



CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION MODEL: A CASE STUDY OF KASHMIR CONFLICT

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

India and Pakistan have been unable to develop friendly relations despite several attempts in the past to initiate a sustainable peace process. Does this indicate that both are going to live in perpetual hostility? Are the problems so intractable that no conflict resolution is possible in their bilateral relations to resolve their differences? These and many other related questions can be raised, as the disharmony between the two major actors is adversely affecting the peace and stability in the South Asian region. The key question of the paper: Can they adopt model of conflict resolution which could have benefitted people on both sides of the border? This paper attempt to study Conflict Transformation model developed by Johan Galtung. The paper further study different approach of the model which relies on non-violence, creativity, empathy to facilitate a positive outcome between both the parties.

KEYWORDS

Conflict Resolution, Peace, South Asia, Conflict Transformation Model

“...conflict arises when goals may be incompatible and mutually exclusive, like two states wanting the same land, or two nations wanting the same state when goals are incompatible, a contradiction, an issue, is born... frustration may lead to aggression, turning inwards as attitudes of hatred, or outwards as behaviour of verbal or physical violence...”.

Johan Galtung

The increasing number of territorial disputes around the world poses increasingly difficult challenges to nations to develop and implement peaceful and sustainable model of conflict resolution. Kashmir is one among the most prominent areas of territorial dispute since the partition of India and Pakistan as two separate dominion states in 1947. Kashmir is an 85,806 square mile region in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent with beautiful mountainous landscape. It denotes a larger area that includes the Indian-administered territory of Jammu and Kashmir (subdivided into Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh divisions) and makes up the southern and eastern portions of the region, totalling about 45% of Kashmir. The Pakistani-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan make up the northern and western portions of the region, totalling about 35% of Kashmir and Chinese-administered territories of Aksai Chin and the Trans-Karakoram Tract in the northeast part of the region, equalling 20% of Kashmir. Therefore, the dispute on who should have control over Kashmir has been one of the most enduring and violent conflicts not only in South Asia but also in the world.

Historical overview

The tensions between India and Pakistan are deeply rooted in their history. Failure to reconcile differences in the independence movement ultimately resulted in partition of the sub-continent by the British into two separate entities – the secular nation of India and the predominantly Muslim nation of Pakistan. The state of Jammu and Kashmir, which had largely Muslim population but a Hindu leader, shared borders with both India and West Pakistan. Since then the Kashmir dispute has bedevilled relations between India and Pakistan. Hence, the 70 years of long conflict, described as 'contradiction' by Johan Galtung, has not yet been resolved due to claim over Kashmir by both the states.

Therefore, it can be said that 'Negative peace' exists between both the countries because the argument over which nation would incorporate the state of Jammu and Kashmir led to the two wars. The first India-Pakistan War in 1947-48 which ended with UN mediation and second in 1965. Tensions were extremely high in 1999 during the Kargil border conflict when an incursion by Pakistani soldiers led to a bloody six-week-long battle and has brought immense suffering and hardship to the people of the state. Meanwhile, several low intensity military conflicts continued between nuclear-capable nation-states of India and Pakistan over Kashmir. We have witnessed recently, in the year of 2016, a series of confrontations between India and Pakistan. In January 2016, six armed militants attacked an Indian Air Force base in Pathankot and killed seven Indian security personnel. Another event occurred in September 2016 when armed militants attacked a remote Indian Army base in Uri, near the Line of Control, killing eighteen

Indian soldiers in the deadliest attack on the Indian armed forces in decades. Later in September 2016, the Indian military, in retaliation, carried out “surgical strikes” on terrorist camps inside Pakistani-controlled territory across the Line of Control. In late October 2016 and again in November 2016, Indian and Pakistani diplomats were expelled from each other's countries on charges of espionage.³

Peru and Ecuador

Galtung's successful role in a 1990s conflict between Peru and Ecuador illustrates the potential of the conflict transformation. While meditating between Ecuador and Peru in a longstanding conflict over a piece of territory in the Andes, Galtung proposed the transformation of the disputed territory into a binational zone and the creation of a park in the area with a peace monument. His proposals were implemented and the violence that had characterized this conflict for over 30 years promptly ceased. The proposal was also a success because the plan for joint management of the disputed territory led to equitable cooperation between the neighbours.

Dispute is still enduring today that despite numerous efforts by the UN, third party negotiators, mediation from other states as well as bilateral discussions, both states are unable to solve these conflicts which has raised much concern internationally. The bilateral dialogues between leaders of both countries had failed numerous times to reach at peaceful decision and resolution. The leaders of both countries exert enmity through the conflict behaviour, e.g. action, threat, arms race, cross boarder shelling, hatred speech, act of violence as well as exercise of military power. This can be compared to what Galtung calls 'behaviour of verbal or physical violence', which has intensified hatred between Indians and Pakistanis that can be termed as 'attitude of hatred'. The continued violence in Kashmir and a heightened threat of terrorist activity by Pakistan clearly highlight the weaknesses of a traditional state-centric approach to solving a conflict. India and Pakistan have been unable to develop friendly relations despite several attempts in the past to initiate a sustainable peace process. But most were proved as failed diplomacy. Does this indicate that both are going to live in perpetual hostility? Are the problems so intractable that no conflict resolution is possible in their bilateral relations to resolve their differences? Can they adopt model of conflict resolution which could have benefitted people on both sides of the border? Can they overcome their historic rivalry and emulate the example of Peru and Ecuador or Northern Ireland? These and many other related questions can be raised, as the disharmony between the two major actors is adversely affecting the peace and stability in the South Asian region.

The Conflict Transformation Model

Ripe Theory

According to Zartman, ripeness usually results from a mutually hurting stalemate in which both parties realize that they have reached “the point where they can no longer escalate their way to victory and the sunk costs plus the countering efforts of the other side make for a costly deadlock”. The usefulness of this core theory is illustrated by the 1993 Oslo negotiations that led to establishment of the Palestinian Self-Government Authority.

Time is now for adoption of an approach which should be more meaningful and sustainable as a conflict resolution and could decrease the tensions and create a peaceful solution which could be acceptable for both parties, i.e. Conflict Transformation. Conflict Transformation model was developed by the scholars like Johan Galtung and Paul Lederach during 1990s. Conflict transformation goes beyond merely seeking to contain and manage conflict; instead, it seeks to transform the root causes of a particular conflict. Conflict transformation is not just an approach and set of techniques, but a way of thinking about and understanding conflict itself. This is the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, conflict, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. This approach relies on nonviolence, creativity, and empathy to facilitate an outcome where both parties move beyond their stated positions to create a new reality in their relationship. Conflict transformation is a long-term, gradual and complex process, requiring sustained engagement and interaction. This also represents clear contrast to conventional diplomacy or the coercive approaches to conflict i.e. war as traditionally used on the international level, which often serve only to perpetuate bitterness and asymmetry.

Northern Ireland Conflict

In the 20th century, one of the most intractable but intensively managed conflicts is the case of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland offers evidence of all five levels of transformation at different points, i.e. the conflict structure changed as the pan-nationalist coalition developed sufficient alliances and confidence to balance the hitherto asymmetric relationships between the parties. *Actor transformations* included changes of government in Britain, the fundamental shift in thinking within the Sinn Féin leadership, and division and change among the Unionists. *Issue transformations* included the mutual agreements reached in the Good Friday agreement to reconcile the legitimacy of the two cultural traditions and establish institutions which reinforce both the Irish and British dimensions of governance. All this could not have taken place without significant changes of mind at the individual and elite level. Northern Ireland offers a striking example of the complementarity of approaches on different tracks and of the interrelationship between structural and cultural approaches.⁸

Recommendations

Firstly, political will is the most important condition to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The leaders should understand that violence results in more violence, catastrophe and loss of lives. In addition, the leaders should have the acceptance for new creative approaches and ideas to transform conflict for the better future of South Asia. Secondly, in order to achieve sustainable peace and stability of the subcontinent, Johan Galtung model of conflict transformation can be considered such as exploring alternatives, cooperation, development, pluralism, dynamism, justice, and freedom which Johan Galtung stated as the "positive peace". Thirdly, in such a distrustful situation confidence-building measures need to adopt training programs, workshops, education, advocacy program for leaders and involvement of grassroots or local people to boost up faith of both countries. Last but not the least, Johan Galtung has come up with more concrete and specific expression about conflict. It is the idea of creating a new reality, termed as 'empirical reality' that may lead a possibility to transform conflict into a peaceful solution, Galtung says, "...the conflict between two countries over a disputed territory may end by one winning in a military or court battle, by a compromise dividing the territory, by both of them withdrawing their claims, leaving the territory to somebody else such as the inhabitants or by the two owning the territory together. Therefore, in the process of Kashmir resolution only the last outcome 'empirical reality' can be experimented on Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan as a practical solution.

In short, unresolved territorial dispute has also been a major drain on the resources and has been a stumbling block to normalising relations between them. Thus, in the present state of deadlock between India and Pakistan this involves the real test of Narendra Modi's 'statesmanship' and take the initiative of applying the model of 'conflict transformation' via a sustainable 'South Asian conflict resolution' by engaging Pakistan on all bilateral issues, most significantly including Kashmir. Whether the solution lies in a political solution of Northern Ireland or Peru and Ecuador, all these successful case studies ensure that each conflict is addressed in the same, principled, peaceful, realistic and creative way.

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