

## LESSONS FOR SRI LANKA FROM THE RWANDA EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract**— Sri Lanka had an ethnic disturbance situation since 1981 which concluded in 2009. In Sri Lanka, there were thousands of civilians and combatants who were killed during the conflict. The genocide in Rwanda was based on two ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. 85% was Hutu, 14% was Tutsi, and 1% was Twa. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has many root causes and consequences that are closely interlinked. Rwanda has successfully overcome the accountability challenges through good governance. It seems clear that in comparison to Rwanda, Sri Lanka's position after the war appears to be quite strong, but both countries faced pressure from international community for an accountability mechanism in the post conflict era. The Objective of this research is to study Rwanda's experience and how it can be adopted to suit Sri Lanka's needs.

The study was carried out by a survey and an interview held with, Rwanda Hon Consul Cally Alles. A Questionnaire has been formed and distributed among the 36 Rwandan scholars in Kotelawala Defence University to facilitate responses to research questions and eventually contribute to the findings of this study. Written consent was obtained before distributing the questionnaire. Maximum number of participants who were in survey believed that Constitutional and Legal recognition for local democracy (86%), Capacity Building for Effective Leadership(86%) and Open Local Government – Transparency (78%) are key factors for accountability issues which should be addressed. In view of Rwanda Hon Consul it is found that Chain of command is always observed, Promotion and appointments are made purely on qualification.

Every country faces different development challenges. But Rwanda's ambitious and complex reform program may offer lessons for others. Taking lessons from good governance in Rwanda will help Sri Lanka to overcome accountability charges laid by the international community.

**Keywords**— Rwanda experience, Accountability, Good Governance

### I. INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's three decade-long war and Rwanda's genocide came to international attention and are still the subject of

discussion by the international community. It claims the loss of lives of both militants and rebels are more than 27000, while 15000 were wounded. And also It claims of civilian deaths were raised up to 200,000 which is a massive number where a country cannot be affordable to lose. Nevertheless Sri Lanka is raising its pride once again from a confronted aftermath towards its development though it is hard won victory.

Regardless of the gaps in time and the ways of its occurrence of conflict, a similar bloodshed was seen in the year 1994 in Rwanda, during the genocidal mass slaughter carried out only for nearly 100 days, between Tutsi and Hutu communities in which more than 800,000 civilians were massacred. And yet the Rwandans today even after such a bloodbath share significant exemplary on how they should raise together as a nation. And also in facing pressure from international community for an accountability mechanism in the post conflict era. After the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) wrested control of the country in July 1994, Rwanda was a country in ruins. It had lost nearly one million people, most of the country's economy had come to a complete halt and many of the most senior government officials had fled the country in fear of reprisals for their role in the conflict. It was a crucial moment for Rwanda and it had to either sink or swim.

It is not an easy task to reach reconciliation settlement activity in a country which has different communities and religious beliefs. It has to commence with various psychological attempts of forgiveness which should appear from its people in their own conscience for the necessity of said formation, obviously which should be led, monitored and maintained by a positive political involvement. This can be achieved by social and spiritual growth through the development of education while keeping a strong focus on economic uplift.

Equality matters, discrimination will lead to many conclusions like hatred, negligence and inequality between communities which will ultimately drag or lead to disastrous situations where as a result, only suffocation and decline of social and economic growth becomes crucial. Especially in a country like Sri Lanka where language barriers which are visible in every aspect needs

to have more focus on this. Ill treatment of equality should be banned or neglected as much as possible. Considering it as a major factor, as a reliable solution, this can be achieved mainly if we overcome the barriers of the trilingual.

Unhesitatingly the responsibility to build the future of a country which is once destroyed due to a long lasted war, falls on the shoulders of the younger generation in it. Reconciliation and rehabilitation can be fostered by achieving innovative and dynamic goals where youth involvement would be crucial. Watching and keeping in mind the shortcomings took place in the pasts and knowing the barriers to overcome the issues, it is the ability of the younger generation to look for a future settlement. Also it is important to increase the participation of youth engagement in volunteerism where they would understand working hand in hand, sharing and building respect on each other to eliminate our racist and separatist tendencies and come together and work together as one nation to develop the country.

As a community it is also our responsibility to select a suitable political structure itself. And to elect people to the parliament who has the strength and willingness to contribute towards country’s development. If we select the wrong source of politics or public administration flow, it will decline in services nonetheless country’s progress. Therefore as a country which seeks reconciliation, we are in need of sacrifices, making of correct decisions and as well as having patience. It seems clear that in comparison to Rwanda, Sri Lanka’s position after the war appears to be quite strong, but both countries faced pressure from international community for an accountability mechanism in the post conflict era. So it important to study how other countries such as Rwanda overcome the problems after long period of war. It could take as a lesson to Sri Lanka in find out solutions for Sri Lanka’s present day situation. Objective of the study is to study Rwanda’s experience and how it overcome the issues at post war era.

II. METHODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

A qualitative research was carried out with the help of main three methodologies. They are Literature study, Survey and interview. Secondary data has been gathered from books/ articles/policy papers. Primary data has been collected from Survey and Interview.

A. Literature Study

Data has been gathered from books/ articles/policy papers from Regional Centre for Strategic Studies

(RCSS), Library Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) and papers available in the internet.

B. Interview

An interview was carried out with prior appointment of Hon Consul Cally Alles at his residence for supplement of this study. An Interview was carried out by researcher and it was recorded, with the permission of the Hon Consul. After the interview, the recording was transcribed into computer files. Care was taken by the researcher to assure the respondents that they and the place of their work would not be identifiable in any subsequent report. Once the final research report was written, the tapes from the interviews were destroyed.

C. Survey Study

A Questionnaire has been formed by the data collected from the literature study and designed with close ended questions. It was distributed among the Rwandan scholars in Kotelawala Defence University to facilitate responses to research questions and eventually contribute to the findings of this study. All Rwandan students at Kotelawala Defence University were considered for gathering relevant data for the research. Verbal consent was obtained before the study.

There are 36 students accommodated in varies fields such as Engineering, Aircraft Maintenance, Medicine etc at Kotelawala Defence University. Out of them 20 students were given the consent for questionnaire and 14 students responded on time.

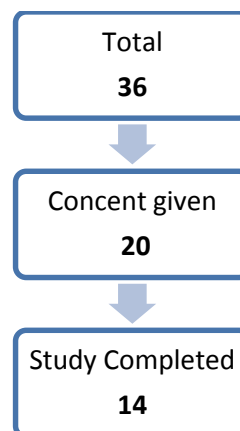


Figure1. Experimental Design

D. Method of Analysis

Data was analysed with the help of said questionnaire. All the answers of each questions on value basis of “Yes” or “No” answers have been rated as follows;

- 80% - 100% Yes Responses - High
- 60% - 79% Yes Responses – Medium
- 40% - 59% Yes Responses – Low

In this research, areas which were considered as” High” have been taken in to consideration as “Strongly Agree”. Medium considered areas are taken as “Satisfactory” and Low considered areas are “Accepted”.

An Interview was carried out with Rwandan Hon Consul in Sri Lanka by researcher and interview was recorded, with the permission of the Hon Consul. After the interview, the recording was transcribed into computer files. Care was taken by the researcher to assure the respondents that they and the place of their work would not be identifiable in any subsequent report. Once the final research report was written, the tapes from the interviews were destroyed.

III RESULTS

**Table 1: Constitutional and legal recognition for local democracy**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	12	86%
Medium	02	14%
Low	00	00%
Total	14	100%

It is clear from the table greatest number of respondents 85% strongly agree for constitutional and legal recognition for local democracy.

**Table 2: Political freedom to elect local representatives**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	08	57%
Medium	06	43%
Low	00	00%
Total	14	100%

Among 14 respondents majority of respondents i.e. 57% was rectified political freedom in the country. In order to

facilitate political freedom to elect local representatives following initiatives have been taken by Rwanda.

**Table 3: Citizen Participation in local decision making**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	10	72%
Medium	02	14%
Low	02	14%
Total	14	100%

On considering the nature of decision making, it was found that 72% respondents were strongly agree (High), while 14% each for satisfied and accepted.

**Table 4: Open Local Government - Accountability**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	06	43%
Medium	07	50%
Low	01	7%
Total	14	100%

**Table 5: Scrutiny of the Executive**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	08	58%
Medium	03	21%
Low	03	21%
Total	14	100%

**Table 6: Open Local Government - Transparency**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	11	78%
Medium	03	22%
Low	00	00%
Total	14	100%

Leadership			
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**Table 7: Capacity Building for Effective Leadership**

Grading	No of Respondents	Percentage
High	12	86%
Medium	02	14%
Low	00	00%
Total	14	100%

From the data of present study, it can be said that 86% have agreed on capacity building for effective leadership. The principle of capacity building for effective leadership is about building strong local democracy and good governance through commitment to continuous capacity development of democratic local government. Effective leadership is central to strong local democracy. It is the responsibility of local governments to build the capacity of councillors, officers and local governance institutions to ensure that local governments deliver quality services to the local community.

**Table 8: Final Observation from Rwanda’s Experience.**

Description	No of Respondents	Graded Average	Position
Constitutional and legal recognition for local democracy	12	85%	1
Political freedom to elect local representatives	08	57%	6
Citizen Participation in local decision making	10	72%	4
Open Local Government - Accountability	06	43%	7
Scrutiny of the Executive	08	58%	5
Open Local Government - Transparency	11	78%	3
Capacity Building for Effective	12	86%	1

IV DISCUSSION

Final results of researcher’s observations have been lined up in above tables. On considering the all questionnaires with its responses following areas has been considered for good governance. For Implementation:

- \* We recommend that each institution keeps an updated database all the time. The implementation of policy actions will be monitored and overseen.
- \* Good Governance findings to feature in social media outlets to enhance country’s presence on the web.
- \* Dissemination and use : Launch good governance acts officially to boost its visibility and its use by our diplomatic missions abroad.
- \*Direct engagements needed with external think tanks and other opinion formers in key western capitals.
- \*Good regulatory framework is the key for Good Governance and Accountability.
- \*The existing legal and other regulatory framework needs modernization.
- \*Reform initiatives to improve the public accountability by strengthening the legal and other regulatory framework is inevitable to enhance the public accountability.
- \* Review of Constitutional provisions and the Provincial Councils Act is inevitable to address the grey areas.
- \*Safety and Security is to be regarded as the sub-indicator on Reconciliation, Social Cohesion and National Unity, there is need to: Increase awareness on nations to maintain the gains in this area.

During the interview with Hon consul by the researcher, following areas has been covered.

A. The Enabling Environment For Constitutional And Legal Recognition for Local Democracy. How much protection does that legislation afford local democracy against the intervention of central government?

Chain of command is always observed. Local and national government is carried out in a very professional way. Every officer and minister is a academically qualified persons. Promotion and appointments are made purely on qualification. President himself followed a degree programme to be set an example as a carrier politician.

B. Political Freedom to Elect Local Representatives

Does political freedom exist in all local government areas such that citizens can freely express their will through the political process and do the councils elected represent the will of the local citizens? Easy access no discrimination.

C. Participation and Openness - Citizen Participation in Local Decision Making.

Are there mechanisms and channels in place to enable citizen participation in local decision making? People participation is right down to grass root level.

D. Open Local Government – Accountability

Is a robust and independent regulatory body in place to safeguard against corruption, mismanagement and the inappropriate use of resources by local government? Rwanda is the only country in Africa that is almost zero corruption. One of the few countries in the world where this is practiced.

E. Open Local Government – Transparency

Do local governments have a public information and communications strategy? It has very good e governance system.

Does this take into account the difficulties/challenges to reach sections of society? It is simplified.

F. Capacity Building for Effective Leadership

Is there a policy responsible for building the capacity of councillors, officers and local governance institutions?

Number of capacity building (Training Programme) has been designed for effective leadership.

The new strategy provides for measures and strategies for: (1) effectively implementing decentralization capacity building initiatives in a coordinated and harmonized manner; (2) proficient national coordination of all decentralization related capacity building initiatives; (3) making operational CB plans at the district level; (4) standardization of CB delivery throughout all districts for quality assurance purposes; (5) introducing innovative approaches for delivery of CB targeting individual skills; and (5) streamlining and delineating the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

Finally researcher has been identified with following interesting areas for good governance with interaction with Rwandan Hon Consul and Military officers at Defence Services Command and Staff College.

\* Governor's Clinic for public hearing.

\* Cutting salaries and government expenditure.

\* Minimising wealth of government by reducing 5000 vehicle in 2005 to 1500 vehicle today, cut down Minister's pay, no bribes reported, use public transport service by government, etc.

\* Autocratic government

\* Language of Rwanda has been changed to English

Further, present government has only one identity as Rwandans, no deviation as per ethnicity. Government slogan is "Never again Genocide", respect for human dignity. Less corruption and now construction industry is booming.

It is also the right of minority to follow their needs in their own language. Though it is not focused, this language barrier will always highlight and will make doubts in thoughts of inequality and will make fears of being isolated. This has become a serious issue among Sinhalese and Tamil community even they have similarity in thoughts and expectations; it differs in communicating and understanding each other. Switching back to Rwandan examples, It must have been a major advantage in Rwanda, the reconciliation was successful because Tutsi and Hutu communities spoke one language and it made them easy to confess, apologies and exchange feelings of forgiveness. There should be a governmental support in overcoming these simple tasks by making learning all languages compulsory, at least the future generations will make it correct where their elders went wrong in living in harmony.

It is also important to build and develop the youth who are already affected by the post war crisis to prevent having negative conclusions. This development should be of both life skills and spiritual growth. Promisingly this would be one leap to generate positive vision on their secured future in a country which serves equality and democracy regardless ethnicity.

## V CONCLUSION

Every country faces different development challenges. But Rwanda's ambitious and complex reform program may offer lessons for others seeking to reform through private sector development. One key to its achievements has been the strong commitment to reform shown by Rwanda's leaders and its citizens. The government has established structures for building a foundation for private sector development and coordinating government-wide reform efforts. And it has created a well-defined, long-term reform strategy that informs all of the country's short-term development goals. The government entities involved in the process have had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and they have respected the goals set in initial implementation strategy documents. All these efforts are showing results in Rwanda's regulatory performance. And Rwanda's dedication to private sector development, in triggering positive legal reforms, has contributed substantially to its overarching goal of promoting national reconciliation and

prosperity. Rwanda's experience help in resolving Sri Lanka's post conflict situation where they have overcome all constrains gradually practicing good governance. There are successful mechanisms practiced by Rwanda as discussed in research results and those can be incorporated to overcome international concerns. It does not mean that Sri Lanka has to follow Rwanda. Sri Lanka has different concept than genocide happened in Rwanda. Therefore Sri Lanka has to formulate own agenda which can be supported by Rwandan experience. Sri Lanka, the ethnic struggle it had that unfolded in a time range of more than three decades, due to conflict of claims between Sinhalese and Tamil communities has finally concluded leaving the country mainly not in ruins, but massively with an economical and social downturn.

In reconciliation, all these factors are important as well as facing the international community. The political affairs in the country should be strong to claim that, if we had the courage and internal strength to overcome the struggle which continued for decades, we have more strength and capability to fix and emerge as a united country. However, narrow gains on unstable political analysis will be significantly disadvantageous for us in standing before the international recognition. And also being politically divided is one of the main factors that affect and decrease success in reconciliation and in development of the country. As for an example of Rwandans, they stood up strong due to the reasons of their ethnic unity and sustainable political affairs.

If we come to a conclusion, as Sri Lankans, we are luckier than the Rwandans as we never lost our development during war for decades, but it was being carried out slow. Even during the war afloat we have come forward and abreast of other developing countries. Like Rwandans, we do not need starting accessions; it should only be working well together. But they pointed out to us a valuable model which is how we should intervene to understand of how we have to come forward to do it for our country's economic and social development of all ethnic groups. Taking lessons from good governance in Rwanda will help Sri Lanka to overcome accountability charges laid by the international community.

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