



The Impact of Political Literacy on Economic Development through Social Reconciliation

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Abstract

Social reconciliation has a strong impact on a country's economic and political success and the achievement of expected economic, political and social goals. When it comes to social reconciliation, politics has a direct impact on it. A country's social reconciliation is determined through political decisions and the problems arising from it have a strong impact on the economy of that country. Accordingly, the primary objective of this study was to study the effect of political literacy on economic development through social reconciliation. For that purpose, 120 people were used as a sample in the three secretariat divisions of Imaduwa, Nagoda, Neluwa district of Galle district. Through the data analysis, it was found that the political literacy of the people is at a low level, which causes the political decisions they take to be not correct and to the social reconciliation. It was also possible to recognize that it had an effect. It was also made clear that it would create obstacles to economic development goals. Accordingly, in order to achieve the desired economic development goals, it is necessary to raise the political literacy of individuals and create social reconciliation.

Keywords: Economic development, Political literacy, Social development, Social reconciliation

Introduction

There are many factors that need to be considered when any economy is going to achieve its economic, political and social goals. Social reconciliation has a prominent place in it. Because without social reconciliation a country cannot achieve any desired goal. Social reconciliation is essential especially for a country to achieve its economic development goals. In order to create social reconciliation, political and social stability should be created. There, the way the voters in the country work to maintain a stable and strong country politically has a direct impact. That is, it is important to maintain a high level of political literacy of voters.

Social reconciliation is the process of increasingly harmonious coexistence in a given society among individuals, groups, and institutions. Essential qualities of reconciliation societies include a high level of trust, a shared vision for a common future, and responsive and legitimate governance institutions that actively support economic development. UN Secretary-General António Guterre has highlighted how social exclusion, polarization, disputes over natural resources and weaknesses in governance undermine social reconciliation. In order to maintain social reconciliation, a politically literate political society should be created. There are many definitions of political literacy. Political literacy is the awareness of political information. Accordingly, if a person knows the names of the presidential candidates running for an election, then we can assume that he or she is politically literate if people understand party differences well. Political literacy can be simply introduced as knowing the political process and political affairs effectively as citizens in order to fulfill one's duties.

Krosnick (1990) refers to political literacy as an indicator of political knowledge, interest and media exposure. Political literacy is more than knowledge. Attitudes and behaviors are required for that. Competence requires effective participation in social life (Dever, D. and Hands, G, 1990). However, these skills cannot be expected to develop if individuals do not participate. A politically literate citizen is an informed person, not a mere spectator.

A politically literate citizen is an active participant in social events. A politically literate citizen not only understands the current situation but also engages and directs the state in an active and effective manner. And a person with political literacy skills can understand the opinions of others and understand the influence on them.

Also, political literacy is a set of abilities considered necessary for citizens to participate in a society, a government. It includes critical thinking skills, such as understanding how government works and important issues facing society, as well as evaluating different points of view. People interested in participatory democracy are also concerned with political literacy. Political events in liberal democracies are chaotic and difficult to understand. There is a complex political process around the people and people have problems in understanding it. Here the public is in a strong position in democracy and should be given opportunities to participate directly and indirectly in decision making. The exercise of governmental power depends on the will and action of the people. Citizens should not only have equal rights but should also have the ability to influence political decisions. Through democratizing and empowered citizens, politics can maintain high levels of literacy. That is, liberal democracy depends on politically literate citizens.

Researchers have defined this political literacy in different ways over the years. The purpose of political literacy is to create a group of citizens who are compatible with a democratic society. Political literacy means having basic political knowledge. (Cassel, A, C, L, 1997). Also, a subject called Citizenship Education has been introduced to teach political literacy at the school level. Citizenship Curriculum Potential. If political literacy is not taught, politicians are thought to be crooks. That is, those who do not understand the use and abuse of power are its victims. Political literacy refers to knowledge skills and attitudes (Crick, B. 2000).

Politicization refers to any issues of law, fairness, distribution of social categories such as welfare and education, equality, issues of rights and responsibilities, public accountability or good governance. From an early age, children begin to grapple with political ideas. How social goods are distributed, is the law equal for all? Is power exercised arbitrarily? Or following proper procedures? is studying. (Henchel, M. 2015).

From this point of view, it is clear that the political literacy of the individual is important for making the right decisions. Accordingly, the primary objective of this study was to study the effect of political literacy in creating social reconciliation. From this point of view, it is clear that the political literacy of the individual is important for making the right decisions. Accordingly, the primary objective of this study was to study the effect of political literacy on economic development through social reconciliation.

Methodology

The sample for this study was selected in three regional secretariat divisions of Imaduwa, Nagoda and Neluwa in Galle district. There, 60 female and 60 male were randomly selected as a total sample size of 120. Both primary data and secondary data were used for data collection. Interviews and a questionnaire were used to collect primary data. Election records, books, magazines, internet, research reports etc. were used to collect secondary data. Mixed method was used for data analysis. The results obtained after analyzing the collected data are as follows.

Results and discussion

The following results were obtained through the analysis of the data collected through the research.

The responses given by the respondents used for the study regarding the factors considered in selecting an election candidate are as follows.

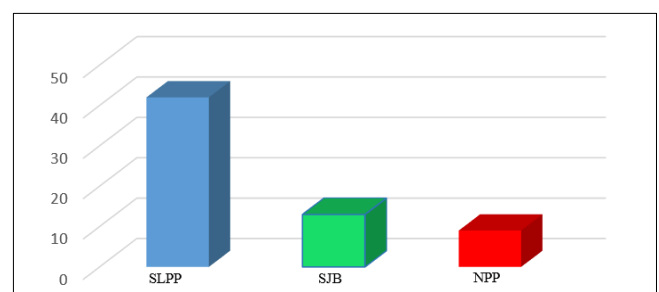
Table 01: Factors considered in electing a candidate

Criteria considered for voting	Priority						Total points awarded to criteria in order of priority	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
A wealth of experience	16	8	13	14	37	32	504	5
Education level	9	23	8	42	34	4	441	4
Professional level	5	5	19	30	18	42	534	6
Nation	28	23	27	11	13	18	372	2
Religion	42	38	18	13	8	1	270	1
Caste	20	23	35	10	10	23	399	3

Source: (Field Study, 2020)

When the factors considered by the candidate in order to vote in an election were lined up according to priorities, it could be identified that the factors such as religion, race, caste, education level, abundance of experience, and professional level were considered respectively. Accordingly, it is clear that religion has had a strong influence on the use of votes here. To further confirm this situation, the relationship between party membership and religion was studied.

For that, they studied the Parties to which the voter belongs and it was confirmed that the respondents represent the 03 major parties that exist today.



Source: (Field Study, 2020)

Graphs 01: Parties to which the voter belongs.

Also the religion of the respondents was considered. This is because the respondents also consider the religion of the candidates while voting.

Graph 02: Religion of respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Buddhist	80	66.7
Hindu	15	12.5
Islam	5	4.2
Christian	20	16.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: (Field Study, 2020)

It could be identified that there was a group of respondents belonging to the Buddhist religion in the sample that is the basis for the study.

Also according to the responses of these respondents, 75% stated that they consider religion while voting. According to the collected data, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) was mostly represented by Sinhala Buddhists (85%). Considering the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), 96% represented Muslims. Thus it was clear that people make decisions based on religion to vote. That is, according to the religion, people vote for the party.

The religious corporation is influencing the functioning of the political authorities in various ways, and on the other hand, the political authorities are also seen in a way that the religious corporations are used to achieve their own political and preferences. Therefore, it can be recognized that the space to bring the most suitable rulers to politics is limited.

According to the collected data, another thing that is clear is that the respondents consider the caste of the candidate while voting. It was stated that 75% of the respondents would vote regardless of other parties if a candidate of their own caste is presented for election. Thus, it will be clear that people cast their votes on factors such as religion, race, caste, etc.

Conclusion

Through this study, it was recognized that people vote based on factors such as religion, race, and caste, without paying attention to the factors that should be considered more carefully. Accordingly, it could be recognized that these people are at a low level in terms of political literacy.

Two of the main challenges faced by Sri Lanka after gaining independence were nation building and developing the country socially, economically, politically and culturally. These two challenges are still unsolved. For this, the interrelationship between the two social institutions, religion and politics, was a major factor. In 1947, 1972 and 1978 constitutions gave priority to differences like religion, language and ethnicity which resulted in an ethnic war which gave terrible results for more than three decades. Looking at the course of Sri Lankan political history, it appears that instead of moving towards a policy of nation building that integrates the desires of multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations, it moves along a policy of reconciliation that separates those desires.

Throughout history, government policies have often specialized for minorities or multi-ethnic groups instead of the territorial and political integration achieved by the diversity of ethnic groups. The most dangerous result is that the Sri Lankan political system is headed towards political underdevelopment. The people who are responsible for this situation are not only the policy makers of this country, but

also the people who believe in different religions, cults, languages and customs should take responsibility for it. Especially the religious corporation is affecting the functioning of the political authorities in every state of the modern world. On the other hand, the political authorities also use the religious institutions to achieve their political ambitions.

Accordingly, a multi-pronged approach should be used to promote ethnic and religious reconciliation. When we consider the current situation in our country, it appears that the first thing that needs to be changed is the mindset of condemning other races, religions and races in people. That is, mainly, mutual trust should be built between them. What is very important in this process is how to maintain good relations between the two parties in the future and to act so that such situations do not arise again. Looking at all the chaos that happened in the country recently, it appears that even though everyone can live without distinction of race, religion and caste, their thinking is that they cannot live together with different races other than themselves. Therefore, the root part of the tree should be nursed first. That is, to an individual root solution. It should be used to create social reconciliation.

Otherwise, the economic and social crises that Sri Lanka is currently facing will continue to grow. Because it is impossible to lead a country to the right economic goals without proper governance. In order to take an economy towards economic development goals as well as social development goals, educated, intelligent, and forward-looking leaders with correct leadership characteristics should be selected as politicians. But when the voters in the country are at a low level of political literacy, it is impossible to make those goals a reality. This study revealed that the political literacy of the sample was low. Accordingly, it is important to introduce awareness programs to raise the political literacy of these people, subject areas that can raise political literacy to the education system. Through this, social reconciliation will be possible and it will directly lead to economic development.

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