

## **ETHNIC CONFLICT AND CO-OPERATION IN SRI LANKA AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

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The duration and intensity of co-operation and friendly relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils in the history of Sri Lanka had been far greater than the duration and intensity of conflicts. In fact the conflicts and discrimination within the Sinhalese or Tamil communities was greater than between them. But recently historical processes have been distorted to highlight the conflicts between the ethnic groups neglecting the predominantly co-operative and friendly relations.

Ethnic conflicts have recently become a worldwide problem because of the unacceptability of any type of discrimination or unequal treatment on the basis of caste, colour, sex, age, race, religion, language, class or income and the universal demand for human rights, freedom and equality. Two major trends which appears to be contradictory but which can be reconciled are visible in the world today—(a) the movement towards universalisation and the formation of larger regional groups comprising many states and ultimately the formation of one world community and (b) the demand for the preservation of even minor ethnic cultures and identities with sometimes demand for autonomy.

In Sri Lanka national integration can be achieved having a realistic view of our past historical co-operation and the global realities of universalisation and the preservation and development of diversities, finally achieving unity in variety with full national integration leading ultimately to the evolution of one world with variety.