

# **Role of Buddhism promoting tolerance in postwar society in Sri Lanka**

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**By**

**W. Bhagya Hithaishi Jayawardena**

**Conflict, Peace and Development Studies (CPDS)**

**Roll No: CINTA/L/0139**

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## **Abstract**

The three decade of protracted civil war in Sri Lanka has direct its path today more on development and peace. Preserving its multi religious and multi ethnic serenity, religion has embedded in to Sri Lankan culture and has played a significant role in socio, political and economical sphere of every citizen. Despite of few moments the past history of the country mostly has witnessed a general climate of tolerance and coexistence among all the religious groups. Although in the postwar phase the peace and reconciliation has been mislead and challenged by the religious extremism.

Religion as an agent of socialization shapes the human behavior and promotes tolerance. Although in the postwar phase religious tolerance within the country has been challenged due some acts of the religious extremism. Hence the core objective of this study is to identify the role of Buddhism in promoting religious tolerance in postwar society in Sri Lanka. The key areas elucidate by the study were the perception of Buddhism in promoting Religious Tolerance, the challenges in promoting religious tolerance in postwar phase and the contribution of the religious tolerance in the postwar reconciliation process .Considering the nature of the study researcher adopted the qualitative method in collecting the data and the primary data was collected utilizing the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were carried out with key informants. The collected primary and secondary data have been presented and analyzed developing themes under each objective.

The research was carried out to elucidate the role of Buddhism in promoting Religious Tolerance in the postwar phase in Sri Lanka as its one powerful tool in reconciling devastated nations like Sri Lanka after experiencing 30 years of protracted war. The foundation of every religious

teaching is to promote Religious Tolerance in the top of that the Buddhist teaching defines it as a path to free from violence. Today practice of Religious Tolerance has been politically and socially challenged due to Buddhists monks' involvement in politics, acts of extreme groups, degradation of Buddhist ethos and religious based educations system prevailing in Sri Lanka.

The research was carried out aiming the application of religious tolerance in peace building process, within a nation enrich with a Buddhist culture since 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The recommendations are made in all three levels including actors of government, religious institutions and finally on community level with a uniformity in order to promote the religious tolerance which ultimately facilitate the reconciliation and long run building peace within the nation.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CPA	Center for Policy Alternatives
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
JHU	Jathika Hela Urumaya
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LLRC	Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
NPA	National Plan of Action
USA	United States of America

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The ancient history onward till modern day, society has disaffected and resulted societal fractions based on race, gender, class and religion. For the past history the world has witnessed a dramatic increase of the conflict where religion has been a salient factor. It has become a common phenomenon and proven with 9/11 incident that today religious extremism has reached up to terrorism where to conduct violence in the name of god. Thus religion promotes peace and guides people on righteous path in contrary war has become dilemma nationally and internationally beyond the borders all around the world including United State of America (USA), South Africa, Europe states, Middle East and south and East Asia.

As a religion Buddhism, founded in the late 6th century B.C.E. by Siddhartha Gautama (Lord Buddha), is a main religion in most of the countries of Asia. The Buddha's teachings are often summarized in the Four Noble Truths, which form the basis of the first sermon he delivered after attaining enlightenment and the Eightfold Path, which provides a basic guide on how to live in the world. Over the course of its 2500-year history, Buddhism has experienced many schisms and modifications and there are currently three major branches of the tradition the Theravada, the Mahayana, and the Vajrayana , although there are many sects and groups within each of these branches.(Patheos,2008)

Emperor Ashoka was a great leader who promoted religious tolerance and core values including respect for all beings. The early part of Ashoka's reign was apparently quite bloodthirsty, but

later he became a follower of the Buddha's teaching after his conquest of Kalinga. As a righteous follower of the lord Buddha emperor Ashoka practiced Buddhism amalgamating with state affairs. He led the country following "Dasa Raja Dharma" the ten precepts which include lord Buddha's teaching on righteous way of ruling the state. Further the emperor Ashoka published 14 edicts, as the basis on his new policy. In his 12<sup>th</sup> edict claims "whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good". Though he was the first monarch to renounce violence, hatred and anger the king Ashoka replaced conquest by force with what he called "conquest by tolerance" (Dhammika, 1994).

Sri Lanka well known as the pearl of Indian Ocean, to the south of India is separated by a very narrow sea of 20 miles. The natural location of the country and the strong neighborhood credited the introduction of Buddhist tradition to the Sri Lankan in the 3<sup>rd</sup> BC (i.e., 250 BCE) by the Emperor Asoka's son, Arhath Mahinda. The strong historical links established claims the Sri Lankan Buddhism to be the longest and the oldest living Buddhist tradition in the world. The Chronicles, including the Mahawansa, the Dipavamsa, the Chulavamsa and the Rajaveliya, record events from the beginnings of Sinhalese monarchy in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC has highly has shown the interconnectivity of Buddhism and the state intervention over religion from the ancient period. The prime example could be to elucidate as Mahawansa narratives discussed the war between the Dutugamunu and the King Elara. Dutugamunu was a prince with Sinhala origin where Elara was an Indian Tamil Dravidian invader. According to the Buddhist chronicles and the texts king Dhutugamunu presented his war in order to preserve the Buddhism of the state from the foreign invader Elara. Specially the monks marching with the troops in the battle is perceived as an act of protecting the king. The politics and the Buddhism has been embedded

and interweave where most of the regimes under the counsel of Buddhist monks. The ultimate national interest of each and every rulers can be defined as expanding their national boundaries specially ancient time , while modern day to maintain their political power. In the process of determining wage war against others, spreading violence and war as an unavoidable circumstance and frequently would not provide much space for spiritual or religious life.

The closing stages of Kandian regime open the doors for the colonial masters and 1505 Portugese, 1656 Dutch and finally British in 1796. The divide and rule policy of British had create severe impacts upon Sri Lankan society specially ethnic, religious and political polarization. 1883 Kotahena riot was one prime example for the religious disharmony . The riot caused great amount of unrest and anxiety among the bureaucrats in Sri Lanka. The main incident took place in the Easter Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup> in 1883 where two people, one Buddhist and one Roman Catholic died and about thirty others including twelve police officers were wounded. It was a turning point in the revivalist movement of Buddhism where anti Christian propaganda and rhetoric led to a violent clash” (Sameer, 2006). The next reported incident was the 1915 Muslim Sinhala riot on May 28<sup>th</sup>, commonly known as the “Muslim riot. It was a petty incident occurred in the Gampola town, Muslims traders in the neighboring Kandy town decide not to allow any procession of Buddhist to disturb worship at their mosque by the noise of musical instruments. The Buddhists were equally determined to hold the Vesak procession following the usual route. When the procession reached the mosque, the Police managed to divert part of it but when the remainder passed through, jeering and stone throwing began. It was a chaos resulting large number of deaths and loss of properties. The government declared martial law to control the situation and military came hard on the people particularly the Sinhalese and Buddhists. Many hundred died in the rioting or in the summary justice, under martial law meted

out by British Troops against civilians. In subsequent years, open conflict between Sinhala Buddhists and Muslims dies down but anti – minority feelings of the Sinhala traders persisted in their consciousness. This was seen not only in largely localized outburst of violence against Muslims, which occurred in Puttalm and Galle 1981, but also in the context of much Sinhala chauvinist propaganda. However it is noteworthy that antagonism has continued less on religious lines on the basis of trade rivalry (Jayawardena, 2003).

The religion intolerance or disharmony was not instantly occurred, it was taking place gradually from the past history and colonization was one key station of outburst. Ethnic religious conflicts in Sri Lanka were among the factors that related the formation of a strong anti – imperialist consciousness, capable of uniting all ethnic groups in a joint liberation struggle. During the colonial period, such conflict also on many occasions weakened the class consciousness of the working people, directing their energies in a wrong direction against minorities rather than against their employers. For example in the Legislative Council , from 1833 to 1912 , the Low Country Sinhala representatives who were appointed by the government were Protestant Christians : a high percentage of Sinhala and Tamil entrepreneurs professional people and government servants were also Christian, the products of missionary schools. The Buddhist petty bourgeoisie of small traders, white collar workers, writers and teachers with the support of the Buddhist monks also opposed the hegemony of Christians in colonial society. These groups spearheaded the revivalist movement to promote Buddhist education, challenge missionary influence and arouse national patriotic feelings among the Sinhala Buddhists (Jayawardena, 2003). Thus throughout the Sri Lankan history it has proven evidence of religious intolerance used as a tool to achieve varied socio, political and economical objects. The divide and rule policy by the colonial

masters, missionary education and trade power were some major causes behind the outburst of violence and religion has been used as a tool in most of the historical records.

Marking end to the 30 years of civil war people had a hope of tranquility but it also hidden under nationalism and fundamentalist religion perceptions of the people. It's questionable what have we learn at the end of this protracted civil war which have been carried out for 30 years resulting many socio-economic and political constraint for the nation. Though as a country today we should stand on the door steps of peace, still we have not learned much of lessons when it comes to tolerance and the peaceful co-existence. It basically results lack of inter-communal dialogue, anti-Muslim propaganda, destruction of private properties, escalation of hate-speech against minorities and religious fundamentalism. The religion violence and the intolerance in post war scenario out burst with the attack on the Mosque in Dambulla in April 2012. According to the report published by the Centre for Policy Alternative (CPA), Attacks on Religious places basically illustrate there have been 65 cases of attacks on places of religious worship. Additionally the activism of Buddhist extremists organizations formed in the post war era is even consequentially resulted in a growing cancer of community disharmony that threatens the health and well-being of the pluralistic society.

Buddhism is a philosophy which promotes the tolerance in a peaceful co-existence even though the historical evidence has proven it as a causal fact for the generating violent and intolerant within society. It's core teaching lies in the path of Dhamma with Karuna, Meththa and Muditha. Although act with Aho, act with loba (greed/desire), dwesha (hatred/ill-will) and moha (delusion/ignorance) always stray from the dhamma. The socio political milieu which has created the xenophobia, clash of self and other creates an atmosphere of dominant groups and minorities. Based on all these facts the study was able to fabricate the role of Buddhism in



promoting peace and tolerance in post war Sri Lanka. Further it also expounded the socio, political dynamics which have lead to religious intolerant and disharmony in post war Sri Lanka with special reference to Buddhists.

## **1.2 The Problem Statement**

To what extent the Inter- religious tension and anti religious attitude of the people has challenged dispersal of religious tolerance of Buddhists in the post war Sri Lankan society.”

The religion is a set of institutionalized beliefs and practices that deal with the ultimate meaning of life. Likewise the Buddhism is the way of life. It promotes the righteous living and peace among human beings. Therefore purpose of a religion is to furnish human beings a sense of self worth, to recognize the right of each individual to enjoy both spiritual and worldly happiness. Religion aims to help people not only live a meaningful life in this world, but also to prepare one for a life after death. Each and every religion practiced by the human kind basically promotes peace and there aren't any religions which promote violence. Specially Sri Lanka as a country defined in history as “dhammadeepa” peaceful nation in a Buddhist perspective and a country where majority belong to Buddhist it's questionable whether there are any scriptural justification for persons who profess to be Buddhists to be aggressive, spread intolerant attitude on 'others' living amongst them.

Sri Lanka has been identified as a multicultural pluralistic society from the past and the religious proportionate in 2012 recorded as Buddhists (70.2%), Hinduism (12.6%), Islam (9.7%) and Christianity (7.4%) according to the report of census and statistic Department. The multi religious or pluralism can be defined as different ethnic groups preserving their unique culture and behavior, while still sharing common native values and principles. Nevertheless inter-

religious relations among the majority and the minority communities. In post war Sri Lankan society peaceful coexistences among the religious groups are still challenging and questionable. Till 2009 Sri Lankan conflict was defined in an ethnic line where as the post war Sri Lanka replaced direction in a more religious line. The post war reconcile should mark under the umbrella of pluralism by generating respect and equality among religion groups where as today many distortions are taking place by some religious groups in an opposing manner. The post war Sri Lanka experienced many attempts of vandalism on places of religious places challenging the pluralist's multi religious notion. Such attempts by certain extremist forces worsen and deteriorate the existence of multicultural ideal and religious tolerance among the community. Thus it creates a gap when all these religions promote peace and the pragmatism of the occurrence of religious extremism and intolerance. The problem arises as a country consists of majority Buddhists and who carries Buddhist values being intolerable, engaging in violence in the name of religion and hatred and discrimination over other religious groups. Religion and ethnicity in Sri Lanka, though defined as a bridging factor among communities from the history it's been used to provide an identity to many people as a dividing factor.

Thus Buddhism is a religion which promotes the pluralism and respects other religions. Specially the righteous man can be a Buddhist no matter Hindu, Islam or Christian according to the Buddhist philosophy. Based on the facts study was able to provide an analytical outlook on post war society and the challenges to promote religious tolerance in present Sri Lankan context.

### **1.3 Research questions**

- How does religion (Buddhism) promote tolerance in post war Sri Lanka
- How does Buddhists perceive religious tolerance in postwar Sri Lankan society?
- What are the challenges to promote religious tolerance among Buddhists in post war Sri Lanka?
- How far the religious tolerance of Buddhists could benefit to reconcile the post war Sri Lankan society?

### **1.4 Rational of the Study**

Marking the end to the 30 years of civil war in Sri Lanka brought a hope that post-war scenario would usher peace, development and reconciliation changing the direction of the nation. Hence, the few years in the post-war era witnessed many infrastructural development, rehabilitation and resettlement programmes but reconciliation process in post-war society is still questionable. One of the most key post war challenges remains to be inter-religion disharmony. There have been incidents such as mob attacks on religious institutions, protest against religious communities and formation of extremists groups in the recent times. Specially as a nation of majority Buddhists with followers of Buddhist values from the very beginning of history, the prime role and the duty of the entire country should be to promote peace and healing the wounds that have resulted from the civil war. Many acts of violence and hostility are taking place in the name of religion today. Old extremist groups have resurfaced with new vigour and new groups have been formed. These have become a great threat and have challenged the religious tolerance and age old social values of Sri Lankan society.

The study was further strived to fill the gaps through people perception and understanding on religious tolerance and its application to a pluralistic society. Finally in a more academically concern the study was used as a platform to apply the theoretical knowledge of reconciliation to analyze the current emerging issues on religious tension as a more pragmatic and timely piece of research work.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The broad objective of this study is,

- To identify the role of Buddhism in promoting religious tolerance in post war society

In order to achieve this broad objective, the study has formulated three specific objectives as follows'

- To explore the Buddhists perception on religious tolerance in post war Sri Lanka
- To elucidate the challenges in promoting religious tolerance of Buddhists in post war Sri Lankan society
- To identify the role of religious tolerance to the reconciliation process in the post war Sri Lankan society

## **1.6 Limitations of the study**

Each and every religion's central focused is to promote tolerance among their followers. Although due to the time constraint, the study only focused on Buddhism and its role in promoting tolerance in post war Sri Lanka. But to avoid the limitation the researcher have add insight from three key informants representing other religions as well. The concept of religion in contemporary Sri Lankan society has been very sensitive area and due to its sensitivity researcher found difficulty in raising some issues and incidents related to religious intolerant. Specially some respondents carried extreme religious viewpoint and though it adds diverse perspective to the study it was difficult in handling situations like focus group discussions. Following the research ethics the researcher was able to gather all their views in a state of neutrality.

## **1.7 Presentation and Organization of the Thesis**

The data on role of religion (Buddhism) promoting tolerance in post war Sri Lankan society has been presented in a form of descriptive to comprehend the rationale of the study. The chapter has been organized in to five chapters as follow,

### **First Chapter: Introduction**

The first chapter provides a sight on impacts of religion to resort inconsistency among diverse societies giving reference on present world scenario. It also provides an outlook on background of the Buddhism and it's relation to key chronological events with few case examples which have challenged the religious tolerance of Buddhists in Sri Lankan society. The Chapter is directed on research objectives, research questions, and research problem and rational of the study.

## **Second Chapter: Literature Review**

It is allocated to define the main concepts related to the study and to review the literature related to the study area in a sequence order. Also the chapter fabricates a broader understanding on theories related to study area and its application to the research study.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

The Chapter provides overview on research methodology adopted in the study. It consists of three sections. The first part of the chapter focused on research design, rational of the site selection, sample design where as the second part of the chapter discussed the data collection Methods used in the study. The final segment of the chapter focused on the data presentation and analysis. The chapter also provides justification based on ethical consideration to prefer particular research area.

## **Chapter Four: Research Data presentation and Analysis**

The overall research findings are presented in the chapter four and it is identified as the foremost chapter of the entire study. It illustrates an analysis on the primary and secondary data collection and presents the data in a thematic order.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Chapter five provides the concluding remarks and the recommendation required by the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

The chapter provides a review on the literature relate to religious tolerance in a Buddhists perspective. Specially it fabricates a link between the present study and relevant past research studies in the area of religious tolerance. Review the past literature was very much beneficial on identifying the causal factors based on historical events and to discover the challenges to promote religious tolerance in the post war Sri Lanka. Further the theoretical framework carry theories relate to religious tolerance and provide theoretical explanations intended for religious intolerant behaviors of mankind. The critical analysis of past and present literature was enriching the study in a more advance manner.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Definitions**

##### **2.1.1 Religion, Buddhism and peace**

For thousands of years religion has had a strong hold over on the lives of human beings. Religion exists in all known societies, although religious beliefs and practices vary from culture to culture. All religions involve a set of symbols involving feelings, linked to rituals practiced by a community of believers.

Sociologist define religion as an institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values, and practices by which a group of people interprets and responds to what they feel is scared and that provide answers to questions of ultimate meanings (Shakrah, Andersen and Taylor, 2005).

Etymological definitions are more or less conjectural, because the origin of the word is shrouded in uncertainty. In Latin it was spelt 'rel(l)igio' and the Roman writer Cicero derived the word from the root 'leg' meaning 'to take up', 'gather', 'count', or 'observe'. Hence according to him religion is an observation of signs of a Divine communication or to read the omens. On the basis of the etymological meanings stated above A.C .Bouquet concludes:"for most Europeans, at any rate, 'religion' has come to mean a fixed relationship between a human self and some non-human entity, the Sacred, Supernatural, the Self – Existent, the Absolute or simply God. Obviously according to the etymological definitions, Buddhism cannot be called a religion because it lack the necessary constituents specified in the definition (Gnanarama, 1998).

Ethically speaking Buddhism is a way of life. One should shun all that evil which is retributive and bring about suffering. On the positive side, one must accumulate merits by resorting to what is morally good and wholesome which results happiness. But, merits alone will not full fill the final objective: emancipation from suffering. It is concentration and insight through mind culture that lead to emancipation. Viewed from an ethical perspective, Buddhism as a religion gives precedence to morality and mind culture and thus reveals its predominately ethical and pragmatic nature. Therefore Buddhism in it's entirety has been defined as a system of ethics (Gnanarama, 1998).But the in a more critical outlook it is problematic how human nature could act in opposing direction when they are highly bound to a exacting religious ethos.

In the early Buddhist tradition, the concept of peace was expressed with the word 'santi' (tranquility, peace). It would be worthwhile to reflect here upon the example and words of the Buddha in order to understand the Buddhist approach to peace and war. One of the early Pali canonical texts, a representative text of the Theravada tradition, the Dhammapada (v. 202) states, "There is no bliss higher than peace." Highlighting the notion of peace, the Buddha is often



identified with the epithet of santiraja (king of peace) (Deegalle, 2009). The ultimate goal of the Buddhist path for the committed practitioner is the attainment of perfect inner peace. The achievement of perfect inner peace is the aim to lead a better life in this world.

### **2.1.2 War, Conflict and Violence**

To Buddhists, war is akusala -- unskillful, evil and teaches how an individual could transcend the universal tendency to engage in conflicts, debates, disputes and wars. However, in the early periods of Sri Lankan history as well as in the ongoing ethnic conflict, those who profess to be Buddhists do not seem to have seen any contradiction in advocating war for the purpose of safeguarding Buddhism. All wars, according to the Buddhist view, originate in the minds of people. Buddhist teachings maintain that the mental processes referred to as unskilled or unwholesome (akusala) determine the behaviour of the large majority of living beings. Conflict in society is therefore, considered in Buddhism to be endemic ( Deegalle, 2006).

Conflict is a natural phenomenon in society where there are individuals of diverse temperaments. But when conflict turns to brawls and rumpuses, peaceful co –existence in society is jeopardized thereby ruining individual and social progress. According to the conflict theorists of sociology, conflict is an inevitable feature of society and many social changes are caused by tension between competing interests (Gnanarama, 1998).

Its modern usage demonstrates that ‘violence’ as a term is used very broadly to include a wide range of negative human actions harmful to other living beings, living organisms, eco-systems and environment. While the aspect of physical assault can be taken as its primary meaning, it also includes minor violations such as verbal abuse. In texts, violence can be understood primarily as physical assault and killing (Deegalle, 2002).

The war, conflict and violence are interrelated concepts and natural phenomenon from the history onwards. Nevertheless all the religions have own way of addressing them. Hatred, ignorance, fears are causal factors usher violence and in a larger context escort to conflict and mass destructions. The religion funnel the ethical behavior of the laymen's inculcating inner peace in human mind where as the causal factors for the violence, conflict and war instigates with the wobbly mind of the mankind.

### **2.1.3 Religious Tolerance and Pluralism**

Tolerance is the willingness to allow others to be different in their views and actions. Above all tolerance is the absolute avoidance of using power, violence or coercion to force other people to think and believe as we do. Tolerance is an attitude of loving kindness (metta) towards those who hold views which are different from ours and even towards those who hold views which are repugnant to us (Gonsalkorale,2013 ). Buddhists belong to a religious group that accepts and appreciates the reasonable teachings of every religion. Buddhists can also tolerate the practices of other religious, cultural traditions and customs, although they may not necessarily wish to emulate them. In other words, Buddhists respect the other man's views and value other practices without harboring any religious prejudices. It could define as religious tolerance according to Buddhist doctrines. Buddhist tolerance shown to other religions is reasonable. Buddhists tolerate other religious practices, and yet at the same time they articulate their views freely on those practices and beliefs without harboring hatred or prejudices.

It was not until the 16th century that the German language borrowed the word 'Toleranz'—or tolerance—from the Latin and French, which is why in the context of the Reformation the concept immediately assumed the narrow meaning of toleration of other religious confessions. In

the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, religious toleration becomes a legal concept. Governments issued toleration edicts that compelled state officials and the population to be tolerant in their behaviour toward religious minorities, such as Lutherans, Huguenots, and Papists. Legal acts of toleration by state authorities led the expectation that people (as a rule the majority of the population) behave tolerantly toward members of religious communities that had until then been oppressed or persecuted (Habermas , 2004).

Most of the societies in modern day are multi cultural and multi religions. In such context the pluralism plays a major role where as Gordon (1964) illustrates that one of the outcomes of inter-ethnic relations of minority ethnic groups with majority community is pluralism, which is all about different ethnic groups preserving their unique culture and behavior, while still sharing common native values and goals. A well-known anthropologist Furnival(1948) accents the same point as Gordon on pluralism, but aptly notes that different ethnic groups ‘mix but don’t combine’. The art of multi – cultural and the pluralistic society is living together and marinating community and religious harmony among each other. In such system it creates a space for the diversity and preserves the rights of minorities in an equal manner. For the exits of such model people need to be more tolerant accepting and respecting the religious diversity.

Now, pluralism and the struggle for religious tolerance were not only driving forces behind the emergence of the democratic state, but continue to stimulate its further evolution up to now. The religious context of discovering tolerance brings first to mind the key component of a ‘rejection based on existentially relevant conviction’. That rejection is a condition necessary for all kinds of tolerant behavior. We can only exercise tolerance towards other people’s beliefs if we reject them for subjectively good reasons. We do not need to be tolerant if we are indifferent to other opinions and attitudes anyway or even appreciate the value of such ‘othernesses. The expectation

of tolerance assumes that we can endure a form of ongoing non-concurrence at the level of social interaction, while we accept the persistence of mutually exclusive validity claims at the cognitive level of existentially relevant beliefs (Palihawadana, 2001).

## **2.2 Religious intolerance in Sri Lankan society**

Rapid militarization of post – independent Sri Lanka is not shocking and alarming for new neither Buddhists nor non Buddhists since such a violent phenomenon was unimaginable a few decades earlier in an island called ‘paradise’. Today allegation of human rights violations and war crimes are echoing in every corner as an apt testimony to inevitable consequences rapid militarization. The tolerant and the peaceful image created by the very presence of Theravada Buddhism in the island over two millennia had created a comfortable zone of safe society relatively free from violence and abuse. This peaceful imagine image began to shatter from the beginning of the latter part of the nineteenth century when seeds and symptoms of an emerging religious and ethnic unrest gradually manifested themselves in a variety of religious and ethnic contexts. Unexpected event such as the Kotahena Religious Riot in 1883 in the late nineteenth century and the Sinhala Muslim Riot in 1915 and the Black July of 1983 in the twentieth century displayed some of unpleasant testimonies of disharmony questioning the very idea of ethnic and religious co-existence of a pluralistic society that Sri Lanka increasingly became in modern times (Deegalle , 2013 ).

According to Centre for Policy Alternative (CPA) report 65 cases of attacks on religious places of worship between May 2009 and January 2013. Direct attacks have been reported from all provinces of Sri Lanka, making clear that the threat is not restricted to particular areas. Most of the reported incidents were from the Western province (16), followed by the Eastern province

(12), the Southern province (11) and the North-Western province (9). Although the list cannot claim to be comprehensive, it offers a starting point to document attacks against places of worship of the four main religions practiced in the country. The lack of coverage by the media and other civil society groups, lack of consistent documentation by religious groups, and the cautiousness of religious and civil society groups to engage on this issue were key obstacles in the compiling of this list. While the numbers do provide some sense of the scale of the violence, it is important to make distinctions in terms of the nature of violence in each of these incidents. The majority of these cases are against Christian places of worship, mostly against non-traditional churches and there are also a number of attacks on Muslim places of worship. The 65 attacks can be categorized into three main types: inter-communal attacks, intra-religious violence, and robbery. In terms of inter-communal attacks the bulk of incidents where perpetrators have been identified, are instances of Sinhala Buddhist attacks on other religious communities' places of worship (CPA, 2013).

The report provides an insight on the spread of Religious Intolerance in postwar communities. Inter- religious violence in the postwar phase societal tension turns merely to an anti Muslim campaign. In addition Evangelical Christians groups and the Theravada Buddhists groups were also been the targeted audience in the phase of post war Sri Lanka. Thus violence outburst by the extremists groups generates hatred anger and ultimately challenging the reconciliation process.

### **2.3 Socio political dynamics leading for the failure of the religion**

Religion in the modern pessimistic view identified as a steer and the religious leaders are the mentors who shape the behaviors of laymen. The religion produces an inherent identity. In such aspect religion as a key function has played a major role in each and every human beings life

from the history. Although the country's current situation has changed its directions harboring religious harmony. Specially the 30 years of long driven war in Sri Lanka taken many human lives and many were displaced and many more were reported migrate. Violence has become a catastrophe in today's term. Specially being a country enrich with all the religious and cultural heritage and as a nation consist of majority of Buddhists there should not be any space for hatred and violence. There are various socio political dynamisms backing these issues. Specially all these violence that are taking place in the name of religion or ethnicity are interconnected and it's hard to come up single definition of its root causes.

In Sri Lanka, however, various forms of violent activities are perpetuated, not necessarily in the name of religion but mostly in the name of nationhood, either Tamil or Sinhala. While the perpetrators of violent acts justify their violent activities, for example, by using narratives found in the Pali chronicles, the nature of violence and quantity of violent acts have increased dramatically within the last two decades. Certain forms of violence such as the exploitation of labour are also embedded in the economic order itself and exploitation becomes a basis for animosity between ethnic groups leading to the breakdown of law and order. For Buddhists, the real challenge in the modern world is finding a way to avoid getting bogged down in various forms of violence either in the name of nationhood or religion ( Deegalle, 2006 ).

Nationalism makes the political religious and places the nation above politics. The nation is created as an object of devotion and political forces which become focused upon it are intensified in their energy and in the symbolism of a "higher" purpose, is vital to the momentum of nationalism. The momentum which if anything is on the increase has been among the most liberating, but also among the most oppressive and destructive, political energies of this century. The religious form of nationalism which is so much part of this process has engulfed social and

other religious and political ideas and doctrines- liberal democracy, communism, socialism, fascism, and anarchism - in its path. These have all become subordinate to the nationalist purpose and have received renewed energy and have been transformed or fashioned within religion of nationalism (Kapferer, 1988).

Stanly Tambiah's (1992) attempt to explain why Buddhist communities, particularly prominent groups of Buddhist monk, have come forward to defend the state in its internal war against Tamil secessionists, as ethnic conflict. Tambiah, like many non - Sri Lankan Buddhists seemed to have been shocked and appalled by the violence and brutality to which Sri Lankan society, with its claim to the religious heritage of compassion and non violence, had descended in the 1980's. In his explanation, Tambiah identifies a close link between the Sinhalese nationalist politics and its political appropriation of Buddhism as an ideology. His question on 'If Buddhism preaches non violence why is there so much political violence in Sri Lanka today?' Tambiah suggest that answer to this questions lies in the changed role of Buddhist monk in the framework of politicization and political activism (Uyangoda: 2007).

Moving away from the political dynamics the society has reached to its intolerance due to social dynamics as well. Religion plays multiple roles in shaping up the behavior of the man kind and mostly creates a belief of sacred among each religious group. Similarly the religious belief also responsible in establishing the values, norms that shapes the behavior of the people. Religion creates an identity and belongingness among people where as it result their own religion sacred and superior comparing to others is one causal fact for the modern day violence. Nevertheless it inculcates ethnocentric attitude among each other. Specially a study mainly focused on Buddhism and as country majority followers of Buddhists engaged in violent acts and intolerant behaviors could not be justified. The religion and education systems should promote the religious

values with respect to multi –religious and pluralism than promoting religious extremists. The stereotypes on each religion have result and created prejudices among other religions. Even the laymen following the extremists’ are evidence for the deterioration of the religious ethos due to mystical religious beliefs of the people.

#### **2.4 Role of Buddhism promoting Tolerance**

Tolerance is the acceptance that other religious groups hold different views from us. Tolerance is the willingness to allow others to be different in their views and actions. Above all tolerance is the absolute avoidance of using power, violence or coercion to force other people to think and believe as we do. Tolerance is an attitude of loving kindness (metta) towards those who hold views which are different from ours and even towards those who hold views which are repugnant to us. Intolerance on the other hand is the willingness to use of force, violence and coercion to make other people behave as we want them to and hold the views we want them to hold. Tolerance is not about agreement or being vague about differences and disagreements (Gonsalkorale, 2013).

Metta is basically meant as loving kindness in Buddhism. It can further elaborate through concepts as respect, friendliness, amity, kindness and nonviolence. The practice of “Metta” begins with cultivating loving-kindness towards themselves, then one's loved ones, friends, teachers, strangers, enemies, and finally towards all sentient beings. In general might not find easy to tolerate the people we dislike. But as the followers of the Buddhism the lay people have act afar their likes and dislikes. The most important fact is inculcating the attitude of good will towards someone whom you dislike.



The best pali chronicle which depict the Metta is “ Karaneeyametta Sutta”. Metta Sutta reveals the various qualities that any good human would want to perfect, making those who come into contact with him or her happier in the process. These qualities are both psychological and behavioral, and include honesty, humbleness, contentment, peacefulness, and freedom from hatred, ill will, and having a boundless heart that is cherishing all living beings just as a mother would protect her only child. Regarding the development of such wide reaching and boundless kindness, the sutta includes a section that comprises the cultivation of goodwill. And it is made clear that there are to be no exceptions to this generous wish, with various types of beings referred to as being the recipients of loving-kindness. These include the weak, the strong, the seen, the unseen, those nearby and those far away. For, is it not true that the most hideous of murderers and torturers have some people close to them that they love and protect? To care for only those that are family and friends is to do what probably ninety-nine per cent of humanity do, including rapists, thieves and dictators, whereas to develop feelings of loving-kindness towards all beings, whether close to one or not, is surely a much more difficult yet worthy achievement. The Buddhist followers do not have any demarcations based on caste, race, and nationality religion. (Ajahn Chah,2008) The metta signifies the friendship and nonviolence whereas should be able to accept others with pure compassions.

“Whatever beings there may be,  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short, or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to be born,

May all beings be at ease.”

(Karaneeya Metta Sutta)

Karaneeya Metta Sutta also reveals the various qualities that any good human would want to perfect, making those who come into contact with him or her happier in the process. These qualities are both psychological and behavioral, and include honesty, humbleness, contentment, peacefulness, freedom from hatred ( Ajahn Chah, 2008).The Buddhist the followers of metta sutta as the practitioners of nonviolence guide the path to develop loving kindness among the man kind which lead to the path of peace.

Further Kakacupama Sutta(similie of the saw) is another pali chronicle which preach the correct way to develop patients. In sutta the Buddha addresses the question of how one should respond to someone who uses harsh, harmful or untrue words to us. Normally such language would generate anger within us and before we know it , we might very well find ourselves retaliating in rage, either through equally harsh language or perhaps even through physical confrontation. Instead Buddha offered very different path.

Herein (monks) you should train us: ‘our minds will remain unaffected and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, and starting with him we shall abide pervading that person with a mind imbued with loving kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.’ This is how you should train, (monks) (Analayo,2003 ).

According to the sutta the monk practice of tolerance illustrate an example as “ Monks, even if bandits were to savagely sever you, limb by limb, with a double-handled saw, even then, whoever of you harbors ill will at heart would not be upholding my Teaching. Monks, even in such a situation you should train yourselves thus: 'Neither shall our minds be affected by this, nor for this matter shall we give vent to evil words, but we shall remain full of concern and pity, with a mind of love, and we shall not give in to hatred. On the contrary, we shall live projecting thoughts of universal love to those very persons, making them as well as the whole world the object of our thoughts of universal love — thoughts that have grown great, exalted and measureless. We shall dwell radiating these thoughts which are void of hostility and ill will.' It is in this way, monks, that you should train yourselves (Buddharakkhita, 2006).

Buddhist teaching has no space for greed, hatred and delusion. As the mentors in the society the religious leaders specially the Buddhist monks spread tolerance through their practice of loving kindness to bridge the gap between the religious groups. The teaching of Buddhism has not been limited only to Buddhists. Even Jainism followers in later stage have become followers of Buddha and the teachings always encouraged them to hold their own religion while following Buddhism. The modern era the most of the violence and conflict occur due to the ethnocentric or the extreme beliefs of the mankind. The feeling of superiority enriches more hatred and anger among each group.

All throughout existence it has been customary in human society for individuals to identify themselves with a larger group - ethnic or religious or whatever. This identification is imbibed unconsciously in the course of growing up in society. In this process much else is also imbibed: we acquire the habit of having a high regard for ourselves and a low regard for those whom we

see as members of other groups. We assimilate the many stereotypes held by our group about "other groups". Our education does not teach us to question the assumptions that lie behind these stereotypes or prejudiced opinions. In fact we are not even aware that we hold such pre-conceived opinions. They and the ignorance in which they are shrouded are the causes of misunderstanding and conflict in all multi-cultural societies. The less evident intolerance with which we treat persons in our immediate familial and societal environment is far more pervasive. Bias, the essential ingredient of intolerance, is based on likes and dislikes - which are the stuff of our daily experience. That being the case, we unconsciously imbibe the intolerant attitude not only towards members of out-groups but also towards anyone with whom we have had unpleasant experiences. These biases lie dormant in our psyche, unknown to us, and make frequent inroads into our conduct, in the normal processes of relationship - in the family, in the wider circle of our friends and colleagues at work and entertainment, or in social and political conduct at the national level. It is to this more pervasive and more fundamental intolerance that Buddhism addresses itself (Palihawadana, 2010).

Thus the overarching attachment to particular group construct hatred among the other religions resulting inter-religious tensions as in today's Sri Lankan scenario. It's the intolerance form within ourselves and mostly it has been fed by the extremists groups formed in the post war period.

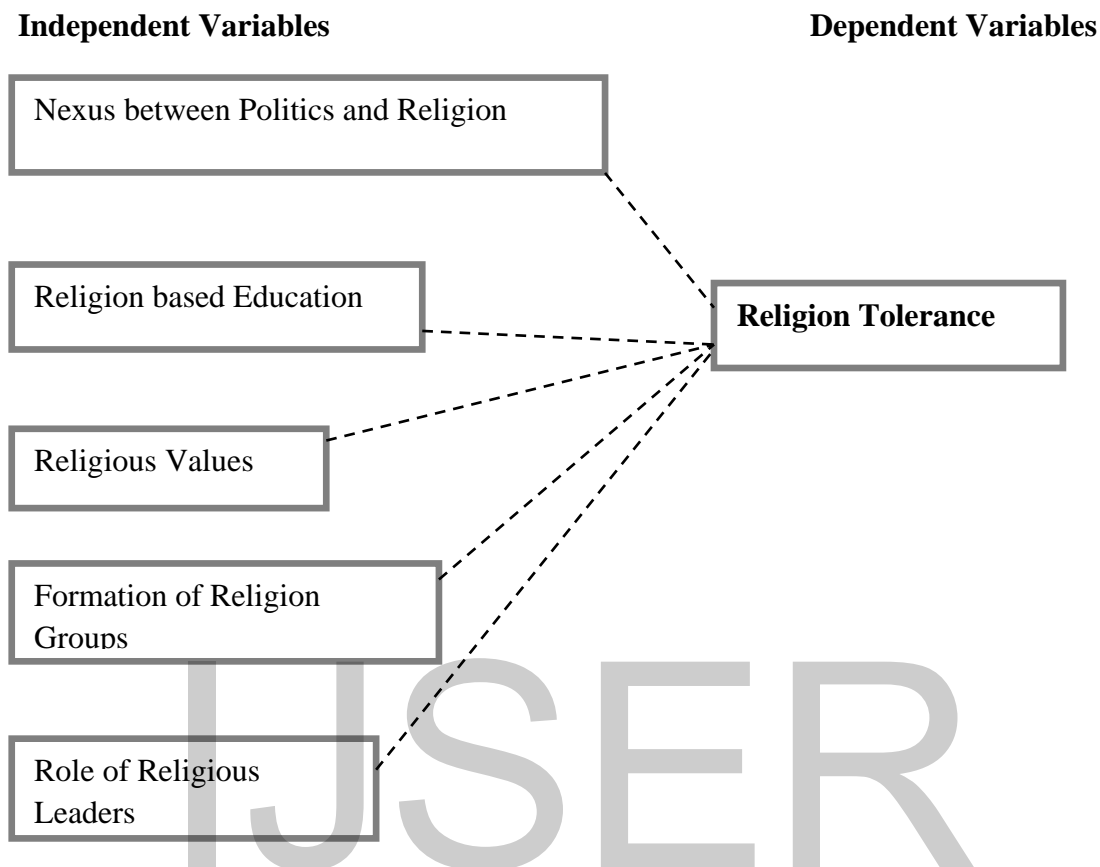
The post war Sri Lankan scenario violence are taking place due to less tolerance of the religious groups which is requisite in reconciling the mindset of the people. Distortion of the religious symbols, practices and scared places are proven examples for the religious intolerance in the post war society. Reconciliation must find ways to deal with past without getting locked into a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness inherent in the past. It provides a place for truth and mercy to

meet. It recognizes the need to give time and place to both justice and peace. That's why the Buddhist teaching promotes the loving kindness to mercy on the people who take mystical path. People should nurture the tolerance and respect the diversity. As mentioned in the Dhammapada (197-200) "people should live happily and let us not hate the once who hate us. People should be free from the hatred, greed and ailment and live happily."( Gonsalkorale, 2013).Today it has lacking in some Buddhists followers and gradually recede religious tolerance. Thus it's very much timely to focus on role of Buddhism promoting the tolerance in this troublesome pluralistic society of post war Sri Lanka.

## **2.5 Theoretical Approach**

Religion is more than a belief because combination of beliefs practices and symbols in promoting the meaningful life for the mankind. The process has distorted by the violence and the xenophobic attitudes. Hence the chapter lies within the framework of the theories where the entire study proceeds. The theoretical framework is the foundation on which the entire research study is based. It is logically developed, described and elaborates the theory underlying these relations and describes the nature and direction of the relationship. The unit may consist of two sections; initially focused on the relationship between two variables; independent and the dependent variables. Religious Tolerance was considered as the dependent variables where as the factors that confront the promotion of religious tolerance are identified as independent variables.

Diagram no. 01: Relationship between independent and dependent variables



### 2.6.1 Theoretical application of the study

The study was basically guided by two theories of Social Identity theory and concept of Reconciliation. Those two theories provide two diverse perspectives where as the Social Identity theory direct to understand the religious group confrontations challenging inculcating religious tolerance among Buddhists in contrary reconciliation concepts guides the path to promote religious tolerance to reconcile the post war societies in align with peace and harmony.

### 2.6.1 Social Identity Theory

The social Identity theory develop in social psychology designed to explain the in group belongings and out group discrimination. The concept of identity is commonality today. Social Identity Theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. When individuals define themselves in terms of their belonging to a social category, a social identity is formed. In other words, social identity is "the knowledge that (one) belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance of ... the group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292)

Social psychologist Tajfel (1982) perceives social identity as the part of the self-concept arising from both the knowledge of and the value or significance of group membership for an individual. Through the process of self-categorization, the individual categorizes herself and others around her into groups, which in turn defines her identity in relation to society. Similar to the personal anxiety-reducing phenomenon of identity just described, the individual will display favoritism to her 'in-group' even when there is no conflict or competition with an 'out-group'. This is to encourage 'positive in-group distinctiveness', which in turn maintains or protects the identity of the group and reflects positively . With the same aims as those above (self-esteem, -efficacy, and -consistency), the group member builds positive in-group distinctiveness by inter-group discrimination – the negative categorization of an out-group characteristic serves to heighten the positive distinctiveness of the in-group. The particular variable could be anything – language, religion, history, economy, nationhood, etc. – as long as there is a difference which can be compared. Not surprisingly, inter-group discrimination produces a dynamic of competition potentially leading to conflict. The competition is related to the in-group trying to prove its superiority, according to social identity theory, which is a value-judgment not only about the in-group, but also means the out-group is inferior. The more this superiority and inferiority is

emphasized, the more the out-group's identity may feel threatened or negated, and will inspire the out-group to build up its positive identity in response (Hudson, Benedek and Ferrandiz 2009).

The group distinctions are naturally caused and sometimes unavoidable. The group identities of particulars mostly bring collectiveness, cohesive and enhance belongings of the group members. Despite of all these positive dimensions in group belongings cause discrimination and prejudices. The extremists' feelings direct unconsciously or consciously the followers to act same. Sometimes the violence or the incidents reported on attacking the religious places in Sri Lanka are result of identity clash. The most important aspect of the application of the theory is to identify the psychology behind why people tend to follow and protect their own religion by detriment the other. Building nexus with identity theory and the reconciliation the study further developed the connectivity of transforming prejudice feelings of religious groups in order to facilitate the reconciliation process and changing their attitudes in stabilizing peace in post conflict scenario.

### **2.6.2 Reconciliation**

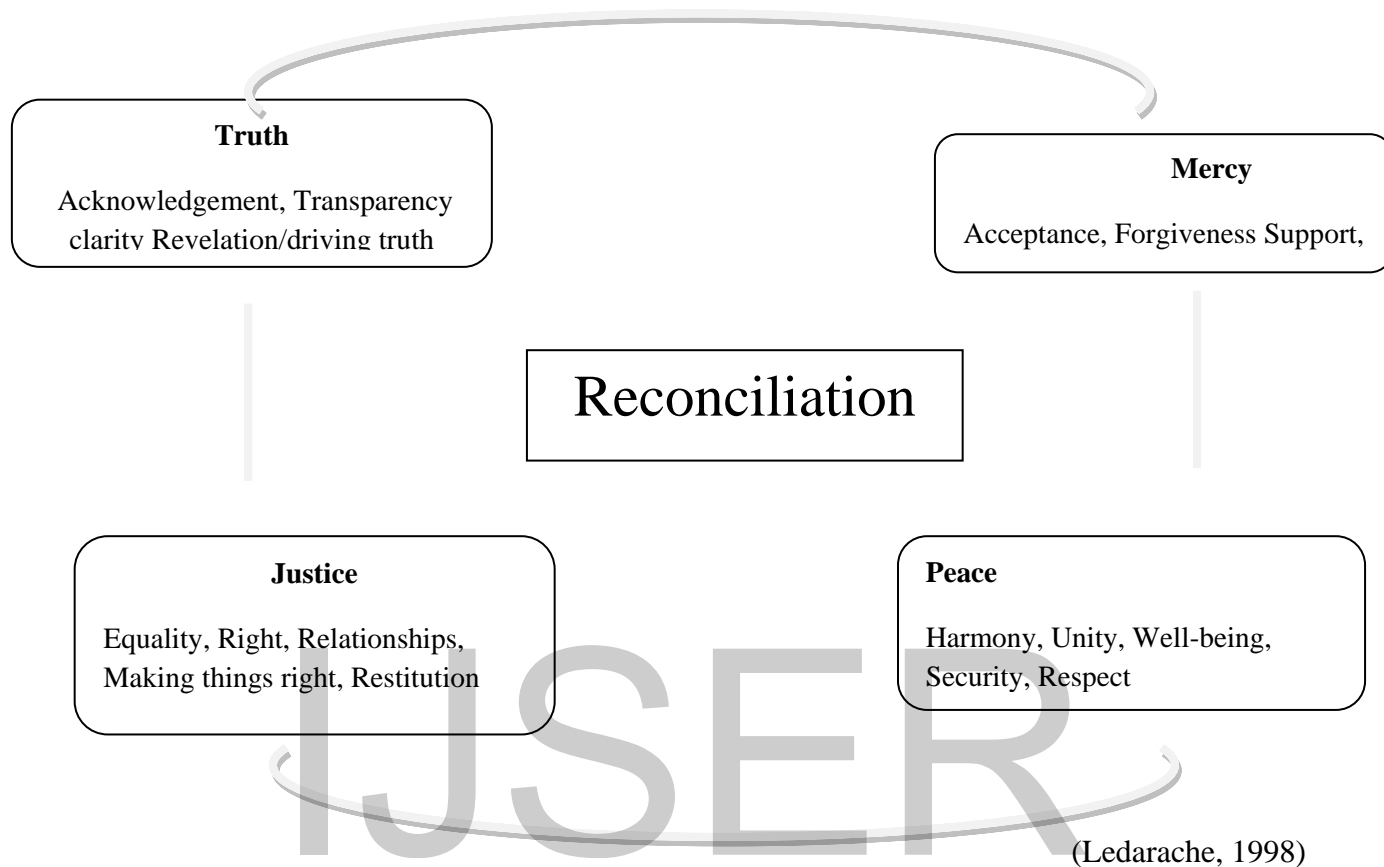
Reconciliation as a concept is still a comparatively new element in peacemaking, and some of its ideas remain untested or unaddressed, others have only been applied in real situations once or twice. It's mainly due to the context and the socio, economical and political aspects of the country. Post war reconciliation it not a simple process because it's all about providing space for your enemy, accepting your opponent, providing justice for the victims, replacing anger/hatred through love and finally it's about the positive transformation of conflict affect societies with the best guarantee of the violent in the past may not occur. Specially aftermath of civil war or brutally oppressive regimes there has been a huge appeal for reconciliation. There is hope of



reconciliation will rebuild the conflict devastated nations through healing their past wounds and standing together.

Reconciling the post war communities are all about facilitating communication between the dispute parties, more inter faith dialogues to redress the anger-prejudices and all kind of misunderstandings are the best mechanisms in attaining peace. There is no a universally accepted perfect reconciliation approach or model. Reconciliation should address in many dimensions although John Paul Lederach has lay foundation for the reconciliation process which includes the four pillars Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace. The Truth and Mercy always meets together. The conflicting parties should be able to accept, forgive and lend support to each other to obtain reconciliation. Healing could not be happen within a day. It's a long driven process. It's not all about loving your enemy forcing to forget the dreadful memories, but it's about coexisting with them. Further it is about developing cooperation among each others, changing the attitudes of the people and practicing tolerance instead of revenge or hatred. Mercy could not be achieved if the parties are not willing to see each other as they are.

Diagram no. 02: Conceptual framework of Reconciliation



After marking 30 years of catastrophic war the Sri Lanka moving towards reconciliation. In response to post war demands the state of Sri Lanka has appointed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) on the 15th of May 2010. Its a phase where government bring effort to reconcile the post war communities although some extremists groups and religious followers vandalize the process inculcating religious violence and hate speeches. Religion has a major role in reconciling the wounded communities. Conflict as common phenomena even visible during the Buddha's period. Thus conflict resolution methods adopted in Buddhist teaching was varying. To King Pasenadi, who was frustrated and grieving after three defeats at the hand of his nephew King Ajatasattu, the Buddha explained the futility of victory and defeat:

Victory breeds hatred;

The defeated sleeps in sorrow;

The peaceful sleeps happily,

Abandoning victory and defeat. (Dhp. 201)

When his relatives, the Sakyas and the Koliyas, lined for war to share water of a river, he sat amidst the battle lines and asked them the crucial question: “What Is more valuable – a drop of water or the lives ksatriyas chiefs?” He taught them to live without hate among the hateful (Dhp.197-199). The admission of one’s wrong doing, the making of amends and the exercise of restraint in the future to prevent its recurrence are three essential ingredients for effective reconciliation. This the Buddha enjoined in the Samannaphala Sutta as follows: Anguttara Nikaya identifies as two wise persons: one who sees and admits one’s offenses; and one who rightfully pardons one who had confessed one’s offenses. Those who do not do so are termed two fools. Buddha’s teaching highlight the four bad conducts which prevent mankind from being righteous are the wrongful desire or greed, hatred, fear and delusion. Nevertheless these are the barriers for the reconciliation. Similar teaching the best strategies to indoctrinate the reconciliation align to Buddhist teaching could be the generous giving (Dana), avoidance of harsh words and practice of pleasant and polite words (Priyavachana), benevolent actions (attacharya) and finally acceptance as equals (samanatta) (Guruge 2010).

It’s requires to practice and apply such model in contemporary society in order to address the religious based violence and disharmony widespread around the country. In order to be an authentic Buddhists follower the people should be able to practice religious tolerance through accepting their opponents, tolerating their hatred and forgiving others. The study utilized the

model to understand the value of reconciling the post war communities in order to address the religious intolerance. Further in the next chapter will analyze the importance of application of religious tolerance and its contribution for the post war reconciliation process.

IJSER

## CHAPTER THREE

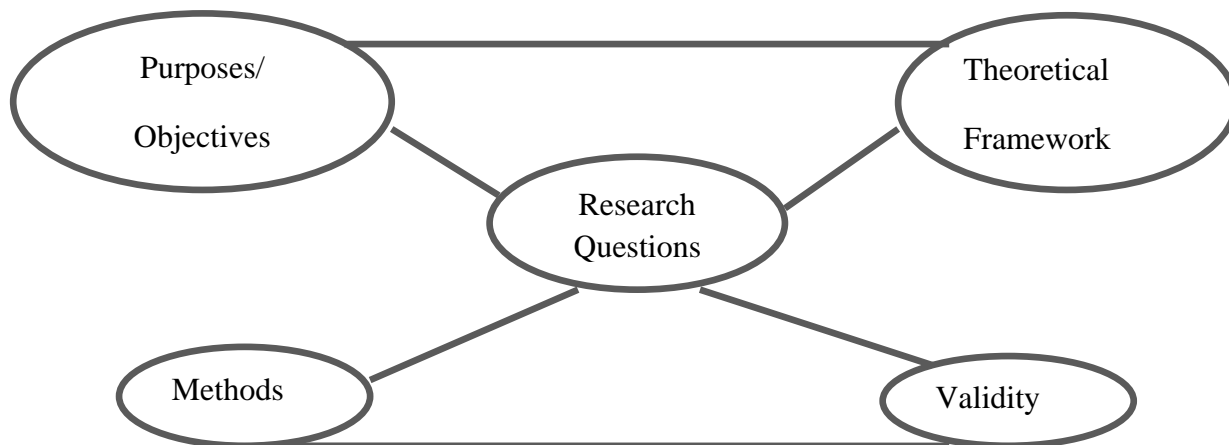
### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The research was based on the descriptive research design since study merely focuses on find out the situation, perception and opinion of the Buddhists on religious tolerance in the postwar phase. The purpose/Objective focuses on the major research objectives of the study nonetheless the ultimate goals of the study. Specially it looked upon the role of Buddhists in promoting religious Tolerance in Postwar society in Sri Lanka. In the process of reaching the research objectives it was important to explore the literature and preliminary research conducted in the area of religious studies.

#### Interactive model of Qualitative Research Design

**Diagram no. 03:** Interactive model of Qualitative Research Design



The grounded theory of Social identity and concept of reconciliation were always guiding the research in the right direction. The research questions are interconnected with all other components because the entire research was carried out to find solutions to the research questions. In that process study has identified the most appropriate method for the data collection and analysis. It has illustrated the research relationships with the sample of the study. The final component of the qualitative design is the validity of the research. And at the end of the study it checks for the validity. All these components are interconnected. The research questions have clear relationship with the use of the study and its theoretical framework. Same time the choice of the relevant theory was selected based on the purpose and the questions of the study. Likewise the methods adopted in the study were able to answer the research questions as well to deal with the validity threats. The research design of the study was conducted considering all the aspects of the above illustrated five components.

### **3.2 Rationale of the site selection**

The research was conducted to identify the role of Buddhism in promoting religious Tolerance in post war Sri Lanka. As the focused of the study is mainly on Buddhists, the research focused site of the study was the one of the main Buddhist Institutes of the country, Buddhists and Pali University of Sri Lanka and Post Graduate Institute of Buddhist and Pali University of Kelaniya University. Both Buddhists educational institutes are locate in Colombo district in western province of Sri Lanka. Rational behind selecting those two sites were because as the main focused of the research lies on Buddhists, and the two universities represents two categories of Buddhists students. Specially the Buddhist and Pali University comprise of undergraduates and the Post Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist studies students represent a advanced

educational background of post graduate, MPhil and PhD. The two segments of Buddhist students contributed diverse aspects to the study.

In addition most of postwar violence was taking place around Colombo and considering the fact research was limited to Colombo. Though the selection of the Key informants was not limited to particular geographical boundary and the selection was purely on the area of their religious expertise.

### **3.3 Sampling Design**

Sample is a collection of items or elements from a universe. According to the particular study sample is mainly centered on Buddhists. As the sample design was not determined by chance but rather by the personal conviction and judgment of the researcher study is much familiar to non probability sample. Under Non probability sampling design the researcher applied purposive and snowball sampling methods as the most appropriate sampling methods.

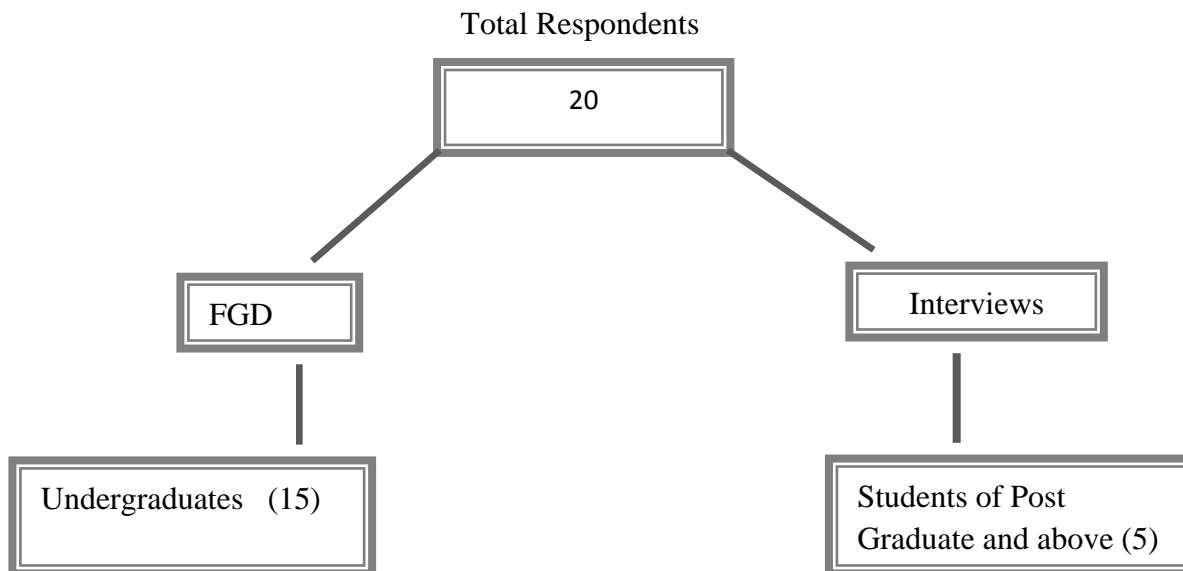
Thus the study followed the purposive sampling method based on the subjective interest such as Buddhists population. A purposive sample is one which was selected by the researcher subjectively using their judgments. These types of samples are mainly selected from the population through researcher's institution or on some other subjective basis. The purposive sampling involved targeting Buddhists because it was the group that the study interested. In particular Sri Lanka being a country consists of majority Buddhists and thus religious tensions are occurring centering Buddhists the study was limited to the Buddhists population as its sample. But to require more validity few non Buddhists thoughts also have been considered.

Narrowing down the sample, study focused on Buddhist laymen and monks with the criteria of specialization of Buddhists studies either Bachelors level or Post graduate level. As a result the

sample was limited to two famous Buddhists educational institutes Pali and Buddhists University and Post Graduate Institute of Kelaniya University. In such situations where the most relevant group was difficult to identify the researcher had to apply the snowball sampling method. Specially the snow ball sampling method was applied to select the 5 candidates of the graduate studies and most of the lecturers and the students supported in referring the respondents which was mostly required for the study. For instance at the initial stage the researcher was guided by referral networks by the head of the university and later directed to subject-expertise or specialists lecturers/clergy in that particular institute/university. After building a healthy rapport between them and the researcher, these lecturers/clergy helped the researcher to select student monks and lay students in different educational levels. The members for the 03 focus Group Discussions were chosen based on simple random sampling and all groups were consist of laymen and Buddhists monks. Researcher used Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to gather information from undergraduates due to its high proportion nevertheless in-depth interviews were also carried out with students who followed post graduate and other graduate programmes related to Buddhist studies.



Diagram No. 04 : Total number of respondents



In addition 12 key informant interviews also were carried out. Specially the researcher had to adopt the snow ball sampling in selecting the key informants' who are expertise and working in the particular area. Twelve Key informant interviews were basically conducted based on purposive sampling which also comprised of few experts representing other religions. In selection of the Key informants the basic criteria was considered as their expertise area in related to religion and the location or the area of the representation was not considered. As the rational of the study provide an in-depth analysis on ongoing inter- religious disharmony and issues related the study has not given much prominent for the quantity of the sample.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods and Methodology**

#### **3.4.1 Nature of source of the Data**

Collecting data is the connecting link to the word of reality of the researcher. Research as a media can be interpreted as having a content of data and a process of methodology. Without those data a methodology cannot be utilized to bring validity for the study. Data requested by the study was gathered employing various research techniques align with primary and secondary data collection methods. The appropriate data collection method always provides accurate data to achieve useful results in a research study.

#### **3.4.2 Secondary Source of Data**

Secondary sources cannot be ignored in a subject area like role of religion and the way it promote religious tolerance. In the study it was important to highlight how Buddhism promotes religious tolerance and the data related were collected through secondary sources. In addition to identify the causes and challenges dispersion of religious tolerance among Buddhists the relevant secondary sources was cited since Kalinga war. Dating from 265 B.C.E Kalinga war is the first historical incident to promote religious tolerance. Aftermath the research gradually referred key historical events such as Elara Dutugamunu war, colonial period, and post colonial and post war was significant in identify the causal factors that have challenged the dispersion of religious Tolerance. Nevertheless the researcher was vigilant in referring and accepting the secondary sources in a sensitive subject area like religion and full of personal biases. In such scenario the validity and the credibility of the data are questionable.

### 3.4.3 Primary Source of Data

Primary data is original data gathered by the researcher for the research study. Based on its qualitative nature of the study the primary data collected through Focus Group Interviews with students representing two Buddhists Institutions, In-depth interview with Key Informant Interviews, and observations were some of the tools occupied by the researcher. The focus group discussions were able to provide accurate data required achieving the main objective of the research and key informant interviews maintain the balance perspective for the primary data adding a multi religious aspect to the study. Even though psychological aspects were not counted in the study some of the observations made on the respondents helped the researcher to understand level of influence over religion made upon human life.

### 3.4.4 Tools of Data Collection

#### Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

The main intention of conducting focus group interviews was to investigate the attitude and sensitivities towards the emerging religious intolerance. In contrary to explore their knowledge and thoughts to address the challenges to promote religious Tolerance in post war society based on Buddhist Philosophy. Researcher was able to carry three focused group interview sessions with students of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. Each focused group interview session was comprised of 05 students including Buddhist monks and laymen. First session was carried out with the students following Buddhist Philosophy, second sessions Buddhist Culture and Buddhist Studies and finally the third FGD was carried out with students following Buddhist Philosophy. The rationale for selecting two sets of students following Buddhist philosophy was

that majority of the students follows Buddhist philosophy and only very less students have chooses Buddhist culture and Buddhist studies. The participants were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. The study was not limited only to Buddhists monks and the laymen added a different perspective to the study in comparison to monks. The focus group was conducted at the University library and researcher moderated all the sessions. Initial stage of each focus group session the moderator was able to convince the objectives of the study and researcher assured the confidentiality of participants and the data. The focus area of the discussion was centered on Religious Tolerance of Buddhists and the research area was incorporated with different aspects from politics, ethics, religious extremists, and reconciliation to provide a more clear understanding on the study. The comments were recorded during the session under the permission of the group members. The research area was very much interested to all the groups as they were students who specialized in the area of religion and based on their background some of them became very sensitive towards the research topic. But the moderator respected all the diverse views of the group members. The category of Focus Group sessions are listed as follows,

Table no : 01: Focus Group Sessions

	Course	University	No. of Participants
FGD 01	B.A. Buddhist Philosophy	Buddhist & Pali University	05
FGD 02	B.A. Buddhist Culture B.A. Buddhist Studies	Buddhist & Pali University	05
FGD 03	B.A. Buddhist Philosophy	Buddhist & Pali University	05
	Total		15

### *In-Depth Interviews*

The research employed two main techniques to collect data and the second important technique was in-depth interviews. The interviews were carried out with two segments of groups including the students of post graduate and above graduate programmes and key informants also been targeted in in-depth interviews. The semi structured questionnaire (Annexure 01) was formulated with a sequence of understanding the concept of Religious Tolerance, political and social aspects challenging the concepts and contribution for post war reconciliation were areas covered under the questions. Specially defining religious tolerance the preference was given on Buddhists nevertheless during the key informant sessions the explanations were based on their religion beliefs as it comprised of non Buddhist as well. The key informant was not limited to Buddhists and it was a combination of all the religions because the practice of religion tolerance is always towards the respect of other religion parties.

The interviews carried out at the Post Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist studies were guided and facilitated by a senior Lecturer. The researcher was able to gather information with 5 students of the present batch of post Graduate studies on Buddhist Studies. It also comprised of Masters and Mphil students.

The informants of the study were consisted of experts in religion studies and some of them were activists in promoting religion tolerance in post war society. The key informants who contributed to study were mainly lectures, religious leaders, teachers and students representing Hinduism and Islam.

The interviews were carried respecting all religions beliefs without violating any research ethics.

The lists of interviewed respondents are present in the following table,

Table No: 02- Key Informant Interviews

Designation of the Respondent	Institution	No. of Respondents
Dean, Faculty of Buddhist Studies	Buddhist & Pali University	01
Lecturer, Dept. of Religious Studies & Comparative Philosophy	Buddhist & Pali University	01
Senior Lecturer, Dept. of History	University of Kelaniya	01
Librarian	Post Graduate Institute of Pali & Buddhist Studies (University of Kelaniya)	01
Lecturer	Post Graduate Institute of Pali & Buddhist Studies (University of Kelaniya)	01
Lecturer	Post Graduate Institute of Pali & Buddhist Studies (University of Kelaniya)	01
Associate Professor/Activists	Bambarella Temple, Kandy	01
Graduate	Buddhists Piriwena Kaduwela	01
Graduate/Teacher	Dhaham School, Kaduwela	01

Christian theologians	Christian Theological Centre – Jaffna	01
Undergraduate/Maulawi	School of social work	01
Graduate	University of Colombo	01

Observation

Most of the above mention techniques used in data collection was indirect as the researcher had to depend on respondents to collect information based on their experience. But in contrary the observation method is one direct method used in qualitative research. In observation process the researcher recognized and noted people’s behavior than asking for behaviour. As most of the respondents were experts in their own religious beliefs some of them were very sensitive while talking the historical events and the heritage of the particular religions. The researcher was keen on observing all their nonverbal communication which includes the gesture, posture, tone of voice and eye contacts. Specially the most highlighting fact during the observation was the tone of voice of the respondents. High tone of voice was maintained by most of the undergraduate students while they were talking about the religious intolerance. Because some believed violent behavior occur moments of safeguarding their own religion. As it was a sensitive subject area the researcher didn’t interrupt the respondents and the observation was carried naturally a part of interview session.

Intellectual Arguments

In order to broaden the subjective knowledge in contemporary situations researcher was able to attend in some public lectures chaired by intellectuals like senior lectures, Monks and Presidential counselors. Those sessions were very constructive as the topics were directly

relating to the research study as well as added more pragmatic information derived from public discussions held aftermath. The information of the Intellectual arguments is present as follows,

Table no: 03: Intellectual Arguments

<b>Designation of the Speaker</b>	<b>Organization Represented</b>	<b>Topic for the Seminar</b>	<b>No of speakers</b>
Professor in Psychology. Dept. of Philosophy & Psychology	University of Peradeniya	What our society needs today; Buddhism or Marxism?	<b>1</b>
Presidential Counselors Former vice chancellor	Law Faculty	Religious Freedom & Sri Lankan Law	<b>4</b>
Senior Lecturer Dep. Of History	University of Kelaniya	Religion for reconciliation? is it feasible	<b>1</b>
Professor in Philosophy  Professor in Political Theory	McGill University  Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	Role of Religion in secularism – Pluralistic Society	<b>02</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>05</b>



### **3.5 The data presentation and analysis**

The data analysis is identified as the center of research due to its significance. All the data was gathered and analyzed align with research objectives. As the research study was qualitative in nature the data analyzed was based on ideas and observation.

The research adopted thematic analysis to analyze the primary data. After obtaining an overall understanding on research finding the researcher was able to formulate relevant theme based on the research objectives. Initial stage the researcher had to review the literature and then start coding through marking margin notes. By refereeing those notes and relevant highlights from literature review researcher developed descriptive themes based on the evidence produce in the data. After completion of the preliminary stage the researcher was able obtain to a clear understating on the database and the main issues needed to analyze in the study. Finally research was able to develop analytical themes pulling all the evidence and adding their own feelings to enrich the quality of the study.

### **3.6. Ethical Consideration**

Ethical consideration of a research study is another principle guideline for the researcher. Due to the sensitivity and most public attentive area of the country the researcher was very much concern on selecting the topic and framing the objectives. Under the correct guidance and supervision of the supervisor researcher decided to focus the study on Buddhists. To maintain the impartiality of the findings researcher adjoined the study with other religious aspects.

Following the basic human ideals researcher was responsible and vigilant to avoid the harmful and discriminative data findings or quotes based on any religion. All the religious beliefs and teachings were respected and valued.

All respondents counted in the study were aware on the research objectives prior to the sessions. The researcher affirmed confidentiality of the respondents and to utilize the research findings only for academic purposes. The research was conducted on the objective interests of the study perhaps researcher was trying to maintain the neutrality avoiding the personal biases. The religious tolerance would not be pragmatic and realistic without respect and acceptance of other religions. Based on that ground rule researcher was able to maintain the research ethics without harming to any religions values during the entire research process.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN PROMOTING TOLERANCE IN POSTWAR SOCIETY IN SRI LANKA

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Introduction

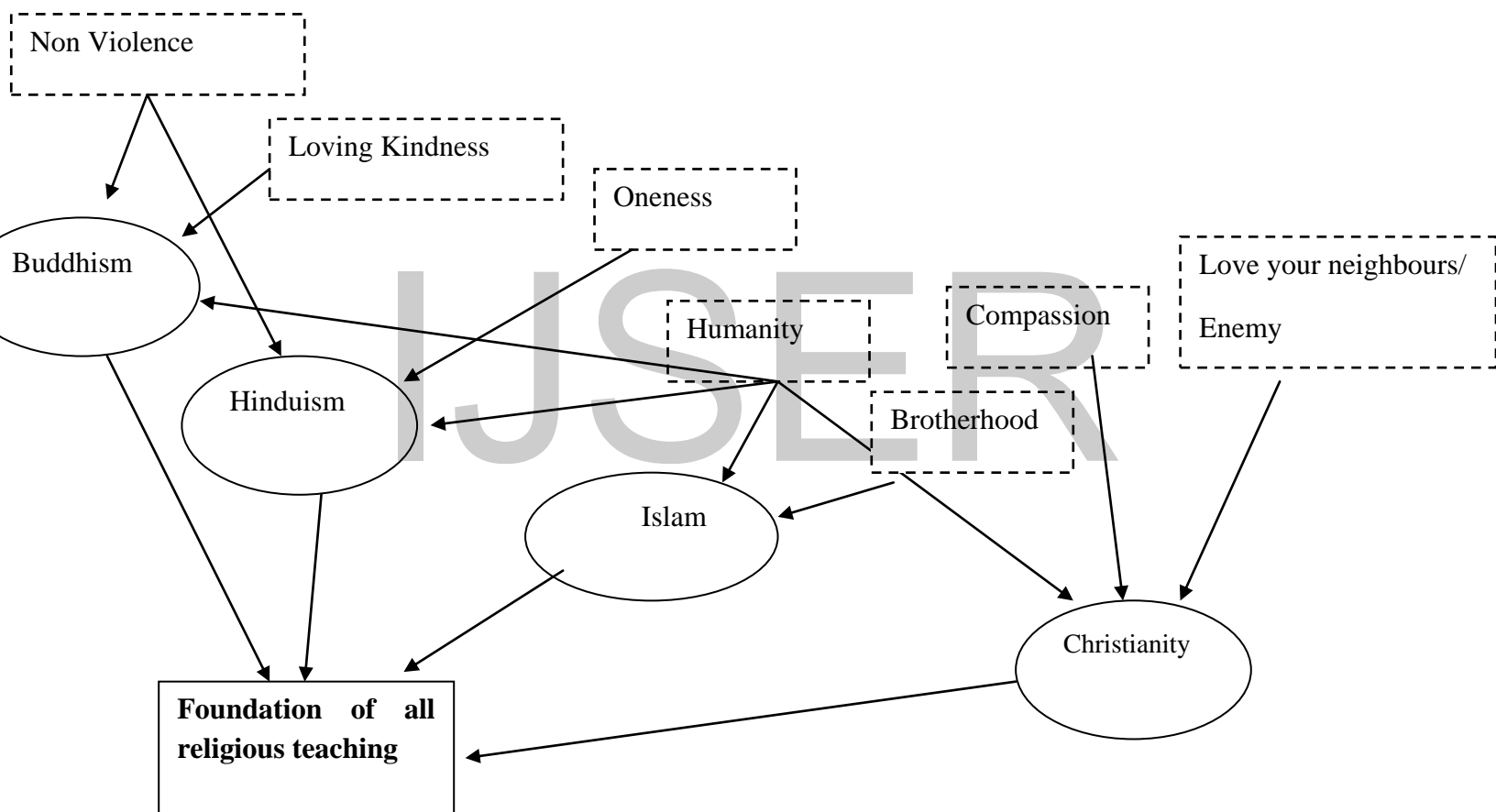
The chapter four presents the data on religious Tolerance among Buddhists in post war Sri Lankan Society and empirical data will be analyzed in-depth in light of grounded theory approach. The data utilized in the chapter is presented in a sequence order specially focusing on the conceptual understanding on “Religious Tolerance”. Further the chapter will also analyze the present challenges for dispersing the Religious Tolerance among the Buddhists’ in the post war era. In addition it will also explore the leading factors challenging Religious Tolerance in the Buddhists community focusing on social and political factors. Paying more attention to the grounded theory approach, it will also focus on the contribution laid by Buddhists practitioners on Religious Tolerance in order to obtain and benefit the postwar reconciliation process. Following the research methodology of the study, the analysis chapter is break up into themes based on the research objectives and the research questions.

#### 4.1. The Buddhists perception on religious tolerance in post war Sri Lanka

The pragmatism of the term Religious Tolerance lies blending with the other religious philosophy. Religion is defined as a set of beliefs and each belief systems endorse religious tolerance. The human beings are naturally diverse in many ways and the term tolerance means providing space for “other”. The following thematic map analyzes the four dimensions of

religious tolerance focusing on four main religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The main scope of the analysis was to prove the fact of commonality in promoting religious tolerance in all religious teachings. The acceptance, respect and nonviolence are underpinning value in all religions and well depicted in the following thematic map,

**Diagram No. 05- Thematic Map 01**



#### **4.1.1 Buddhist Perception on Religious Tolerance**

The path to Dhamma in Buddhism encourages the goodwill and avoids the bad. The Buddhist moral conduct always prescribed through a deep understanding of humanity. The teaching of Dhamma in Buddhism promotes humanity through patience, tolerance, kindness and compassion. In Buddhism Religious Tolerance focuses not on safeguarding the own religion, it do not frame people in the basket of religion and a person who lead respectful and harmless life is regarded as religion. Thus it is not limited to Buddhists, although for the betterment of everyone. The Religious Tolerance required promoting in respect to all the mankind on earth regardless of their religion status, caste, and race.

According to the views of all the respondents in the focus groups sessions and the interviews carried out, Buddhism was identified as a religion which promotes Religious Tolerance in boundless. The students following Buddhist philosophy stated that the Buddhists belong to a religious group which accepts and appreciates the reasonable teachings of every religion. Buddhists could tolerate the practices of other religious, cultural traditions and customs, although they may not necessarily wish to emulate them. Further Buddhists respect the others' views and appreciate their practices without harbouring any religious prejudices. Two groups further highlighted the importance of tolerating "anger" and "hatred". As stated by a group member "Tolerance does not signify hitting in return when someone disperses any violence". Tolerating your 'religious' other means to forgive and accept them. The group members illustrate the examples from 8 worldly conditions of life as described in Buddhist philosophy. Those 8 worldly conditions gain and loss, good repute and ill repute, praise and censure, and pain and pleasure. Richness lies when people aren't be disturbed by any of these. People should be able to tolerate all these 8 conditions without erupt any violence to be a true disciple of Buddha.

The student group following the Buddhist Culture and the Buddhist Studies highlighted the importance of Religious Tolerance in the postwar phase. As stated in the FGD they believe citizens were suppressed socially, psychology and economically due to the 30 years of war. The cause behind all the civil and communal wars and conflict are centered with absence of Tolerance. The Religious Tolerance according to the group is not drawing boundaries to tolerate others. Despite of the situations the Buddhists should be able to tolerate until the very last without dispersing any violence. The Buddhist philosophy has preached the merits and the demerits of tolerance. Illustrating the monk “Punna” story the group highlight the best mechanism for the conflict resolution in modern scenario as the practice of Religious Tolerance. But as the two members highlighted the Religious Tolerance in Buddhist spectrum has different interpretations. Some believes that it’s a cowardliness to tolerate some behaviors’ and it’s the reason for violence erupts today in Sri Lanka. According to the group the Religious Tolerance was defined as the practice of self possession and self discipline.

Cakachupama Sutta was the most illustrated Sutta by many of the respondents in defining the Religious Tolerance. Stating examples from the Sutta the respondents mentioned the practice of tolerating your “other “in any circumstance as the ultimate teaching of Buddha in promoting religious Tolerance. To be a right follower of the Buddha a mankind should tolerate even the most difficult movements as depicted in the sutta when your body has been scratch in to pieces even such moments the Buddhists should tolerate without impinging violence. The person couldn’t tolerate such act would not identified as a Buddhist follower according to the Buddhist teaching as stated by the respondents, The Dhamma of Buddha is not limited to one religion and it’s common to all human beings.

Considering the Buddhist perception on Religious Tolerance as many respondents stated in the FGD even for the non Buddhists it's a religion of pacifists. They further stated that it's an appreciation of diversity and religion which promotes the pluralism. The teaching shape the mind sets of the followers to exercise a fair, objective attitudes towards those whose opinions are different based on their religion. The Buddhist followers are not bounded by and regulatory. Any one is free to follow of Buddhism and also to renounce. The striking fact as illustrated by the respondents, Buddha teaching even does not let the other religious followers to abandon their own religion. Thus they further stated, the behaviour of some religious followers today in the postwar phase are confusing compared to the authentic religious teachings.

According to the perception of a candidate of graduate studies, the practice of religious tolerance is to promote universal love. But today's scenario it's questionable whether the Buddhists follow the real path of Buddhism? Because today Buddhists nature has been changed due to many reasons. Defying the Buddhists perception on Religious Tolerance, in today scenario there are many factors leading behind. Mostly they could be categorized as social, economical and educational level of the people and the stress they underpin in maintaining these levels. Considering the human nature and their environment many people are under stress, and intolerant. But this would not be the real status of a Buddhists.

Considering the Buddhist perspective on promoting Religious Tolerance, it is acknowledge that, the Buddhist community belongs to a religious group that accepts and appreciates the teachings of every religion. The Buddhist faith tolerates the other religions, cultures, traditions and all religious practices without harboring any violence instead of their religion.

The Buddhist teaching has been interpreted differently by different religious leaders by today. The futility of certain religious beliefs and practices could not identify as Religious Tolerance though many have misperceive the term of Religious Tolerance today. Some have taken the liberty of incorporating all sorts of superstitious beliefs in the name of Buddhism. Others take undue advantage of that tolerance of Buddhists to convert them into their faith. According to the Buddhist teachings religious tolerance is not mere tolerance of other religious beliefs but the tolerance that we practice when others disturbed and condemned our religion without impinging any destruction in return.

Tolerance has been widely accepted as a virtue related to human conduct. It is an attitude of someone towards others which involves two parties. The Religious Tolerance is on accepting the religious “other” through abandoning own misperceptions on other religious beliefs. All the religious faith promotes and respects the other religious faiths. Such spectrums in there are resemblances and discrepancies in religions. Although concept of tolerance means respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of world’s cultures, forms of expression and ways of being human.

Proving the fact stated by a Christian respondent *“The Christian perception on religious tolerance is identified as a religion of tolerance. The Christ suffered and died on the cross as he was persecuted by the Jews. The Jesus was able to tolerate all the violence resort against him and was able to overcome through his practice of love, and compassion on his enemies. The essence of the Christian teaching is to love others as you love your selves. The cross symbolizes the tolerance and it promotes the humanity of mankind. The practicing tolerance in Christian teaching meant as two edged – sword which links both the commandments of violence and humanity, the path to free from violence”*. The perception of a Hindu respondent on Religious



Tolerance was viewed Hinduism as a religion believes and accepts all faiths, their beliefs are as all rivers rushing towards ocean, and all religions are also pointing towards the Truth. Hindus do not condemn non-Hindus to hell, not even atheists our main motto is “vasudhaiva kutumbakam” where the whole earth is a family and we are all children of God. As stated by a respondent on Islamic perception on Religious Tolerance. *“It’s a basic principle of every religion including Islam though people misperceived it today. The Islam also rejects discrimination against any individual on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity, profession or geographical location. It prohibits the use of abusive words or anything that could stir up racial hatred. According to the teachings, each and every one is a creation of God and therefore should respect each other. In this regard, Islam enjoins all Muslims to establish peace, even if it requires patience and sacrifice”*.

The founders of all the religions has always profited unity of mankind and they have foster harmony, goodwill and understanding of all the people in the world Unfortunately, however, certain followers of every religion, for their own selfish reasons and due to their intolerance and narrow mindedness, have gone against the real essence of Religion and have created chaos, discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding.

## **4.2. The challenges in promoting religious tolerance of Buddhists in post war Sri Lankan society**

### **4.2.1 Religious Tolerance in postwar Sri Lanka**

After marking the end of 30 years of protracted civil war, the direction of the country has been changed in as reconciling the postwar communities. Therefore Religious Tolerance should prevail in postwar Sri Lankan society to reconcile the communities.

High profile of violence has outburst in the postwar phase on due the acts of extremists groups. The initially reported incident was on the April 2012 attack in the Dambulla Mosque. Next phase the violence has stretch targeting religious institutions, business places and religious groups. According to the CPA report published on Attacks on Religious places has reported 65 attacks aftermath of the war. The incidents are not limited to one religion and attacks have targeted on Christian churches, Buddhist and Hindu Temples and finally Muslim Mosques.

The religion has embedded in Sri Lankan culture and Sri Lankan society is more religion oriented. As stated by a candidate of post Graduate studies “Religious tolerance is needed in a country like Sri Lanka due to multi ethnic and multi –religious nature. The practice of religious tolerance clears the path of fundamentalists and extremists. When the atmosphere is disturbed it affects the law and order of the country. It has direct impacts over the economy of the country specially in post war recovery. Therefore the religious tolerance is essential for a country in many aspects and the intolerance has direct impact over the development process in post war Sri Lanka. There are many factors challenging promoting postwar Religious Tolerance like faith, traditions, morality and culture”.

The proving the fact the National Value survey conducted by the Asia Foundation on 2011 stated, "Intolerance is high for certain forms of religious expression. This is most apparent on the issue of erecting religious statues or places of worship in public places, which continues to be divisive between and within all religious groups. Furthermore, while most Sri Lankans, including religious minorities, say they feel free to express religious opinions in their local area, a marked proportion of Muslims and Hindus feel restricted.

The people in Sri Lanka breathed a tender breeze of violent free from bombs, shells and bullet firing. In contrary the fundamentalism and the extremism seems rampant aggressively. Specially after a long driven war the mentality of the people need to be revolutionized. As stated by a lecturer in history "Most of the mentality of the people were centered on war and it should be rehabilitate and reconcile. It should not be limited to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) cadres, but also to Sri Lankan military and all the people's mind sets needed to revitalize and transfer from and conflict to a peaceful mindset. The conflict mindset of the people are more prone to be intolerant than tolerating the sensitive issues related to their religion. The in group mentality consider the outer group as their opponent and the religious tolerance have outburst starting from the Dambulla mosque attack to Halal issue."

As stated by the undergraduate students of Buddhist Philosophy in the FGD, religious tolerance has demoted within Sri Lankan Society in the post war phase. After 30 years of civil war, people mind set required to be rehabilitated and reconciled, which includes the people of the country were part of the conflict directly or indirectly. Victory mindset of majority spread violence and hatred on each others. People tend to bring the fact of Religion in forward in order to impinge violence and address political concerns. When religious has been the only option, people are more attached to their own religion. The religious violence in the post conflict phase is centered

upon halal issue, land ownership of religious institution and rise of population as mention by the undergraduates. People have been more sensitive toward religion in the post conflict phase and even due to very minor fact people are aggressive which is totally opposed to the Buddhist teaching.

In the analysis on high tendency to follow the religious beliefs in the post war setting the respondents had diverse views. The graduate students mainly highlighted high intense among the masses to follow their own religion in the postwar scenario. Some highlighted it as a tendency which outburst after the tsunami and some mentioned the trend occurred with the rise of Monk Soma. Many monks became famous and even they were promoted by media. Many Buddhist tend to follow them and it is identified as popular Buddhism. In contrary the candidates of the graduates studies depicted different views stating that the Religious Tolerance is part of the Buddhist culture and it's still existing in the postwar setting .Although people are narrow minded towards their religious 'other' and some perceive it even as a religious threat. According to the respondents the Buddhists in the postwar phase has generate a fear on religious "other" and in such scenario they have lost their Religious Tolerance.

In Buddhism Tolerance has been identified as major value that every Buddhist should inculcate. The biggest hazard in the contemporary world is lack of tolerance of the people. The root causes behind the outburst of violence is due to intolerant behavior. As we are at the door step of the ending 30 years of civil war and there is a common need for everyone to assemble tolerance into their life. All religion teachings have preached the consequences on practice of tolerance. Specially in Buddhism practice of tolerance is one major segment. The root causes behind the rise of conflict and violence mainly is due to intolerant and when people hesitate to forgive each

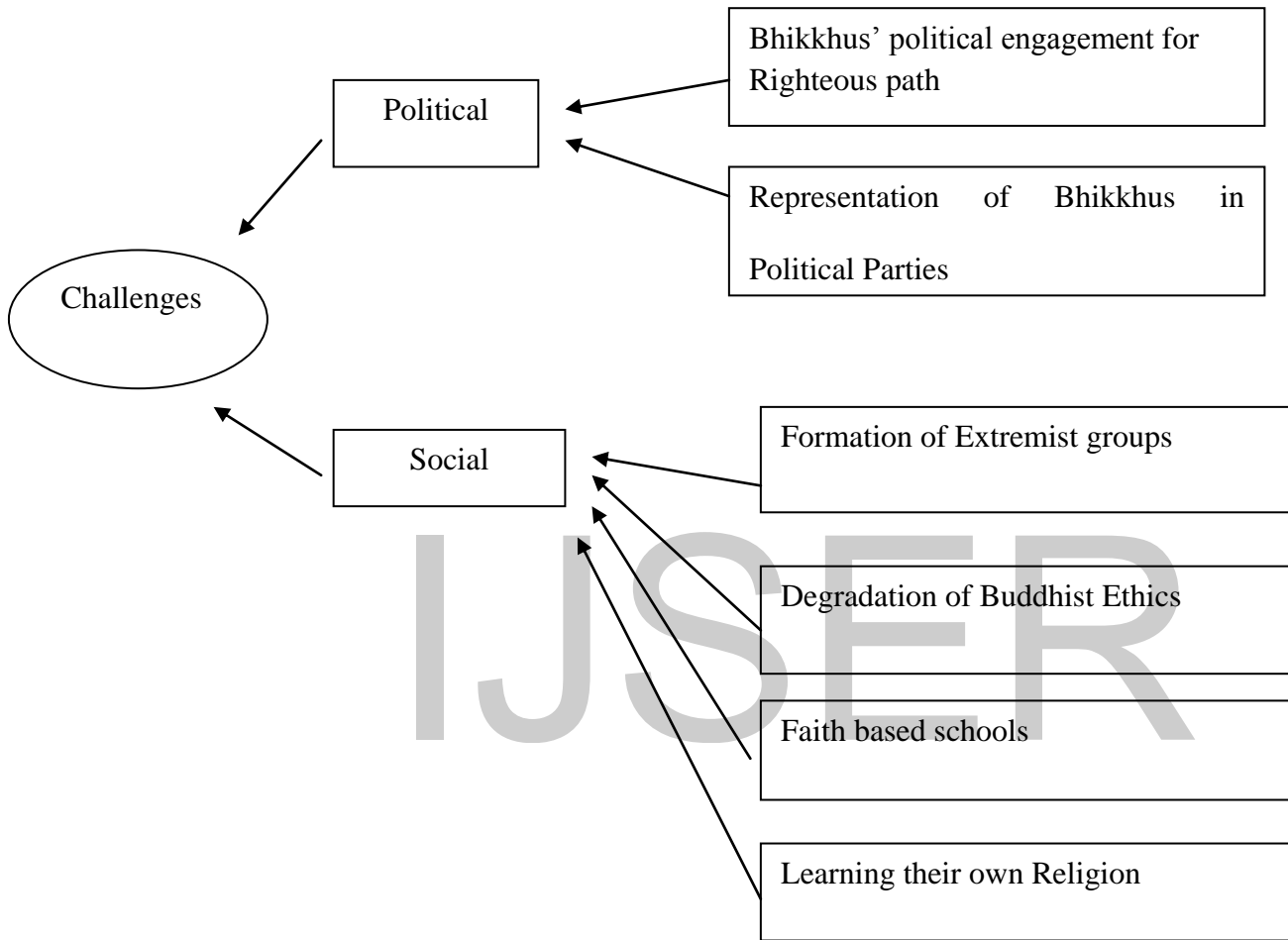
others. When people are not capable of controlling their anger and the hatred, it decreases their level of tolerance and prone to more aggressive, ultimately resulting hostilities.

As stated by the respondents the post conflict scenario of the country is more religious compared to previous. Specially in the phase of postwar the people attachment is very high with the religious Institutions. As the study focused was upon the Buddhists, the undergraduates of Philosophy and Buddhist culture stated the fact of popular Buddhism and the high prevalence of Buddhists visiting temples, observing Sil and chanting Pirith after math of war compared to previous. As stated by the respondents prevalence has reached in to its peak due to rise of Venerable Soma Thero and post conflict phase the high religious attachment and sensitivity among the religious groups were reasons for outburst of the violence. As a result the notion of “self” and “other” in terms of religion has been raised. The Religious Tolerance is the best mechanism to promote peace for countries that have undergone with protracted civil war

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### 4.2.2 Challenges in promoting religious Tolerance in post war Sri Lanka

Diagram No: 06: Thematic Map: 02



#### **4.2.2.1 Religious Tolerance and Politics**

##### **Bhikkhus political engagement for Righteous State**

The nexus between the politics and the religious tolerance have been interpreted in different aspects and the main intention of the study is to understand the impacts of politics on promoting religious tolerance among the Buddhists in post war Sri Lanka.

As stated by the respondents in the study, the Bhikkhus involvement in Politics is not rather recent and it has history of 60 years or even more. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C during the time of King Devanam Piayatissa (247-207) Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon by Arahath Mahinda, the son of Emperor Asoka. Under the guidance of Arahath Mahinda a Sinhala Buddhist culture was established and practiced. Nevertheless, Bhikkhus involvement in politics has increase drastically in secular matters. The involvement of the Bhikkhus in the politics is varied according to the respondents. But referring to the past history many Bhikkhus have actively engaged in politics for the wellbeing of the masses. But today many criticisms have laid upon their role in engaging in politics due to its dynamic nature.

Exploring the nexus between the Buddhism and the Politics each respondent had different views. All the respondents were agreed upon the nexus between the politics and the Buddhism. As mentioned in the FGD by the group of undergraduates studying Buddhist Philosophy there is a nexus between the Buddhism and politics according to the historical chronicles but in the modern society the objective of Buddhists involvement of the politics has been changed compared to the Bhuddha's teaching. As stated by a Buddhist monk "considering the Buddha's teaching there was no direct space or involvement in politics. Although Lord Buddha inherent from a royal family and in his path to enlightenment he dethatched from the royal family and royal treasuries

.According to his teaching, the politics could be defined as serving for the well wellbeing or welfare of all mankind."It is selfless service to promote the welfare of others. It is service of compassion without inducement or prompting any rewards. Lord Buddha was the first to set in motion the noble service of atthacariya when he sent forth his first sixty missionaries exhorting them with these memorable words: "Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many...." (caratha bhikkhave bahujana hitaya bahujana sukhaya).The lord Buddha didn't combine politics with his Dhamma and he served everybody equally. There was no difference in serving the royal king and the group of untouchables. The group highlighted the most appropriate example was the invitation received by the King Bimbisara and the Ambapali for the alms giving. Though it was an invitation received by the King, Lord Buddha rejected and accepted the alms of Ambapali without any biases. The service of the Bikkhus in politics also should be transparent in serving the masses. The Dhamma create no space for the wealth and power and path of dhamma only promote the equality and justice to everybody. During Buddha's period it was not attached to any institutions specially with state bodies. Sri Lanka was under the rule of Portuguese, Dutch and British and during that era most of the Buddhists felt their rights have been violated. Many temples were closed and many Christian based schools were established. During that era the all the Buddhist educated Bhikkhus gathered against the British rule. The respondents believed attaining independence in 1948 was a victory of Buddhists and they believed the Buddhist monks had to play a major role afterwards. In the time frame the Sri Lankan Buddhists defined their role in politics as serving for the wellbeing of the public. Such politics was acknowledged in Buddha teaching according to the group. But the political path of the Bhikkhus in post independent transformed much in to power politics though it is not acknowledged in Buddha's teaching.



The undergraduate students of Buddhist culture stated politics and the religion as two concepts. The religion was considered as a belief system where as the concept of politics means the state affairs basically government and the state. As the respondents stated, Buddhist philosophy do not align with politics. The only teaching on politics in the Buddhism is 10 traditional qualities desired by a king (*Dhasarajadhamma*). It includes Generosity, Virtue or Morality, self- sacrifice, honestly or straightness, Gentleness, self – control, Non- anger or pleasant temperament, Non violence, forbearance and Non opposition. But referring to the past history many chronicles like Mahawansa has depicted examples for Buddhist monks' involvement in state affairs. Specially in ancient Ceylon kingdoms like Dutugamunu the Bhikkhus have served as advisors for the king. In ancient era the state was given priority for the Buddhism. Buddhist teaching was directed the means to rule in righteous way but has not provided any space for the Bhikkhus to engage in politics as stated by the respondents. Thus the authentic Buddhism rejects politics and has not provided any space for it.

As stated by the candidates of graduate studies, every Buddhist monk who enters in to the Buddhist order and the path of Dhamma are bounded to follow the four noble truths with the ultimate gain of attaining “*Niravanaya*”. But today the path has been misguided and Bhikkhus should not fold in to four prejudices of *Moha* (Delusion) *Loba* (Greed) ,*Dvesha* (Hatred) , in such scenario they would not been identified as Bhikkhus. Since the general public prospect on Bhikkhus participation in politics were laid on building a constructive change within the society. Their hope lies on experiencing a peaceful atmosphere specially in post war scenario but whether they are in the track of building peaceful society is questionable. The political involvement of the Bhikkhus as stated by the respondents specially the monks, towards a righteous path also still dubious. The politics is one best mechanism to spread religious tolerance and the religious

harmony among the masses. Being the representatives of the legislative the Bhikkhus could have performed better role in addressing the religious intolerance. Bhikkhus responsibility is to use the power for the wellbeing of the public not to be a part of power politics.

Exemplifying the McTernan's argument as highlighted in "Religious Concerns in the Ethno-politics of Sri Lanka", "the religious agencies and religion becoming an actor in violent situations". In the Sri Lankan case, we have to understand the positive role that Buddhist monks can play in the peace process: why some of them are protesting to the issues in relation to peace negotiations? I argue that the Sri Lankan problem is not simply a Buddhist problem. It is a complex one in which all four religions, participate in one way or another. Recent events in the Sri Lankan religious sphere, suggest that both Christians and Muslims are also involved in the current political and religious crisis in Sri Lanka. This plurality of religious agency, we have to keep in sight and take into account in order to find a viable solution to the problem. As stated in McTernan's argument the post war scenario, religious tolerance will be pseudo practice without the mutual cooperation of all religious leaders. Specially in the post war era though Buddhism is identified as a religion which respect the religious diversity, although it challenged due to political influences.

### **Representation of Bhikkus in Political Parties**

Sri Lankan Buddhist monks' active involvement in politics began in the mid-twentieth century. The present day political involvement of the Bhikkhus came in to debate in 2001 when Venerable Baddegama Samitha represented the Parliament. It can be identified as a critical turn in the political history of Sri Lanka as it was the first Bhikkhu representation.

Buddhism in a pragmatic world it always been tied with the politics. As stated by the both the categories of graduates and the undergraduates, the Buddhist teaching has highly rejected the engagement of the Buddhist monk in political process. Although the members had different views, few undergraduates and one graduate candidate stated that Buddhist monks are not supposed to represent the parliament. The respondents also justified the representation in the parliament mentioned the reason to get in the line of politics of Buddhist monks should not only to represent Buddhists, instead should represent every citizen without religious biases. The Buddhist monks have not been aware about their exact role in politics. They should not engage in elections. However the respondents mentioned the importance in amalgamation and directing the country in the righteous path. The Bhikkhus could not attain any of these goals without any political support in the modern discourse. Thus only channel to guide and support laymen could be through representing a political party.

But in contrary the rest of the respondents were agreed and justified the Bhikkhus representation of the engaging in party politics. But according to their views disagree with the direct representation in the party politics and the core reason to engage in politics was to guide the disciples into righteous path. The reasons pointed by the two groups were due to disagreement upon the some unfavorable financial benefits received and the changing the direction of the Bhikkhus representation in politics. The study exemplify the necessitate of Bhikkhus representation in political parties specially on resolving the structural issues related to religious hostilities although goals needed to be different from the politicians and to bring justice to all mankind regardless of their religion and ethnicities as stated by the respondents.

The Bhikkhus engagement in politics or representing the political parties, the problem really lied upon the divisions of representation in party politics. The Buddhists in the discourse of politics have divided in to diverse sectors. They represent different political ideologies. As stated by the respondents, there is a high requirement of Buddhist monk to engage in politics in the postwar scenario since it has become the focal point in bringing concrete solutions to many volatile situations of ethno – politics in Sri Lanka. Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) lead an effectual initiative but it needed to be direct less politics and more on addressing issues related to religions. Specially it is needed and required for the Bhikkhus to take a stand in such moments like today where violence take place in the name of religion.

#### **4.2.2.2 Religious extremism**

Religious extremism could be defined as individual or the group of people becoming more religiously extreme. Even the behavior of the group of members' is also extreme in nature. Exploring the nexus between the religious tolerance and the religious extremists it's vital to understand how extremisms have been defined in Buddhism. Considering the uprooting extremist groups in the postwar Sri Lanka the many of the respondents believe that Buddhism do not provide any space to extremism.

As mentioned by the undergraduates' students following Buddhist philosophy in the FGD, Buddhism is a religion of extremism which is attached with nonviolence. The only extreme level a Buddhist could reach is practice of non violence. But there aren't any spaces within Buddhism for the contemporary modern day religious extremism. Buddhist doctrine of life could be summed up in four lines,

*“Sabba papassa akaranam,*

*Kusalassa upasampada,*

*Sachitta pariy odapanam,*

*Etam Buddhadasasanam.”*

According to the group views the Buddhist followers should avoid all evil, cultivate the good and the true, purify hearts and that the teaching of the Buddhas. Most of the extremists' groups' ideologies were based on the history despite of the authentic Buddhism. Within the Buddhist extremists framework the Buddhists should determine not to harbour any violence on others. Instead of act of violence should indoctrinate the tolerance on their opponents”.

The graduate studies candidates identified Buddhism as a religion which promotes the moderate life without believing on extreme paths. According to their views the religious groups or the individuals tend to follow the extreme path which destroys their inner peace and lead to more conflicts and violence. They mentioned the need of revitalization of the religion in the postwar phase. In such situation extreme routes merely pertain due to the sensitivity towards the religious beliefs. The religious extreme groups should bring efforts to promote coexistence among the mankind instead of resorting violence. And if there are certain Buddhists who feel they are unable to appreciate the ways of other religious practices, then the least they could do is to maintain their silence and refrain from any undue criticism; this attitude is very important for peaceful co-existence. This is called sympathetic understanding. Sometimes the people have misinterpretations on the two concepts of the extremisms and fundamentalism. According to the interviewees religious extremism simply meant as the quality of the state of being extreme in their religious beliefs .In contrary the religious fundamentalism meant as the adherence to such

belief. As assert by a respondent “Buddhism is a religion which is not extremists but in order to safeguard it from the other religions, the acts taken by the monks could be identified as religion of fundamentalists. Further stated that the high requirement of safeguarding Buddhism from the current threats of Evangeline Christianity and the acts of some Islamic groups. Thus Buddhists should not spread violence in the name of religion.”

The religious intolerance is very much factual in the post conflict scenario of the country. Violence are underpinning between some extremists groups and religious groups even for minor issues due to religious intolerance. These extremists’ activities occurred due to misinterpretation on the religions and acts of small groups tarnish the peace building process of the nation. As all the respondents stated Buddhists acts of extremism challenged the religious tolerance and the authentic Buddhist teaching. Subsequently some of the respondents justified the act of extreme groups in safeguarding religion. In the postwar situation all the religions are competing to safeguard their own religion. The religious leaders in the postwar phase has a greater possibility in guiding their fellow lay people in the correct path wiping away mystical beliefs of extremists groups.

#### **4.2.2.3 Degradation of Buddhist Ethics**

The practice of Religious Tolerance is highly depending on the religious values of a religion. The Buddhist value system as stated by a candidate of graduate studies has directly embedded with the culture. The Buddha’s teaching and the values are the great inheritance of Buddhists. Most of the Buddhist use to practice their daily lives according to Buddhist principles as it’s a part of Buddhist culture. Referring back to the Buddhist values it lies upon the 10 *Paramis* as stated by the respondents. The ten paramis – dana (generosity), sila (precept), nekkhamma (renunciation), panna (wisdom), viriya (energy), khanti (patience) sacca (truthfulness), adhitthana

(determination), metta (loving kindness) and upekkha (equanimity) – can form a solid value system on which a Buddhist builds his or her personal spiritual life. The person who practice those ten *paramis* be tolerant and also be able to tolerate others as well. Every religion is embedded by their own religion ethics which consists of respecting all mankind without any discrimination regardless their religion. Reviewing both views from the graduate studies candidates and the undergraduate students except 02 members all the 18 members stated that there is no such degradation in Buddhists ethos although the practice has been varied due to the popular Buddhism. Specially 18 respondents stated that tendency of following “amisa puja” in the phase of the postwar is high due to drastic increase in the Buddhists dispels engage in charity and offering alms. Though there is degradation in the Buddhists ethos in supporting extremists and the outburst of violence, in general Buddhists tend to follow and highly attached to practice Buddhists values and ethos in the postwar phase as mentioned by the respondents.

As stated by a non Buddhist respondent of the study, *“each religion consists of culture, creed and cult. These factors are in separable in every religion. The religious values can be estimate over tolerance. The tolerance could be considered as a part of religious culture. The adherents to any religion demonstrate the level of tolerance and prove the best practice of religious ethos. The religion can be either moderate or militant, it depend on the level of tolerance and the religious adherence.”*

Examining the postwar scenario Buddhism has been challenged due to its degradation of Buddhist values among the Buddhist monks and disciples. The uniqueness of Buddhism is identified on the basic values hindered in the religion and its practice. Nevertheless it is uncertain whether the layman and the monks in modern day are bounded by those religious values referring to the erupted religious violence.

The human dignity, worth and social justice which are the key pillars of every religious ethos, foundation of religious values have being questionable today. Degradation of religion values have force a threat on promoting Religious Tolerance. As discussed in the next segment, education could be the best approach to incorporate the religious ethos in to mainstream and best mechanism to promote Religious Tolerance.

#### **4.2.2.4 Religious Tolerance and Education**

Education has become an effective channel in promoting religious Tolerance in post war Sri Lanka. Although to understand the present context, it is also vital, to pave the attention on the past education systems and its challenges on promoting religious tolerance.

##### **Faith Based Schools**

Education can be considered as the main pillar for the development of a Tolerant society. The more people knowing about other religions are better qualified to live together and respect each other's 'otherness. But turning back to the history, education system has been challenged in promoting Religious Tolerance due to the established education system which is centered on faith based schools.

The research findings of the segment of challenges of faith based schools in promoting the Religious Tolerance in post war societies run backs to the history, as stated by the respondents. In the long history of education system in Sri Lanka specially in the pre-colonial era the key main education body was the "Priven" the Buddhist educational institute attached to the temple and the main target audience of the "Piriven" was the young Buddhist monks. Although during the colonial era things were changed and with the emerged of the Catholic and the Anglican Church many schools were established. Through these schools the concept of "Missionary



School” was introduced to the society. In contrary to counter these Missionary schools the “Sinhalese-Buddhist” nationalism a set of schools and institutions were created. The pioneers of the movement of establishing the Buddhist schools were “Henry Steel Olcott” and “Anagarika Dharmapala”. Subsequently “Muslim” nationalist moments led by “Siddi Lebbe” founded another set of schools and “Tamil” nationalist led by “Arumuka Navalar” founded their own set of education institutes.

At the initial phase, all those faith based schools were established to counter the Missionary schools. The system was centered on promoting own religious values and ethos. In such framework, it created fewer opportunities for the religious other. Comparing with the other multi religious schools, the students in the faith based schools has lesser opportunities to learning together and it results less cohesion and sensitivity towards the other religions.

As stated by a respondent, a state counselor, and a non Buddhist, also a person who has experience a faith based school system in Sri Lanka, *“the main problem today in our country is the School Education system. Our children have been divided into schools based upon their own ethnicities, religions and they study in these schools for eighteen years of their life, growing up in a religiously, ethnically homogenous environment, and once they leave school and enter the diversified society, we ask them to join their hands with other ethnic, religious communities and intend to call ourselves a pluralistic society. How can we expect our children to integrate to a more culturally complex society suddenly? We should admit that there were fair reasons in the past for the establishment of vernacular schools in our country. The challenge then was to counter the education offered by Missionary schools by giving equal treatment and equal opportunities to Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in our country by establishing vernacular schools. These schools are functioning today as well; in fact those are some leading schools in*

*Sri Lanka. But the challenge in front of us today is different. The challenge today is about how to build a “Sri Lankan Brand” identity; A Sri Lankan nationality. I believe it should begin within the school education system. The seeds of a ‘Sri Lankan identity’ must be planted and watered within the school classroom. We must openly discuss the barriers to achieve this new challenge ...”*

Education as an institution of secondary socialization, practice and promote Religious Tolerance in a multi religious society like Sri Lanka as it's very much essential. As stated by all the respondents of the study it is essential to learn their own religion and subsequently these religious based schools also should provide some space for the children to adhere other religion beliefs that will ultimately promote Religious Tolerance among each other. If not the faith based schools ultimately produce nationalists like “Sinhalese-Buddhist” and “Tamil-Hindu”. The lesser the people are Religiously Tolerant the reconciliation path would be more intricate.

The nexus between the religion and the education emerged and used methodically by the colonial masters under the colonial rule. The British rulers establish religious based schools as a mode to promote their religion. In contrary to promote the religion the Buddhists too established Buddhists schools and the systems on processing until today. The fact to be consider in education is not to promote their own religion hence to build a common system to unite all religious groups. Understanding and learning on their religious teachings create belongingness among each other and it support to coexist with fellow religious members. The religion education should be used as a tool to unite instead of dividing fact. As stated by a graduate studies candidate the school syllabus of Buddhism is not sufficient and the Sunday school has being commercialized. It is vital to align more religious ethos and principles into the school syllabus. Although schools and the education systems which teach their own religion would be one causal

fact for the violence erupted according to the respondents. Such system creates only less opportunities to respect the other religions.

### **Fewer opportunities for comparative Religious Studies**

The current education system of compulsory religion studies in Sri Lanka does not provide much opportunity to absorb the other Religions'. But in the tertiary level many universities have the comparative religious studies where many students follow and learn about the other religions. Referring to the history of the compulsory religious studies, religion is a compulsory subject in the public curriculum since 1947. Subsequently the authorities paid attention on the erosion of the values in contemporary society and in year 1980 and 1990s attentions was more laid upon promotion of human values and the human rights. Further the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka established a unit for social integration and peace and in 2008 implementation of National policy on Social Integration and peace is a turning point of education history of Sri Lanka. As mentioned and discussed in the document it is necessary to adhere the social integration and peace in to every subject and further it also highlighted the importance of linking the concept such as non violence, conflict resolution, empathy to Promote the human values.

As stated by a graduate studies candidate, opinion on learning the other religions *“the students until 18 are not adequate to grasp another religion in-depth. Also the school syllabus does not provide enough spectrums for students to comprehend a religion. A child initially need to understand their own religion, subsequently it is also important understanding the differences of other religions. Beginning it is always required for a child to learn their own religion to form own religious identity. The religious identities are basically formed based their language, culture and religion. All the factors do support a person in forming their own identity.”*

The undergraduate students had different views on the comparative religious education. Specially the students following the comparative religious studies highlighted importance and its contribution in promoting Religious Tolerance. They highlighted the learning opportunities they received learning the other religions in their undergraduate level. Further they highlighted that knowing other religion would always benefit them to respect and to bring constructive criticism without generating any harm. As stated in the focus group discussions most of the causing fact behind erupted violence lies due to the lack of understating on the 'religious other'. As mentioned by non Buddhists "Education system in Sri Lanka emphasizes that religious education as compulsory. In post war situation this kind of change in curriculum is appreciable. But in a democratic nation should not be compelled to follow certain religion. If it comes either by clan or pedigree or tradition it would not affect the society."

In the postwar phase as a country looking forward to peace building and reconciliation education could be used as the more affluent mechanism to promote Religious Tolerance. As mentioned in the National Education Society in 1995, report emphasis the fact that Sri Lanka needed to make educational efforts to build tolerance, understanding, unity, harmony which was sorely needed in this country of ours. Adhere these would indirectly align the national unity as a part of the national curriculum. The curriculum in the postwar country like Sri Lanka needed to provide more prominence to the peace education in order to stabilize peace. The importance of teaching comparative religions in the curriculum would produce a generation with rationalistic avoiding the fundamentalist and fanatical religious teachings.

### **4.3 Religious Tolerance as part reconciliation**

Reconciliation as a concept is still a comparatively new element in peacemaking, and some of its ideas remain untested or unaddressed, others have only been applied in real situations once or twice. Post war reconciliation is not a simple process because it's all about providing space for your enemy, accepting your opponent, providing justice for the victims, replacing anger/hatred with love. It's about the positive transformation of conflict affect societies with the best guarantee of the violent in the past may not occur. Therefore it's a long run process. Specially aftermath of civil war or brutally oppressive regimes there has been a huge appeal for reconciliation. There is hope of reconciliation will rebuild the conflict devastated nations through healing their past wounds and standing together.

According to the views of both the groups' of undergraduates and the graduate studies candidates highlighted the importance of Religious Tolerance in the reconciliation process. Some of the graduate studies candidate stated that people should have urge to reconcile. It's not limited to one religion. All the religions should stand together as it's the prime responsibility of all the religious leaders. Thus dubious fact is religious leaders' inclination to support the process.

As stated by a respondent, "The post war reconciliation is the best tool which should be focused to build up harmony and good will among races. In our nation so far this approach seems to be failure due to religious extremism. The religious tolerance seems to be myriad due to the above mention challenges. In order to address the reconciliation it is important to find solutions for the challenges." "Reconciliation should be with the conflicting parties. The reconciliation process is realistic when the religious 'other' is accepted and respected. The domination of the victory could not be defined as reconciliation. It's a Situation with absence of tolerance."

According to the views of the respondents of undergraduate studies the peace should pertain in the country. Specially all the religious groups should feel a sense of belongings to their country and as citizens they all should enjoy the right live. The civil harmony support integration of all the citizens regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, religion and caste. The willingness to reconcile laid on accepting the religious “other”. In such scenario the concept of reconciliation would be pseudo. Today it has generate hatred and violence among the religious groups and such feelings should not eject forcefully. The mindset of the people needs to change proactively. Entire religious groups’ requisite is to unite together. The religious groups’ outburst violence with hegemony attitude would not facilitate the Reconciliation process than impinge more religious intolerant among religious “others”.

In response to post war demands the state of Sri Lanka has appointed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) on the 15th of May 2010. On 26 July 2012 the government released a National Plan of Action to Implement the Recommendations of the LLRC (NPA), which contained timeframes, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and responsible agencies through which recommendations of the LLRC could be implemented. The most of the actions are in addressing the structural challenges and the resolution for them have been initiated in state level. Some examples are the maintain and support current practice of the National Anthem being sung simultaneously in two languages, Set aside a separate event on National Day to express solidarity and empathy with all victims of the tragic conflict and pledge our collective commitment to ensure that there should never be such blood-letting in the country again, Enact and strictly enforce deterrent laws to deal with ‘hate speech’ relating to ethnicity, religion, and literature, Ensure public Universities have ethnically mixed student Populations with a choice of courses offered in all three languages, Facilitate the early return of the displaced Muslims to

their places of origin in the Northern Province. Take immediate steps to assist in rebuilding of the mosques, houses and schools destroyed or damaged by the LTTE. These are needed in a society which was brutally affected for three decades and to retrieve their devastated mindsets as minorities or victims. But today's outburst violence targeting religious others threaten and has challenged the system. But still it's essential and required to implement all the recommendations because they ultimately bring concrete resolution in a long run process.

The next chapter of the report, Chapter Five will present the researchers Conclusion about the conducted study. In advance, the Chapter Five will bring forth the recommendations by the researcher.

IJSER

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The Religious Tolerance has become the most challenging and the required practice in peace building in Sri Lanka. The practice of Religious Tolerance creates an atmosphere for the religious “other” a sense of belongingness and acceptance which may directly facilitates the reconciliation process. The postwar scenario of the country has turned it’s directions of Religious Tolerance to a Religious Intolerance due to the acts of extremists groups. Today the country has reach to a stage of inter-religious tension due to the failures of the moderators of all the religious leaders. Instead of building sustain relationship of trust and the friendship among the religious groups, in contrastingly it has build restrictive dialogues with extremists within the respective religions. It is important to replace the Religious Intolerance with Religious Tolerance to reconcile the post war communities. Therefore the aim of the research was to study on Religious Tolerance giving much preference to the Buddhism and its application in postwar society in Sri Lanka. Nonetheless it also focused on the contemporary challenges which distracted the practices of Religious Tolerance and finally its functions in facilitating the reconciliation process in postwar Sri Lanka were also preferred areas of the study.

In exploring the study on Religious Tolerance, the main focus was on understanding the perception of the Buddhists on Religious Tolerance. The study concluded that all the religious teaching has provided space for their religious “Others” and their interpretations on the term Religious Tolerance is vary. The secondary and primary data were spontaneously utilized and the study summarized that Religious Tolerance was the foundation in all the religious teaching



where all the religions leads the path to free from violence through accepting the religious “other”. As the study main focus lied upon Buddhism, the analysis proved that Buddhist philosophy always respects other practices without harbouring any violence and prejudices. But in contrary to the authentic Buddhism today the practice has reversed resulting inter-religious tension in the postwar phase. The true meaning of Religious Tolerance in Buddhism tolerate even the most difficult moments impinging violence. In-depth analysis of the study reports that post war phase, there were several social, political and economical issues reasoning for the outburst Religious Intolerance. Hence the study concluded that the biggest socio political challenges that distracted the practice of the Religious Tolerance in the post-war phase was monks engagement in politics including representing the political parties, formation of religious based extremists groups, degradation of religious values and faith based education. Each factor directly or indirectly distracted and contributed to Religious Intolerance which was taking place in the post war phase. According to the final analysis remarks, the Buddhist monks’ enrolment in politics which was contradictory to the authentic Buddhism even though not practical in today scenario and the historical evidence proved the nexus and affiliation of Buddhism and Politics. Specially the religious extremism which is totally against the Buddhist teaching was one major factor to outburst the violence. The religious extremism is a notion which was rejected by many religions like Buddhist teaching although some extremists groups impinged violence in order to safeguard Buddhism in the post-war phase. The study was able to identify effects of the religious based school education and the advances of them as a stimulating fact for the religious intolerance. However the arguments have bought up those education systems established by the colonial masters and their counterparts produced ethno- nationalists’ par with their religion. It

further stated importance of comparative religion studies in eliminating the extreme religious views and practice to acknowledge every religious teaching exclusive of prejudices.

The research study also analyzed significance of Religious Tolerance in the postwar Reconciliation process. The findings proved importance of Religious Tolerance in order to reconcile the postwar communities and recommendations of LLRC also have promoted the practice of Religious Tolerance. In the concluding remarks of the study proved high need of rehabilitation of the mindsets of mass to accept their religious “other”. As stated, the roles of religious leaders have depleted and they are more power oriented than being spiritual. Thus it is concluded that despite of the challenges, the practice of Religious Tolerance is required to a country like Sri Lanka to reconcile the postwar communities to eliminate the inter-religious tension and to transform the conflict affect societies in to peaceful society.

## **5.2 Recommendations:**

The Religious Tolerance has been the most vital component in reconciliation and peace building in Post-war phase in Sri Lanka. After a comprehensive analysis the following recommendations are hereby propose to Government, actors and community.

### **5.2.1 Government**

**Rule of Law:** In order to promote the Religious Tolerance in Sri Lanka it is required that the government to uphold the rule of law to eliminate the violence which are taking place in the name of religion. The proper mechanism of establishment of Rule of Law in the country makes the individual and the private entities accountable under the law. Unfair treatments would not

count in respect of their religion. The government should be able to ensure the protection of religious freedom which is free from religious violence and ensuring equal treatment in order to promote Religious Tolerance.

### **5.2.2 Effective implementation of LLRC Recommendations**

Sri Lanka has appointed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) on the 15th of May 2010. On 26 July 2012 the government released a National Plan of Action to Implement the Recommendations of the LLRC (NPA), and it has given prominence to promote the religious harmony. It take account of maintain and support current practice of the National Anthem being sung simultaneously in two languages, Enact and strictly enforce deterrent laws to deal with 'hate speech' relating to ethnicity, religion, and literature, Ensure public Universities have ethnically mixed student Populations with a choice of courses offered in all three languages, Facilitate the early return of the displaced Muslims to their places of origin in the Northern Province. Implementation of these recommendations would bring solutions to many structural challenges which were highlighted in the analysis chapter. Proper implementation of the recommendations would address the religious intolerance and the religious violence channel the message to the grassroots.

### **5.2.3 Religion Leaders**

In order to address inter – religious tension, the role of the religious actors need to be reviewed. Even sometimes considering violence took place in the post-war scenario the religious leaders directly or indirectly responsible for the outburst of violence. Though religion is identified as a heterogeneous even within the religion there are ideological clashes. It is vital to define the role of religious actors without any religious bounds. The religious institutions required to play a

leadership role in protecting religious faiths from the hate speech and the intolerance. The religious leaders should expand their role in mediating with antagonists groups than safeguarding their own religious faith. Therefore the religious actors representing all the religions have a major role in promoting the religious tolerance in postwar phase as they are the guiders of the laymen.

#### **5.2.4 Media**

Sometimes the incidents of violence would not reach to public without media and the civil society response. Today scenario the media plays a vital role in promoting the popularity of the Buddhists monks are ranked by the media and not by the service rendered to the laymen. Media would be used as effective channels to reach the mass in reporting the incidents which disperse the religious intolerance and the extreme views. Hence the media has a greater responsibility in deplete the intolerance in reporting and while marinating and promoting the balanced public debate to aware the masses.

#### **5.2.5 The civil Society:**

The civil society is another strong mechanism where the role could facilitate sensitizing the community with high public understanding to overcome the ongoing religious tension. The civil society role could be widened in mediating the antagonists' parties or to bring the responsible religious actors to a public discourse. More Interfaith dialogs and trainings are required to conduct in community level specially targeting the youth in changing their attitudes towards the religious "other".

### **5.2.6 Education**

Education could be used as a tool to promote respect and accept the multi – religious nature of the country. The religious education of the country should promote the multi religious education providing more exposure for the children to understand other religions in order to promote the Religious Tolerance. The values education system should be able to encourage behavior such as love, respect, compassion, endurance, kindness, sympathy, patience, forgiveness and mercy in order to pre-empt and redress the problem of religious intolerance.

### **5.2.7 Community:**

The general public has a vital role to play in promoting the Religious Tolerance specially in adhering to various religious beliefs. The general public should be aware the importance of grasping the religious teachings correctly and communicating them without misinterpretation. It may reduce limit the response to the violent and the hate campaign and the intolerance driven by the religious extremists. The response of the general public varies from the hate message which may promote via the social network and the collective efforts should initiate to speak against the intolerance.

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**ANNEXTURE 01**

**MA in Conflict, Peace & Development Studies**

**University of Ruhuna /Tribuvan University**

**“Role of Religion promoting Tolerance in Postwar Sri Lanka”**

**Interview Schedule:**

**Date of Interview:**

**Name:**

**Organization/Position:**

1. Define tolerance according to your religion?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Are you aware on violence taking place due to inter – religious tension in the post war phase?

2..1 Yes  No

2.2 If Yes what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....

3.Do you believe that religious tolerant as a prevailing fact in post war Sri Lanka?

Yes  No

3.1 If Yes' Reasons for Religious tolerant?

.....  
.....

3.2 If No' reasons for religious intolerant?

.....  
.....

4. Do you think that post war Sri Lankan society is more religious compared to past?

Yes  No

4.1 If yes' Reasons?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. What is the nexus between religion and politics in postwar Sri Lanka?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Do you believe education system (religious base schools) in Sri Lanka as a casual fact for religious intolerance?

.....  
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7. What are the impacts of culture and values over religion in the post war sri lanka?

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8. Do you think religion leaders performing their duties in the post war Sri Lanka?

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9. Is there any space for extremists in any religion?

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10. How can we use tolerance as tool to reconcile the post war Sri Lankan society?

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## **Guidelines**

Question 01: How it is referred in Buddhist/Christian/Islamic/Hindu teachings, chronicles

Questions 02: People awareness on violence that are taking place due to inter-religious tensions

Questions 03: A personal opinion on religious tolerant/intolerant in the post war scenario

Question 04: Comparison between war society and post war/Based on the comparison your opinion on whether people are more religious or not?

Question 05: The nexus between politics and Buddhism – is there any space for politics in Buddhism/Christianity/Hinduism/Islamic, views on religious base political parties and involvement of religious leaders in politics

Question 06: Education system with special reference to religious base schools any other opinions relate to religious education in our education system

Questions 07: Are there any cultural influences over religion, is it a fact for religious intolerant/tolerant in post war Sri Lanka AND prevalence of religious values. Is there any correlation between religious values and religious intolerant? Have they degraded in post war society?

Question 08: Role of religion leaders in post war Sri Lanka

Question 09: Buddhist/Christianity/Hinduism/Islamic perspective over religious extremisms

Question 10: How to tolerance as a mechanism to reconcile the post war society