

From the Era of Civil War to Peace and Democratization: Sri Lanka in Transition

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Abstract: Bringing the 30 years old civil war permanently to an end in Sri Lanka is not a fairy tale but the success story of a small non-military-based country in this modern global village. The triumph in defeating the infamous liberation tiger of Tamil Eelam or LTTE has belittled super powers worldwide campaigns in the global fight against terrorism that transgress borders and threatens sovereignty. Thus, the success of Sri Lanka in eliminating terrorism is relatively massive and record-breaking in its history; the once war-torn and divided island-nation in the Indian Ocean has experienced thriving recovery in spite of the near absence of foreign assistance within the 5 years post-civil war tenure. Yet, various challenges have surfaced to curtail the post-war transition process which attempt to bring equilibrium to the local and global interests. Hence, this study aims to examine the policies on the implementation of the peace and democratization efforts and to discuss on the post-civil war transitional matters of the government of Sri Lanka in accommodating local and global interests. The research finds the partial attitude of the local and the international actors in fully acknowledging the peace in the country as a success and the positive impacts of the post-civil war transition process for the betterment of mankind. Another finding indicates three prevalent internal and external impeding factors to realize the total success of the peace endeavor; the revival of ethno-nationalism; the role of neighboring India (Tamil Nadu) as a regional power; the policy of Tamil diaspora and the establishment of a local Tamil political party. Hence, concerted efforts like the attention and the assistance of the international community; the undivided supports from Tamil political forces and the positive attitude of the Sinhalese nationalists to have peace and harmonious environment are duly recommended to achieve an all-inclusive and sustainable post-civil war transition process in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Post-civil war transition, internal and external forces, interests accommodation, nationalists, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan is one of the most studied cases of protected ethnic conflicts in the world that have attracted many research scholars, mediators, aid workers, funders and super powers to get involved and intervened with the hope of resolving it. Sri Lankan authorities were able to defeat the separatists and terrorists and to control fighting and violence but failed to find lasting solution to ethnic conflict by exploring and clearing the root causes. At the end of 30 years long civil war, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the strongest separatist groups fighting against the Sri Lankan ruling authorities and

armed forces and advocating for a separate state for Tamils in the North-Eastern region of Sri Lanka were finally defeated and the post-war recovery process in Sri Lanka was quickly set in. There are aspects of successful story made available to many states and organizations that advocate for peace, reconciliation and fight against terrorism. However, these achievements have gained little attractions in world affairs. Furthermore, the post-civil war transition process in Sri Lanka has come to receive criticisms locally and internationally which are standing as huge challenges before Sri Lankan authorities in the matters of post-civil war transition process. This research, therefore, attempts to examine and assess the post-civil

war transition process and identifies the factors that pose challenges to the activities of transition process. Further, the research suggests ways to overcome the future challenges in order to empower and continue post-civil war transition process to establish peace, justice and harmony in the country based on democratic political system.

The rest of the article is divided into five parts with the conclusion. The next part discusses the concerning areas in the post-civil war scenario on theoretical background followed by a review of the nature of ethnic conflict, civil war and post-civil war scenario in Sri Lanka. The next part assesses the achievements in post-civil war transition process in Sri Lanka. The selected major factors that influence the post-civil war transition process are also discussed. Furthermore, the researchers give some recommendations and suggestions in order to overcome the challenges and issues cropping up in the transition process in Sri Lanka. This study incorporates only the secondary data collected from different informative material sources including academic journals, reports of research based institutions and newspapers. The opinions and the ideas are presented through the system of descriptive and interpretive methodologies.

CONCERNING AREAS IN POST-CIVIL WAR TRANSITION PROCESS: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Post-civil war scenario has set out in detail a number of long-term actions to be taken immediately in order to improve quickly the war-torn society, the economy and polity. Therefore, the concerns need to be focused on different aspects which sometimes inter-relate and pose a number of challenges and create critical situations. Ethnic conflict and civil war usually entail low production; reduce investment and capital flight due to underlying uncertainty which results in reduction of gross domestic production (Kang and Meernik, 2004). Rebuilding and promoting economic sectors, infrastructure rehabilitation and enhancing livelihoods are the major priority areas that need immediate attentions in a post-civil war recovery process. Furthermore, since ethnic conflict and long-term civil war cause both human and physical losses, they need to be compensated along with the counseling of war-related psycho-social issues.

War-torn societies entering the path towards democracy and peace face the challenge that stand against efforts to achieve any desirable goal. Strengthening democratic institutions with human rights and promoting civil society and finding permanent solutions to solve the problems of the conflict are some of

the concerning areas in post-civil war transition process. Democratization refers to the process of opening up political space, including improvements regarding contestation, participation and human rights (Jarstard, 2008). Post-civil war transition process emphasizes the re-establishment of democracy through number of means. Democracy is commonly understood as a system where diverse interests are managed through ongoing negotiations and accommodated by accountable and legitimate institution. The former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros, Boutros-Ghali declared the establishment of democracy is essential for the creation of a self-sustaining peace in post-conflict societies because peace, development and democracy are inextricably linked in such war-shattered societies (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, 1996). Establishing a democracy in a post-civil war context is often equated with organizing free and fair elections in the aftermath of civil wars. However as Jung (2008) argues the conceptualization of post-civil war democracy is in need of further, elaboration and discussion. Whereas, democracy is still a much contested concept in politics, there is almost no theoretical and conceptual discussion about what we mean by democracy or democratic promotion in post-conflict societies. As Wantchekon (2002) states, the post-civil war democratization is differ from the kind of political liberalization that followed the breakdown of authoritarian governments in Europe and Latin America and which has received much attention in the literature on transition to democracy. According to him, post-civil war democratization is primarily motivated by the need for political order which generate social order. It allows government change and power transfer among competing forces. Further, it helps to control political violence at least temporarily.

The process of democratization in a war torn society sometimes involves predatory warring factions with no normative commitment to democracy, facing a very weak, collapsed civil society. Democracy in such a context has come about as the consequence of a peace agreement. Moreover, a key component of the democratization process in a war torn country such as El Salvador has been the demilitarization of the warring factions and the reconstruction of a collapsed state. The electoral process was a tool for the creation of political order. In sharp contrast with El Salvador in South Africa and Poland the purpose of holding elections was to secure the representation of previously excluded political or social groups. State-building efforts were not central to the transition process (Wantchekon, 2002).

Sustainable peace presupposes a system of governance where diverse interests and grievances are accommodated by negotiations and compromises

(Wallensteen, 2011; Licklider, 2005). Further, a sustainable peace process needs well planned reconciliation process. Reconciliation is an overarching process that includes the key instruments of justice, truth, healing and reparation for moving from a divided past to a shared future (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003). The post-civil war reconciliation initiatives should aim in order to facilitate participant re-engagement in civilian life to move beyond mere disengagement from violence, designing and implementing well-crafted rehabilitation programs to reverse the process of radicalization and to win hearts and minds of the public in general.

However, competing with contested nationalism thesis and the ruinous practice of ethnic outbidding underpinned with the deep rooted ethnic conflict, pose a big challenge to all the above mentioned processes. These two lead to the process of systematic discrimination and advocate the idea of a monolithic, unitary and indivisible sovereignty of a nation. Further to that they refused the exclusive rights of the minority ethnic groups whereas no longer a situation that allows the survival of a political system based on competitive principles (Podder, 2006). However, when searching for political solution all these contexts need to be transformed toward accommodating all concerning parties in the conflict, including the minorities. Failure to deal with the dilemmas regarding the process of democratization and peace-building can result in a return to conflict situation. Alternatively as Jarstad (2008) rightly mentioned, it can result in backsliding to authoritarianism.

In a developing country, all the above mentioned processes need more internal and external supports and aids to help recovering the economies to improve infrastructures to aid people who lack employment to improve shelter, to focus on healthcare and a host of other services and to find lasting solution to the conflict. Thus, less developed and developing nations should be more deserving of foreign assistance and other kinds of support, especially in the aftermath of civil war. The lack of international support and cooperation in post-war transition process will probably impact the entire process.

ETHNIC CONFLICT, CIVIL WAR AND POST-CIVIL WAR SCENARIO IN SRI LANKA

The systematic neglect and violation of the rights of Tamil minority by the successive post-independence governments dominated by the Sinhalese have steadily led to the marginalization of Tamil minority. This marginalization made the Tamils to demand and advocate for more autonomy and then separate state in the North-Eastern part of Sri Lanka, the areas where they have

been living predominantly. Many militant groups emerged on this backdrop and mobilized the Tamils to achieve their aspirations. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) formed in 1976 under charismatic strategist Velupillai Prabhakaran was influential one among them which sought to establish a separate independent state for Tamils in the North-Eastern region. With its military strength and international networks, it became one of the strongest rebel groups in the world which was later listed as a 'terrorist group' by many governments, including the United States of America (USA) and many European countries.

The ethnic conflict exploded into full-scale war after the LTTE's ambushed and murdered thirteen soldiers was followed by government-sanctioned anti-Tamil riots across the country in July 1983. Since then, the LTTE fight against the Sri Lankan Government forces led to an armed conflict that lasted for 26 years. The civil war in Sri Lanka was marked by phases of high intensity (Eelam War I: June 1983 to July 1987; Eelam War II: June 1990 to January 1995; Eelam War III: April 1995 to February 2002; Eelam War IV: July 2006 to May 2009) interrupted by different efforts to find a negotiated solution which failed altogether. The separatist war has caused a loss of at least 100,000 lives, including rebels, soldiers and the public. There were many attempts, even under the third party mediation to find a political solution to the ethnic conflict with the LTTE. Believing on its military and public strength, the LTTE, however, failed to cooperate with other parties on these initiatives.

The longest fought civil war in South Asia came to an end when the Sri Lankan armed forces successfully defeated the LTTE forces militarily in May 2009 with thousands of human casualties and severe devastation. Even though, the Sri Lankan Government was able to recover the immediate war-related impact, however, there are a number of issues that remain as priority concerns in the post-civil war transition process towards peace, reconciliation and democratization. Among the many, the recovery of material losses should be given priority concerned in the post-civil war democratization, reconciliation and peace-building process. It was obvious that the civil war had severely impacted on the entire sectors of the people of the north-eastern region. But, even after 5 years, budget allocation for those recoveries is small and its utilization is also questionable. Rather, millions of rupees of tax payers' money have been allocated to celebrate the war victory for the last 5 years which has received huge criticisms both locally and internationally. In the post-war reconciliation process, it is the wounds of violence and war due to the conflict should be reconciled by acknowledging the loss of all

parties. Affected parties would not easily forget the losses of their closed relatives and their livelihoods. Therefore, they should be allowed to remember their beloved ones for some periods. However, the decision taken by Sri Lankan Government not to allow Tamil people to remember any war-related deaths or injuries in the North-Eastern region has come to question the government's post-civil war ethnic reconciliation process.

It is noteworthy highlighting the four imperative aspects identified by Venugopal (2012) for sustainable post-civil war transition process in Sri Lanka. According to Venugopal, the government must offer a political solution to the conflict, there must be a significant improvement in donor-government relations, post-war reconstruction must be open, participatory and transparent, calibrated towards peace-building and ethnic reconciliation and government and donors must focus on rapidly improving living standards with infrastructure and reasonable levels of economic development in the war-affected North-Eastern part to bring them into line with the rest of the country.

ICG (2012) has also identified some important issues which need priority concern in the post-civil war transition process in Sri Lanka. The group's report highlights the issues of militarization, Sinhalaisation, population movements and issues in return of Muslims in the Northern Province which all present threats to long-term peace and stability. The report indicates that almost the entire Tamil-speaking north is now dotted with Sinhala signboards, streets newly renamed in Sinhala, monuments to Sinhala war heroes and even a war museum and battlefields that are open aiming to turn Sinhalese concern. The slow but steady movement of Sinhala settlers along the southern edges of the province, often with the supports of military and the central government is particularly worrying. All these, according to the report, sharpen the edge of military policing and deepen mistrust on both sides of the civil-military and Tamil-Sinhala divides. Further to this as Pradhan (2012) indicates the challenge in bringing the Tamil and the Sinhalese communities together is still remaining. There may be absence of violent incidents in Sri Lanka but there are no more trust and believes among ethnic groups which are important in building national unity and societal harmony in a post-civil war context. Moreover, the re-emergence of hegemonic ethno-religious nationalism and their brutal activities also question the distinctive ethnic features of minorities and the reunification of different ethnic groups under a common goal of achieving peace and development (Thiranagama, 2014).

Most importantly, a sustainable and lasting solution should be developed by healing the deeply underlying

factors led to the ethnic conflict. However, despite strong pressure from the United Nations (UN) and the governments of Indian and United States (US) the Sri Lankan government shows little inclination to offer any tangible devolution of power to the North and the multi ethnic East; even the limited powers legally devolved to provincial councils under the current constitution are not in full practice.

The LTTE terrorism and separatists' claims are defeated by the military forces in Sri Lanka but both the cases have gained more criticisms from many parties in terms of violation of war ethics, especially of human rights violation. There are criticisms and claims posed by many parties as Sri Lankan military forces used unauthorized weapons during the last phase of the war and used human beings as shields which caused killing of thousands of innocent civilians. An official report released by the United Nations Security Council in 2011 found credible evidence that both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government were guilty of human rights violations and war crimes (United Nations, 2011). In March 2012, the security council voted in favor of a resolution urging the Sri Lanka Government to open a war crimes investigation. And there was another resolution passed in 2014 against Sri Lanka Government urging the international investigation on this matter. However, Sri Lankan Government has continuously denied all the questions of the UN authorities and other parties by opposing any kind of international investigations in terms of war crime in Sri Lanka.

ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENTS IN POST-CIVIL WAR TRANSITION PROCESS IN SRI LANKA

With number of issues, criticisms and challenges, Sri Lankan Government has achieved a considerable level of success in the post-war transition process. On this matter, some important areas need to be emphasized here. Defeating the LTTE terrorism, immediate post-war recovery, humanitarian role of the military force and initiatives to restore democratic institutions are important among others.

Successful story of defeating terrorism and immediate recovery: As a powerful terrorist group with international network and strong moral and physical supports from Tamil diaspora and international community, the LTTE was militarily succeed in some battlefields with Sri Lankan military forces and was able to gain control over a considerable part of territory in the North-Eastern region with the establishment of their own government

institutions and administration. This was sometimes viewed by many as the functioning of an independent state system (Stokke, 2007). Further, the LTTE was equipped with the latest military technology and its forces. Therefore, the defeat of the LTTE terrorism in Sri Lanka should be emphasized and rewarded by international community and super powers. There are valuable lessons to be learned from Sri Lanka experience by many countries and institutions on the matter of combating against terrorism. However, instead of receiving accolades from the international community for successfully defeating the LTTE, Sri Lankan government has received nothing but criticisms from different parts of the world. Although, the government has faced so many challenges in dealing with the humanitarian situation concerning the plight of the internally displaced persons in the war-torn areas, however, the government has demonstrated maturity in handling the post-conflict humanitarian crisis and was able to resettle almost all (except few thousands) war-related displacements. The government of Sri Lanka has resettled nearly half a million people within a short period in places severely devastated by the civil war without receiving post-war international assistance much.

In fact, the immediate and progressive attempts of Sri Lankan Government authorities have contributed to rebuild infrastructure, basic amenities and livelihoods in war-affected areas. Many projects and implemented by the economic development ministry and other ministries aiming at the regional development in the northern and the Eastern provinces need to be highlighted in this regard. Drew from its own rich heritage of moderation, tolerance and coexistence with communities living side by side for centuries, Sri Lanka embraced the restorative justice model rather than adopting the classic retributive justice model for its post-civil war rehabilitation process. The retributive justice model involves punishment by sentencing. The restorative justice model promotes repentance and transformation (Hettiarachchi, 2013).

On the one hand, Sri Lankan Government has been allocating a considerable amount of its income to maintain the interests of the military forces. However, on the other hand, there has been a progressive economic growth; decrease in poverty, unemployment and budget deficiency; increase of regional economic development, rural empowerment, per capita income and advancement in health and education sectors as well as other basic amenities which are the major challenges for many conflict affected countries in the world. However, the issues and challenges are still prevailing in resettling the majority of Northern Muslims who are now estimated as hundred thousand people forcefully evacuated by the LTTE in

October 1990, living outside the North-East. Further, the resettlement of a thousand of civilian displaced from Sampore in the Trincomalee district of eastern province due to the military offensives in 2008 also is questioned due to the government declaration of their places as High Security Zones (HSZs).

Post-civil war recovery and humanitarian role of Sri Lankan military: The military has been playing vital role in the politics of South Asian countries. However in Sri Lankan context, the role of the military was limited to maintaining security and territorial integrity of the country. But, when ethnic conflict became violent in nature and the rebel groups started to target the civilians and other non-military domains, the military then became an active party in the ethnic conflict. Since 1980s onwards, successive Sri Lankan governments have attempted to defeat the separatists' terrorist activities and claims with the utmost support of military power by modernizing the military with a considerable percentage of budget allocation. It is noteworthy as Wickramaratne (2013) indicates the military has contributed not only to the defeat of LTTE terrorism but also to the rapid recovery of war-related devastations. They engaged in post-war activities to help the government machinery, so as to restore everything back to normal within few years.

However, there are criticisms on the role of the military in post-civil war recovery process. After the bitter civil war that ended in May 2009, the country opted to involve in its bloated military in a range of commercial activities. Instead of downsizing its strong defense forces (about 300,000), the government has encouraged their involvement in various commercial and other activities. Analysts and NGOs have questioned the military involvement in commercial ventures claiming it could lead to the President Rajapaksa's administration using the military to perpetuate its role as it may be with time too hard to separate them from national economic activities (Bedi, 2011). Furthermore, the government's initiatives to militarize the civil administration (service) with the appointments of military personal (mostly retired) as head of provincial and district administration with the decision-making and influencing powers and highly responsible to the political head in the central government has intensified the suspicions of the military role in post-civil war politics in Sri Lanka. Not with standing, it is difficult to de-militarize the war-torn areas immediately due to many reasons, however, a scheduled process is needed in this regard.

Restored democratic system of governance: Conflict and civil war normally undermine the democratic system in any

country. Basically, conflicts emerge due to inadequateness of accommodating conflicting interests by the democratic institutions. Therefore in a post-civil war context, restructuring and empowering political institutions in a democratic and inclusive way become important tasks. Sri Lanka was also able to restore the political institutions at local, provincial and national levels with democratically elected bodies within the few years of the end of the civil war. The election conducted to the Northern provincial council in 2013 was viewed as a new chapter in post-civil war transition process (The Hindu, 2013). The Commonwealth Observer Mission to Sri Lanka's Northern provincial council election also described the northern provincial council as a historic election for Sri Lanka which makes a step forward in the harmonious development of the Northern Province and of Sri Lanka as a whole (The Commonwealth, 2013). In addition, the government has initiated a number of projects to empower the institutional and human capacities of local and provincial governing bodies. It is worth noting that the main Tamil political party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) which was criticizing the provincial council system also has contested the post-civil war provincial council elections held in the Northern and the Eastern provinces and was able to control the provincial administration in the North. However, there are criticisms on central government control in the affairs of provincial governments and the denial of exercising devolved powers to the provincial councils as enshrined in the constitution.

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTEREST ACCOMMODATION IN POST-CIVIL WAR TRANSITION PROCESS IN SRI LANKA

Many attribute the post-civil war stability to the success of the rehabilitation program, the effectiveness of the reconciliation initiatives and the economic development and democratization activities. Likewise, number of factors influences the interest accommodation of different parties in post-war transition process towards peace and democratization in Sri Lanka, however, this study has mainly focused on identified three factors as examined below.

Revival of ethno-nationalism: Revival of ethno-nationalism in post-war scenario is one of the major factors that pose high pressure in accommodating interests of minority groups and international forces. It is noteworthy to say that the defeat of LTTE not only paved way for re-integration of Sri Lankan territory but also the re-emergence of ethno-religious nationalism in Sri

Lanka. A number of old and new Buddhist forces have been advocating for hegemonic projects of nationalism which is intended at establishing a Buddhist Raj (State) in Sri Lanka. In their advocacy, they not only question the rights and privileges specified to other ethnic and religious minorities but also oppose any foreign or outsider's involvement in the post-civil war transition process. Agitations and violent incidents staged by these groups against other minority groups in the recent past have brought about a number of criticism and anti-Sri Lankan alliances at international level. Not only the local public, political parties and institutions but also many international human rights organizations have questioned the unauthorized, illegal acts of these forces and urged the relevant authorities to control them. However, no meaningful initiatives were taken to control their activities; rather their activities were increasing which intensifies the suspicious relationship of government authorities with these forces.

Furthermore, the above forces reject any form of power-sharing and international mediation in order to resolve the ethnic problem led to civil war and devastation in Sri Lanka. They have been challenging the fullest implementation of thirteenth amendment to the constitution which devolved powers in selected areas to the provinces and advocated the de-merger of the North-Eastern Province that was merged under the India mediated political settlement in 1987. Subsequently, they had been questioning the Norwegian facilitated peace process which led to many peace talks between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE from 2002-2005. These forces are still agitating for the involvement of outside third parties in the peace process and oppose any kind of power-sharing arrangement to accommodate interests and claims of ethnic minorities. Additionally, these groups have been challenging the inter-group ethnic harmony in the recent past (Stein, 2014).

Position of Indian authorities: In the South Asian context, India has been playing an influential role not only in politics but also in other sectors. While, several actors around the globe were involved in Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in different ways, the actor most heavily and most consistently entangled in Sri Lankan ethnic conflict and civil war has been India, the "regional power" in South Asia (Destradi, 2010). As a big neighbor closely linked by marine border, history, culture and traditions of Sri Lanka, India has influenced Sri Lankan affairs in a number of ways. Different factors induced India involving in Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. The steady stream of Tamil refugees escaping the island, the formation of an LTTE network in the South of India and most notably, the great

interest in Sri Lankan affairs displayed by the Tamil population of the state of Tamil Nadu were most influential features among them. Leggold (2003) identifies them as negative security externalities. Keethaponcalan (2005) has identified further three factors that played a role in the Indian decision to intervene Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, namely: considerations of Indian regional hegemony, India's national security and the politics in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. All these factors ultimately led India to become one of the strongest external parties in Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. In the early 1980s, the government of Tamil Nadu and the central government under the premiership of Indira Gandhi had supported Tamil rebel groups in Sri Lanka by providing them with military assistance and training (Dixit, 2003; Dos Santos, 2007). India's direct intervention to resolve Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in 1980s should be understood in this line. However, the assassination of Indian Prime Minister, Rajive Ghandi by the LTTE in 1990 marked a stop to its direct intervention but induced indirect intervention in a number of ways. This led not only to the ban on the LTTE and its support in Indian Territory but also limited its support to separation and the power-sharing in Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, India has created a situation (condition) that any post-civil war peace initiatives of Sri Lankan Government should be consulted with and satisfied by the Indian authorities. This was realized even during the Norwegian brokered peace process in Sri Lanka. Every effort taken by Sri Lankan Government and the facilitators were consulted with Indian authorities. Among this conditionality, a cordial relationship between the both countries continued. In the case of Sri Lanka, India has repeatedly emphasized its presence for a peaceful solution and a political settlement to the ethnic conflict. However from 2007 onward, the Indian Government quickly supported the military offensive of the Sri Lankan Government and even took a clear position against the investigation of war crimes by the United Nations Human Rights Council after the end of civil war in May 2009.

It was obvious as Hariharan (2012) indicates that the defeat of LTTE terrorism in Sri Lanka was partly succeeded with the strongest support of Indian authorities. And the post-war recovery process also sponsored considerably by the Indian Government. On this backdrop, there is a friendly responsibility for Indian authorities to support Sri Lankan Government to find political solution to the ethnic conflict. Despite, India playing constructive role in the post-war recovery process, its role in political settlement is limited. India expects the political solution to Sri Lankan ethnic conflict

should be limited to the provincial council system sponsored by it through Indo-Lanka accord in July 1987. But, the Tamils' expectations go beyond that limit. On the other hand, Sri Lankan Government has also shown its reluctance to fully implement the provincial council system. On this setting, India can play an active but neutral role in facilitating parties to bring peaceful settlement in Sri Lanka.

Tamil political parties and diaspora community: The ethnic conflict and civil war in Sri Lanka have caused to the external displacement of over one million of population, mostly the Tamils of North-Eastern part of the country who were mostly settled in European and American countries. Both, the Tamil political parties and diaspora community have played active (opposing) roles in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. They, directly and indirectly have supported the LTTE's advocacy for establishing a separate state in the North-Eastern part of Sri Lanka. In the post-civil war context too, they have been challenging government's moves towards peace building and democratization. In the absence of the LTTE, the Tamil diaspora community is projecting and advocating the Eelam demand with the establishment of a Transnational Eelam State while diplomatically associating with international community attempting to bring Sri Lankan rulers to the international tribunal for war crime and violation of human rights. It was obvious that the role played by the Tamil diaspora in influencing the United Nations Human Rights Council in passing two resolutions against Sri Lanka by requesting for an international investigation on the human rights violation made by parties in the last stage of civil war in Sri Lanka.

However, most of the analysts agree that the Sri Lankan Government, the eight founder member nation of modern common wealth has opened its democratic way of resolving issues in the Northern and the Eastern provinces by conducting elections to provincial councils and local government bodies. The TNA, once viewed the demerger of North-Eastern Province as against the will of the Tamils and announced not to contest the election in 2008 but has changed its position to participate in the elections held in 2012 (for Eastern provincial council) and in 2013 (for Northern provincial council). At present, the TNA has formed provincial government in the North and holds a balancing opposition position in the East. Further, government has formed a parliamentary committee to propose lasting solution to the ethnic conflict. Therefore, Tamil political parties, especially TNA should change their positions in order to support the government's initiatives in post-civil war transition process with the hope of recovering the war-affected North-Eastern region

and finding permanent and agreeable solution to the ethnic problem. This change should be constructive and attracted by all concerning parties.

CONCLUSION

As earlier indicated in this study, even though Sri Lankan Government has achieved a considerable level of improvements in the post-civil war transition process, there are a number of factors that have to be considered substantially in order to attract the attention of different parties. Firstly in post-war transition process, healing of conflict and war-related losses is important, since this helps to reconcile affected groups for ethnic and social harmony. Therefore, acknowledging and compensating human and material losses and reconciling the psycho-social impacts became important tasks in this regard. Celebrating the war victory while denying the rights of other parties (groups), especially of minorities, definitely would lead to have increased distrust and mistrust among the ethnic groups. By developing attitudes of friendliness and compassion to other human being, man to achieve peace and harmony with other fellowmen.

Secondly as a developing country with limited resources, Sri Lanka needs supports of the international community, especially of the United Nations, the United States of America and India in its post-civil war transition process. These parties must recognize the Sri Lankan strategy to defeat terrorism which is a successful story to the entire world. Rather of passing resolutions and pushing Sri Lankan Government to face more pressure and difficulties, they must constructively contribute to the post-civil war development and peace-building process. Furthermore, not only Indian authorities but also other foreign forces must hand-off their interventionist attitude in dealing with Sri Lankan internal affairs including the affair of ethnic settlement and must help Sri Lankan Government in a friendly manner to recover the cost of civil war and to mobilize all resources to the national development. Sri Lanka is neither one of the India's states nor the colony of any country. Therefore, accepting and recognizing Sri Lanka's sovereignty in dealing with its internal affairs is a must.

Thirdly, both the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil diaspora community need to extend their fullest support to re-build the war-affected North-Eastern region. Due to the 30 years-long civil war, the North-Eastern region has lost almost all its opportunities for constant development and expected prosperity. The initiatives immediately taken by the Sri Lankan Government has created a hope with potential situation for peace, development and democracy not only in the region but

also in the entire country. However, it needs more moral and physical support from many sides. As a party to the source of finance to the LTTE which strengthened the LTTE to fight the Sri Lankan forces directly and diplomatically, the Tamil diaspora community can extend their loyalty and fullest support for Sri Lankan government's initiatives to recover the war-affected north-eastern region to ensure sustainable development based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the goals of governance, minority and women empowerment, migration, reconciliation, creative expression for the betterment of mankind. At the same time, Sri Lankan Government must come forward with some income generating and job-oriented economic projects and with substantial budget allocation, especially for the North-Eastern region. There are potentials for marine-based development initiatives in this region which would improve the livelihood and economic standards of the people in the region since majority of them are involving in such marine-based activities.

Fourthly, since the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka emerged mainly due to negligence and the denial of cultural and religious rights of minorities, the government of Sri Lanka should propose legal and institutional mechanisms to safeguard and empower the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities in its peace and democratization process and to enable the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians to profess their religion with mutual understanding and goodwill. Additionally, not only changing of constitutional and legal provisions and politico-economic set-ups (structures) but also the positive change of attitudes, behavior and actions of ethnic majorities is important in this regard. All religious institutions and its leaders should play an active role in restoring ethnic and religious harmony in the post-civil war period in order to ensure sustainable peace, co-existence and development in the country.

Finally in any way, Sri Lankan Government must propose its political package to find sustainable solution to the ethnic conflict. Government should re-start negotiations with political parties and other democratic forces representing ethnic groups, inside and outside the parliament in order to find lasting solution to the ethnic conflict. Any political proposal to resolve the ethnic conflict must go beyond thirteenth amendment to the constitution and should respond to the deeply rooted causes to the ethnic conflict. Further to these as a member of the United Nations, Sri Lankan Government also has the responsibility to extend its fullest corporation in the matter of any initiatives with international authorities in order to help finding permanent solution to the ethnic conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a non-military based small state in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka has succeeded in its 30 year-long civil war defeating one of the strongest terrorist groups in the world, the LTTE. Even though, the Sri Lankan government has achieved a considerable level of post-war recovery process, however, the process has been facing a number of challenges, especially due to the interests of stakeholders who hold diverse and conflicting perceptions and interpretations regarding different issues. The advocacies for Sinhala Buddhist hegemonic ideology and anti-minority agitations staged by the hegemonic nationalist forces pose a great challenge to the process of negotiation and in finding political solution to the problems. In post-war Sri Lanka, a serious deterioration of the human rights situation has been a source of major concern by the international community, Tamil political parties and diaspora community who have strong alliance with and support from international actors. In fact, the military engagement has witnessed a selective and deliberate targeting of civilians with each side denying responsibility and engaging in a mutual blame game. Since, all these issue are deeply underpinned with the empowerment of post-civil war peace and democratization processes, building the economy and strengthening the civil society, therefore, the government of Sri Lanka should listen and accommodate the issues and interests of influencing forces in future initiatives. However, a protracted civil war requires a protracted peace process initiative for its termination. Therefore, it may take time to find lasting solution but it should be carefully planned at least at this stage with the supports and incorporation of all stakeholders. Democracy is tolerance of differences and accepting the varieties of the world. It is to be encouraged. Differences are to be settled by peaceful and democratic methods. All are to preach reconciliation and harmony. The hospitality of outlook is to be developed. God treats all as equal.

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