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Disputes in India-Sri Lanka Relations

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Abstracts

India and Sri Lanka is close neighbours. The two countries have had a lifelong relationship since ancient times. Sri Lanka is only 32 km from the mainland of India. Relations between the two countries date back to pre-independence times. Cultural, historical, political, geographical, and economic and trade relations between the two countries have been extensive, but since the post-independence period of India and Sri Lanka, there have been many disputes between the two countries. The outcome of this dispute is hampering relations between India and Sri Lanka. This is affecting the economic and national security of India and Sri Lanka.

Nations like China and Pakistan are taking advantage of the dispute between the two countries. In this small country like Sri Lanka, the growing dominance of the enemy nation is a threat to India's security. The reasons for the dispute between India and Sri Lanka are as follows. Sri Lankan Tamil issue, fishermen issue, refugee issue, Kachchatiu Island issue, maritime border etc. Problems appear to be the cause of disputes. The above problem is affecting the economic and political relations of both India and Sri Lanka.

Keywords: India, Sri Lanka, Tamil, Sinhalese, Fishermen, Refugees, Kachchatiu, Tamil Nadu.



Introduction

Today we see many disputes in India-Sri Lanka relations. The issue of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka, the issue of fishermen, the issue of refugees, the maritime border dispute between the two countries as well as the growing ties between China and Pakistan in Sri Lanka show that India-Sri Lanka relations are under constant tension.

Tamil Questions

Even today, the pre-independence issue has not been resolved by the Sri Lankan government. This question must be resolved democratically. There are two very different Tamil groups in Sri Lanka. Tamils settled in northern and eastern Sri Lanka from the 3rd century. They are Sri Lankan Tamil. The roots of Tamil alum are old. The second Tamil is the Tamil brought from India by the British in the 19th century to work on tea plantations. Although he had 4 generations there, he was known as Indian Tamil.*



Sri Lanka is one of the most oppressive communities in the world. The majority Sinhalese community has perpetrated a great deal of injustice and oppression on the minority Tamil community. Tamils who work in tea and coffee plantations live in the mountains of central Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese governments that have been in power since independence in 1948 have treated them inhumanely. Sri Lanka was formerly known as Ceylon. There are three major societies in Sri Lanka. The majority are Sinhalese, the minority are Tamils and the Muslims.

Therefore, the Tamil question that has arisen in Sri Lanka since pre-independence times is still visible today. This Tamil question caused millions of Tamils to be killed in the civil war in Sri Lanka. Many became homeless. Some have left Sri Lanka and migrated to other countries.

The expulsion of human rights organizations from the Tamil-dominated areas by the Sri Lankan government without resorting to cooperation or peace to resolve the Tamil issue, Helping Tamil civilians to enter refugee camps, declaring those who remain after the deadline as Tamil

* <http://www.raintesol.com/andolan-magazine.in/content>

† <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Solving-Sri-Lanka%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98Tamil-problem%E2%80%99-in-2012-23583.html>



Tigers or terrorists, handing over the entire territory to the army, not waiting for them to escape by maritime manoeuvres, exterminating dissidents as Tamil Tigers. The measures were taken by the Sri Lankan government.[‡]

The Question of Refugees

After the ethnic riots in Sri Lanka erupted in 1983, the majority Sinhalese community began to inflict injustice and oppression on the minority Tamil community. This made it impossible for the minority Tamil community to live in peace in Sri Lanka. Such an atmosphere had created fear in the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. So he came to India to save his own life. The government arranged for the refugees to live in camps in and around the coast of Tamil Nadu.[§]

Currently, there are 64,208 refugees living in 107 government camps in Tamil Nadu and about 40,000 outside the camps, according to the Elam Refugee Association (ERR). It is an NGO helping Sri Lankan Tamils to return and rehabilitate. According to the ERR, special camps are run by the Government of India and the State Government of Tamil Nadu for 40% of the refugees in the camps. Currently all the Tamils in the camp are ready to return to their homeland. However, after returning to Sri Lanka, Tamils who have lived in Tamil Nadu for a long time are concerned about the availability of basic services in Sri Lanka, the condition of their property, the availability of employment opportunities and security.^{**}

A special Presidential Commission was set up under the chairmanship of my Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga to find a solution to the Tamil problem. The decision was well received by the international community, India and the World Tamil Council. But even today, that process does not seem to have been completed.^{††}

The issue of these refugees is still unresolved by the governments of India and Sri Lanka. Despite the change of government in both the countries, the Sri Lankan government is not trying to take these refugees back to Sri Lanka, nor is India trying to send them back to Sri Lanka. However, this issue could pose a threat to India's security in the future.

The Question of Fishermen

Sea fishing is widely practiced in the state of Tamil Nadu. In 2016-17, the fishing production of Tamil Nadu was 6.69 lakh tonnes. The state of Tamil Nadu ranks 4th in the total fishing output of India. In 2016-17, foreign exchange earned Rs 391439 crore by exporting 79336 MT. Tamil Nadu is the second longest coastal state in the country with a total area of 1376 km. Out of the total population of Tamil Nadu, 9.85 lakh people are sea fishermen. He lives in a fishing village of 608.

[‡] Bigul new paper 11/03/2017 www.bigul.co.in/index./bigul/840/sec/g

[§] chapter-iv the problem of Tamil refugees in India

http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/28322/10/10_chapter%204.pdf P- 86

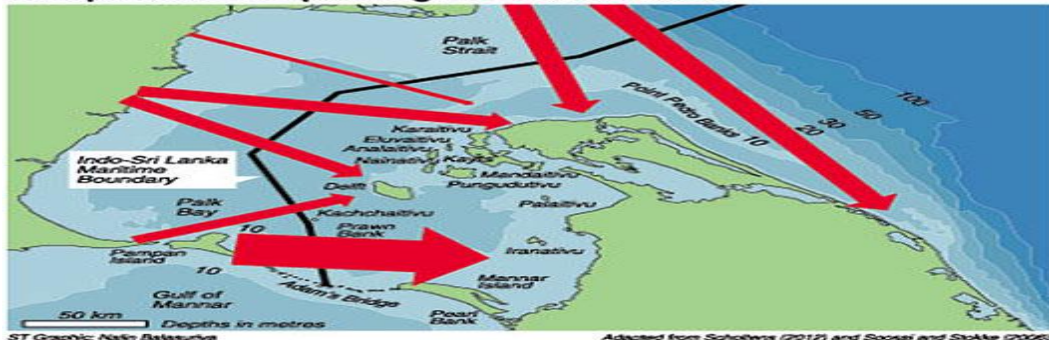
^{**} Eight years after end of war, Tamil refugees divided over returning to Sri Lanka. Livemint E-Paper <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/9E7ixOgfiB7jOGGqdqFK/Eight-years-after-end-of-war-Tamil-refugees-divided-over-re.html> 05/06/2017

^{††} “-----” Annual Review of India Sri Lanka relations by Anushee Ghisad. Southasiamonitor.org

They go fishing in the deep sea as fishing near the coast is declining. They are violating Sri Lanka's maritime border.**



A snapshot of Indian poaching in Sri Lankan waters.



§§

Sri Lanka's ethnic differences have had an impact on India and Sri Lanka's fishing problems. This effect has forced the Sri Lankan Navy to protect maritime borders in the Strait of Palk. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi had discussed the issue of fishermen in Tamil Nadu on June 19, 2008 at a meeting of the District Collector's Office in Chennai. He had said at the time that the Gulf of Mannar and the area from the Palk Strait to Tricomalli had been declared a military zone. The Tamil Nadu government, on the basis of information received from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and Defense, had advised fishermen in Tamil Nadu to refrain from crossing the border and entering Sri Lankan territorial waters. But even today, fishermen from both the countries are violating the maritime border.***

Today, Sri Lanka has wiped out a terrorist organization like the LTTE. But the problem of fishermen in both countries is growing. Fishermen have no man-made borders in the world. So when fishing in the sea, the boundaries are not crossed or the distance cannot be measured. Therefore, it is necessary to solve the problem of fishermen in both the countries. This is an important issue in India-Sri Lanka relations.†††

For the last several years, India has been trying to solve the problem of fishermen in Sri Lanka. Fishermen from both the countries are caught by the armies of both the countries as they are coming to each other's sea border area. Jayalalithaa, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing concern over the repeated incidents of

** fisheries department policy note 2017-18 www.cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/fisheries_e_pn-2017-18pdf P 20

§§ <https://iasbaba.com/2016/06/iasbabas-daily-current-affairs-29th-june-2016/>

*** maritime boundary with India Sri Lanka experience – Sanath de Silva www.Sinhalanet.net/sharing 19 march 2015 P- 5

††† Ibid P – 6



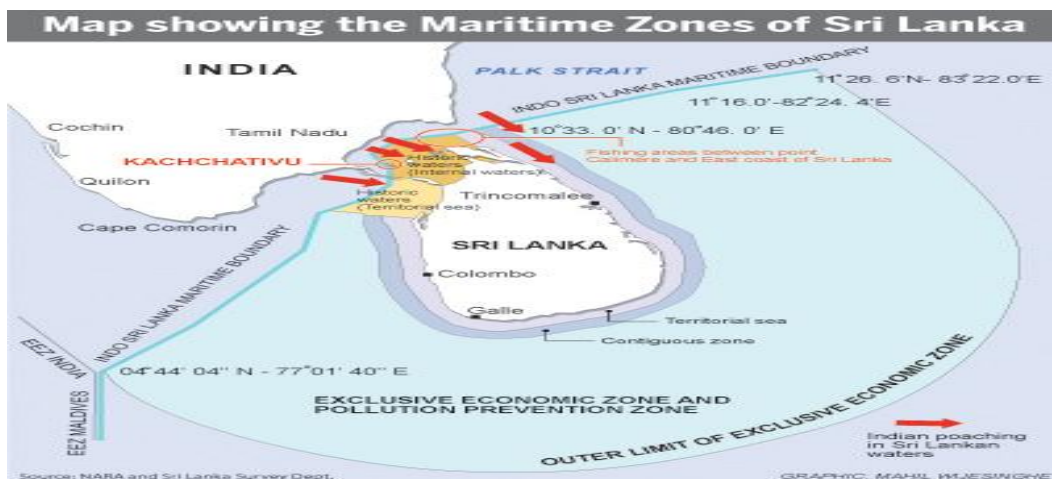
fishermen being caught. The Sri Lankan government has also decided not to allow Indian fishermen to fish in its community.^{***}

Even today, Tamil fishermen in the state of Tamil Nadu are being caught by the Sri Lankan Army. Ships and nets near them are being destroyed for their fishing. This is creating anti-Sri Lanka sentiment in Tamil Nadu. But the central government does not seem to be taking appropriate action.

Kachchatiu Island

In 2011, the Tamil Nadu government passed a resolution on Kachchhdivu Island by a majority in the Assembly. The resolution was implemented by the Tamil Nadu government itself. Later on 03/05/2013 and 05/12/2014 in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, the government unanimously passed resolutions. The Government of India has been requested to reclaim the traditional rights of the fishermen of Tamil Nadu and reclaim the island of Kachchhdivu. So does India resume the dispute over Kachchhdivu Island in Sri Lanka? Such a question has arisen.^{***}

"The main objective of the Government of Tamil Nadu is to bring back the island of Kachchhdivu to India and to give the fishermen the right to fish traditionally in the Palk Bay area." Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar said the state government had personally asked the Supreme Court in 2008 in a case filed by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to personally encircle Kachchhdivu Island. The island was given back to Sri Lanka in the 1970s. In a statement to Prime Minister Narendra Modi three times, Jayalalithaa reiterated the need to abide by the 1974 and 1976 Indo-Sri Lanka Accords. Today, Sri Lanka's naval presence on the island has greatly increased.^{****}



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*** NDTV 05/01/2015

**** fisheries department policy note 2017-18 cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/fisheries_e_pn-2017-18pdf P 32

**** www.Qatar-tribune.comnews-details/id/17755

****†††† <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2016/11/13/features/resolving-decade-old-fishing-dispute-depriving-none-and-holding-none-ransom>

People have been moving freely on the island since pre-independence times and it continued till 1974. After the treaties of 1974 and 1976 and the outbreak of civil war in Sri Lanka in 1983, the situation changed completely and the relations between the people of the two countries changed. This island is not strategically important for India. But it is a very important place for Indian fishermen and their livelihood.^{****}



§§§§

After much discussion between India and Sri Lanka on June 26, 1976, an agreement was reached on maritime borders in the Gulf of Pakistan. This came into force on July 9, 1974. But the agreement does not mention Kachchhdivu Island. But in the agreement, it falls within the maritime borders of Sri Lanka. The treaty defined the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Adam as far as Adam Bridge, 18 nautical miles north of Pedro Paite. This was about 86 nautical miles away. The agreement thus recognized equal rights for land and water between the two countries. It was decided that the maritime merchant ships of both the countries could cross the border of both the countries. Thus ended the status quo created in 1967 by the treaty. In which the maritime borders of both the countries were being used interchangeably.

^{****} Maritime Cooperation between India and Lanka – Adluri Subramanyam Raju, S.I. Keethaponcalan, Manohar Publishers New delhi 110002 and Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo 5 P- 20

^{§§§§} <https://www.iastoppers.com/10th-july-2020-current-affairs-analysis-iastoppers/>



In 1976, an agreement was reached on the maritime boundary between Mannar Bay and the Bay of Bengal. By this agreement, the sea area was determined by latitude and south at 13 points in the Gulf of Mannar. Which were at equal distances from the coastal areas of both countries? Through this agreement, both countries promised to use the economic sector in accordance with the rules of international law. This is a very important agreement in India-Sri Lanka relations.^{*****}

The following measures need to be taken for Indian fishermen

1. GPS system should be installed on the ship going for fishing in the sea.
2. Official registration of ships and fishermen by The Central Government giving
3. Therefore, it is necessary to solve this problem at the local level by holding meetings of the fishermen's association of both the countries.

India Needs to Intervene to Solve the Problem of Fishermen in the State of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka

1. New Delhi should make arrangements with the Government of Sri Lanka. The rights of fishermen in both the countries should be protected in the respective territorial jurisdictions.
2. Efforts should be made to promote the welfare of Tamils in Sri Lanka as part of a long-term policy decided by various Indian governments. The existing Tamil Nadu government needs to be motivated with confidence.
3. Restrictions on the number of Indian fishing vessels going beyond the central coast, which defines maritime boundaries
4. The two countries should form an association in which the fishermen of both the countries should cooperate with each other. There should be an institution with the power of arbitration to resolve disputes.
5. As part of the bilateral initiative, they will consider setting up a Palk Bay Authority in New Delhi and Colombo to suggest joint solutions to the problem of fishermen, covering their livelihoods and trade in the region.^{†††††}

Conclusion

The above questions have created tension between the Tamil Nadu state government and Sri Lanka. As the Tamil Nadu state government continues to exert political pressure on the central government, it is having an impact on India's internal and national security. So Sri Lanka is also

***** Bharat Sri Lanka sambandh Rajiv Ghandhi kal ke vishesh sandarbha may – Abhay Narayan ray Published by VL Media Solution New Delhi-11005 pratham sanskaran 2010 P-42,43

††††† India Sri lank fishermen Problem some solutions <https://idsain/idsa.comments/indiasrilankafishermenproblem-gsen-180614>



getting closer to China than India. Today, China is dominating the Indian Ocean by investing heavily in Sri Lanka.