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**LAKSHMAN WEDIKKARAGE**

Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Department of Social Science Education, Sri Lanka

**NILANTHA PUSHPAKUMARA**

Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

## **THE IMPACT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION ON SOCIAL COHESION IN SRI LANKA**

### **Abstract:**

Sri Lanka is a multicultural country where three major ethnic groups, namely Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims live. Therefore, it is important to create an atmosphere of social cohesion among these different ethnicities. Education, particularly, can play a key role in expediting such cohesion. A 30 year war had seriously damaged social cohesion between Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority. Moreover, intermittent ethnic atrocities between Tamils and Muslims as well as Sinhalese and Muslims have further soured social cohesion among these three ethnic groups. Consequently, it is imperative that social cohesion be created to develop a healthy society in Sri Lanka. Education is considered as a key instrument in bringing about understanding between different ethnic groups living in the same country. The present research is undertaken with a view to determining to what extent the teaching of Citizenship Education in Sri Lankan secondary influences social cohesion. Documents, interviews were the main methods of data collection. Initial findings reveal that teachers are not adequately trained to handle Citizenship Education. Document analysis shows that lessons related to social cohesion are relatively less in the syllabus of Citizenship Education. Moreover, teachers are compelled to teach social cohesion in mostly mono-ethnic atmospheres.

### **Keywords:**

Citizenship Education, Multiculturalism, Social Cohesion, Ethnicity

**JEL Classification:** A20, A20, A20