

A Qualitative Analysis on Historicizing Nationalist Discourse of the Origins of the Communities of Sri Lanka among the Contemporary Sinhalese

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Abstract : In the post-war reconciliation context, the Sri Lankans need to develop constructive discourse on political harmony, cohesion, and co-habitation to make a positive impact on legislative changes towards post-conflict reconciliation, sustainable peace, and justice. Ideological discourse constitutes power in constructing ideational, textual and interpersonal constructs for legitimizing power in society. This paper qualitatively analyses the exemplified discourse extracts of some prominent contemporary Sinhalese, which represent majoritarianism and ethno-nationalism regarding the origins of the Sinhala and Tamil communities and the consequent status availed to their existence in Sri Lanka. The study focuses, with the historiographical evidence, on whether such discourse has been a part of the problem or a part of the solution to the protracted, historically constructed Sri Lankan conflict. It finds out the continuation of such persistent and reiterated linguistically embedded ethno-centric ideological and attitudinal positions even now, which need to be addressed. This paper recommends awareness creation among the public about the true, scientifically derived historical information on the origins, evolution and inter-community co-existence and conflict of the two communities so that a durable solution can be reached in the long run.

Keywords : conflict, discourse, ethno-nationalism, ideology, legitimization, Sinhalese, Tamil

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