

## **FOSTERING CO-EXISTENCE AMONG TAMIL, MUSLIM AND SINHALA YOUTH GROUPS IN KALMUNAI MUNICIPALITY AREA.**

**A. Rameez,**

*Lecturer in Sociology,*

*Department of Social Sciences,*

*South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.*

*arameez@seu.ac.lk*

### **Abstract:**

*Studying about the dynamics of youth groups has occupied a significant place in the contemporary social sciences researches. In this backdrop, this study is undertaken with the objective of fostering co-existence among Tamil, Muslim, Sinhala youth groups living in Kalmunai Municipality area which is actually a home for a multi ethnic and multi religious communities in the Eastern Sri Lanka. It has a youth population of 40473 between the ages of 10 to 24(District Statistical Handbook, Ampara Kacheri: 2005)*

*Kalmunai Municipality area has a longstanding history of ethnic conflict and violence from 1980s. The number of conflicts escalated between the Tamils and the Muslims that resulted in huge loss of properties, assassination and abduction. There was a fracture on the relationship among Tamils and Muslims in the area as a result of unhealthy development. Due to this situation, youth groups from Tamil and Muslim communities were disintegrated and the mindset of the youth groups representing Tamil, Muslim and even Sinhala communities was molded by suspicion, fear and enmity. Muslim youth groups believe that all the Tamil youth groups are the supporters of either LTTE or paramilitary groups and the Tamils youth groups believe all the Muslims youth groups are the enemies of the Tamil community since they did not support in the long lasting freedom struggle of Tamil community. This situation gave rise to widening the relationship among Tamil and the Muslim youth group and even Sinhala youth groups. As a result of that, the chances for meeting and or dialogue have been narrowed down causing many problems.*

*Moreover, the relationship among Tamil, Muslims and Sinhala youths in Kalmunai Municipal area has been broken due to the attitudinal, contradictory and behavioural causes. These causes reduced the opportunities for dialogue, interaction and the understanding among youth groups in Kalmunai Municipality area which gave rise to suspicion, lack of trust, avoidance, Prejudice ect.*

*Field research conducted by author in few areas in Kalmunai Municipality area reveal that making awareness about the gravity of peace and understanding other ethnic youth groups through their cultural values and programs are the personal level*

*output in the study. The study also found that the relationship among different ethnic youth groups can be built quite effectively by conducting cultural events and meetings thereby increasing the opportunities for interaction and better understanding. Finally this study emphasis that violence, suspicion and hatredness will be prevented among Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala youth groups by increasing the interaction and understanding.*

**Key Words:** *Interaction, Dialogue, Understanding, Suspicion, Prejudice*