

SRI LANKAN RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHERN PROVINCE

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©2019

**International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education (IAJSSE) | ISSN
2518-2412**

Received: 10th September 2019

Accepted: 18th September 2019

Full Length Research

Available Online at: http://www.iajournals.org/articles/iajsse_v2_i2_53_59.pdf

Citation: Kanagarathnam, J. (2019). Sri Lankan reconstruction and reconciliation: A special reference to northern province. *International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 2(2), 53-59

ABSTRACT

This research is about the reconciliation and reconstruction process in post-war Sri Lanka. Reconciliation is a complex process that can rebuild the relationship between major conflicting parties. During the relations between ethnic groups became highly deteriorated. However, the end of civil war largely instigated the need for reconciliation and reconstruction to attain sustainable peace and development. Though attempts were made by the previous government to rehabilitate ex-combatants from the direct violence, infrastructural development, resettlement of war-related displacements, they did not ensure the reconciliation of ethnic groups due to several shortcomings in the process. With the regime change in 2015, the so-called 'good governance' regime has initiated several measures to strengthen

post-war democracy, development, and reconciliation. release of lands in the Northern Province, investigating the missed persons, rehabilitation of war crimes, the formation of Reconciliation Task Forces, the discussions on a new constitution, reducing the military forces, road, and railway development are some of those measures introduced expected to strengthen reconciliation and reconstruction process. Though the present government has taken the above measures about reconciliation and development this study argues the current development and reconciliation process and achievements. The study adopted a qualitative approach to collect data, particularly through a semi-structured interview, focus group discussions and observations.

Key Words: *post-war ethnic reconciliation, postwar reconstruction, Sri Lanka*

INTRODUCTION

As a developing country that lost its pride due to 30 years of civil war, Sri Lanka highly needs the strengthening of reconciliations and reconstruction for the promotion of peace and development. Although ethnic reconciliation has been highly emphasized by many activists, the international community, and highly prioritized by the governments, the reconciliation objectives were poorly achieved and faced challenges with the interference of different sources. The post-war Mahinda Rajapaksa led government and the current national government are witnessing several initiatives on sustainable peace and inter-ethnic harmony after the end of the war. In particular, the northern dimension is the most affected region compared to other provinces. Some of the post-war government's bureaucratic regimes have been unsuccessful because of the regime. However, it can be observed that the current government of goodwill is heavily focused on the development of the reconciliation process. Even though the present Government has taken several steps to win the minds of the masses in the post-war period has not been achieved the expected results. Our unbiased studies about the challenges and possibilities that the present government facing in solving this problem are still unclear. Aim of This study identifies past and present government actions and challenges regarding post-war reconciliation and reconstruction.

Reconciliation and Reconstruction Framework

Reconciliation is a complex term, and there is little agreement on its definition. Reconciliation is a parallel process that redesigns the relationship between us. “Effective reconciliation is the best guarantee that the violence of the past will not return” (Bloomfield & Barnes, 2003). There is no prospect of any progress along the path to reconciliation without replacing fear by non-violent coexistence, and without a minimum of physical security, and building confidence and trust. The reconciliation process requires each party, both the victims, offender, and the winner gains renewed confidence in each other. Reconciliation is a long-term process. There is no quick-fix to reconciliation. It takes time and its pace cannot be dictated. It is also a deep process that involves a coming to terms with an imperfect reality which demands changes in our attitudes, our aspirations, our emotions, and feelings, perhaps even our beliefs. Such a profound change is a vast and often painful challenge and cannot be rushed or imposed. Therefore, reconciliation is also a very broad process that necessitates the application of its initiatives and process to everyone. It is not just a process for those who suffered directly and those who inflicted the suffering, central though those people are. The attitudes and beliefs that underpin violent conflict spread much more generally through a community and must be addressed at that broad level. The reconciliation process consists of four steps. Truth-telling; healing; Re-construction and resettlement; Transitional Justice. These four pillars were necessary for the reconciliation process. Mainly reconstitution is first to step for starting the reconciliation process. Reconstruction requires not only strong political and social commitment, but also budgetary resources aimed at training and education for sustainable means of livelihood, capacity development, restoration and rehabilitation of educational, scientific, health and community-based institutions, and funds to repair and restore damaged rural infrastructure such as roads, water supply systems, hospitals and health clinics.

Reconstruction and Reconciliation Process carried out in Northern Province

It is necessary to carry out various reconstruction work in the Northern Province as the area most affected by the war. In particular, the current government's actions can be looked at in the aftermath of various requirements, including the rehabilitation of displaced people and their resettlement of the land seized by the military, and the rehabilitation of dilapidated roads and mosques.

Under the Mahinda Rajapaksa Regime

Development activities under the Mahinda Chinthanaya: Introduced in 2005 by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Its main objective is to address the problem of persistent conflict, including the development of large infrastructure facilities including fisheries, port development, airports, water supply and irrigation, and massive rural development activities. Under the thins project, All Major highway is being reinhabited. Those included Major roads; provincial roads; and rural roads. 7500.17 million has been spent for this purpose. The three bridges reconstructed by Mannar Bridge, Sangupittipalayam and Aruviyarupadam were

destroyed by the LTTE during the war. Also, the railway service was started with the help of India in the Northern Province.

Intrudes the Rehabilitation program: The government has implemented rehabilitation programs focusing on former Borelli boys and integrating them into the community. 364 male and 230 female children have been rehabilitated. They were thus given medical and psychological consultations and formal education. The ex-combatants were again rehabilitated with no intention of war and were given their job openings. It also allowed them to re-join the community.

Safe Environment and Resettlement for Internally Displaced Persons: 295,139 people could not return to their homes after the war ended, most of them from the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, which were meshes. They were initially placed in welfare canters and then transferred to welfare villages. North of the North and East of the East is the solution to the immediate needs of the North and East; The Regional Development Project was created. In the welfare canters, food, wellness, and security were organized. Schools, religious cooperation, telecommunication, bank loans were also provided. As well as by the security forces and the police; Awarded. Since 2009 it has transformed welfare villages into 'open spaces' to ensure the mobility of the displaced. Between 2009-2012, the government spent 10880 million on displaced persons. In 2012, the total number of internally displaced persons was reduced to 26721 and others were resettled to their places. A total of 225476 families have been resettled in the North and East.

Carrying out compensation activities: The capacity of the people, property, rehabilitation and industrial authority has been reviewed and strengthened and 577 million rupees have been awarded to 677 persons under the compensation scheme for the affected families. 3.5 million was given to 31 holy places. Under the loan program, 238 million were given to 1853 persons. 25000 / - as per the marriage allowance. Besides, a livelihood.

Under the Maithripala Sirisena Regime

Beginning of the year of 2015, through the victory of Presidential Election, Maithiripala Sirisena took oath as the President of Sri Lanka on the 9th of January 2015. His regime also contributes to making some reconciliation.

Resettlement: A resettlement process has been established in the Northern Province. Minister Rishad Bathiudeen, Pfizer Mustafa, Duminda Dissanayake, and T.M Suvinathan are also part of the team. Action is being taken to resettle 462 families of 971 internally displaced persons in welfare canters through the resettlement process. 88 million has been allocated for the purchase of private land by the Secretary of the Jaffna District for 20 families per household. At a function organized by the Security Forces in Jaffna, the President handed over 701 land certificates to the people. Out of this, 490.91 acres were released in the Kopay area, 210.7 acres in Tellippalai and 6.2 acres from the Nadeswarakalluri complex. A total of 700 families have been provided with habitat and all areas owned by the military have been

handed over to the civilian population. Similarly, 800 acres of land that was taken over by the previous government were handed over to 234 families.

Measures to eliminate eyelashes: If land mines are at risk in war-torn areas, the government should act to remove mines. Environmental protection must be provided after the removal of land mines. After the war, 640 mine villages were identified. About 1.3 million mines were identified. Minesweeper National Committee for Minesweepers is working with relevant agencies and agencies to develop minesweepers policy. Last year alone, the government spent 11 million. The focus is on schools and public places and the Government of Japan, China and India and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provide financial assistance to the government.

Is the Responsibility of the government to find a solution to solve these issues soon... After defeat LTTE from war. The government should have acted to find a political solution, but the Ex. the government didn't give the priority to solve it. President Maithripala Sirisena is expecting the political solution through the new constitution. Through the new constitution, he expects power-sharing in the unitary method. After coming in power short while, President Maithripala Sirisena has taken more actions to implement reconciliation among communities in Sri Lanka. While comparing Ex. President Reconciliation process than President Maithripala Sirisena reconciliation process to a certain extent in a good way. Although He must make more process to implement in a constructive reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Obstacles of Building Reconciliation and Reconstruction

The government has not taken steps to address the problems of the people who have been physically and mentally affected by the war. The government has not implemented any welfare programs for the more than 25,000 (in the north) innocent people who have been killed in the war.

In the North and East, in the South, the military has become synonymous with civilians. Some of the military camps in the North and East are still unoccupied. Sri Lanka, with a population of 20 million, sees 2,10,000 soldiers. Also, 20 funds are allocated for security. There are 10,000 troops in the Northern Province alone. (Interview: Mr.Suresh premachnithiran, Parliament MP) This militarization is seen as a threat to the freedoms of the people and the general life of the people. Significantly, despite the end of the war, the number of recruits in the military has increased and the military has become increasingly involved in public works. Military involvement in marketing activities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In this way, the military's normal coexistence with the civilian population is not conducive to independent peers. It is also a threat to peace. The use of the military for economic purposes has become an important issue in modern times. Martin Luther King has said that "a nation that spends far less money annually for the security of the military than for social development will die a little more spiritually".

Refugees are yet to be completely cleared and housing projects are still unfinished. It is noteworthy that the University of Moratuwa has submitted a study that states that the government

intends to undertake the 65,000 Pair Housing Project in the Northern Province. CAFFE Executive Director Keerthi Tennakoon said, "The government of goodwill claims to lease out the loans it received during the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime, but in practice, the land is being seized." More than 11,500 Tamil families are living without a tract of land in Jaffna.

The undermining of local capacity in the north and east (first by the LTTE and now by the government) is greatly reducing chances for reconciliation. Unless control over everyday activities – from holding meetings, to buying vegetables, to attending university – is handed back to the people and civilian officials, communities will continue to be fearful and divided. Development needs to happen with local input and without military involvement. Donors should insist on this. Sometimes people who are from North and East, feel that they are living under the military rule.

Un-Durable solutions for displaced persons are the major problem of reconciliation still government has not given any valid solution for internally displaced people. Families that have been displaced over the decades of conflict should be permitted to move freely and settle where they wish. A local system for resolving land disputes is essential. It should be open, transparent and sensitive to the complex forms of ownership that have arisen from more than twenty years of multiple displacements. It should be run by the local governmental authority with community participation and without the involvement of the military. To the extent possible, vehicles and other property seized or abandoned during the conflict should be returned to rightful owners. Many communities in the north and east will require housing and livelihood support for several years. This assistance should be administered by local authorities and development partners, who should be allowed to increase levels of assistance and determine priorities (ICG-Asia Report, 2011). Hence, post-war development assistance is managed by the central government with the help of military and local representatives are not considered.

The government should provide families of the deceased or miss with whatever information it has about the circumstances of death or disappearance of their loved ones, regardless of ethnicity or status as a combatant or civilian. It should start by releasing information gathered in the 1991-1998 disappearances commissions, the 2006 one-person disappearances commission and the 2006-2009 Commission of inquiry. Much of the information gathered about individual cases for these commissions was shared only with the president or attorney general, not with the families. The government should also assist in the location and recovery of remains and provide accurate death certificates or declarations of absence for families that request them. Families should be allowed to state the cause of death or circumstances of disappearance as they understand it, and the issuance of documentation should not prejudice their right to seek further information or legal relief. All families should be permitted to grieve openly, collectively and according to their own cultural and religious customs. Monuments to commemorate the dead should be allowed (ICG- Asia Report, 2011). The dead and missing also the main problem to build reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The present Paranagame Commission is not efficiency to find the missing people.

CONCLUSION

Post-war reconciliation and reconstruction in Sri Lanka are becoming increasingly important. The past government has been able to observe more reconstruction efforts to cover up war crimes and seek foreign aid rather than reconciliation. However, they were not dealt with wholeheartedly and by governmental powers. It can be observed that the current national government is carrying out reconstruction efforts through reconciliation. Lifeguards are more concerned with reconciliation rather than reconstruction. The reconstruction process is very important as it is the most important pillar of reconciliation.

The extent of progress in reconciliation, resettlement, and reconstruction would be dependent on the level of interaction and support that exists between the center and periphery and the goodwill and cooperation displayed in the formulation and implementation of development programs. The overall success of these interventions, including the realization of anticipated outcomes, however, would depend on the quality and adequacy of the implementation strategies adopted and the capacity of the public service to deliver.

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