

Building Effective States Through Peacebuilding Initiative: Empowering Peace in Sri Lanka

Satheesmohan Santhiramohanathas

Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

<satheesmohan66@yahoo.com>

Abstract - Since Sri Lanka has ended the civil conflict in 2009, there have been significant peace initiatives that to address the grievances and the root courses of the protracted armed conflict, while building a sustainable future based on unity and diversity. Meantime, it can be equally argued that the success of the post-conflict recovery in Sri Lanka cannot be achieved alone either state building or peace building process. It requires a holistic approach to peace, security, development and human rights that could strengthen the assurance of sustainable peace and prosperity of the country. Effective state building process is critical in terms of institutional reform that is believed to bring accountability and transparency in governing system of a country. Meantime, nation building and peace building require a collective effort in terms of addressing the socio, economic and political grievances of the conflicting parties and create a platform for dialog that to bring peace and end of future conflict. It is important to understand and work on multiple theoretical aspects that applied in both conflict and post- conflict settings. Sri Lankan post-conflict peace process may need some improvements for these multiple efforts applied at current context. This might improve significant efforts in addressing the grey areas in relevant to the socio, economic and political grievances of the conflict and the reconciliation process that surely boost for empowering peace and effective state-building. Therefore, this research focuses on the grey areas in peace building process in the post conflict setting and accumulates the knowledge among state-building, nation building and peace building to empower peace in Sri Lanka. The conceptual framework of the research is based on both Global Peace Index and the Fragile States Index that to apply the Sri Lankan situation. The research methodology will be a secondary data collection, which are the available sources from news articles, reports, yearbooks and online publications.

Keywords - State-building, Peace-building, Empowering Peace in Sri Lanka

I. INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka has entered into a new political reality after a military victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009. Since the country's long term conflict ended, then the post-conflict recovery was the key focus in terms of lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Thus institutional reform along with peacebuilding became prominent in post conflict Sri Lanka. While, criticism on post-conflict approach to peacebuilding and state-building that failed to address the socio-economic and political grievances of minority community remain unresolved. Meantime, there is a common observation that the institutional reform that to replace the malfunction of the state affairs require more efficiency and inclusive approach in state-building process of the country. However, despite this criticism many could argue that the seven years of conflict transformation in Sri Lanka is hopeful and need inclusive approach in peacebuilding and state-building affairs. Therefore, the study is intended to analyse some theoretical insides on peacebuilding and state-building affairs and bring Sri Lanka as a specific case study in order to support the peacebuilding initiative in post-conflict Sri Lanka.

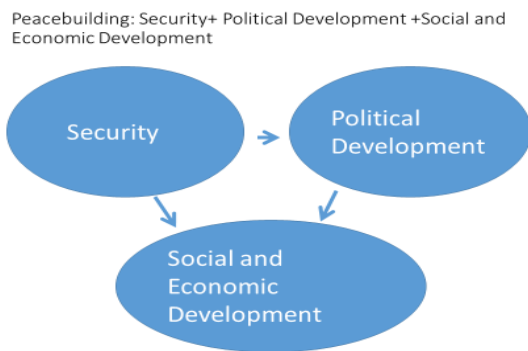
II. PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding is always focused that what the ends it should be? The liberalistic approach to peacebuilding which is based on liberal peace and liberal democratic theory formed during 1980s discusses peacebuilding as democratization and economic empowerment of a country. It further, argues that the promotion of a liberal democracy and market based economy could create conditions for a better country. This idea continued even after the end of cold war and turned into focusing more on post-conflict setting and peacebuilding. For instance, an agenda for peace – 1992 proposed by Boutros-Ghali the 6th secretary of the United Nations (1992-96) stressed a complex relationship among peace, development and democracy in a conflict setting is critical to post-conflict

peacebuilding. According to him the complex relationship among peace, development and democracy could create a chaos in socio-economic and political process of the country and often undermine one into other. In detail, he argues that the absence of peace in a country is more likely to undermine the process of democracy and development. Likewise, the absence of development and democracy in a country could create a socio- economic and political vacuum and conflict at large. An agenda for peace (1992).

The second generation of the peacebuilding or the United Nations' approach to peacebuilding is focused on a holistic approach to security, political development and socio-economic development into the agenda. United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

Picture 1: Second generation of peacebuilding



Picture 1 examines the holistic approach to second generation of peacebuilding.

The core argument of the module is a holistic approach to a long term peacebuilding initiative of the post-conflict scenario. While it is dealt with an immediate post-conflict recovery, it is mainly focused on pre and future conditions of the conflict nature of a country. In this regard, security, political and socio economic aspects taken into consideration in peacebuilding and conflict transformation of a conflict affected country. Security sector reform, institutional reform, political transformation, judicial reform, economic recovery and civic engagement are some of the key areas that the second generation of the peacebuilding is looking into the agenda.

III. STATE-BUILDING

Frances Fukuyama argues that State-building is a building of state affairs based on governance and democracy. He further, stressed that state-building seeks to build functioning and self-sustaining state structures that to re-

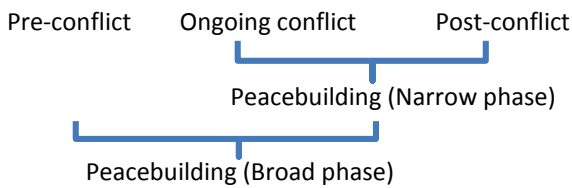
establish the social contract between the state and citizens and promote state legitimacy. Francis. F (2004) Interestingly, James Dobbins' argument on state-building based on military power. Military power is a core strengthen of the state and civil-military engagement is thus critical for the integrity of the state and citizen. James. D (2007). Despite arguments on military strength and governance as significant factors in state building affairs but the modern state is highly interconnected with both aspects and as well as populace division and nation building of the country.

In post conflict scenario, the state-building process require a holistic approach into socio, economic and political transformation of the concern. A notion of governance programming that includes electoral system, participation and inclusion, combating corruption, and rule of law and justice reform require a significant political transformation from war to peace. Also, socio-economic recovery that concern on transformation of war economy, livelihoods and employments, economic recovery and growth, private sector development, preservation of environment and cultural heritage and natural resource management is equally required as part of an inclusive state-building process. Further, more importantly the reconciliation and social renewal is critical in state-building process in terms of addressing the grievances of the conflicting parties. In this regard, Peace education is required in the country's educational system. Further, the involvement of non-state actors that includes civil society, community led development projects, religious actors and diaspora into a peacebuilding process is critical for a state-building.

IV. PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING IN POST-CONFLCIT SITUATION

Peacebuilding is primarily associated with post-conflict environment and state-building is likely to be a central element of it in order to institutionalize peace. There are two phase of peacebuilding. A narrow phase of a peacebuilding seeks significant conflict transformation in an ongoing conflict and focuses on immediate post-conflict recovery. That includes negotiation, mediation, ceasefire and peace agreements, peacekeeping and recovery of conflict at large. Meantime, a broad phase of peacebuilding which is focused on all elements of the conflict transformation. It deals with root courses for the conflict, conflict management, conflict prevention and more importantly dealing with post conflict state-building of a country.

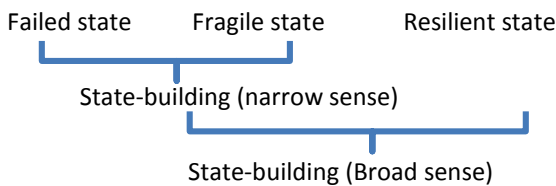
Picture 2: Two stages in peacebuilding



Picture 2 examines the narrow and broad sense of peacebuilding in conflict setting.

A narrow sense of state-building is dealt with a failed and fragile conditions of the conflict setting. It further responses with immediate actions that to recover a state from its fragility. Regaining the state autonomy and the territorial integrity of a state is mainly focused in this regard. Meantime, a broad sense of state-building is mainly focused on resilience from fragility. While rephrasing the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of a state, the socio-economic and political reforms is equally required for a resilient state.

Picture 3: Two stages in state-building



Picture 3 examines the narrow and broad senses of state-building.

Further, it is interesting to see that the both aspects of peacebuilding and state-building that is dealt with governance programming and socio-economic recovery of the conflict including state formation, institutional reform, national reconciliation and civic engagement may seem similarity in terms of its outcome. Strengthening the sovereignty and the integrity of the state, democracy and empowering peace are the common outcome of these two process. Therefore, it is very critical for a country that affected by conflicts to deal with these two process simultaneously.

V. PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka enjoy a relative peace and the absence of violent conflict since the long conflict ended in May 2009. Though the brutal terrorism is no longer in place but the question for sustainable peace and political settlement to the ethnic struggle is remained significant in the post-conflict phase in Sri Lanka. The way civil- conflict ended is not widely acknowledged by the entire community of the

island nation. Since the conflict ended, there has been two major phenomena based on the result of the conflict; the victorious aspect and defeated aspect. S. Satheesmohan.S (2015). Despite, criticism on post-conflict recovery of the country, the significant process had been made in terms of socio-economic and political reform during the last seven years of the post-conflict setting. Sri Lanka is one of the few countries that could transform significant concerns in the area of resettlement of IDPs reintegration of ex-combatants, and more importantly post-conflict political transform. Therefore, Sri Lanka has never experienced a revival of an armed conflict since May 2009.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) which is one of the prominent publications in the USA, identifies that Sri Lanka is getting progress in terms of balancing militarization and improving significant steps toward security of the society and a conflict free country. Further it ranked Sri Lanka as 97 in place for 2016 out of 163 counties. Further, 2016 report of GPI demonstrates that Sri Lanka had made significant reforms and policies in terms of peacebuilding and state-building compare to the previous rankings. Global Peace Index (2016). According to other index called the Fragile States Index (FSI), Sri Lanka has been ranked as 43 in position out of 178 countries in 2016. The Fragile States Index (FSI) is done a survey based on political, military, social and economic indicators of an individual country that to support peace initiative in the country and highlighting the individual country’s position in world affairs. Further, the 2016 report which is highlighting that Sri Lanka has reached significant improvement by overcoming its past rankings of fragility and moving towards stable and resilient state. Fragile States Index (2016).

VI. EMPOWERING PEACE IN SRI LANKA

The relative peace is always vulnerable unless it addresses the root courses of the conflict. Sri Lanka is privilege enjoying peace after deafening a local terrorism that crated more complex relationship between south and the north of the country. Thus empowering peace through state building initiative is critical to address the political question to the ethnic conflict. From the country’s minority point of view that post-conflict peacebuilding does not address the root course of the conflict rather it is focusing on state building and institutional reform that could benefit to the country’s majority community at large. Further, the minority community does not believe that the present peacebuilding is not given hopes to the ethnic Tamils. Sanayi.M (2014). Despite criticism, many could argue that the prevailing peace is hopeful and could bring

country back to normalcy. Peace is prevailed after so many years of conflict and this is a time to sustain the peace.

The research is focused five areas could concern in terms of empowering peace in Sri Lanka.

1. State-building that should address the creation of an accountable state. In this regard building an effective and accountable state is critical. Mainly it should have focused on institutionalizing or democratizing peace into the state-building agenda.
2. Peacebuilding that should address the non-recurrence of an armed conflict. In this connection, addressing the root cause of the armed conflict is critical and it could have been into the agenda for peace in Sri Lanka.
3. Comprehensive power sharing democracy. Power sharing is critical to strengthen the Sri Lanka's democracy, economy, religious and ethnic harmony. It could address many prevailing tensions in the post-conflict setting.
4. Nation-building that should address the unity of the national identity. Thus political harmony should be respected based on the needs and proportionality and not based on ethnic nationalism.
5. Peace, security, development and human rights should be incorporated into the state building and peacebuilding agenda. In this regard, the government initiatives on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) is critical and particularly implementing the goal.16 which is related to promote peace, justice and strong institutions could strength the ongoing process of state-building and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.

References

Francis. F 2004, *State-building: Governance and world order in the 21st century*, Cornell University Press New York.

Ghali B.B (1992) "An agenda for peace", United Nations. NY: USA,
<<http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/shared/Winter/protected/Boutros%20Boutros%20Ghali%200Agenda%20for%20Peace.pdf>>, Accessed on 01/10/2016

Global Peace Index, 2016
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GPI%202016%20Report_2.pdf>, Accessed on 01/10/2016

James. D, Seth G.J, Keith C, Beth C.D, 2007, *The beginner's guide to nation building*, RAND Corporation, USA.

< file:///C:/Users/HOME/Desktop/RAND_MG557.pdf>
Accessed on 01/10/2016

Messner. J.J, & Nate. H (eds) 2016, *Fragile States Index, The fund for peace*, Washington DC.

< <http://library.fundforpeace.org/fsi16-report>>, Accessed on 26/08/2016

"Post war development not for all", Colombo Gazette, Sunday 2nd August 2015,

<<http://colombogazette.com/2015/08/02/post-war-development-not-for-all/>>, Accessed on 03/08/2015

Sanayi. M, 2014, *War making and state building: the politics of state reform in Sri Lanka*, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo.

Satheesmohan.S, 2015, 'Promoting national reconciliation: a way forward to inclusive national security' in IRC Proceedings, KDU Press, Ratmalana.

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission
< <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>>

United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
< <http://www.unpbf.org/>>

BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHORS



Author is a lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. He earned his B.A (Hons) in Philosophy from University of Peradeniya and M.A in International Peace Studies from the United Nations mandated University for Peace. His research interested is Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.