Peace and Its Impact on National Wealth

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ABSTRACT

“Wars are not fought in the battle field but in the minds of the people”. Hence peace should be established in the minds of the people to take the country to the peaks of prosperity. It is said that conflicts exists within ones own-self, in groups and societies leading to disunity, destruction of national economy. Mind is the root cause of the sorrow and suffering, happiness and peace. Trained mind develops happiness and peace leading to prosperity and growth of national wealth. And untrained mind brings sorrow and suffering leading to destruction of national wealth. The peace, harmony is having positive effect on the growth and development of the nation, similarly conflict and suffering is having negative effect on the growth of the national wealth.

It can be witnessed world over the countries which are fighting for a long-time has destroyed the peace and national wealth. These countries remained as underdeveloped nations in the history. In the entire continents one can witness this phenomenon. Some countries have realized and stopped struggle after total destruction of the national economy. Some countries have realized fast regained the peace to protect the national integrity and wealth of the nation. Ultimately truth and wisdom should prevail that is “peace unity prosperity national wealth building”. Which one to choose? Peace, prosperity or conflict and suffering? It is in the hands of the people of the nation. The overall objective of the study is to identify peace and its impact on national wealth. Particularly, the study intends to examine the impact of conflict on national wealth and to identify the major strategies used to minimize conflicts and establish peace.

Keywords: Peace, Prosperity, Conflict and Suffering, National Wealth.

Introduction

“I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moon shine….War is hell;
General Sherman.”

“Wars are not fought in the battle field but in the minds of the people”. Hence, peace should be established in the minds of the people to take the country to the peaks of prosperity. It is said that conflicts exists within ones own-self, in groups and societies leading to disunity, destruction of national economy. The conflicts internal and external have serious impact on the socio economic development of the nation.

Socio-Psychological Impact of Conflict

Social impact is that the people constantly live in fear, suffer from depression, become helpless, and unable to lead normal healthy life. As a result, they cannot attend to their duties, sincerely; the productivity comes down, affecting the wealth of the nation. There is no regular income as it is constantly disturbed by war situations. In such fearful condition people suffer from hunger, poverty, disease and death.

As Seymour (2003) noted so much less tangible than the physical destruction of war, the effects of conflict on the psychology of individuals and a society are as profound as they are neglected. If the attitudes that lead to conflict are to be mitigated, and if it is taken that psychology drives attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups, then new emphasis must be placed on understanding the social psychology of conflict and its consequences. The suffering and trauma that
are the results of war need to be addressed and prioritised in plans for peace. Effective means for dealing with these less-visible consequences of violent conflict must be developed if a true and sustained peace is to be realised.

**Economic Impact of Peace and Conflict**

In economic front also, the agricultural, industrial, income affects to a great extent. Farmers, abstain, may not grow the crops as they were doing in the normal time. Similarly, in the industries, small and medium scale reduce the production capacity, becomes shortage of material, finance, labour. Many units closed and shut.

Economic development, business and peace are mutually reinforcing. Economic modelling and statistical analysis led by the Institute for Economic Peace (2014) has demonstrated peace to be a key factor in determining wealth creation. Peace advances the economic development of society by fostering conditions that are conducive to business and investment. At the same time, business can play a decisive role in building and strengthening peace through job and wealth creation.

**Peace and Development Relationships**

From the above discussions, it can be seen that there is direct relationship between peace and national development and conflict and destruction of national economy which is being shown hereunder in the form of model.

**Model 1: Model of Peace and Development**

![Diagram of Model 1: Model of Peace and Development]

As it can be seen from the model 1, when there is peace in the society, there is harmony which results in the economic growth and development of the nations. However, if there is no peace; there will be no harmony and eventually there will be no socio economic growth and development of nations.

As it can be seen from model 2, whenever there is conflict in the society; there is disharmony which result in socio economic depression and national destruction. But, when there is no conflict, there is no disharmony and there is no socio economic depression and no national destruction. The two models explain positive aspects of peace and negative aspects of conflict.

**Model 2: Model of Conflict and Destruction**

![Diagram of Model 2: Model of Conflict and Destruction]

**Causes of Conflict**

Most of the time, conflict is political and egoistic. Sometimes, the wars are fought for trivial reasons, to defend their ego. Some of the important causes are boarder disputes, language issues, and ethnic issues etc. Those issues in majority of the cases could have been resolved through discussions but the leaders refuse to discuss, due to ego clash, as a result the conflicts are prolonged for years, seriously affecting health and wealth of the people and nations. In addition, religion has often been
debated as a cause or a cure of conflict. The latest report of Peace and Religion (2014) shows that religion can be a catalyst for peace, as religious groups and communities tend to strengthen the social bonds of citizens. Civic engagement and participation, as well as higher group membership, such as sports or religious groups, corresponds with slightly higher levels of peace and can strengthen the resilience of societies.

Diversions of funds are one of the major causes for the conflict. The rulers, who are involved in the conflicts, allocate more funds, for purchase of arms and ammunitions. The budget that is allocated for the socio economic development of the people is diverted to meet the war related activities. Most of the people in the war affected areas are living in abject poverty, or below poverty line. War, which was once a method of obtaining trade by violence, now is profitable trade in itself. The manufacture of lethal weapons and provisions, make huge profits, some of which are used to pay the supporters “war for this and for that” with always a new excuse and a new bogey to frighten timid objectors. Time was when nations believed in the prescription that if you want peace you must prepare for war, but a survey of the international events during the last few decades will disapprove the efficiency of the prescription (Piyadassi, 1991).

Causes of Conflict and Its Implications: Some Evidences

There are several conflicts all over the world which has affected the life of the people and the economy of the nation. The border conflict, religions, language, ethnic conflicts seriously affected the economy as a result people are facing untold sufferings. It is not only in one continent, the conflict have affected the health and wealth in many continents. The conflict in African countries such as Ethiopia-Eritrea, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Angola, Libya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt and in addition to that the other countries like Syria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan are discussed hereunder.

African Countries

Territorial disputes, armed conflict, civil wars, violence and the collapse of governments and ultimately the state have come to represent the greatest challenges to peace, security and stability (Ikejiaku and Staffordshire, 2009). The factors that cause conflict in Africa includes: economic, political, population, climate and environment, ethnic composition, militarization, poor growth and political corruption. On the African continent, these threats have been much more pronounced and indeed have taken on a scale, intensity and frequency that have defied even the imagination of the greatest science fiction.

Despite decades of conflict, death and tragedy, coverage of issues in Africa has often been ignored, oversimplified, or excessively focused on limited aspects. Deeper analysis, background and context has often been lacking, so despite what seems like constant images of starving children in famines, news of billions in aid to Africa from generous donor countries, the background context and analysis is often missing. Whether aid makes the situation worse, or why there is famine and hunger in Africa when African nations are exporting crops to other parts of the world are rarely asked by the mainstream (Shah, 2000).

a) Ethiopia- Eritrea Conflict

Africa in general, has suffered from artificial borders drawn by former imperial and colonial rulers, akin to what is usually attributed to Imperial Britain as the "divide and conquer" policy, but practiced by almost all power brokers throughout history, ancient and modern. A combination of Italy drawing the maps region and later, cold war support for dictators, has been part of the historical contributory factors, amongst others, that have led to troubles of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The May 1998 - June 2000 which was resulted because of border dispute has resulted in loss of human life and economy. More than 100,000 deaths and millions of dollars diverted from much needed development into military activities and weapons procurements. In addition, while the conflict raged on, in both Ethiopia and Eritrea severe drought threatened a famine as bad as the one in 1984 (Shah, 2000).

b) South Sudan

After decades of brutal civil war that left two and a half million dead, the devastated and vastly underdeveloped southern part of Sudan secured independence in 2011. The world’s youngest nation came into existence amid great challenges. As per the report of Centre for American Progress (2014)
on December 15, 2013, tensions between factions loyal to President Salva Kiir, of the Dinka ethnic group, and those aligned with his former Vice President, Riek Machar, of the Nuer ethnic group, exploded into fighting on the streets of Juba, the capital city. South Sudan’s dramatic return to war has torn communities apart and left countless thousands dead. As of September 2014, 1.8 million people were still too afraid to return to their homes. Even through humanitarians have given assistance to over 3.1 million people in South Sudan, they estimate that at least 2.2 million were still facing either crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. This puts them at just one level under levels during a “famine” or “humanitarian catastrophe.”

c) Somalia Conflict

Over the past two decades the nature of the Somali crisis and the international context within which it is occurring has been constantly changing. It has mutated from a civil war in the 1980s, through state collapse, clan factionalism and war lordism in the 1990s, to a globalized ideological conflict in the first decade of the new millennium. Somalia has had no effective government since 1991 (Nchi, 2012). The country has suffered a long history of failed governments, famine, wars, lootings, piracy, and bomb attacks. The 1991-92 famine killed over 240,000 people, and history is in danger of repeating itself. The current culprit is Al-Shabaab, a hyper-violent ultra-extremist Somali jihadist group made up of mostly forced conscripts.

In relation to the above, the three years from 2006-08 were catastrophic for Somalis. Military occupation, a violent insurgency, rising jihadism and massive population displacement has reversed the incremental political and economic progress achieved by the late 1990s in south central Somalia. With 1.3 million people displaced by fighting since 2006, 3.6 million people in need of emergency food aid, and 60,000 Somalis a year fleeing the country, the people of south central Somalia face the worst humanitarian crisis since the early 1990s (Bradbury and Healy, 2010). In June 2011, tens of thousands of Somali refugees flooded camps in Ethiopia and Kenya - at a rate of more than 3,000 new arrivals per day. Three-quarters of a million people are at immediate risk of famine; another 750,000 are refugees in neighboring countries, and 4 million half the total population is in need of emergency aid. It is a calamity that could join the ranks of the Rwanda genocide and the Darfur crisis in terms of scale and human suffering (Centre for American Progress, 2014).

d) Nigeria

The Niger Delta in Nigeria has been the attention of environmentalists, human rights activists and fair trade advocates around the world. The trial and hanging of environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Ogoni ethnic minority made world-wide attention. So too did the non-violent protests of the Ogoni people. The activities of large oil corporations such as Mobil, Chevron, Shell, Elf, Agip have raised many concerns and criticisms (Shah, 2010). Since the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls two months ago and subsequent international promises of assistance to Nigeria, attacks by Islamist Boko Haram militants have been relentless. This year has been without doubt the most violent stage of the conflict so far, with at least 3,300 people killed in Boko Haram-related violence since January (Ross, 2014).

e) Angola

There have recently been numerous civil wars and conflicts going in Africa, some of which are still going on, including Angola, which has seen an estimated 500,000 people killed since 1989 and an estimated 3 million refugees. It is also being torn apart due to resources such as diamonds and offshore oil, with various factions fighting for these prizes, supported by multinational corporations and other governments (Shah, 2000).

f) Libya

The crisis in Libya comes in the context of wider unrest throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The surge of what looks like spontaneous and ground up pro-democracy protests has been spreading throughout a region long controlled by authoritarian regimes from left and right of the political spectrum, and both pro and anti-West. Reaching crisis point in August, conflict events continued to escalate across Libya. Conflict events throughout 2014 have mostly involved political militias targeting unarmed civilians. This is due largely to the reactionary targeting of off-duty military and security personnel, who are attacked in their civilian capacity. The conflict landscape of August
reflects the growing cleavages of a polarised society punctuated by riots and protest movements. These protests have advocated political reform catalysed by the eruption of communal militia interactions (ACLED, 2014).

g) Democratic Republic of Congo

Described by some as Africa’s First World War, the conflict in the DRC (formerly known as Zaire) has involved seven nations. The Central African country is bordered by numerous nations with whom it has had conflicts. There have been a number of complex reasons, including conflicts over basic resources such as water, access and control over rich minerals and other resources as well as various political agendas. This has been fuelled and supported by various national and international corporations and other regimes which have an interest in the outcome of the conflict. Since the outbreak of fighting in August 1998, some 5.4 million people have died and it has been the world’s deadliest conflict since World War II. The vast majorities have actually died from non-violent causes such as malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition all typically preventable in normal circumstances, but have come about because of the conflict (Geneva Academy, 2014).

h) Cote d’Ivoire

Following elections in Cote d’Ivoire in October 2010, both President Laurent Gbagbo and opposition candidate, Alassane Ouattara, claimed victory. International observers agreed that the Ouattara had won, but Gbagbo refused to accept this. Negotiations failed and while the world’s attention was elsewhere, the situation became volatile and violent outbursts turned into the country’s second civil war. Forces supporting Ouattara have swept through the country and Gbagbo’s position looks precarious while he remains defiant. At the same time, possibly a million people are thought to have fled their homes, about 100,000 of which have crossed over into neighbouring Liberia. Thousands of civilians have been killed in what observers have found to be mass human rights violations. There have also been reports of massacres and mass graves (Shah, 2011).

i) Syria and Egypt

The year of 2013 has expectedly been a terrible year for several Arab nations. It has been terrible because the promise of greater freedoms and political reforms has been reversed, most violently in some instances, by taking a few countries down the path of anarchy and complete chaos. Syria and Egypt are two cases in point. Syria has been hit the hardest. For months, the United Nations has maintained that over 100,000 people have been killed in the 33 months of conflict. More recently, the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights concluded that at least 125,835, of which more than third of them are civilians, have been killed. The UN’s humanitarian agency (OCHA) says that millions of Syrians living in perpetual suffering are in need of aid, and this number will reach 9.3 million by the end of next year. There are currently 2.4 million Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. The number will nearly double to 4.1 million by the conclusion of next year (Baroud, 2014).

In case of Egypt also, violent repression of protests over unemployment and lack of political freedom left more than 100 people dead. However, the extent of the violence did not amount to an armed conflict of a non-international character governed by international humanitarian law. As a result of the protests, Hosni Mubarak announced he was stepping down as president on 11 February 2011, ending three decades in power (RULAC, 2011).

j) Sri Lanka

The conflicts in Sri Lanka prolonged for more than two decades without effective solutions. In May 2009, the government claimed final victory against the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers), a non-state armed group formed in 1977. They had been confined to a small coastal area in the north-east of the country, and their positions were reported to have been completely overrun. Most of the fighting took place in the north, but the conflict also penetrated the heart of Sri Lankan society with Tamil Tiger rebels carrying out devastating suicide bombings in Colombo in the 1990s. The violence killed more than 60,000 people, damaged the economy and harmed tourism in one of South Asia's most potentially prosperous societies. The result is that the people suffer from hunger, and poverty and economy derailed (Geneva Academy, 2009).
k) Thailand  

The conflict in Thailand, seriously affected the tourism on which the people have depended for their livelihood. Zawacki (2012) states that political turmoil and a decades-old conflict between the security forces and non-state armed groups in the south of Thailand have increased since 2004. The conflict began in January 2004 and has pitted variously armed and organized ethnic Malays nearly all Muslims against the predominantly Buddhist Thai state and its security forces. Over 5000 people have been killed and thousands more injured.

l) Afghanistan  

Afghanistan became a key Cold War battleground after the Soviet Union invaded in 1979 to prop up a pro-communist regime. However, after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, civil war continued and the US lost interest in the country. The emergence of the Taliban – originally a group of Islamic scholars brought a measure of stability after nearly two decades of conflict. With its more than 3,000 civilian deaths, 2011 was the bloodiest year for civilians in Afghanistan since 2001 (Afghanistan, 2012).

m) Iraq  

Iraq is engaged in a non-international armed conflict involving a variety of insurgent groups, including militia forces operating along largely sectarian lines. The level of violence has been intense, with one of the biggest surveys so far of Iraqis who have died violently since the US-led invasion of 2003 putting the figure in a range of between 104,000 and 223,000. In addition, 4,422 coalition troops had been killed since the start of the military action.

The conflict between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and affiliated forces, on the one hand, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and associated armed groups, on the other, continues to take a heavy toll on civilians. Overall, at least 24,015 civilians have been killed or injured in Iraq during the first eight months of 2014. Of these, at least 8,493 civilians were killed and 15,782 were wounded. From the spread of the conflict from Anbar to other areas of Iraq, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 11,159 civilian casualties between 1 June and 31 August. This number includes at least 4,692 civilians killed, and 6,467 wounded. The actual numbers could be much higher. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine, after fleeing their homes or who remained trapped in areas under ISIL control or in areas of conflict are unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people have been particularly vulnerable (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, 2014).

n) Pakistan  

As the report of Amnesty International, (2010) since independence, the Pakistani military has fought three wars against India, several border skirmishes with Afghanistan, and an extended border skirmish with India in 1999 and is currently conducting military operations against armed groups along the border areas of Afghanistan. There have also been occasional reports of skirmishes between Pakistani and Afghan forces patrolling their respective borders, which could reach the status of an international armed conflict. There have been non-international armed conflicts and internal disturbances and tensions in Pakistan for many years. According to the Ploughshares report, conflicts in several areas were said to have killed upwards of 1,650 people in 2006, 1,300 in 2007 and between 11,000 and 12,000 in 2009, when the operation in the Swat Valley began.

Major Implications of the Conflicts  

Violent conflict has devastating effects across a range of areas, many of which have lasting impacts. There are clear detrimental effects of conflict on the reduction of poverty and hunger, on primary education, on the reduction of child mortality, and on access to water. Internal conflicts harm males and females in equal measures. More intensive fighting leads to much longer recovery times.

**Human toll:** Violent conflict results in loss of life, disablement, rape and sexual violence, displacement and forced migration, the spread of disease and famine. Loss of life continues into the future with the spread of HIV/AIDS and the presence of landmines.

**Social systems:** Armed conflicts disrupt and destroy families and community life. Family systems are undermined through the deliberate targeting of women, the recruitment of children to join ranks of rebel groups, massive displacements, and losses of life and property.
**Political governance:** Violent conflict impacts negatively on the rule of law, state capacity, and democratic political processes. Corruption and criminality often take root, and the influence of military actors rises. Politically excluded groups are increasingly marginalised and targeted.

**Socioeconomic costs:** Infrastructure, capital stock and household assets are destroyed during conflict, investment declines, and household and national incomes drop. The loss of livelihoods, due in part to the destruction of infrastructure and natural resources, and lack of employment opportunities coincides with a weakened social safety net and a decline in the capacity of the state to provide services, such as health and education. Socioeconomic indicators demonstrate that impacts of conflict include declining literacy, a drop in life expectancy and increased infant mortality. The collapse of education systems and the loss of educated populations (due to death or displacement) have negative long-term implications for human capital and economic productivity.

**Social capital:** The processes and impact of violent conflict weakens and in some cases destroys the social fabric of societies. Conflict disrupts social relations and can result in social dislocation, and a decline in interpersonal and communal group trust. While social capital within a group may be strengthened, social capital across groups is weakened by the destruction of the norms and values that underlie cooperation.

**Socio-psychological:** Experiencing violent conflict can be extremely traumatic. Many war-affected persons suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome, which contributes to poor mental and physical health, reduced quality of life, and in some cases, greater difficulties in work, education and family life - and increased violent behaviour. Women who have endured sexual violence can suffer rejection in their own families and communities. Youth and children are at particular risk: research has shown that experiencing violence at an early age results in higher risk of perpetuating violence. Feelings of humiliation and betrayal, and the desire for revenge, can also perpetuate a cycle of violence in which ‘underlings’ rise to power, engage in extreme acts, inflicting indignities on those who had done the same to them.

**Legacy of large-scale human rights abuses:** Violent conflict results from and produces a breakdown in law and order and the perpetration of human rights abuses on a mass scale – by government, non-state actors, and in the case of transnational conflicts, external actors. Addressing this legacy and finding the appropriate methods to come to terms with it is a key challenge in conflict-affected societies. Left unaddressed, there is the risk that grievances will persist and societies will remain locked in conflict dynamics.

**Regional/global impact:** Violent conflict has various effects in neighbouring countries and beyond as arms, drugs, conflict resources and refugees spill over the border. Mass refugee migration in particular can place a large economic burden on host countries. Neighbouring countries may also suffer from damage to cross-border infrastructure and the environmental impacts of conflict.

**Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Then how to end the war and build the nation?

It is a million dollar questions. All the nations who are involved in the war should resolve to wage war against hunger, poverty, illiteracy, disease, and ignorance.

- The budget allocated to the war related activities should be drastically reduced, and more funds invested to develop the education, agriculture, industry and generate more employment for the people for self sustenance.
- In-depth research should be conducted to find out the common causes for these conflicts and preventive measures, continues peace meetings, dialogues, conferences, seminars etc to be conducted to avoid conflicts and establish peace.
- People should say no to the conflicts and involve, pressures the rulers to allot more funds and focus on more on developmental activities, eliminating the common enemies, of mankind, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, ignorance and make world peaceful, where everyone can live by harmony, equality.
- The UNO should make concerted effort to end the conflicts by inviting the parties to the table for discussions and see that the peace is established without delay.
If the majority powers do not change heart we will have to face unparalleled human tragedy. The world is in dread of war. War would mean the complete destruction of the human race. A change of heart by the big powers is the only solution to world peace. All genuine peace conferences and prayer meetings will be instrumental in carrying the message of world peace to the people at the helm of others.

The UNO has considerable potential for conflict prevention and conflict resolution, but it is obvious that it has a limited mandate when it comes to violent conflicts, often defined as internal disputes. Over the years, the UN has developed considerable competence in peace-keeping, but not in peace-making or in peace-building. It is therefore necessary to continue exploring ways to advance the UN's role as peacemaker.

The United Nations Organization is making effort to bring the parties in conflict to the table for the discussions but the parties do not listen and pursue their egoistic goals. The destruction caused due to war cannot be set right in a year or two. It takes decades to restructure the economy.

**Conclusion**

The world is in deep suffering because of the conflicts. The people are the sufferers because of the internal and external conflicts. People are undergoing untold sufferings due to the poverty, unemployment and starvation which are the results of unending wars. The solution is that the people in the world should say no to the conflicts and wars. The international organizations have to exert more effort to resolve the conflict and establish peace.

All being suffer in one way or another. Suffering may be physical or mental or both. All know the pain of starvation, of want of clothing, want of shelter and the pain of disease. Death is a blow to all alike. So let us not add to the suffering of others but bring amity to those who are in enmity; unity to those who are divided; peace and harmony to the confused and restless. Ultimately the peace should prevail for the welfare and prosperity of the mankind in the entire world.

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