

Balasooriya, Ajith
Paper: Sustainability

Towards positive peace: Government of Sri Lanka`s post-conflict peacebuilding efforts

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL)ʼs “triumph winning” of the conflict against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has not brought a comprehensive answer to the underlying causes of the conflict, though the absence of war was prevalent for the last two years. Absence of conflict was able to bring a negative peace - conclusion for three decades of physical violence in the country. However, existing social justice for every citizen in the post-conflict era is yet to be improved in a comprehensive manner to meet its potential to achieve positive peace. Enhancing human rights of the victims of the conflict, bringing justice for the injustice of the conflict by perpetrators, establishing effective mechanisms for addressing underlying conflict causes such as political grievances, basic needs of food, shelter, health, education and livelihood, and social dignity and equal opportunities to participate in social and economic activities should be on the top of post-conflict peacebuilding agenda. Therefore, to achieve positive peace for the country, as the primary representative of its people or the winner of the conflict, GoSL has to go ahead with clear and comprehensive peacebuilding activities and implement strategies to overcome prolonged causes of the conflict.

Some of GoSLʼs post-conflict activities and implementations have publicly demonstrated as the path of GoSL to reach the potential of social justice of the conflict affected citizens of the country. However, “monopolistic Sinhalese military strategies” have shown their limited capacity to deal with underlying causes both at national and local levels to achieve social justice to reach the goal of positive peace rather than its “nationally popular political interests”. Many activities and strategies in post-conflict peacebuilding aim to address the surface of the existing issues. So far, there could not be seen any credible mechanism to bring justice, accountability and post-conflict reconciliation for conflict affected civilians to overcome structural violence other than military dominated partial mechanisms. Therefore, GoSL has to overcome multiple challenges in post-conflict peacebuilding to bring positive peace which could reach the potential of social justice of every citizen of the country. This preliminary paper discusses the existing post-conflict activities, implemented strategies and challenges to meet the potential of social justice of the conflict affected citizens in the country in order to achieve positive peace.

Keywords: Post-conflict peacebuilding, Sustainable peace, The Government of Sri Lanka