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978-0-521-02975-9 - Electoral Allegiance in Sri Lanka

Dilesh Jayanntha

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Sri Lanka is one of the few new Commonwealth countries to have had a strong democratic tradition and a vibrant electoral life since Independence. In this book Dilesh Jayanntha examines the basis for Sri Lankan electoral allegiance since 1947. He challenges the prevalent notion that caste is the basis for electoral allegiance and convincingly argues that the patron–client relationship is its primary determinant.

Following an introduction outlining recent Sri Lankan political history, Dilesh Jayanntha then examines electoral allegiance in three contrasting constituencies. Two of these are rural constituencies, the other an urban one. They differ from each other in various ecological, economic and social respects and they have a different history up until 1947. Yet, as the author demonstrates throughout, patronage networks based initially on private wealth and later on access to and control of state institutions determined electoral allegiance. Often the patronage network was congruent with caste. But as Jayanntha shows, where the patron–client tie cut across the caste tie it was the former which proved decisive in deciding electoral allegiance.

This is the first detailed comparative analysis of electorates in Sri Lanka. It addresses issues that are relevant not only to South Asia but to the developing world in general and will therefore be of interest to specialists and students of South Asia, comparative politics, sociology and anthropology.

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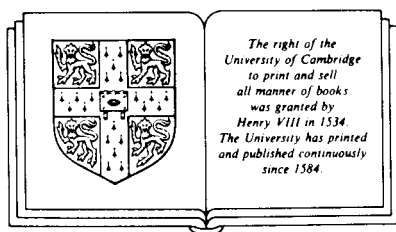
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# ELECTORAL ALLEGIANCE IN SRI LANKA

DILESH JAYANNTHA

*The World Bank,  
Colombo, Sri Lanka*



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It will be clear to the reader that it has been thought necessary to change various placenames. The names of certain individuals have also been changed. The author and publisher are confident that these changes in no way diminish the essential validity of this study and its conclusions.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGA	Assistant Government Agent
APC	Agricultural Productivity Committee
ARTI	Agrarian Research and Training Institute
ASC	Agrarian Services Committee
CC	Cultivation Committee
<i>CDN</i>	<i>Ceylon Daily News</i>
CNC	Ceylon National Congress
CO	Cultivation Officer
CP	Communist Party
<i>CSO</i>	<i>Ceylon Sunday Observer</i>
CTB	Ceylon Transport Board
CWE	Co-operative Wholesale Establishment
DDC	District Development Council
DRO	Divisional Revenue Officer
GA	Government Agent
GOC	Government of Ceylon
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LRC	Land Reform Commission
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
MP	Member of Parliament
MPCS	Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society
NWP	North Western Province
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
<i>SLN</i>	<i>Sri Lanka News</i>
SLNA	Sri Lanka National Archives
SP	Sessional Paper
TC	Town Council
UC	Urban Council
UDA	Urban Development Authority
UF	United Front



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*Abbreviations*

ULF	United Left Front
UNP	United National Party
VA	<i>Vidane-Arachchi</i>
VC	Village Council
VLSSP	Vipalavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party
WP	Western Province