Failure of Reconciliation in Sri Lanka and risk of reproduction of war?
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Abstract

Sri Lankan civil war was ended in 2009, keeping a great role to be played the actors in terms of peace building. Among them reconciliation has become the foremost approach in peace building discourse. According to the current discourse, the civil war has ended with a unilateral war victory the ethnic conflict is still going on with no war conditions and with absence of holistic approach to solve it. Therefore, there will be a great contingency for the reproduction of civil war in future. Thus, it is very important to identify the major issues which direct to the reproduction of war in future. Civil war is also a kind of disaster which can be categorized as a manmade disaster. Hence, this paper seeks to explore the following research problem. Why that is the reconciliation become a difficult and complex in Sri Lanka? This study employed a multiple methods to gather data including a survey and in-depth interviews. The survey was conducted in the districts of Mannar, Vauvniya, Mullativu and Thrincomalee with a total sample of 200. Similarly 30 in-depth interviews were carried out with policy makers, politicians, academics, journalists, activists of civil society and researchers. When it comes to the initial findings, following reasons can be identifies as the potential facts for the reproduction of civil war in future. 1) Lack of unanimity amongst the actors within the government regarding the post war reconciliation, 2) Confrontational agenda between the government, civil society organizations and international community, 3) Ambiguity maintained with regard to policies on reconciliation and peace building, 4) Contradiction among the key policy makers in the reconciliation process and 6) Greater deal of the ignorance among the general public. Therefore, national security and restoration of normalcy are being regarded as the salient issues in the post-war landscape in Sri Lanka. Hence, end of the civil war, it has opened up a new opportunity and time to focus more on sustainable peace and space to deal with the ethnic problem in Sri

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Lanka. In this no war condition, still Sri Lanka has filed to overcome the risk of war in future.

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Keywords: Conflict, Reconciliation, Disaster

1. Introduction

Sri Lankan civil war was ended in 2009, keeping a great role to be played the actors in terms of peace building. Among them reconciliation has become the foremost approach in peace building discourse. According to the current discourse, the civil war has ended with a unilateral war victory the ethnic conflict is still going on with no war conditions and with absence of holistic approach to solve it. Therefore, there will be a great contingency for the reproduction of civil war in future. Thus, it is very important to identify the major issues which direct to the reproduction of war in future. Civil war is also a kind of disaster which can be categorized as a manmade disaster.

1.1 Research Problem

Eight years after the end of the civil war, Sri Lanka is still struggling to establish a sustainable and viable peace (Uyangoda, 2015). The absence of war and violence has constructed a favourable political and social environment for the settlement of the ethnic conflict. The state of emergency is not in operation; there are no curfews, no military presence in public spaces, and no daylight abductions and “involuntary disappearances” which used to be a part of everyday life in the past (Uyangoda, 2015). In the absence of curfews and sudden bomb explosions in public places, Sri Lanka’s economy and public culture are awake at night as well. The massive infrastructure development projects, which the previous government launched in collaboration with the Chinese state and capital, impression that post-war Sri Lanka has entered a new phase of rapid economic take-off under the conditions of social peace. With the end of the war in 2009, the government of Sri Lanka and the international community emphasized that reconciliation should be the top priority of the country. In addition, the large-scale violence in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, considered one of the key obstacles to reconciliation, ended with the war. So why did reconciliation fail during Rajapaksa’s tenure? This is the question at the thematic heart of this study. This research attempts to address the following issue: Why did reconciliation attempts fail in Sri Lanka during the period of 2009-2015 despite the existence of conditions in its favour?

1.2 Methodology

Both primary and secondary data are used in this research. Primary data refers to information and evidence gathered by research from primary sources, through surveys, interviews, discussions, and observations in the field. Secondary data is obtained from secondary sources – published materials, such as newspapers, reports, and existing research studies. Qualitative data is collected through opinions, perspectives, ideas, stories, recollections, and case histories. Demographic and economic information is collected as quantitative data. Qualitative and quantitative data are gathered as both primary and secondary data.
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