
The Role of Tradition, Modernization and Economic Factors for the Strengthening of Ethnic Identities

A.M.A.S. Gunasekara

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

Corresponding author: dinetputa2009@gmail.com

It is globally acknowledged that all the societies in the entire world comprise various social strata and different ethnic, racial, cultural and religious groups. These differences breed antagonistic interactions which are familiar with ethnically heterogeneous societies. With the advent of Marxism and liberal ideologies in the 20th century, human society has placed lesser emphasis on ethnicity. Marxism advocates that the economic factors, class interests and class conflicts are the foundational sources of the society. In contrast, the liberal ideology is of the view that man is expected to enjoy more freedom at the advanced stage of human social evolution. Apart from this theoretical standpoint of social reality, the issues related to ethnic and religious identities have convincingly begun to emerge. The ethnic, religious and linguistic identities have taken the initiative of the violent or non-violent conflicts not only in developing countries but in developed countries as well. The research problem of the study is how traditionism, modernization and economic factors contribute to strengthen ethnic identities. The main focus of this research is on finding out the role of tradition, modernization and economic factors in strengthening ethnic identities, which are assumed to disappear during a progressive growth phase of social evolution. This paper is based on secondary sources of data. The data has been analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Still, it has given rise to new dimensions. Besides, the educated elites and the urbanites who emerge from the process of modernization, are supposed to go beyond the boundaries of confirmed traditions and distance themselves from traditional ethnic biases. Furthermore, the economic factors to provide the necessary background to support in strengthening ethnic identities in the context of the globalization, as well. The so-called modernization has led to the creation of risky areas of ethnic identity, in other words, to create conflicts to reinforce ethnic identities and contradictions.

Keywords: Economic factors, Educated elite, Ethnicity, Modernization, Traditions