

Abstract 103

A Study about Language Rights Violation in the Post War Sri Lanka

Dhanushka Dihan Wickramasinghe

English Language Teaching Unit, Faculty of Built Environment & Spatial Sciences,
Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Southern Campus
dhanushkadihan@kdu.ac.lk

Language constitutes a fundamental right of all citizens of Sri Lanka. According to Chapter III, Article 12 (2), no citizen shall be discriminated against on grounds of language. The constitutional provisions thus entitle a citizen to transact business with and access government in the language of his/her choice. Language as a right defines a set of duties and obligations on the part of the State and of the citizen that would enable the fulfillment of such rights. Language emerged as a crucial factor in political mobilization of the two major communities, the Sinhala and Tamil in the post war scenario. However, the language rights continued to be flouted in certain state sectors in the postwar Sri Lanka. The objective of this study was to find out which sectors in the society have the most tendency to breach the language policy and there forth to recommend a proper mechanism. The findings reveal that the non-compliance of language policy occurs to a degree in terms of visibility and ambience and service delivery in the government offices. It is recommended to perform a revision in the language policy act and the proper decentralization of the language policy provisions to the ground level and to create designated bilingual positions in the government sector. The study was of qualitative nature and the data for the study was accumulated from the complaints and investigation Division Official Languages Commission of Sri Lanka where the language complaints was analyzed in terms of the nature of the violation of the language policy.

Key words: Official Language Policy, Language Rights, Violation, Implementation, Sri Lanka