

A Study on Public Consciousness at Regaining Common Rights: A Case Study of Meethotamulla Waste Problem

K.A.D.A.D. Gunarathna^a, K.G.S.P.D Alwis^{b*}

University of Colombo^a

University of Peradeniya^b

*Sampath.p.alwis@gmail.com

People in all democratic societies work to win their rights. In every case of loss of rights, they conduct their struggle employing various methods to regain those rights from those who violated their rights. Sometimes these struggles can occur through a political background or some of them can happen voluntarily. This study examines how public consciousness spreads in struggles to regain rights by focusing on the “Meethotamulla” waste disposal problem in the Colombo district to which a permanent solution has not been found since 2009. This struggle involves around 1000 people both directly and indirectly. The sample included all age groups and an equal representation of both genders. Around 60% of the people in and around “Meethotamulla” area who directly in this case, were subject to questionnaires in order to gather information. The findings of the questionnaire indicated that 60% of the sample have a public consciousness that they don’t have rights. For 82% fighting for rights meant protesting and conducting struggles which are radical methods. However, it is significant that 18% of the population seem to perceive struggles as unsuccessful. The common opinion of the people regarding the cause of the “Meethotamulla” struggle is the collapse of daily life patterns of individuals. The perception of 71% is that the struggle was initiated by few individuals and that it gradually expanded as more people joined it. Out of them, 86% believe that the struggle originated without any political influence. While 73% hold the view that it is the continuous negligence of people’s demands by the political leaders and the related authorities is one of the reasons for the struggle 78% think that the government at that time strongly obstructed the struggle. 90% believe that their struggle did not receive a proper solution. The findings indicate that 82% believe they should somehow gain solutions in near future. The study concludes that findings of regular studies on public consciousness in areas where struggles to regain rights occur should be considered for the enhancement of state management, conflict management and good governance. Hence it is necessary to provide solutions to “Meethotamulla” community before conflicts are arosed again.

Keywords: rights; public consciousness; struggle; management
