

Building Social Cohesion: Contribution of Inter-marriages (A Social Anthropological Study on the Village in Munneswaram)

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This study intends to explore Sinhala-Tamil inter-marriages and social cohesion. Accordingly, the study intended to study how caste, religious integration, and social relationships affected the formation of social cohesion in the area. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, key informants, and observations, and the data was analyzed using the narrative analysis method. The sample that was selected via purposive sampling method comprised 30 inter-married families living in the 568, GS Division in Munneswaram. Emile Durkheim's theory of social integration is critical in addressing this field of knowledge. The study revealed that the civil war, unemployment, dowry, landlessness, marginalization, and social exclusion paved the path to inter-ethnic marriages. However, inter-ethnic marriages constituted a serious threat to the existing tradition. In addition, because of inter-marriages, there were close social ties between Tamil and Sinhala neighbors and relatives. In terms of the religious component, these marriages had created religious coherence between the two ethnic groups, opening the way to creating peace inside the family institution, and religious solidarity between the Hindus and the Buddhists flourished in Munneswaram. The distinctive aspect of these marriages was the production of children who were multiculturally socialized, as they had to study and adapt to two religions in the family institution. The children in these families are promoted as children with multi-religious outlooks through practices that abstracted from the philosophical basis such as religious activities, rituals, and ceremonials.

Keywords: Caste, Inter-marriage, Integration, Social Cohesion, Socialization

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