Language as a means of peace building: a case for school curriculum in Sri Lanka

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The three decades of conflict in Sri Lanka show that education for peace is essential for building a sustainable society. Now, in the post-conflict period, Sri Lanka is facing many challenges in the process of the task of nation building. This study focused particularly on school education and the role of the curriculum in nation building. Regarding the curriculum, the specific emphasis was on the language aspect of education.

The purpose of the study was to review the current situation and suggest policy options on the curriculum of Second National Languages (2NL) to policymakers and other stakeholders in school education and so lead to positive, sustainable changes in school education. To this end, policies on 2NL in Sri Lanka and Singapore were analyzed.

Policy research method was used. The study focused on reviewing policy documents and the curriculum of 2NL teaching through the lens of peace education, the Sri Lankan 2NL curriculum in comparison with Singapore’s second language curriculum, and a suggested suitable framework for policy and practice of a 2NL curriculum. The latter covered the following subtopics: educational policy, teacher recruitment policy, curriculum policy and curriculum implementation policy.