

## **Language Policy Changes and its Impact on the Civil War in Sri Lanka**

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Language is an indispensable human endowment that is used for communication and is always meant to be used for affirmative discourse. Yet, language itself has become crucial in creating dissension in many parts of the world. Sri Lanka, a multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country, in which a prolonged civil war continued for nearly three decades, sets a prosperous ground for researchers to study its latent and manifest sociolinguistic aspects in order to invent new mechanisms for the betterment of people. In this status quo, studies that address the subtle impact of language and its relation to ethnicity and identity are significant in analysing the pivotal role played by a language. Therefore, an exploratory research was conducted to study the role of language in multi-ethnic Sri Lanka as a step towards conflict resolution and transformation. Both primary and secondary resources have been used in this study. The research location was in Eastern province, namely Trincomalee district as it represents almost equal numbers of different ethnic groups. Questionnaires, group discussions, individual interviews have been used to collect data from the sample population while secondary data has been analysed. Data showed that though language is not considered a serious topic of concern among the general public, it has a significant effect on civil life. Further, it showed that in a dense multi-ethnic setting, each layer of society has felt the effects of language policy changes, leaving both positive and negative impacts. Accordingly, analysing the root causes of thirty years of civil war in Sri Lanka, language has been identified as one of the major reasons for its prolongation because language policy changes had an influential impact on different ethnic groups thereby extending its effects into the political, economic and social arena.

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