

Problems and Challenges of Minorities' Political Participation in Sri Lanka: A Case Study of Welikanda Pradeshiya Saba in Polannaruwa District

Sutharsitha, P* & Somarathna, AGTS

Abstract

Sri Lanka is a country composed of diverse ethnicities. Understanding patterns trends of political participation of ethnic minorities are crucial for integration in Sri Lanka. The main objective of this research was to investigate the problems and challenges faced by minority people in political participation. This study was mainly based on primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from structured questionnaires and interviews. For the sample 50 people were selected from minority dense areas in Welikanda Divisional Secretariat division in Polonnaruwa district and sample population was selected randomly. In addition to that 05 interviewers were chosen from members of Welikanda Pradeshiya Sabha randomly. This study used secondary data sources as books, newspapers, annual reports, institutional reports and websites etc. Qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis methods were used to analyze the data in this study. The study found that lack of awareness and motivation, less competitive past political status, lack of trust in political leaders, less communication and less transport facilities, lack of leadership in minority people, fewer relations of political leaders, rural situation of villages and lack of religious, social, cultural societies and organization as the identified problems and challenges. The study recommended that arranging some awareness programs in schools and villages for example political related drama, seminars, and some conferences about the importance of their voting rights, enhance political leaders' activities in minority dense areas, maintain their organizational structure very well are very important in enhancing minorities' political participation. And maintaining unity within members in major opposition party, selecting proper candidates to the competition by parties can also improve the political participation of minority people.

Key words: Minority Peoples' political Participation, Minority Rights, Integration

To whom correspondence should be addressed: sutharsitha @gmail.com

*Department of Social Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka