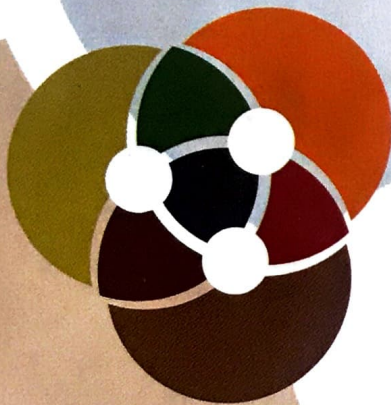




# Book of Abstracts



SAARC Regional Seminar on

**CULTURAL DYNAMICS** *in*

**NATIONAL HARMONY**

*in* **SOUTH ASIA**

15-16 MAY 2015, PERADENIYA, SRI LANKA

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Ms. Anjali KORALA

***School History Curriculum and its Impact on Sri Lanka's Reconciliation Process***

The three decades-long war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state devastated the country's economic and human resources. This protracted war also contributed to polarising ethnic communities who once enjoyed greater coexistence. The war has not only been a result, but also a cause of the ethnic conflict. Hence, it is in this context, that the ending of the war has become a necessity. However, even though, the violence and destruction came to an end since the ending of the war, the challenges of reconciling the polarised communities continue to exist. Therefore, since May 2009, reconciliation has become the main political agenda of the country. The former regime spearheaded large development programmes in order to reconcile the war-affected communities. The LLRC appointed by the government recommended many initiatives that could address the differences and a pernicious trend leading to irrevocable grievances of the different ethnic communities in the country. Although, many initiatives have been taken by various stakeholders, recent ethnic tensions clearly indicate that ethnic reconciliation among communities is far from being achieved in this context of polarisation among communities.

This paper inquires how school curriculum can be instrumental in constructing ethnic stereotypes among the Sinhalese students. This paper is developed based on findings of the research that I have conducted for my Bachelors degree programme in Political Science. The research examined how school history curriculum has contributed to students' attitude towards minority communities. The paper examines the impact text books make on the country's reconciliation process. This research was conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods to inquire the attitudes, perceptions and

knowledge of the male and female students of upper middle class families. Two exclusively Sinhala Buddhist schools were selected while the balance two were selected from schools where students from mixed ethnicities attended.

This paper questions: i) Do school curriculum and text books on history facilitate or undermine the reconciliation project of the country? and ii) How do the text books and the history curriculum shape the opinion of students who study in mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic school environments? Thereby, this paper argues for the importance of re-examination and review of the current history text books in order to support the government's quest for reconciliation that would bring about lasting and just peace in Sri Lanka.

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Dr. Deepi Rekha KOULI

*Art as a Cultural Medium of Peace in South Asian Countries*

Art is the living heritage of the people of a society. Art represents socio-cultural as well as religious aspects of a society of a particular period or a region. The origin of the art can be traced to the religious and cultural background of a society. India as a South Asian country represents similar art traditions from the earliest time till date, thereby playing an important role in the peace process between South Asian countries. The region of Assam situated in eastern-most corner of India is an integral part of Indian art tradition. Like the rest of India, religion played a vital role in the evolution of art tradition in Assam. Archaeological evidences in stone, metal, terracotta, wood and ivory as well as literary evidences signify rich cultural heritage of the region and exhibits cultural bonding with neighbouring countries.