

35 years have passed since the historic by-election to the Kankasanthurai constituency was held in February 1975. This much delayed by-election was a result of the resignation from the National State Assembly and the challenge posed by S.J.V Chelvanayakam to the then government of Sri Lanka to hold a by-election as a referendum for a mandate for Tamil community's six demands for the amendment of the 1972 Constitution of Republic of Sri

Six Principles for Reconciliation

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Lanka. Mr. Chelvanayakam won that by-election with a resounding majority. But this charismatic, Gandhian leader did not live long enough to witness his life-long struggle for the rights of his community deteriorate into a demand for secessionism and a campaign of terrorism. Months after the by-election triumph, he was debilitated by effects of Parkinson's disease and passed away on 27th April 1977 at the age of 79.

It would have been an immense relief to all Sri Lankans and those in the international community who are concerned about the future well being of Sri Lanka that both the Tamil United Liberation Front and the Tamil National Alliance have now publically stated that they will no longer stand for a separate state for Sri Lankan Tamils. But in the run up to the April 8 parliamentary elections, the TNA is seeking a mandate from the voters of Northern and Eastern Provinces for internal self autonomy based on the Tamil motherland concept as outlined in the election manifesto of the TULF in the 1977 general elections. Not only the sections of the TNA, which was the political arm of the LTTE until the middle of last year, whose election manifesto states that it will seek a "Federal solution based on the shared sovereignty and the right of self-determination in a contiguous north and east of Sri Lanka", and even some of the leaders of the TULF such as V.N. Anandasangari seem to insist on the unification of the present Northern and Eastern Provinces under a federal system of government.

It is pertinent here to briefly examine how the demands for a federal state evolved into a demand for a separate state and, after three decades of bloodshed, reverted back to a demand for federalism. Since the establishment of a unitary state of Ceylon under the Colebrook Commission reforms in 1832, suggestions for the need of decentralization of power based on communal or geographical concerns were made from time to time by various sections of the Ceylonese society. As far back as 1926, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike proposed the need for devolution of power stating: "There would be trouble if a centralised form of government was introduced to countries with large communal differences". The Kandyan Chief's Association proposed a federal form of government consisting of three self governing areas, i.e., 1. Kandyan provinces. 2. Southern and Western provinces, and 3. Northern and Eastern provinces, to the Donoughmore



Anandasangari

Tamil United Liberation front with the initial participation of the Ceylon Worker's Congress and some of the Muslim leadership. Upon formation of the Front, its leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam put forward the following six demands to the Government:

- 1.The Tamil language should be given the same status in the Constitution as Sinhalese.
- 2.There should be constitutional guarantees of full citizenship to all Tamil speaking people.
- 3.The state should be secular while equal protection is afforded to all religions.
- 4.The state should provide fundamental

Commission in 1927.

The demand for a federal form of government was made in the earnest when the Federal Party was branched out of the Tamil Congress in 1949 under the leadership of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam. This charismatic leader made several attempts at resolving the ethnic issue by negotiating

with the leaders of various governments from the newly independent Government of Ceylon of 1948 to the Republic Government of Sri Lanka of 1972. In 1957, he entered into a pact with Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike for the establishment of Regional Councils (The Northern Province is to form one regional area whilst Eastern Province to be divided into two or more regional areas). The Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1965 too suggested the establishment of District Councils. However, both these agreements were unilaterally abrogated by those governments in response to the fierce opposition.

In 1972, a new constitution was adapted making Sri Lanka a sovereign republic. The Federal Party moved an amendment to the Constitution for establishment of a federal government with an autonomous Tamil state and an autonomous Muslim state with three Sinhala states. The All Ceylon Tamil Congress was divided on this issue. Dr A. Thyagarajah, the parliamentary leader of the ACTC, who



By S Piyasena former Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai

stood with the government, was expelled from the party. (Dr. Thyagarajah was later assassinated along with other leading Tamil parliamentarians of the time such as Amrithalingam, Yogeswaran, Dharmalingam, Alarlasundaram etc., by break-away terrorist factions). The rejection of these and other demands resulted in the merging of Tamil political parties into formation of a Tamil United Front which later became the Tamil United Liberation front with the initial participation of the Ceylon Worker's Congress and some of the Muslim leadership. Upon formation of the Front, its leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam put forward the following six demands to the Government:

rights guaranteeing equality to persons of ethno-cultural groups.

5. There should be provisions in the constitution for the abolition of cast and untouchability.
6. Constitutional provisions should be made for de-centralised structures of government.

The Tamil United Front gave three months notice to the Government to take steps to amend the constitution in the light of these demands. When the Government did not respond, the TUF launched a passive resistance campaign on 2nd October 1972 which happened to be the 103rd birth anniversary of Mahathma Gandhi. The next day, 3rd October, Mr. Chelvanayakam resigned from the National State Assembly leaving that constituency vacant for the next two and half years. It is well known how the then Government's failure to yield into these very reasonable demands of the minority for peaceful co-existence with the majority resulted in a non-violent protest movement turning into a more aggressive campaign for a separate state after the demise of Mr. Chelvanayakam and the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front. It is also well known how when TULF failed to get their demands addressed through democratic means, various militant groups emerged which evolved into a three decades long brutal campaign of terrorism.

In retrospect, the TNA, TULF and other groups representing the minorities may be well served if they re-

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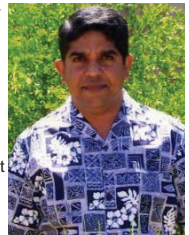
GOJI BERRY - A SUPER FRUIT



Family: Solanaceae
Botanical name: Lycium barbarum
Other names: duke of argyll's tea tree, chinese wolfberry, mede berry, barbery matrimony vine, bocksdorn, murali (India), red medlar

Since the early 21st century in the United States and other developed countries, there has been rapidly growing attention for goji berries for their nutrient value and antioxidant content. It has considered and ranked very highly as one of the top super-fruits in the world.

Goji berry plant is native to East Asia and Eastern Europe. It is widely grown as a cultivated crop in almost all parts of China and some other regions of Asia. It can also found in the Middle East, Britain and parts of North America including Canada. China, the main supplier of goji berry production in the world. They have about 82,000 hectares of farmlands, yielding 95,000 tons of goji berries per year.



Dr. Lalith Gunasekera Invasive Plant Scientist Melbourne - Australia

Goji berry plant is a deciduous (a plant having

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