

## “Sri Lanka Matha”: A Matter of Translation

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A national anthem is a patriotic song identified with a particular country as an expression of national identity. The language of a national anthem is significant as it is a united representation of all the communities inhabiting a country. Hence, the present study attempts to identify the perspectives surrounding the acceptance of both the Sinhalese version and the Tamil translation of the National Anthem of Sri Lanka, and to explore its potential to generate social cohesion in our society. The study was conducted via a mixed method approach, predominantly consisted of fifty questionnaires distributed amongst undergraduates of the Universities of Kelaniya and Jaffna, combined with unstructured interviews with ten participants. Furthermore, research articles and publications apropos to the study were employed to strengthen the outcomes of the research. Under descriptive statistics, the garnered data were analysed according to two primary research questions and sub-categories. The analysed data succinctly portrayed a conflict between perspectives showcased by the undergraduates. The responses of the undergraduates whose mother-tongue is Tamil, elucidated that they consider the national anthem and individual identity as correlated variables, whilst undergraduates whose mother-tongue is Sinhala expressed a completely different standpoint. With regards to the differences of perspectives, the marginalization of the ethnic Other, superior mentality, shifting of blame for the three decades of prolonged violence and suffering were amongst the justifications both Sinhalese and Tamil speakers presented in accepting and/or rejecting the bilingual version of the national anthem. The final outcomes of the study undoubtedly depict that there is an immediate requisite needed concerning the language of the National anthem of Sri Lanka. Finally, the study suggests some plausible solutions for the issues in translation concerning the national anthem of Sri Lanka, that could be adopted in order to minimise social marginalization and strengthen inclusivity within the diverse communities.

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