

Analyzing the Dynamics of Norwegian Mediation: Lessons from Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand and explain the process of Norwegian mediation from the perspective of the civil society in Sri Lanka. The author traces the evolution of Norway's role from the selecting respondents of different districts based on the composition of different ethnic groups. The suggestions of the study highlight the importance of all levels of civil society actor's participation, public awareness, and consensus in the peace process and it can be helpful to avoid the spreading of the mistrust against the facilitators or mediators. In addition, it is important that all segments of political parties, and political leaders from all sides, contribute to a conducive atmosphere for peace process. The research offers a novel way of explaining that facilitators should address such misperceptions and misunderstanding immediately to work out their plan for helping the parties to yield a lasting solution to conflict.

Keywords: Third party mediation, conflict resolution, civil society, spoilers, Sri Lanka, Norway

1. Introduction:

The conflict resolution literature in the post-cold war era provides a vast analysis of a number of dimensions of conflict resolution, conflict mediation and peace building. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is one of the most widely researched conflicts of the world today. Most of analyses that seek to understand the nature of the conflict are based on interpretation of political events of the country during and after the colonial period in Sri Lankan history. The literature on external intervention in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict can mainly be divided into two categories. Accordingly, India and Norway are the prime interveners, though there are some other interveners who can be accommodated into Norway's mediation.

Literature on the Norway-led multilateral mediation in Sri Lanka focuses mainly on the motivation and the preliminary outcome of it. Samaranayake (2006) points out that Norwegian facilitation was the refusal to accept the other parties to the process. Moolakkattu (2005) examined the qualifications and motivations of Norway as a third party and its role in Sri Lanka. Kriesberg (2001) mapped out peace keeping is not done only from the top down, but laterally and from the bottom up as well. Too much of the literature on the conflict has been 'top-down', rather than 'bottom-up' (Bullion, 2005). Having reviewed the existing literature, I concluded that, there has been a missing aspect in the literature that it lacks attention and attempts to analyze the challenges of Norwegian mediation in Sri Lankan peace process.

It is believed that the success or failure of any attempt to reach a peaceful solution, up to a

significant extend, will depend on the active or inactive participation of a third party mediation to build trust between the parties involved in conflict and the civil society. Is this assumption correct at least in Sri Lankan context? This question was motivated me to dig into deeper the Norwegian mediatory process in Sri Lanka. In fact, what factors should be there with third party mediation for achieving fruitful outcome for a conflict? As such, the aim of the study is to explore the challenges of Norwegian mediation in the Sri Lankan peace process.

2. Methodology:

The review of literature on the general and Norwegian mediation efforts in Sri Lanka suggested a fundamental research question that what are the challenges that Norwegian mediation faced in Sri Lankan peace process during the period of 2001-2006. Based on the question the following hypotheses were formulated in order to find answer to the major question; (1) Successful mediation depends upon the confidence of all most all the influential groups about their voice is being given a space in the peace building process, (2) Norwegian mediation in the peace process is not effective for building peace in Sri Lanka, and (3) Success of a peace process depends upon the effective mechanisms to deal with spoilers. To test these hypotheses, data were collected by open-ended interviews, informal discussions and also texts and other relevant documents. This study is limited to the six selected Districts and focuses only on Norwegian mediated fifth peace process from 2001-2006. This time horizon was chosen because the international third party was actively played its role with the blessing of both conflicting parties. Respondents were selected from different districts based on the composition of different ethnic groups that are Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. Out of total 150 respondents, 30 civil society activists and 120 general public were interviewed during August and September of 2006.

The primary data was used with the secondary data at points where analysis wants more in-depth consideration. At some points, table and graphs were used for more clear depiction of the analysis and sometimes statements made by respondents were quoted to support my arguments. Meanwhile, findings of the study were compared with theoretical perspective to see the external validity and the reliability of findings.

3. Third Party Mediation as a Conflict Resolution Process

Conflict resolution is a process in which the conflicting parties try to find a solution. Wallenstien (2002) defines conflict resolution as “a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other’. In highly escalated conflicts the parties may, for all practical purposes, be unable to control themselves or limit their disparaging actions. This is especially true for violent, all-out confrontations in which the conflict is fueled by the intense emotions which arise when people experience the devastation of war.

Third party mediation is a typical response to destructive and persistent social conflict and comes in a number of different forms attended by a variety of issues (Freedman, 1992). Third party has been defined as an assistant who tries to make an acceptable agreement for both antagonistic parties and tries to bring conflicting parties to a negotiation table through good coordination with the purpose of lasting settlement (Goran L, Nordquist and Wallensteen, 1993). Third parties might act as consultants, helping either side or both to analyze the conflict and plan an effective response. Alternatively, they might act as facilitators, arranging meetings, setting agendas, and guiding productive discussions.

Third party mediation in a conflict signals that the parties need outside help that their conflict is too difficult to terminate by themselves and at the same time it is costly enough that they both want to see it end (Crocker et al., 2004). If a conflict becomes protracted itself with no possibility to resolve by fighting each other of antagonistic parties, there can be forwarded a discourse for a mediatory settlement. Third party mediation is likely to take place when, conflicts are long drawn and complex, disputants own conflict management efforts have reached an impasse, neither side is prepared to further cost or escalation of the dispute, disputants are prepared to break their stalemate by cooperating with each other. Therefore, mediation is the main alternative to negotiation by the disputants themselves and is a useful procedure in many situations.

Mediation is not only facilitating to discussions, but also it usually imposes a structure and process on the discussions that is designed to move the parties toward mutual understanding and win-win agreements. It is practiced by numerous and diverse actors, ranging from individuals through states to international organizations (Bercovitch and Gartner, 2006). While many different styles of mediation are common, most mediation have the conflicting parties sit down together to explain to each other their views about the nature of the problem or problems and how they think it might best be resolved (Bush and Folger, 1994). Among the several forms, more active and powerful third party role is mediation. Mediation is a process that is fair, private, confidential, and self-determined. Mediation is aimed to induce the parties to come to a settlement themselves. They create a sense of urgency or they may even consciously maintain a high degree of tension. A mutually hurting stalemate may be real, introduced or manipulated by mediators. Therefore, Mediation is a non-coercive form of intervention and of an individual, group, or organization, which turns an original bilateral conflict into a triadic interaction (Bercovitch and Rubin, 1992). Mediation is best viewed as a process that is used worldwide in numerous kinds of conflicts and that can be systematically studied within the broader context of negotiation and conflict resolution.

4. Sri Lankan Conflict and Past Failure of Peace Efforts:

Since 1983, the protracted violent conflict has raged between the government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This conflict has caused immense destruction to the social, political and economic institution, and in addition to the loss of thousand lives. During the last three decades, Sri Lanka has experienced three types of mediatory efforts (big power mediation, national mediation and Norwegian mediation) which were all failed to bring an end to the conflict. The destructive nature of the conflict gradually escalated; a number of efforts were made to resolve it by peaceful means with the help of outside party or without it. Third party involvement in to the conflict of Sri Lanka is going back to the first half of the 1980s.

India openly entered the conflict scenario of Sri Lanka by playing an important role. Final outcome of this reaction of India was signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord 1987. This accord made a path to very big argument of the civil society and it was criticized as a solution for Indo-Lanka conflict and not for Sri Lanka –LTTE conflict. The nature of the Indian involvement took the form of power involvement. This involvement can be classified as an involvement of regional power into a domestic conflict of smaller country. India's official involvement has ranged from negotiator to peacekeeper (Edirippulige, 2004). India was unable to maintain in the process of involvement. This refers to two things i. e third party should not be biased towards one party as a result of previous link and it should be impartial or should not show preference to position held by disputant parties. Sinhala people conceived Indian intervention as biased towards Tamil position. On the part of Tamils, they thought India would not help their just grievances other than her own interest. As a cumulative effect of above mention hostilities Indian involvement ended in an utter failure. The

Indian involvement would remain as a classic example in the literature of conflict resolution and settlement.

Norway was the second external country to attempt to be as an international mediator in to the conflict after the Indian involvement failed in 1980s. Norway has become the second outside country following India to play a third party role in the conflict of Sri Lanka. With compared to this, Norwegian mediation is clearly deviated from such a context. In contrast to Indian intervention, Norwegian mediation in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict is an invited one by both parties to the conflict in order to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Norway's involvement in the peace process started in 2001, and end in 2006.

5. Peace Process under Norwegian Mediation; An overview

The armed conflict broke out at the beginning of 1980s continued in the 1990s, interrupted by two previous attempts at a ceasefire in 1989 and 1994. Following the Sri Lankan parliamentary election held on December 5th2001, the opposition leader Ranil Wickramasinghe was elected as the Prime Minister. With changing the Government, a new attempt was made to recommence the stalled peace process (Ganguly, 2004). Entering into further peace negotiations with the LTTE, the Prime Minister took responsibility for moving the peace process forward. Meanwhile, by 25th December 2001, the LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire which was announced for one month from Christmas Eve for cessation of hostilities (Wijedasa, 2001). Likewise, the Sri Lankan government also welcomed the unilateral ceasefire called by the LTTE. In this context, Wickremesinghe wrote to Norwegian counterpart in December 2001 for a formal revival of Norway's efforts to bring two parties of the conflict to the negotiating table. In the same way, LTTE chief V Prabhakaran also wrote to Norway by telling that he was seeking Norway's continuous engagement as the facilitator to help to find a stable peace and a permanent settlement to the ethnic conflict (Ameen, 2002). The new millennium dawned with making positive aspirations of the eyes of the people about a lasting solution for merely twenty five years aged conflict in Sri Lanka.

The peace process of Sri Lanka has stepped a considerable way from 2001 to 2006, though it was stalled on as a result of political crisis in national politics of the country. Within this process Norway as a facilitator has performed a very significant role in keeping belligerent away from the hostile activities while mediating them to find a political solution. As Prof. Johan Galtung, who argues that a small country without military power or economic power, can successfully engage in peace making in the world. The main point here is that Norway, though not a big power in the military sense is sufficiently rich enough to influence a peaceful environment in the world. But much analysis's assessment of small state mediators is open based on the credibility and access enjoyed by such mediators.

The ceasefire agreement between the GOSL and the LTTE and its communication for more than three years brought the most important outcome which is the suspension of the war between the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE. Norway was expected mainly to stop the violence and facilitate the meeting of the two parties which were not in talking terms and thereby enable confidence building. The Six rounds of peace talks held between the GOSL and the LTTE during period of September 2002 to April 2003 have had yielded mixed outcome with successes and failures. Since then, the peace process has been stalled. The major failure of the 2002-2003 peace initiative as a process is that the parties did not succeed in signing even an interim political settlement to consolidate the gains of the CFA and six rounds of talks. They failed to sign an agreement for an interim administrative structure in 2003-2004.

The ground conditions on which the peace process was launched in 2002 have changed considerably. The condition of strategic parity has been greatly altered. The trust between the

government and the LTTE has eroded considerably (Uyangoda, 2005). During this time, Norway has suspended its mediation activities in two times. First, in 2003, Norway suspended its mediation role following the political crisis in Sri Lanka. Second, in June 2006, Norway asked the parties to in writing- reiterate their commitment to the ceasefire agreement, originally reached in 22 February 2002. When focusing on domestic politics, the GOSL's agenda has been modified radically since 2004-2006.

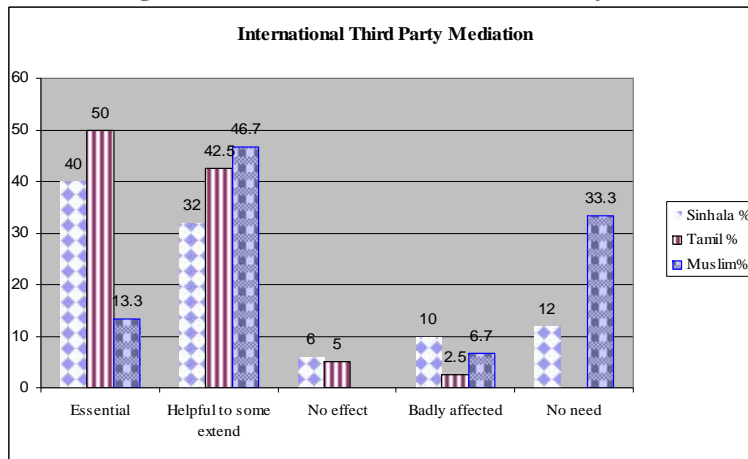
6. Challenges of Norwegian Mediation in the Sri Lankan Peace Process;

6. 1 Civil Society Perceptions of Third Party Mediation.

The nature of internal conflicts in the post cold war era provides the most compelling argument for the participation of civil society in peace process. Civil society is the "non-formal" sector of society and involves group and individuals concerned with particular causes or issues within the community. In conflict areas, the concern is mostly to end the war and to promote peace. The importance of civil society involvement in conflict resolution and peace building in violent conflicts has during the last decade been increasingly stressed (Orjuela, 2003). The significance of civil society in general and its role in conflict in particular has been recognized by the United Nations in recent reports and resolutions. There is general assumption that the civil society is only relevant within the context of conflict resolution. This is an uncritical assumption. The civil society can be part of the problem of conflict generation or escalation. The point being emphasized is that civil society may be an actor or facilitator in conflict situations and, not necessarily the manager of the process. In other words, it could be part of the problem as well as the solution. Civil society responds to conflict in numerous ways. Civil society has a potential role of (1) Preventing violent conflict, (2) working on war zones, (3) Supporting negotiations and settlements, and (4) endorsing reconstruction and reconciliation (Orjuela, 2003). Civil society activists can play crucial roles in conflict resolution process by surfacing the conflict and escalating it nonviolently to bring about necessary changes. The role of civil society actors in peace process are determined by number of factors, including both external factors such as the attitudes of the warring parties and the degree of "political space" afforded to civic groups, and internal factors such as the resources and skills available for groups to draw on. Their capacities may help to create the conditions for talk, build confidence between the parties, shape the conduct and content of negotiations and influence the sustainability of the peace process.

The finding of the research, the majority of the civil society expressed that international third party mediation is needed to achieve a positive solution for the conflict. In general, 75.8% of total respondents (120) still agree with outside support to bring belligerents to a negotiation table and help them for compromised solution. Only 24.2% of the respondents say that a third party role is not important or makes unfavorable impacts to the country (See figure 01). A majority of the Sinhala (72%), Tamil (92.5%) and Muslim (60%) communities believe that an international third party will have a positive impact on the peace process.

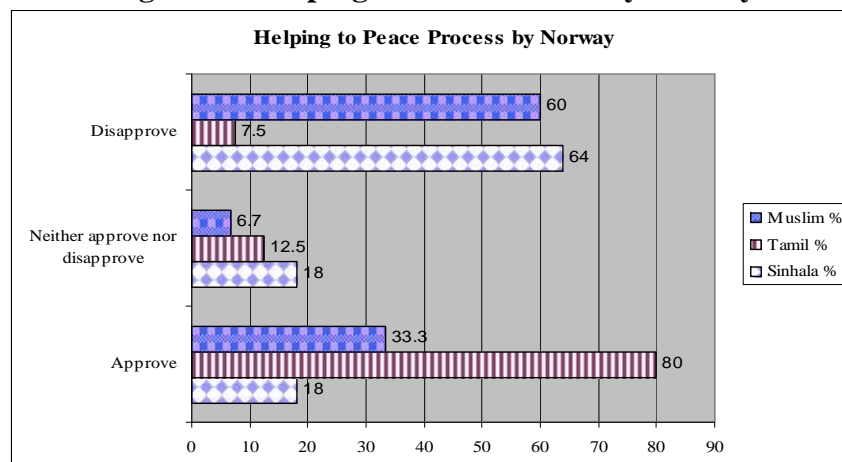
Figure 01: International Third Party Mediation



Source: Field Survey by the Author

While 58.9% of total interviewees were expressing their willingness for third party facilitation, 24.3% said such facilitation is not essential for the peace talks. This means that third party mediation is believed to be worked as a constructive conflict resolution approach. In general, the people of all communities have given overwhelming support for the peace process. The study indicated that only 42.5% out of 120 respondents agree with Norwegian facilitation to the peace process. Approval is highest amongst the 80% Tamils. The study found that 64% of Sinhalese and 60% of Muslims disagree with Norway’s assistance in the peace process. 44.2% out of all respondents said that they won’t approve Norway’s mediation any more. Out of sample, 13.3% neither approve nor disapprove (See figure 02).

Figure 02: Helping to Peace Process by Norway



Source: Field Survey by the Author

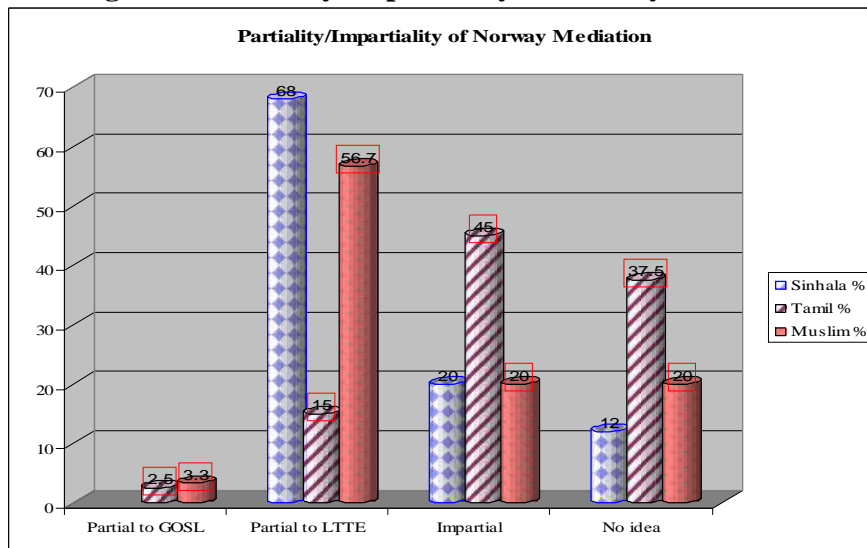
6.2 Neutrality and Impartiality

Neutrality and Impartiality are central components in the activity of third party mediation. Third party neutrality is a widely discussed subject within peace and conflict research. This attributes its expression in the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by the mediator toward the parties

in the mediation process. Mediator's neutrality is important to create an atmosphere and psychology of confidence and trust in the negotiation process among the parties to the conflict. Analysts who agree with the traditional thesis believe that mediator impartiality is a critical quality for successful mediation (Young, 1967; Miall, 1992). Impartiality is seen as one of the main requirements of acceptability by the parties, and as a prerequisite to establishing relationship of trust. It serves as the basis for effectively carrying out the role of intervener. A mediator must not have an interest in the outcome of the dispute; he or she must be a "neutral" in every sense of the word. Most of the analysts agree that neutrality and impartiality are essentially matters of perceptions of the parties in conflict.

The finding shows the civil society activist in Sri Lanka, questioned Norway neutrality as a mediator. Majority of civil society activist perceives the Norway as a biased mediator. According to the findings, 47.5% of the public believes that Norway's mediation is partial to the LTTE. Furthermore, majority Sinhalese 68% and Muslims 56.7% believes that the Norway is partial to the LTTE. 45% of Tamils believe that the Norway as an impartial mediator (See figure 03).

Figure 3: Partiality/Impartiality of Norway Mediation



Source: Field Survey by the Author

Therefore, one of the challenges that Norway faced with is that the lack of civil society consensus toward their role. Whatever the outcomes that the peace process brought, those had to be barred by the civil society at the end. Therefore, the civil society awareness and consensus are inevitable for any peace building effort. This supports the first hypothesis valid that successful mediation depends on confidence of almost all the influential groups in having their voice in the peace building process. The next challenge is that the marginalization of groups and political parties obstructed the peace process and created 'spoiler behavior'. This proves that the hypothesis two, that the Norwegian mediation into the peace process is not effective for building peace in Sri Lanka, to be valid in its general content.

6.3 Managing Spoilers in the Peace Process

Deriving a spoiler typology, Stedman argues that violence will not disrupt the peace process, if those who are willing to deal with peace process are supported, and provided opportunists with avenues to become a part of the process. Maintaining a good relationship with other social and political organizations such as other political parties, non-governmental organizations and voluntary

associations are important for a mediator because of their remarkable role especially in the societal level. These types of relationships help the mediator to lighten its part of the work. Also it facilitates the facilitator in proceeding with his or her tasks. These organizations can mobilize the grassroots communities about the peace process. But past experiences show that such an inter-relationship in between different organizations was not built up by Norwegian mediators. The marginalization of groups and political parties might obstruct the peace process and creates 'spoiler behavior'. Spoilers are here defined as those who oppose the peace agreement and would seek various means to create uncertainty and turmoil with the peace environment. At the same time spoilers are also those who have a stake in the peace process but who feel that they have been left out. There are stakeholders who have not been formally or informally associated with the peace process. Specially, hard line political parties like Jantha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) and marginalized community organizations like Muslim Congress and Estate Labour Union should be met and discussed the matter and their position over the enduring peace deal. The Norwegian mediation role has been criticized by the extremist nationalists as it treated the LTTE as equal party to the GOSL.

The JVP have often demanded Norway to leave the country. They have stood on the sidelines while the main Sinhalese political parties are playing the major role in the peace process. During the period following the 1995 breakdown of talks, the JVP, who today represents some of the most extreme-nationalist Sinhalese elements in Sri Lanka, has organized demonstrations where thousands of (militant) Buddhist monks have protested against the cease-fire and peace process (Hoglund and Sevansson, 2003). In the 2004 parliamentary elections the PA came back into power with the support of nationalist JVP. In the 2005, among several parties who supported Mahinda Rajapakse to win the election, JVP and the Sinhala Buddhist ideology led JHU strongly opposed to the peace talks with the LTTE since the very beginning of the peace negotiations and Norwegian mediation. They saw the LTTE as purely a terrorist organization that had to be dealt with in law and order terms. Then President Chandrika Kumaratunga also was not interested with the kind of legitimacy that the peace negotiations offered to the LTTE as she was ignored by the premier and other parties in consulting when the CFA was signed. Therefore, in April 2004 a general election, contrived by the president using her executive powers to remove ministers and declare a state of emergency. The government partners such as JVP are organizations with potentials to work as spoilers of the process. Very appropriate example is that interruption of the peace process by dissolving the parliament by the president at last time. Numbers of groups expressed their support to the president against to the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) which was put forward by the LTTE. Ultimate result was that peace process was stalled on the way. As Uyangoda (2000) has recently pointed out, "the lesson that political leaders should learn from failed peace attempts is that governments as well as international custodian of a peace process have that the singular responsibility to protect the initiative from spoiler intervention"

Most importantly, these are the groups that can serve to build a wider inter-communal confidence at grassroots level. The mediator is definitely benefited from such relationships with think-tanks at middle level of the society. Finally, this sort of relationship helps to build a mutual trust between warring parties and mediators so that it makes easy working environment for prospective peace building of a country.

6.4 Monitoring Role of Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission

The failing ceasefire from 2002 has been monitored by the Norwegian led Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which has put Nordic observers on the ground in both GOSL and the LTTE held areas. A multinational monitoring force, the SLMM, was established, with some 70

personnel from Scandinavian countries based in offices around the north east¹. The main objective of the SLMM is the helping to peace-keeping. The SLMM is an organization to monitor the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement between the GOSL and the LTTE. Recognizing that any peace process would be dependent on the CFA, the international community hoped that the SLMM would deter the parties from either violating or allowing incidents on the ground to escalate and threaten the CFA, provide a communication line and create trust between the parties, particularly at the local level.

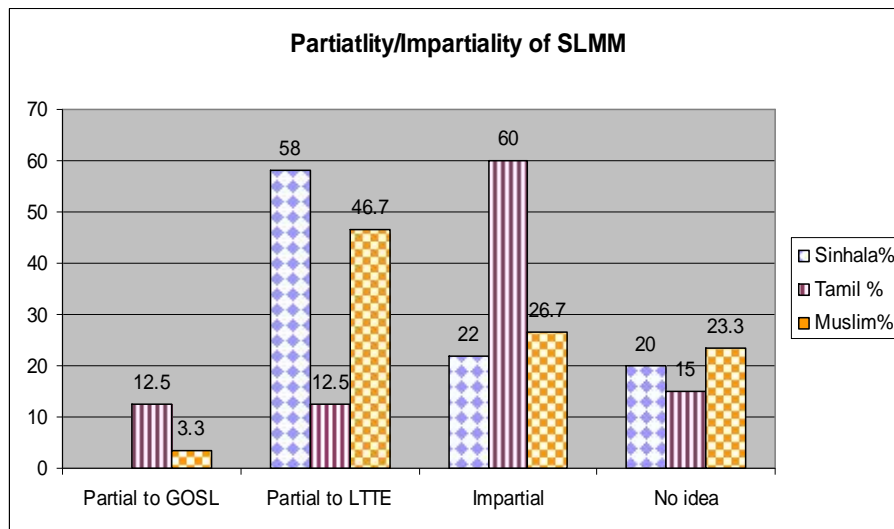
Table 1: Violations of the CFA by both Parties

CFA Violations at a Glance February 22, 2002-December 31, 2006 (Cumulative statistics)	
Number of (ruled) Violations Committed by the GOSL	346
Number of (ruled) Violations Committed by the LTTE	3827

Source: SLMM

As the table 1 shows, a far greater share of the ceasefire violations was committed by the LTTE (91.7% of the total) than the GOSL (8.3%). Majority of the respondents that I spoke with felt that the SLMM hardly, if not at all, had been able to deter or stop the LTTE from violating the cease-fire. The SLMM have been criticized for turning a blind eye on LTTE violations. However, a large share of the public perceives the SLMM as biased. According to my field research during August and September 2006, 58 % of the Sinhalese and 46.7% Muslims believe SLMM is partial to the LTTE.

Figure 4: Partiality/Impartiality of SLMM



Source: Field Survey by the Author

Respondents including Tamils at large did not perceive any major effort by the SLMM to reduce the scale of violations. Even if SLMM finds that one party has committed a major violation of CFA, it is mostly likely that SLMM be reluctant to exert pressure on that party based on the belief that such pressure works counter-effectively towards the peace process. If SLMM finds that one party has committed a major violation, for instance, they may therefore be reluctant to exert pressure on that party to make it stop. Repeating such violations-if such pressure is perceived potentially to harm the ‘peace process’, or if this process is considered to face major blockages. Such crisis perceptions

¹ According to article 3.5 of the CFA, the SLMM shall be composed of representatives from Nordic countries.

may lead monitors to assume that pressure will make the party want to stop cooperating with them, or even worse, to withdraw from the peace talks altogether.

Ceasefire monitoring missions are intrinsically valuable. Their documentation of whether parties to a ceasefire agreement respect their obligations may be crucial for later efforts to settle contentious issues in judicial or less formalized process of conflict resolution. Moreover, the presence of ceasefire monitors sends a precious signal to war-ridden people that they are not forgotten by the outside world. Nevertheless, the idea that ceasefire monitors will act in an impartial way, and that they will influence parties to respect the ceasefire if they don't, appear seriously misguided when confronted with evidence.

But, the mandate of the SLMM has so far been a limited one. Nevertheless, the SLMM, has in practice put on record its ruling of violations and done so publicly, in effect naming and shaming the perpetrators. The limitations of the SLMM's capacity and mandate have meant it has not been able to be constrained in its ability to investigate violations. So far the Norwegian led SLMM has been waiting passively for complaints to be made to it. Even when people who have nowhere else to go to complain to it they take no action saying it is outside their mandate. Perhaps they too feel helpless. However, it has had no capacity or mechanism to prevent micro cycles of violence. In fact, most of criticism of the CFA and the SLMM is linked to the proliferation of micro violence. It does not entitle the SLMM to be like a court of law, making judgments and passing out punishments. This is because the ceasefire agreement signed by the government and LTTE is a voluntary agreement. There is no external authority that can enforce it, apart from willingness of the GOSL and LTTE themselves. In sum the SLMM's role, even if it is largely symbolic, in the maintenance of the 'no war, no peace' scenario and the CFA that forms its foundation, cannot be denied. According to my field research, the majority of the civil society believes that international third party mediation is needed to achieve a positive solution for the conflict. But, the study found that 64% of Sinhalese and 60% of Muslims disagree with Norway's assistance in the peace process. Meanwhile 44.2% out of all respondents said that they won't approve Norway's mediation any more. Furthermore, 56% suggested that Norway's role should be replaced with another country like India or Japan. However, Norwegian mediation, from civil society perspective, has relatively failed in their role of strengthening the peace process.

7. Analysis of Norwegian Mediated Peace Process:

Sri Lanka's public debate on external mediation has been an extremely vibrant one, pointing to inherent weaknesses as well as limitations of mediation as practice in conflict resolution. Majority of civil society activist perceives the Norway as a biased mediator. The lack of impartiality is a major criticism against the Norway. According to my research findings, Norwegian mediated peace process in Sri Lanka, gave a small room of space to the civil society voices. But it was the state party- the government- that failed to see the need for an inclusive process- not only civil society even the Head of State was side tracked. Furthermore, the Norwegian-sponsored peace process is very much a bi-lateral one between the two major actors, the government and the LTTE. The lack of other parties' support generated anxieties and those who felt threatened or excluded from the process tried to use different tactics to spoil whole process. Especially the exclusion of Sinhala and Muslim nationalist parties by keeping shut their say from the peace talks has further fuelled volatile activities across the country. According to my analysis, the marginalization of groups and political parties obstructed peace process; especially hard line political parties (including JVP, JHU and SLMC) spoiled the peace process.

8. Conclusion:

The evolution of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict could be compared to a snowball rolling down from a mountain of snow. At the beginning it is small, but as time passes, it develops a momentum of its own, becomes larger and complex. Since 1983 the GOSL had been inclined to explore negotiations as an alternative to militaristic approach. Sri Lanka has experienced three types of mediation. First, big power mediation which was ended in disaster, second, national mediation conducted by President Premadasa which was again ended in failure and the third, invitation to the government of Norway to facilitate the negotiation process. Norway had primarily pursued a strategy based on a communication-facilitation approach. The concern of the GOSL an LTTE, and Norwegian mediators, to preserve the present peace process is understandable and needs to be appreciated.

The 2002 ceasefire agreement has saved thousands of lives and, together with development assistance from the international community; it had given the people of Sri Lanka a real peace dividend. However, none of those attempts had no so far been succeeded to address the root causes of the war and achieve permanent solution. One of the clear characteristics of all those attempts was lack of transparency of process and its restriction to an elite circle. First and foremost suggestion based on the evidence found by this study might be that the participation of the civil society actors at all levels of the peace process will also be helpful. It is also helpful to avoid the spreading of the mistrust against the facilitators or mediators. An examination of spoiler dynamics in the fifth peace process may provide us with clues as to how this process works in Sri Lanka. Spoiler dynamics are multiple in characters and it depends on the convergence of particular interests to coalesce with one another. At the same time, spoilers were also those who have a stake in the peace process but who feel that they have been left out. Both space and structures need to be created to broaden, pluralize and democratize the process of making and building peace, at the negotiation table as well as on the ground. It is important that all segments of political parties, and political leaders from all sides, contribute to a conducive atmosphere for the peace process. Lack of communication is often seen as a major factor in conflict dynamics where misperceptions and mistrust dominate the environment. Therefore, Facilitators and mediators are often necessary to ensure that such misperceptions and misunderstanding are addressed immediately.

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