

It was 9th October 1988.

Night was falling. My Kiri Amma (grand mother) returned through paddy field directing a herd of cattle back home. She had vaguely seen some strange boys in dark suits sitting by the pathway, in unusual places. She was old, eyesight was poor. If not, that wouldn't have been the last time she returned home. There were 13 homes in our village. Many were poor farmers. There was one home with a TV. As it was Sunday, we all gathered there to watch the tele drama.

Seneviratne mama was clever; he said "we all should not stay here for long". He came to the road & found some strangers positioning around the place we gathered. Having nothing for his defense, he shouted. That was a call for others to flee. We heard gun fire, it was for Senevi mama. He laid down his life and saved some lives, because tigers had to start shooting before they circled the village completely.

Though we tried to run away, tigers were around us. My chuti nangi (youngest sister) was 4 yrs then, she did not eat without listening to a story. My brother was writing something in his school book. Suddenly tigers hit the front door. It was not made up of strong wood, so my father kept pushing from inside preventing force opening. When that failed, tigers fired several shots at my father thru the door, he fell still trying to keep it closed. They dashed inside, kicked my father's body away and chopped the head away. My mother held 3 of us firmly, trying in vain to cover us with her hands. When a tiger aimed his gun at us, she pleaded to leave the children. He went back and came with another lady tiger. She had a sword. She grabbed my chuti nangi away from my mother's lap and cut her neck off. Then my brother because he tried to say something. Then my mother. When tiger girl hit my mother's neck with the sword, I fainted. Whole night long, I cried trying to wake up my mother. She jerked few times, and became silent. Her blood was warm, same warmth 3 children cherished until this day.

Whole night, I heard gun fires and my relatives crying. With each gun shot, their voices dwindled. I heard Renuka nenda (neighbor) crying next door, pleading them to kill her. Later I learnt why she pleaded that way. A tiger man beheaded her mother, Father, 3 brothers and only sister and brought all 6 heads to the road. They shot at the house opposite mine, then dashed in. There they killed Nawaratne mama's mother (my kiri amma), his elder bother, nanda and two daughters.

Following morning, many people came to see this wonder, one big person (a politician) even came in a helicopter. Bodies were collected by Army men and prepared for last rights but they could not reach the village cemetery because, tiger men were still waiting in ambush. There was another fire fight too. Then a bulldozer came and cut a mass grave and all bodies were laid in it and closed. Those killed on this day were,

1. K.R Amarasinghe Karunaratne
2. Punchiralage Somawathi
3. Saman Ravidralal Amarasinghe
4. Kumudu Nalanee Amarasinghe
5. A.Hethuhami
6. Nimal Karunartne

7. Mallika Damaynthi Karunaratne
8. Nadeeka Sandamalee Munasinghe
9. Pradeepa Sandamalee Munasinghe
10. Pulinguralage Chandradasa
11. Kapuruhamige Dhanapala
12. Sumudu Seneviratne
13. Murugathage Tikiribada
14. Jayantha Jayasiri Ranasinghe
15. Tikiri Bandage Siriyalatha
16. Piyadasage Nandaseeli
17. Gunasekarae Nimalwanshe
18. Piyasenage Wijesena
19. Nimal Wanshage Sriyani Surangika Nimalwanshe
20. Nimal Wanshage Priyanthe Nimalwanshe
21. R.D.A.Chadradasa
22. Malhami Punchibandage Kumarashinghe
23. Podi Appuhamige Seethawathi
24. Kumarasinghage Sisira Kumarasinghe
25. Kumarasinghage Samantha Kumarasinghe
26. Kumarasinghage Malkanthi Kumarasinghe
27. Mudaliamige Piyasena
28. Herathamige Tikirihami
29. Piyasenage Piyanka
30. Piyasenage Sunethra Nandani
31. Piyasenage Milinawathi
32. Piyasenage Nuwan Kumara

33. Piyasenage Rohana Sisira Kumara
34. Niluka Thilakasiri
35. Kumarasinghage Gamini Upathissa Kumarasinghe
36. Manthihamige Piyasena
37. Mudaliamige kalyanawathi
38. P.Sriyani Kusumalatha
39. P.Ramani Niranjala
40. P.Manori Priyanga
41. Mudaliamige Rangiethana
42. Wickramadasage Ranjana Jayakodi
43. Kandappurale Bedderalage Malhami
44. Siral Mohottalage Bebi Ethani.

Remaining villagers fled for safety leaving their belongings. Many people and organizations promised many things but they never reached us.