Asian Journal of Politics and Society

ISSN 2989-011x
Open access Biannual refereed journal
Volume 01 | Issue 01 | January-June 2023

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ISSN 2989-011x
Open access biannual refereed journal
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Universal Buddhist Pantheon in Post-War Sri Lanka

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Received: 17 June 2023 / **Revised:** 06 August 2023 / **Accepted:** 13 August 2023

Abstract

Sri Lankan popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon represents the long-term hybrid nature of Buddhism, ancient Sri Lankan feudal social structure, sacred geographical locations, and class and caste association. This article aims to present the transformation of the Sri Lankan popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon to a universal Buddhist pantheon in post-war Sri Lanka. The Mahamevnawa monastic movement as a recent popular, innovative and radical Buddhist movement departs from the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, and presents a universal Buddhist pantheon that is based on the Buddhist sacred text the Tripitakaya. Unlike the deities of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, the deities of the universal Buddhist pantheon are not restricted to any particular geographical or sacred location which presents a radical departure from Sri Lankan ancient feudal social structure to a more modern and larger upward social mobility-based Sinhala Buddhists social order. This paper argues that the universal Buddhist pantheon is a result of Buddhist purifying processes, nationalist orientation and the impact of the social composition of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement in post-war Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, Social mobility, Tripitakaya, The Mahamevnawa monastic movement, Universal Buddhist pantheon*

Introduction

Buddhism and the pantheon have a long historical and mythological connection in Sri Lanka. The Mahamevnawa Asapuwa (monastery)[1] which was formed by Rev. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda in 1999 has constructed a new Buddhist pantheon in post-war Sri Lanka. The Mahamevnawa cosmology is a radical and purifying cosmology in contemporary Sri Lanka since it attempts to purify the hybrid nature of Buddhist cosmology and present what this movement calls a 'pure Buddhist cosmology.' Further, it departs from the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon and constructs a universal Buddhist

pantheon based on the Buddhist sacred text the *Tripitakaya*. Sinhala Buddhism has historically been a humanist-deist religion, in the sense that the nature and behaviour of deities is super-human. That is, the deities (gods and goddesses) have special powers but are oriented toward the same goals as humans, and this is perfectly exemplified by the example of a human - Buddha. This situation creates a number of problems. One is that, according to Obeyesekere (1977), popular Sinhalese Buddhist deities go in and out of fashion according to how close or far away they are from human affairs. The second is that it is possible to imagine a world in which there are no deities at all. The Mahamevnawa monastic movement stands in the middle of these two positions since it imagines a world with deities but without non-Buddhist deities. Owing to the transformative potentialities that the Mahamevnawa represents as it steps away from the traditional humanist-deist paradigm to the universal Buddhist pantheon, I explore in this article the forces that have influenced this alternation in Sri Lankan Buddhist practice and closely engage with the arguments of Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988), Obeyesekere (1977, 1978, 1984) and Winslow (1984). The central argument of this paper is that the transformations to Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist pantheon that the Mahamevnawa represents are a response to Buddhist purifying processes, its nationalist orientation, and the impact of the social composition of this movement.

Literature Review

Popular Sinhala Buddhist Pantheon

The popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon is limited to a particular geographical location, Sri Lankan territory, and it is justified in ancient chronicles like the *Mahavamsa*. Bond (1992: 32) argues that '[i]n both its theoretical and actual structures traditional Theravada was hierarchical[2]' Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 19) state that the ancient chronicle, the *Mahavamsa,* has justified the clear structural hierarchy of the traditional Sinhala Buddhist pantheon. The Buddha handed over the protection of Buddhism in Sri Lanka to God Sakra. Then, the God Sakra entrusted the responsibility of protecting Buddhism to the God Vishnu (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 19). The God Vishnu has shared this responsibility and the territory of Sri Lanka with three other deities. These three deities and God Vishnu are together labelled as *satara varam deviyō* (the four guardian deities). The four guardian deities are God Vishnu, and three of the five deities, named: Nātha, Saman, Kataragama (Skanda), Vibhīṣaṇa and Pattini (Obeyesekere 1972, 1977, 1978, 1984). The four guardian deities have given warrants to twelve deities, who are at the next level below in the hierarchy of the pantheon (Gombrich & Obeyesekere 1988: 19-20). The power and morality of the twelve deities are hierarchically inferior to the four guardian deities. These twelve deities are called 'godling' (*dēvatā*) due to their moral ambivalence. Hence, they are placed under the deities and above demons (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 20). Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 20) state that '[w]hile most of higher gods historically derive from India, the Twelve Gods are (whether in myth or fact is hard to determine) deified local lords (*baṇḍāra*).' Human beings and these minor deities are morally similar to each other. These twelve deities have given warrants to demons and evil spirits (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 20). Therefore, significant

aspects of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon are, it is then justified in the *Mahavamsa,* there is a hierarchy among deities and other spirits in the pantheon, and those deities and spirits are located specifically in the Sri Lankan territory.

The popular Sinhala Buddhist cosmology involves a multitude of gods, goddesses, demons and ghosts as well as humans and the Buddha. It is a cosmology made up of different levels, at its apex is the Buddha. Obeyesekere (1984: 61) mentions that the Buddha is at the top of the pantheon, and all other deities and demons are subordinated, and their qualities and nature are defined in relation to the Buddha. Though the Buddha is considered to no longer be active in the world, or exercises any power, the Buddha's power and authority are still effective through deities to whom the Buddha has given warrants (*varan*) to protect Buddhist *sāsana* and the Buddhists of Sri Lanka (Obeyesekere 1963, 1977, 1984; Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988). Though doctrinal Buddhism devalues the worshipping of deities (Obeyesekere, 1977: 377), the worshipping of deities has become a major religious and ritualistic practice for all Sinhalese in Sri Lanka (Kapferer, 1983; Langer, 2007). Deities are considered to be good beings who follow the path of the Buddha and orient toward the ultimate goal of Buddhism (Obeyesekere, 1977; Kapferer 1983). They advance along this path by helping human beings and receiving merits (*pin*) from Sinhalese Buddhists through the latter's acts of Buddhist devotion (Kapferer 1983: 32). Merits of their previous lives have caused deities to reach their renowned status. Human beings need to be good Buddhists to gain the support of deities. Obeyesekere (1984: 50) notes that '[m]an's relation to the Gods is everywhere characterised by subordination and dependence. The Gods are powerful and superior beings who can do things for their dependent humans. Hence, worshipping deities, and believing in deities and other spirits have been a main aspect of popular Sinhala Buddhism.

Another significant aspect of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon is the dynamic nature of the hierarchical positions of some deities. Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 30) state that the structure of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon has not changed while the divine hierarchy has changed. Though there are four guardian deities, different deities have occupied this role. The reason, they suggest, derives from the Buddhist concept of merit, and with that the upward mobility of deities toward Buddha-hood within the pantheon, as a result of their good actions (see also Obeyesekere 1984). This upward mobility of deities has happened since ancient times. Though the four great regal deities Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūḍha, Virūpākṣa and Vaiśravaṇa were involved in human matters, their images are now used to decorate the front walls of Buddhist shrines (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 31-32). Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) state that another four deities have taken their positions. While Vishnu has taken a permanent position among the guardian deities, three of the following five deities Natha, Pattini, Saman, Vibhishana, and Kataragama fill the other positions. These guardian deities are considered the protectors of the Buddha's Tooth Relic in Kandy, Buddhism and Buddhists in Sri Lanka. They are also considered to be bodhisattvas – future Buddhas who are at different levels of achieving that goal, and of these, Vishnu, Saman and Natha are more benevolent and

less punitive. God Vishnu is in charge of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, and God Saman is the overlord of the Samanala Peak where the Buddha's sacred footprint is located. God Natha is considered the next Buddha – Maitreya – and was also considered the protector of the Kandyan Kingdom (Obeyesekere, 1977; 1984). The Goddess Pattini is a famous deity in the Western, Southern, Sabaragamuwa and Eastern Provinces. Since Goddess Pattinī is female, she has to be reborn as a male to become a Buddha. Though God Kataragama is also a Bodhisattva, he has a long way to go to be a Buddha due to his lack of virtuous and compassionate qualities (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 30-31). Gombrich and Obeyesekere state that:

> Gods who at one time are low enough to take an interest in human affairs gradually move up into a kind of honorary retirement as "great Gods"; minor deities of rather mixed or neutral character move up to full God head; their place as "Godlings" (*dēvatā*) is taken by (ex-) demons. Canonizing Gods by calling them future Buddhas is an aspect of this process. (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 31).

Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 32) note that the mobility of deities has been based on traditional Buddhist ideology. The logic of that ideology is if a deity grants more favours, he becomes more compassionate and powerful. Therefore, as a deity goes higher in scale, he loses direct contact with the human world and his punitive aspect. Hence, a more inferior spirit in the cosmic administration world then fills that deity's place. For instance, when God Vishnu was transferred from his Alutnuvara official residence to Kandy, Dadimunda, who is a local servant of God Vishnu took God Vishnu's Alutnuvara official residence and became Alutnuvara Deviyō (God of Alutnuvara) (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 32). Obeyesekere has presented a few cultural principles that govern the changes of the pantheon. They are:

> 01. ...Wherever the Buddhist virtues of compassion (Maitriya) and benevolence (karuṇā) increase in the character of a God, there is a concomitant decrease in his punitiveness, however righteous it may be. 02. ….The more benevolent and compassionate the God, the more remote he becomes in relation to the worshiper. 03. …The more favours the deity grants the worshipper the more he is viewed as benevolent and compassionate; the more benevolent he is, the less involved he becomes in the affairs of the world, which makes him progressively otiose. 04. …When major Gods become further removed, others move up to take their places, the movement generally being from demonic to divine status. 05. …When a particular demon ascends through the pantheon's hierarchy, his identity is often split into two, a divine one and a demonic one, the latter progressively decreasing in importance as the importance of the former increases. 06. '…If the deity ascending through the hierarchy is already composite of demon and God or dēvatā, then the divine aspect is enhanced as the demonic declines.' 07. '…A deity moving up through the supernatural hierarchy possesses at a certain stage an anomalous status composite of demon and God, which is often conceptualised as

> dēvatā'. 08. '…When an inferior deity passes into divine status, he may retain some pejorative identity in his name, which is initially resolved by giving him an alias or a prefix that qualifies his former pejorative name; or he may be given a totally new name. (Obeyesekere, 1984: 64-70).

At the centre of Obeyesekere's analysis of the dynamics of the pantheon, is the role of human agency. Deities are elevated human beings unified by their mutual goal to be released from existence, which was exemplified by the wisdom of a human being – the Buddha – and, with that, a sense of the karmic consequence as a result of human actions in the world. Grounded in these actions, the pantheon changes in parallel with society and history. For example, changes in literacy, mass education, urbanisation and industrialization have intensified the 'belief and practices of the spirit cults' (Obeyesekere, 1977: 377). Another example is Goddess Pattini, who is worshipped in relation to children's diseases, smallpox, chicken pox, and at the time of drought and famine. Obeyesekere (1977) argues that though the Goddess Pattini was more popular in the traditional peasant society, the Pattini cult has been gradually declining due to the irrelevance of her involvement in her traditional roles because of free universal healthcare, hospitals, and vaccinations (Obeyesekere, 1977: 381). However, the worshipping Goddess Pattini has not totally disappeared. It has transformed from 'communal group rituals' to individual worship at Pattini shrines (Obeyesekere, 1977: 382). God Skanda (Kataragama) has been a very popular god since the fifteenth century due to South Indian immigrants, the patronage of some kings, and the war between local kingdoms and foreign invaders. Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) note that the growth of personal guardian deity (*iṣṭa dēvatā*) presents the collapse of the authoritarian structure of the traditional pantheon. Hence, morally ambivalent deities such as God Kataragama, Kālī and Hūniyam have been popular as personal guardian deities (Obeyesekere, 1987; Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988; Piker, 1993; Bastin, 2002). God Kataragama is more popular than other guardian deities because the God Kataragama is seen to be the most suitable deity for seeking support to manage the 'stresses of modern life' than other benevolent deities (Seneviratne & Wickermeratne, 1980; Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988). Lay people can approach God Kataragama for both moral and immoral purposes (black magic).

The popularity of the Indian Goddess Kālī has been rising, and she has been a major goddess in the Buddhist pantheon (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988; Bastin, 2002). People seek support from Goddess Kālī for resolutions of personal conflicts, jobs, ensuring prosperity, revenge, marriage proposals, illnesses, sorcery and vengeance (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988; Bastin, 2002). God Hūniyam has also been a popular deity. God Hūniyam is good at solving family conflicts, finding jobs and partners, curing illness, cursing enemies, redress in court cases or property thefts, and success in marriage proposals (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988: 128). Gombrich & Obeyesekere (1988) mention that since the traditional village community was based on an agricultural peasant society, kingships and extended family ties, it was easy to solve social, economic, political and emotional conflicts, difficulties and issues faced by any member of the

family by means of family members, relatives and neighbours. This traditional village community had changed due to various social, economic, political, and educational changes, and due to demographic forces, such as population growth, migration, and urbanisation. Further, universal free education and health, poverty, unemployment, the emergence of middle and low class in urban areas, the failure of social institutions and the malfunction of state regulated institutions such as education, legal, political and economic caused to increase frustration among people. According to Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 100), 'people quite correctly perceive that in modern Sri Lanka rational action to better oneself or one's family is not always crowned with results, especially if one is not a member of the elite'. Hence, people in the low class especially, tended to seek alternative ways to meet their mundane necessities. Thus, the spirit religion supported them to meet this requirement. Therefore, low-class people seek the support of deities who are not only virtuous but also malevolent, with an aim to manage their lives due to frustration, loneliness and urban anomie that they face. Unlike the traditional spirit religion, where deities could achieve upward mobility through being virtuous and reduce their intervention in mundane matters, popular spirit religion has opened a space for deities to reach a higher status by intervening in human affairs. Therefore, the popularity of a deity depends on the deity's ability to handle the invocations of people who seek the support of these deities in the spirit religion. For instance, worshipping God Huniyam has become popular among the lower class. Obeyesekere (1977) mentions that "[t]he rise and fall of deities are an inevitable process, sometimes slow, at other times rapid, but occurring at all periods in Sri Lanka's history. External socio-economic conditions may bring about the rise of a God; his fall can be brought about by similar conditions" (1977: 394). The significant aspect of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon is the dynamic position of the deities that connect with the larger social transformations. However, as I discuss later, the Buddhist pantheon of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement is a static pantheon since the position of deities does not change when the society goes through various social transformations.

With reference to the demons, Obeyesekere (1984) mentions that unlike gods, the demons are irrational beings. Therefore, they do harmful things without principle or cause, their wickedness disturbs the moral order, and causes suffering to human beings. Hence, though the gods have power, demons do harmful things due to their wickedness and evil nature. Obeyesekere (1984) states that '…king-Gods cannot stop demons from causing harm; they can admonish them, punish them if they do evil, and control them. But wickedness and evil cannot be stopped' (1984: 62). Therefore, the demons must be controlled by the deities in order to prevent a disturbance of social order and people's physical health (1984: 63). Obeyesekere (1984) states that demons can be converted into deities due to the fact that 'the cultural ideology of Buddhism', which allows for status changes (1984: 67). There are cases where demons were converted into good Buddhist laymen in both popular as well as doctrinal tradition of Buddhism. 'In a culture that does not have an ideology of karma and rebirth, the apotheosis of the demon may be difficult to justify, but not in the Hindu Buddhist religious traditions' (Obeyesekere, 1984: 67).

Therefore, it is possible that all spirits can change their hierarchical positions by following the Buddhist path.

Exorcism connects with spiritual religions. With regard to exorcisms, Kapferer (1983) presents a differentiation between the classes. According to Kapferer (1983), '[d]emon exorcisms are mainly a working-class and peasant practice, and are devalued by the middle class often because of their class associations and connotations' (1983: 18). Professional intermediaries play vital roles in the traditional spirit religion of Sinhala Buddhists. Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) note that there is a connection between the hierarchy of the spirits and the hierarchy of professional intermediaries' caste. The dominant caste priest called *kapurāḷa* works for godlings, while the low caste priest called *kaṭṭāḍirāḷa* works for the demons. Sometimes a higher caste person also may work as a priest for the demon according to personal preferences (1988: 21). Therefore, the caste connection with the professionals and different hierarchical positions of the pantheon.

The Mahamevnawa monastic movement stands out in the cosmology of the popular Sinhala Buddhism. As the Mahamevnawa monastic movement argues, the popular Buddhist pantheon related religious practices destroy the *nirvāṇaya* achieving path since the non-Buddhist deities have both benevolent and malevolent. When *Bumata* deities (deities who live close to the earth) help people, they are biassed with personal attachments and purposes, since these deities do not have spiritually developed lives. Therefore, it causes long-term negative impacts on the spiritual journey of Buddhists. When the monks of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement preach, it is very common to hear the negative and long-term impact of seeking support from non-Buddhist deities, such as visiting shrines and making vows, on their spiritual journeys. Real Buddhists must not aim to seek the support of non-Buddhist gods. According to this movement, there are no real, spiritually advanced, and benevolent Buddhist deities at the shrines, since real Buddhist and virtuous deities live in the upper levels of heaven. Therefore, devils or beneath deities will intervene with people's problems when they visit shrines and make vows. Devils generally reside in most of the shrines and control them. Since they are beneath, spiritually less developed, and non-Buddhist deities and devils at the shrines, they expect people to come to their shrines regularly. They need to increase their number of followers to bring offerings and food for the deities, so that the devils and spirits may survive. Therefore, they will solve the lay followers' problems temporarily, and they again create problems in the lives of those people in order to bring them back to the shrines. In addition, this movement believes that when those lay people die, the devils will send their subordinate servant devils and spirits to their place of death. Those servant devils and spirits then appear as the family members of the dying person. After the person dies, those spirits will accompany that person's soul to the main devil of the shrines. According to Rev. Gnanananda, the monks, the sermons and the publications of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement, when the soul of a person is brought to the main leader devils, there is no escape for that soul for many hundreds and thousands of years. Since the dead person has sought the support of those spirits when he is alive, his soul has to acknowledge the support of devils by working as a servant for devils for many

hundreds and thousands of years. According to this movement, there is then no way of escaping from this bond and then it is really hard for those souls to achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhism. My point here is that the transformative nature of the Mahamevnawa practice then openly discourages popular Sinhala Buddhism's vows and demonological practices since it is an obstacle to the spiritual journey of Sinhala Buddhists in contemporary society.

Materials and Methods

The Mahamevnawa monastic movement is very popular, innovative and radical in contemporary Sri Lanka. Rev. Gnanananda's aim is to find 'true Buddhism' since he believes that 'true Buddhism' is not practised in Sri Lanka (Mahamevnawa, 2023). According to the statistics of the official website of the Mahamevnawa monastery, there are more than 650 Buddhist monks, more than 100 Buddhist nuns, and hundreds of thousands of lay followers (Mahamevnawa, 2023). Furthermore, this movement has more than 70 branches throughout Sri Lanka and an international presence in the USA, England, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Ireland, South Korea, Dubai and India. Therefore, the social composition of this movement consists of local followers from various classes, castes, ethnicities and localities, as well as diaspora communities and foreign nationals. This article is based on ethnographic research which was conducted mainly in Malabe, Polgahawela and Balangoda branch monasteries of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement while exploring other branches of the Mahamevnawa monastery as well from October 2017 to October 2018. The Malabe Mahamevnawa branch monastery is situated in Malabe city, an urban centre located around 20 km from the centre of the national capital, Colombo, in the heavily populated Western Province. The Polgahawela Mahamevnawa monastery is the main branch monastery of this movement. It is located in the Kurunegala District of North Western Province and around 82 km from Colombo city. The Balangoda Mahamevnawa branch monastery is a rural centre. It is located in the Rathnapura District of Sabaragamuwa Province and 156 km far from Colombo city. At the selected branches of the Mahamevnawa, I employed the informal interview method and participant observation method to collect data over 12 months. I employed participant observation to observe three broad areas: the daily activities, special days' activities and special organisational activities of this movement. The informal interviews were conducted with Buddhist monks, temple workers, lay followers of this religious movement, and villagers surrounding these three selected monasteries. This article then presents the cosmology of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement through an ethnographic study.

Results and Discussion

Feudal Administration System and the Popular Sinhala Buddhist Pantheon

There are many different discourses about the hierarchy of the Sinhala Buddhist pantheon and its various manifestations. Obeyesekere (1984) argues that there is a similarity between the hierarchy of the feudal administrative system and the popular Sinhala

Buddhist pantheon in Sri Lanka. There are kings, sub-kings and rulers of provinces in the hierarchy of the feudal administrative system. Similarly, as Obeyesekere (1984) mentions, '[i]n the operative pantheon of the Sinhalas the great divine kings are the Gods of the Four Warrant- Viṣṇu, Saman, Vibhīṣaṇa, Kataragama, and other major Gods like Pattini and Nātha. There are major and minor Gods, as there are similar rulers in the secular realm' (Obeyesekere 1984: 54). Further, Obeyesekere (1984) states that similar to kings, gods also have areas of jurisdiction, as well as divine authority over people in their territory (1984: 54). The king delegates his authority in his area of jurisdiction to the sub-kings and governors. Though this authority structure can be seen in the pantheon, it is not as simple as the secular feudal system, as the major deities of the pantheon have similar statuses, and the deities' jurisdictions overlap. Obeyesekere (1984) mentions that '…the authority structure of the pantheon uses the *idiom* of South Asian feudalism, but is not a *replica* of the structure of feudalism' (1984: 54). In addition, the king's power is especially strong in regions or provinces where the palace is located, even though the king rules the whole realm. The deities also have their own main shine. Like a palace, the region where the main shrine is located is considered the deities' special territory, while there may be shrines elsewhere. However, Obeyesekere (1984) states that '[t]hese boundaries are not immutable: as the importance and popularity of the deity decline, his territory too shrinks, and he may even be forgotten or rendered irrelevant' (1984: 55). Furthermore, though minor deities have their small territories within a larger realm, their territories can expand and they can share attributes with the higher deities if their popularity increases (1984: 55). Though Obeyesekere's explanation is important for the comparison between the hierarchy of feudal administrative system and popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, as I will discuss later, it is not sufficient to apply this explanation to the four guardian deities of universal Buddhist pantheon such as Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūḍha, Virūpākṣa and Vaiśravaṇa, since they do not have a particular shrine or authority jurisdiction in Sri Lanka. Instead, they are responsible for every direction of the universe.

Winslow (1984) argues that the popular Sinhalese Buddhist pantheon is territory based, rather than a representation of the feudal political administrative system. The territories of deities are not equivalent to territories of the feudal system, which are under the labels of local, provincial and national level of administration. Winslow (1984) argues that '…the hierarchy of deities is represented territorially, not in a feudal way by the interest of land allocations of different sizes, but by the centre-versus-periphery quality of these allocations' (1984: 279). Winslow (1984) further explains that there are a few factors to take into account when considering the connection between territories and deities. One is that the territories of deities may reduce when the deities become more meritorious. The other point is that the value of the deities' territory is not solely based on the size of the territory. The location, character and historical connection will determine the value of the land and its association with higher deities (Winslow, 1984: 275-276). Winslow (1984) notes that '[f]or both of these reasons, it is not always possible, even in theory, to predict a deity's territorial status from pantheon rank alone' (1984: 276). Due to these factors, a small territory may connect with a higher deity and be more worthwhile than a larger but less important territory associated with lower deities. Winslow (1984) argues that:

> Rather than higher Gods having the largest territories, instead they have what might be characterised as the better territories, the better addresses, while lower deities inhabit relatively less desirable, albeit often quite extensive, areas that are *adjacent to* instead of *contained within* the areas of higher Gods (Winslow, 1984: 278).

Therefore, as Winslow (1984) argues, Sinhala Buddhist pantheon is not a reflection of the mediaeval Sinhalese political system but a territorial based system. Along with Winslow (1984), I would also argue that it is not a simple task to look at the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon and suggest that the pantheon is similar to the feudal administrative system, especially when it comes to deities who do not have particular any residential location in Sri Lanka. Moreover, there are different Sinhala Buddhist pantheons in Sri Lanka, and that makes it difficult to capture all the diversity of different pantheons and present a generalised argument about the Sinhala Buddhist pantheon.

The Tripitakaya and the Universal Buddhist Pantheon

The issues with the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon are the locational limitation of deities, the Hindu origin of some of the deities and its foundation in the ancient chronicle of the *Mahavamsa* and folklore. The deities of this pantheon are not universal deities since their territory and power are limited to Sri Lankan territory. The Mahamevnawa monastic movement has also formed a new Buddhist pantheon which is primarily based on the *Tripitakaya.* The deities of the pantheon are then Buddhist deities who have been mentioned in this sacred text. I call the new Buddhist pantheon of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement 'the universal Buddhist pantheon' since the deities of this pantheon are not restricted to a particular geographical location, any particular shrine, or jurisdiction areas in Sri Lankan territory. This pantheon then goes beyond the power, authority and boundaries of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon that Obeyesekere (1984) and Winslow (1984) have presented. The power of deities goes beyond the boundaries of the Sri Lankan nation state and spreads throughout the universe. Furthermore, anyone from any background can accept this pantheon irrespective of their class, caste, education, profession, geographical location and religious adherence due to the fact that this pantheon is based on the *Tripitakaya*. Hence, the universal Buddhist pantheon departs from the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon that has hybrid nature of both Buddhist and Hindu religious influences. Moreover, the significance of the universal Buddhist pantheon of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement is it radically departs from a feudal political administrative system to a more socially mobilised open hierarchical system.

As I mentioned above, the social composition of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement is complex since there are monks and followers from various classes, castes, educational and geographical locations. Therefore, the ideological foundation and teaching of this movement need to reach and attract all these diverse social compositions of this movement. In other words, this movement has to present a rational Buddhist pantheon

that is based on Buddhist sacred text since it can be accepted by everyone. What this movement does is, creates a new universal Buddhist pantheon based on the Buddhist sacred text the *Tripitakaya.* Since this religious text is generally accepted as the 'true Buddhist sacred text', where the Buddha's real teaching is included and preserved, anyone from any background may agree to the teaching of the Buddha in this text. There are various references to Buddhist deities in this text. Based on these deities, the Mahamevnawa monastic movement presents its universal Buddhist pantheon.

The Mahamevnawa monastic movement divides the deities into two broad categories, real Buddhist and benevolent deities, and non-Buddhist and beneath deities. This division encompasses a strong nationalist sentiment and purifies Sinhalese Buddhism since this movement rejects all non-Buddhist deities from their universal Buddhist pantheon. According to this movement, the real Buddhist deities are deities who have been mentioned in the *Tripitakaya.* These deities are benevolent and virtuous. They have spiritually advanced lives, and they aim to reach the *nirvāṇa.* This notion is similar to the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, as both the deities in Sinhala Buddhist pantheon and the universal Buddhist pantheon follow the path of the Buddha and orient toward the ultimate goal of Buddhism (Kapferer, 1983; Obeyesekere, 1977). The recognition and acceptance in forming the universal Buddhist pantheon then depend on the *Tripitakaya*. I met a Netherland monk of this movement at the Malabe Mahamevnawa branch monastery. He said the following about the *Tripitakaya*:

> The Buddha doesn't live in this present society. But, we can meet him through reading the Tripiṭakaya since it contains His teaching. Buddhism can be only understood by reading it. Unlike other religions, Buddhism is a more philosophical and scientific religion. That's why I accept the Buddha's teaching. It is mentioned that the Buddha had direct contact with various deities. These deities are religious and virtuous. If we accept that the 'true Buddhism' is written in only the *Tripitakaya*, then we have to accept the Buddhist deities who have been mentioned in this text. I accept that there can be some spirits we can't see through our ordinary eyes. Someone who has a higher mental capacity may be able to see those deities.

This statement shows that a foreign follower of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement also accepts the *Tripiṭakaya* as a reliable source of Buddhism due to the fact that Buddhism is more philosophical and scientific. Scientific means here is there are many areas of Buddhism that can be studied scientifically such as the universe, human body and mind, meditation, etc. Buddhism is open to scientific studies to verify whether the teaching of Buddha is right or wrong. Since the Buddha is not alive anymore, the sacred text *Tripiṭakaya* then provides access to the Buddha's teaching. Hence, the deities who have been mentioned in this text are also accepted, since the Buddha had direct contact with them and their reference in the text. Therefore, this religious text provides justification for real Buddhist deities that anyone from any background can accept. The Mahamevnawa monastic movement then promotes only deities of the *Tripiṭakaya* since followers of this movement from various backgrounds can agree to it. Therefore, the

social composition of this movement is very important in creating the universal Buddhist pantheon. Hence, the significance of the universal Buddhist pantheon of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement is its departure from the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, and then the universal Buddhist pantheon is solely based on the Buddhist sacred text the *Tripitakaya*. This is, on the one hand, going back to the textual traditions of the past, but on the other hand, a radical departure from the traditional popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon.

According to Rev. Gnanananda, the monks, the sermons and the publications of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement, the real Buddhist deities are really important in the *nirvāṇaya* achieving path since they protect Buddhism, the teaching of the Buddha, monkhood and Buddhist lay followers. As this movement promotes, there are many hundreds and thousands of Buddhist deities in various heavens. Based on the *Tripitakaya*, this movement believes in a few main heavens, such as *Chathummaharajika, Thawthisa, Yaama, Thusitha, Nimmanarathi* and *Paranimmitha Wasawarthi* respectively. In addition to these heavens, there are upper-level heavens also called *Brahmaloka* such as *Brahmaparisajja*, *Brahma purohitha*, *Mahabramaya*, *Pariththabaya, Appamanasuba, Ahassaraya, Pariththasubaya, Appamanasubaya, Suhakinnakaya, Wehappalaya, Asagngnasaththaya, Awihaya, Athappaya, Sudassaya, Sudassiya* and*Akanittakaya.* The Buddha is at the top of all of these heavens and *Brahmaloka.* According to this movement, the lowest-rank deities are called *bumāta deviyō* who are the deities living closest to the earth. This movement teaches that most of the popular deities in the Sinhala Buddhist pantheon in contemporary Sri Lanka are *bumāta deviyō.* Therefore, most popular deities such as Vishnu, Kataragama, Pattini, Natha, Sumana Saman, Vibhishana, Pulleyan and Saraswathi, Gambara, etc., belong to the *bumāta deviyō* category. This movement rejects all of these deities from their textual universal Buddhist pantheon, except for God Vishnu and God Sumana Saman. God Vishnu is important since he is the custodian god and protector of Buddhism and Sri Lanka, while God Sumana Saman protects Sri Lanka and the Sir Pada Mountain where the Buddha had placed his footprint. Furthermore, God Sumana Saman had listened to the Buddha's preaching directly. In addition, God Kataragama has also ambiguous recognition in this movement since God Kataragama connects with the birth of Rev. Gnanananda due to the fact that Rev. Gnanananda was born after his parents made a vow to the God Kataragama. Most of the other *bumāta deviyō* and devils by and large have either Hindu origin, or both benevolent and malevolent characters.

The Mahamevnawa monastic movement places Buddhist textual heavens and deities over the popular Sinhala Buddhist deities and their power and authority. A monk of the Malabe Mahamevnawa branch monastery told me the following at an informal interview. According to the monk, the deities in the *Chathummaharajika* heaven are higher and more superior than *bumāta deviyō.* The *Chathummaharajika* heaven is located above the earth. In all heavens, a month consists of 30 days and a year consists of 12 months, though the length of a day differs between the levels of the heavens. Fifty earth years is one day in the *Chathummaharajika* heaven, and the life expectancy of the deities in this

heaven is 500 years of such days. The next level up is the *Thawthisa* heaven. One hundred years on earth is one day in the *Thawthisa* heaven. The life expectancy of the *Thawthisa* heaven's deities is 1000 years of such days. *Yaama* heaven is located above *Thawthisa* heaven. One day in *Yaama* heaven is equivalent to 200 years on the earth. The life expectancy of deities in *Yaama* is 2000 years of such days. The next level is the *Thusitha* heaven. Four hundred years on earth is one day in *Thusitha* and the life expectancy of the deities in the *Thusitha* heaven is 4000 years of such days. The next level of heaven is *Nimmanarathi*. Eight hundred years on earth is one day in the *Nimmanarathi* heaven. The life expectancy of deities in this heaven is 8000 years of such days. *Paranimmitha Wasawarthi* heaven is higher than *Nimmanarathi* heaven. One thousand and six hundred years on earth is one day in the *Paranimmitha Wasawarthi* heaven. The deities in this heaven have 16000 years of such days as their life expectancy. Therefore, as the Mahamevnawa monastic movement states, there are many hundreds and thousands of real Buddhist deities in these heavens than a few popular deities in the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon.

In addition, the Mahamevnawa monastic movement does not recognize the four guardian deities of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon as the real Buddhist four guardian deities. This movement says that deities such as Vishnu, Kataragama, Pattini, Natha, Sumana Saman and Vibhishana are not the real Buddhist guardian deities. They are just minor deities who live close to the earth. According to this movement, the real Buddhist guardian deities are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūḍha, Virūpākṣa and Vaiśravaṇa, and this movement gives a foremost place for these four guardian deities. Gombrich & Obeyesekere (1988: 31-32) argue that these four great regal deities are not important in popular Sinhala Buddhism, since their images have only decorative function on the walls of Buddhist shrines. Hence, Gombrich & Obeyesekere (1988) point out that these deities have lost their importance and involvement in human matters. However, the Mahamevnawa monastic movement then attempts to re-establish the power and importance of the four great regal deities in contemporary Sri Lanka by going back to the *Tripitakaya*.

The real Buddhist guardian deities are universal deities since they control the earthly directions, not just a small territory. The God Dhṛtarāṣṭra controls the eastern direction. He is the master of the spirits called Gandhabbās. He has 91 sons and all of them are called Inda. God Virūḍha controls the southern direction, and he is the master of spirits called Kumbhandhās. He also has 91 sons and all of them are also called Inda. The God Virūpākṣa dominates the western direction and he is the master of spirits called Nāgās. He has also 91 sons and the name of them is also Inda. The God Vaiśravaṇa controls the northern direction and he is the master of spirits called Yakkha. This god also has 91 sons, and they are called Inda. The God Vaiśravaṇa has nine Yakkhas, and they search various earthly matters and then report to the God Vaiśravaṇa. The nine Yakkhas are Tatolā, Tattalā, Tatotalā, Ojasi, Tejasi, Sūra, Rājā, Arittha and Nemi. These Buddhist textual four guardian deities are significant because they control four directions of the world (Gnanananda, 2016). Furthermore, these deities do not belong to a particular location, a shrine or a territory in Sri Lanka. Since they are universal deities, they control the whole

universe. Therefore, they can travel everywhere, and they can intervene in the matters of real Sinhala Buddhists followers from any place in the world. Therefore, according to Rev. Gnanananda, the monks, the sermons and the publications of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement, it is easy for real Sinhala Buddhist followers to seek the support of the real Buddhist deities from any place, either in Sri Lanka or outside in any other countries. The Sinhala Buddhists do not need to go to any particular shrine or seek the intervention of any ritual expert to get the support of real Buddhist deities. Hence, the explanations of both Obeyesekere (1984) and Winslow (1984) are not sufficient to explain the universal Buddhist pantheon of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement. I would argue then if the four guardian deities of the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon are like local feudal lords, the four guardian deities of the universal Buddhist pantheon are then higher and more powerful than those local deities due to their territories have been defined as directions instead of a particular location in Sri Lanka. Hence, they are more like 'great emperors' due to the fact their area of jurisdiction goes beyond the Sri Lankan territory to the universe. Therefore, anyone from any part of the world can gain access to the deities of the universal Buddhist pantheon. Since the followers of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement live in various parts of Sri Lanka and various foreign countries, they can then seek the support of those universal Buddhist deities since their power and authority has spread all over the earth. Therefore, this movement has challenged the established popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, spirit religion and its religious and cultural practices.

Conclusion

The Mahamevnawa monastic movement radically departs from popular Sinhala Buddhist cosmology. The popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon is based on a mixture of Buddhist and Hindu deities, justification in the historical chronicle of the *Mahavamsa,* Kandyan feudal system, sacred geographical locations and class and caste associations. The Mahamevnawa monastic movement presents an alternative pantheon based on the Buddhist sacred text *Tripitakaya.* Their pantheon is a universal Buddhist pantheon since deities are not restricted to any particular geographical or sacred location in Sri Lanka. These deities have been mentioned in the *Tripiṭakaya,* and they spread their control throughout the whole universe. Therefore, anyone from any background such as class, caste, education and geographical location can accept it from any part of the world. Moreover, excluding Hindu deities and only including Buddhist deities based on the *Tripiṭakaya* presents that the universal Buddhist pantheon is a result of a purifying process which attempts to separate Hindu religious influences from contemporary Buddhism.

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[1]I use the English word ‘monastery’ to present the Sinhala word ‘asapuwa’ throughout this article.

[2] Bond (1992, p. 32) states that ‘[c]osmologically its universe exhibited gradations of being, with the devas ranked at the top in their tiers of heavens, human beings below them, and other creatures and spirits below humanity, down to the Niraya worlds. In addition to being objects of worship or fear, all of these forms of being stood for possible planes of rebirth within the cycle of samsāra’.

AJPS
ISSN 2989-011x
Open access biannual refereed journal
Volume 01 | Issue 01 | January-June 2023
Article 02

Gender Differences in the Determinants of Business Performance among Entrepreneurs of the Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka

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Received: 23 March 2023 / **Revised:** 30 May 2023 / **Accepted:** 07 June2023

Abstract

Women entrepreneurs often face challenges in accessing finance due to cultural norms and gender bias. This can impact their ability to invest in their business and expand operations, which can lead to lower business performance. This study analyses the factors that influence the business performance of men and women in different sub-sectors of small-scale enterprises in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. This is an explorative study, which employed several data collection techniques, including key informant interviews, non-participant observation, a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. They were carried out among small-scale tourist enterprises in the Hikkaduwa Urban Council (HUC) area of Galle district, Sri Lanka. The samples were chosen at random, and the data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Three major sectors, namely accommodation, food and beverage, and tourism-affiliated retail services were selected for this study. Secondary information was mostly collected from the literature on gender studies and relevant documents of small-scale enterprises. The data suggests those women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka are performing well and, in some cases, outperforming men. The fact that women in all three sub-sectors showed a higher increase in sales than men is a positive sign of the growing role of women in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the fact that women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector showed the highest sales expansion is particularly encouraging. This indicates that women in this sub-sector may have fewer gender differences in business performance than women in the other two sub-sectors.

Keywords: *Business performance, Entrepreneurs, Gender, Sri Lanka, Tourism Industry*

Introduction

In the general Sri Lankan context, the patriarchy influences all social phenomena in the society. There is no exception when it comes to gender participation in enterprises. Female participants are at a disadvantage when it comes to surviving in the industry (Meru and Kinoti, 2021). They have to face a lot of barriers in the industry because of the gender inequality that could be generally observed in society.

Tourism as an industry has been growing in the recent past in Sri Lanka. The main reason for this is the end of the civil war and the improvement of transportation and infrastructural facilities around the country (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2014). This has opened up a lot of opportunities in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. Yet, due to the gender inequality that prevails in Sri Lankan society (Jayaweera, 1999 A), whether this condition has created equal benefits for both genders is questionable.

Lack of gender-specific research: While there is a growing body of research on entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, there is a need for more specific studies that examine gender differences and constraints faced by men and women on running their businesses. By addressing this gap, the study can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for men and women in the tourism industry.

Practical implications and policy considerations: Understanding the factors influencing business performance and the gender differences in the tourism industry could have practical implications for policymakers, industry practitioners, and aspiring entrepreneurs. By identifying the constraints faced by men and women, appropriate measures can be developed to address gender disparities and promote a more inclusive entrepreneurial environment.

By considering these evidences, the research problem of investigating the gender differences in factors affecting business performance among small-scale tourism entrepreneurs in the Hikkaduwa study area is justified, as it addresses the existing knowledge gaps, align with the broader context of gender inequality and entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka, and has practical implications for the industry.

In the general Sri Lankan context, patriarchy influences all social phenomena in society, including gender participation in enterprises (Meru and Kinoti, 2021). Female participants in the industry face numerous barriers due to gender inequality prevalent in society. Research has shown that women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka encounter challenges and opportunities shaped by gender inequality (Meru and Kinoti, 2021). This situation raises concerns about whether the growth of the tourism sector, driven by the end of the civil war and improvements in transportation and infrastructure (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2014), has equally benefited both genders in Sri Lanka (Jayaweera, 1999 B).

Small-scale enterprises play a significant role in every industry, as many existing businesses started on a small scale due to the lower resource requirements. Studies have highlighted the importance of small-scale enterprises as a starting point for individuals entering the business field (Meru and Kinoti, 2021). This is because such enterprises

demand fewer resources compared to larger-scale ventures. However, it is crucial to examine the factors that influence the business performance of men and women in different sub-sectors of small-scale enterprises in the Sri Lankan tourism industry.

This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of gender differences in factors affecting the business performance of small-scale tourism entrepreneurs in the Hikkaduwa study area. By analysing these factors, the study intends to shed light on whether there is a difference in the business growth of men and women-owned enterprises across various sub-sectors. Additionally, the research will investigate the different constraints that men and women face in running their businesses. Through this analysis, we can gain insights into the challenges and opportunities that exist for women entrepreneurs in the Sri Lankan tourism industry (Meru and Kinoti, 2021; Jayaweera, 1999 B).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that women's economic empowerment has shown broader impacts in various domains, including socioeconomic opportunities, property rights, political representation, social equality, individual rights, family development, market development, and community development (Sathiabama, 2010). Understanding the influence of gender on business performance can contribute to advancing women's empowerment and addressing gender disparities in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Literature Review

The International Labor Organization (ILO) recognizes the importance of women's entrepreneurship in developing countries as a means to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment, and poverty reduction (Pettersson and Hedin, 2010). The nature of women's entrepreneurial activities is influenced by the region, socio-economic status, and geographical conditions they belong to (Xheneti et al., 2019). Cultural features and religious influences in East Asia and the Pacific contribute significantly to shaping the representation of women entrepreneurs (De Vita et al., 2014). Motivations for engaging in business vary across countries, with factors such as communitarianism and the need for independence playing a role (Carter et al., 2003).

In the Middle East, women entrepreneurs face challenges due to socio-cultural backgrounds and limited access to funds from banks, resulting in a higher promotion of family-based enterprises rather than women-owned enterprises (World Bank, 2014). In South Asia, the growth of women's entrepreneurship is impacted by institutional and educational levels (De Vita et al., 2014). Sub-Saharan Africa sees a significant presence of women business owners, but high fertility rates and family obligations pose challenges (Tajeddini et al., 2017; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017).

Gender disparities in new venture formation and firm ownership persist across countries, irrespective of GDP and geography (Waring and Brierton, 2011). Household variables are found for a better explanation on gender disparities in labour market outcomes than

individual traits or outright discrimination (Brush et al., 2009; Henry et al., 2016). The African context highlights that women are more prevalent in specific sub-sectors of the informal economy, such as fruits and vegetables street trading (Skinner, 2010).

Understanding the socio-political background and specific cultures of Sri Lanka is crucial to comprehending women entrepreneurs in the country. Individual characteristics, values, social obligations, and behaviours are shaped by diverse cultural and historical backgrounds (De Vita et al., 2014). Despite slower growth and limited expansion, women-owned firms are growing in number and making significant contributions to wealth creation, employment, and innovation (Brush et al., 2009).

The nature of women's entrepreneurship is complex and influenced by various factors, including cultural, socio-economic, and historical contexts. Understanding the specificities of women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka requires consideration of the country's socio-political background, cultural attributes, and individual characteristics. While challenges persist, women entrepreneurs are making valuable contributions to the economy and society.

Social science and other policy studies have significantly researched an understanding of small-scale enterprises in tourism (Thomas et al., 2011). Studies such as the Global Entrepreneurship 2011 proved remarkable dissimilarities between men and women in terms of entrepreneurial activities (Maes et al., 2014).

Scholars (Sharpley, 2015; Kinnaird and Hall, 2000; Chambers et al., 2017) found that gender studies in tourism had explored different aspects such as tourist motivation, roles, relationships, institutions, and the impact of tourism on society. Many women relish the opportunities created by tourism, but the extent to which they could enjoy these opportunities is restricted (Meera, 2014; Bakker, 2019). It is notable in many studies (Baum, 2013; Baum, 2015; Baumet al., 2016; Booyens, 2020) analysing the nature of workforce problems women face regarding their wages and roles in tourism.

Few women are in managerial or decision-making roles in small businesses in the tourism sector (Liu and Wall, 2006; Kattara, 2005). It compared the employment structure in the tourism industry to a pyramid, with many women working seasonal and part-time jobs at the bottom and a small number holding the top management positions (Jordan, 1997; Liu and Wall, 2006).

Aitchison (2005) reveals that existing gender patterns of employment in tourism culture contribute to maintaining and continuing the challenges which women are facing in tourism. Hence it is essential to discuss the challenges those are women entrepreneurs facing., (Iwu and Nxopo, 2015; Nsengimana, 2017). In addition, women-owned businesses have many market restrictions, and limited opportunities are available for women entrepreneurs (Bates, 2002). Further, many studies related to tourism

development consider gender as a variable; however, the significance of gender causes some debates (UNWTO and UN Women, 2011).

Income disparity had become one of the main aspects of research on women and tourism (Guimaraes and Silva, 2016; Casado-Díaz and Simon, 2016; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). According to them, the gender wage gap is more comprehensive in tourism because women run a comparatively smaller business and their household responsibilities pose gender-based restrictions that limit their business tasks (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Morrison and Teixeira, 2004). Women have made remarkable steps towards attaining equality in tourism. Particularly women managers in food serving and service providing vocations struggle to achieve equality.

Tourism researchers have studied gender roles for several decades (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Due to their low capital and lack of support from governmental or connected institutions, the majority of traditional women entrepreneurs have less facilities. These difficulties and issues make their business undesirable to tourists. As a result, these business owners make less money. This is largely acknowledged by conventional women business owners (Misango and Ongiti, 2013).However, despite the challenges and constraints faced by women entrepreneurs, recent studies have revealed an increasing trend in women's participation in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism industry compared to men (Ratten, 2018; Tajeddini et al., 2017). This growing participation highlights the resilience and determination of women in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. However, women entrepreneurs often face less recognition and their impact on the country's economy is often under-recognized due to gender implications and traditional sex segregation. This lack of recognition further compounds the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector (Hewapathirana, 2011; Meunier et al., 2017).

When it comes to starting up a business, both men and women entrepreneurs encounter constraints related to capital, labour, and resources. This cross-cultural analysis reveals that women in Uganda, for example, tend to be less successful than their male counterparts in the entrepreneurial field (Katongole et al., 2013). Family and cultural restrictions also pose significant barriers for women entrepreneurs, particularly in male-dominated societies (Poggesi et al., 2016; Welsh et al., 2014). These constraints and barriers can impede the growth and development of women-owned businesses, limiting their entrepreneurial opportunities and potential.

In conclusion, while there is a positive trend in women's participation in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism industry, women entrepreneurs still face numerous challenges and constraints. The under-recognition of their contributions and the gender implications in society hinder their progress and limit their economic impact. Capital, labour, and resource constraints, along with family and cultural restrictions, further compound the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. To support and empower women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, it is crucial to address these barriers, provide targeted support, and foster an inclusive and enabling environment that recognizes and values their

contributions. By doing so, women entrepreneurs can fully unleash their potential, contribute to economic growth, and promote gender equality in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts mixed methodologies, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study location was Hikkaduwa urban council (HUC) in the southern province of Sri Lanka, which is identified as one of the main tourist destinations in Sri Lanka. The first nearly six months of the period were used to collect data in May-November 2015 by the author in the Sinhala language. Small scale enterprises registered in HUC are spread across 28 sectors, including seven in the tourism industry. Of these seven sectors, accommodation, food and beverage (F&B), and tourism-affiliated retail services were selected for the study as they had the largest number of enterprises owned by women. The main techniques used were simple observation, key informant interviews (25) semi-structured questionnaire surveys (390) (195 women and men entrepreneurs each), and in-depth narrative interviews (24). Considering the existence of a substantial number of establishments, the existence of a substantial number of engagements by both men and women and having observed the trend of expansion of business establishments during the 2009 - 2014 period, the sample was drawn. The list of entrepreneurs was collected from the government office, and respondents were contacted. All the women entrepreneurs in these three sectors (accommodation, F&B and tourism-affiliated retail services) were surveyed. This amounted to 195 women respondents. For comparison purposes, an equal number of male entrepreneurs were selected from the three sectors. Since there are more men entrepreneurs, 195 men were selected at random from the list of entrepreneurs available at the HUC. Semi-structured interview results were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Simultaneously, twenty-four in-depth interviews (12 women, 12 men) were conducted with four male and four female entrepreneurs from each of the three sectors. Respondents were selected among the semi-structured survey respondents on the basis of the rapport established between the informants and interviewer, and the reliability of the information shared in the questionnaire survey. Respondents who were willing to share detailed business data and whose survey data revealed interesting nuances to the case were purposefully selected for in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were transcribed, translated into English, and coded for analysis.

Factors affecting gender differences in business performance in income and expansion among sub-sectors compared with before and after engagement of SSE narrated in their accounts have been analysed to understand trends, patterns, classifications, and connections in each story were analysed and interpreted. Quantitative data is analysed using SPSS and Minitab statistical packages, deriving descriptive analysis, percentages, frequencies, cross-tabulations, and chi-square tests were done.

Non- participant observation, key informant interviews, and in – depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Qualitative data have been analysed, categorised similar themes under relevant categories as per the context of narratives. The researcher sought trends, patterns, classifications, and connections to encounter the study objectives. By triangulating with various methods, the researcher was able to investigate from various angles and perspectives. All findings were organised in the data presentation together with the study goals and theoretical ramifications, as well as any relevant interpretations, descriptions, quotes, comments, and arguments. All names mentioned in the narratives are synonyms.

Results and Discussions

Factors Affecting Gender Differences in Business Performance in Income and Expansion among Sub-sectors

This study aims to analyse the factors affecting gender differences in business performance in income and expansion among sub-sectors. Some of the influencing factors include lack of financial access, poor financial literacy, unfavourable social norms and attitudes toward starting your own business, limited mobility, no/less access to networks or communication, unequal distribution of household and family responsibilities, and poor maternity protection (Vossenberg, 2013; Hewapathirana, 2011; Madurawala et al., 2016). Women entrepreneurs also encounter a lower level of market access as a significant challenge. Some researchers (Singh et al., 2001; Carter, 2000; Roomi et al., 2009) argue that men are better at business. Women entrepreneurs remain at the low-income level in the small and medium enterprises sub-sector because of the socio-cultural restrictions on women. These include the demands of domestic duties, restricted nighttime movement, worry about reputation, and men's superior knowledge and abilities.

Negative Norms towards Entrepreneurship

This section elaborates on the different business performances by sub-sectors and each sub-sector experiences the negative norm as a barrier differently. Considering the competition faced by women entrepreneurs in different sub-sectors, over 71.1% of women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector face very high competition as they revealed (Table 1).

Table 1: Competition Faced at the Beginning of Business by Gender and Sub-Sector

The Competition of Small – Scale Entrepreneurs' Faced in Continuing this Kind of Business in 2009	**Men**						**Women**					
	Type of Small-Scale Enterprise						**Type of Small-Scale Enterprise**					
	Accommodation		**Food and Beverage Services**		**Tourism-affiliated Retail Services**		**Accommodation**		**Food and Beverage Services**		**Tourism-affiliated Retail Services**	
Very High	01	2.6%	00	0.0%	02	1.5%	02	5.3%	00	0.0%	05	3.7%
High	27	71.1%	13	59.1%	33	24.4%	25	65.8%	09	40.9%	51	37.8%
Moderate	10	26.3%	08	36.4%	95	70.4%	10	26.3%	11	50.0%	75	55.6%
Low	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	05	3.7%	01	2.6%	00	0.0%	02	1.5%
Very Low	00	0.0%	01	4.5%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	02	9.1%	02	1.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

As shown in Table 1, more women in the accommodation sector than in other sectors felt that they faced severe competition. Having reached higher income levels than other women, women entrepreneurs from the accommodation sub-sector have successfully overcome such norms as 'women cannot work in competitive environments under challenging conditions.' Sri Lankan women's gender identity had been primarily concerned with being a "dutiful wife and a caring mother" (Surangi, 2018). Hence, this traditional motherhood role centred on child-rearing and caring, and average domestic tasks loaded on women's hands are the leading constraints that obstruct women entrepreneurs in their journey toward business success.

Support from husbands makes women feel less stressed and contributes to a better income. According to Table 2, 75.9% of women's spouses in the accommodation sub-sector are involved in the business. This has led women entrepreneurs from the accommodation sub-sector to manage their household work without complexities.

Women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sector try to balance their business and daily household responsibilities. In analysing the stories, most women respondents in the present investigation affirmed their satisfaction with their businesses, even though they run the business in a small space. There were few opportunities to learn about market potential or their own potential to develop as entrepreneurs. Mrs. Kusuma[1] explained,

> I chose to start this business two years ago. I am satisfied with it. With a household to manage as well, I cannot have a large business. To earn more, I have to work more. If I become too competitive, I might not be able to fulfil my duties as a mother. I do everything for my family and my children who have lost their father. So, running a business that matches my level is better for me. We women cannot work as men in this field. This is more than enough. (Field Data, In-depth Interview, Women Small-scale Entrepreneur, Tourism-affiliated Retails Services Sub-Sector, October 2015).

Ms. Ramya,[2] an unmarried woman, recalled her memories of the times she started her business. Social norms, which subordinate and marginalised women, restricting them to the prescribed domestic roles, have a massive impact on women's businesses (Kodagoda, 2012) and the support available for women entrepreneurs.

> I was afraid of investing a big amount of money in expanding my business. Also, my parents said, how can you, as an unmarried girl, expand this shop by getting a big loan? Though I have the willingness to expand, finally, I decided not to do so (In-depth Interview, Field Data, Food and Beverages Sub-Sector, 2015).

The individual stories bring different degrees of such competitions. This is the story of an unmarried girl in the accommodation sector. She indirectly revealed the nature of the societal attitude toward starting a business by an unmarried young woman. Power dynamics that prevail in the patriarchal culture deteriorate women to be dependent on the men of the family. Less confidence in risk-taking in expansion causes these women to maintain their businesses on a small scale. The reason could be that women commonly receive a lower recognition as entrepreneurs, viewing that they have fewer capacities. Not being risk-takers can be identified as a significant business growth barrier for women (Hewapathirana, 2011). Unlike the other two sectors, women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector revealed they had to face high competition at the time of business stats.

Ms. Ramya's story reveals that these societal perceptions, influenced by family members, cause women to be less capable. The negative opinions from outsiders (family members, friends, rules and regulations of financial institutions) influence women's perceptions of taking risks. As the above story highlighted, "… because you are an unmarried girl" proves that society expects certain limitations from a woman in functioning. Labelled as the risk or vulnerable group in society, women feel uncertain about expanding their business without encouragement from society.

Being a woman hinders women's engagement and the development of their representation in tourism. Chinomona and Maziriri (2015) mention that "Entrepreneurship has been a men-dominated phenomenon, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today are most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs" (Chinomona and Maziriri, 2015: 835). However, the picture in Sri Lankan is still the same according to the above mentioned witnesses.

Still and Timms (2000) analysed women who own small businesses. They stated that economic and cultural factors affect income differences among men and women. The presence of the men is a significant factor in handling liquor, with or without a licence, in running a tourism business.

Married women with lower business targets tend to perceive that it is better to run their businesses on a smaller scale. They admit that they have fewer capacities with the burden of household duties (Surangi, 2018). This is also stated in the OECD report 2012, delineating that women-owned enterprises are smaller and earn 30–40% less profits than men-owned enterprises of comparable size (OECD, 2012). This has led women to have lower performance than men. Selling liquor is essential to increase sales, mainly in the accommodation and food beverages sub-sectors.

Most tourists visiting Sri Lanka are from Western countries, and their cultures are embedded with liquor consumption.Many small-scale women entrepreneurs in the

accommodation sector have mentioned the difficulties of getting a liquor licence at a higher tax rate. However, in most Asian cultures (particularly in Sri Lanka), liquor consumption or any liquor-related business by women is not socially approved. Although tourist arrivals have created much demand for accommodation and food and beverages sub-sectors, selling liquor by women business owners is considered culturally unacceptable. Compared to the food and beverage sub-sector, women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sector face less pressure to offer liquor since accommodation-related businesses have other income and do not need to depend on income from illegal liquor sales. Having a bar licence in the local context is an expensive process.

As an alternative, the small-scale business holders in the accommodation sector had chosen to sell the liquor illegally as they can manage it during the seasons when tourist arrivals are high without obtaining an annual legal licence at a much higher price. This alternative had never worked in women-headed businesses since women are afraid of the police or excise officers, unlike men. Caught by the police for selling illegal liquor is a kind of culturally labelling act for a woman rather than for a man. Therefore, to be in the legal process, women should seek help from other men. Mrs. Kumuduni[3] is a woman who accepted that challenge. As she explained,

> I am a woman and running a business hiring eight men. What could I do in my business without a liquor licence? I tried to sell 'arrack,' but I was caught by the police. I was at the police station and went to the courts too. After that bitter incident, I was rejected by the neighbourhood. I was labelled as a 'bad woman,' giving meaning to me as a sex worker. My children do not like me anymore. They complained that they could not go to school because other children teased them due to my story of being in the police station. The same thing happened to Ayya[4] in the next stall. Nobody accused him as a sex worker who has been to jail and courts for the matter of selling liquor without a licence. But, in my case, being a woman, I should maintain the standards and dignity and obey the rules and regulations! (In-depth Interview, Field Data, Small-scale Women Entrepreneur Accommodation Sub-Sector in Hikkaduwa, 2015).

The above story points out the double standards set out by society for women. The comparing view of the women-headed small-scale entrepreneur in Hikkaduwa cites that she has been labelled and discriminated against by society and stereotyped as a 'bad woman' simply because she was selling liquor illegally. When a man in her neighbourhood did the same, society did not view him as a 'bad man.' This woman further stated that she should maintain societal standards and dignity by obeying the rules and regulations that govern by society. This shows that women's roles in different sub-sectors are stereotyped by the rigid and dominating patriarchal hegemonic values.

The Negative Attitudes Towards Entrepreneurship

This section elaborates on why each sub-sector differently experiences negative attitudes as barriers to business performance. The following narrative of the women-headed small-scale enterprise in the food and beverages sub-sector points out difficulties in running a business. Studies have proved that women in Sri Lanka continue to face several impediments when owning a business. In such cases, cultural attitudes often work unfavourably (Surangi, 2018).

Mrs. Kanthi,[5] a widow, explained the challenges she faced and how she had overcome them:

> "I am a widow. My husband started this business. When he died, I had no means to live on. So, I decided to continue the business. It was very difficult for me to run the business. I had the challenge of finding skilful labourers and keeping them for a long time in the business. Some labourers tried to manipulate me, taking authority over me. They thought, I am just a woman widow and can be controlled easily. They wanted me to run the business as they wished. When I went against their decisions, they quit the job and put me in trouble. My husband never had such issues when he was the manager. The staff were so nice to him and got things done as he desired. However, I gradually learned the ways to manage the staff. Now I have become a firm but flexible manager for seven workers. The business is profitable, and it benefited the labourers as well due to an increase of their salary and improved wellbeing. But I have to tell you this; it is not easy for women to run a business" (In-depth Interview, Field Data, Small-scale Women Entrepreneur, Tourism affiliated Retail Services Sub-Sector, 2015).

The study found that 11.9% of women in the tourism-affiliated retail services are unmarried, and 3.7% are widowed. Societal attitudes obstruct women from running the business, and how women who have patience in handling business tasks effectively could cope with such challenges. Tourism-affiliated retail services sub-sector women reported a higher widowed rate than other sectors. It also revealed that tourism-affiliated retail services women earn less comparatively. In Sri Lanka, "… in the temporary or permanent absence of men, mothers have to take responsibilities and roles of being the economic provider and protector, and also have to continue the roles of nurturing and caregiving" (Surangi, 2018: 7). Women who are suffering from economic difficulties always have adequate courage to find their own ways to get rid of such challenges by taking it as the primary motive for prospecting a better life for their children. Hence women in this sector reported a higher widowed rate and faced greater economic difficulties than married women in other sectors.

The women cannot take risks by selling liquor with a licence due to the gender-constructed roles in social institutions.Social norms for subordinate

women heavily impact women's businesses and the support systems available to women entrepreneurs. Maintaining a guesthouse by a woman has not been accepted by society, and such societal values have constrained women from actively engaging in their business purpose. In a way, women must cope with prevailing negative social and cultural attitudes and gender discrimination (Terrell and Troilo, 2010; Chinomona and Maziriri, 2015). These general norms and cultural practices in the country obstruct women's success as entrepreneurs (Wellalage and Locke, 2013).

The four capital types, i.e., financial, social, cultural capital, and human and symbolic capital, as stated by Pierre Bourdieu, are found in the above narratives of small-scale men entrepreneurs in the study (Bourdieu, 2013). Women have been influenced by less access to financial, cultural, and social capital than men, making it difficult for them to run their businesses.

Unequal Share of Family and Household Responsibilities

This section elaborates on why men and women in each sub-sector experience an unequal share of family and household responsibilities as the main barrier to business performance. When 21.6% of men entrepreneurs in the food and beverages sub-sector are expanding their business in space, only 5.4% of women entrepreneurs do the same. Unlike men, women have strong family bonds, and women entrepreneurs in this sub-sector require much commitment to the business. Buying raw foods from the market, food preparation, and cleaning and handling business are major tasks. When women entrepreneurs in the food and beverages sub-sector receive a double burden from the family, they find it harder to manage their business. Hence, naturally, they choose to run their business in a small scale. Men entrepreneurs in all three sub-sectors tend to expand their businesses while only a few women entrepreneurs do.

When analysing the reasons why women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sector earn less than men in the same sector, the men entrepreneurs believe that women in their own industry have limitations in handling the business. Men entrepreneurs do believe that balancing both household and business tasks for women is quite a difficult task. Mr. Lalith[6] revealed his view on this. According to his quote, even male entrepreneurs believe that women find it difficult to achieve business development since balancing both family and business tasks remains a challenge for them.

> As we think it is easy for women to manage their home activities but maintaining both family and business is not an easy task for them. Also, they should give priority to household tasks because they have to pay more attention to children (In-depth Interview, Field Data, Men-headed Small-scale Entrepreneur, Accommodation Sub-Sector, 2015).

Unequal sharing of family responsibilities also limits women's innovation by limiting their networking. Mrs. Kanthi[7]explained her story by saying how many responsibilities she handles on her family alone while running the business. At the same time, family responsibilities obstruct women from losing business opportunities. Because of family commitment, women had to refrain from running a profitable business. The responsibilities of a dutiful wife made a woman more dependent on family members. Balancing daily activities and achieving entrepreneurial targets had created stress among women.

> I have two children, and my husband is disabled. Children are still schooling. I live with my parents. They are also in bad health condition. Therefore, I have to stay at home to care for them and my husband too. That is why I maintained this stall at home-based. Most of the time, I miss opportunities to participate in training because if I go there, no one will take care of them. I have to support my children's homework. In addition, I have to escort my parents to the clinic. Cooking, washing, cleaning, and almost everything I have to do by myself. Therefore, I have no chance to spend more time on my business. (In-depth Interview, Field Data, Women Entrepreneur Small-scale Retail Entrepreneur, Tourism-affiliated Retail Services Sub-Sector, 2015).

The household responsibilities and their impact on business management are common to women in all three sectors. With all the maternal responsibilities, women are motivated to balance their family and work-life, believing that giving comfort to the family is also a maternal responsibility.

The married women in each sector, women without children have shown an increase in sales in expansion than those who have children. 20.8% of accommodation sector women who do not have children increase their sales while only 7.7 % of women with one child in the same sector increase their sales. According to Pearson Chi-Square, a significant relationship occurs among the expansion of 2014 and the number of children among the women in different sub-sectors, considering that the P-value (0.010) was less than the 0.05 significance level. Also, male respondents' number of children was less than 0.05 significance level, considering the P-value (0.000). A statistically significant relationship was found ($c2$ (1) = 31.79, p <0 .000) when the Chi-square test of independence was calculated between the expansion of 2014 and the number of children.

Also, considering the P-value (0.000), the number of children in women respondents' was less than the 0.05 significance level. A statistically significant relationship was revealed ($c2$ (1) = 17.92, p <0 .000) when the Chi-square test of independence was calculated between the expansion of 2014 and the number of children.

Research on cross-cultural environments also demonstrates that a woman's primary societal function is that of a wife and mother, and that such familial and

cultural constraints limit their ability to pursue their own business interests (Welsh et al., 2014). Owing to the purpose of devotion to family and housework, women prefer professions or roles that need less educational qualifications and smaller human capital investment. This has been identified as a self-imposed barrier to women's achievements in entrepreneurial success (Segovia-Perez et al., 2019).

Women entrepreneurs face various problems linked with entrepreneurship. These problems intensify since they have to play a dual role as wage earners and homemakers (Chinomona and Maziriri, 2015). Women also play a triple role beyond the dual role in society. The unpaid but necessary responsibilities of daily family life, like child care and housework, nonetheless fall on their shoulders.

The study examines the occupation of respondents' spouses to understand the role of gender and its relation to business performance. A significant association exists between men and women respondents with the type of business they are engaged in terms of spouses' employment status (Table 2). There are fewer women entrepreneurs whose husbands are helping them in their businesses. Employment status of spouses and combined variables of the sub-sector with gender Chi-square test was performed, and it had generated the p-value of 0.000. P-values less than 0.05 alpha levels, confirm ample evidence of a significant relationship between the spouse's occupation and gender. A statistically significant relationship was found when the Chi-square test of independence was calculated between the employment status of the spouse and the combined variable of the sub-sector with gender [(c2 (1) = 37.203, p <0 .000)].

Table 2: Employment Status of Spouse

Spouse Employment Status	**Accommodation**		**Food and Beverages Services**		**Tourism-affiliated Retail Services**	
Gender	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Spouse Employed	17	06	06	10	57	69
	46.0%	20.7%	28.6%	52.6%	51.0%	61.0%
Spouse Unemployed	01	01	04	00	02	02
	2.7%	3.4%	19.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.8%
Spouse involved in Businesses	19	22	11	09	53	42
	51.3%	75.9%	52.4%	47.4%	47.2%	37.2%
Total	370	29	21	19	112	113
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

For both women's and men's enterprises in the main three sub-sectors, annual revenue is higher when both parties are involved in the business (Table 3 and Table 4). This makes sense because the spouse may perform a crucial role as an unpaid family employee for the company. The difference is more in men's enterprises in the accommodation sector. The accommodation sector requires more workers and gains the maximum income among the three sectors. Here, men who had successfully organised their wives' labour had an advantage over their competitors.

On the other hand, in the accommodation sector, approximately half of the female company owners in the highest salary group operate their companies without the assistance of their husbands. This signifies the strong business leadership of the business women entrepreneurs in accommodation and the difficulties they face in mobilising spouses for their business. It can be inferred from the Chi-square test in Table 3 and Table 4 that the relationship exists between the 2014 revenue and the combined variables of the sub-sector with spouse involvement because the P-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 significance level.

Table 3: Revenue in 2014 by Spouse Involvement to the Business-Men Entrepreneurs

Revenue 2014 in Million	**Accommodation**				**Food and Beverage Services**				**Tourism-affiliated Retail Services**				Total	
	With Spouse		**Without Spouse**		**With Spouse**		**Without Spouse**		**With Spouse**		**Without Spouse**			
0.1-3.0 Mn	06	27.2%	12	75.0 %	07	53.8 %	08	88.9 %	29	44.6 %	41	58.6 %	103	52.8 %
3.1-6.0 Mn	08	36.4%	03	18.8 %	06	46.2 %	01	11.1 %	34	52.3 %	27	38.6 %	79	40.5 %
6.1 and above	08	36.4%	01	6.2 %	00	0.0 %	00	0.0%	02	3.1%	02	2.8 %	13	6.7 %
Total	22	100%	16	100 %	13	100 %	09	100%	65	100 %	70	100 %	195	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 4: Revenue in 2014 by Spouse Involvement to the Business - Women entrepreneurs

Revenue 2014 in Million	**Accommodation**				**Food and Beverage Services**				**Tourism-affiliated Retail Services**				Total	
	With Spouse		**Without Spouse**		**With Spouse**		**Without Spouse**		**With Spouse**		**Without Spouse**			
0.1-3.0 Mn	05	28.0%	04	20.0%	05	55.6%	05	38.4%	45	73.8%	44	59.50%	108	55.4%
3.1-6.0 Mn	08	44.0%	10	50.0%	04	44.4%	04	30.8%	16	26.2%	29	39.20%	71	36.4%
6.1 and above	05	28.0%	06	30.0%	00	0.0%	04	30.8%	00	0.0%	01	13.0%	16	8.2%
Total	18	100%	20	100%	09	100%	13	100%	61	100%	74	100%	195	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Spouses' occupation was another constraint in which women entrepreneurs faced greater difficulties in making income. The Pearson Chi-Square denotes a significant relationship between 2014 revenue and combined variables of the sub-sector with spouse involvement of women entrepreneurs by considering the P-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 significance level. A statistically significant relationship was found when the Chi-square test of independence was calculated between 2014 revenue and combined variables of the sub-sector with spouse involvement of women entrepreneurs [(c2 (1) = 53.145, p <0 .000)].

While running the business, women entrepreneurs have to attend to their family responsibilities. The percentages of women entrepreneurs' spouse involvement in the business remain low in each sub-sector except for women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector.

Women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector reported receiving the highest support from their spouses(75.9%). Analysing the reasons behind the higher rate of spouse involvement in women entrepreneurs' businesses in the accommodation sub-sector revealed that managing guest houses by women entrepreneurs alone is reported as a difficult task.

The Problem of Land Ownership

In the Sri Lankan legal context, men and women are lawfully permitted to legally own, transfer, inherit, and dispose of land or any other property. However, Sri Lanka's Land Development Ordinance and some other personal laws (Sri Lanka's laws such as the Kandyan law, Thesawalamai Law, and Muslim Law), which are currently operating in the country, have also been accused of gender bias in land ownership. For example, a woman married under the personal law of Thesawalamai[8] will not be able to use or request loans from the local banks without her husband's consent or the consent of a relative of his family (Jayawardene and Gunerathne, 2010). If her husband died, she has to get consent from another man in the family.

The Land Development Ordinance 1935, which is relevant to British regulations, made biased on women's land ownership by giving preference to men's owners (traditionally a man) upon intestate. The bias has been reinforced via the custom/practice accompanied by authorities' officials of solely accepting the man as the head of the household, even when the man got disabled, and the woman would be the household breadwinner.

The women prefer to keep their businesses small. However, when compared with women from the other two sub-sectors, women in accommodation sub-sectors, out of 38 women-owned enterprises, 14 expanded their business in space in the three different sub-sectors, a significant relationship had been found between

business expansion and gender (Table 5). As discussed above, women in the accommodation sub-sector tend to receive a better income than men in the same sub-sector. Since the accommodation sub-sector requires a higher capital investment, women entrepreneurs with their own property tend to earn more than women entrepreneurs in other sectors as they have no expenses for hiring buildings or lands.

Chi-square test results also found a significant relationship between the owner of the business location among men and women entrepreneurs in all three sub-sectors. As space is a critical factor for the accommodation sub-sector, at the beginning of a business, men have shown higher expansion in space (30) than women (14) in the accommodation sub-sector. Generally, in the accommodation sub-sector, both men and women entrepreneurs required larger capital for a start up than the other two sub-sectors. However, most women do not own their land in the accommodation sub-sector (Table 6), as their husbands own them. Therefore, women do not expand their businesses as they cannot expand their businesses on rented land. When entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs' parents own the land, there is a trend for women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses in space. This pattern is mainly evident among women entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector. Entrepreneurs need their own property for business expansion.

Table 5: Expansion vs. Owner of the Business Location at the Beginning by Sub-Sector

				Men						Women					
				Type of Sub-Sector						Type of Sub-Sector					
				Accommodation		Food and Beverage Services		Tourism-affiliated Retail Services		Accommodation		Food and Beverage Services		Tourism-affiliated Retail Service	
Who was the owner of the business location at the beginning	Entrepreneur	Expansion 2014	Space	20	80.0%	07	43.0%	01	1.50%	07	43.8%	00	0.0%	01	1.6%
			Branches	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%
			Number of sales	00	0.0%	07	43.8%	29	43.9%	03	18.8%	05	83.3%	29	46.8%
			Space and Branches	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%
			Branches and Number of sales	05	20.0%	02	12.5%	11	16.7%	05	31.3%	00	0.0%	10	16.1%
			Space and Number of sales	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	25	37.9%	01	6.3%	01	16.7%	22	35.5%
			Space, branches, and number of sales	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%
	Entrepreneur's parents	Expansion 2014	Space	09	75.0%	01	100%	00	0.0%	05	41.7%	01	9.1%	00	0.0%
			Branches	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%
			Number of sales	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	06	37.5%	05	41.7%	08	72.7%	12	80.0%
			Space and Branches	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%

			Branches and Number of sales	03	25.0%	00	0.0%	02	12.5%	01	8.3%	00	0.0%	01	6.7%
			Space and Number of sales	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	08	50.0%	00	0.0%	02	18.2%	02	13.3%
			Space, branches, and number of sales	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	01	8.3%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Women entrepreneurs must rely on rented land or land that belongs to their husbands. Land is a critical asset, and its access is the greatest challenge for women entrepreneurs in a masculine society. Pearson's Chi-square test is employed to find the relationship between gender and land ownership. This identifies the categorical explanatory variables by combining categories to exclude cells below the expected frequency of 5. The results identify a significant relationship between gender and land ownership. More than 65% (65.8%) of men entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector have their own land, while the number of women entrepreneurs accounted for less than that (42.1%). The pattern is the same in the food and beverages sub-sector, i.e., 72.7% and 27.3%. Social attitudes toward land inheritance in Sri Lanka give privileges for men to receive land ownership generationally.

Table 6: Owner of the Business Location at the Beginning by Sub-Sector

Who was the owner of the business location at the beginning	Type of Sub-Sector					
	Accommodation		Food and Beverage Services		Tourism-affiliated Retail Services	
	Sex		Sex		Sex	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Entrepreneur	25 65.8%	16 42.1%	16 72.6%	06 27.3%	66 48.8%	62 46%
Entrepreneur's spouse	01 2.6%	09 23.7%	01 4.6%	03 13.6%	07 5.2%	20 14.8%
Entrepreneur's parents/ Entrepreneur's spouse's parents	12 31.6%	12 31.6%	01 4.6%	11 50.0%	17 12.6%	16 11.8%
Other	00 0.0%	01 2.6%	04 18.2%	02 9.1%	45 33.4%	37 27.4%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Otherwise, they have to get rented land for business purposes. Hiring a land/building for accommodation purposes is more expensive for accommodation entrepreneurs than the other two sub-sectors because the accommodation sub-sector requires relatively larger land than the other two sectors. A small space is sufficient for the retail sub-sector to run their business at a minimum level.

Table 6 shows that men are the primary group who has ownership of the business location. The statistical data indicate that 54.87% of male entrepreneurs in the three sub-sectors own the business location, while only 43% of women entrepreneurs own their business location. According to Pearson Chi-Square, there is a significant relationship between business location ownership and

combined variables of sub-sector gender, when considering the P-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 significance level. When the Chi-square test of independence is calculated between business location ownership and combined variables of the sub-sector with gender, a statistically significant relationship was found [(c2 (1) = 76.219, p <0 .000)]. There are specific reasons for this fact. Men are advantaged in finding suitable land for the startup business (e.g., getting bank loans), which ultimately links to the business performance. Following empirical findings of a women entrepreneur reveals the nature of men's dominant society widespread in Sri Lanka.

Education and Training

Insufficient education and training posed constraints on women entrepreneurs' business performance (Chinomona and Maziriri, 2015). Girls' education is one of the most effective instruments for empowering women. It could be accomplished by giving the girls the information, abilities, and self-assurance they needed to look for economic opportunities. Jalbert's (2000) argument claims that most women entrepreneurs have no training or education; due to this, it is difficult for women to start and manage businesses.

The situation is common for Eurasian countries as they claim gender differences exist largely in the labour market. The reason is that women must tolerate the burden of unpaid and unavoidable tasks such as childcare and household work in their daily domestic lives (Jalbert, 2000).

The present study reveals that the majority of women respondents (43.1%) have studied up to A/L[9], while most men respondents (45.1%) have studied up to O/L[10]. According to the data, only 0.5% of male respondents and 1.5% of women respondents have received their higher education. Comparatively, women in the sample had received higher educational attainments than men. Therefore, no significant differences were found in the education level between men and women entrepreneurs in the sample.[11] However, as discussed in the latter part of this chapter, women entrepreneurs had been shown fewer chances of getting proper training related to the tourism field.

Although there are no considerable differences in educational attainments of men and women entrepreneurs in different sub-sectors[12], both genders in the study area had less access for training. Those women entrepreneurs in the tourism-affiliated retail service sub-sectors reported having the highest number of training at 26.6%, while men in the food and beverage sub-sector marked the highest number among male entrepreneurs among all sectors. Lack of training was a leading issue for women entrepreneurs in the Hikkaduwa sample area, where they faced higher competition levels.

As shown in Table 7, training gives positive outcomes, but they do not make a direct form of impact on gaining higher income. Training does not necessarily bring a significant and direct impact to improve revenue as it provides a selective form of impact on entrepreneurs' lives.

Table 7: Training or Examination Related to Business/Tourism by Annual Revenue in 2014

			Annual revenue 2014 (in Mn)				
			0.10 - 3.00	3.10 -6.00	6.10 - 8.00	8.10 -10.00	10.10 - 20.00
Men	**Training or examination related to business/tourism**	**Yes**	18.4%	5.1%	15.4%		
		No	81.6%	94.9%	84.6%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Women	**Training or examination related to business/tourism**	**Yes**	14.8%	7.0%	7.7%		
		No	85.2%	93.0%	92.3%		
	Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Training influences business formation mainly by enhancing the necessary skills of entrepreneurs. For example, proper training related to courses such as gem science, sewing, and Batik had improved the required industrial skills. However, reaching higher income levels highly relies on other reasons, such as how far the entrepreneurs can cope with other barriers and new innovative ideas of entrepreneurs could be better competed with other businesses. In addition, most training programs were random, and usually, they did not continue, as revealed by respondents.

Access to Finance and Financial Assistance for Accessing Loans

The shortage of capital was a critical barrier for the further development of business. Women had chosen various strategies to achieve economic security for their businesses. Within the bank strategies of entrepreneurs, women got fewer chances to deal with financial assistance. Women faced many crucial challenges in securing personal fulfilment for their bank loans where guarantors were unwilling to sign on behalf of them (Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2015: 3). Women themselves underestimate their capacity to deal with financial institutions perceiving that they are less capable than men in handling financial matters. Also, financial institutions hold a biassed attitude toward men, believing men entrepreneurs are more stable in their businesses than women entrepreneurs. They revealed that they had past experiences with women who had given up their businesses due to circumstances of their lives like childbirth and caring for family-related matters. Besides, most women entrepreneurs have difficulties knowing how best to approach banks and use bank loan schemes and other credit products (Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2015:3).

Table 8: Financial Assistance Received During Start-Up of the Business by Sub-Sectors

How do you rate the level of assistance you received when you started your business?	**Men**						**Women**					
	Type of Small-Scale Enterprise						**Type of Small-Scale Enterprise**					
	Accommodation		Food and Beverage Services		Tourism-affiliated Retail Services		Accommodation		Food and Beverage Services		Tourism-affiliated Retail Services	
Very High	01	2.6%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	00	0.0%	02	9.1%	02	1.5%
High	15	39.5%	06	27.3%	05	3.7%	14	36.8%	01	4.5%	09	6.7%
Moderate	14	36.8%	05	22.7%	36	26.7%	05	13.2%	04	18.2%	26	19.3%
Low	00	0.0%	01	4.5%	26	19.3%	02	5.3%	00	0.0%	13	9.6%
Very Low	08	21.1%	10	45.5%	68	50.4%	17	44.7%	15	68.2%	85	63.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Comparatively, entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector were found to hold a positive attitude towards the assistance received from financial institutions (Table 8). When they started their business, financial institutions mainly worried about the bail bonds of their agreements. Entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector are more stable in their initial capital than entrepreneurs in the other two sub-sectors. Therefore, the bank got the least risk in offering them loans. Therefore, as entrepreneurs in the accommodation sub-sector, they got easy financial access and thus, held a positive attitude towards the assistance they received.

Masculine values accept that women are more suitable for home-based activities than businesses. However, this has changed in the present day; women now run their own businesses. Some successful women have taken up all those challenges. The historical records of Sri Lanka mentioned that fewer women were in their own-account work, and most women workers were unpaid or underpaid (Madurawala et al., 2016; Surangi, 2018). However, women entrepreneurs experienced obstacles that limited their development. This study's empirical findings figure out the existence of gender biases in small-scale enterprises and their impacts on women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study reveals significant gender differences in factors affecting business performance in terms of income and expansion across sub-sectors. Factors such as unequal sharing of family and household responsibilities, negative norms and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, land ownership issues, limited access to education and training, and challenges in accessing finance contribution to the income disparities between men and women entrepreneurs.

The study highlights that men tend to have higher incomes and larger businesses compared to women, particularly in the higher income categories. Women-owned enterprises, especially in the food and beverages and tourism-affiliated retail services sub-sectors, tend to have smaller businesses and earn lower incomes. However, women entrepreneurs demonstrate higher sales expansion in all sub-sectors, with the accommodation sub-sector exhibiting the least gender differences in business performance.

The analysis also emphasises the impact of family responsibilities on women's business performance. Women with more dependents or small children face greater challenges in managing their businesses, as their unpaid household responsibilities limit their time, networking opportunities, and access to new ideas. Spouse involvement in the business also influences performance, with both husband and wife involvement generally associated with higher revenues.

However, in the accommodation sub-sector, many women entrepreneurs successfully manage their guesthouses without a partner's involvement.

The study suggests several recommendations to address the challenges faced by men and women in different sub-sectors of small-scale entrepreneurship in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. These recommendations include promoting gender-sensitive strategies for equality, implementing proactive training programmes, developing gender-sensitive and sector-specific action plans, reviewing industry policies, and establishing effective financial networks. By implementing these action points, the barriers and constraints faced by men and women entrepreneurs can be mitigated, fostering a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem in the tourism industry.

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[1]Mrs. Kusuma is a pseudonym for a woman entrepreneur in the tourism-affiliated retail stores sector, who has run her business for 5 years.

[2]Mrs Ramya is a pseudonym used for a women-owned small-scale entrepreneur in the accommodation sub- sector, who runs her business for 5 years.

[3]Mrs. Kumuduni is a pseudonym used for a women-owned small-scale entrepreneur in the accommodation sub-sector, who has run her business for 15 years.

[4]One of the elder brothers.

[5]Mrs. Kanthi is a pseudonym for a women-owned small-scale entrepreneur in the tourism-affiliated retail services sector who has run her business for 10 years.

[6]Mr. Lalith is a pseudonym for a man-owned small-scale entrepreneur in the accommodation sector who has run his business for 7 years.

[7]Mrs. Kanthi is a pseudonym used of a woman-owned small-scale entrepreneur in the tourism-affiliated retail services sub-sector, who runs her business for 6 years.

[8] Thesawalamai is one of the three main customary laws operating in the country. It is a personal law applicable to the Tamil people of the Jaffna province.

[9]A Sri Lankan qualification examination. G.C.E. A/L, General Certificate of Education, similar to the British Advanced.

[10]A Sri Lankan qualification examination. GCE O/L, General Certificate of Education, conducted by the Department of Examinations under the Ministry of Education.

[11]It is noted that a quarter of the (25.1%) women respondents engaged in the tourism-affiliated retail services business are A/L qualified, compared to their male counterparts (21.5%). Similarly, the majority (29.2%) of men respondents who engage in tourism-affiliated retail services business are O/L qualified, compared to their women counterparts (26.2%).

[12]According to Pearson Chi-Square, there is no significant relationship between training or examination related to business/tourism. Combined variables of sectors by sex considering the P-value (0.544) and (0.291) was more than 0.05 significance level. When the Chi-square test of independence is calculated between gender and training or examination related to business/tourism, a statistically significant relationship was not found ($c2$ (1) = 1.218, $c2$ (2) = 2.466). The Chi-square test of independence was performed between three different sectors in terms of combined categories of training or examination related to business/tourism.

Asian Journal of Politics and Society
ISSN 2989-011x

AJPS
ISSN 2989-011x
Open access biannual refereed journal
Volume 01 | Issue 01 | January-June 2023
Article 03

War Memories and Their Impact on the Ethnic Reconciliation Process in Sri Lanka

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Received: 25 February 2023 / **Revised:** 03 May 2023 / **Accepted:** 10 May 2023

Abstract

This study addressed the commemoration of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between memories and personal, interpersonal, social, and political reconciliation in post-conflict Sri Lanka. The general problem statement of this study was, "War memories have a significant impact on the process of post-war reconciliation in Sri Lanka." Discussion of contemporary essays revealed that memory remains a key factor in the conflict and a critical issue that needs to be addressed by policy makers in a post-war reconciliation process. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of war memories and their impact on the post-war ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka from the perspective of war victims. The main objective of this research is to find out whether the memories are constructed or natural. The study can be classified as both a qualitative and quantitative research design, which is referred to as a mixed research design. With this in mind, the researcher chose a rapid ethnographic perspective for this study. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were used as the method of data collection. Quantitative data was crucial for the analysis of living conditions before the war, during the war, and in the post-war period. Therefore, a questionnaire survey was used as a quantitative data collection method. Personal war memories become social memories or collective memories, and finally the collective memories were influenced by the reconciliation process in the post-war period in Sri Lanka. Memories have impacted personal, interpersonal, and societal reconciliation and ultimately political reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Ethnic Group, Memory, Memorialization, Reconciliation, War*

Introduction

This study focuses on the commemoration of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. The war in Sri Lanka, which has lasted for more than three decades, was ended in May 2009 by government forces using military means. However, the civil war has significantly disrupted the social fabric of the Sri Lankan polity (Abeyrathne, 2002).

Remembrance is not explicitly included in the four pillars of transitional justice—truth, justice, reparation, and assurance of non-repetition. As a result, the specific role that remembrance plays in a transitional justice process is often left to the individuals negotiating the boundaries of the process (Atkinson, 1971). Commemoration is an important component of truth-seeking and evidence-gathering to ensure that victims and survivors are treated fairly. In addition, commemoration of loss is one of the symbolic gestures made by victims and survivors in the process of reparations. Public memorials to commemorate man-made disasters contribute to a society's commitment to prevent similar events in the future. Consequently, commemoration is often used as the glue that holds together and preserves the traditional pillars of transitional justice (Azar, 1990).

Against this background, memory is a topic frequently studied in the social sciences. Although numerous scholars have attempted to describe memory, there is no clear-cut description. Memory in general refers to remembering the past, which involves constructing the past based on perception. Memory is not static due to the dynamic nature of perceptions, especially since collective memory is usually influenced by social interaction (Atkinson, 1986).

The purpose of this research was to explore the link between memories and their connection with post-conflict personal reconciliation, interpersonal reconciliation, societal reconciliation, and the political reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. Several unresolved issues remain, including the lack of progress towards a long-term political solution, human rights violations, thousands of widows, political prisoners the disappeared, and the allegations of crimes against humanity and war crimes (Banda et al, 2004). Under this condition, personal memory gradually becomes a community memory, and finally, it can harmfully affect the reconciliation process and finally towards a stable peace process as well. Government development projects in the eastern province are functioning and those do not indicate that the wounds of war victims have been healed. These unhealed wounds can emerge as associational and effective memories, and finally, they pave the way for unstable peace in society (Bandaralage, 2009). The government should win over the majority community by demonstrating that reconciliation is beneficial to everyone. According to the respondents, they suffer from the wounds created by the thirty-year war, and they are waiting for a legal framework to be created where justice will once again be available to everyone.

Through this approach, the pain of the wounds that were created during this war period can be brought to an end (Banda et al, 2004).

Memory is directly connected with the war. Every jarring incident that is related to the war comes and goes in our cognition. Civilians, as well as every opposing party, have suffered from the jarring memory. In a war or conflicting context, win and lose memories are the two types of memories. Both these memories have two aspects (Barnhart, 1988). The winners' memories are filled with happy feelings, while the losers' memories are simply their memories with frustrated minds. In many post-conflict societies, the responsible parties have ignored this key element, the memory. As mentioned above, memory has different dimensions, which is connected with both individual and collective memory. In the war arena, individual memory can profoundly affect the cognition of a person.

Reconciliation is mainly based on memory, and when failing to address the memory of the war victims, the reconciliation process will be declined by the responsible parties. Therefore, it is imperative to address and consider the effectiveness of remembrance for the reconciliation process in a post-conflict society. Almost all the countries that have achieved post-conflict reconciliation have done so in the memory of their victims without any differences in opinion (Baddeley, 1986).

By mixing with the culture, it has become a collective memory. In the discussion of memory, in the Sri Lankan war context, can be considered bitter memories for Tamil civilians who live in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country. People can have individual memories of being members of the LTTE group or Tamil community (Barnhart, 1986). When time passes, this personal memory can become a collective memory. It shapes the way of seeing the world by one group. According to this idea, it could affect the reconciliation process of the post-war society. When the war ended, the Sri Lankan government started the reconciliation process with the support of various parties, which was followed by transitional justice. Many researchers have argued that the transitional justice period has failed. The failure of the transitional justice period affected the overall fruitfulness of the reconciliation process (Coomaraswamy, 2013).

The discussion of a contemporary researcher revealed that memory remained a key factor in the conflict and it is the main issue that needed to be addressed by policymakers in a post-war reconciliation process in the country. The vigour of narratives of memory is political and a powerful force for mobilising ethnic groups in the political and social functions of the country. In this context, it is pertinent to raise what role memories of war assume in ethnic reconciliation and why they matter in the ethnic reconciliation process in the post-war context (Kupchan, 2011). And how ethnic political entrepreneurs and spoilers politically manipulate memories of war victims in their power struggle under a representative democracy and how to deconstruct those politically constructed memories by conflicting parties among respective individuals of ethnic groups.

Those are the puzzles that remain unresolved in the knowledge and skills domains of the sociology of conflict (Kupchan, 2010). The broad problem statement of the present research was, the war memories have a significant impact on the process of the post-war reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Pioneer literature and Studies on War Memory

Ethnicity has worked as one of the primary motivating factors for those engaged in those ethnic conflicts and riots. Researchers have highlighted that the failure to accommodate different ethnic groups in the mainstream social, economic, and political processes has to be considered in explaining this social and political phenomenon (Gunasekara, 2006). Some researchers argue that Sri Lanka's development prospects have been reversed by several decades as a result of the three-decade civil war. According to this perception, the country has become a society that lives without various social and human rights.

It is observable that greedy politicians engage in a political game that is based on creating and strengthening sentiments of ethnicity. As a result, they harbour antagonistic feelings towards each other. Such hostile ethnic relationships are relevant to Sri Lanka and many other post-colonial societies in the Third World. This implies that ethnic conflict is a significant reality of our time. This is confirmed not simply by its ubiquitous state alone, but also by the cumulative increase in the frequency and intensity of its occurrence. According to an estimate, some forty-eight countries are experiencing ethnic-nationalist conflicts of one kind or the other (Tambiah, 1986).

After World War II, Asia and Africa had become severely divided societies, except for some other countries in the Caribbean region. These countries, after World War II, gained political independence. As a result, ethnic groups in conflict do not stand in a hierarchical relationship with one another. Instead, they are parallel groups divided by vertical cleavage. This excludes, for example, relations between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, where an ethnic conflict has revolved around systems of ethnic stratification. Still, it includes links among such groups as House, Ibo, and Yoruba in Nigeria; Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka; Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Malaysia (Horowitz, 2000).

According to ethnic riot records, there was a period of more than four decades after 1915 when there were no ethnic riots. However, it can be seen that, after 1977, mistrust grew at a breakneck pace, resulting in frequent riots (Gunasinghe, 1984).

Thus, in the post-colonial Sri Lanka state, the rights of its civilians have been challenged. It clearly shows social, economic, and political structures entangled

with severe root causes and the inability of the Sri Lankan state to make sure that there is a mechanism to ensure dignity, identity, and equality of people after its independence in 1948. Today, Sri Lankan society is delighted in having decisively defeated the LTTE armed conflict militarily. In general discourse, politicians, policymakers, and journalists identify simple reasons. From their perspective, the driving forces behind the violent conflict are aroused by ancient hatred of ethnic and religious communities (Gunasekara, 2004).

The common notion built up among the Sri Lankans after the armed conflict is that peace has been established. Especially, having eradicated the top-level leaders and carders of the LTTE, most politicians, policymakers, and even more academics tend to have the same opinions. According to Johan Galtung (2001), there are two types of peace. Namely, positive peace and negative peace. Achieving peace through eradicating violence is part of the ongoing conflict, which is called "negative peace." However, when focusing attention on violent conflict in Sri Lanka, it is clear that we see only a negative peace in such a context, in which direct violence is wiped out. Some other sources that lead to violent conflicts are less visible. In a post-war society, a solution focusing only on behaviour is not sufficient to have a positive peace. For long-lasting peace, it is necessary to change the context and attitudes that create the conflict. The purpose of the current study is to look into the issues and challenges of the post-war reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. It is also expected to result in an easing of ethnic enemy mentality, contributing to the ethnic reconciliation process in the country (Galtung, 2001). This is the specificity of the present study. A cursory glance at the catalogue of a library reveals voluminous literature on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It has become a laboratory for researchers in conflict and peace studies. The above literature can be divided into two major categories, as follows:

Studies conducted before the end of the military confrontation between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. In the discussion of the previous studies, it can be seen that three books have been written based on three narrative studies. The books are "Road to Nandikadal" by Major General Kamal Gunarathna, "Gotas War" by C.A. Chandraprema, and "Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata" by Thamilini Jeyakumaran. These three books were written after the end of the war in 2009. These three books have various perspectives regarding war and its causes, the members who joined the war, and the main characters who paved the way for the victory. Two Sinhalese writers have written two books from these three books, and a Tamil writer has written one book. Both the Sinhalese writers are former army leaders, and the Tamil one is a former LTTE leading women's rebellion. These three books have been written from Elite perspectives. An elite group can be defined as a small group of people who are very influential, who make decisions, and who are powerful (Inciardi and Rothman, 1990). These three people can be introduced as elites according to this

definition. According to that, the content of these three books has an elite perspective.

While Sinhalese elites have represented elite Sinhala, Buddhist nationalistic ideology, the Tamil elite has represented Tamil elite ideology through these books. According to Kamal Gunarathna's book Road to Nandikadal, he has written his book for poor parents who sent their sons to fight with the ruthless LTTE. "The elite people in Colombo and abroad and the human rights activists, who misled us by a wrong picture of our soldiers and the war," he said, adding that he doesn't want his memories to be buried with his retirement (Gunarathne, 2010).

Those who possess power currently control the story of the past. Those who control the past shape the future. According to Kamal Gunarathna, he has written his book for the ground level of the community and elite. The undiscussed contradiction is also present in the presentation of the Sri Lanka army. They are commonly detained for being bold and patriotic. The duration of love for the great intimates causes great arousal.

On the other hand, we can see that a sheer economic requirement drove them to recruit men and women. They were children of distant rural hamlets whose parents were impoverished. So it was financial disappointment rather than patriotism. According to this idea, he was convinced that soldiers had joined on behalf of the motherland. However, Kamal Gunarathna has forgotten the economic necessity behind it.

A writer who wrote Mahawansa has glorified the majority victory through history. In parallel to these books or literature that have been written recently, which also celebrated the majority victory. Researchers who have investigated Mahawansa established that the imaginative construct, which Nandikadal indeed is not, is a fictional construct. In Mahawansa, Dutugamunu has been glorified by the author in the conflict between Dutugamunu and Elara. The author further glorified Elara in the Mahawansa to illuminate the glory of Dutugamunu. Gunarathna also uses this method in his book. Gunarathna seems incapable of dealing with complexity, taking instead a simple way of seeing things in sharply contrasting categories: good versus evil; the brave versus fanatical; the state is always good and right; it is its opponents, evil and wrong. Gota's war has been written by the secondary party to glorify the elite class. Unlikely, many stories are authored by journalists.

Moreover, Gota's war is also no different. It is also divided into two parts. Gota's War was written by Chandraprema. He looks at the conflict through the lens of the media. In another way, it was written in the newspaper author's eye. It has a sense of Sinhala Buddhist nationalistic ideology.

The writer starts his book by examining the origins of the conflicts in the thirty years immediately after independence. Right from the beginning, Chandraperuma's flag is nailed firmly to his masthead, never moving. Never relented throughout the chapters. As a result, the Tamils are not right, they have

always been wrong, and nobody in this protracted conflict can be blamed on the Sinhalese as the state. The blame is mainly directed at the Tamil political leadership, which, as per Chandraperuma's radicalisation and nationalisation of Tamil politics, over does perfectly fair lows and acts by the state. According to his description of the riots in the 40s and 50s, another downplays the violence against Tamils and often highlights the violence against Sinhalese. He claimed he depicts the state and the police as doing everything they could to quell these programmes, which Chandreperuma believes were the weakness of the Tamil politicians in the first place (Chandraperuma, 2012).

To keep Gotabhaya central to the narrative, Chandreperuma is persuaded to keep the trench level view of the war while looking at the same events, such as the eruption of youth insurgencies in the southern part of the country. The political confrontation between the Rajapaksha and their opponents.

In the creation of conflict, the writer describes the opposition of Tamil leaders against Sinhala only. The satyagraha as a way of displaying protest was never meant to be peaceful. It was violence-free only to the extent that actual physical violence was not used by the satyagraha. In every other aspect, the Satyagraha was a way of waging war. All over, Chandraperuma consistently refuses to apportion any responsibility for the fight to the Sinhalese or the state's policies. Instead, he blames the Satyagraha themselves for the violence committed against them. He continuously blames the 1958 riot on Chelvanayagam's tarring of the Sri "ශ්" letter and the 1983 riot on Prebhakaram's killing of thirteen soldiers in an ambush. Nowhere does he claim the right to protect nor the authorities' responsibility to uphold the rule of law (Bastian, 2023).

Chandraperuma holds widely held beliefs that even he could agree with and use to colour what was a troubling history. The war was all the more interesting because the good men were not clear. The bad guys did a great thing, and none of the players knew what was going on or that it would be the end. Taking a heroic character as the theme (Gotabhaya Rajapaksha), Chandraperuma strains the historical record to the point of disbelief (Chandraperuma, 2013).

Sinhala Buddhist authors have written both these books from the perspective of majority Sinhala Buddhist nationalism. In these books, the Sinhala army is considered efficient, brave, and heroes. Similarly, the LTTE members have been described as brutal, passive, and Gota's war is a profoundly biassed book on a fascinating subject, Sri Lanka's civil war. It mixes compelling details to trigger underwater mines with absolutely subjective and generally misleading opinions. Overall, Chandraprema's story as a whole is so biassed as to be absurd at times, and it is utterly misleading unless people have other sources or memories to refer to.

The book "Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata" was written by Thamilini Jeryakumar. She was the former leader of the LTTE's female political section.

After the group got crushed by the Sri Lankan government army officers, Thamilini became a prisoner. However, she was pardoned by the government. This could be seen on the other side or the losers' side of the story, as a narration from one who is within the core of the armed struggle itself. This book has given a good depiction of the other side of the war which is not commonly heard or brought to attention. She has described under this book the excellent version of LTTE had towards civilians initially, the pain her people suffered in war, and the guilt feeling that LTTE is responsible for it. She has described her memories of the destruction of the war. Destruction, loss of lives, and loss of lives and casualties were the primary losses of the war.

The perspective through which these three books have written is about the elite of each ethnic community. Both parties' elite personals have written these books with their perspectives. Therefore, the memories regarding ground-level victims of the war or community could not be identified.

Theoretical Perspectives of Memory and Reconciliation

Table 1: Charles A. Kapchan's Four-Phase Process of Lead to Sustainable Peace

Phase	Behaviour	Qualities Evaluated	Resulting Affect
Phase I	Unilateral Accommodation	Intent	Hope
Phase II	Reciprocal Restraint	Motivation	Confidence
Phase III	Societal Integration	Character	Trust
Phase IV	Narrative Generation	Identity	Solidarity

Source: Kupchan, 2011

According to the above table 1, it could be identified that if a particular country or society wants to achieve sustainable peace after the conflict or war, it should address these four phases in the post-war situation. According to Kupchan, unilateral accommodation builds a foundation for reciprocal restraint, which later sets the stage for societal integration. The final generation of new narratives and identities forms a sense of solidarity and communal identities between the two conflicting parties (Kupchan, 2011).

Materials and Methods

The present study has been carried out on the role of war memories and ethnic reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka, which needed both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the primary data for in-depth inquiry of the war victim's memory and its impacts on ethnic reconciliation. Therefore, this study falls into both qualitative and quantitative research designs, known as mixed research design. Against this backdrop, the researcher adopted a rapid ethnographic view for this study.

The data collection methods for qualitative research are conducted in a natural setting. Thus, books and articles can only give limited information about insights into human relations and their deeper perceptions and thoughts. First-hand participation is therefore needed to understand how the social world is functioning. For this reason, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted in the data collection process.

The quantitative research approach was also helpful for this research to get information on their income level, education level, opinions on both parties who were conflicting etc. To analyse their living conditions before the war, during the war and post-war situation, quantitative data was essential. A questionnaire survey was used as a quantitative data collection method.

The selection of the study area is based on the gravity of the effects of the war in the Batticaloa District in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the study selected Karadiarunaru village in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat area in Batticaloa District for primary data collection, one of the villages mostly destroyed by the war. As a result, the primary data for this study was gathered in a village called Karadiyanaru in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division in the Batticaloa District of Sri Lanka's Eastern Province.

The study used non-probability sampling techniques. The research strategy that was used to select sample respondents for this study was two-way. First, respondents to the qualitative data collection were selected purposely to represent various segments of society. They include the elderly (men and women), village elites, war widows, ex-LTTE combatants, including gender, civil society leaders, politicians, university lecturers, and religious leaders. In the meantime, respondents to the quantitative data collection methods were selected through a simple random method.

Further, the collection of primary data from respondents of Karadiyanaru village was done using various methods. They were observations, semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews, and questionnaire methods.

Qualitative data analysis is more appropriate to analyse the war victim’s memory towards issues and challenges of post-war peace-building in the country because the data gathered from in-depth interviews is more descriptive than numerical. In

this backdrop, thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data, such as across a number of interviews, to identify repeated patterns, themes, concepts, and meanings.

However, quantitative data is also added to the analysis before any comparative analysis or any concluding arguments. Both the primary and secondary data were mainly analysed through qualitative methods, while using quantitative methods as appropriate. The research was done primarily on the war memories of victims and their impact on ethnic reconciliation.

Further, the researcher used simple statistical methods such as tables, bar charts, pie charts, etc., to present quantitative data. And it was only used to manually tribulation data and generate fundamental correlational analysis of quantitative data. However, it presented data in simple statistical methods like using charts, tables, and graphs etc.

Results and Discussion

Impact of Memory on War to Reconciliation

The war ended twelve years ago, and people are still waiting for the dawn of sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. To achieve sustainable peace, it is essential to receive reconciliation. In the process of reconciliation, memory is significant. Community-led memory initiatives that do not have state sanction can, and indeed has, taken more liberal and creative forms over the years. Memory initiatives can assist entire communities. Special community memories are significant, which directly affects the initiation of the reconciliation process.

The personal memorialisation effort, like community initiatives, take various forms to express and to remind that, if not which may have been forgotten. They hold deep meaning and personal significance in a way that no other initiative can afford the space to express. Individual memory initiatives encompass anything about arms giving, book dedication, art installation, documentation of incidents, photographs and storytelling.

Even after a settlement is reached and a peace agreement is signed, this is by no means the end of the war. The settlement has to be implemented. If it is just a war between two people, this may not be hard: those two people do what they agree to do, and past problems may be solved. In addition to the elite who negotiated the agreement, their constituents also have to agree to the settlement, or else the agreement is likely to fail. Usually, there is a long period of peacebuilding from the grassroots level, eventually culminating in apology, forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation itself is a highly complicated, contested term. Some see it as simply coexistence; others respect, and for some others, mutual forgiveness.

Trust is the keystone of reconciliation, and also trust is the glue that holds relationships, societies, and economies together. War results in the breakdown of trust, and that is why its rebuilding is a core element of peacebuilding. It is essential to overcome fragmentation and reduce animosities for the successful implementation of peacebuilding.

> Even though visible wounds are recovered, invisible wounds from the war are so devastating and harder to repair." The bombing had started. Every moment we saw a flight, we thought it was a military plane that dropped shells. We could not even come out of our houses. We had to suffer from hunger and poverty. How should we forget the past, when such incidents recall our memory (Saniya, who was 46 years old Tamil woman, 09.07. 2018).

War had torn social fabric. Mistrust roams in all relationships. In such a sense, even minor problems can increase into significant violence. Inner peace helps societies re-establish trust through the collaborative identification hurdles towards existing peace and solutions to common issues by giving secure places for discussions. Reconciliation is a process of community involving interpersonal understanding of the past suffering and the changing of hostile attitudes and behavioural patterns into creative and hopeful relationships towards lasting peace (Milton, 2014). This definition focuses on the critical building blocks of post-conflict reconciliation. It acts on changes in emotional attitudes and behaviour. The definition emphasises that reconciliation is a social process after armed struggle and works on differences within and between former riotous groups after ending war. Eventually, it shows that reconciliation is a process, not a specific situation at one particular moment in future. This definition parallels others who see reconciliation as a pragmatic process of rebuilding relations to enable coexistence and sustainable peace. According to the responses, it could be identified that it had been a friendly relationship among this area's people before the war. These people are waiting to build a relationship that they had maintained before the black July in 1983. Following statement witnesses this waiting situation. It means they are waiting to reconcile with society again.

> We want to live together as we were before the war. With the war, our relationship collapsed. We hope for justice. It does not mean everyone who engaged in the war should be arrested or punished. We want only the harmony between one another as before we had (a war victim who has lived 72 years in Karadiyanaru).

Concreted memories are a symbolic resource that can be assembled to legalise the political agenda for the present and future. A typical example of communicative memory is generational memory, which spans about 80–100 years (or three or four generations). In this case, memory is lived, which tends to be more influential in public discourse and personal behaviour. Sometimes the memories they faced in the past come to the surface, from time to time, and then those memories directly affect the reconciliation process of society.

According to social identity theory, people get much of their identity from the groups they belong to. Therefore, the significance of having a positive self-image is essential for humans and by comparison with other groups, this target is obtained by accessing one in-group more reasonably than the out-group of significant problems. Be a part of that favourable group by bearing similar beliefs and sharing the group's views.

The research wanted to get some overall responses to the war situation and their feelings during the war. According to their responses, it has been tabulated as follows: During the war, how they live and how the living conditions affect their consciousness and how they still live with those consciousness and psychological issues are explored. Psychological issues should be addressed to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation.

The Way of Memorialisation

The subject of memory is crucial in building political reconciliation and unity in a post-conflict environment. Prospects for lasting peace grow dimmer when the politics of memory are not addressed carefully. The researcher asked the respondents regarding the mode of memorialisation. Those answers were categorised into five categories. Those are constructing monuments for memories, introducing a national day for remembering, renaming buildings or streets by the names of war heroes, building proper burials and giving death certificates, and so forth. Among them, many of the respondents' answers were given as dead certificates and then established as proper burials. According to their responses, it could be inferred that they hope to provide dignity to their closest friends that lost their lives during the war. According to that, it has been indicated that they don't expect significant monuments or national day ceremonies. Only they ask for fair living conditions for their heroes and those closest to them.

Table 2: The Way of Memorialization of Civilian of this Area

The Method	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Construct Monument Memories	3	6	3	5
Introduce a National day for Remembrance	0	0	0	0
Rename Building or Street	8	16	6	10
Give Dead Certificates	29	58	13	22
Proper Burials	10	20	38	63
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018.

Table 2 represents the responses regarding the method of memorialisation of lost people during the war. According to that, it could be identified that men and women have different options and those options are varied. Male respondents have expressed their responses regarding memorialisation, as foremost, giving death certificates, building proper burials, renaming buildings or streets, and finally constructing the monument. The percentages of these responses were, 58%, 20%, 16%, and 6% respectively. Parallel women's responses were first to build proper burials, then give dead certificates, and then to rename a building or road. In percentages, they were 38%, 22%, 10%, and 5% respectively. Males wanted to memorialise war-affected deaths by giving death certificates, while females wanted to have proper burials. The notable fact here is that no one wanted to introduce a national day ceremony to memorise dead people due to the war. However, everyone wanted at least one mechanism for the memory of these people.

Respondent's Ideas about Memorialization of War victim on Reconciliation

Drawing on the Durkheimian concept of collective memory developed by Albwachs (1992), Middleton and Edwards (1990) locate both discourse and memory as external to the minds of individuals, arguing that memory is a social process of "collective remembering." War heroes or dead people should be remembered because of the war to achieve reconciliation in the post-war period. After the war, society should be reconciled, and everyone wants to normalise their lives. Memory and reconciliation are both sides of the same coin. To achieve reconciliation in society, it is essential to address the memories of war victims. When the researcher inquired regarding the importance of memorialisation to achieve reconciliation, their responses were as follows.

Table 3: Respondent's Ideas about Memorialization of War Victims for Reconciliation

Ideas	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Memorialization is important for reconciliation	40	80	51	84
Memorialization is not important for reconciliation	6	12	0	0
No opinion	4	8	9	16
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018

According to the respondents, memorialisation is very important to achieving reconciliation. Both men and women have agreed to acknowledge that memorialisation is essential for reconciliation. Among the respondents, some didn't have any opinion in terms of memorialisation. For war heroes, certain dates and locations are significant for memorialization. Heroism is different from person to person, place to place, or community to community. On this ground, no one can hope to recall the same person, same day, or same place in terms of heroism. When the researcher observes this area, it could be concluded that heroism and memorialisation are different in various ways. Four out of every five males have expressed that memorialisation is essential to reconciliation. Nearly the same number of female respondents also said their responses were memorialised as memorialisation is essential to reconciliation. According to respondents, it will be helpful to heal their unforgettable memories. Then they can mentally and physically be settled in the current situation and can experience the reality of life.

> The war was ceased by the government. But we have no chance to live as before the war period. We could not even go outside because there were army camps everywhere. We cannot do anything with a free mind (A 45 year old in Karadiyanaru).

> We always have problems. Especially for girls, when they see a beautiful girl, they tend to loiter in this area. Many problems were created by the war. We have to live with that unforgettable memory. When we remember the past, we hate both parties who were involved (a woman who was 54 years old).

Tourism has gradually become popular with the end of the war in war-torn areas. That is called war and peace tourism. It continues to grow as tourist attractions, and hundreds of thousands of local and international tourists visit former battlefields, military cemeteries, and memorials throughout the year. With the popularisation of war tourism in the post-war period, the scale of memorialisation

and the profusion were maintained. The monuments have also been overshadowed by the interpretation of the battlefields.

Tourism encapsulates economic, security, and development agendas in concrete ways. Tourist sites mobilise fear of potential terrorism and a return to the rule of the LTTE if vigilance and militarisation are not maintained. In such a context of risk, development is best done by the military. Within this logic of securitisation, militarisation becomes a common-sense approach.

According to these respondents, war memory in the past is repeatedly memorialised because of war tourism and peace tourism. With the advent of war tourism and peace tourism, military troops began to control and govern those areas. That was a kind of militarisation of these areas. These conditions were painful and brought the most profound memories to the surface again and again. According to them, these activities have been caused to get the forgotten memory back so they can recall them. They stated that recalling such a memory prevented them from feeling friendly.

Ideas of War Victims to Achieve Reconciliation

The inability to come to terms with anger or strife can often lead to stress disorders, mental health disorders, and relationship problems. Forgiveness is a personal decision. Those focus on individual experiences and the truth. It mainly focuses on transitional justice.

Forgiveness and truth are terms that connect with reconciliation. This is because truth can be hard to find in a society with so many versions of it, and when there is ambiguity, who shall forgive and who shall receive forgiveness? Ideally, forgiveness should be given by all to all. However, at least the first step in such a process needs to acknowledge, affirm, and understand the opposite side. Forgiveness, with its focus on the past rather than the future, does not alone provide a psychological basis for how people can overcome past events and reconcile (Halpern, Weinstein, 2004). Forgiveness is critical when achieving a reconciled process. It is not only after the war but also after any ordinary conflict. According to respondents, they have expressed their ideas on war victims to achieve reconciliation. Within that discussion, they have mentioned that forgiveness is critical to reconciling a society after a war. Otherwise, people who were victimised by the war may try to create revengeful thoughts within themselves based on their past gloomy memories.

According to this idea, apologising is another crucial factor in reconciling war victims. According to some respondents, they have expressed their ideas on public apologies. According to them, they hope not only to receive personal apologies but also a public apology as a country.

According to respondents, compensation is another tool for justice. Compensation should be provided for the victims of lost lives, destroyed claims, and lost lands. Still, these victims do not have permission to access their lands. The 30 year-long war has dispersed their horses and other properties. Even their family members and closest friends were lost, and they waited to meet them. However, if they do not have any chance to meet them or build up their property, they should be given compensation for those things. Otherwise, their memories regarding these have affected them as a barrier to reconciling their mentality.

Civilians in war-torn areas had violated every type of right, and yet they were denied their rights. They have fought on behalf of their rights, and the authorities still have not taken a proper step to create a program to establish the process. However, they hope for equal rights as citizens. When the researcher was observing these areas, it could be seen that there were no equal rights to education and health. So they ask for equal rights. According to them, it could be identified that if they have equal rights, they can quickly achieve reconciliation.

Power-sharing is another requirement for reconciliation, according to them. Power-sharing is a political process. It should be done by the government and then at the state level. When the researcher inquired into the necessity of power-sharing, they expressed that the provincial-level power-sharing process is successful. Power-sharing relates to peaceful reconciliation. In the Sri Lankan context, losers are still requesting power-sharing to reconcile society.

These ideas can be presented as follows: Many respondents have expressed that power-sharing and compensation are very important in reconciling. Therefore, if the authorities concerned can proceed to solutions, they think it is effortless to achieve reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

Civilians in war-torn areas had been violated in every way, and they still had no chance of achieving their rights. According to them, they have fought on behalf of their rights, and still, authorities' concerns have not taken a proper step to create a programme to establish a process. However, they hope for equal rights as citizens. When the researcher was observing these areas, it could be seen that there were no equal rights to education and health. So they ask for equal rights.

These ideas can be presented in the following way: Many respondents have expressed that power-sharing and compensation are very important in reconciling. Therefore, if the authorities' concerns can proceed to solutions, they think it is elementary to achieve reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

When the researcher inquired about the ideas of war victims to achieve reconciliation, their responses could be categorised and depicted as follows: According to their answers, it could be tabulated as forgiveness, apologies, compensation, giving equal rights, and power-sharing.

Table 4: Ideas of War Victims to Achieve Reconciliation

Activity	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Forgiveness	6	12	6	10
Apologies	3	6	7	12
Compensation	16	32	24	40
Give Equal Rights	7	14	13	22
Power sharing	16	32	10	16
Self-Autonomy	2	4	0	0
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018.

According to the respondents, compensation and power-sharing are essential ways of achieving justice. As revealed by respondents, compensation was the most appropriate activity, as revealed by respondents, to achieve reconciliation, and secondly, power-sharing. According to female respondents, they have expressed giving compensation as the most suitable activity to achieve reconciliation. Many of them achieve reconciliation. Both males and females did not respond, as forgiveness would be necessary for reconciliation. It means they are not willing to forgive people who are responsible for war crime-related activities. Self-autonomy was the lowest response from both males and females as an activity to achieve reconciliation.

In this article, the researcher has discussed the memory of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. First, the nature of wartime memories has been discussed with the experience during the war. Then, the researcher discussed "how personal memories become societal memories or collective memories, and finally how collective memories can affect the reconciliation process in the post-war period in Sri Lanka."

Based on the nature of the war experiences in the context of Sri Lanka, the researcher identified two levels of war experiences as follows;

Individual-level war experiences

Community-level or societal-level war experiences

The researcher also divided these experiences into two parallel parts based on their embedded relationships with the former;

Personal or individual memories

Collective memories

The memories were identified as very important in the period of transitional justice. It was advantageous to consider cultural, religious, ethnic, social, and political pluralism in a reconciliation process. The memorialisation process was identified as a critical consideration in the process of transitional justice. For the healing process, memorialization was also very important. The researcher categorised different types of memories. Almost all respondents had war-related experiences and memories related to those experiences. Both male and female respondents had been affected, yet they were still suffering from war-related memories.

Effects of Memory on Personal Reconciliation

It was found in the analysis that people who were interviewed still live with fear in an insecure condition in society. War has created a negative situation in the affected area. They have faced tragic experiences during the war, which have

remained bitter memories in their lives. However, they are finding a way to heal the memories that they still suffer from.

Any successive governments that have come to power have been unable to address the problems caused by the war. Many people living in the war-affected areas are still waiting for justice for relatives who were abducted, imprisoned, and disappeared. Most of them are suffering from PTSD with wartime memories. PTSD related experiences badly affected the healing process of these people. Still, they suffer from nightmares and flashbacks of bitter memories.

Effects of Memory on Societal Reconciliation

Before the war, Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims who lived in harmony maintained mutual relationships and used to do business collectively. Every Sinhala family left due to the war also gave up their businesses. Although the civilians did not create the war, the main consequence is that it has divided the community of these areas. Mistrust and insecurity have been deepened throughout society by the war.

Revenge and hurt have become the main targets of some people in these areas. People who were repaid and hurt during the war are still waiting to retaliate against those who committed such crimes.

Although social relationships in this area have improved in the post-war era, many things are yet to be achieved. They don't have the time and opportunity to memorise the closest of their friends. They are waiting to remember their relationships and most intimate moments on a ceremonial day.

Effects of Memory on Interpersonal Reconciliation

People living in war-affected areas are still waiting for a proper mechanism to build up the social relationships that they used before the war. They had been seeking a way to come together to work as a society again. Unfortunately, there is no proper mechanism that strengthens social cohesion by rewording norms such as forgiveness and repentance. As a result, individual memory has become a collective memory, which in turn creates psychological issues as a community instead of healing.

Effects of Memory on Political Reconciliation

Responsible parties that ignore their responsibilities emphasise governance far away from those seeking a proper way to create governance in these areas. People’s memories of the role of local government and provincial councils in the affected areas are bringing these people from the past to the present in the reconciliation process and thus they have no trust in these two government agencies at all. Notably, the central government has not adequately addressed

educational opportunities and livelihood-related activities for the youth. And also, the community memorialisation process is essential to political reconciliation. In terms of these people, they are waiting to commemorate their community and build memorial sites to remember them.

Reconciliation is shaped by various factors: the experiences and memories of the victims; their roles in a conflict situation; their positions and predicament in the post-war environment; and by their individual and collective attitudes and perceptions. Individual memories that originated from personal experiences have become collective memories in another stage of their lives. For example, the memory of a wounded person has led not only to a dark future but also to a collective negative impact on the reconciliation process.

The reconciliation process restores social ties and boosts social capital more broadly. In this process, people may have more willingness to interact with one another after the community has acknowledged their suffering and after individuals have forgiven each other. In this regard, reconciliation may strengthen social networks. These social networks erase war memory, which will be successfully affected by an intense reconciliation process. Finally, it needed to highlight a big gap in the policy adopted to reconcile the ethnically fragile society of the country. The government policy package aimed at reconciliation lacks proper elements to address the collective memory of the war-victimised community. It was observed that the government is ignorant of the necessity of looking at the link between collective memory and reconciliation and is disinterested or has no gut to engage in such a process in a political setting wherein electoral politics is run on an ethno-religious moral registry. As Sri Lankan academia is bound by a positivist trap, the researcher leaves the issue to be addressed by normative social and political theorists on what needs to be done.

Conclusion

Two identities exist in memory. One must carefully restore one's health because it is a delicate creature that is continuously in danger of going extinct. The memory of a violent past may be lost if victims and survivors are not allowed to tell their tales, and with it, any chance of learning the truth or obtaining justice. The most effective means of achieving peace in a post-war society will be for people to remember their war heroes and their loved ones.

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AJPS
ISSN 2989-011x
Open access biannual refereed journal
Volume 01 | Issue 01 | January-June 2023
Article 04

Criminalising Dissent: Sri Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Act and Its Use in Suppressing Social Movements - 2022

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Received: 26 April 2023 / **Revised:** 27 May 2023 / **Accepted:** 04 June 2023

Abstract

After its independence in 1948 from the colonial rulers, Sri Lanka witnessed the worst economic crisis and political instability in the country. As a response to the persistent pressures of the economic crisis, mass protests broke out all over the country in March, 2022. Consequent to the mass demand, president Gotabhaya Rajapaksha and the regime had to resign, and Ranil Wickramasinghe became the new president. Initially, the political regime in power used military forces to suppress these protests and the current president has been using the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) alongside the armed forces and the police to control social movements. Activists who led the protests have been arrested under PTA without trial. Hence, the objectives of this study were to examine how the authoritative regime uses the PTA to criminalise dissent and how it discourages the social movement in 2022, and how the act violated the fundamental rights of the activists. This is a qualitative study and the primary and secondary data has been collected from national and international reports, journal articles, web articles, and books to analyse the main purposes of the study. The Gramscian critical theory of 'hegemony' has been used as the theoretical framework since it elaborates how the states employ certain tools consciously or unconsciously to restrict dissents, and how dissents are not welcome in liberal democracies. It was evident that the use of PTA violates the fundamental rights of the activists, and harms the democracy in the country, further discouraging the social movements of the citizens.

Keywords: *Criminalising, Protests, Social movements, Sri Lanka, Terrorism*

Introduction

On August 18th 2022, several student activists were arrested under the PTA for their involvement in organising anti-government protests against the violation of citizens' rights mainly due to the corruption of the authoritative political regime, economic crisis, and current political instability in Sri Lanka (The International Federation for Human Rights, 2022). By using a counter-terrorism act to arrest the activists, the authoritative government has criminalised them and suppressed the social movement by warning the citizens who protest. Given this situation prevailing in the country, this paper discusses how Sri Lanka's authoritative political regime criminalised dissents using the PTA and suppressed social movements in 2022. This paper proceeds by providing details of the situation in Sri Lanka due to the economic crisis and political instability, how the social movement - 2022 triggered as a response to the given situation, and the use of the PTA to suppress the protesters by the government. To analyse the given situation, Gramscian's critical theory of 'hegemony' is used to show how to criminalise dissent and suppress the social movement, in addition to the violations of the fundamental rights of activists, as well as human rights.

The Economic Crisis and Political Instability

People in Sri Lanka are currently facing a disastrous economic crisis experiencing shortages in basic necessary items, i.e. medicine, food items, cooking gas, and fuel. The cost of living has also sharply increased amid the situation. The economic crisis has affected several rights such as the right to education, health, and adequate standards of living to name a few. The reason behind the crisis is a serious balance of payments (BOP) problem, which caused the rapid depletion of foreign exchange. It eventually affects importing consumer goods, and the country is unable to repay past debts as well (Ramakumar, 2022). As the crisis affected almost all the main sectors, the government cancelled school examinations for millions of students due to the lack of printing papers (The Guardian, 2022b). Additionally, due to the significant increase in the prices of sanitary napkins, many schoolgirls are unable to attend school on the days they are menstruating, and this is also affecting aspects such as their education, mental and physical health, and personality (De Alwis, 2022; Samaraweera, 2022).

Sri Lanka imports nearly eighty-five percent of its medicine in foreign currency, and at least five percent of drugs were not in stock in April 2022 (The Guardian, 2022b) which directly affected the free healthcare system of the country by leaving many serious patients at risk. The prominent discussion of the economic crisis was drawn around the fertiliser policy in 2021 - an experiment in organic agriculture that affected the domestic food production of the country, such as rice production, which fell by thirty to thirty-five percent, the tea production by about fifty percent, maize production by fifty percent, potato production by thirty to fifty percent, sugarcane production by thirty to forty percent, and cinnamon

production by twenty-five percent, amongst many others (Weerahewa, Senaratne & Babu, 2022). Even though the government tried to justify the crisis as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is adequate evidence that the crisis has arisen due to the corruption and irresponsibility of the authorities. The country has already been showing the signs of an economic crisis before the pandemic, such as restrictive trade regimes, weak investments, and loose financial policies like tax cuts in 2019. These have contributed to a rapid growth in debt to unsustainable levels (The World Bank, 2019). The Rajapaksha regime is mostly responsible for the crisis because Gotabhaya Rajapakshawas the president during the crisis from 2019-2022, his elder brother was the prime minister, and the third brother, Basil Rajapaksha, was the finance and economic minister during his brothers' presidencies (Pande, 2022). However, with the irresponsibility of authorities, there was a series of violations of rights to education, health, and an adequate standard of living in Sri Lanka.

Since Sri Lanka was admitted as a member state of the United Nations in 1955, the state is accountable for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) according to the government-approved draft on 02 June 2022. However, the recent situation affecting the country due to the irresponsibility of the government has shown that the SDGs are far more than achieving even the first four goals, i.e. 'poverty reduction, undernourishment, good health and well-being, and education' (United Nations in Sri Lanka, 2022). Not only the government has failed to achieve SDGs, but also to fulfil the state's fundamental duties for its citizens as included in chapter VI of the revised edition of the constitution in 2021 as follows;

> "27. (2) (c) the realisation by all citizens of an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, the continuous improvements of living conditions, and the full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.
>
> 27. (2) (h) the complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levelsඋ
>
> 27. (9) the state shall ensure social security and welfare" (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978: 17-18).

The negligence of the above-mentioned fundamental duties eventually led people to stand against the corrupted political regime, and hence thousands of people came into the street protesting and demanding the resignation of President Gotabhaya Rajapaksha and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksha who are the creators of the situation. People from all over the country joined the struggle day by day and the struggle became a remarkable social movement in the country's history.

The Social Movement - 2022 in Sri Lanka

Referring to Nancy Langton, Swain (1988: 4-5) defines the term 'social movement' as "collective behaviours engaged in by non-institutionalized groups oriented towards achieving specific goals, particularly the goal of extracting or resisting social change". Bhonagiri (2016: 1) describes it as "movements [that] are composed of multiple collective actions. Collective action involves people doing something together repeatedly or over a sustained period to achieve a shared purpose". Therefore, it is clear that social movements are collective, in which everyone fights toward one purpose. The primary purposes may vary for social movements such as reforming the current system, espousing radical and revolutionary ideas, and enhancing or circumscribing rights (Bhonagiri, 2016). Safa (2020) explains how one of the social movements in Latin America centred on human rights violations due to the cost of living and weak provision of public service. He further explains that women played a major role in this social movement and it is one of the best examples to recognize social movements as a collective behaviour of people for their rights.

Similarly, Sri Lankan people initiated a social movement for their rights to education, health, and standard of living. The growing economic dissatisfaction led thousands of people to come to the streets in protest using creative slogans, art, theatre, dance, music, and technology, displaying their demands (Amnesty International, 2022b). The protests had no segmentation, and people from every race, religion, and class participated in the struggle for justice. Information technology and advertising professionals, doctors, lawyers, engineers, academic professionals, journalists, university students, farmers, religious leaders, and labourers joined the struggle as they are one way or another affected by the economic crisis and political instability. The Left-wing political parties, such as the People's Liberation Front (*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* - JVP), and Frontline Socialist Party (*Peratugami Samajavadi Paksaya*) have contributed to the movement (Devapriya, 2022). The United National Party (UNP) (*Eksath Jathika Paksaya*), and Illankei Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) also supported the social movement. This uprising movement was different from the past struggles in Sri Lanka, and the majority of young people initiated protests against corrupted political regimes (Jayamaha, 2022). The author states;

> The salient feature is that respect for the concept of Democracy. And another important fact is that more than thousands of youths came forward and got together without party politics, religion, ethnicity, and gender. The place where they stay together is called '*Gota Go Gama*' (Gota Go Village) and this protest is also defined as 'Adaraye Aragalaya' (Protest of Love). Indeed, this protest was peaceful and still, they are showing their democratic values to the international society (Jatamaha, 2022: 364).

The social movement initiated by the youth is a turning point in the country's political history and it encouraged people to focus on the emancipatory possibilities from a vast number of issues (Fernando, 2022).

On 31st March 2022, people held a protest at the president's residence in Colombo, the country's capital city. In response, the police used tear gas and water cannons to push back the protesters. According to a report compiled by Amnesty International (2022b), The police have arrested more than fifty persons, including journalists, a number of whom have been tortured and subjected to ill-treatment while in custody. In addition to that, they did not have their right to a fair trial and an assigned lawyer. In mid-April people created a protest in Colombo, naming it "*Gota Go Gama*," which means "Gota Go Village." This iconic protest place was the main anti-government affirmation place, which obtained global attention to corruption and its worst impacts on the people of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan authorities have unlawfully restricted their right to freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression by using military and police involvement from time to time (Amnesty International, 2022a). The Sri Lankan Police declared a curfew in Colombo and later extended it to the entire country. The military forces were deployed in the protest place in Colombo. Sri Lankan citizens remained in struggling with these barriers and continued to demand the resignation of the President and the Prime Minister, and the whole Rajapaksha regime, who are mainly responsible for the crisis (Radhakrishnan, 2022). At the same time, the hooligans with allegiance to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and the ruling party, Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPP) supporters attacked protesters in Galle Face and destroyed the protest place (Radhakrishnan, 2022). However, after three months, protesters succeeded in the struggle, and President Gotabhaya Rajapaksha and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksha resigned. President Gotabhaya became the first president in the country's history to be forced to resign by a popular uprising (Devapriya, 2022). Gotabaya Rajapaksa has officially stepped down as the President by sending a letter of resignation, according to Article 38 of the Constitution, through the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Singapore effective from July 14, 2022. The Speaker of Parliament announced the resignation in a special statement and according to him, a Head of State is expected to be appointed within a period of seven days, pursuant to Article 40 of the Constitution and Presidential Elections (Special Provisions) Act (No. 2 of 1981) (The Ministry of Justice, 2016).

After Gotabhaya Rajapaksha's resignation effective from July 2022, the ruling party Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPF) elected Ranil Wickramasinghe, who was the Prime Minister after the resignation of Mahinda Rajapaksha, as President with a parliamentary majority of 134 votes (Devapriya, 2022). The protest leaders refused to accept Ranil Wickramasinghe as the president due to reasons such as; seventy-three years old Wickramasinghe was a six-time Prime minister in Sri Lanka, he was responsible for the country's economic and political crisis, and most importantly he came to power without people's firm mandate to become president. He is involved with the Rajapaksha regime, which is why he was voted by parliament members who were with the Rajapaksa regime in the first place (Pathirana, 2022). Above mentioned reasons led protesters to remain in the

struggle everywhere in the country while continuing the protests in the main place Colombo *Gota Go Gama*. The current President Wickramasinghe has also continuously used the military and police to control protests and activists. He has even been trying to suppress protests by imposing a state of emergency and sending air force helicopters over *Gota Go Gama* (Pathirana, 2022). President Wickramasinghe not only used the armed forces to suppress the protests, but also he used counter-terrorism laws to control protests.

Using the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)

Sri Lankan current authoritative regime is using the PTA Act to criminalise dissents and suppress the social movement. The majority of young people initiated protests against corrupted political regimes, and they led the general public to make a sociopolitical change. Sri Lanka's Inter-University Students' Federation (*Anthar Vishwa Vidyala Shisya Balamandalaya*) was highlighted in that case because of its contribution to the social movement throughout the country. The Inter-University Federation has about seventy student unions, which means ninety-five percent of university students in the country. Therefore, it has been playing a major role in the social movement (De Alwis, 2022). The convener of the inter-university federation, Wasantha Mudalige; the convener of the Inter-university Bikshu Federation, Rev. Galwewa Siridhamma and student activist Hashan Jeewantha were arrested on August 18, 2022, under the PTA due to their involvement as student activists in the ongoing social movement (The International Federation for Human Rights, 2022). The police stated that they need to further investigate whether these activists have involved in persuading the public to set fire to Mr. Wickramasinghe's residence, caused the assassination of a parliamentarian, incited the general public to overthrow a lawfully elected government, disobeyed a court order and other acts. President Wickramasinghe had signed as the Minister of Defence, three ninety-day detention orders against the dissents Section 9 of the PTA No.48 of 1979 (The International Federation for Human Rights, 2022). Hasan Jeewantha was released without charge by the Tangalle Magistrates Court, Southern Province on October 7, 2022, after fifty days of arbitrary detention. The Terrorist Investigations Division (TID) of the police informed the court that there was no sufficient evidence to continue to hold him under the detention order (SOS-Torture Network, 2022). At the time of this study, Rev. Galwewa Siridhamma Thero was granted bail on 23rd November 2022 by the Fort Magistrate's Court and remanded by the Kaduwela Magistrate's Court for a separate case, where he was returned to remand custody. The Venerable Thero was ordered to appear at the CID once a month, and he was prevented from travelling overseas and barred from making any comment on the legal matter to the media (Farzan, 2022), while Wasantha Mudalige remained arbitrarily detained.

The PTA (Temporary Provisions) Act No.48 of 1979 was implemented during President Jayawardene's period (1977-1989) for suppressing the Tamil movement

in Northeast areas of Sri Lanka (Coomaraswamy and Reyes, 2004). After the independence in 1948 from colonial rulers, the growing tension between Sinhalese and Tamil populations led to discriminatory government policies against Tamils, therefore as a result, Tamil youths mobilised and unleashed violence alongside birthing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) organisation, and the government implemented the act as a counter-terrorism method (Coomaraswamy and Reyes, 2004). The act shows excessive police powers of arrest, detention, and seizure of property issued under emergency regulations. The amendment bill in 2022 and section 9 (1) permits a minister to issue a detention order for up to twelve months if it is reasonably believed that the suspect is connected to unlawful activity. (Coomaraswamy and Reyes, 2004). The police can carry out further investigations without the continued detention of the persons and thus the detention of these activists (who were involved in the protests) under the PTA is unreasonable, unfair, and vexatious, and police investigation can be successfully prosecuted under general law (The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, 2022).

Literature Review

There is plenty of existing literature for examining how anti-terrorism acts have been used to criminalise political dissents around the world. Using anti-terrorism laws concerning State security against political dissents and human rights defenders, which has become a trend in many countries to assimilate human rights defenders, as well as social protest movements (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2015). Saudi Arabia's political dissents were fighting with demographic changes in society and with changing political dynamics within the royal family. The Saudi government used new counter-terrorism laws to suppress peaceful political activism in the country (Azoulay, 2014). Similarly, in Brazil's history of activism, 23 activists have become public and high-profile in both 2013 against increasing bus ticket fares, and 2014 against excessive spending in Fifa's world cup. The authoritative regimes have used anti-terrorism laws such as '*Leis de orgaizações*' and '*Antiterrorismo*' to criminalise activists and suppress protests (Gomes, Cavalcanti, & Abarca, 2022). Another example is evident in Turkey, where the authoritative regime used counterterrorism laws to criminalise academics for raising their voice against state violence in Kurdish-populated areas. On 11 January 2016, 1128 academics signed a petition against state violence, while the President accused this peaceful campaign of being terrorist propaganda, and thus demanded that all of them be arrested for investigations. Hence, even academic freedom has been criminalised using counterterrorism measures (Baser et al, 2017). Hence, the above information attests to the use of anti-terrorism laws to suppress protesters or activists by authoritative regimes all around the world. The current study was inspired by the above-mentioned existing literature to examine how authoritative regimes use anti-terrorism acts in Sri Lankan context. The majority of local studies have examined the concept of

anti-terrorism with references to ethnic minorities and the specialty of the current study is, it mainly focuses on political dissents and the violation of their rights.

Research Problem and Research Questions

The PTA has been used for arresting activists of the social movement 2022 in Sri Lanka and it is unlawful. This study has examined how the above-mentioned anti-terrorism law is used to criminalise dissents and how it eventually affected the violation of their rights.

Hence, the study focuses on two main research questions as follows;

> (i) to examine how the authoritative regime has criminalised dissents using the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), and hence how it discourages the social movement in 2022.
>
> (ii) to examine how using the Prevention of Terrorism Act caused a violation of the rights of the activists of the social movement in 2022.

Materials and Methods

To examine the aforementioned research questions of the study, primary and secondary data have been collected from books, reports, journal articles, web articles, and previous studies. The collected data from texts have been analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis and Gramscian Critical Theory of Hegemony has been used as the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

The criminalization of dissent is currently being discussed from a variety of ontological, epistemological, and methodological vantage points. This study makes use of the Gramscian critical theory of 'hegemony' to discuss criminalising dissents and suppressing the social movement 2022 in Sri Lanka. As Gramsci explains in his book Prison Notebooks in 1971, the law is the repressive and negative aspect of the entire positive, civilising activity undertaken by the State, and the state represents the coercive and punitive force of juridical regulation of a country (Gramsci, 1971: 506-517). The law is also an integral element of civil society and performs an educative role 'turning necessity and coercion into "freedom"' (Gramsci, 1971: 506-517). Brabazon (2006: 4) states that the Gramscian theory suggests that "the states have employed certain tools, and these tools consciously or unconsciously restrict dissents, and dissents are not welcome in liberal democracies". Hence, the Gramscian critical theory is essentially important in the discussion of criminalising dissents and protestors using PTA concerning social movements.

Gramsci's definition of hegemony is generally understood to represent the process by which a class or group in society attempts to establish its domination/power over subordinate classes or groups through a combination of consent and coercion (Simon, 1982: 24-32). Consent (or the masses) depends on belief in certain claims

of legitimacy. The domination is commonly associated with coercive (or the ruling class) state action by the courts, the police, the army, and the national guard (Litowitz, 2000: 515). A hegemonic project must appear to benefit the dominated and to be the only option. A challenge or threat could take the form of opposing groups that share a worldview and expand power gradually, the most effective resistance to a hegemonic project is to develop a counter-hegemonic project which delegitimizes the legitimating claims of the hegemonic project (Simon, 1982: 24-32). When the hegemony is faced with a "crisis of legitimacy" due to a serious threat, coercive mechanisms and all available resources are employed including instruments of the state apparatus such as institutes, budgets, communications campaigns, public consultations, and law. Therefore, quoting Habermas and McBride, Brabazon (2006: 4) explains that dissent is thus permitted in a liberal democracy, but only until it truly threatens the dominant hegemonic project. In light of this theoretical background, I will now examine how using the PTA criminalised dissents and suppressed the social movement 2022 in a broader context, causing violations of fundamental rights in the Sri Lankan context.

Results and Discussion

This paper primarily concerns the identification of protesters as terrorists and their detention under the prevention of terrorism. Even though it is clear that the protesters and activists have not committed any 'terrorist' activities, why did the government of Sri Lanka systematically construct their image as terrorists and used the PTA? This presupposes the underlayer of a hegemonic power in addition to the intended suppression to keep the control of the public to retain power by the authoritarian regime. In exploring this matter, the following section discusses under two sections i.e. (i) criminalising dissents using the PTA and discouraging the ongoing social movement, and (ii) using the PTA and fundamental rights violations of activists. There are both international and national human rights criticisms of the PTA, which will be further addressed alongside the analysis with Gramscian critical theory of hegemony.

Criminalising Dissents and Suppressing the Social Movement

Sri Lankan authorities justified their cause to investigate the student activists, who were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in different ways using responsible parties as the mouthpiece. The country's public security minister Tiran Alles stated in his parliament speech on 24th December 2022 that investigations have uncovered that struggle activists inciting terror and investigations are ongoing and many revelations will be made in the coming days (2022). The police media spokesman has justified the arrest of activists under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in media discussions. Attorney-at-Law and human rights activist Nuwan Bopage stresses that the police produced a B report on the

protesters but did not mention any action related to an act of terror or toppling the government (Farzan, 2022). The HRCSL (2022) defines 'terrorism' as;

> Any person by the use of threat or use of force and violence by unlawfully targeting the civilian population or a segment of the civilian population with the intent to spread fear thereof in furtherance of a political, ideological, or religious cause commits terrorism (The HRCSL, 2022: 2).

Hence, it is evident that the ruling regime had an intention of criminalising political dissents and controlling social movements. The Fundamental Rights petitions filed in the Supreme Court challenging the legality of using the PTA by President's Counsel Saliya Pieris with M.A. Sumanthiran and Attorney-at-law Manjula Balasooriya appeared for the petitioners (Sooriyangoda, 2022). The Supreme Court has given the permit to name Western Province Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police, D. Tennakoon as a respondent in a Fundamental Rights petition filed on behalf of Wasantha Mudalige, who was arrested and detained under the PTA (Sooriyangoda, 2022). The Supreme Court further observed that until now, there is not an iota of evidence placed before the Court to support the detainee's engagement in terrorist activities (Sooriyangoda, 2022). The authoritative regime's decision for using the PTA proved the Gramscian theory, which explains that the state has employed certain tools and these tools are used to restrict dissents, and domination is commonly associated with coercive state action (Litowitz, 2000, p:515). Apart from them, the responsible persons act as a mouthpiece to justify the cause of arbitrary detention of activists under PTA also related to the state tools used for domination and restrictions referred to in this theory.

The student activists have appeared for the rights of citizens which were violated by irresponsible politicians in Sri Lanka. Thousands of people were inspired by these young student activists and participated in protests with a common objective. The police have arrested activists using a selective application of the law (SOS-Torture Network, 2022). For Gramsci, the most effective resistance to a hegemonic project is to develop a counter-hegemonic project which delegitimizes the legitimating claims of the hegemonic project (Simon, 1982: 24-32). Therefore, activists are playing an important role in protecting the rights of citizens as well as changing the corrupted system by becoming a counter-hegemonic project. Now Sri Lankan political hegemony has faced a "crisis of legitimacy" due to the threat of this counter-hegemony initiated by political dissents. Hence, hegemony, represented through the use of the law, specifically the Prevention of Terrorism Act, to control the dissents, is trying its best to implement different types of tools to suppress both dissents and social movements. Therefore, the use of the PTA is, in its intent as a legal instrument, one of the most powerful hegemonic tools the corrupt regime has used. Still, it is utilising not only to suppress but also to criminalise the ongoing social movement in Sri Lanka.

In pointing out the misuse of PTA, Lawyer C. Galappatti of Lawyers for the Rule of Law explains that the PTAshould really be used to protect people from terrorists, but what Sri Lanka's president is doing is now using the law to protect terrorists (the ruling class) from the citizens. He further adds that 'terrorists are political rogues who have robbed the country's wealth from ports and airports' (UCA News, 2022). In relation to Gramsci's definition of hegemony which highlights a class or group domination over a subordinate class or group, in the Sri Lankan context, two classes can be identified: corrupted political elites, and citizens. No matter the political party the citizens belong to, the corrupted politicians are in the same class or group, and citizens belong to the other class whose rights are violated by corrupt politicians. This was evident in the instance in which the current president Ranil Wickramasinghe was elected as the president with a majority of votes of his opposing political party. Now, with the support of the politicians in power, the president tries to implement different types of tools to control and suppress political dissents. When the hegemony is faced with a crisis of legitimacy, it deploys all available resources, such as budgets, communications campaigns, and public consultations. Now the authoritative ruling regime has labelled activists as terrorists or criminals in Sri Lankan society by using a counter-terrorism law (Collective, 2022). Hence, the main purpose of using a counter-terrorism law is to criminalise dissents while preventing citizens from gathering with activists for their rights. The government uses all faithful media such as newspapers, Television, and Radio to spread negative news about activists to retain the hegemonic power of the ruling class.

Violating the Fundamental Rights of Activists

As Gramsci's theory on hegemony explains a class disparity in society that attempts to dominate power over subordinate classes or groups, in this study, it is evident that the ruling class or the hegemonic group does not consider even the fundamental rights of dissents in the country. The hegemony's main purpose is to utilise every possible resource to control them which is also the way a hegemonic group protects itself from a counter-hegemonic group. When considering the Sri Lankan current context, the hegemonic ruling class has completely neglected the fundamental rights of activists (who represent the class of citizens). Both international and national human rights defenders, legal professionals, as well as political activists, have shown that using the PTA is unlawful and unfair since those student activists are involved in protests against corruption and irresponsible political regimes, in addition to the fact that every citizen has the right to protest, guaranteed in both national and international laws (United Nations, 2022). The police can carry out further investigations without the continued detention of these persons and detention of these activists under the PTA is unreasonable, unfair, and vexatious, and police investigation can be successfully prosecuted under general law (The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, 2022).

The current president Ranil Wickramasinghe delivered a speech on 25th November 2022 in the parliament saying about his plan for controlling the upcoming protests of citizens as follows;

> There are plans to initiate another 'Aragalaya' (struggle) to change the government. But I won't give space for that. I will get the military and the forces and I will impose a state of emergency (Gunadasa, 2022).

This clearly shows his authoritarian approach particularly to the right to protest and citizens' fundamental rights violation, although the rights have been established in both internationally and nationally accepted policies.

On 11 June 1980, Sri Lanka acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Amnesty International, 2022). As such, Sri Lanka is bound to protect the civil and political rights of its citizens. Those rights are explained in the articles such as; article 7: freedom from torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and Article 9: the right to liberty and security of person, all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. Other articles such as article 10 have stressed that everyone shall have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law, and articles 16, and 19 stress the importance of both freedom of expression and peaceful assembly (United Nations General Assembly, 1966). The authorities have violated activists' fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom from torture, or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and right to liberty and security by arresting them under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, 2022). Furthermore, the Constitution of Sri Lanka included the fundamental rights of freedom from torture, or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, and punishment under Article 11, and rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Article 14 (l) (a) and (b) (Constitution of Sri Lanka, as amended in 2020). It was evident that authorities have not considered the rights established in the country's constitution, and have arrested activists under PTA (The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, 2022). Hence, it is evident that the authoritative political regime in Sri Lanka has violated the fundamental rights of the political activists who were arrested under the PTA, included in both national and international policies. Many civil community organisations raise their voice while protesting against using a counter-terrorism act to arrest the activists, and the authoritative government has been using police to control them. The UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Association has informed that the authority should ensure the people's rights to assembly in Sri Lanka. He further explains that considering the protests planned by the Inter-University Students' Federation in Colombo, Sri Lankan authorities must respect the right to assembly (Farzan, 2022). Hence it is clear that the authoritative regime in Sri Lanka does not even consider the fundamental rights of citizens when citizens become a

counter-hegemonic project against the corrupted hegemonic authority. In Gramscian words, ‘the ruling class implements its full potential tools to control people's uprising’.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was evident that the authoritative regime criminalised the political dissents by arresting them under the PTA, which also caused fundamental rights violations of dissents. The provisions of the PTA and its application have long been the subjects of severe criticism both nationally and internationally. On March 29, 2022, some sections of the PTA were amended, however still do not bring the legislation in line with international human rights law and standards and are thereby wholly insufficient (Amnesty International, 2022). The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) as well as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), also denounced the reforms as insufficient. While it is evident that the way of using this act is harmful to the democracy in the country, discouraging the peaceful movements of citizens, it also violates the fundamental rights of the citizens. The article used the Gramscian theory of hegemony as a lens to highlight that the use of the PTA is a powerful hegemonic tool that not only suppresses the dissents but also criminalises them, leading to a long list of human rights violations. The counter-terrorism law has become a tool for the hegemonic ruling class to protect people’s uprisings and to control alternative political mechanisms.

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AJPS
ISSN 2989-011x
Open access biannual refereed journal
Volume 01 | Issue 01 | January-June 2023
Article 05

Uncovering the Methods of Operation and Funding of Armed Groups in the MENA Region: A Special Focus on Libya and Yemen

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Received: 24 February 2023 / **Revised:** 05 August 2023 / **Accepted:** 12 August 2023

Abstract

Combatants cross national boundaries to represent ideas or organisations outside of state control, making traditional interstate conflict obsolete. As a direct result, non-state armed groups have developed into dangerous adversaries to established militaries. The study's primary focus is on their funding strategies, as this is a crucial part of their operations. This study seeks to clarify these multifaceted processes by analysing the fundraising strategies of violent extremist organisations. In their search for funding, these organisations have employed a wide range of strategies and methods. This research analyses secondary sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the operational and financial methods used by armed groups. This research, which focuses on Libya and Yemen, highlights the ingenuity and flexibility of armed organisations in the MENA area. According to the findings, in order to keep their operations going, these groups partake in a wide variety of illegal acts, receive external backing, and exploit local resources. The ramifications of these funding sources on regional security, political dynamics, and stability are also highlighted in the study. Comprehensive solutions to address the core causes of armed group financing, including building governance institutions, supporting socio-economic development, and developing regional cooperation, are advised based on the study's findings.

Keywords: *MENA, Armed Groups, Terrorism, Funding, Conflicts*

Introduction

Located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is home to a wide variety of countries. The historical, cultural, and geopolitical significance of this massive area, sometimes called the cradle of civilization, cannot be overstated. The countries of southwestern Asia

and northeastern Africa, from Iran to Egypt, including the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant, make up what the Oxford Dictionary calls “the Middle East.” The region’s rich history, many cultures, and important position in world politics are its defining features. The countries in this strategically and politically crucial region of the world came to be collectively known as the “Middle East” during the 20th century.

Located in the far north of Africa, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, is the North Africa region, which is also a part of the MENA region. Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia are all part of this group. The cultural, linguistic, and historical traditions of North Africa are distinguished by their hybrid origins in Africa, the Arab world, and the Mediterranean.

The dynamics of armed groups in the MENA area can only be understood by having a firm grasp on the region's intricacies. Non-state players have emerged in an effort to establish influence and control over the region as a result of its precarious political, social, and security situations. In order to resolve the underlying problems and promote stability in the MENA area, it is crucial to analyse the methods of operation and funding of these armed groups.

Given this context, the purpose of this study is to delve into the complex dynamics of armed groups in the MENA area, with an emphasis on Libya and Yemen. The research aims to shed light on the origins, activities, and sustainability of these organisations by revealing their operational methods and financial networks.

The MENA region has been a hotbed for armed conflicts and violence in the post-Cold War era. With the rise of non-state actors and armed groups, the dynamics of warfare have shifted from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts. As a result, the issue of funding for these groups has become a critical factor in the continuation and success of their operations. This research paper focuses on the methods of operation and funding of armed groups in the MENA region.

The goal of this research paper is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various strategies and behaviours employed by armed groups in the MENA region to fund their operations. The study will utilise a qualitative descriptive research methodology, which will involve collecting and analysing data through case studies and documentary analysis. By using this methodology, the paper aims to present a detailed understanding of the funding mechanisms of these armed groups.

The paper begins by highlighting the post-Cold War era and the shift in the dynamics of warfare from inter-state conflicts to intra-state conflicts. The introduction also discusses the emergence of armed groups as an alternative to regular armies, which has created the challenge of funding for these groups. The introduction sets the stage for the rest of the paper, which will delve into the various methods of operation and funding used by armed groups in the MENA

region. Specifically, this research paper will address the following research questions:

- What are the primary methods used by armed groups in the MENA region to fund their operations?
- How do armed groups in the MENA region utilise the funds they receive?
- What is the impact of the funding mechanisms used by armed groups in the MENA region for the broader security and stability of the region?

To answer these questions, the paper will utilise a qualitative descriptive research methodology. Qualitative descriptive research is a flexible approach that allows for the in-depth exploration of complex phenomena in their natural settings. This approach is particularly suitable for this research paper, as it will enable the collection of rich, detailed data from multiple sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the funding mechanisms of armed groups in the MENA region.

In this context, the study examines how the economies of armed organisations influence the dynamics of war by applying examples from Yemen and Libya to the economics of conflict and the ways they employ to secure funding to cover their activities.

Literature Review

As a result of internal strife, regional conflicts, and foreign interference, armed organisations have mushroomed across the MENA region in recent years. These organisations function independently of states but pose serious threats to the established order (Salloukh, 2017). In order to address the causes of disputes and foster stability in the region, an understanding of their dynamics is essential.

The armed groups in the MENA area are characterised by their varied histories and goals. Some organisations have deep historical roots; they speak for historically oppressed ethnic or religious minorities who now want autonomy or restitution. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey and the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq both originated in the fight for Kurdish rights (Kaya & Whiting, 2017). Others, like Lebanon's Hezbollah and Palestine's Hamas, have political or ideological goals related to fighting off what they see as an oppressive foreign presence (Berti, 2019).

Armed organisations in the MENA area deploy a wide variety of strategies, each of which reflects the unique objectives and conditions of the many parties involved. There are those who use asymmetric warfare, attacking military units, government institutions, and civilian populations with guerrilla tactics, suicide bombers, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). To further their goals of spreading propaganda, recruiting followers, and shaping narratives in order to win support and legitimacy, armed organisations also employ social media and information warfare (Paterson & Hanley, 2020).

Armed groups in the MENA often also possess territorial control. They frequently set up alternative administrative systems to guarantee the safety and well-being of their constituents. In Iraq and Syria, ISIS has declared a caliphate, while the Houthis in Yemen have taken over large swaths of the country (Honig & Yahel, 2019). Both the organisations' operational capabilities and the sovereignty and stability of the afflicted states are put to the test by these territorial gains.

Having a steady supply of money is essential for armed organisations to continue doing what they're doing and to grow in power. These organisations use a wide range of financial strategies, including partaking in criminal activity and exploiting local resources. Some armed organisations receive cash, equipment, and training from regional or global entities pursuing their own strategic interests, highlighting the importance of external backing from state or non-state actors. These organisations can also generate income through participation in criminal economies, including drug trafficking, human smuggling, and the plunder of cultural heritage sites (Podder, 2013).

The stability of the MENA region and international security are threatened by the presence of armed organisations. They make things worse, further splinter the political landscape, and hamper any attempts at peaceful resolution. The involvement of armed organisations in illegal enterprises contributes to corruption, weakens the government, and prolongs economic instability. Their activities may also have unintended consequences, such as refugee problems or the spread of extremist ideas or acts of terrorism beyond their local areas.

In order to effectively combat the threats posed by armed organisations in the MENA area, a comprehensive strategy is necessary. It entails working to improve inclusive government, advance social and economic progress, and deal with the root causes of disputes. Combating the actions of armed organisations requires a number of important measures, including the improvement of the rule of law, the sharing of intelligence, the tightening of border controls, and the disruption of funding networks. The recruitment and radicalization of vulnerable populations can be avoided by combating radicalization, investing in education, and offering economic possibilities (Dandashly, 2015).

Addressing the transnational dimension of armed group activities and fostering regional security requires international cooperation and support, including capacity-building programs. It is essential to deal with the underlying causes of discontent, foster social unity, and work toward governmental institutions that are representative of the interests and aspirations of all groups (Reveron, 2016). The MENA region may achieve enduring peace and stability by tackling the underlying reasons and implementing all-encompassing solutions, reducing the power of armed groups, and paving the way for a brighter future.

Materials and Methods

The economics of armed organisations and their effects on the MENA region's economy are the focus of this qualitative study. Academic articles, reports from international organisations, government reports, and news stories were all thoroughly analysed. The thorough comprehension of the economic capacities of armed organisations and their influence on the regional economy was made possible by the review of the relevant literature.

Data from various documents and reports were analysed to identify trends, patterns, and relationships. These documents included those detailing financial transactions, patterns of war expenditure, and economic indicators in the region. The content analysis offered a comprehensive look at the financial aspects of armed conflict and terrorist organisations.

To dig further and provide more concrete examples, few case studies were used. Selected to be broadly indicative of the situation in the MENA region, these cases provided a richer context for comprehending the interplay between the financial resources of armed organisations and the regional economy.

To answer the research topic, a qualitative data analysis method was used to parse the information gathered from various sources. Triangulation, or using many sources to confirm the same piece of information has contributed to the study's rigour.

Results and Discussion

The Economics of Armed Groups

In wartime, economic studies focused on the effects of state relations and wars on economic development, but when the Cold War ended and the world entered a period of relative security calm, economics narrowed its focus to provide partial analyses of conflicts in order to reflect the shifting nature of international relations over time.

The pursuit of raw commodities through conquest and imperialism was made possible by early business conceptions that described war as "predation." The importance of economic resources in civil wars and conflicts has gotten more attention recently because of the shift in the character of conflicts since the Cold War. Non-cooperative game theory has been used by economists to build explanatory models for government decisions, which, when combined with macroeconomic and internal factors, provide a better understanding of the internal factors that determine the state's tendency to conflict or militarization.

But competing parties and armed organisations are not the only ones relying on natural resources for their money; there are other sources as well. For the new war economy, criminal activities like looting and black-market trade, often aided by outside sources, were the root cause of ongoing conflict (Dunne & Coulomb, 2008: 147).

Collier's theory states that any rebel movement must have a commercial activity to ensure sufficient resources for war, and these resources come from the exploitation and sale of raw materials available in the country. When the war economy plays its full role by providing them with a decent life, the conflict may diminish (ibid: 152). In other words, it is those actions or relationships that generate cash for the advantage of armed groups or parties participating in the conflict; which are opportunities for armed groups in the economic arena.

The relative strength of the warring factions, which have a variety of options for financing and external support, including donations and diversion of aid flows in their favour, or the state's own sponsorship of armed groups, including arms supplies and military aid, determines the limits of economic opportunities in conflict situations. The balance of power between the state, non-state forces, and armed groups is perhaps the most important factor in defining the war finance strategy.

For rebels and armed organisations, the ultimate goal is to not only control their own sources of funding but also to undercut and take those of their opponents. This may be the driving force behind the attacks on economic infrastructure in conflict zones, where one side aims to deprive the other of revenue, raise reconstruction costs, disrupt economic activity, and limit investment opportunities for the other side, all of which serve to reduce output, increase unemployment, and raise inflation (Taylor, 2013: 2).

As a result, in addition to receiving financial assistance from foreign governments and generating revenue from the control of natural resources, armed groups use a variety of financing methods to maintain their armies and recruit fighters they train to commit criminal acts such as bank robberies, oil well raids, and celebrity kidnappings (Wennmann, 2011: 338).

Conflict Economics

There are four types of armed conflict, and the norms and tools that apply to each of them are different, according to international humanitarian law.

- There are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the First Additional Protocol in 1977, Hague standards, and other legal concepts that apply to international armed conflict.
- Wars of national liberation that are described under the First Additional Protocol of 1977 are included.
- Conventional and customary rules govern non-international armed conflicts, including those covered by Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and other treaties.
- The Second Additional Protocol of 1977 defines non-international armed conflicts quite narrowly.

We may be dealing with a non-international armed conflict, as the study concentrates on the economics of the conflict, specifically non international armed conflict (OHCHR, 2015, p. 4).

Non-international armed conflict economies can be divided into two categories. These economic models are matched by a variety of armed groups pursuing different military objectives: conflict, expansion, and control.

Predation

On the basis of a struggle between government forces and armed groups operating in officially state-controlled areas, this approach has been developed. Hit-and-run attacks, such as murder, kidnapping, and bank robbery, are used by armed organisations to weaken the state and increase their own financial resources. Due to the modest size of the armed organisation and the relatively small scope of its operations, these groups do not expand their activities in order to increase their money at this early stage.

Expansion

The conflict economy grows increasingly parasitic as armed groups develop in size and number and in their ability to reach and have regional implications. Armed organisations then switch to low-intensity warfare, in which they pursue economic measures to damage the government instead of launching hit-and-run attacks.

Armed organisations are seeking to gain a larger piece of the shadow economy, which is bolstered by the additional earnings that these groups generate from other sources of finance, as the official economy struggles and the government loses a significant portion of its financial revenues.

Territorial control

Armed groups gain more influence as their members take control of a certain area of the state and acquire responsibilities for running social services, governance, and taxation, which helps them raise their budget so they can continue military operations.

An armed force controlling land and people and establishing institutions could turn that part of the country into an independent state, as it has already been done with NPA-controlled areas in the Philippines, Bougainville-controlled areas in Papua New Guinea, and Cambodia's Khmer Reds in Cambodia (Wennmann, 2011: 345).

Non-State Armed Organizations' Funding Sources

In recent decades, scholars and peace practitioners have become more interested in how non-state armed groups raise and sustain their financial resources, a topic that has sparked a great deal of debate and discussion.

Despite the great variety of funding options available to armed groups, financing for these organisations is largely dependent on a few sorts of funding that are tailored to the specific objectives and motivations of the organisations they support.

Examples of groups that obtain financial support from voluntary associations include non-state armed groups that engage in voluntary activities, but groups that do not engage in such activities may resort to criminal conduct or aggressive behaviour to raise funds.

It is also important to note that armed organisations' ability to raise funds is influenced by the economic opportunities accessible to them in the territories they control, as well as the political context in which the fight is taking place.

Understanding the war economy that sustains non-state armed groups and their activities is perhaps essential for those parties who want to engage with their members in support of the peace process. This is due to the resources mobilised by these actors severely influencing their incentives to enter into ceasefire deals or substantive negotiations to end the conflict (FATF, 2015: 13).

To continue their presence and activities, armed organisations use a variety of financial techniques, which can be classified as either legitimate or unlawful.

Legitimate Sources of Funding

The money that terrorist organisations and armed groups get from charitable organisations and companies is known as "black washing," and it refers to the practice of relying on legitimate funding sources like charities, government subsidies, and social benefits in order to fund their activities of terrorism and violence. Listed below are some of the most prominent lawful financing sources.

Organisations Dedicated to Philanthropy

Trusted by a wide variety of the public, charitable or non-profit organisations have attributes that make them attractive to terrorists, and their activities, which are frequently money-intensive, make them particularly vulnerable to terrorist financing abuses.

As a result, terrorist organisations are able to more easily set up associations and charities to fund their activities because charities are subject to far fewer regulations than financial institutions or publicly owned corporations.

The FATF has stated that the misuse of non-profit organisations to finance terrorism has become a significant weakness in the global effort to limit the financing of terrorist organisations.

The Fraudulent Transfer of Funds

This can be done through a legal charity or a fictitious false organisation appearing to be a legitimate charity in order to conceal the fact that the money is

being used to fund terrorist organisations, for example, by telling donors they are making a donation to help orphans.

Donations given to either of these terrorist organisations will be used to fund terrorist training camps of some kind (ibid: 10).

Revenues from the C-company

Profits from lawful businesses can be used to fund terrorist activities, and the threat from this source may lie in the difficulties in monitoring it, as working on projects and enterprises does not require formal qualifications, nor does it take big investments to start one up. This makes it difficult to check reported sales and actual transactions, especially in businesses that have a large amount of cash available for transactions that support terrorist activity.

Donations

Terrorist funding trials involving direct financial support from people have accounted for around 33% of all prosecutions in the United States since 2001, with rich donors constituting a significant source of cash for some terrorist organisations (Zreik, 2021).

They have acknowledged that private donors and sponsors play a crucial role in funding some terrorist organisations, including ISIS. Terrorist-affiliated individuals donate to non-profit organisations, which are then targeted by armed groups. These gangs then use the non-profits' networks to steal money.

These groups utilise the Internet to recruit more terrorists via social media and raise money for their operations. They also use the Internet to set up “fake non-profit entities” and spread the word about their activities.

In the event of a terrorist attack, the most susceptible non-profits are those that carry out “service” operations in the immediate vicinity of a known terrorist danger or a terrorist's place of business, unless appropriate oversight and scrutiny of how contributed monies are used and handled is activated. As a last safeguard, it is important to verify the integrity of the money transfer channels (ibid: 14).

Support from Governments

The Financial Action Task Force, a Paris-based intergovernmental organisation that works to combat money counterfeiting and terrorist financing, does not have a particular designation for state-sponsored terrorism. Despite the fact that this type of funding does not meet FACTA's criteria and principles and is not in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1 and 2 (a), it remains a long-term threat to international security because states and governments may continue to provide financial support to terrorists (Zreik, Iqbal, and Rahman, 2022).

The success of the working group's efforts to assist countries in adopting best practices to detect, dissuade, and otherwise disrupt terrorist financing is fundamentally undermined when it comes to the stability of the financial, political, and regional institutions.

Self-financing

According to Financial Action Task Force (FATF) studies, the monies required to finance small attacks originate from the personal savings and business profits of terrorist elements and their support networks. The fact that terrorist organisations may fund themselves in so many different ways suggests that they can be highly decentralised and self-sustaining.

As a result of several investigations and prosecutions, it has been proven that commercial ads for projects like secondhand cars and restaurants with terrorist products are directly linked to the operations of terrorist groups, which may be done, for example, by shipping vehicles. Secondhand automobiles from West Africa and other used cars from the Middle East are being exported. It is estimated that the majority of used and imported car dealerships are based in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Singapore. Conversely, high-risk areas where terrorist groups are concentrated are more likely to be home to car dealers. As part of a money laundering plan, this type of commerce generates huge profits, which are ultimately transferred to terrorist groups (ibid: 16).

Illicit Funding Sources

Prior to the increased international pressure, some terrorist organisations relied heavily on finance and support from sponsoring countries. As a result, these groups have had to turn to alternate means of revenue, such as smuggling and the collection of funds from criminal operations. Weapons, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and drug trafficking are some of the most common crimes committed by criminals.

The Smuggling of Drugs

For terrorist organisations, drug trafficking provides them with the funds they need to carry out their terrorist actions, develop their techniques and weaponry, and increase their presence in their target areas.

Drug trafficking has gained importance as a means of supporting terrorist organisations at the same time that state support for terrorist organisations has decreased, making it more difficult to tell terrorist organisations apart from drug trafficking gangs until there is a large overlap between their activities.

Terrorist and criminal groups have been able to work together more easily thanks to the internationalisation of communications and banking systems, as well as the opening of borders, as a result of globalisation. Although investigations have

uncovered direct linkages between numerous terrorists and drug dealers, these relationships may evolve out of necessity, convenience, or mutual benefits (FATF & GAFI, 2008: 15).

Kidnapping for Ransom

Terrorist groups, like ISIS, rely on a variety of revenue streams to stay afloat, and kidnapping for ransom is one of those streams. For each ransom, it has been estimated that the terrorist group receives 5 to 50 percent of its annual revenue, depending on other factors such as the size of the group and local economic conditions in the country where the ransom was paid (Zreik, 2022). The area in which the company does business.

Ransom payments totaled at least $222 million by terrorists, including Al-Qaeda and ISIS, between 2008 and 2014, according to US government data. Counter-ISIS Financing for Ransom Group Statement No. 32 issued on May 13, 2015, called for the kidnappers to be denied the benefits of the ransom by making all cooperative efforts to prevent kidnappings, based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2133 (2014) and 2161 (2014), most recently 2199.

At the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) in Algiers, a note was delivered on best practices to avoid and deny terrorist organisations the benefits of kidnapping for ransom. Even more so because kidnappings and ransom payments are a major source of funding for these groups. The terrorist group receives the money in cash when it has been delivered to the cash holders. Financial institutions such as banks, exchange businesses, insurance companies, lawyers, and other systems can also be used to pay the ransom. Remittances, the sale of assets and loans, or the creation of trusts to collect donations in order to pay the ransom are all possible options (FATF, 2015: 18-9).

Money Laundering: A Key Revenue Source for Armed Groups in the MENA Region

Money laundering has emerged as a significant funding source for armed groups in the MENA region, requiring an understanding of its mechanics to effectively counter these groups' activities.

Several laundering techniques are used by these organisations. These include trade-based money laundering, which involves invoice falsification and front firms, and the hawala system, an unregulated trust-based network that leaves no paper trail (Marzuki et al., 2023). Other techniques include smuggling routes and bulk cash smuggling procedures for moving money from illegal activities like drug trafficking or arms smuggling (Soudijn & Reuter, 2016). Front corporations, charities, and cryptocurrencies are also used to legitimise illicit earnings (Faccia et al., 2020).

The consequences of money laundering by terrorist organisations in the MENA region are vast, promoting corruption, weakening institutions, and fueling

violence (Al Shaher & Zreik, 2022). Countering money laundering requires concerted efforts across multiple fronts. Governments should strengthen anti-money laundering legislation and regulatory procedures (Cassara, 2015). Effective financial intelligence units and specialised law enforcement authorities are also vital for the detection, investigation, and prosecution of money laundering cases (Beebeejaun & Dulloo, 2023).

Financial institutions can contribute by implementing robust customer due diligence, transaction monitoring, and reporting systems. Public awareness campaigns and capacity-building efforts are also crucial in educating the public about the dangers and consequences of money laundering (De Koker, 2006).

Results and Discussion

This study investigates the persistent violence in the MENA region, particularly in Yemen and Libya, over the past two decades. The central finding is that the economics of armed organisations significantly contribute to this enduring conflict.

The two case studies, Yemen and Libya, were selected due to their many shared characteristics. A key understanding drawn from these cases is that economic factors play a pivotal role in sustaining conflict. Armed groups' financial ability to procure weapons, ammunition, and even combatants themselves directly influences the intensity and longevity of hostilities (Chatham House, 2019). By considering the economic components of these armed groups, we gain valuable insights into the dynamics of conflicts raging in the MENA region.

The Libyan Case

When Muammar Gaddafi died in 2011, Libya’s internal sovereignty, including its monopoly on power and resources, was handed back to the country’s local communities, who formed armed groups to fill the resulting security void and central gap. Meanwhile, the Libyan military and intelligence services tasked with maintaining the country’s security have weakened as the dictatorship of former Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi has fallen.

However, the numerous armed organisations in Libya since the 2014 split in national authority have taken a variety of approaches. While some of these groups dwindled, some stayed active and grew their influence, while others dwindled.

Institutional Infiltration

Armed organisations, with the exception of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, played a more active role in Libya's war in 2014, coalescing and merging as local legitimate forces under a central leadership. Arms-wielding groups, however, concentrated on recruiting and enlisting members from the state's security services, despite the fact that they were not subject to it (Chatham House, 2020).

It was in 2016 that armed groups operating in Tripoli, the country's capital, were given government contracts, paid jobs,and access to the state's budgets in exchange for providing protection services. They also used their networks and locations to secure major commercial contracts. Armed groups and their networks became increasingly aware of this dynamic as it rose through the ranks.

In 2018, the Sarraj government's Al-Nawasi Brigade militia tried to force the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) management to recruit and hire candidates from the same armed group, which resulted in the authority's management refusing and being forced to leave Tripoli. The LIA was forced to leave Tripoli. To maintain physical and institutional dominance, Tripoli-based militant groups took advantage of this for several months.

While in Tarhuna in August and September of 2018, the Seventh Brigade, also known as the Kani Brigade, attempted to remove Tripoli militias from the city, they referred to the armed groups as "ISIS for public funds" in Tripoli.

This demonstrates that after successfully defending their strongholds in Tripoli, the armed factions in the city have adopted a series of "predatory" measures and a predation strategy, as previously discussed.

Some armed groups were able to gain access to rent, while others were unable to do so, while the majority of armed groups focused on infiltrating the government.

Control of the Territory

Armed factions in Libya's capital, Tripoli, have been able to extort rents, control access to buildings, and intimidate employees thanks to their ability to infiltrate state institutions (Chatham House, 2019).

It was during this time that the Libyan armed forces gained control of heavy weaponry and the flow of weapons in eastern Libya, as well as forging partnerships with eastern Libyan armed groups. As of April 2019, the Libyan National Army (LNA) may have posed a severe threat to armed factions affiliated with the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) (Chatham House, 2020).

There was no UN Security Council resolution on a ceasefire, nor was there any effort to implement an arms embargo, nor was there a real effort to avoid foreign meddling in Libya, which has aggravated the violence.

External Support

By November 2019, Libya's military had gained air superiority, and the Kremlin was providing mercenaries in support of a counter-escalation in response to the international uptick in violence (ibid: 51).

Adopting Legitimate Sources of Finance

Because of the weak official economy and the horizontal organisation of armed groups in southern Libya, it's possible that regular fighters were forced to go elsewhere for targets to fund their lives. Due to the protracted absence of state institutions and the ineffectiveness of service delivery, these groups relied on long-term, multi-pronged strategies for fostering the development of the private sector, in addition to official support and private project income.

To compete for resources and influence, armed organisations have turned to non-traditional economic sectors such as mining and manufacturing, rather than spending as much on operational costs as their members are paid (ibid: 58).

The Use of Criminal Coercion

In order to raise money, armed organisations in Libya have frequently used illegal coercion tactics. Islamic State's activities in Libya were limited to the Fezzan region and the town of Bani Walid, a hub for human trafficking, as well as the organisation's use of theft, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and cross-border smuggling, as well as trafficking in handicrafts and other goods, to raise funds.

According to the United Nations Panel of Experts, the organisation continued to impose taxes on human trafficking networks as a source of funding. In 2021, the United Nations estimates that the Islamic State's Libyan remnants will be dispersed primarily between the southern desert cities of Ubari, Traghen, and Ghadwa and those who cross southern Libya to the borders with Chad, Niger, and Sudan in small groups. ISIS's operations are primarily supported by the illicit trade in Libyan oil and narcotics (Fitzgerald 2021: 7-8).

The National Transitional Council (NTC) in Libya: Emergence and Funding During the Arab Spring

During the Arab Spring, Libya’s National Transitional Council (NTC) emerged as a key political organisation, guiding the country through its transition away from Muammar Gaddafi's rule (Ajibade-Samuel & Akeem, 2016). The de facto governing body, the NTC, ran into the urgent problem of finding money to keep going during this crucial time.

The NTC came together in Benghazi in February 2011 to stand against Gaddafi's rule. Its members included opposition politicians, tribal leaders, military officials, and regional representatives. The group's principal goal was to serve as a political focal point, coordination hub, and voice for anti-Gaddafi activists all around Libya (Cole & McQuinn, 2015).

The NTC needed foreign backing in the form of financial aid to secure its continued existence. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar both played significant roles by giving major financial aid for salaries, equipment, and logistics (Dehshiri & Shahmoradi, 2020). The NTC has been recognized as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people by Western nations such as France,

the United Kingdom, and the United States, who have all pledged support to reinforce the NTC's efforts against the Gaddafi government (Schnelzer, 2015).

The NTC benefited not only from international backing but also from the release of Gaddafi regime assets that had been frozen. The NTC gained access to these assets abroad owned by Libyan firms over time, providing a critical source of cash (Pradella, & Taghdisi Rad, 2017). The NTC was able to meet immediate demands and sustain operations because of the use of these thawed assets.

Unfortunately, the NTC still had trouble allocating its resources efficiently despite the generous donations it had received. Financial management was difficult due to the rapid pace of the political transition and the lack of adequate institutional support. Concerns about maintaining openness, accepting responsibility, and allocating resources fairly developed into persistent issues.

Furthermore, there were dangers associated with being dependent on external funds and sponsorships. Concerns were voiced regarding the potential impact on the NTC's decision-making procedures and the future political dynamics in Libya, as well as the influence and interests of the supporting countries (Kasaija, 2013).

The Case of Yemen

In 2014, the Houthis seized control of Yemen's capital and largest city, Sanaa, igniting a civil war. A new government and lower fuel prices were among the demands of the Houthi movement as the Hadi government failed to deliver on its promises of economic reforms. As a result, the government removed subsidies for gasoline, which allowed the group to organise and gain support from outside its core, leading to massive protests demanding lower fuel prices and a new government (CFR, 2022).

Hadi's government resigned under pressure in January 2015, while Hadi later fled to Saudi Arabia, and military units joined Saleh loyalists in joining the Houthis, which contributed to Houthi success on the battlefield in late 2014 when the Houthis captured part of Sanaa and consolidated their control of the capital.

A “political council” to govern Sanaa and much of northern Yemen was announced in July 2016 by the Houthis and the former government of Ali Abdullah Saleh, which was overthrown in 2011 after nearly thirty years in power.

Despite Saleh's decision to switch allegiance to the Saudi-led coalition and break with the Houthis in December 2017, he was assassinated, and his forces were defeated two days later by the Houthi militias.

By 2018, the coalition had expanded to include forces from Eritrea and Pakistan and had launched an air campaign against the Houthis with the goal of restoring Hadi's government. During those years, armed groups in Yemen adopted several tracks in order to obtain funding, the most prominent of which can be addressed as follows:

Territory Control

During the years of war in Yemen, al-Qaeda in Yemen benefited from the turmoil that ensued in 2015. The organisation took over the seaside city of Mukalla and released three hundred convicts from the city's prison, many of whom are thought to be members of AQAP. The terrorist group sought to extend its grip westward to Aden and took portions of the city before coalition forces reclaimed a substantial part of the territory in 2016.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula offered Yemenis in some regions security and public services that the state was unable to deliver at the time. In the central province of Bayda, where the Houthis and ISIS have increased their influence in recent years despite al-Qaeda's reduced activity (Robinson, 2021).

Infiltration of the Institutions

Coercive measures were used by administrators and merchants allied with the Houthis to suppress economic activity in Sanaa. There hasn't been any competition for control of Sanaa except for the abrupt outbreak of combat in December 2017 when the Houthis killed their old partner, former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and consolidated control of the capital.

No matter how many times they faced the “implicit threat” of using force and how many times they received popular support, Houthi and affiliated groups continued their campaign to seize the institutions until the Central Bank of Yemen and the Ministry of Finance were fully controlled by Houthi companies or by their role as supervisors. Although most of Yemen’s customs revenue is collected in Hodeidah, Dhamar, and Amran Governorate before being sent to Sanaa for redistribution, the Houthis have also taken over the Sanaa offices of the country’s major telecommunications businesses. A formidable military machine was created because Houthi militias managed to unite all three sectors of Yemeni society. They were able to build a long-term base of support for their military operations, even if the Houthis' international rejection and resistance and the Hadi government's efforts since 2016 to wrest control of the reins from Houthi hands were unsuccessful; Sanaa's economy is in shambles.

Remittances

Official banking channels and the hawala system have been used by Houthi networks in northern Yemen to maintain financial and trade flows. “Houthi Central Bank,” a state-run commercial bank, and the hawala exchange mechanism form the core of this system. No real movement of funds is required (not even electronically). The Houthi organisation was able to retain its systems in diversion despite the Hadi government's previous attempts to disrupt them (Chatham House, 2019).

To support their operations, armed organisations in the MENA region draw on a wide range of resources. Some examples of such illegal pursuits are smuggling,

extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and the drug trade. They may take advantage of local economies through taxation, protection rackets, and the management of key resources (Achilli & Tinti, 2022). Their ability to raise funds is greatly influenced by donations from other, friendly organisations and governments.

Armed groups in the MENA region have access to a diverse arsenal of weapons. Weapons in this category can range from handguns and submachine guns to mortars and RPGs. Some groups may even be able to acquire more advanced equipment, such as MANPADS or anti-tank-guided missiles (Spapens & Duquet, 2022). Illicit trade routes, nefarious arms smuggling rings, the theft or appropriation of state-owned weapons, and wartime stockpiles are only some of the many possible origins of such weapons (Brightman, 2011).

Armed organisations' access to firearms is influenced by both internal resources and external backing. Some organisations get direct military aid from third parties, such as the provision of guns and ammunition (Tamm 2016). These foreign sponsors may either knowingly or unknowingly aid in the proliferation of arms by transferring weapons to state actors in order to strengthen the capabilities of the armed groups they support.

Conclusion

Understanding the dynamics of contemporary conflicts requires research into the financial situations of armed groups in the MENA region. This research identified the financial backers of these organisations and assessed their effect on peace and security in the region.

Economics plays a crucial part in modern warfare. The stability of a territory is often directly affected by the mix of legal and criminal financial sources that armed organisations rely on. The inability of these parties to compromise due to financial constraints and the subsequent necessity of continual wars for their survival are more examples of how economic power contributes to the maintenance of violence.

It is crucial to address the economic causes of wars. Economic growth that includes underrepresented groups, efforts to narrow the wealth gap, and access to resources for those with fewer resources should all be given top billing. When dealing with transnational conflicts, it is imperative that states, administrations, and people work together to cut off the flow of weapons and illicit finance. Peace and stability are also promoted when civil society organisations are strengthened.

Several issues, including the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on these economies, the function of external actors, and the distinctions between the sexes in conflict, remain unanswered. Progress toward long-term peace and stability can be facilitated by answering these issues.

There are many opinions on how major powers and armed organisations engage with one another. It's possible that major powers are providing financial, military,

or ideological support to these organisations. This backing can sometimes be used to further geopolitical interests or fuel proxy warfare. Not all armed groups, however, have the backing of larger countries; sometimes they form as a result of regional grievances or shifts in power.

Conflicts can drag on, violence can rise, and progress toward peace can be impeded when strong powers back opposing sides. It can also spread weapons, radicalise people, destabilise regions, and keep proxy battles going. Therefore, diplomatic endeavours, regional cooperation, and respect for state sovereignty must all be part of any solution to this problem. The region can become stable and safe if discussion is encouraged, inclusive government is implemented, and the causes of conflicts are addressed.

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