

## CONTRIBUTION TO UNHRC THROUGH BELIEF

### Belief in Theory

August 2017, Sydney - I discussed with my husband Param, details of Saraswathi Pooja – the nine day Hindu celebration in honour of Goddess of Education. We started celebrating this particular festival at the temple when I started managing our family temple at Sangarathai-Thunaivi in Northern Sri Lanka. Until then we celebrated at home as per common Hindu tradition. I believe that in essence, my contributions towards the temple have culminated in promoting the worshippers at this temple to include the worship of Goddess Saraswathi and therefore the motivation to be educated and also to use knowledge above emotions.

The land was lawfully purchased by my father Visvalingam Navaratnam. Our Aachi / grandmother – Mrs. Manickam Visvalingam established and maintained the temple and at family level, we called it the Vairavar temple at Sangarathai – a village within Vaddukoddai district – Vaddukoddai (pronounced Vattukottai) being the birthplace of *Vaddukoddai Resolution 1976*, about which a popular Tamil website reports as follows:

*[The first National Convention of the Tamil United Liberation Front meeting at Pannakam (Vaddukoddai Constituency) on the 14th day of May, 1976, hereby declares that the Tamils of Ceylon by virtue of their great language, their religions, their separate culture and heritage, their history of independent existence as a separate state over a distinct territory for several centuries till they were conquered by the armed might of the European invaders and above all by their will to exist as a separate entity ruling themselves in their own territory, are a nation distinct and apart from Sinhalese and this Convention announces to the world that the Republican Constitution of 1972 has made the Tamils a slave nation ruled by the new colonial masters, the Sinhalese ,who are using the power they have wrongly usurped to deprive the Tamil Nation of its territory, language citizenship, economic life, opportunities of employment and education, thereby destroying all the attributes of nationhood of the Tamil people.]* as published by [www.sangam.org](http://www.sangam.org)

To my mind, the above was a political declaration on the basis of the core purpose of establishing a Diverse Identity within the Nation of Sri Lanka. Belief is expressed by different persons and groups in diverse forms and the above resolution was interpreted by armed militants in a different form to the politicians who gave birth to it. It's like the dual-citizenship issue currently being faced by the Australian Parliament. The depth of our investment in an issue determines the strength of the base of our reception.

In March 2021, due to continued focus on the issue, I presented this as follows:

Every community needs an internal hierarchy through which the community is managed. Mine began with family and then extended to the workplace in Colombo. Hence I became Sri Lankan largely through the workplace. Likewise here in Australia. After I stopped working for material returns, I had to find a group that would best facilitate my contribution to become a heritage. The first call came when a Yoga Swami devotee asked me whether I would go to Northern Sri Lanka to help the Tamil Tigers set up a public admin system funded by the UNDP? That gave me the opportunity to assess not only the needs of the Tamil community as they were then but also the willingness of the LTTE to accept such an administration. It was a failure due to both factors. The public who were affected by the war expressed from different angles. Hence I had to first become part of the LTTE managed group and then the Government managed group. The reports were differently structured to suit the diversity of the two groups.

As a Tamil in Australia, I am similarly having to go into two different modes when engaging with the Tamil Community. I identified with similar separation in the British Tamil Community also. The UNHRC report has manifested this at this time. Anyone serving the Tamil community of Sri Lanka, needs to appreciate this need to take two different structures when dealing with the Tamil Community of Sri Lanka and of Sri Lankan origin.

As has been published frequently this month, Mrs Ambihai K Selvakumar, a director of the International Centre for the Prevention of Genocide (ICPPG) is on hunger strike, and she demands that the UK refer Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court. It is possible that this identity came through her workplace structure which needs to first identify with the need of the community. Given the internal divisions, this is not possible. It is worse when the issue is seen as a Sri Lankan problem and becomes more confusing when it is seen in the context of global participants. The real solution would satisfy all true contributors.

Each one of us needs a structure through which to connect to other participants. To the extent we provided service on the basis that the need of the beneficiary is our need, the structure is Universal. Universal Franchise is based on this discovery. Hence in democracy where the voter is positioned below the one who receives the vote, would empower the one above, through independence. Independence is an absolute power. Freedom is a milestone on the way to realising Independence. A democratically elected leader would lead naturally through this absolute power of truth.

As a self-governing person, I do not identify with Mrs Ambihai K Selvakumar's claim that she represents the Tamil community. To so represent, one has to believe in the whole and the measure used needs to be applied on Equal footing to all sections. Within the British Tamil Community, this lady's part is very small as per the supporters. Global Tamil Forum has been given official space by the Island, which is a mainstream Sri Lankan news medium, on the basis of an interview by the BBC. The essence of it was presented as follows:

*[The Global Tamil Forum (GTF) spokesperson Suren Surendiran said that the Tamil community did not believe in commissions appointed by the government of Sri Lanka to address post-war reconciliation issues. In an interview with the BBC Sinhala service, Surendiran said that the Tamil community expected the UNHRC to address their grievances.]*

The role of GTF is confirmed also as follows:

*[GTF doesn't directly involve in politics in Sri Lanka. We work very closely with the elected members of our community and others. We engage with civil society organisations and representatives from a cross section of all communities in Sri Lanka and reflect the ground reality in Sri Lanka to overseas stakeholders.]*

When Mrs Ambihai K Selvakumar began her hunger strike did the GTF see it as its democratic duty to either endorse it or openly oppose it? I have no knowledge of the GTF's stand on this. Hence one is entitled to conclude that the GTF's stand was to remain silent on the issues raised by Mrs Selvakumar.

Until one knows otherwise, one has the democratic duty - to acknowledge that Mrs Selvakumar believes in the claims she is making. If GTF were law abiding group then it is possible that they would identify with the belief of Mrs Thatcher in the case of IRA Martyr Bobby Sands:

*"Mr Sands was a convicted criminal. He chose to take his own life. It was a choice that his organisation did not allow to many of its victims".*

This applies also to Mrs Selvakumar whose mentor as per her own admission is LTTE's Thileepan. LTTE killed Tamil Politics and hence Democracy itself. If that was the governance structure that Jaffna Tamils wanted they would have abstained from voting in the parliamentary elections.

As I keep saying to my students, one has to believe in the measure/theory, – to know rights and wrongs of an action. I usually use Pythagoras's theorem which states that '*the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares on the other two sides.*' Represented as follows:

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

This was also the 50:50 demand (50% of seats in Parliament was to be reserved for minorities) by the Hon G G Ponnambalam – as per Sri Lanka's Political reality at that time.

The reverse of Pythagoras's theorem is also true. Accordingly when the square of the longest side of a triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two the triangle is a right angled triangle.

Represented as follows:

$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$

Politics is linear measure and its square is governance measure. Hence the second highest vote winner is raised to Equal level to complete the governance picture – as two sides of the one coin.

In Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese community is the hypotenuse. Tamils and Muslims are respectively the other two sides of the triangle. Self-governance cannot be measured through linear measures. Linear measure has to be multiplied by itself to find the Governance measure. Hence where all three communities are self governing the triangle is a sovereign body. If there is interference with this through powers using linear measures – the whole loses its sovereignty and does so exponentially.

LTTE killed such Tamil leaders – using linear measures. This is why Mrs Selvakumar said that she was not following in Gandhi's path. Gandhi was self-governing and hence whatever he did to himself as penance would naturally spread itself to all those who believed in him and considered Gandhi to be part of themselves. Mrs Selvakumar's penance would go towards those to whom LTTE was governance power. But this then makes them part of the group proscribed by the government of the UK and other countries. LTTE chose to live in hiding. It would not have gone to the UN for Justice. It had the courage to give itself the same punishment that it meted out to its opposition. It is disrespectful for those who take the lawful path – to grade them – including as heroes.

If proscription is lifted by the UK prior to governance power being allocated by law to those in Sri Lanka – then that would effectively demote the status of law abiding Tamils and Muslims of Sri Lanka who have realised self-governance in the little space they have had. Tamil community's claim of Nationhood was lost, when Tamil Politicians were killed and majority remained silent.

When Tamils became the Equal Opposition in Parliament in 1977, to my mind, that manifestation upheld the Political form as expressed by Tamil Politicians. It confirmed that more Tamils were proportionately stronger in governance than Sinhalese. Such manifestation despite Tamils being a minority group as per headcount, confirmed to me that Tamils were supported by Natural forces of belief. It confirmed also the need for us to make declarations of belief to earn such support from that land itself. As per my belief, Earth preserves the Energy manifested at that place. That place is of heritage value for this reason.