

Bill that boosts Eelam plan

By Kumbakarana

One important question that arose over the controversial Equal Opportunities Bill was the ownership of land. But what was challenged in courts was those provisions which threatened freedom of education in Buddhist and denominational schools.

Twenty five years after the passing of the Vaddukkodai Resolution to establish an independent Tamil Eelam, the infrastructure for such a dream remains in residual form.

Tamil lawyers, doctors and other professionals who formed the backbone of the technocracy when the dream of an independent Eelam was first declared have now abandoned Jaffna which was to be the core of the Eelam. They are now living in Colombo, Melbourne, Toronto, London and in Indian cities.

It is also alleged that the Tamil migrants in Colombo will eventually take control of various institutions, including schools, in the capital city. Their plan is to take over these institutions because it would take at least a decade to create their own institutions. There is no doubt that further political aspiration will raise their head in the process.

The manner in which the section of the Equal Opportunities Bill that dealt with the ownership of land simply glided out of it is worth mentioning.

It was thought the Thesawalam Law which governs land ownership in Jaffna peninsula, now under Army control, would be adversely affected. If Jaffna had been under Tiger control, we believe there is a possibility that the section on land ownership might have been included in the bill.

Thus they could defend their ethnically cleansed Jaffna and fulfil their "aspiration" to take control of institutions in Colombo. Educational institutions belonging to the Muslims and Catholics have been skillfully exempted from the operation of the Equal Opportunities Bill. In this overt manner opposition from these religious communities has been checked to begin with. What is evident from the exclusion of the subject of land ownership and the targeting of only Buddhist schools is that bill is anti-

Buddhist. Concealed within such matters as sexual harassment and the so-called rights of some employees and not others is the true aim of the Bill – to immobilise and undermine Sinhala Buddhist institutions.

Separatism and ethnically cleansed exclusive Tamil homelands are permitted to exist and exclusively Hindu, Muslim and Christian schools are exempted under this law while the government wants to take control of Buddhist schools only. By this the government's aim is quite clear — weakening the Sinhala Buddhists.

Not only such a law is unjust but it will also in the future drive the Buddhists to seek redress for their grievances through anti-government movements. On the other hand could such an Act be operative in all parts of the island? How can one operate it in the northeast and in the hill country?

Did not the racist Tamils of the Badulla Tamil Vidyalaya snatch away repeatedly the right of Muslim teachers, who under the law are permitted to clad in "purdah"?

When it is not possible to question under the law of this country the setting up of exclusive, ethnically cleansed homelands, what equal rights can we talk of? What equal opportunities can there be when armed terrorism, might and organized political power flout the law of the land?

The next step in the colonization of Colombo is the popularization of the Indian Hindutva concept among the migrant Tamils. The floats carrying peace messages are not going to Mullaitivu where the war rages, but are seen in the capital city, and the south.

The next move would be to obtain the right to vote for the migrant Tamils in Colombo. Their aim is to obtain fifteen seats in the Western Provincial Council and five in Parliament. If the late Neelan Tiruchelvam had been alive this would have been the next piece of legislation he could have drafted. The aim of all these activities is to strike the Sinhalese. The Equal Opportunities Bill has received the plaudits of the US, the World Bank and the IMF. Some observers believe that this Bill was another conspiracy to obtain further foreign aid.