

Peace and Conflict Studies : A Global Perspective

Dr.U.Sarangi*

***The author is an officer in Government of India, New Delhi**

Abstract

The research paper entitled '*Peace and Conflict Studies : A Global Perspective*' defines peace as an investment, focuses on integration between peace, economic behaviour and sustainable development. The research carried out by SPRI, Stockholm and United Nations relating to peace and conflict management, prevention and resolution is a unique global effort to determine peace, justice and strong institutions. The study identifies the levels and kinds of investments in peace building and sustainable development, highlights the role, functions and activities of SPRI, UN, examines the relationships between peace, conflict and security, indicators of peace and development, financing for peace building, migration and mobility, food and security, environment of peace and in promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The impact of COVID-19 and human rights response to the pandemic, role of UN peace keeping missions in the outbreak of corona virus etc., have also been dealt in the research study. The other aspects include key facts impacting conflict, peace and security, post COVID-19 response, low income shock and civil conflict, review of literature on aspects such as civil war, poor economic performance and opportunity cost of violent behaviour, role of SPRI in development of international stability, human security and peace keeping, consequences of armed conflict, peace agreements and arms trade controls etc., have also been studied in this research paper at length. The most important aspect that has been impacted is the UN SDGs which has become difficult and challenging to achieve due to the impact of the pandemic, as slated by UN by 2030. The conclusion drawn from this research study is that there are strong linkages existing between global peace, conflict, security, human rights, economics of peace and sustainable development, arms trade, conflict and violence in the long run. This would go a long way in achieving the SDGs slated by UN by the turn of 2030 thereby leading to peace building.

Key Words : Peace, Conflict, Human Rights, UN Peace Keeping, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

Peace is an investment. The peace of today not only allows for production and consumption today, but also creates expectations and culture of peace for tomorrow. By definition, sustainable development includes consumption and economic behaviour today that does not negatively impact on future generations. Therefore positive, peaceful development today is sustainable development. SPRI, Stockholm is a unique international research organization working for the development of peace and sustainable development goals. SIPRI's research in this initiative examines the relationship between peace and different measures of prosperity, giving particular focus to the conditions that bridge between conflict management, prevention and resolution and how that can lead to peace. It also identifies and assesses the levels and kinds of investments in peace building and sustainable development, including aid flows and the measure of effectiveness in development, particularly related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals(UNSDGs).

Activities undertaken by SPRI

(i) Indicators of Peace and Development

SIPRI contributes to global efforts to identify indicators and targets for monitoring progress on peace and development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG16 on peace, justice and effective institutions.

(ii) Complexity and Fragility

SIPRI undertakes research on methods for defining and measuring fragility, which is linked to the effectiveness of development in complex environments.

(iii) Financing for Peace Building and Comparative ODA

SIPRI looks at trends in aid to fragile and conflict-affected countries over the last fifteen years and in the new development era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

(iv) Mobility and Migration

SIPRI seeks to understand the root causes of different kinds of migration and the experiences of migrants in order to inform policies that incorporate the security, development and humanitarian aspects of mobility.

(v) Food and Security

SIPRI seeks to improve the understanding of the relationship between food, security, stability and peace. For this work, SIPRI has agreed a multi-year partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

(vi) Environment of Peace 2022

The Environment of Peace 2022 (EP2022) project is an ambitious new initiative that aims to increase global understanding of the impacts that simultaneous environmental crises are having on peace and insecurity. It will analyse the drivers of and linkages between environmental change and its social dimensions examining not just climate change but the consequences of issues such as the loss of biodiversity, water insecurity and land degradation. It will explore the challenges and opportunities ahead, presenting clear and practical recommendations that can be adopted at different levels of decision making.

The initiative leads up to 2022, the year which marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) the first major intergovernmental conference to look at the human relationship with the environment and wider developments in both the environmental and peace building spheres. For this anniversary, SIPRI will release the initiative's findings in a report provisionally entitled '*Environment of Peace*'.

The project is led by SIPRI under the guidance of a panel of international experts.

(vii) Conflict Peace and Security

SIPRI looks at the most important consequences of insecurity and efforts to minimize them. Despite a decline in the number of conflicts worldwide, they continue to have a deep and harrowing impact on the communities caught up in them. SIPRI works on conflict and peace studies, analyzes the different kinds of armed conflict that occur, how they unfold and what their

consequences are. It also examines peacekeeping missions, working to improve their efficiency and cooperation. The research takes both a general and specific focus. The SIPRI Multilateral Peace Operations Database collects data on global peace operations from 2000 onwards and analyses overall trends in peace operations. It also looks at specific regions of the world, such as Afghanistan, Mali and the Arctic, where there are local challenges and solutions to resolving violent conflicts.

(viii) SPRI Yearbook 2020 presents a combination of original data in areas such as world military expenditure, international arms transfers, arms production, nuclear forces, armed conflicts and multilateral peace operations with state-of-the-art analysis of important aspects of arms control, peace and international security.

Goal 16 : Promote Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain a great threat to sustainable development and is a global challenge. The number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict exceeded 70 million in 2018, the highest level recorded by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in almost seventy years. In 2019, the United Nations tracked 30 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in 47 countries.

COVID-19 response

Human Rights are key in shaping the pandemic response

By respecting human rights in this time of crisis, we will build effective and inclusive solutions for the emergency of today and the recovery for tomorrow. Human rights put people at centre-stage. Responses that are shaped by and respect human rights result in better outcomes in beating the pandemic ensuring healthcare for everyone and preserving human dignity. The UN Secretary General urged governments to be transparent, responsive and accountable in their COVID-19 response and ensure that any emergency measures are legal, proportionate, necessary and non-discriminatory. The best response is one that responds proportionately to immediate threats while protecting human rights and the rule of law (*Statement of UN Secretary General*). To focus on ‘the true fight’, UN Secretary General called for a global ceasefire, in an appeal urging warring

parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN Peace Keeping Missions are continuing to carry out their mandates while also helping countries in their corona virus response, which is guided by four main objectives viz; (i) to protect UN personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations, (ii) help contain and mitigate the spread of the virus, ensuring that UN personnel are not a contagion vector, (iii) support national authorities in their response to COVID-19 and continue to deliver on key mandates. The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) stepped up health, water, sanitation and hygiene services to protect refugees and displaced people, working with governments to ensure that people forced to flee are included in COVID-19 preparation and response plans.

What Post COVID-19? Avoiding a Twenty-First Century General Crisis

The COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact and a Historical Analogy

In the coming months, the COVID-19 pandemic hopefully will be under control. In fact, governments worldwide are elaborating plans and strategies to live with this corona virus as long as there is no vaccine and no treatment. Social and economic activities are re-starting cautiously and they will be re-shaped substantially. However, the pandemic is going to evolve also as a major recession on a global scale which will be pervasive and (presumably) long-lasting. At this juncture, some international organizations have released forecasts on the economic downturn which is taking shape. The IMF has predicted that the global economy is projected to contract sharply by 3 percent in 2020 but the result could be actually even worse. The WTO has estimated a trade loss between 13 percent (optimistic scenario) and 32 percent or even more (worst case scenario). In a very short span of time, emerging economies and low-income countries have experienced the largest capital outflow ever recorded. In brief, the economic shock will be substantial and in particular global linkages (trade, FDI) will be broken or severely blunted.

The COVID-19 pandemic/recession would be considered nothing but parts of a general crisis which is not the summation of independent short-term shocks but rather a long-lasting movement. The question is crucial indeed. Upon this general premise, the five possible priorities are: (1) reshaping the UN system with particular regard to Security

Council and peace-keeping; (2) Relaunching multilateralism and WTO; (3) Reforming the IMF conditionality; (4) an international price control mechanism; (5) a global Emergency Buyback of weapons. The first objective should be surely a commitment to reinvigorate United Nations system, in particular, regarding its role on peace, international security and peacekeeping. The most difficult/challenging task would be that of reorienting/reshaping the UN Security Council. There is a need to make the council more depictive of the current global power balances and thereby enable it to intervene more effectively in armed conflicts worldwide. The humanitarian tragedies of unresolved conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya mark the urgent need of opening a dialogue to re-shape the Security Council. In fact, in spite of several issues and failures, UN peacekeeping operations have contributed effectively to peace also avoiding post-war violence and to enhancement of welfare within societies (*Bara 2020; Beber et al. 2019; Bove and Ruggeri 2016; Caruso et al. 2017; Di Salvatore 2019; Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2017; Dorussen 2014*). In the light of the predicted collapse of trade linkages and global value chains, the WTO has to gain a major centrality in the international economic system. This should also be a part of a broader effort to maintain peace between states in the long-run given the linkages between trade, FDI and peace (*Gartzke and Westerwinter 2016; Martin et al. 2008; Martin et al. 2012; Polachek et al. 1999; Polachek et al. 2011*).

A conditional model of local income shock and civil conflict

Common political economy models point to rationalist motives for engaging in conflict but say little about how income shocks translate into collective violence in some cases but not in others. Grievance models, in contrast, focus on structural origins of shared frustration but offer less insight into when the deprived decide to challenge the status quo. Addressing these lacunae, a theoretical model of civil conflict would be a feasible option that predicts income loss to trigger violent mobilization primarily when the shock can be linked to pre-existing collective grievances. The conditional argument is supported by results of a comprehensive global statistical analysis of conflict involvement among ethnic groups. Consistent with theory, we find that this relationship is most powerful among recently downgraded groups, especially in the context of agricultural dependence and low local level of development, whereas political downgrading in the absence of adverse economic changes exerts less influence on ethnic conflict risk. Economic explanations feature prominently in the scientific study of civil war. A central argument links loss of income,

growing unemployment, and increasing living costs to the rise of insurgent organizations through reducing opportunity costs of violent behavior (*Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon 2008; Grossman 1991; Hirshleifer 1994*).

Review of Literature on Peace and Conflict Studies

An influential explanation of civil war holds that poor economic performance lowers the opportunity cost of violent behavior. Participation in rebellion is here seen as a rational response to increased individual hardship brought about by the loss of employment, reduced wages, and rising living costs. When expected returns from fighting outweigh income from regular economic activity, an individual's inclination to rebel goes up (*Grossman 1991; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hirshleifer 1995; Dal Bó and Dal Bó 2011*).

The opportunity cost argument has been substantiated by a strong and robust empirical relationship between negative growth in GDP per capita and increased risk of civil conflict (*Blattman and Miguel 2010; Hegre and Sambanis 2006*). Yet, economic activity is inherently endogenous to the political context (*Aisen and Veiga 2013; Fatás and Mihov 2012*) and the quality of economic data for countries of key concern is poor (*Jerven 2013*). Attempts to address these issues through instrumental variables, typically relying on rainfall statistics or commodity prices as exogenous measures of economic performance, have yielded results more ambiguous than those derived from conventional income-conflict regressions (*Bazzi and Blattman 2014; Buhaug et al. 2015; Fjelde 2015; Miguel and Satyanath 2011*).

In the wake of this ambiguity, a handful of recent studies have turned to micro-level analysis of how labor and income opportunities among individuals affect incentives to partake in rebellion (*Arjona and Kalyvas 2011; Blattman and Annan 2016; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008; Verwimp 2005*). Survey-based studies and field experiments are extremely valuable for assessing individual-level causal pathways and mechanisms, but single-case approaches are not suitable for generalization and the focus on individuals limits the ability to infer about meso and macro-level processes.

Ethnicity can play an instrumental role in mobilization for rebellion by providing a cognitive frame for linking increased economic hardship to grievance-based collective action. Partly, ethnicity represents an already salient political cleavage in many societies partly, an external

shock may revive and reinforce ethnic solidarities because of the hardship inflicted, and help members overcome coordination problems (*Denny and Walter 2014*).

The paucity of resistance among marginalized ethnic groups has sometimes been taken as evidence of the irrelevance of grievance theory (*Tilly 1978*). Instead, it is argued, the absence of civil war in these cases can be explained by a lack of feasibility of rebellion due to a strong and repressive state (*Fearon and Laitin 2003*), deficiency of entrepreneurs and resources required to mobilize the aggrieved (*McCarthy and Zald 1977*), or insufficient individual material incentives to forego normal modes of living (*Collier and Hoeffler 2004*). Others claim that such materialist interpretations rely on inadequate empirical measures that ignore collective emotions and fail to capture important intergroup inequalities that often underpin civil conflicts (*Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011*).

Economic conditions feature centrally in all of these models, but individually they are insufficient for explaining the outbreak of collective violence. An explanation is provided for the onset of civil conflict that combines the strengths of the grievance and opportunity cost approaches: the attention to salient, collective identities that allow individual grievances to translate into group behavior on the one hand; the emphasis on feasibility and temporal variations in opportunity cost structures presented by economic downturns on the other. The result is a conditional model of local income shock and civil conflict that predicts widespread loss of income to serve as a focal point for mobilization primarily when it affects politically marginalized individuals with pre-existing ethnic ties. Politically demoted groups are considered especially vulnerable in this context. Among such groups, a sudden shock can offset the social equilibrium and increase the perceived feasibility of collective action.

It would be a misnomer to conclude that outbreaks of ethnic rebellion during economic crises are solely, or even primarily, about worsening of economic conditions. Ethnic groups that respond violently to a severe income shock are likely to harbor pre-existing animosities toward the regime that relate to more fundamental forms of marginalization. Herein lies an important policy implication. The solution to latent and simmering ethnic insurgencies are primarily political in nature. Sustained investments in poor, agrarian regions may make marginalized rural

communities more resilient to weather extremes and dampen a potential trigger effect (*Tester and Langridge 2010*). However, technological advances and productivity improvements do not address underlying causes of collective frustration related to unequal land distribution, underdeveloped property rights, corruption, lack of political representation, and various forms of overt and covert state-sponsored discrimination. Addressing these fundamental political issues is paramount for successful conflict prevention and a lasting peace.

Role of SPRI in development of International Stability Human Security and Peace Keeping

(i) International Cooperation

The degree to which international politics are characterized by tensions and disagreements, especially among the three great powers China, Russia and the USA is a serious cause for concern. Nonetheless, even governments that express loathing of diplomacy find it next to impossible to do without cooperative approaches to shared problems. The spread of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) underlines the message that other global challenges today also require cooperation for human security and international stability.

(ii) Global Developments in armed Conflicts Peace Process and Peace Operations

Active armed conflicts occurred in at least 32 states in 2019: 2 in the Americas, 7 in Asia and Oceania, 1 in Europe, 7 in the Middle East and North Africa and 15 in sub-Saharan Africa. As in preceding years, most took place within a single country (intrastate), between government forces and one or more armed non-state group(s). Three were major armed conflicts (with more than 10 000 conflict-related deaths in the year): Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria. Fifteen were high-intensity armed conflicts (with 1000–9999 conflict-related deaths): Mexico, Nigeria, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, the Philippines, India, Myanmar, Cameroon, Pakistan and Egypt. The others were low intensity armed conflicts (with 25–999 conflict-related deaths).

(iii) **Consequences of Armed Conflict**

The reduction in the severity of several armed conflicts in 2019 led to a further decrease in conflict fatalities, continuing a recent downward trend since 2014. The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at the beginning of 2019 was 70.8 million (including more than 25.9 million refugees). Protracted displacement crises continued in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen, as well as in the Sahel region. In 2019 almost 30 million people in five countries (Afghanistan, the CAR, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan) and two regions (the Lake Chad Basin and central Sahel) needed urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance.

(iv) **Peace Agreements**

Of the 21 new peace agreements in 2019, 10 related to local agreements and 11 to national agreements, although most of the latter were renewal or implementation accords. Two new substantive national peace agreements were signed in sub-Saharan Africa: in the CAR and in Mozambique. Relatively peaceful transitions of power in Ethiopia (in 2018) and Sudan (in 2019) and the implementation of a 2018 peace agreement in South Sudan led to significant decreases in armed violence in those three states in 2019. Peace processes in two of the most protracted and complex armed conflicts had mixed results in 2019: in Afghanistan the Taliban–United States peace talks collapsed, before resuming in November 2019; and in Yemen the 2018 Stockholm Agreement was supplemented by a new peace accord, the November 2019 Riyadh Agreement.

(v) **Arms Trade Controls**

Global, multilateral and regional efforts continued in 2019 to strengthen controls on the trade in conventional arms and in dual use items connected with conventional, biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Membership of the different international and multilateral instruments that seek to establish and promote agreed standards for the trade in arms and dual-use items remained stable. At the same time, there were growing signs that the strength of these instruments is being increasingly tested by stretched national resources and broader geopolitical tensions.

Chronology of 2019 Selected Global Events relating to International Peace and Security

16 Jan 2019 : The United Nations Security Council establishes a UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement in Yemen.

6 Feb 2019 : The Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups sign a peace agreement.

27 Mar 2019 : India announces that it successfully tested an anti-satellite weapon for the first time.

30 Apr 2019 : Juan Guaidó, the leader of the opposition in Venezuela, instigates an attempted uprising against President Nicolás Maduro.

19 May 2019 : A further allegation of chemical weapon use in Kabanah, Syria, is investigated by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

20–21 June 2019 : Iran shoots down a US military drone. The United States responds with cyber attacks against Iranian intelligence and military assets.

17 July 2019 : The World Health Organization (WHO) declares the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

2 Aug 2019 : The USA formally withdraws from the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty).

8 Sep 2019 : US President declares the Afghan peace talks 'dead'.

9 Oct. Turkey announces the start of military operations in north-east Syria to create a 'safe zone'.

4 Nov 2019 : The USA formally notifies the UN of its intention to withdraw from the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change in 2020.

31 Dec 2019 : A pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China, is reported to the WHO.

Concluding Observations

The research paper entitled '*Peace and Conflict Studies : A Global Perspective*' defines peace as an investment, focuses on integration between peace, economic behaviour and sustainable development. The research carried out by SPRI, Stockholm and United Nations relating to peace and conflict management, prevention and resolution is a unique global effort to determine peace, justice and strong institutions. The study identifies the levels and kinds of investments in peace building and sustainable development, highlights the role, functions and activities of SPRI, UN, examines the relationships between peace, conflict and security, indicators of peace and development, financing for peace building, migration and mobility, food and security, environment of peace and in promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The impact of COVID-19 and human rights response to the pandemic, role of UN peace keeping missions in the outbreak of corona virus etc., have also been studied in the research study. The other aspects include key facts impacting conflict peace and security, post COVID-19 response, low income shock and civil conflict, review of literature aspects such as civil war, poor economic performance and opportunity cost of violent behaviour, role of SPRI in development of international stability, human security and peace keeping, consequences of armed conflict, peace agreements and arms trade controls etc., have also been studied in this research paper at length. The most important aspect that has been impacted is the UN SDGs which has become difficult and challenging to achieve due to the impact of the pandemic, as slated by UN by 2030. The conclusion drawn from this research study is that there are strong linkages existing between global peace, conflict, security, human rights, economics of peace and sustainable development, arms trade, conflict and violence in the long run. This would go a long way in achieving the SDGs slated by UN by the turn of 2030 through peace building.

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