Efficacy of Reconciliation Approaches in Building Peace

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Abstract:

Background: The concept of reconciliation can be defined as a process of transforming post-conflict situations into peaceful atmospheres. The developments of the field of reconciliation have incorporated mercy, truth, justice and peace into reconciliation approaches. It is a transformative process of restoring the relationships between former adversaries and victims. To enhance this transformative process, several approaches of reconciliation have been introduced. The main objective of this study is to examine the efficacy of reconciliation approaches in building peace in transformative societies.

Materials and Methods: This study is mainly focused on secondary data and the data will be gathered through books, journal articles, reports, and other academic publications. This study is a qualitative data analysis and the content analysis method is used to analyze data.

Results: The approaches of reconciliation; structural and insitutional, socio-psychological and spiritual or holistic addressing numerous issues related to transformative societies. The structural approach dealing with security, economic, political cooperation between disputed parties. The socio-psychological approach cncerns on the emotional and behavioral elements on relationships of former adversaries and victims. The spiritual or holistic approach highlights the importance of rehailiation through spiritual and holistic elements. The combination of these approaches defined the smooth application of reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

Conclusion: The approaches of reconciliation clearly reflects the efficacy of relevant contribution towards fostering peace in coomunites. It directs the transformative societies in shaping durable peace and healing. The complexity in dealing with the crucial issues after a hostle situation can be address through approaches of reconciliation.

Key Word: **Reconcliation, Approaches of Reconciliation, transformative societies, Peace**

I.   INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation is a concept which has been defined very vaguely in the field of international relations and peace studies. It has been defined as a process in which a goal should be achieved and as a mechanism which directs the transitional societies into peaceful atmospheres. It has been referred to as acceptance and repentance from the perpetrators and forgiveness from the victims as non-lethal, co-existence as democratic decision making and reintegration and as encompassing four concepts namely truth, mercy, peace and justice concepts which in themselves are difficult to define (Mobekk, 2000). A comprehensive definition would suggest that reconciliation is about building or transforming relationships damaged by violent acts and coercion not only among people and groups in society but also between people, citizens and the state (Sanchez & Rognvik, 2012). Reconciliation is a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace (Brounéus, 2007). A conceptualize definition illustrates that reconciliation is the relationship-building process underline the importance of reconciliation as a process that requires the restoration of the relationship between former adversaries which will pave the way for long term peaceful coexistence encapsulates concepts like peace, truth, justice, mercy and healing (Dilek, 2012). According to Laura Stovel (1998), reconciliation goals fall into two distinct groups of activities that occur at different levels of the peace process. One kind of reconciliation involves people coming together or coming together with an agreement. Reconciliation is an ambient process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness and healing. It means searching for a way to live alongside former enemies, not certainly to love them or forgive them or forget the past as a whole, but to coincide with them to develop a level of cooperation necessary to share society with them so that everyone can have preferable endurance (Bloomfield, et al., 2003).

Reconciliation is a complex platform which cannot be defined under one perspective and definitions of reconciliation widely vary due to its closer linkages to peace, justice and restoratives justice. However, there are some common features which describe the main characterisics of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a process

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aims at rebuilding relationships, healing the wounds to associate with truth, mercy, peace, justice and acknowledge past sufferings and lead to sustainable peace in transitional societies. According to Johan Galtung (2005), reconciliation is a processed aimed at putting an end to the conflict between two parties which includes closure of hostile acts, a process of healing and rehabilitation of both perpetrators and victims. Apart from the widely diverse definitions, the concept of reconciliation has been discussed in different aspects of society with dissimilar perspectives. Reconciliation has been broadly argued in aspects like religion, socio-culture, economy, politics, psychology and judiciary. The religious aspect of reconciliation is coupled with the main principles of Buddhism and Christianity. Those principles underline the compassion, mercy and forgiveness in the reconciliation framework. It gradually develops a notion that the victims should be fully granted retribution and reconciliation is regarded as the ultimate fulfilment of justice. Socio-cultural aspects shape the attitudes, behaviours and the beliefs of people to make relevant decision making according to the socio-cultural values. Reconciliation is an authoritative trope governing transitional justice, it is propagated, promoted and enforced by NGOs, international flows of reconciliation experts, and newly proliferating centers funding research and offering research and offering assistance to states undergoing transition whether from conflict to peace or to more democratic governance (Moon, 2004).

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The main purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of reconciliation approaches in building peace. The study is mainly focused on secondary data and the data will be gathered through books, journal articles, reports of United Nations and NGO proceedings. The study is a qualitative data analysis and content analysis method will be used to analyze the gathered data.

III. RESULTS

The concept of reconciliation is closely attracted to other aspects in a variety of fields. Reconciliation has a great link with religious aspects in which it promotes the process of mercy and forgiveness. Apart from the religious aspect reconciliation has close roots with socio-cultural, economic, psychological, political and juridical variations. The concept of reconciliation has been widely discussed as a concept as well as an approach. The concept of reconciliation can be addressed politically as an matter of coexistence and interdependency; psychologically as an issue of socio affect within interpersonal relations and intersubjectively; judicially as an culmination of restorative justice and rehabilitation; philosophically as an issue of resentment and forgivability and religiously as an issue of healing, mercy and satisfaction (Krondorfer, 2018). Reconciliation as an approach is consists of main three perspectives; structural and institutional, socio-psychological and spiritual or holistic. In this sense, reconciliation is highly connected towards explaining the nature of reconciliation and drew its specific attention to structural, socio-psychological and spiritual elements.

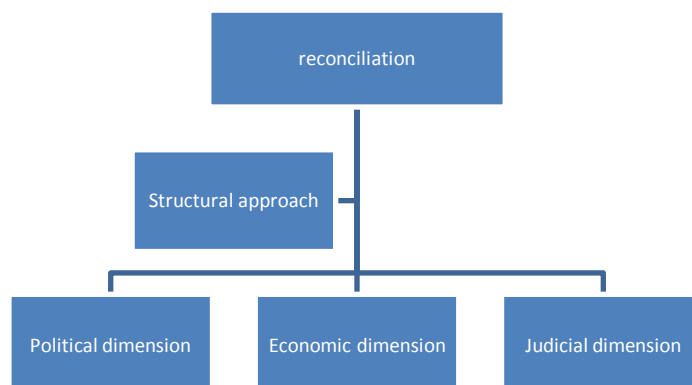Figure 2.3: Approaches of Reconciliation
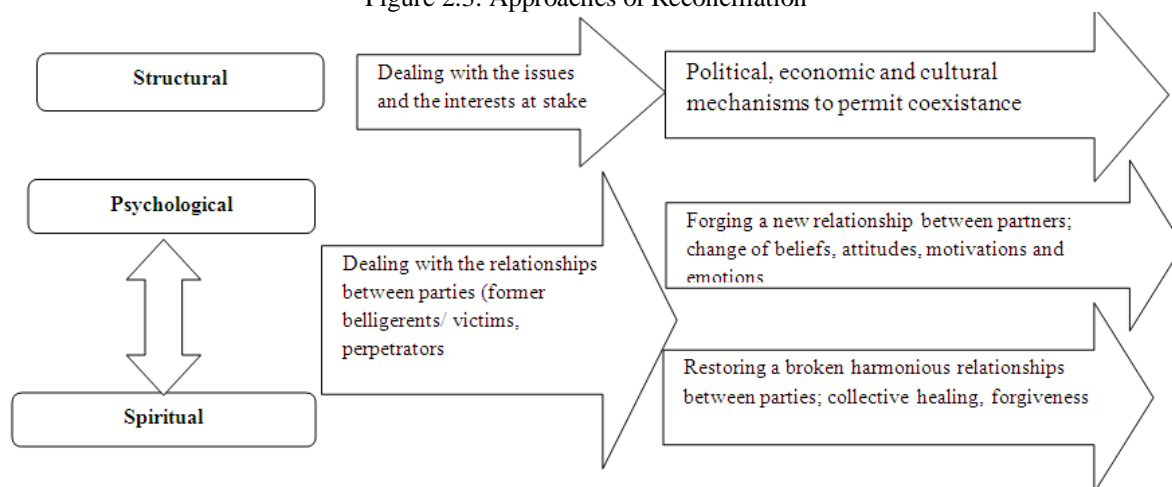
Source: (Shamini, 2014)

The structural approach mainly pays attention to security, economic independence, political cooperation between parties and justice for past injustices and psychological aspect emphasizes the cognitive and emotional elements of process or rapprochement between former adversaries. The spiritual approach of reconciliation heals the victims and offenders in the process of rehabilitation. The combination of these three approaches defines the process of reconciliation.

2.8.1. Structural approach

The structural approach of reconciliation aims at establishing institutional frameworks to both parties to agree upon mutual agreements for peaceful settlements after acts of violence. The combined structural and institutional conditions like high-level interaction and cooperation, joint organizations, social learning and common grounds are needed to avoid possible disagreements and conflictual situations. Structural mechanisms can take the form of confidence-building measures like exchanging representatives in various political, economic and cultural spheres, maintaining formal and regular channels of communication and consultation between public officials. The structural approach mainly concerns institutional reforms with the purpose of integrating all the groups in a democratic polity, restore the rights of people and favour a fair distribution of wealth (Rosoux & Anstey, 2017). Therefore it requires political integration where all the parties are included in the political system to gain democratic values, justice, human rights, economic opportunities and equality. Kelman (1999) identified five components of reconciliation; resolution of the conflict, mutual acceptance and respect for the other group's life and welfare, development of a sense of security and dignity for each group, the establishment of patterns of cooperative interaction in different spheres, the institutionalization of conflict resolution mechanisms (Shamini, 2014). It illustrates that a standard solution should be accepted by both the parties, and both parties should respect the rights of others. These mechanisms may trigger the building cooperative interaction and institutionalization as the components of the conflict resolutions. This process can be further strengthening through reconstruction, re-stabilization and rehabilitation. Most states practised different frameworks combining the relevant components to their local political, economic and judicial policies of the country. Therefore most scholars refer political, economic and judicial aspects as the central dimension of the structural approach of reconciliation.

2.8.1.1. Political dimension

Under the structural approach of reconciliation, political dimension plays a pivotal role. Political dimension has the ability to encourage reconciliation through developing different structures of political governance, democratic structures and other equal treatments under the political structures. The practice of democratic values can strengthen past violent acts and wrongdoings. The mutual trust that can be accomplished upon the democratic institutions can be an excellent sign to create a long term reconciliation attempt. This level is the initial platform where the other dimensions, like economic and judicial dimensions, can be restored better. Democratization process incorporates with various measures like electoral systems which are free and fair for all parties, new distribution in political power, restoration of human and civil rights of the people, the establishment of new democratic political institutions and organizations, enforcement of democratic principles and rules of governance, broad political participation and replace the political leaders who have been pretreated during the conflict (Shamini, 2014). The political dimension of reconciliation should be conceptualized in involving the re-establishment of mutual respect for the rule of law (Murphy, 2007).

The South African Reconciliation barometer introduced six principle indicators for reconciliation; political culture, human security, cross-cutting political relationships, dialogue, race relations and historical confrontation (Little & Maddison, 2017). The successful implementation of the political dimension lies with the politicians or leaders of a state and the entire population in different levels. Therefore, the negotiation process of a reconciliation process should be backed by middle level and ground-level leaders and societal organizations. However, the primary purpose of the political dimension is to enforce political and governance to enhance fair institutions to deal with the past wrongdoings in an equal manner to all the parties involved.

2.8.1.2. Economic dimension

The economic aspect of a state can be a cause of war, cause of reoccurrence of war or sometimes the best way to reconcile the post-conflict societies. Barbara Walter explains two specific factors that cause a war or a reoccurrence of a war. Firstly, people may feel that continuing life in the current condition is worse than the possibility of death in war (Brounéus, 2007). Secondly, people may not be delighted to have a closed political system which does not permit change. This explanation suggests that economic wellbeing and the openness of the political system can prevent the occurrence of war and conflicts. The negative economic growth rates and the low level of economic standards of the states can easily prone to war and conflicts. Therefore, economic developments and economic progress can facilitate reconciliation in the long run. It is the key for long-lasting peace in the future, and economic decentralization, land reforms, investments, financial assistance and a well-organized economic plan can further encourage the peace process.

The process of compensation and truth commissions of reconciliation can only be effectively implemented when the state is enriched with economic developments and economic progress. Sometimes victims may not be happy with their access to education, job opportunities, medical care and peaceful society. They may frustrate from the atrocities happened, and worth of commercial value can positively transform their opinions and views regarding future activities. Moreover, money cannot replace the loss of beloved ones, but it can be the central resource of surviving through the darkest days of one's life. The TRC of South Africa was recommended to distribute economic reparations for the victims identified by the commission against apartheid. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Chile appointed a specific commission to precisely examine the crimes and recommend reparation mechanisms for victims in 2004. The commission recommended a monthly pension scheme for victims with other symbolic reparation alternatives (OHCHR, 2008). Between 2000- 2008, over $ 113 million was spent on compensatory allowances for a member of the families of political prisoners, and between 2005 to 2008, over $ 103 million was spent of the children of victims in Chile (International Center for Transitional Justice , 2009). Therefore, the reparation process can trigger the living standards of the victims as well.

In Bosnia, a community garden project was initiated in 2000 to develop a supportive space for all the ethnic groups. In this project, people from different ethnic groups could work together to grow food for themselves and their families. It brought different ethnic groups of the conflict together to work towards a collective goal. Bosnia developed this community garden project regularly with the parties who are directly engaged to the conflicts. In a Rwandan town, the liberated prisoners of the genocide of Rwanda started a campaign to rebuild the houses of the relatives of people who lost their lives in the Rwandan genocide. One member of that association stated that "We wanted to show the people of Kinigi that we had changed, we heard that many still had nowhere to live after losing their homes in the genocide. some of us were worried about revenge, but when we arrived, people gave us blankets and tools to help us. They were happy because they didn't think that we would behave in this way, we now feel a part of the community" (Blagojevic, 2004). Apart from reparations, these kinds of economic transformation projects can heal the wounds and have the ability to secure them with economic satisfaction. Most of the national and international NGOs are working towards this end to meet the economic dimensions of reconciliation.

2.8.1.3. Judicial dimension

Under the structural approach, the question of how to deal with the past atrocities and how to punish the perpetrators is a complex and critical process. The need for justice and peace will always urge for truth commissions, tribunals and fair justice mechanisms. This is where the reconciliation can bloom in a proper standard to verify its previous work in political and economic dimensions. Brouneus (2003) pointed out the framework of justice of Rama Mani. This framework is consists of three dimensions of justice for peacebuilding; the rule of law, rectification justice and distributive justice. Basically, the rule of law of a state should be restored after the acts of war. The restoration of law is a challenging task to cope with past atrocities. Rectification justice deals with the injustices and pain of the people during the wartime. This phenomenon is essential in several aspects and can be combined in three specific perspectives; countries bound by international law to prosecute past abuses, establish legitimacy, stabilize peace, and psychologically heal trauma. Distributive justice is addressing other injustices based on socio-economic and culture to prevent further uprisings. A state should decide what kind of a justice system to be implemented, and reconciliation requires judicial restoration in a way to make possible developments. In this sense, scholars highly pay attention to retributive and restorative justice.

Retributive justice can be considered as criminal, procedural and legislative justice. It became a fascinating scholarly debate recently. Retributive justice model was deployed since the end of the Second World War when the Nuremberg trial was established. Under the provisions of retributive justice, acts are defined as a violation of the law. Reconciliation belongs to the reparative process and deals with broken relations, and when the positive other is violated, the society urges for punishments for perpetrators via police, court and jail systems

(Nordquist, 2006). Solely it deals with the past atrocities and punishes the responsible parties for such atrocities. The supporters of retributive justice mechanism believe that prosecuting perpetrators for their offences is necessary to avoid a culture of impunity (Kent, 2009). Therefore, punishing the offenders may buildup relief and security among the victims with a sense that finally the justice is granted to them. Arguments in favour of retributive justice are that prosecuting and punishing offenders publicly acknowledges wrong-doing and wrong-doers, provide justice for victims individualizes guilt, reduces the risk of private revenge, and serves as a deterrent against future such abuses (Idris, 2016).

Restorative justice is also known as transitional or reparative justice. This process was popular in Canada and United States in the 1970s. Restorative justice centres on the idea that justice must involve an effort to address the harm caused by wrongdoing and that prosecution and penal sanction through criminal courts are not the only or the best means to achieve this (Clampa & Doak, 2012). Restorative justice ontology is the belief that even though people commit evil acts, they are not themselves bad people. If they take full responsibility for what they have done, they can become full members of society again (Stovel, 1998). Lambourne (2009) pointed out that restorative justice mechanisms such as victim-offender reconciliation circle sentencing and community conferencing are suggested as the best means of promoting reconciliation and crime prevention, either in conjunction with or as a replacement for punishment through the formal legal system. It focuses on crimes as a conflict between individuals and other parties like victims, perpetrators and society. The primary purpose of restorative justice is to resolve the conflictive relationships. Justice is the combination of transforming a conflictual past into a peace with the promotion of reconciliation. Restorative justice is widely connected with the truth commissions and trying to reintegrate the offenders or criminals in the community via apologies, reparations, payments, and truth commissions to help them realise their own misconduct. Mostly, the restorative justice mechanisms are interconnected with the traditional local mechanisms of the community. Moreover, restorative justice can provide mechanisms in which the public can gather together to demand accountability for past wrongdoings, thus empowering individuals and fostering democratic development (Kent, 2009). Restorative justice feeds into reconciliatory political that seeks, on the one hand, transform the national polity and simultaneously signal to the international community their readiness to belong to an international democratic order (Moon, 2004).

2.8.2. Psychological approach

The structural approach of reconciliation such as political, economic and judicial dimensions can solve the material damages of life. The psychological healing or psychological health is much challenging than the dimensions of structural approach, after a conflict or a war. The structural approach mechanisms can be implemented quickly with the help of sustainable psychological repertoire (Rosoux & Anstey, 2017). Most of the time, psychological repertoire can call a profound change in the public sphere. The victims of war can be psychologically tortured, and the painful experiences of past atrocities can bring flashbacks even after the end of a conflict. Therefore, psychological upbringing is essential in building broken relations due to conflict and healing of the wounded souls is an important task. Easing psychological trauma is a long-term process where it closely links with the reconciliation process. It can be considered as an emotional change with a variety of diversity matters. The parties to the conflict have experienced trauma or atrocities in different atmospheres, and they may suffer from it differently. Rosoux (2017) pointed out that the spiritual approach connects with a psychological approach by asserting the practice of forgiveness for the adversary's misdeed. Through this combination, the building of relationships between the former belligerents, victims and perpetrators to advance a new relationship and transform their emotions, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and opinions. This psychological change of a society usually starts with the minority. It is a slow process and eventually changes the belief systems and attitudes of them towards the other parties. The transformation of relationships does not occur in the same way, and this slow and arduous process is interconnected, but their vision of the transformation process is diverging (Rosoux, 2009).

2.8.3. Spiritual Approach

The spiritual approach attempts to understand how parties can restore a broken harmonious relationship between the disputed parties. It leads to forgiveness and attempts to build the spirit of mutual truth. The spiritual approach of reconciliation has a significant relationship with religious perspectives. The term reconciliation has strong religious relations from different religious perceptions. The religious and traditional communities can be engaged in the reconciliation process to improve the outstanding peace frameworks. It is easier to heal community relationships across a broad spectrum of society. The instances where the communities have shared values in a religious context, the opposite party also brought together to be reconciled. The foundation of Catholic doctrine describes that reconciliation as penance, forgiveness and confession. Brouneus (2003) stated that one approach of the Bible is the concept of justice that can be seen as interpersonal reconciliation focuses on the concepts of compassion, mercy and forgiveness. In Africa, forgiveness rituals have a strong healing effect

in building new relationships, and it is believed that the perpetrators committed the wrongdoing due to the person's possession of the evil spirit in their body (Masika, 2014). According to the traditions of Buddhism, the components of the middle path such as acceptance, tolerance and compassion, plays a significant role in shaping the reconciliation paradigm. Sometimes victims argue that confessing and forgiving is not applicable with their religious background and if the wrongdoers should be responsible for the acts they have committed. The teachings of religions mostly motivate to manage conflicts, forgiving the past offences and building the divided societies. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, after the apartheid movement popularized confession and forgiveness as an essential part of achieving reconciliation (Lundy, et al., 2018).

IV. DISCUSSION

Reconciliation as a process have interlinked with approaches of structural and institutional, socio-psychological and spiritual and holistic. The structural approach cpncerned on security, economic independence, political cooperation between disputed parties. The dimensions of structural approach political, economic and judicial aspects enhance the reconciliation initiatives in a variety of fields. The comined output of the elements of structural approach provide justice for past injustices of conflictual societies. The socio-psychological approach consider about cognitive and emotaional elements of the process between former adversaries. Spiritual or holistic approach of reconciliation heal the victims and offenders wth the process of rehabilitation. The rapprochement process of reconciliation at the first level implement structural changes in macro level by the politicians. Secondly, in the intermediate level, people to people linkages may develop, and schools, NGOs, media and local councils may play a critical role. In the third level, it concerns about individuals at the micro-level. This is the most critical stage where individuals are all about reconciliation.

V. CONCLUSION

Reconciliation can be defined as a process modifying the transitional societies into peaceful atmospheres. The concept of reconciliation is interconnected with the concepts like truth, mercy, peace and justice. Reconciliation process of a state is the unique platform to restore the relations between former adversaries or disputed parties. The conduct of reconciliation can take different approaches and each approach is significantly addressing the crucial midway hassels of reconciliation frameworks. The usage of reconciliation approaches can lead to specify issues to be addressed after a hostile situation. Therefore, reconciliation ca be regraded as an adjustable cell to promote peace, mercy, justice and truth. The performance of the approaches of reconciliation may depend upon the expertise, financial strengthen and accountability.

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