

The Ethno-political Polarization Scenario in Sri Lanka's Presidential Election held in November 2019: A Critical View

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Abstract: Under the nineteenth amendment to the constitution of Sri Lanka, the president himself cannot dissolve the parliament until the completion of four and a half years. Under these circumstances, the president may look to strengthen his powers. Mahinda Rajapaksa pointed out that the nineteenth amendment of the constitution, which the Sri Lankan parliament passed just after he lost his presidency in 2015, has reduced the powers of the president's office. The nineteenth amendment of the constitution strengthened the prime minister's role, re-established a two-term limit on the presidency, and reinforced independent commissions like on human rights, police, the judiciary, and civil services. Regarding the nineteenth amendment of the constitution, two different types of opinions were formulated. Many people welcomed the end of the all-powerful executive presidency. Some of the others have criticized that the nineteenth amendment of the constitution, by dividing executive powers between the president and prime minister, produced an ineffective and confused government. But Mahinda Rajapaksa's opinion hinted strongly that the SLPP would push for the parliament to revoke the amendment and re-concentrate powers in the presidency. If a strong presidential system is re-established that it would come at the sacrifice of the independence that the judiciary and police have enjoyed since 2015. A last-minute agreement between the SLFP and the SLPP saved them from the political destruction. The result of the presidential election underlined the beginning of the SLPP as the most powerful political party in the country at the sacrifice of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Both the SLFP and the UNP tolerated weakening setbacks with their leadership in panic. The SLPP will further strengthen its position at the forthcoming parliamentary polls.

Key words: Nineteenth Amendment, Presidential Election, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, National Democratic Front, Gotabaya Rajapaksa

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the nineteenth amendment to the constitution enacted in 2015, which trims the powers of the presidency, the prime minister couldn't be removed without a referendum. In terms of the nineteenth amendment, the prime minister has to resign or continue to serve in that position as long as the cabinet continues. Even if the president was elected by the people, according to the nineteenth amendment to the constitution, the president's power is curtailed. Therefore, until the presidential system is amended another way constitutionally, the presidential election must be viewed

as a constitutional matter. The Local Government Elections, held in 2018, were an opportunity for all political parties to test their strength in the political arena. A similar experiment was held in November 16, 2019 in the presidential election. In fact, the political parties have designed the strategy for their political game in the presidential election targeting the parliamentary election that would be held in 2020. It can be said that only the party that is going to form the government with an absolute majority (2/3rd) in the year 2020 parliamentary elections could fulfill the promises made to the people in the presidential election. Therefore, this research article is focused on examining the following crucial problems:

1. Does the country head for another crisis far worse than previous crises?
2. Is it the lack of knowledge of the constitution among members of the parliament which is deliberately used to cause crises?
3. Does the nineteenth amendment reflect the fortune of Sri Lanka?
4. What's the public opinion on the nineteenth amendment post presidential election?
5. What, in the future, necessary strategies should be developed to ensure maximum security to the minorities?

This research was done qualitatively and involved analysis of the content of the events. The content analysis generally involves closely examining the text of documents and the words of politicians, diplomats, and political analysts. The data collected regarding the criticisms of the constitution of Sri Lanka on websites, political leaders' speech, historical evidence, and research books have been used to write this research article. Basically, this research paper consists of two parts. The first part of the research paper will analyze the presidential election results, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's decisive victory and the post-election consequences. The second part of the research paper will analyze the president's power and functions according to the 1978 Constitution, even after the nineteenth amendment.

II. THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT

This presidential election was held on 16 November 2019 and contested by thirty-five candidates. It was recorded as a historical event in the presidential election in Sri Lanka (Sunday observer: 2019.10.13). Two of the thirty-five presidential candidates were very powerful contestants. One was Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who concluded the civil war in 2009, and another was Sajith Premadasa, who is the son of the assassinated ex-president Ranasinghe Premadasa, who fell victim to a Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) suicide bomber in May 1993 and was a minister in the Ranil Wickremesinghe's government. Similarly, two of the thirty-five presidential candidates were retired army officers. One was General Mahesh Senanayake, who retired in 2019, and another was Lieutenant Colonel Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, who retired in June 1990. Gotabaya Rajapaksa contested on behalf of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), which is

Sinhala-Buddhist Nationalist party. Even though the SLPP lacked parliamentary representation, those elected on the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and the nationalist members served as the SLPP members in the parliament.

Sajith Premadasa contested on behalf of the New Democratic Front (NDF), the third occasion a United National Party (UNP) led coalition fielded a candidate from the New Democratic Front. General Sarath Fonseka and Maithripala Sirisena contested in the 2010 and 2015 presidential elections, respectively, under the 'swan' symbol (Daily mirror, 2015.07.01). The Janata Vimukthi Peramuna contested the presidential election for the first time in October 1982, during which its founding leader Rohana Wijeweera was its candidate. In 2019, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) leader Anura Kumara Disanayake contested on the National People's Power (NPP) ticket (Sunil W.A, 2019.09.05) but he couldn't even save his deposit.

Table: 01

Presidential Election 2019-All Island Results

Name of the Candidate	Parties	Votes Received	%
Gotabaya Rajapaksa	Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP)	6,924,255	52.25
Sajith Premadasa	National Democratic Front (NDF)	5,564,239	41.99
Anura Kumara Disanayake	National Movement of People's Power (NMPP)	418,553	3.16
Mahesh Senanayake	National Peoples' Party (NPP)	49,655	0.37
Total Valid Votes		13,252,499	82.87
Rejected Votes		135,452	0.85
Total Polled		13,387,951	83.72
Registered No. of Electors		15,992,096	

Source: https://elections.gov.lk/web/wp-content/uploads/election-results/presidential-elections/PRE_2019_All_Island_Result.pdf

Gotabaya Rajapaksa obtained a major victory in the Presidential election. Accordingly, SLPP's candidate Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected as the new President of the Republic of Sri Lanka. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa secured 6,924,255 votes (52.25%), NDF candidate Sajith Premadasa secured 5,564,239 votes (41.99%) and NPP candidate Anura Kumara Disanayake secured a distant third place, managing to secure 418,553 votes (3.16%) (Presidential Elections Results – 2019). Gotabaya Rajapaksa is the first to be elected for a five-year term under the nineteenth amendment to the constitution. The former president Maithripala Sirisena received a six-year term and reduced it to five years by way of the nineteenth amendment of the constitution. The Presidential election had a turnout of more than 80%, which is the largest turnout in Sri Lanka's election history (Presidential Elections Results – 2019). Although there were incidents including a shooting attack on buses carrying Muslim voters in the North-East without casualties, the election was held in a relatively peaceful manner (The Guardian, 2019.11.16). At that

time, Gotabaya Rajapaksa tweeted that "I am grateful for the opportunity to be the president, not only of those who voted for me but as the president of all Sri Lankans. The trust you have invested in me is deeply moving and being your president will be the greatest honor of my life" (Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 2019.11.17).

III. GOTABAYA'S DECISIVE VICTORY

Gotabaya Rajapaksa's presidential election victory was determined by the following factors, such as security, ethno-nationalism, economic straits, government's infighting, and SLPP's political organizational strength. The election was conducted seven months after the Easter Sunday attack on the 21st of April 2019. The self-radicalized Islamist extremists carried out the suicide attacks at five-star hotels in the heart of the Colombo, and three churches in Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa, and killed more than 250 Christians including foreigners (Anbarasan Ethirajan, 2019.08.13). Easter Sunday attacks stoked fears about the instability of the security system

in the country. Notwithstanding advance warnings from the Indian government, (Nikhil Kumar and Sugam Pokharel, 2019.04.24) the government failed to prevent the devastating Easter Sunday attacks on churches and hotels, that feeling, and anger were well embedded in people's minds. Under these circumstances, Gotabaya promised to secure the island and eradicate terrorism during the election campaign. Gotabaya's pledge to prioritize security and his ethnic-nationalist message resonated with the many Sinhala voters (Pitasanna Shanmugathas, 2019.04.23). Gotabaya got the active support of Buddhist monks who have long promoted the idea that Tamils and Muslims threatened Sri Lanka's Sinhala Theravada Buddhism. Under these circumstances, Sinhalese ethnic nationalist sentiment were further increased by the Easter bombings.

The United National Front (UNF) government's unpopularity, slow economic growth, and difficulties in debt servicing gave Gotabaya a big. Moreover, the UNF government failed to deliver significant welfare to the poor and middle-income Sri Lankans. There was a sharp decline in tourism following the Easter attacks. Therefore, numerous Sri Lankans faced domestic economic inconvenience and difficulties (Yen Nee Lee, 2019.04.26). Since the Rajapaksa family's popularity had reached the apex among the Sinhalese, Sajith Premadasa had to get overwhelming support from Tamils and Muslims to have a chance at election victory. In this environment, SLPP spread the allegation that if Sajith Premadasa won the presidency, he would be a hostage of the minorities.

The UNF government's economic policymaking was confused and often inconsistent. Moreover, the increasingly deadly relationship between President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe further intensified the government's ineffectiveness. In October 2018, President Maithripala Sirisena removed Ranil Wickremesinghe from the prime minister's office and replaced him with Mahinda Rajapaksa as the prime minister. But the Supreme Court ruled it as unconstitutional (Crisis Group, 2018.10.3). Therefore, it has helped to discern the confusion of the country's governing elite.

The Rajapaksa family established SLPP very systematically in 2016 to be a political wing for the return to power and also the SLPP organized party branches at the grass root level island wide. SLPP got a massive victory in the February 2018 local government elections, and also it helped to strengthen the party at the grassroots level (Rohan Samarajiwa, 2018.02.12). Therefore, it can be said that it helped Gotabaya Rajapaksa get popular support from rural areas in the presidential election. Unlike the Gotabaya family that had carefully put the foundation of the campaign for election since 2016, Sajith Premadasa was named as the UPF presidential candidate, after a harsh battle with party leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, just days before the campaign began. The Sajith Premadasa's campaign was weaker than Gotabaya Rajapaksa with weak party organization and less funding and media support. Most of the private media was owned by Gotabaya Rajapaksa's

friends and companions. While it can't be denied that more than a few media spread disinformation on his behalf, still the strong media support notwithstanding the disinformation campaign helped Gotabaya Rajapaksa win the presidential election.

Most of the disinformation spread to target the Sajith Premadasa's election campaign claimed that Premadasa had signed a secret pact with the Tamil National Alliance. The five Tamil political parties such as Illangai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Tamil People's Council (TPC) led by former Chief Minister of the Northern province and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), before the presidential election, signed a memorandum containing thirteen (13) demands including a demand for a political solution and abolishing the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). It noted that "the acceptance of the political aspirations of Tamil nation, recognition of the merged Northern and Eastern Provinces as the historical habitat of the Tamils and realization of the fact that the Tamil People under the provisions of international law are entitled to the right of self-determination" (Colombo Gazette, 2019.10.30). The parties had declared that their support could be given to any candidate based on the support they received for demands.

M.K. Shivajilingam, who is the chairman of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), contested the presidential election. He was expected to divide the Tamil votes. But Tamil people rejected him in the Presidential election. Former Chief Minister of Northern Province C.V. Wigneswaran took a neutral stand on the Presidential election and did not tell the people whom to vote for. According to his statement, "both the main candidates whose Minister Sajith Premadasa and former defense secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa have not accepted the demands put forth by Tamil parties. Therefore, the people thinking about their history, current internal and external circumstances will make the decision on their own and cast the vote" (Eye Sri Lanka, 2019.10.31). Whoever won in between Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Sajith Premadasa would be doing nothing for the Tamils. Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that people should decide according to their conscience. This was a good move for Gotabaya. But people did not accept his statement.

IV. POST- ELECTION CONSEQUENCES AND FORMATION OF THE SHADOW GOVERNMENT

November 16th, 2019 poll was the first admiration test for the UNP government headed by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe who was under pressure from his cabinet colleagues to step down. A day following the presidential election, three cabinet Ministers resigned including Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera.

The swearing-in of the new President was held on the 18th November 2019 and following that a meeting, regarding the parliament, was held among the Speaker, the Prime

Minister, the Leader of the opposition, and other party leaders of the Parliament. The speaker was informed of the decision of the prime minister and the opposition leader following discussions with respective party leaders. The speaker convened a meeting of all-party leaders to take a final decision. The prime minister and the opposition leader discussed the above issues with the speaker of the house, the speaker convened a meeting of all-party leaders to take a final decision. Accordingly, the following alternative measures had been taken into consideration (Colombo Page, 2019.11.19):

1. As required by the constitution, the parliament to be dissolved on March 1st, 2020, to be held on the new parliamentary election in April 2020.
2. As required by the constitution, members of parliament to voluntarily gave a 2/3rd majority to dissolve the parliament and hold a general election immediately,
3. As required by the constitution, the government headed by the prime minister and ministers to resign permitting the executive president to appoint a caretaker cabinet until the general election.

Prime minister selected the third alternative proposal by the party leaders, accordingly, honorably resigned to pave the way for the new president to form a new government in terms of the overwhelming mandate he had obtained. Following, his ministers resigned their ministries agreeing with the voice of the people. The best and intelligent action which Rani Wickremesinghe could take obeying the Latimer Principles which he often speaks of. The Latimer House Principles were designed to help the business of fair, efficient, transparent, responsive government or government for the people. The confidence, belief, and trust which people have in their government is the ultimate challenge (litmus). Also, if his party sits in the opposition, he can make Sajith Premadasa the leader of the opposition and he can continue as the leader of the party. This is nothing new to the party. The most revered leader of UNP Late Hon. Dudley Senanayake did so.

The main feature is that the election took place in accordance with the nineteenth amendment to the constitution of Sri Lanka. There is a fundamental difference between the power of the previous presidents and the current president. It should also be noted that at the time of the election, an all-powerful executive president had expired with the nineteenth amendment to the constitution. The voters had faced the election with the traditional view of the election of the executive president. The presidential candidates also struggled to come to terms with the reduced powers of the president as voters. Following the nineteenth amendment to the constitution of Sri Lanka, the president's executive powers have been severely restricted, and the parliament and the prime minister have been promoted to a strong position.

In this case, next section of the article will seek to put forward what the president's power elected by the people on the 16th of November will be, and what the prospect of the election is.

V. THE PRESIDENT POWER

According to the 1978 Constitution (even after the nineteenth amendment), there shall be a President to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. He is the Head of State, Head of the Executive, Head of the Government, and the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces (Article:30, para:1). He shall be directly elected by the people and his term of office shall be five years (Article:30, para: 2). According to the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution, a person cannot be elected by the people more than two times as president (Article:31, para:2) The president shall cease to hold any other office created or accepted by the Constitution. If she/he is a Member of Parliament, she/he shall vacate his membership in Parliament. The president shall not hold any other profitable position (Article:32, para:2). There shall be the duty of the President to ensure that the Constitution is respected and upheld, promote national reconciliation and integration, ensure and facilitate the proper functioning of the Constitutional Council and all commissions, and on the advice of the Election Commission, ensure the creation of proper conditions for the conduct of free and fair elections and referenda (Article:33,para:1). In addition to the powers, duties and functions expressly conferred or imposed to make the Statement of Government Policy in Parliament at the commencement of each session of Parliament, preside at ceremonial sittings of Parliament, summon, prorogue and dissolve Parliament, to receive and recognize, and appoint and accredit Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Plenipotentiaries and other diplomatic agents, appoint as President's Counsel, keep the Public Seal of the Republic, declare war and peace; and do all such acts and things, not inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution or written law, as by international law, custom or usage the President is authorized or required to do (Article:33,para:2).

VI. PRESIDENT IN CONTROLLED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL

The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has confirmed the chapter of the "Constitutional Council". The constitution states that the constitutional council shall consist of the following members; the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, one Member of Parliament appointed by the President, five persons appointed by the President, on the nomination of both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and one Member of Parliament nominated by agreement of the majority of the Members of Parliament belonging to political parties or independent groups, other than the respective political parties or independent groups to which the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition belong, and appointed by the President (Article: 41A, para:1)

The President shall, within fourteen days of the receiving a written communication specifying the nominations made by Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, make the necessary appointments. In the event of the President failing

to make the necessary appointments within such a period of fourteen days, the persons nominated shall be believed to have been appointed as members of the Council, with effect from the date of expiry of such a period (Article: 41 A, para:6). Since then, the president has no constitutional authority to do so. This means that the President cannot make any obstructions or interventions in this area or that members do not have to wait for the President's signature.

It is the duty of the President to ensure and facilitate the proper functioning of other commissions approved by the Constitution. The members of the following commission should be appointed by the President in recommendation by the Constitutional Council (Article:41B, para:3). These are the Election Commission, the Public Service Commission, the National Police Commission, the Audit Service Commission, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, the Commission to Investigate allegation of Bribery or Corruption, the Finance Commission, the Delimitation Commission, the National Procurement Commission (Article:41B in schedule under the para:6). These commissions are solely independent commissions. The president is powerless to intervene in the commission's decisions. The president may, however, submit his advice to the Constitutional council. It is only at this moment that his suggestion is accepted by the Constitutional Council.

The constitutional council shall recommend three persons for the appointment for the Chairmen of commissions, and the president shall appoint one of the persons recommended as Chairman (Article: 41B, para:3). The President shall appoint the Attorney General, the Auditor General, the Inspector General of Police, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and the Secretary-General of Parliament in accordance with the recommendations of the Constitutional Council (Page37, Schedule, Part II). All the Commissions referred to in the schedule to the article 41 B and 41 C other than the Election Commission shall be responsible and answerable to Parliament (Article: 41 B, para:6). The President shall appoint the Chairman and the members of the commissions specified in the Schedule to the Articles 41 B and 41 C, within fourteen days of receiving the recommendations of the Constitutional Council for such appointment (Article:41 B, para:4).

If the President fails to make these appointments within fourteen days, the following two procedures shall be followed. The first one is, the persons recommended under article 41 B, para 3 to be appointed as members of a commission shall be deemed to have been appointed as the members of the commissions. The second one is, the person whose name appears first in the list of names recommended article 41 B, para 3 to be appointed as the Chairman of a commission shall be deemed to have been appointed the Chairman of the respective Commissions (Article:41 B, para:4, sections a & b). Therefore, the President of Sri Lanka is governed by the Constitutional Council and the Commissions which members are recommended by the Constitutional Council. He cannot

function independently. The fact is, that the Prime Minister be a strong power and President weakened by the Constitution.

VII. APPOINTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTERS

The President shall be a member of the Cabinet of Ministers according to the Constitution. At the same time, he shall be the head of the Cabinet of Ministers (Article:42, para:3). The President shall appoint as Prime Minister the Member of Parliament, who, in the President's opinion, is most likely to command the confidence of Parliament (Article:42, para:4). The President shall be a member of the Cabinet of Ministers according to the Constitution. At the same time, he shall be the head of the Cabinet of Ministers (Article:42, para:3). The President shall appoint as Prime Minister the Member of Parliament, who, in the President's opinion, is most likely to command the confidence of Parliament (Article:42, para:4). However, the president does not have the power to dismiss an appointed prime minister. The President shall, in consultation with the Prime Minister, determine the number of Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministries and the assignment of subjects and functions to such Ministers (Article:43, para:1). The President shall, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoint from among Members of Parliament, Ministers, to be in charge of the Ministries so determined (Article:43, para: 2). The President may, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoint from among Members of Parliament, Ministers who shall not be members of the Cabinet of Ministers (Article:44, para:1). The Cabinet Ministers shall be responsible to the Cabinet of Ministers and to Parliament (Article:44, para:4). The President may, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoint from among Members of Parliament, Deputy Ministers to assist Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers in the performance of their duties (Article:45, para:1). But, the total number of Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers shall not exceed thirty and Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers and Deputy Ministers shall not, in the aggregate, exceed forty (Article:46, para:1). The Prime Minister shall continue to hold office throughout the period during which the Cabinet of Ministers continue to function under the provisions of the Constitution unless he resigns his office by writing by his hand addressed to the President or ceases to be a Member of Parliament (Article:46, para:2). A Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister shall continue to hold office throughout the period during which the Cabinet of Ministers continues to function under the provisions of the Constitution, unless he is removed from office under the hand of the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, resigns from office by a writing by his hand addressed to the President; or and ceases to be a Member of Parliament (Article:46, para:3).

The president does not have the authority to dismiss appointed ministers. In order to do so, the President should seek the advice of the Prime Minister to remove one of the Ministers. It cannot be done without the advice of the Prime Minister. In

this case, the president cannot act independently or control ministers. The president cannot remove ministers from office. The president does not have the authority to do so. So, the Constitution has created a president who will serve under a strong Prime Minister. Only with the advice of the Prime Minister can a President make a change in the Cabinet's matters and functions.

VIII. LEGISLATURE

The president may proclaim, summon, prorogue, and dissolve parliament. However, the President shall not dissolve the Parliament until the expiration of a period of not less than four years and six months (4-1/2) from the date appointed for its first meeting. Though, Parliament requests the President to do so by a resolution passed by no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the whole number of Members, including those not present, voting in its favor (Article:70, para:1). Therefore, if only 2/3rd of the Members of Parliament ask for a resolution to dissolve Parliament, the President can dissolve the Parliament. If Members of Parliament request to the president, the president can dissolve parliament 4-1/2 years before. Therefore, the president has no more power to dissolve parliament. If at any time after the dissolution of Parliament, the President is satisfied that an emergency has arisen of such a nature that an earlier meeting of Parliament is necessary, he may by Proclamation summon the Parliament which has been dissolved to meet on a date not less than three days from the date of such Proclamation (Article:70,para:7).

IX. JUDICIAL SERVICE

The Chief Justice, the President of the Court of Appeal and every other judge of the Supreme Court and of the Court of Appeal shall, subject to the approval of the Constitutional Council, be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand (Article:107,para:1). There shall be a Judicial Service Commission consisting of the Chief Justice and the two most senior Judges of the Supreme court appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Constitutional Council (Article:111 D, para:1). The President can appoint judges of the High Court on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission.

X. DILUTION OF POWER

In 1978, JR Jayewardene drafted the Second Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka by incorporating the contents of the Fifth Republican Constitution of France. The president had the power to perform as the dictator of the presidency and to guide the ministers in the prime constitution. The Eighteenth Amendment to the constitution was intended to reinforce this. However, in the nineteenth amendment to the constitution, the power of the president has been mostly devolved to the parliament and the prime minister. The Prime Minister and Cabinet, which had long been subject to the president's arbitrary powers, were released from the nineteenth amendment. That is, the president has lost the power to interfere with the activities of other government institutions

because of his position. The Prime Minister's post is vacant only in the event of death, resignation, loss of confidence in Parliament, the defeat of the budget and loss of parliamentary membership. The Nineteenth Amendment does not include provisions that would make the Prime Minister's post unavoidable by the President. Instead, the Westminster structure has been rebuilt in the relationship between the President, Prime Minister, and Parliament.

XI. CONCLUSION

The doctrine guide of the presidential election law expects, electors should elect a personality fit to be the president. Excellent educational qualification, common sense, foresight, the healthy physical and mind to devote to the multicultural society, the executer of the rule of law guided by democratic principles, the way of thinking and attitude to lead a multicultural society, diplomatic power to promote the country in the international political game, hasn't been convicted of bribery and any other criminal charges, abuse of power and duty, and does not exhibit reckless behavior. It is expected to elect a person with a personality who has the same characteristics as the forerunner of the people.

The Sinhala people of South in Sri Lanka seem to be excited by the election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President with the tremendous support of Sinhala Buddhists. Sinhalese are glad that he won the election without minorities' support. Remarkably, most of the Tamil and Muslim people gave their support to NDF candidate Sajith Premadasa. They believed that they could show collective protest to the SLPP and its political leaders mainly the Rajapaksa family. Sinhalese, particularly political and religious leaders, who are affiliated to the SLPP believed one group of minorities was conspiring against territorial integrity and another group of minorities was to destroy Sinhalese culture and survival. In this case, Sinhalese were joyful that their leaders were not dependent on the willing of the minorities. Similarly, Tamil leaders had been, for a long time, claiming that Sinhala leaders in general, particularly led by the Rajapaksas family were against Tamil people's political aspirations. Therefore, at the national level, Tamil political leaders attempted to team up with the side they are perceived as less harmful. Thus, Tamil political leaders are happy about their successful protest movement.

As in the case with other people, Muslims had gambled in electoral politics. They wished always to be on the side of the winning political party in any elections. But, in 2012, Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and several other extremist groups were unleashed against Muslims people. The consequence was seen with the anti-Muslim violence in Aluthgama, Beruwala, and Welipenna in 2014. Following the Easter Sunday attacks, there was another wave of hate campaign started against Muslim people across all the regions in Sri Lanka. The Muslims people believed that these campaigns had the backing of SLPP and Rajapaksa's family. Therefore, Muslims too voted to show their collective protest against the Rajapaksas. Unfortunately, the scenario has been created that

the Sri Lankan people were satisfied with the divergence on an ethnic basis in the presidential election.

Regarding the scenario, could say that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was unhappy with the people's election behavior. While addressing the country after the formal swearing-in ceremony at *MahaMaluwa* of Ruwanweli Maha Seya, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa thanked everyone who voted for his victory and welcomed the minor communities to join hands with him to work towards the prosperity of the country. He expressed "...The main message of the election is that it was the Sinhala majority vote that allowed me to win the presidency... I knew that I could win with only the votes of the Sinhala majority. But I asked Tamils and Muslims to be a part of my success. Their response was not what I expected. However, I urge them to join me to build one Sri Lanka..." Accordingly, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa must take action to safeguard rights and reconciliation among various communities by erasing the divergence.

The Tamil and Muslim people and politicians were unfairly mistreated. But they understood that the presidential election results attempt to create a unified Sinhala majoritarian state. History has offered that window of opportunity to the new president Gotabaya Rajapaksa once again. Before, such an opportunity appeared at the end of the civil war in 2009. President should ensure that the right measures are accepted and operated towards building bridges to include all people in the country. More importantly, the President should win over the minorities' minds who did not vote for him. As the President should accept that he was elected for all citizens of the country, by making them feel as equal citizens in Sri Lanka. The high voter turnout throughout the country proves the peoples' firm belief in democracy. However, the voting pattern of the election demonstrated a deeper political-cultural divergency of the Sri Lankan plural communities. In the future, the new president would have many challenges to be faced, and hard decisions to be made for the betterment of all Sri Lankans. The most urgent priority should be given to maintain law and order, respect the rule of law and nurture the country's pluralistic and democratic values. People fervently expect peace and amity, restoration of harmony and lasting goodwill among communities under the new presidential administration.

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