

Review Article



Youth Problems in Sri Lanka from 1970 to 2020

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the youth problems in Sri Lankan context from 1970 to 2020. This is a sociological study on youth problems in Sri Lanka. Among the youth issues we identify here, unemployment and the reality of working-class life, youth unrest, educational disparities and youth, class disparity and youth problems, open economy and youth, abuse of young women, ethnic crisis, and youth are mainly important. The aim of this study was to analyze the social, economic, and political factors that have affected youth issues in the contemporary era. A qualitative research method has been chosen for conducting this research. Accordingly, the youth issues that arose from 1970 to 2020 became the limits of our research. The research problem here is what are the contemporary youth problems in Sri Lanka? In this investigation, we are building the foundation that the factors that have affected the youth problems in Sri Lanka after 1970 have been ideologically influenced. The importance of this study is that it adds a new field of study to sociology, political science, and psychology. The results revealed that contemporary youth issues are more ideological than superficial. Thus, it is concluded that the influence of the ideological state apparatus has affected the youth problems in Sri Lanka.

Introduction

It is important to identify the contemporary social, economic, and political background in the investigation of youth issues in Sri Lanka over five decades from 1970 to 2020. The youth rebellion in Sri Lanka in 1971 and the open economic policy in 1977 were the primary factors that led to social change in recent history. Likewise, the beginning of the Sinhalese and Tamil war called Black July in 1983 and the renewed youth struggle in 1989 is notable. Furthermore, the ethnic crisis that lasted for three decades is notable. At a time when many social problems

such as social injustice, class disparity, labor exploitation, etc. were emerging throughout Sri Lanka, even the education they received was of no use in fulfilling the expectations of the youth. Many rural youths emerged from free education and in a background where political patronage was more important than education, these youths were inclined towards a revolutionary path. After 1977, Sri Lanka's economy was also shaped into a new pattern. A pluralistic social system emerged and import, and export trade flourished. There, not only material resources but also human resources were exchanged. With the open economy, but also the foreign job market is increasing. There are many problems

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caused due to social and economic changes. Frustrated by the unfair treatment of many institutions, many extremist youths turned to external methods from the parliamentary system. The Sinhala-Tamil war in the north-east of Sri Lanka is important here.

The questions that arose in the post-war period have also emerged with a different face. From this point of view, contemporary youth issues are not spontaneous, but can be identified as a development of social trends since the 1970s.

Discussion

This article is expected to look at the social, economic, and political background of Sri Lankan society after the 1970s, and how it affected the youth. In other words, the youth issues that arose during that period were analyzed here. Among them, the problems faced by the youth under the topics of unemployment and the reality of working-class life, youth unrest, educational disparities, abuse of young women, and ethnic crisis are identified here.

Unemployment and the Reality of Working-class Life

After the 1950s there was an important change in the political economy of Sri Lanka. During the early years of that decade, the advantages of the economic boom that occurred after the Second World War also belonged to Sri Lanka. After 1956, the expansion of the public sector became the main way to get jobs through political patronage. At the same time, the rural small property-owning class did not lose their property. Successful cooperative projects in the countryside further strengthened the economic security of poor farmers by creating a systematic capitalist market for agricultural products and controlling consumer prices. Thus, the local petty bourgeoisie found itself in a newly liberated position. After the 1960s, there was no employment in the public sector to meet the expectations of the relatively emancipated rural youth [1].

In a background where political patronage was more important than education, these young sections were inclined towards a revolutionary path. An example of this is the youth revolt of 1971. Even after Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948, school education was not adapted to the new national needs. Therefore, since the 1960s, a huge mismatch between job needs and job opportunities has emerged. Although the number of young people dropping out of school and joining the workforce had grown to 220,000 annually, the economy's ability to provide jobs was not more than 70,000. According to the World Bank, there was not much unemployment in Sri Lanka by 1952. But by 1969-1970 unemployment had risen to 550,000 which is 14% of the workforce. 69% of the unemployed belong to the rural sector and 89% are young people of the age group 14-24 years [2].

With the new economic pattern that emerged in Sri Lankan society due to the 1977 open economy, the market demand for trained and unskilled labor increased. Cheap labor and labor-based industries emerged in Sri Lanka. This encourages the youth to turn to low wages or service work. However, the salary received was not enough for the youth to fulfill their expectations. With the emergence of cheap labor and labor-based industries in Sri Lanka, there was a greater demand for the labor of the youth. Sometimes this did not even measure the level of development of the country. Moreover, young people with high social expectations did not like labor jobs. Many manufacturing firms prioritize labor-intensive products such as garments. The workforce working in these has to work in shifts. Working hours are often increased by factories. Especially in the free trade zone workers do not get good social respect. Moreover, labor exploitation is also high. Nor is the life profile or social profile of garment workers, who earn a large proportion of Sri Lanka's export earnings, good. These young workers who are pressured by insufficient wages, living quarters without health facilities, and work forced to exceed their strength, are also caught in various oppressions in the outside society. As a result of the opening

of the economy in 1977, there was a huge increase in the labor contribution from young women in the free-trade zones created based on foreign investment.

After the open economy in 1977, the youth of the newly born society began to suffer from unemployment. Educated only in their mother tongue, this group was forced to work as laborers in the private sector dominated by the new urban middle class due to long periods of unemployment. They gravitated towards semi-skilled or unskilled labor jobs, and the less educated youth became even more unemployed. For these young people, the ideal class for their social existence has been the traditional middle class as the traditional middle class gradually declined in size, at face of new conditions. However, it was insufficient to fulfill the goals of the rural youth. These rural youth had no chance to enter the new urban middle class because of unemployment. A striking characteristic of unemployment was that it affected the educated youth rather than the uneducated youth. While unemployment was 5% among those with no schooling, it was as high as 30% for young people who passed the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level. The opportunities for top jobs were very limited and the demand for them was unlimited. Although employment was permitted in some sectors of the economy, it did not meet the expectations of job seekers. According to the 1968-1969 Labor Force Survey, the 1967 Rural Credit Survey, and the 1971 General Certificate of Education Sample Survey of the Unemployed among Youth Passers, 53% of the youth who passed the GCE had hoped for clerical jobs. Only 21% preferred any form of employment. According to a 1969 survey, unemployed graduates preferred government or state corporation work [3].

Inequalities between education and employment may arise from two deficiencies. The primary reason is the failure to create an education system at the outset capable of producing a workforce with the requisite skills, interests, and inclinations. The second is the failure of the economic model to make the right investments and choices related to technology

to match the current workforce. It is revealed that most of the unemployed youth are in the age group of 20-29 years. Furthermore, the majority of these unemployed are secondary school leavers with general education qualifications. The largest number of unemployed is concentrated in Mathara, Kaluthara, Galle, Hambanthota, Gampaha, Kegalle, and Kandy districts of Sri Lanka. In addition, the number of unemployed young women is much higher than the number of unemployed youth [4].

It is also important to note that unemployment patterns do not follow a simple urban-rural dichotomy. There were differences between Sri Lanka's commercial city of Colombo and rural areas, but it was the urban workforce that was most affected by unemployment. As a whole, youth unemployment in the country is 25%, compared to urban areas, where urban youth unemployment is 34% [4]. Therefore, in general, in addition to the problems faced by the educated rural youth, there is a severe lack of employment in the cities of Colombo and Gampaha in Sri Lanka in the urban unemployment sectors. To analyze the confusion of employment patterns, it will be important to measure the expectations of some unemployed people and to examine what kind of jobs they would like to pursue in the future. Most unemployed youths preferred to work in clerical and managerial occupations in industries. Only 8.4% prefer to engage in agriculture. 21.1% of the unemployed are looking for professional, managerial careers and 5.8% of the current career pattern belongs to that sector. Only 8.4% of youths preferred to be engaged in agriculture and in the real world, a maximum percentage of 47.5% of current occupations are engaged in agriculture [4].

Analyzing this situation according to the opinions of educated people, it becomes even more confusing. It seems that all those who pass the GCE Ordinary Level, GCE Advanced Level, and University degree wish for office jobs such as managerial positions or clerical positions. Not even a single percentage of those who pass the advanced level exam, nor the same percentage who leave the university, want

to be agricultural workers, and only 1.5% of those who pass the ordinary level exam work in agriculture. The situation is the same in the industrial sector. Only 15.5% of the passers of the Ordinary Level are employed in industries. 5.5% of those who pass the Advanced Level Examination want to work in agriculture, while none of the university graduates do so [4].

The Economic and Social Survey Report issued by the Department of Census and Statistics for the year 1971 as well as the Sears Report make a very clear analysis of the employment problem in Sri Lanka. It seems that more than 90% of the working people in Sri Lanka are employed. 90% of people between the ages of 15 and 25 who have not received more than sixth-grade education are employed according to the national average. However, unemployment is as high as 60% among those between the ages of 15 and 25 with a sixth-grade education [5]. The core of the youth problem is the problem of educated and semi-educated youth. The main reason for this employment problem is the crisis in the national economy.

Youth Unrest

It was only in the middle of the 1960s that young people started coming forward in Sri Lanka as special members and political groups. Although the initial form of this force was seen in the universities during 1960-1962, there was no independent youth politics in Sri Lanka before 1965. During this period, university and youth political movements were restricted by the politics of national parties. The only difference was that this politics was shaped according to the special conditions of the area of the respective universities or the youth organization. Despite the inherent militancy of the youth, the slogans of the respective classes were presented by the youth of this time. But after 1965, not only were special slogans related to youth sections presented, but also political organizations outside the thinking of national political parties were formed. Some of this type of youth later joined to form the 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' political party, while others evolved independently [5].

This feeling of desperation, in Gall, Theldeniya, or Jaffna, Sri Lanka, was equally read by the youth, "tell whom?" from the texts [4]. Because of this frustration that arose from the existing institutions, many extremist youths turned to external methods from the parliamentary system. In the north of Sri Lanka, they emerged as the only alternative to the ousted major political party leadership. If the existing system failed to respond to their grievances in front of them, their only option was to raze it to the ground. This fact was made clear by the constant attacks on government property and other things by the youth from the South. There must be a definite need for government to proactively respond to the growing needs of the youth. The majority of the population is youth. History has proven that if their grievances are not addressed or their voices are not heeded, youth political parties operating outside the mainstream will once again emerge.

According to the survey using 10,192 young people regarding the April uprising of 1971, some basic characteristics related to their social background have been identified. By age group, 77% of them belonged to the age group of 17-26 years. By education, 2.5% had no schooling and 17% were educated from kindergarten to 4th grade. 42.3% were educated from 5th grade to 8th grade, 32.2% were educated up to ordinary level, 4.1% were educated up to advanced level examination, and 1.6% were graduated [6].

This evidence clearly shows that a large number of those who joined the youth revolt of 1971 were rural youth from poor and lower-middle-class families. Although the number of university students among the youth of this rebellion was not very large, they represented the main leadership of the rebellion. Understanding the need for a violent revolution to find solutions to the existing problems, they took that message to the rural youth. Rohana Wijeweera, Layanal Bopage, J. Uyangoda, Somasiri Kumanayake, Nayananda Wijekulathilake, Sarath Wijesinghe, J. Samarathunga, who were among the main leaders of the 1971 rebellion were university

youths and many others who were about to get a university education were among them [2].

On the one hand, the government was fighting against the political party 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' and on the other hand, the JVP was moving towards a civil war. The police were chasing the JVP. On March 16th, 1971, Rohana Wijeweera was arrested and by March 19th the number of youths arrested by the police and the army was about 100 [7]. People including the mass organization of the JVP, the Socialist Union, the Patriotic Student Front, the Patriotic Women's Front, and the Patriotic Monk Front made a concerted effort to save Rohana Wijeweera. After that, with the open economy, large rural youth social expectations, suffering from unemployment, emerged. A majority of these disaffected youth participated in the 1989 anti-government uprising. It is said that about forty thousand lives were destroyed in the rebellion. But the European Parliament team that came to investigate this said that more than sixty thousand youths have died in rebellious situation [8].

At present, the army of the Sri Lankan government, which is more than two hundred thousand, consists of these rural youths. Most of them do not have secondary education. People who have secondary education get higher posts at the ordinary level. This social upheaval also led to youth unrest. Sri Lanka's radical Sinhalese rural youth attempted to gain power through armed struggle on two occasions, both of which ended in defeat. It is also certain that in both cases they tried to seize power through armed struggle with the good intention of building a new society that they thought was just. They chose such a violent course of action because they did not think that there was any other non-violent course of action. Conscious intervention for social change need not be violent. But it was the belief of the radical Sinhalese rural youth that this could only be done through a violent struggle. In addition to risking their precious lives, they resorted to a way of acting that risks the existence of the entire society due to their strong belief that there is no other way for it. But clearly, it should be mentioned that it is an

ideological fallacy. The main argument they used to come to that wrong conclusion was that there is no other way but violent force. It should be mentioned that this delusion is not limited only to these young people. Such acceptance exists not only among Marxists of all stripes but also among non-Marxist scholars who reject Marxism but accept the revolution [9].

Revolution is the prospect of liberation. With the youth uprising of 1971, their aspiration was a socialist state. From the day the young people who entered the path of emancipation left the house, the people in the houses spent theirs in fear. The 1989 uprising was a social issue that had a great impact on contemporary society. Just like the 1971 rebellion, it overcomes it with youth turning to anti-government rebellion, kidnappings, corruption, murders, etc. The political decisions of the then ruling United National Party in Sri Lanka also led to the rise of the Sinhalese youth rebellion in 1987-1989, which can be called the civil war in the south, which ended with the destruction of sixty thousand young lives. Due to the Black July struggle of 1983, the Sri Lanka Communist Party, the New Lanka Samasamaja Party and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna were banned. The ban on the JVP continued. The banning of a Democratic party without sufficient grounds had very serious consequences. It seems that they once again initiated an armed struggle and carried out killings and assaults without sufficient political philosophy. The state repression launched against them was also brutal [10].

Educational Disparities and Youth

Educational system and its social outcomes since the 1950s after the independence of Sri Lanka, there has been a lot of influence on the youth. English education established in Sri Lanka by the British for some limited purposes turned to Sinhala medium after 1956. Scholars say that a great decline has started in the education sector since then. In the education system that existed then, scientists did not get the high intellectual products of the human brain and some of them were not practical based on intelligence. The free education and

mother tongue education system which came later, the education system suffered a big invasion. Thus, an education system that was liberal and capitalist in the mother tongue itself became the gate opened by the government for the children of the rising petty bourgeoisie. Technical education was sidelined, and no attention was paid to vocational and technical education.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were many lost youths who were not helped by education. The free education in the Sinhala medium of the welfare state produced even more futile results in the face of a new economic pattern that emerged after 1977. Many young people are tired of the education system based on political interference and have become victims of the economic system. A large number of people who took part in the 1971 uprising were educated up to the ordinary level or above. Relatively more educated students were also disaffected in the 1980s. In particular, the socio-economic background that led to this is also important. This is due to the failure to meet the needs and aspirations of young people who have received less than the secondary school education, especially in rural provinces.

All the students produced by the school system strived to be trained in arts and languages. The result of such an education can only be the creation of a person engaged in a dull office job. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the school system became more widespread, but this was also its purpose. The sole purpose of education was to get students into universities. That is to meet the 2% requirements that will eventually enter the university. Sri Lanka still lacks the kind of education that can turn the remaining 98% into productive citizens [5].

The following statistics presented by the Examinations Department of the Ministry of Education highlight the mismatch between education and employment. In 1987, 484797 students appeared for the GCE Ordinary Level examination, and only 95416 students qualified to continue their education. The remaining 389,381 students, all of whom were in the age

bracket of 16 years, had to find other avenues for their future advancement. In the same year, out of 112,577 students who appeared for the GCE Advanced Level examination, only 31079 students qualified. Out of these, only 6143 selected people were able to enter the universities. The admission rate is one of the lowest compared to other countries in the world. In many other countries of the world, a very high percentage of students who appear for this exam enter universities. Accordingly, 106,434 students who appeared for the advanced level examination in the year 1987 alone were unable to enter the university and became people who lost hope. This desperation is compounded by the fact that their entire school routine is focused on preparing for advanced-level exams and getting into university. Thus in 1987, a total of 495,815 students, i.e. nearly half a million youth (398,381 O/L students and 106,434 A/L students) had to endure the non-fulfillment of their aspirations [4]. This process of socialization of students continues year after year, producing demoralized and disappointed youths who blame the education system with considerable justification for not being able to achieve their goals.

Since secondary school education does not provide the basic knowledge and skills required for gainful employment, opportunities for self-employment are few and far between for the majority of secondary school leavers. There is no advice on such occasions, and no alternative advice to develop them. Due to the education, they have received, they are more interested in office jobs and have attitudes like lack of work pride, which has also caused them trouble. Due to this, many lucrative employment avenues are closed to them. And even university students, mainly graduates in the arts and humanities, are frustrated. The number of unemployed graduates registered by the government increased day by day. It is also natural for these desperate people to join together and lead a rebellion against the existing system. Concerning the above figures and analysis, one of the major problems facing Sri Lanka today is the mismatch between education and employment. Primarily secondary school

leavers are neglected. If we want to avoid future disappointments and riots, these issues should be addressed as a matter of urgency and priority. The national backbone is the education system. However, the way Sri Lanka's education system has evolved over the years reveals that there is something fundamentally wrong with it. Political leaders firmly believe that equality in human society can only be created through a centralized state bureaucracy that imposes unchanging standards throughout the country.

Financial and other forms of developing personal skills to support youth and self-employment by running such projects with the competitive demand for school leavers as indicated by the organization 'Tharunyayata Hetak' (A Tomorrow for Youth) It is also proposed to support the youth and help the disabled youth to develop their personality [11].

Abuse of Young Women

In a male-dominated society, it is based on traditional attitudes that men are stronger than women. The basis of these attitudes is the beginning of the process of male influence on the subjugation of women. The story of using biological differences to oppress women goes back in history to the collapse of a patriarchal society with the rise of private property. Growing up in the social attitude and practice that men are superior, young women have received less education and other facilities than young men. According to the traditional thinking that women are not equal to men physically, spiritually, and intellectually, she naturally became a slave.

However, by 1971, there was a complete loss of these attitudes. That is, the young woman is also to some extent equal to the young man. By 1971, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayake showed progress in the status of the young woman by becoming the first female prime minister of Sri Lanka. After that, more people focused on the young woman according to their social life. The young woman, who was confined to the kitchen and lived under social pressure, got the opportunity to come to a society free from that

pressure. A young woman could also apply for political seats long after she had the right to vote under universal suffrage. The fact that the parliament was opened to represent the people of the respective regions by winning the victory is a high political victory in the society. This was due to the change in culture and social attitudes, economic, and political influence.

With the open economy after 1977, according to the social and cultural environment of that era, young women began to face many problems. Economically, the cost of living has risen, facing complex issues, etc. and has lost the ability of men to live only on their salary. Due to these various problems, the number of employed women has gradually increased. With the implementation of open economic policies, after the emergence of free trade zones, rural young women were more inclined towards it.

The 1978 Sri Lanka Department of Labor Employment Survey shows that according to that sample, 87.6% of female workers are concentrated in the textile industries and 62.6% in other textile industries [12]. It indicates that these jobs are compatible with the concept of suitable jobs for women. The establishment of the free trade zone and the arrival of industries dependent on semi-skilled labor to the country through the international division of labor led to the establishment of large-scale textile industries, followed by women in industries such as electronics and gem cutting.

According to the 1984 census, about 90% of the people employed in Katunayake and Biyagama free-trade zones in Sri Lanka are young women. These young women are subjected to labor exploitation, working under minimal facilities for very little pay. They have to struggle for a long time to meet production targets. In 1984, Sri Lanka refused to sign the International Labor Organization Convention banning night work for young women [12]. However, the personal safety of young women is threatened due to working at night, and this situation directly affects young women in the free-trade zone. Similarly, they do not have good housing facilities and they are sexually

harassed in and on the way to workplaces. Moreover, the economic background of the young people who migrated from the village to the city for employment purposes was not favorable, so they worked during the day and engaged in prostitution at night. Furthermore, as a result, young women resorted to abortion spontaneously. However, most of them unable to afford the financial requirement even to have an abortion, they finally resorted to marriage.

Moreover, during the 1989 terror in Sri Lanka, young women were brutally murdered. It continues to violate the human rights of young women without any hesitation. The number of young women who were oppressed due to the North and East war in Sri Lanka is huge. Among them, Sinhala-Tamil opposing religious girls were raped with hatred, and soldiers were brutally tortured and abused on the battlefield. Also, by the year 1980, young women migrated to Middle Eastern countries as domestic workers. It rose to 30,000 in 1980 alone [13]. The rape that happened in connection with this is also big. Sometimes young women go to work as domestic workers and they are abused in foreign countries and mothers leave their teenage daughters alone in their homes. Also, rape related to plantations is not less. There are many cases of young women being abused by employers in tea plantations in Sri Lanka.

When the United Nations declared 1975 as Women's Year, almost all political parties, trade unions, and non-governmental organizations celebrated the occasion. Feminists traveled all over Sri Lanka and discussed the issues of young women. They received good responses from young women of all classes. New organizations emerged that represented different trends in feminism. They ranged from liberalism to Marxism. Aid was provided to its feminist movements and projects. The aid was provided to government organizations. The result of this activity was the building of international relations between women's movements [14].

This way of thinking became popular in Sri Lanka during the decades 1975-1985. The establishment of the Women's Bureau (1978),

the participation of official delegations to the Women's Conferences (1980) and Nairobi (1985), the appointment of a Minister for Women's Affairs (1983), and the increase in the number of women's projects reflected the popularity of that way of thinking [14]. The first socialist feminist group to emerge in Sri Lanka was the 'Kántha Handa' (Voice of Woman) which was established in 1978. This group, which publishes a magazine in three languages, raised many new questions. Economic demands including equal pay, rape, sexism in mass media, and opposition to beauty contests are some of those new issues. In the years that followed, other socialist feminist groups emerged. These small feminist groups are united in women's action committees, the committee's campaign on specific issues. International Women's Day is celebrated annually on March 8. Left-wing parties, including the Lanka Samasamaja Party and the Community Part, have separate women's associations. They have continuously highlighted the social and economic oppression of young women [14].

The International Decade of Women was held from 1986-1985 and a major achievement of the decade was the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which included a comprehensive body of legislation on women's rights [13]. The fact many beauty pageants have been recorded in this decade is controversial. The increasing use of the beauty and femininity of young women for commercial purposes and the pricing of female characters can also be identified. Another area where socialist feminists campaigned in past decades was the beauty industry. However, the protests did not bear much fruit. Due to increasing commercialization and consumerism, the number of nude shoots and fashion shows has increased, and the misuse of young women's faces and bodies for advertising has also increased.

Another issue raised by these feminists is the right of young women to control their sexuality and reproductive processes. It also includes

campaigning to change the outdated abortion law that has emerged as an issue today. As in India, a common legal system for all ethnic groups is being discussed to stop the continued injustice against Tamil and Muslim girls under the guise of respecting their traditional laws through so-called personal law. Another aspect of feminist consciousness that grew in this women's decade was feminists' recognition of the importance of contemporary women's studies. A women's studies program with a socialist orientation has been started by the Women's Education Center and the Social and Peace Center [14].

Sri Lanka's Women's Research Center, women's Bureau, women's affairs ministry, etc. also discuss the issues of young women, and even at the rural level, the attention of young women towards their independence can be recognized by the formation of women's societies and women's societies. But at the rural and urban levels, some women organize and engage in struggles in various situations based on false objectives. The developmental approach is implemented by other non-governmental organizations such as the Women's Bureau and Mahila Samithi to encourage rural young women. There are various organizations of professionals in the city, sister organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs. In political fields, women's organizations affiliated with various parties have emerged. The chairperson of the Seva Wanitha organization of every ministry is the minister's wife. The work of these servicewomen is to help the government's policies to be implemented and to organize various social assistance events [14]. Thus, its objectives are directly related to the entire bureaucratic state apparatus. Hence, it does not contribute in any way to solving the problems of young women. From this, it can be recognized that their goals are limited and the question of what the future of young women will be like is still a challenging question before the society.

Ethnic crisis and youth

Western imperialists invaded third-world countries intending to steal people's labor, wealth, and cultural heritage. By the twentieth century, liberation movements were against the harsh exploitation and slavery of the imperialists. This was further supported by the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917. Sri Lanka youth with this concept took a step forward in 1971 and raised their heads again in 1987-1989. It can be thought that the protests caused by the series of social stratification actions during the riots were suppressed for the last time. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Sri Lanka's open policy further intensified.

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has had a direct impact on contemporary youth unrest. The youth of the north took up arms for a separate state called Tamil Eelam. The youths of the South mostly turned to militant movements to secure the motherland, preventing the country from being divided, and protesting against the presence of the Indian Army in Sri Lanka. This shows that such feelings related to national identity have become a factor that leads the youth to sacrifice their lives for a certain purpose.

The recommendations of the Lessons Learned and Reconstruction Commission (LLRC) have been monitored by the LTTE for violations of international humanitarian law, using civilians as human shields, placing military equipment in civilian centers, shooting civilians fleeing to safe areas, recruiting minors even in the final conflict, planting landmines and IEDs even outside the conflict zone, forcing civilians into the conflict, and segregating. Among these is the difficulty of identification, the use of suicide bombers who continue to harm civilians. The LTTE took full advantage of the loopholes and some clauses in the ceasefire agreement by not handing over illegal arms and carrying out arms exports. Violated human rights and recruited child soldiers. The commission received many complaints that the fundamental rights and liberties of the people were violated due to the conflicts. Among them are complaints about

kidnappings, recruitment of minors for war activities, extrajudicial death sentences, and violation of press freedom. Apart from the LTTE, other groups also recruited children for war activities. However, it should be noted that the Rehabilitation Commissioner as TMVP and UNICEF signed an agreement to release all the children [15].

At that time, Tamil youths in the north of Sri Lanka claimed that the main reason for the unrest in the north and east was political. The Sinhalese Only Act enacted in 1956 and the population ratio system introduced around 1970 were cited as powerful political reasons that led the people to first for a federal system of government and secondly for a separate state. When these grievances were complicated by the need for war, the safety of the lives of Tamil young men and women living in these areas seemed to them to be an acute issue. This insecurity was also felt by the Sinhalese and Muslim people living in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Physical insecurity is a result of political changes in the north and east, including internecine struggles between Tamil militant factions.

Although the reason for the youth unrest in the North is political, it is clear from the fact notice of the people of the North and South that economic reasons have also affected this. Initially, the open economic policy adversely affected domestic products such as onions and chilies in the north and handlooms and handicrafts in the south. The deployment of the navy to quell the conflict led to a setback in the fishing industry in the North as well as in the South. Tamil youth could not get jobs in government offices due to a lack of language proficiency. Nevertheless, there was an inflow of foreign money due to large-scale emigration from the North and South. The result was that certain sections became extremely poor. Moreover, the leadership in the plantation areas was terminated and the militant personnel stirred up the youth sentiments in the plantation areas. Furthermore, with the development of educational facilities in the plantation areas, there was no diplomatic action on future crises of school leavers who

completed secondary education but were reluctant to work on plantations.

The problems of the Muslim youth started on 30.10.1990 when the Muslim settlers drove the LTTE out of the north at gunpoint. Muslims were victims of ethnic cleansing in the north and east [15]. Young women belonging to the Muslim community demanded the right to teach Arabic and Islam in their schools and the right to admit a certain percentage of university students from the Muslim community. Tharunayata Hetak organization has been indicated as an aim of incorporation to build a peaceful atmosphere among the Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher youth of Sri Lanka, friendship and goodwill among individuals, to develop a sense of national consciousness and mutual understanding [11].

To sum up, these kinds of upheavals took place in Sri Lankan society. In 1957-1958, the Sinhala-Tamil riots that provoked the Sinhala Buddhist majority and the protest of the Dravidian people in Jaffna against the change of the administrative language from English to Sinhala in 1960 are important. Furthermore, it is important that the Sinhalese youth group gathered around the political party called Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in the 1960s and the first revolt of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in 1971. The 1970s saw the emergence of the LTTE and other armed Tamil youth groups in the north and the 1975 LTTE launching a series of political assassinations, and then the banning of the LTTE organization in 1978 and the Tamil protest attacks in Jaffna in 1981 grew greatly. Among the social upheavals were the 1983 Black July destruction of Tamils, the banning of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, and the implementation of the first phase of the Eelam War. In 1987, the JVP's second revolt resulted in an armed uprising in the south and the arrival of the Indian peacekeeping force in the north. In 1989, the JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera was killed and the rebellion was suppressed. In 1990, the Indian Army left the country, and the second phase of the Eelam War was launched. The third phase of the Eelam War in 1995, the ceasefire in 2002, the resurgence of the war in

2006, and the end of the war in 2009 after the killing of LTTE leader Prabhakaran took place in the Sri Lankan social corporation. The sparks of this post-war era are still burning in Sri Lankan society and the younger generation was its most affected one.

Conclusion

We identified the youth issues in Sri Lanka for five decades 1970 to 2020 mainly under seven areas. These are unemployment and the reality of working-class life, youth unrest, educational disparities and youth, class disparity, and youth problems, open economy and youth, abuse of young women, and ethnic crisis and youth. This study reveals that contemporary youth issues are more ideological than superficial. Thus, we can conclude that the influence of the ideological state apparatus has affected the youth problems in Sri Lanka.

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