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*Re*examining the History of Articulating Valourized Identity of the Soldiers' in Sri Lanka Army

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Abstract

Ranaviruwo (War hero) identity articulation trajectory is significantly informed by the changes in the social context. Tamil rebellion groups started to fight against a common goal "a separate state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east of Sri Lanka", and among the militant groups, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) appeared most virulent in nature The Sri Lanka Army represented the military executions under different ruling parties as the former government's decision on bring the military solution to this political turmoil. This research paper is to examine the soldier's identity formation process throughout different phases of the Eelam war. *Re*constructing the *ranaviruwo* identity in the changing social setting is to recognize its evolution throughout different phases of the Eelam War. The purpose this research paper is to present a genealogical script based on newspaper articles circulated during the four phases of the Eelam War.

History of the Eelam War

Twenty six years waged Eelam War (1983-2009) punctuated with five peace talks and commenced as four phases. The first phase of the Eelam War started with the death of thirteen soldiers. This new culture of violence started with first phase of the Eelam War, the armed conflict between Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the LTTE (Gunaratna, 1987:1998;Flynn, 2011; Amarathunga, 2009). Virulent actions of the LTTE disturbed the normal civil life which included destructions to public property, assassinations of politicians and higher rank army officers, massacres and atrocities reported from all parts of the country (Gunaratna, 1987; 1998). SLA reported a war victory on Operation Liberation in 1986 and brought temporary control over LTTE International actor's interference in all the phases of the Eelam War was visible and they have influenced vividly during this protracted warfare. Most remarkable intervention in the first phase of the Eelam War was the Indian intervention with the airdrop. India signed Indo Lanka Peace Accord and sent Indian the peace keeping mission (IPKF) to Sri Lanka (Bhaduri et al, 1990; Dixit, 1998).

The second episode of the Eelam War started with the change in the political setting of the country where the decision was taken to embark the IPKF and after the failure of the peace talks (de Silva, 2000). The LTTE started 'ethnic cleansing' through massacring Sinhala and Muslim civilians for the sake of having a 'separate state' of Eelam with their guerilla type war tactics (Fearon 2004; Ivan, 2008). Certain researchers viewed Sinhalese as extremists responded to LTTE with waves of patriotism and both parties accused that Sinhalese are fighting for 'the motherland' and Tamils are fighting for 'the homeland'. During this phase the LTTE obtained military maturity (Obrest, 1992;Tozzi,2010).

After the collapse in peace talks in 1994, under the new political leadership the government searched for a military solution, through a long phase of offensive and defensive operations to end the war. Where it demarcated military victories at the

beginning of the third phase and recorded great debacles at the latter part of the Eelam War III. The Sri Lankan armed forces found difficulties in facing to the ceaseless waves-operations launched by LTTE. Recorded deaths of the soldiers counted in higher number and defeating battles often counted to rise in number of deserters from the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) (Gunaratna, 1998; Munasinghe,1999).

The fighting resumed after four years of ceasefire agreement with GoSL and the LTTE (Pay and Smith, 2009). In 2006 'war for peace' started with the humanitarian operation from Mavilaru ended in 2009 with the death of the LTTE leader (MoD, 2011) The final phase enclosed tripartite collaboration with political, military and media to win the war. The slogan of 'the war for peace' was a militarily successful and became a powerful reinforcement of other motives represented the war as something constructive in spite of sacrifice, worthwhile for younger generations to save from horror (Flynn, 2011). From 2009 onwards Sri Lanka stepping to a non-war context where it demands an urgent need to reconstruct the war affected areas.

Within this background, the research work carried out to enquire how the socially constructed so called *ranaviruwo* identity, was articulated in different phases of the Eelam war in Sri Lanka?

Research design

This research paper follows a qualitative notion of enquiry thus empirical investigation on the soldiers' *ranviruwo* identity articulation process during different phases of Eelam War and how the *ranaviruwo* identity reflect in archival data of newspapers during the different phases of the war. The genealogical script facilitates to investigate how different notions of soldier (viz *soldaduwa, hamudabataya*) widely appeared in the social texts moved in the heroic valorization which bound to the context with the social actors' expressions in the public sphere. In here the contextual dynamism is apparently visible due to the influence of political, social, military and international actors. News Papers as part of Social Texts as

secondary data sources on (Re) articulating *ranaviruwo*. The selection of newspapers during the war and after the war was based on the timeline developed with the assistance of other published war reporting and post war social integration programmes conducted by the Sri Lanka Army. In addition to that one part of the postwar detailed newspaper analysis from 2011-, 2013 March was done on both weekdays and weekends published Sinhala and English newspaper articles gathered from National Library and Kotelawala Defence University library newspaper archives.

The time under the consideration of this study comprised of many insurrections, struggles, victories, defeats and cease-fire periods in the war history of Sri Lanka. Apparently, the war history of Sri Lanka represented political, military, economic and international changes have a reciprocal effect on such dynamic nature of the context. In search of a method to investigate this historical formation I followed the tradition of genealogy brought and discussed by French philosopher Foucault (1977) in his book on Neetzsche):

> The role of the genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretation, they must be made to appear as event on the stage of historical process (Foucault 1977:86).

Therefore the formation of *ranaviruwo* identity also bound to a series of historical phenomena where various interpretations exist about its construction and as a result it is necessary to unearth the history in a holistic manner as Foucault explained:

> The isolation of different points of emergence does not conform to the successive configurations of an identical meaning; rather they result from substitutions, displacements, disguised conquests and systematic reversals. If the interpretation were the slow exposure of the meaning hidden in an origin, then only the metaphysics could interpret the development of humanity (Foucault 1977: 86).

The Genealogical script is based on the textual analysis. The relationship of construction of identity in the social world explicitly demonstrated in texts. "Circuit of mass media tends to present the sites written the circuits as discrete unidirectional and temporally related" (Benwell, 2009: 121) Language plays a pivotal role in text and context bridging actions. Textual analysis to explore the contextual influences beyond the traditional literary texts narratives, fictions, films, public announcements greatly appealing to the context and explicates the everyday realities. Therefore the process of examining the genealogy of *ranaviruwo* identity formation textual analysis would be one of the most applicable and prevalent method. Further, social texts materially represent the everyday reality (Barry, Carrol and Hansen, 2006).

Collective Identities of the Soldier

The identity formation of *ranawiruwo* was amorphous and subjected to variations in the social setting. Before the initiation of the Elam War virtually there was, no such an appellation appears in the social texts within the sources that I have analyzed[1] . The Elam War first erupted in 1983 with the death of 13 soldiers in Jaffna, which created national calamity (Gunarathna 1998; de Mel 2006; Flynn 2011; Hathurusinghe 2012). Prior to that period where the ceremonial outfit of the Sri Lanka army and the soldiers were mostly engaged in ceremonial activities (viz: Army tattoo, pass out, ceremonial drill) to preserve the military traditions and martial ethos (SLA, 1999). The news reportage encapsulates the key role of the soldier is providing the national security and recognize their role as a

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[1] 1978 -1983 is the time period I have taken as the prewar period for my data gathering and analysis purposes.

supplementary role, where the soldiers are kept on other duties apart from the combat operations under their prime attention.

Reflecting back the past, the image of the soldier before 26 years dragged Elam War, where no such interaction with the civil society how soldiers' image objectified without the soldier's major role as a combatant is necessary to examine. After the formal inauguration of Ceylon Army in 1949 the army renamed as the Sri Lanka Army in 1972[2] (SLA 1999). Prior to the Eelam War and at the early phase of the Eelam War the Sri Lanka army soldiers identified as "Army men" (*Armykarayan*[3]) in the oral colloquial use. Further from time to time they also commonly identified as a collective representation as similar to the other forces (i.e Navy and Air force) as "forces". Those appellations of the soldiers' were frequently used to identify the soldier in the SLA. Therefore, it is apparent that there was no such a valorization, heroism or any glorification to the ceremonial army solider in the early history prior to the Elam War. During this time it resonated with the expendable nature of the soldier where the state was overlooked administering the soldier retirement benefits. In this point in time it is possible to identify the *ranaviruwo* identity was virtually none existing in the period prior to the Elam War.

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[2]The new republican constitution declared "Sri Lanka a free sovereign and independent republic and Sri Lnaka became the official name of the country therefore Ceylon Army renamed as Sri Lanka Army (SLA 1999 p.221)

[3]Army men In Sinhala colloquial language use *Armykarayan* which does not pay respect to a person where it originated from *Maalukaarayan* and *Policekarayan* strait Enghlish interpretation as Fishermen, Policemen Karaya- who is engage in certain thing often use after the subject/word p350. *Sarasavi* Sinhala-Sinhala Dictionary *Sarasavi* Publications, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka (2010).

300 "Army men" march to Mahaveli sites

A contingent of 300 men from the machinery pool of the Army will next week march to construction sites to the Mahaweli project to take the place of workmen who had left for the Middle East, The defence ministry spokesman said that: growing numbers of trained men from the three services were going AWOL (Absent without leave) for jobs in west Asia. Men and some of these machines have been for the first time in this country. Adequate training facilities should have been made to meet the demand for skilled personnel, foreign contractors at a meeting had indicate that the situation was so grave that they would have to import skilled personnel to fill the vacancies. But Mr.Gamini Dissanayake Mahawelli Ministry offered Army personnel instead and this has been accepted by the foreign contractors.

Source: The Sunday times, 1981, 05. July p.01

The army soldiers recognized as an easy supplement for skilled labour in a peace prevailing society where the national security replaced with supplementary roles such as the development activities during that time period. According to the theory of social identity, 'role' as a base of *identity* formation, 'role' often maintains meanings, expectations and resources associated with it. Role identities maintain the complex interrelatedness of social structures and people tied organically through social identities they are tied mechanically through their role identities within the group (Thoits, 2013). Role identities and social identities are simultaneously relevant to, influential on affect and behavior (Stets, 2006). In a culture which was not saturated with military values and messages the status of soldiers' identity was apparently became nonexistence as a result some other ordinary form of notions developed as '*Armykarayan*' (Army men) without any valorization of the *ranaviruwo* identity. Further, this colloquial identity used frequently and hardly reflected patriotic senses of the soldier. The army soldiers were in a ceremonial

outlook and act as a contingency stock, where it shows the dispensable nature of the soldier before eruption of the Elam War.

Simultaneously army soldiers were categorized under the same canopy as the other services (i.e Navy and air force) without given any specificity as *Hamudawa* "forces". As some of those news excerpts brought under the consideration:

Earlier those were in "forces" pension scheme is unreasonable

"Sri Lanka tri forces soldiers who released form the service to join with other government jobs, then retired from that particular job , the tenure which was completed in forces will not include into the service tenure served in government and further 'forces service tenure' to consider when paying the pension was refused by the Director General. But when those who released from the other government jobs and then joined forces, which service tenure will be taken into consideration in the pension development process".

Source: *Lankadeepa* (Sinhala Daily Newspaper) 1983,17 August, p.01

Further, in early news reporting's 'Army men' or as 'forces' used for the collective representation of the soldier under the canopy of 'military' or 'tri forces'. It shows lack of centrality to the collective identity as army soldier and several peripheral identities have developed over the time where no shared for the core identity as a result of contesting multiple collective identities, there was no such specificity given to the army soldiers, prior to the Elam War (Koshmann, 2012). The army soldier was recognized as equal as the other forces several peripheral identities were in existence. Since the ambiguous nature and doubtful recognition of the soldiers' role by the society and even marginalized their duty when compared to the other government occupations their welfare matters often

neglected as the new excerpts revealed "for the service tenure to consider when paying the pension was refused by the Director General"

> "Until now our forces haven't trained against the terrorists because there was no such a requirement, further there was no such capacity to do. Instead of developing the forces we did develop the country"
>
> Source: Press conference with a government minister Anada Tissa de Alwis, *Aththa*
>
> (Sinhala Daily Newspaper) 1984, 08 December, p.01

In the absence of war the soldier was positioned as a supplementary workforce who contributes to the development which shadowed the soldier's contribution to national security. Those who occupied in the Army were similar to any other government occupations. Then the soldier is a government servant where there was neither a clear identification of army soldier with other civilian occupations nor the Army distinguished evidently from other forces. Nevertheless the proximity of the soldier identification developed during the first Elam War, heavily with the patriotic conscientiousness as 'fight for the motherland' and the collective identity driven as 'Sinhala Buddhist Army[4]' since the Sri Lanka Army comprised of Sinhala and Buddhist ethno religious group amounted for 98% compared to the total strength. Even this collective identity criticized by many international actors as a 'mono-ethnic army' (de Mel 2006; Hewamanne 2009; Flynn 2011).

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[4]Peace reconciliation and conflict studies researchers emphasized Ethnic religious identity of the army soldier carried out as Sinhala Buddhist Army Ethnic-religious identity is the notion of identification especially in a fragemented society to form a collective identity of the Army (Gunasinghe 1987, Gunarathna 1996).

Then the soldier identification often associated with their 'self-deprived nature' and 'patriotism' acknowledged by the 'civilian others' with initial tension generated with the LTTE actions.

Government sponsored propaganda campaigns often emphasized the 'sacrifice for the motherland', *deshaye puthun* or the 'sons of the soil' to differentiate "the soldier self" from "civilian others" (Simpson, 2009). Further those who join the army acknowledged by the community for their rare dedication where civilian others were not been able to get such challenge, opposed 'conscription' where the 'citizen soldiers' were not willing to accept by the Sinhala community. However, the soldier identity was never become free from political influence where it created ambiguity to the wider society inevitably. With the government attempt to introduce conscription[5] in 1985 the collective identity of the *ranaviruwo* valorization escalated among the civilian others to encourage those who volunteer their service to join the army otherwise if conscription would suppress civilians.

"Brave soldier" foundation ceremony

Donations for the fund for soldier welfare was the main intention of this foundation.

Source: *Aththa* (Sinhala newspaper) 1988, 19, November P.04

With the first phase of the Elam War the soldier's life and welfare was critically discussed in the public sphere where it started welfare activities from the sake of acknowledging their bravery. At the mean time this encouragement was driven by the context in 1985 where the

[5]In 1985 the constitution of labour force productivity and conscription attempted to introduce by the government where it vested authority to develop armed forces apart from triforces and police (ex. semi army gramasewaka, National productivity force and National defence force) and if necessary can call every civilian who is above 18 years have to serve for forces (*Silumina,* 1985)

government decision on conscription since the strength of the army was not adequate (*Silumina*, 1985). In this social milieu influenced the "soldier self" to differentiate from "civilian others" by crafting an identity as "Brave soldiers". Apart from the political actors' first war victory in *Wadamarachchi* operation[6] as an initiating point of the "*ranawiruwo*" the soldiers' identity shifted from too generalized identities earlier used for identification purposes (viz. "*Hamuda bataya*", "*Armykaraya*" to "*weera sebala*").

Therefore until *Wadamarachchi* operation in 1986 (Operation liberation) the social texts were silent and it was the collective representation as 'forces' which attracted the social acceptance than individual orientation. With the JVP[7] insurrection, soldiers were deployed to assist police to restore peace by controlling rebellions. When Sri Lanka Army soldiers engaged in the Eelam War in the Northern part of the country the soldier was a 'hero' for the Sinhalese community and for southerners the soldier was a 'traitor' due to the soldier's anti-terrorism actions under the guidance of the government even was similarly taken to repress the Sinhala youth insurrection(Indradasa, 2012). Therefore, some similar military interventions had valorized and de-valorized soldiers' heroic identity by the same community in two different social settings. In such a context, some excerpts of the news reporting:

> During last three years, 200 soldiers who attached to army misplaced and no
> information found, whether they have abandoned the service, migrate for foreign

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[6]Wadamarachchi Operation also known as the operation liberation which is first operation successfully launched against the LTTE in 1987 (SLA 1999)
[7]JVP insurrection is the abbreviation of *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* led two major revolts in 1971-1987 and 1989 where the southern youth of the country uprising with the communist party ideology (Indradasa, 2012)

job opportunities now the military police had started investigation. Some soldiers desert the Army and joined JVP. Those soldiers who engaged in violent activities already arrested".

Source: *Sri Lankadeepa* (Sinhala Newspaper) 1987, 14 June, p.01

Therefore there was a series of phenomena added in the initial phase of the Elam War given mixed implications for the *ranaviruwo* identity where the hero or traitor belongs to the perception of the community often associated with war, "social tensions", "political" and "international actors". As a result, in the first phase of the Elam War this amorphous nature of *ranaviruwo* identity apparently visible with the heroic movement executed, paused and again executed in the identity articulation trajectory.

The absence of common idea that the soldier need to be apolitical and an obedient arm of the government was visible in the early part of the Sri Lankan history. The soldier's representation, as an "obedient arm" of the government (Janovitz, 1971) and soldiers need to be apolitical[8] (Huntington, 1957) was evenly applicable for the Sri Lankan setting, which was discussed, in the Western discourse.

When the "military movement" was not in the desire of the prevailing government then the Army iconified in that military movement, often obliterates with peace talks. Therefore, the war victories and developed valorized soldier image begin to disappear from the context. The Sri Lanka Army soldier's image declined with "Indo- Lanka peace accord" since the accord inclined to "confine the soldiers to barracks" (Gunaratna, 1998). This international-political interplay greatly influenced on soldiers' public image, as for

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[8] A reported phenomenon of the planned coup senior officers accused for a coup plotters to topel the government. In 1962 the army should remain aloof from politics and loyalty served whatever governments the electorates has chosen (SLA 1999 p.129)

example the news published in a daily English newspaper with the discussion of the political party leader in the opposition the extracted here as:

> There are certain sections of the accord we have no objection, for example the cessation of hostilities and the terrorists handing over their arms to the government. Both the question that arises is has it taken place? We certainly do not like the presence of the Indian Army here which means that the government does not trust its own army….
>
> Source: Commentary Vijitha Yapa, after two months since Indo-Lanka Accord was signed, The interview with Sri Lanka Freedom party Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike reasoning SLFP's opposing the accord (1988.02.23 p.11).

Indo-Lanka peace accord confined the soldiers to barracks also created a view that 'GoSL suspicious about its own army' diluted the glamour spreading throughout the society and punch back the soldier into an inactive army. In the social identity theory distinctiveness, salience and prestige are the antecedents of group identification. Sri Lanka Army was unable to gain those primary attributes of the collective identity to construct the *ranaviruwo* identity with the IPKF intervention. However an expression to the general public the government's act implied that the Sri Lanka Army is quiet lethargic and inactive with the expressions quoted by the international actors in news reporting:

> The government must firmly say it will not negotiate with terrorists. Their representatives or anybody else who refuses to renounce violence and terrorism. Saying the government must adopt two pronged strategy is either military or political. On the military side they have to become far more profiled. I get the impression that the government troops are just sitting here allowing terrorists to attack them. They should go out more and take out more terrorists themselves. They have to be very quick, like Israelis do in Lebanon. First they got hit the terrorists hard and wipe them out will all the necessities that exist.
>
> Source: Daya Ananda Ranasinghe with discussion of Mr. Ian Geldard, Londdon Institute for the Study of Terrorism, Source: *Sunday Times* 1987,1 4 June

Rise and fall of the soldier identity was greatly inclined by the prevailing government decision. With the IPKF appearing in the warfront created views of ' military side have to become far more profiled' 'government troops are sitting and allowing to attack them' even challenged and puzzled the existence of soldiers' bravery. War victory in Wadamarachchci, JVP insurrection and Indo-Lanka peace accord were such three phenomena influenced on (de) valorize the *ranaviruwo* identity.

> Government Dual policy on using soldier image in North and South different representation to get political advantage
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> Source: 1990, 23 December Rawaya Newspaper Daniyel in South, Migel in North Sajith Halthota Genuine reason behind youth joining the Army?

The ambivalent presence of the collective identity is heavily influenced by the government decision. Lack of focus and the subjectivity of those actions could create blur demarcation of the soldiers' collective identity and indoing so mark "low salience" of the *ranaviruwo* identity (Ran and Goldern, 2011).

Combat role to valourise the soldiers' identity

After a long pause of combat operations under the Indo- Lanka peace accord where IPKF arrived to Sri Lanka and its departure empowered the Sri Lanka army soldier with the combat role. Returning back to their primary duty as a combatant reported in newspapers as:

> While it's necessary that we do not underestimate the capabilities of the SL forces today, with their great experience, training and obviously better motivation with a clearly identified enemy, it's necessary at the same time not to underestimate the

tiger capacity to cause death and destruction, and prolong the struggle for control their strongholds in the North and East.

While the fighting should be left to the soldiers… and the political and diplomatic initiative to the politicians, let something be said now to explain internationally what happened now, before the entire sequence of events are obfuscated in make screen of Tiger propaganda.

Opinion author, the Sunday Times (weekend English Newspaper) 1990, 24 June.

'The fighting should be left to the soldiers' suffice to reflect how the time and exposure to the first phase of the Elam War, the war victory of *Wadamarachchi* and failure of the Indian Army in Sri Lanka enables in doing the soldiers' role based identity as a combatant (Perera, 2001;Narayan, 2008). This engagement of the role in an essential context form the collective identity with the role of soldier and military gaining hegemony.

Therefore with those two phenomena enabled to valorize the *ranaviruwo* identity where it created trust and confidence that the soldier gaining the impression as a professional in the Armed services. Social identity theory explains if the role expectations of the significant others is in congruent with the role performance would enable to enhance centrality and salience of the group's collective identity. In this scenario, the social role expected from the army and the soldier to venture on eradicating terrorism through combat operations. Meeting the social expectations improved identification by the civilian others (Stryker 1986).

"Uniform", "Ceremonial Funeral" identification symbols of the soldier

Identity construction and identification symbolizes through the death of a soldier in the mortal combat, pride and honour signifies with the "ceremonial funerals". This movement started with the soldiers' reengagement in combat operations. Sacrificing the life in the battlefield or death considered as the 'supreme sacrifice' and signifies the soldier commitment to protect the motherland, which enabled in valorization of *ranaviruwo* identity (Zittoun et. al. 2003)

> "Army regiments great effort to conquer and obtain the control of Wadamarachchi, again LTTE struggling hard to recapture where attack to Nelliadi camp died *weera sebalunge* (brave soldiers)", those crowd gathered to Padukka Udumulla Sargent Wijenayake Perera's funeral with the honours of SLA *Hamuda batainge* (soldiers) dead coffins were taken to the cemetery."
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> Source: Saranapala Pamunugama news reporting to Diwaina (Sinhala Newspaper), 1987, 10 July

The above excerpts of the news reporting identified the dead soldiers as *weera sebalun* and they were subjected to the honour of living soldiers. Soldiers who are alive formally represented as the *Hamuda Batain.* Death signified the valorization of the scarification for the motherland with the patriotic consideration whereas living would not as significant as the death in this identity valorization process. *Weera* is the superlative earlier used to reflect the bravery of the soldier. The high inclination of the combat role has shifted the peripheral identity (*weera sebala*) to the core.

In summary, by highlighting the heroic image of the combat soldier and marginalizing noncombat identities, militarized socialization is responsible for both formally and informally reproducing the centrality of the Sri Lanka Army soldier. However, despite its omnipresence, militarized socialization produces social differentiation. In contrast to the

ideal of a republic, can society that places no conditions on those who may contribute and become "good citizens", in reality, nationality, gender, and class limit individuals' access to the common good. The particularistic nature of militarized socialization is also reflected in the responses of the "soldiers themselves" who are, nominally, the "natural" recipients of this "ideal". The change in the social phenomena and social actors shift the core identity "*sebala*" into a peripheral identity and replaced by *weerasebala, which* was earlier in the periphery.

The soldier differentiates from civilians significantly from uniform and from the death of the solider. Further, when those symbolic rites in the funeral ceremony dis-appeared the civilian others recognize as "disgracing event":

Mid night burial of a *weera sebala* (brave soldier) MH Premachandra Gunawardena

"Terrorist who blasted a landmine, Premachandra Gunawardena and another five soldiers died on 1987 June 21. Disorganized burial after this death no salute or funeral honour given to the soldier, parents were disappointed".

Source: News reportage *Silumina* Sinhala Daily Newspaper, Role has not honoured '*Hamuda Bataya*' 1989, 07 October.

Thus led to narrating, the death of the soldier and illuminated with the 'bravery', 'zeal' and 'pride' in a winning battle often disappeared in a losing edge of the war same scarification but a different respect given.

Riviresa operation

Those who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation, those who became injured to protect the sovereignty of the motherland (*Maw bime Swiree bawaya*) are heroes among us (…).

Source: Samudra Weththasinghe and Bandula Widanapathirana, Riviresa Operation's soldier experience Lankadeepa, 1995, 31 December, p.11

The above news reportage attempted to define a 'hero' or 'superhuman nature' will be protected through sacrificing the life or by becoming injured in the battle field for a soldier. This would imply a mere combat role would not make a hero, where injury or death tattooed a heroic identity as *ranaviruwo*. Uniform and the common identification symbols discuss uniqueness and centrality of the soldiers' collective identity.

Loosing battles loosing identities

Military masculinity to present as hegemonic news related to war victories, vanquish are greatly supported and the debacles, failures death tolls and retreat appear in the public sphere demoralize create opposite views and often disturb the heroic move of the soldiers' collective identity.

> Ceasefire collapse, the SL forces too had been keen on this ceasefire to secure the release of the police officers and move the injured out. The Sri Lanka forces had suffered a setback in Kattaparichchan where 43 Army commandos and four soldiers died fighting with tigers.
>
> Source: The Sunday Times (weekend English Newspaper) reported by special
>
> correspondent 1990 June 24 p.04

Riviresa war victory cherished victorious soldier, where it transcend and entitled with soldier- battle-victory. Great soldier's death in the battlefield, where the losing the battle superlatives of the identity disappeared in the news reporting. It would imply that the same value has not been ascribed for the death of the soldier in a wining operation and for the death of the soldier in a losing battle.

> Soldier moral has never been better, and that, even without the wholly unnecessary hoopla about capturing Jaffna, is a singular achievement. The soldiers seem to be building up a legend of their own; earlier, it's only the Tigers which had one. The Sri Lankan Army had debacles. It shows good army doesn't need heroes; it merely needs teamwork and sincerity of purpose. This war didn't have charisma: there were no Athulathmudali's no Kobbekaduwa's[9]….

> Source: Rajpal Abeynayaka , Waiting for CBK[10] to finish the war The Sunday Times, 1995, 10 December, p.08

Sri Lanka Army as the collective identity individual identities represents their charisma late General Dencil Kobbekaduwa's representation of the Army. Loosing wars often (de)valorize the *ranaviruwo* identity and it even suppresses the hero concept. Even though the hero concept perceives as a matter of overriding others but loosing battles where no heroes accepted. Further deserting the army is another factor to de-valorize the *ranaviruwo* identity.

> Namal once deserted and then rejoined because of the genuine patriotic, feeling in his heart. The wife of the soldier who sacrificed for the motherland (*Maw bima wenuwen diwi pidu sebala*) in battle near Nallur tells; Lance corporal/ Private W. P Indika Namal Wijethunga (35), he who studied Pothanegama Vidyalaya up to Ordinary Level just because of economic problems he was searching for a job and he used to fishing in Tissa tank, in 1991 he joined SLA . After marriage he deserted the army after that again his sole income earning job was fishing in the Tissa tank. For the children and for the family expenses this revenue source was not adequate. Then he thought to join the Army again but it was problematic since he deserted the army then in 2001 during the grace period given by the government he got an opportunity to join the service again.

> Source: news reportage by Athula Bandara Lankadeepa 2005, 10, December, p.03

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[9]General Denzil Lakshman Kobbekaduwa was a key military personality who provided leadership for victorious military operations Operation Wadamarachchi (Liberation) and Operation Balavegaya.
(Jayathilaka 1998, Liyanage 2006, Lanra 2012)
[10]Her excellency the ex-president Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumarathunga, the political party which presented the third phase of the Elam War from (1994- 2005) (cite)

This news reportage shows the social disapproval of deserting the army by a soldier and even the soldier rejoin and sacrifice the life the *ranaviruwo* identity valourization disappeared from the social texts. As it just reported the fact '*Mawubima wenuwen divi pidu sebala*' one who sacrificed the life for the motherland but not as a heroic act. This textual analysis resonated that the *ranaviruwo* identity is not a mere replica of sacrificing the life for the motherland to valorize the identity in the war context.

The prolonged war provided identity of the soldier expressed to the public as in one end for the civilian other to attract to the Army career and the soldier status, benefits, lucrativeness of the other rank soldiers visual and textual representation of the institutional identity and the attempt to articulate the identity, which interface the public. This ranking structure based designation of the soldier disclosed to the public in war news reportage, ceremonial news reporting such as pass outs, tattoos, giving away accolades, colours, gallantry awards and insignia.
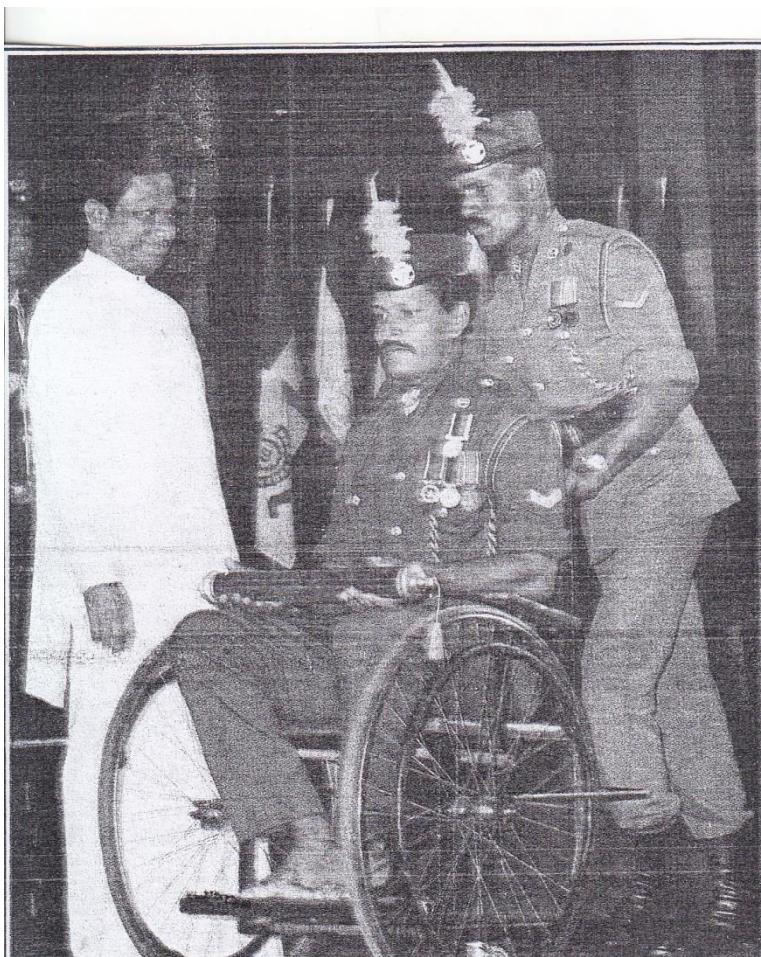
Figure 01: The act of valour

Source: The Sunday Times 10 January 1990 p.08

> The Ranashoora medal was posthumously awarded to Lance Corporal K. Nihal at a ceremony at Army Headquarters on Thursday. Lance Corporal Nihal was killed at the Elephant Pass camp while attempting to rescue his comrades during the attack. Herre his brother Sujith Wickramasinghe receives the medal from Major General Dudley Perera, Commander of the Medical Corps.

With the height of the Eelam War, the institutional customs on giving away gallantry awards for sacrificed soldiers and disabled soldiers frequently appeared in the newspaper.

The award giving ceremony often graced by the president or a chief Army official.

Conclusion

In this research paper I have produced a genealogical script of soldiers' identity formation. In the pre Eelam War context, collective identification was revolved around ethno religious background of the solider. Further, lack of soldiers' role recognition placidly expressed in the linguistic construction mostly informal and colloquial outfit of the notions, as (Army Men) *armykaraya* and occasional presence in social texts as (Soldier) *sebala* or *hamudabataya*. Therefore, in the prewar context and even in the early part of the Eelam War salience of the soldiers' collective identity is in questionable state and no such valorization or even *ranaviruwo* identity was virtually not in existence.

At the beginning of the war period, temporal outfit persuaded certain events such as war victories and deaths of the soldiers, marked heroic superlatives *weera*, *weerodara* to make the collective identity more stable and in doing so valorized the soldiers' collective identity. Further negative image of the soldiers grown with the debacles (de)valorized the identity as the newspaper excerpts analysis showed as (Sacrificed soldier) *divipidu sebala*. In the time of war, the events in the social context often negotiate and renegotiate the heroic identity. Even though with the upheaval of the war heroic valorization obtained centrality the soldiers' collective identity totally was not free from peripheral identities due to the multiple interpretations born with the influence of the social actors as I have come a cross with "*Nilaadum daarin*" uniform bearers used to call for army soldiers. Additionally social expectations of the soldier' role as a combatant and bring a military solution to end the war is another critical reason for the valorization of the collective identity and make the identity more meaningful and enhance the centrality. In the literature on the social identity

theories disclose the multidimensionality or multifaceted nature of professional identity and the relationship between those dimensions or facets (Misher, 1999; Tsui, 2011).In the gradual transition of ceremonial army to a fighting army with the arousal of the Eelam War, the glimpse of *ranaviruwo* identity came into existence. In the examination and analysis of the widely present social texts in the chronological sequence even though a coherent flow of identity construction is hard to find relevant to the contextual changes, brought *ranaviruwo* identity (de)valorization overtime.

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Appendices

Table 01: Different appellations found in news reporting, during four phases of the Eelam War

Phase of the Eelam War	Appellations appear in the texts	Meanings	Changes in the contextual setting or social phenomena
Eelam War I 1983-1989	News reportage – *Udahamuda sebala* (Army soldier), *hamuda sebala*, *Hamuda bataya* (soldier without specifying army can belongs to tri-forces)	Official address of the soldier in Sinhala often reffered to soldiers' collective identity.	
	Oral use *Armykaraya*	Colloquial identity of the soldier often use in informal social setting	
	Sinhala Buddhist Army	Collective identity often labeled in Ethno-religious majority	
	Weera sebala	*Weera* is the superlative used to denote the bravery of the soldier.	

Eelam War II 1990-1994	News reportage – *Udahamuda sebala, hamuda sebala, Hamuda bataya*	In this phase of the war even it frequently appeared	Collapse in peace negotiation process Governement's attempt in bringing a military solution War victories and debacles
	Institutional identity – private, lance corporal and corporal	Pass out parades, colour awarding ceremonies, funerals frequently reported in news papers	
	Weera sebala, Weerodara sebala	War victory highlighted	
	Short stories - *Nila-andum dhaarin (Uniform bearers)*	To insist that the public is skeptical on whether the soldiers truly fighting for the sovereignty of the motherland or with short term views on their promotions and recognitions.	

Eelam War III 1995- 2001	News reportage – *Udahamuda sebala, hamuda sebala, Hamuda bataya*	In this phase of the war even it frequently appeared (as so similar to other phases)	Unsuccessful attempt on peace negotiation with LTTE. War victory in Jaffna. Debacle in Kilinochchi and Paranthan.
	Institutional identity – private, lance corporal and corporal	Pass out parades, colour awarding ceremonies, funerals	Longest phase of offensive and defensive operations. Higher number of deserters and soldier deaths with the Kilinochchi
	Ranaviruwo, weerodara ranaviruwo	Heroic soldier, War hero Government enlistment campaign launched in 1999-2000 to uplift the collective identity of army soldiers' and to increase the enlistments launched a government sponsored advertisement series – "Lioncubs' paradise".	debacle Cease fire agreement 2004 Tsunami Norway and Japan intervention on peace negotiations
Eelam War IV	News reportage –	War front and the home front news reprotagee	"Humanitarian war" began

2006 -2009	*Udahamuda sebala, hamuda sebala, Hamuda bataya* Institutional identity – private, lance corporal and corporal Ranaviruwo, weerodara ranaviruwo In this phase of the war even it frequently appeared Pass out parades, colour awarding ceremonies, funerals	Pass out parades, colour awarding ceremonies, funerals Government army enlistment advertisement, news reportage especially to highlight the war victories "*Api wenuwen api*" together for all	"War to end the war", "war for peace" Death of the LTTE leader and war victory ended EW IV

	Heroic soldier, War hero		