

# TRY ME



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**රස පිරි TRY ME**



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## Enough is Enough - "Let's Talk the Country Forward"

**F.A. Rodrigo - Sathianathan**  
Clayton,

Since there is a talk in Sri Lanka of a parliamentary General Election during the course of the year or early next year, members of all political parties will form now onwards be called upon to make preparation for the purpose of contesting elections.

This reminds me of the candidated who sent in their nominations prior to Independence in 1948. They were well educated and many were professionals. The majority of them used their own wealth and resources to uplift the masses and assist the economic development of the country. They were honest freedom fighters who sacrificed everythings. Some even served prison sentences under the colonial masters.

However, in the past six decades, our country has had to face several problems, perhaps due to the wrong type of candidates, being elected to the provincial, Municipal, Urban Councils, Pradeshiya Sabhas and parliament.

We are to be blamed for all the problems in the country due to lack of civic consciousness among the Sri Lankan public who thought it best to confine themselves only to the duty of casting their VOTE and thereafter not being interested in demanding that the candidates whom they elected kept the pre-election promises.

Bribery, corruption and waste have been happening over the years under different Government but the situation is now getting worse by the day.

What the Trade Unions and other organizations were doing was to make individual demands such as for better pay or better working conditions, but nobody was taking to the streets to protest against bribery corruption, waste, inefficiency and the plunder of national resources such as raping of the forests illegally, etc.

The problem of corruption is a very serious matter in our country. It is time the public woke up to this reality and reacted to pressurise those in high authority to curb this menace, Their civic duty must not end with casting the VOTE.

When elected, the first thing politicians do is to promote their kith and kin into jobs. Also, unsuitable persons get recommended to hold positions of justices of the peace (JPs). Some of these politicians do not have any basic educational qualifications nor the ability to represent the just causes of the people. The only credentials these politicians have seem to have is money and gun culture. They (the politicians) later get wings to fly to foreign countries together with all their family members and even include their domestic aids at taxpayers' expense.

When President Mahinda Rajapakse went to address the UN General assembly he took with him nearly 50 of his close associates. One of the Ministers who attended the Peace Talk in Geneva stayed in the most expensive hotel together with his family members who also accompanied him on the trip. Is this not an absolute waste of taxpayers' money? The important question is: "who is answerable to the public"? The motto seems to be "you scratch my back and I will scratch your back".

My mind goes back to the time of the late Felix Dias Bandaranaike. He was very adamant to wipe out corruption. Many in the public service and government corporations feared that era. Unfortunately, he did not have support from other political parties to see his vision through. Leaders of all political parties in the country are well aware that Sri Lankans are gullible to promises made at all election platforms.

To enable the country to go forward, the Government of Sri Lanka should invest in sending technicians, reseach professionals, enviornment officers and the like to developed

countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, France and Germany or even India, Singapore and Japan for training. This would enable these officers to learn the techniques and gain the know-how of implementing strategies to keep the cities, country and the environment clean. In days gone by, Colombo was known as "the cleanest City in the East" and Sri Lanka was known as the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean".

If my memory serves me right, the only politician who never left the shores of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was the late Dr. W. Dahanayake who was a Minister and also Prime Minister. He represented the Galle electorate for many years.

In today's Sri Lanka one does not need to have any basic educational qualifications or age limit to be elected to any council or parliaments! However, to enter into employment in the Public Sector or private Sector you need to have some minimum edcational qualifications and age limit, together with a certificate from the police and Grama Sevaka for public clearance.

The leadership of all political parties should ensure that no candidate defeated at the polls will be promoted through the National List. This action goes against everything that stands in the name of democracy.

Today, some of the politician's sons and their henchmen have become more powerful and taken the law into their own hands, of course with the blessings of their parents. This should stop immediately and the Head of the Sri Lankan Government should take meaningful action as nobody is above the Law of the Country.

What the people of Sri Lanka want today is peace and stability in the country, so that they can get on with their normal lives and work peacefully, thereby helping to develop the country for future generations. To achieves this, the hierarchy of all political parties in the country should select suitable candidates to represent the people in Councils and Parliament with at least the following qualifications if the country is to move forward.

- 1.Candidates selected should have the educational qualification of GCE (Advanced Level). We have plenty of them in Sri Lankan.
- 2.Good knowledge of the three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English.
- 3.Professionally qualified persons in all the fields to devolop the country.
- 4.Character certificate either from the Head of the Temple, Church, Kovil or the Mosque as to the suitability of the candidate to hold office in any of the councils or parliament.
- 5.Declaration of their assets liabilities. Also, the candidate selection process should include points given to persons professionally qualifies in their relative fields as these persons will not require the services of the underworld thugs to campaign for them.

Given these circumstances the people will judge and elect the best suited and qualifies person. Heads of all Religious Organisations in the country should bring pressure to bear on the leadership of all political parties to understand that the answer to take the country forward is to appoint candidates:

- "Who sincerely love the country.
- "Who do not demand salary increases, expensive cars, free travel abroad and other perks;
- "Who are prepared to work hard and make sacrifices for the future development and betterment of the country;
- "Who get appointed NOT to fill their own pockets and that of their henchmen.

The people of Sri Lanka have been suffering for the last six decades and it is a known fact that more than 50% of the people live on "Samurdi Allowances" !

We must leave this world, better than we found it, since we are only "passengers in transit in this world".