

SINGING FOR THE WAR: AN ANALYSIS OF SONGS IN RELATION TO AROUSING SINHALESE INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL ATTITUDE

H.M.U.T.K. Herath

*Sripalee Campus, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
herath.uthpala@gmail.com*

To maximise the communal unity fostering the gist of the ideology of the moment, music, later combined with words (songs), has been playing a vital role corresponding with coexisting political environments for centuries. Accordingly, during the peak phase-2008-2009, of Sri Lankan civil war against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), a large number of songs have been composed uttering the pride and the superiority of Sri Lanka especially through praising the dedicative role of the brave Sri Lankan soldier and his/her family. Thus, the research was carried out to answer the question that; were these songs capable of making an impact on the Sinhalese to arouse individual national attitude.

Explaining nationalism, Henk Dekker *et al.* have stated that national attitude is developed upon six attitudinal developments/stages-national feeling, national liking, national pride, national preference, national superiority and nationalism. Accordingly, when studying these songs' lyrics which most of them were written in Sinhala, several dogmas such as bringing forth the Sinhalese' historical victorious battles, symbolising of Sinhalese as lions and uttering ancient kings fought against Tamils *etc.* are evident. Thus, it is apparent that lyrics of these songs have been acted as a mode of conveying all stages of Sinhalese national attitude. As opposed to lyrics, the musical aspect of majority of these songs does not carry the essence of local musical features. Except for fewer songs which were influenced by *Panchathurya* instrumental beats and *Prashasthi* tune, most of the melodies are composed following different foreign or pop music styles. Supporting the hypothesis of the study, 93% of respondents have responded in given questionnaires, indicating that they have not felt national attitude when listening to [given] songs. For most of them, the reason was lack of native atmosphere in the melody.

After analysing data gained over questionnaires, written sources and selected thirty songs' melodies and lyrics, it is visible that these songs were written to enrich national attitude, but their melodies have failed to enhance lyrics' underlying meaning. The foremost reason is that these melodies were not created using native sounds which was known or learnt through contents of national socialization. Hence, it can be concluded that these songs were not capable of making an impact on Sinhalese to arouse individual national attitude as songs' melodies did not carry the essence of Sri Lankan [musical] sounds, though lyrics convey individual national attitude in to some extent.