

The Importance of Learning Second Language to Bring Unity and Reconciliation Among Major Ethnic Groups in Sri Lanka.

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A language is not just a set of words and phrases, rather it comprises of customs, traditions, and culture of a certain community. It can be verbal or nonverbal but it's like a bridge to connect with one another. The ability to understand and communicate with someone in their mother tongue is a key step to achieving harmony and avoiding ethnic divides. Sri Lanka consists of a multicultural society and Sinhala and Tamil languages are the two national languages as a way language is a powerful tool for cultivating trust and leads towards mutual respect and recognition in the multi-cultural society. The purpose of the study is to understand the importance of learning a second language to bring unity and harmony among major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The prime objective of the study is to identify the importance of learning a second language to bring unity and harmony among the major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives are to identify the perception of opposite ethnic groups before starting the second language study programs and, to identify the changes in the previous perception of opposite ethnic groups after completing the second language study programs. The qualitative research method is used to carry out the study and one hundred-second language teachers at the National Institute of Language Education and Training (NILET) are identified as a sample of this study. Fifty Tamil language and fifty Sinhala language teachers are picked out by a simple random sampling method. Interview and Focus group discussion methods are used as research tools to collect the primary data and the secondary data were collected from research articles, books, and paper articles. The study revealed that there is a huge gap between these two major ethnicities but there are positive reactions after completing the second language programme in terms of respecting and understanding each other's nature, culture, and feelings. Further, the study identified that lack of knowledge in the second language makes a huge gap, and this gap plays a major barrier to bringing unity, harmony, and peace among them. Finally, the study recommended that it is essential for the next generation of Sri Lanka to have the knowledge to learn and speak two national languages for a greater understanding of each other's nature and culture. Proper implementation and mechanism for monitoring the language policy are very important and a practical way of bilingual education will allow the children from a very young age to acquire to appreciate and acknowledge each other culture, feelings, and emotions. The success of the military does not guarantee long-lasting peace and harmony. As a responsible citizen of the nation, everyone must find the answer to the root causes which led to the Sri Lankan civil war in the first place and must take a tiny step forward to learn both national languages to understand and feel other's culture, feelings and, emotions for healthy Sri Lanka.

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