

# **Fostering Social Harmony among the Undergraduates and its Challenges in the North Eastern Universities**

**Sachithanantham, P.**

Department of Comparative Religion & Social Harmony, Eastern University of

Sri Lanka

[Sachith72@yahoo.com](mailto:Sachith72@yahoo.com)

After the end of the civil unrest, the necessity of social harmony and peacebuilding is paid more attention in the reconciliation process. The importance of peace and harmony have become a central theme of investigation among academics as well as other sectors for the sustainable development of the country. As far as higher education is concerned, universities had to play a pivotal role in building up mutual trust and relationship among the multi ethnic community undergraduates for the betterment of the future, because the possibility of interaction between the multi ethnic communities was affected by the civil unrest. Hence there is prime need for understanding each other when they come together in the universities specially in the north eastern universities, where the number of multi ethnic undergraduates increased rapidly after the war. Thus the Eastern, South Eastern, Jaffna universities are facing difficulties in handling the multi lingual student population and creating harmonious relationships among them. Clashes among the undergraduates that have been recorded in the universities clearly indicate that unrest prevails in the universities. Therefore, this study intends to identify and investigate; a) what social harmony programmes are being implemented in these universities, b) what challenges are faced by the universities in fostering social harmony among the undergraduates c) what can be suggested further to improve and strengthening the social harmony. For this, the research has been primarily using data obtained through interviews, participation observation and used research books, encyclopedia, universities hand books, and related materials, such as e-resources. The research found that those universities incorporated the social harmony subject as a compulsory component in their curriculum. In addition, the IRQUE, and the HETC Projects, also contributed in various ways for enhancing social harmony activities such as cultural programmes, field trips, inter-university students exchange

programmes for fostering social harmony among the under graduates, even though various elements are contributing to disturb the peaceful environment of the northeastern universities.

**Key words:** *Multi-ethnic, Multi-lingual, Peace building, Reconciliation, Social harmony.*