

Responses of the majority community to the ethnic conflict in a multi ethnic society: A study of the present conflict of Sri Lanka

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This paper is based on a study conducted to examine the responses of the majority Sinhalese in Sri Lanka to the current ethnic conflict in the country. The materials collected in the study were the published and unpublished documents in the form of books, booklets, pamphlets, journal and newspaper articles and undergraduate and postgraduate research studies. In collecting materials for the study, an attempt was not made to survey all relevant literature, but to the literature, which were easily accessible within the short time frame of the study.

The primary objective of this study was to identify, understand and explain various responses of the majority community to the present ethnic conflict in the country. Further this study intended to examine constraints in finding a lasting solution to the problem. The findings of the study reveal that a conflict based on ethnicity becomes more complex unless the conflict is resolved at the very beginning as this kind of conflict ramifies and stretches into several other issues. In such a situation, finding a solution to an ethnic conflict of this nature becomes more and more difficult because of other issues also has to be addressed simultaneously.

The study also reveals that the elite of majority community try to accommodate the minority groups of the same in order to strengthen its ethnic identity and its position by means of extending their discourse of community. Finally, the study hints addressing the grievances of certain groups of the majority community is also vital in managing a conflict between the majority and minority ethnic communities of a country.

Key words: Content analysis; Ethnic conflict; Sri Lanka; Majority community