

Northern Ireland Model: Lessons for Kashmir Conflict

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Abstract:

In conflictive and deeply divided societies, approaching to a level of mutual and peaceful living requires negotiations, compromise and an accommodative sustained peace process. In such a situation transition from conflict to relative peace can be attributed to the positive approaches of the stakeholders of that particular context. Northern Ireland is one such example of transition from conflict to compromise for peace. This study tries to understand the evolution of Northern Ireland conflict to a peace process and underline similarities between Northern Ireland and Kashmir conflicts. A critical account of the insights and lessons obtained from the grand peace deal known as Good Friday Agreement (1998) has been made and it has been discussed that how these lessons are relevant for the Kashmir conflict.

Key words: Northern Ireland, Peace process, Good Friday Agreement, Kashmir conflict¹

Introduction

Presently we are facing numerous conflicts the world over and most of them are intrastate conflicts. Over the last decades of the 20th century intrastate conflicts became an increasingly common problem rather than inter-state conflicts or wars.

¹ The state of Jammu and Kashmir which is under the Indian administration consists of three regions: Jammu, the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. In this paper Kashmir conflict has been used in place of Jammu and Kashmir conflict.

Intrastate ethno political conflicts are now considered as one of the most important threats to the global security (McGwire, M.M.2002). These intrastate conflicts are not only aiming to demands like protection of identity and devolution of powers but at many places leading to separatist movements. No doubt political arrangements like federalism, autonomy and devolution of powers are powerful tools of conflict management more so when these arrangements facilitate states and its constituents advance to a level of shared sovereignty and consociationalism. Among others the most urgent issues of international politics in contemporary times is to explore the alternatives for durable peace in regions torn by ethno-national conflicts. At the same time it is also challenging to tackle the question that how can peace be made, and kept, between warring groups with seemingly incompatible claims. There are many conflicts in the world which have been resolved through an approach which is more or less the same. We have Finish, Italian and Irish examples of conflict resolution and peace building those yielded important general insights about the benefits of territorial self-rule, cross-border linkages, regional cooperation, and third-party involvement. In this study the main focus is on the Northern Ireland and how transition occurred from an intractable conflict to a process of peace building. This study also tries to explore insights and lessons which are relevant for the Kashmir Conflict. For this purpose it is important to understand the nature of conflicts in Northern Ireland and Kashmir.

Northern Ireland

The genesis of the divisions between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland could be traced from the seventeenth century, much before the incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom (Good Friday agreement-An overview.2013). Ireland was made part of the United Kingdom in 1801 by the Act of Union. In the midst of growing resistance

to British rule, the Island was partitioned by the United Kingdom's Government of Ireland Act of 1920², with the southern twenty six counties gaining independence from Britain. The other six North-Eastern counties remained part of the United Kingdom known as Northern Ireland. The new state of Northern Ireland acquired its own parliament and considerable autonomy within the United Kingdom. The nature of autonomy included that Westminster retained responsibility for defense, foreign policy and other matters of its concern. London was content to leave most Northern Ireland matters in the hands of the new Stormont administration. This regional government was given extensive powers, but taxation and ultimate sovereignty remained with the British parliament at Westminster (Henry Patterson 1996)

With this dispensation many people in Britain thought that the partition of islands would have resolved the conflict to a certain level. What actually happened was an opposite reaction which proved to be a source of a future Northern Ireland conflict. Partition also altered the demographic equation which resulted into the catholic minority restricted in Northern Ireland. During Northern Ireland's self-rule from 1920s to 1972 protestant majority dominated the political sphere. Widespread civil, political and socio-economic rights violations of the catholic community led to inter-communal unrest between protestant and Catholics. In response to the increasing discrimination and violation of civil rights a movements arouse in 1968 which was launched by the Catholics. This civil rights movement was met with violence by extreme unionists and the police, which in return prompted action by nationalists and republicans. It also nurtured growing

² The Government of Ireland Act 1920 was the Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which partitioned Ireland. The Act was intended to establish separate Home Rule institutions within two new subdivisions of Ireland: the six north-eastern counties were to form 'Northern Ireland', while the larger part of the country was to form 'Southern Ireland'. Both areas of Ireland were to continue as a part of the United Kingdom, and provision was made for their future unification under common Home Rule institutions.

hostility between Protestants and catholic communities, as the political institutions in place failed to address the issues of injustice, unrest and exclusion in Northern Ireland. In 1969 the London government deployed the British army in an attempt to restore order. Presence of army and there repressive measures disheartened the catholic community to a point from where the campaign for internal reform of the Northern Ireland state was subordinated to the need to remove the British presence and unify with the rest of Ireland (John Darby 2003). A rejuvenated militant republicanism, in the form of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA)³, emerged from the increasingly politicized and assertive Catholic minority. This in turn prompted violence from Protestant loyalist militant groups. Northern Ireland government was unable to impose control in the region. Given the situation the London parliament invoking its powers, under the Government of Ireland Act, abolished the Northern Ireland government in 1972 and Direct Rule was imposed. The period from 1960s until 1998 which is called Troubles was a period of human crisis with thousands of individuals, family and community tragedies (John Darby 2003).

Since the partition of Northern Ireland in 1921, unionists, mainly Protestant, have desired to remain part of the United Kingdom while nationalists, mainly Catholic, have wanted Northern Ireland to become part of a united Ireland. Deep mistrust has divided both communities. The conflict intensified during a thirty-year period known as "The Troubles" (1966-1996) (Tim Pat Coogan 1996). For years, the British and Irish governments sought to facilitate a political settlement to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Between 1974 and the ceasefires of

³ The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA or PIRA) was an Irish republican paramilitary organization that sought to remove Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and bring about an independent republic encompassing all of Ireland. It was the biggest and most active republican paramilitary during the Troubles. It saw itself as the successor to the original IRA and called itself simply the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

1994 there were seven attempts to reach a political and constitutional settlement (Brendon O 'Leary 1997) All of the initiatives were sponsored by London and included an element of power-sharing between Catholics and Protestants to try and stem the bloodshed. The Sunningdale Agreement signed in 1973 approved Northern Ireland an Assembly. Likewise the Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985, insulated from Northern Ireland leadership, gave the Irish government a consultative role in Northern Ireland's affairs. In return, the Irish government recognized the existence of the state of Northern Ireland for the first time. The importance of this agreement is that it institutionalized and made permanent the co-operation between the two governments on the management of the Northern Ireland conflict.

There are many endeavors from London, Dublin and within Northern Ireland that paved the way for different stake holders to assemble together for a grand peace agreement. Firstly negotiation process- during 1980s and 1990s, various levels of communications were established between the key actors involved in the conflict. British government engaged in secret back- channel contacts with IRA from 1972 onwards. Subsequently these talks led to Downing Street Declaration. This Declaration signaled the beginning of open talks between British government and IRA. Apart from back-channel and inter-party negotiations, it is pertinent to mention that the role or engagement of civil society and third party also led to the Good Friday agreement in 1998. On May 22, 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was overwhelmingly confirmed by a referendum by 71% of the voting public in both Northern Ireland and the Republic (Mitchell, Claire. 2003).The Good Friday Agreement called for devolved government, the transfer of power from London to Belfast, with a Northern Ireland assembly and executive committee in which unionist and nationalist parties would share power. The agreement

incorporated the three elements that first emerged in 1972 and sought to address the 'totality of relationships' (Paul Doherty 2000) within the islands of Great Britain and Ireland. It attempted to address the aspirations and fears of all parties, trying to give as much as possible to everyone. It is doubtful if any individual or party is totally happy with the outcome, but both Unionists and Nationalists have identified areas of the agreement that they see as meeting their particular concerns. Equally, there are those in both camps who are opposed to the agreement, who see it as a surrender of their historical position. Although there are a number of components, the agreement was conceived as a total package. Giving assent to it means approving not just those sections that are palatable to a particular party, but also those that are in themselves unpalatable. At the outset, the controversial Anglo-Irish Agreement was replaced by a new British-Irish Agreement. The British government repealed the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 and accepted that Northern Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom until a majority of its inhabitants wished this status to cease. The Irish government undertook to amend the Constitution of Ireland by removing its claim on the territory of Northern Ireland and redefining Irish unity in terms of people rather than territory. The agreement provides for a variety of democratic institutions that fall into what are known as three strands.

The first strand provided a consociationalist arrangement of power sharing within Northern Ireland. It deals with institutions within Northern Ireland and provides for a 108 member assembly elected by proportional representation, with power devolved to it by Westminster. Executive authority within this assembly is discharged by a first and deputy first minister and ten ministers heading departments, allocated with reference to the number of seats each party has in the Assembly. Members of the Assembly must designate their identity as Nationalist, Unionist, or other and key decisions must be taken on a cross-community basis. Strand two deals

with relationships between Northern Ireland and the Irish government. It provides for a North/South Ministerial Council, bringing together those with ministerial responsibilities from both parts of the Island to cooperate on matters of mutual interest. The decisions of this council are to be made by mutual agreement. The third strand deals with the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands. It provides for a British-Irish Council comprised of members of the British and Irish governments and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It also provides for the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which will promote bilateral cooperation. In addition, the Belfast Agreement provided safeguards on human rights, the decommissioning of terrorist weapons, the normalization of security within Northern Ireland, a review of policing and the criminal justice system, and a program of accelerated release of terrorist prisoners.

The Good Friday agreement although did not resolved the Irish conflict in its totality but was successful at least in managing the conflict to a level where from negotiations and dialogue process paved the way for peace building. After analyzing briefly the conflict history of Northern Ireland it becomes essential to delineate into the conflict history of Kashmir so that more parallels between the two conflicts could be drawn.

Kashmir Conflict

The genesis of conflict in Kashmir can be traced from the partition of subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947. The state of Jammu & Kashmir like other princely states was given an open choice to join either India or Pakistan. Unlike most of the princely states in India, Jammu and Kashmir was at this time majority Muslim but with a Hindu ruler, and it was unclear whether it would accede to Pakistan or India. Under haste, eventual accession to India became a matter of

dispute between the two countries, with both India and Pakistan claiming ownership of Kashmir. After a brief war in 1947-48, Kashmir was divided between Pakistan and India administered territories. A ceasefire line was agreed under UN supervision, which has since been renamed the 'Line of Control'. Around one third of the territory has since been administered by Pakistan, with the remainder administered by India, including Kashmir Valley, which has a strong Muslim majority. Although Kashmir became an international issue and was debated in UN because of the active participation of both the countries India and Pakistan. But within the state of Jammu and Kashmir a number of other developments had started casting shadow on relations between union of India and state of Jammu and Kashmir.

After the enactment of the Constitution of India on 26th January 1950, regulation of affairs between Indian Union and the state of Jammu and Kashmir were defined under the Article 370 of Indian constitution. It was outlined that the state of Jammu and Kashmir because of its exceptional historical back ground will be given a special position under the Article 370 of the Indian constitution. However, on August 9, 1953 the Indian government took radical step and dismissed Sheikh Abdullah the then Prime Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Immediately after Sheikh Abdullah was arrested subsequently the special provisions granted to the state of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 were either fully or partially abrogated. This way the Indian union cemented the unwilling integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India. Many factors like the manner in which elections were conducted, tempered democratic process in the state, termination of contacts with other region of Kashmir which is under the control of Pakistan resulted in alienations and widened gap between people of the state and ruling governments at centre which finally took an ugly turn in 1989 when an armed struggle was started in the state against the

Indian union. India on its part has retaliated by deploying Army and other defence forces to curb the armed movement.

With the eruption of violence and rise of separatist sentiments the conflict in Kashmir consumes a lot of human, economic, social and psychological resources. Any attempt at resolving Kashmir issue requires study of various conflict resolution mechanisms. In pursuit of this, several proposals have been offered. Some people wanted Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, some wanted Kashmir's accession to India, while some proposing for complete independence of Jammu and Kashmir. Mainstream political parties of the state also produced their proposals, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has sought pre-1953 autonomy status for Kashmir. Many people and international groups have proposed different models and Northern Ireland model is one such model which deserve a thorough analysis and examination as for as conflict resolution in the context of Kashmir problem is concerned.

There are many parallels and similarities between Northern Ireland and the Kashmir conflict. Firstly both represent multidimensional conflict like in Northern Ireland we have actors like Britain, Ireland and communities within Northern Ireland with different political orientations and aspirations. Similarly in case of Kashmir, parties to conflict are India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir. Different groups within Kashmir with different political orientations and aspirations. Secondly In both the cases resistance movement switched from non-violent to violent and vice versa. Thirdly British and Indian response to resistance movement partly resembles. To curb the resistance movement the methods applied are more or less same. Like militarization, special police force, armed force special powers act and public safety acts. Fourthly there is Foreign or third party involvement in both these cases although with varying effects.

Politicians, academics and journalists around the world often study Northern Ireland model as an example of a successful solution to intractable conflict. Mainly because of the

reason that Good Friday agreement accommodated various issues which were historically contested by various groups in United Kingdom. The question of Northern Ireland status, discrimination, police reforms, human rights, disarmament, demilitarization, north south relations, status of prisoners are some issues which are more or less similar what we have in Kashmir. Need of the hour is to build an institution or arrangement similar as that of Good Friday agreement. Such arrangement like Good Friday agreement is imperative to facilitate the dialogue process in peaceful environment. Looking in to the conflict history of Northern Ireland and Kashmir, the way Good Friday agreement proved essential for peace building in Irish context also seems relevant in Kashmir conflict. Apart from the Kashmir conflict resolution which may take a longer time meanwhile human security can't be halted. There are some other Human rights issues which need urgent attention. Kashmir needs a Good Friday like arrangement which contained provisions on demilitarization, Human rights, armed force special powers act, release of political prisoners, cross-border issue these are some of the issues which could be dealt with as a confidence building measures.

Lessons for Kashmir Conflict

As stated above Kashmir conflict is a multiparty conflict. Externally Kashmir has been a bone of contention for India and Pakistan since the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. Kashmir is divided across the border into two parts one controlled by Pakistan to which they call Azad Kashmir and other part is under the control of India. Both India and Pakistan consider that they have legitimate claims over Jammu and Kashmir. India's claim is based on the accession accomplished by the then Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947 and Pakistan's claim is based on the fact that majority of the population in Kashmir are Muslims so they should go with Muslim state that is Pakistan as per the logic of two nation

theory and the subsequent partition of subcontinent in 1947 into India and Pakistan. Therefore, winning the whole of Kashmir would be their first preference. The history of wars, military stand-offs, and failed mediation and negotiation attempts corroborate that the governments of India and of Pakistan have so far preferred having all of Kashmir to itself, over resolving it peacefully. Despite the stalemate having proven costly, the two countries have failed to cooperate. Managing Kashmir militarily has been a huge burden on the economy of both countries and is also one of the biggest hurdles in their economic and social development.

Internally there is an ever growing alienation on centre-state relation between the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India. So, any idea of resolving Kashmir conflict demands to meet the aspirations of at least three parties two parts of Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan.

In multiparty conflict regions, the conflict resolution becomes harder to realize. The situation was same in case of Northern Ireland. Good Friday agreement which was reached in Belfast on Friday April 10, 1998 is an agreement which could provide possible lessons for Kashmir conflict. The multiparty character of the Irish conflict was successfully negotiated in the agreement. The agreement proposed an inter-connected group of institutions from three stands of Relationship. The Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission were created under the agreement. There was also a comprehensive review of Criminal Justice and policing arrangements and money was allotted to help victims of violence. These all and other above mentioned three stands provide an insight for all the stakeholders in Kashmir Conflict that how peace could be crafted through sharing sovereignty and consociationalism.

Dynamic Negotiations

Peaceful settlement of any conflict or dispute could not be realized without talks or Negotiation. It is not always necessary that negotiation shall start at highest levels of authorities. For

a sustained peace process negotiations could be started by any one at any anywhere. Gerry Adams attempted to start a dialogue with other Irish Nationalists through the intermediation of a religious figure from Belfast (Bew J. et al. 2009). A dynamic negotiation could positively contribute to inclusive results. During the 1980s and the 1990s, in Northern Ireland various lines of communication were established between the key actors involved in the conflict, with much of the peace process conducted in private between representatives of the disputing parties. The British Government engaged in secret back-channel contacts with the IRA from 1972 onwards (Yildiz, K. & Breau, S. 2010). It is the existence of back-channel discussions which assured paramilitary groups that the British Government was not opposed to negotiations. This had significant importance for the peace process. The negotiations contributed for example to the ceasefire announced by the IRA in 1994 as well as the final settlement in 1998 (Dochartaigh, N. Ó. 2011). The effectiveness of any back-channel lies in its ability to foster the appropriate conditions for the development of mutual trust and solidarity between parties, as these crucial factors can move the positions of the respective parties forward (Walton, R. E., & McKersie, R. B. 1965). Personal relationships, information sharing and growing trust were defining characteristics of the channel in Northern Ireland as they contributed to facilitating the development of a cooperative relationship and conferred increased credibility on the parties' intentions. These talks paved the way for the Downing Street Declaration. This declaration signaled the beginning of open talks between the British Government and the IRA. Whereas in the 1970s and the 1980s the official position of the British Government was to reject any public contact with the IRA, the ceasefires and negotiations during the 1990s led to the success of the Good Friday Agreement (Yildiz, K. & Breau, S. 2010). As far as Kashmir is concerned it had already some experiences of brittle negotiations. If ever negotiations started they were used

to buy time and often met with failure and subsequent blame game between parties.

Compromise

To reach to a solution compromise is an unavoidable factor if conflict is to resolve peacefully. Compromise by all parties to the conflict naturally results in win-win situation for all parties. The important lesson for Kashmir conflict is that there is a lack of compromise from the parties involved, be it India, Pakistan or the groups within Kashmir. The 1998 Accord has established a durable framework. This was made possible only because each side was bent on compromise and tried to address the concerns of the rest. London knew that Catholics in Northern Ireland must share power; that even if the IRA was crushed, Catholic alienation would remain. The IRA knew that there was no military solution. Dublin and the Sinn Fein accepted that the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland could not be forced into a union with the South. Most important of all, London realized that while a union was out, the yearning for Irish unity had to be met and met in a manner which satisfied Dublin and Sinn Fein (A.G.Noorani, 2003).

Political leadership

From all the sides in Northern Ireland Adams and McGuinness risked not just their political careers but their lives in leading their movement into a peace. The movement would not have accepted at the beginning of the process; David Trimble and John Hume both sacrificed their political parties and their careers in order to achieve peace; Ian Paisley, having contributed to the start of the Troubles, decided after a close encounter with his maker in 2004 that he wanted to end his life as Dr Yes rather than Dr No; John Major stood to gain nothing politically from starting a peace process in Northern Ireland and yet decided to do so; and the fact that the British and Irish Prime Ministers, Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, were willing and able to work seamlessly together for a decade made peace

possible. Without political leaders prepared to take risks there will be no peace (Jonathan Powell). This is ripe time in both the countries India and Pakistan where leaders are democratically elected. The way Tony Blair deliberately used the magnitude of his landslide election victory in 1997 to jump start the process. The Prime Minister of India Mr. Modi is actually in a position to do what Tony Blair has done in 1997. PM Modi could use political momentum to achieve peace. As far as India is concerned the international scenario has changed as it was in cold war era. India US relations are now marked with more cooperation. It is evident that US is playing a balancing role in South Asia. So, the emerging situation has shifted political momentum. Like in case of Northern Ireland the end of cold war contributed to the change of the context in which it was seen as more politically sensible to engage in a peace process than a national liberation war. It had a clear impact on the republican political analysis (Cox, Michael 1997)

To build peace is not the end of the assignment for leaders particularly in post-conflict societies. In future it also depends upon the leaders not to evade from the process for political gains. In this process Leaders are usually curbed by institutions and in Northern Ireland it was leadership which built peace process and other institutions to maintain peace. Post Agreement, what remained to be seen is whether the particular institutions now in place can provide sufficient opportunities for leaders to move beyond antagonism, or whether antagonism is so deeply institutionalized so much transcendence is in practice possible (Wilford, R and Wilson, R. 2003)

Recognition of conflict

Irish model has some lessons for both India and Pakistan. In Anglo-Irish agreement British government recognized the validity of not only the unionist but also the nationalist traditions. If a conflict consume huge toll in terms of life and economy then there is no point to disagree that India should

recognize the separatist groups in particular and Kashmir conflict in general.

Emergence of Civil Society

Important development in Irish conflict is the emergence of civil society which proved vital for creating the conditions for wider political changes. The change that was viable for accommodation and peace building in Northern Ireland. Civil society groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have markedly increased their role in Northern Ireland, in contrast to the political elite. Civil society organizations such as the community groups, the business community, trade unions, academia, religious organizations, cultural organizations, the media, arts groups, peace groups, and NGOs, should be strong enough to compel stakeholders to take the route of peace. Recently this trend has shaped up in Kashmir but with less consistency.

Involvement of Third parties

The British government had long refused to countenance any international role in Northern Ireland, just as India is refusing to allow external actors to play a role in Kashmir Conflict. It was negotiation process which sparked a ray of hope in parties. From the start of the negotiations it was evident that the road to peace in Northern Ireland would be complicated. Consequently, the parties to the conflict sought assistance from international interlocutors. The traditional role of a third party is to help the conflicting parties to find a solution to the conflict or to limit the destructive effect of continuing violence (*Byrne S. 1995*). The British government invited Ninian Stephen, an Australian, to chair the talks. A facilitator must be trustworthy, impartial and credible to all sides Later they invited George Mitchell to play the role of referee, a role he fulfilled with remarkable patience and balance. Senator George Mitchell, who became known for the introduction of his so-called 'Mitchell Principles'. A facilitator must be trustworthy, impartial and

credible to both sides. Such a key facilitator sent by the United States to Northern Ireland was Senator George Mitchell, who became known for the introduction of his so-called 'Mitchell Principles'⁴. The Mitchell Principles, through the public embracement of democracy and non-violence, offered the possibility to both parties to proceed with decommissioning and negotiations. This attempt was successful. The PIRA declared a ceasefire to which the British Government responded by requesting a six-week quarantine to ensure genuine compliance and endorsement of the Mitchell Principles (Yildiz, K. & Breau, S. 2010). Third parties can also be crucial in guaranteeing independence. So this is an important lesson for both India and Pakistan to understand that third party involvement has proved decisive in conflicts so could prove for them.

Reaching to Consensus

Simultaneously working of the stakeholders and some other relevant factors proved building blocks for the peace process to advance in Northern Ireland. While as in Kashmir apparent differences are seen even on some crucial issues like resolution of Kashmir. With the emergence of armed struggle in Kashmir in beginning of 1990s proved costly not only for society and economy but it also sprout challenges for armed groups as the resistance faced heavy deployment of Indian army with legal protection. Subsequently there was a comparative transition

⁴ The Mitchell Principles specified that 'all involved in negotiations had to affirm their commitment:

- To democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues;
- To the total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations;
- To agree that such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission;
- To renounce for themselves, and to oppose any effort by others, to use force, or threaten to use force, to influence the course or the outcome of all-party negotiations;
- To agree to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree;
- To urge that 'punishment' killings and beatings stop and to take effective steps to prevent such actions'.

from violent to non-violent resistance led by APHC⁵ (All party Hurriyat Conference) and some other groups. The Leaders of the resistance movement in Kashmir has never been able to come up with a common unifying agenda. Although, there are instances where the leaders of the different resistance parties have tried their bit but it has never been successful. As opposed to the unifying attempts, there have been many instances where different parties have been implicitly and explicitly opposed each other and at times accused each other of having nexus with Indian agencies. A recent example of this is that when the chairman of the APHC (G) in a statement said that some other resistance movement leaders are involved in a clandestine dialogue with Indian national political parties like BJP. Reacting to this the chairman of APHC (M) in harsh language accused the chairman of APHC (G) of creating doubts in the minds of people and even said “Who the hell is Geelani-chairman APHC (G)” In the similar manner the so called mainstream political parties, who fundamentally are active in Indian political scenario contesting state and national level elections and show their allegiance to the Indian constitution, are not clear in their manifestos and have projected different solutions to the Kashmir problem. Some of them are talking about greater autonomy within the constitutional ambit of India while as some other parties talk about self-rule which involves the other part of Kashmir which is currently under Pakistan administration. While contesting elections the mainstream political parties always maintain that the election of candidate for the Indian parliament or for the state assembly is primarily for the socio-economic development of the state and

⁵ The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) (formed March 10, 1993) by is a political front formed as an alliance of 26 political, social and religious organizations in Kashmir. It was formed for achieving the right of self-determination according to United Nations Security Council Resolution 47. Hurriyat Conference has 3 factions: Hurriyat (G) led by Sayed Ali Shah Geelani, Hurriyat (M) led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Hurriyat led by Shabir Shah.

not for the resolution of Kashmir problem which they understand is an issue between India and Pakistan.

While considering the case of Northern Ireland it emerges that the period from the start of the troubles in 1965 up to the early 1980s when new approaches started emerging with the emergence of new leadership like that of Gerry Adams as president of Sinn Féin⁶ is similar to the situation in Kashmir. Unlike Kashmir, the development of dialogue between SDLP leader John Hume and Adams eventually led to closer cooperation between a coalition of pro-nationalist partners to pursue a unified Ireland agenda. The coalition would include the republicans, constitutional nationalists, The Irish government, the Irish Diaspora and the United States government. The credit for such a coalition goes to SDLP party leader John Hume who had long found a peaceful Model in which all the participants in the conflict would cease violence, enter into negotiations and agree to share power (A.G. Noorani, 2003). The move to bring all the parties to the political approach is a very crucial and unavoidable lesson to learn from Northern Ireland. Such minor attempts have been made in Kashmir, but of no result. It is because of the stiff stance maintained by the different parties involved in conflict. What is evident is that every party involved is extreme to a level where from they hold the position that there can't be any good above from their own good to resolve Kashmir conflict.

⁶ Sinn Féin is an Irish republican political party active in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The name is Irish for "ourselves" or "we ourselves" the Sinn Féin organization was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith, it took its current form in 1970 after a split within the party (the other party is the Workers' Party of Ireland), and has been associated with the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Gerry Adams has been party president since 1983.

Conceptual Framework

The significant factor in conflict resolution is to know the desired positions of the parties involved only then it becomes easy to draft road map or the frame work for the future course of action. Conceptual framework also helps in building sustained peace process. It is the factor which is lacking in Kashmir conflict and is most required in the present context. While as Northern Ireland provides a very inspiring lesson to learn when British and Irish government moved to establish the conceptual framework for any political negotiations in the future. Conceptual frame work ,document , stressed that the two Government that is British and Irish wanted to see a comprehensive settlement that would return greater power ,authority and responsibility to all the Northern Ireland people (Framework for the future 1995).

Conclusion

Once being a protracted conflict, Northern Ireland has developed one of the most impressive capacities for peace building work and for conflict resolution research of any conflict arena (Darby, 1998). The peace process resulting in the historic Good Friday Agreement can be described as successful as it led the disputing parties to negotiate a peaceful political end to the conflict. It has been shown that the success of Northern Ireland's peace process lies in its combination of internationalist party negotiations and back-channel negotiations benefiting from the involvement of third party actors, which resulted in the adoption of a compromise to end the conflict by peaceful political means, embodied by the Good Friday Agreement. However, the implementation of the Agreement still faces significant challenges which have nurtured the persistence of inter communal tensions in Northern Ireland. Specifically, disputes concern security-related issues such as decommissioning, the release and reintegration of paramilitary prisoners, the reform of the police force and the judicial system.

The question of sovereignty over Northern Ireland also remains unresolved. Issues related to human rights are also essential, due to the fact that transitional justice has been limited in Northern Ireland. Although various mechanisms were designed by the Good Friday Agreement to safeguard and promote the respect of human rights in Northern Ireland. The way civil society has evolved and involved into the Northern Ireland it seems unlikely that the Northern Ireland will derail from the peace process. No doubt there are issues pending but at the same time institutions are also in place to accommodate and resolve them. One such example is the establishment of The Panel of Parties in the Northern Ireland Executive in 2013. It assembled all the representatives from the five major parties in Northern Ireland the DUP, Sinn Fein, Ulster Unionist Party, Social Democrat and Labour party, and Alliance Party- to address disputes that have not been resolved by the peace process. Experience gained from its own history, Northern Ireland has created a scope to grow in the business of peace process.

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