

Representation of Religious Reconciliation in Sri Lankan Primary School Education: A Study Based on Grade One to Grade Five Religious Textbooks and the Teacher's Guides

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Sri Lanka is a multi-religious country with the majority of the population being Buddhist. The 2012 National Census list the population as 70.2% Buddhist, 12.6% Hindu, 9.7% Muslim, and 7.4% Christian. In a multi-religious country, religious reconciliation is an essential factor which promotes love, brotherhood, peace, harmony and educates people to live in unity with diverse religious cultures. The Constitution of Sri Lanka states that education is a fundamental right for all its citizens (The Constitution, 2020). Therefore, citizens should be made aware of the importance of religious reconciliation from an early age. The main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which primary school education in Sri Lanka has contributed to religious reconciliation and to propose suggestions for improving the religious reconciliation through the means of religious textbooks from grade one to grade five. The research problem of this study is to find whether the contribution of primary school education regarding religious reconciliation in Sri Lanka is sufficient. The research methodology used for this study is the methods of content analysis and textual analysis. Accordingly, the religious textbooks referred by students from grade one to grade five and their teacher's guides were used (Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Christianity, and Islam). The findings of this research show that the religious textbooks and their teacher's guides used in primary education have directly and indirectly represented the concept of religious reconciliation in different magnitudes. This study concludes that the contribution of Sri Lankan primary religious education towards the furtherance of religious reconciliation is inadequate.

Keywords: Primary Education, Religious Reconciliation, Religious Textbooks, Teacher's Guides, Sri Lanka