

DEVELOPMENT AND RECONCILIATION IN POST WAR SRI LANKA- A CASE STUDY

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The key responsibility of the state in an ethnically torn society is to build an ethnically harmonious bridge between bipolarized ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. State sponsored reconciliation; mega-level projects in national and local political arenas began in response to reunite ethnically divided groups. Postwar reconciliation manifested through materialistic programs by the government in the Northern Province such as opening schools, constructing roads, resettling displaced families and government certification of the death of the people during the war. Conversely, the government also conducted mega level post-war celebrations in order to reflect the gratitude and appreciate the sacrifice of fallen southern soldiers' lives. The great expectation behind all these programs was to reconcile spiritually and physically broken lives in the north and south.

This research investigates as to why war-affected people feel that they are subject to social, political and economic exclusions under state-sponsored post-war reconciliation policies in Sri Lanka. Two research questions are discussed; firstly, how reconciliation policies decided by the center cure war affected minds and lives? Secondly, how reconciliation policies give the impression of social exclusion to war affected people in the North Province. The data was collected from 100 respondents from Uruththipuram in Northern Province, Killionchi District. Qualitative data was collected using unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. Narrative analysis was used as a methodology to analyze the data.

Social, economic and political exclusions spread rapidly and deeply fragmented the Tamils and Sinhalese unity. National level Tamil and Sinhalese mega cultural fiestas do not forge a sense of understanding each other at a ground level. The state is placed above the citizens and it monitors, dominates and manipulates citizens under post-war development and reconciliation policies. Severed communication links between citizens and state crafters paved the way to ethnic polarization more than post-war development policies in Sri Lanka.