
War Memories and Their Impact on the Ethnic Reconciliation Process in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study addressed the commemoration of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between memories and personal, interpersonal, social, and political reconciliation in post-conflict Sri Lanka. The general problem statement of this study was, "War memories have a significant impact on the process of post-war reconciliation in Sri Lanka." Discussion of contemporary essays revealed that memory remains a key factor in the conflict and a critical issue that needs to be addressed by policy makers in a post-war reconciliation process. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of war memories and their impact on the post-war ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka from the perspective of war victims. The main objective of this research is to find out whether the memories are constructed or natural. The study can be classified as both a qualitative and quantitative research design, which is referred to as a mixed research design. With this in mind, the researcher chose a rapid ethnographic perspective for this study. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were used as the method of data collection. Quantitative data was crucial for the analysis of living conditions before the war, during the war, and in the post-war period. Therefore, a questionnaire survey was used as a quantitative data collection method. Personal war memories become social memories or collective memories, and finally the collective memories were influenced by the reconciliation process in the post-war period in Sri Lanka. Memories have impacted personal, interpersonal, and societal reconciliation and ultimately political reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Ethnic Group, Memory, Memorialization, Reconciliation, War

Introduction

This study focuses on the commemoration of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. The war in Sri Lanka, which has lasted for more than three decades, was ended in May 2009 by government forces using military means. However, the civil war has significantly disrupted the social fabric of the Sri Lankan polity (Abeyrathne, 2002).

Remembrance is not explicitly included in the four pillars of transitional justice—truth, justice, reparation, and assurance of non-repetition. As a result, the specific role that remembrance plays in a transitional justice process is often left to the individuals negotiating the boundaries of the process (Atkinson, 1971). Commemoration is an important component of truth-seeking and evidence-gathering to ensure that victims and survivors are treated fairly. In addition, commemoration of loss is one of the symbolic gestures made by victims and survivors in the process of reparations. Public memorials to commemorate man-made disasters contribute to a society's commitment to prevent similar events in the future. Consequently, commemoration is often used as the glue that holds together and preserves the traditional pillars of transitional justice (Azar, 1990).

Against this background, memory is a topic frequently studied in the social sciences. Although numerous scholars have attempted to describe memory, there is no clear-cut description. Memory in general refers to remembering the past, which involves constructing the past based on perception. Memory is not static due to the dynamic nature of perceptions, especially since collective memory is usually influenced by social interaction (Atkinson, 1986).

The purpose of this research was to explore the link between memories and their connection with post-conflict personal reconciliation, interpersonal reconciliation, societal reconciliation, and the political reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. Several unresolved issues remain, including the lack of progress towards a long-term political solution, human rights violations, thousands of widows, political prisoners the disappeared, and the allegations of crimes against humanity and war crimes (Banda et al, 2004). Under this condition, personal memory gradually becomes a community memory, and finally, it can harmfully affect the reconciliation process and finally towards a stable peace process as well. Government development projects in the eastern province are functioning and those do not indicate that the wounds of war victims have been healed. These unhealed wounds can emerge as associational and effective memories, and finally, they pave the way for unstable peace in society (Bandaralage, 2009). The government should win over the majority community by demonstrating that reconciliation is beneficial to everyone. According to the respondents, they suffer from the wounds created by the thirty-year war, and they are waiting for a legal framework to be created where justice will once again be available to everyone.

Through this approach, the pain of the wounds that were created during this war period can be brought to an end (Banda et al, 2004).

Memory is directly connected with the war. Every jarring incident that is related to the war comes and goes in our cognition. Civilians, as well as every opposing party, have suffered from the jarring memory. In a war or conflicting context, win and lose memories are the two types of memories. Both these memories have two aspects (Barnhart, 1988). The winners' memories are filled with happy feelings, while the losers' memories are simply their memories with frustrated minds. In many post-conflict societies, the responsible parties have ignored this key element, the memory. As mentioned above, memory has different dimensions, which is connected with both individual and collective memory. In the war arena, individual memory can profoundly affect the cognition of a person.

Reconciliation is mainly based on memory, and when failing to address the memory of the war victims, the reconciliation process will be declined by the responsible parties. Therefore, it is imperative to address and consider the effectiveness of remembrance for the reconciliation process in a post-conflict society. Almost all the countries that have achieved post-conflict reconciliation have done so in the memory of their victims without any differences in opinion (Baddeley, 1986).

By mixing with the culture, it has become a collective memory. In the discussion of memory, in the Sri Lankan war context, can be considered bitter memories for Tamil civilians who live in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country. People can have individual memories of being members of the LTTE group or Tamil community (Barnhart, 1986). When time passes, this personal memory can become a collective memory. It shapes the way of seeing the world by one group. According to this idea, it could affect the reconciliation process of the post-war society. When the war ended, the Sri Lankan government started the reconciliation process with the support of various parties, which was followed by transitional justice. Many researchers have argued that the transitional justice period has failed. The failure of the transitional justice period affected the overall fruitfulness of the reconciliation process (Coomaraswamy, 2013).

The discussion of a contemporary researcher revealed that memory remained a key factor in the conflict and it is the main issue that needed to be addressed by policymakers in a post-war reconciliation process in the country. The vigour of narratives of memory is political and a powerful force for mobilising ethnic groups in the political and social functions of the country. In this context, it is pertinent to raise what role memories of war assume in ethnic reconciliation and why they matter in the ethnic reconciliation process in the post-war context (Kupchan, 2011). And how ethnic political entrepreneurs and spoilers politically manipulate memories of war victims in their power struggle under a representative democracy and how to deconstruct those politically constructed memories by conflicting parties among respective individuals of ethnic groups.

Those are the puzzles that remain unresolved in the knowledge and skills domains of the sociology of conflict (Kupchan, 2010). The broad problem statement of the present research was, the war memories have a significant impact on the process of the post-war reconciliation process in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Pioneer literature and Studies on War Memory

Ethnicity has worked as one of the primary motivating factors for those engaged in those ethnic conflicts and riots. Researchers have highlighted that the failure to accommodate different ethnic groups in the mainstream social, economic, and political processes has to be considered in explaining this social and political phenomenon (Gunasekara, 2006). Some researchers argue that Sri Lanka's development prospects have been reversed by several decades as a result of the three-decade civil war. According to this perception, the country has become a society that lives without various social and human rights.

It is observable that greedy politicians engage in a political game that is based on creating and strengthening sentiments of ethnicity. As a result, they harbour antagonistic feelings towards each other. Such hostile ethnic relationships are relevant to Sri Lanka and many other post-colonial societies in the Third World. This implies that ethnic conflict is a significant reality of our time. This is confirmed not simply by its ubiquitous state alone, but also by the cumulative increase in the frequency and intensity of its occurrence. According to an estimate, some forty-eight countries are experiencing ethnic-nationalist conflicts of one kind or the other (Tambiah, 1986).

After World War II, Asia and Africa had become severely divided societies, except for some other countries in the Caribbean region. These countries, after World War II, gained political independence. As a result, ethnic groups in conflict do not stand in a hierarchical relationship with one another. Instead, they are parallel groups divided by vertical cleavage. This excludes, for example, relations between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, where an ethnic conflict has revolved around systems of ethnic stratification. Still, it includes links among such groups as House, Ibo, and Yoruba in Nigeria; Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka; Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Malaysia (Horowitz, 2000).

According to ethnic riot records, there was a period of more than four decades after 1915 when there were no ethnic riots. However, it can be seen that, after 1977, mistrust grew at a breakneck pace, resulting in frequent riots (Gunasinghe, 1984).

Thus, in the post-colonial Sri Lanka state, the rights of its civilians have been challenged. It clearly shows social, economic, and political structures entangled

with severe root causes and the inability of the Sri Lankan state to make sure that there is a mechanism to ensure dignity, identity, and equality of people after its independence in 1948. Today, Sri Lankan society is delighted in having decisively defeated the LTTE armed conflict militarily. In general discourse, politicians, policymakers, and journalists identify simple reasons. From their perspective, the driving forces behind the violent conflict are aroused by ancient hatred of ethnic and religious communities (Gunasekara, 2004).

The common notion built up among the Sri Lankans after the armed conflict is that peace has been established. Especially, having eradicated the top-level leaders and carders of the LTTE, most politicians, policymakers, and even more academics tend to have the same opinions. According to Johan Galtung (2001), there are two types of peace. Namely, positive peace and negative peace. Achieving peace through eradicating violence is part of the ongoing conflict, which is called “negative peace.” However, when focusing attention on violent conflict in Sri Lanka, it is clear that we see only a negative peace in such a context, in which direct violence is wiped out. Some other sources that lead to violent conflicts are less visible. In a post-war society, a solution focusing only on behaviour is not sufficient to have a positive peace. For long-lasting peace, it is necessary to change the context and attitudes that create the conflict. The purpose of the current study is to look into the issues and challenges of the post-war reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. It is also expected to result in an easing of ethnic enemy mentality, contributing to the ethnic reconciliation process in the country (Galtung, 2001). This is the specificity of the present study. A cursory glance at the catalogue of a library reveals voluminous literature on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It has become a laboratory for researchers in conflict and peace studies. The above literature can be divided into two major categories, as follows:

Studies conducted before the end of the military confrontation between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. In the discussion of the previous studies, it can be seen that three books have been written based on three narrative studies. The books are “Road to Nandikadal” by Major General Kamal Gunarathna, “Gotas War” by C.A. Chandraprema, and “Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata” by Thamilini Jeyakumaran. These three books were written after the end of the war in 2009. These three books have various perspectives regarding war and its causes, the members who joined the war, and the main characters who paved the way for the victory. Two Sinhalese writers have written two books from these three books, and a Tamil writer has written one book. Both the Sinhalese writers are former army leaders, and the Tamil one is a former LTTE leading women's rebellion. These three books have been written from Elite perspectives. An elite group can be defined as a small group of people who are very influential, who make decisions, and who are powerful (Inciardi and Rothman, 1990). These three people can be introduced as elites according to this

definition. According to that, the content of these three books has an elite perspective.

While Sinhalese elites have represented elite Sinhala, Buddhist nationalistic ideology, the Tamil elite has represented Tamil elite ideology through these books. According to Kamal Gunarathna's book *Road to Nandikadal*, he has written his book for poor parents who sent their sons to fight with the ruthless LTTE. "The elite people in Colombo and abroad and the human rights activists, who misled us by a wrong picture of our soldiers and the war," he said, adding that he doesn't want his memories to be buried with his retirement (Gunarathne, 2010).

Those who possess power currently control the story of the past. Those who control the past shape the future. According to Kamal Gunarathna, he has written his book for the ground level of the community and elite. The undiscussed contradiction is also present in the presentation of the Sri Lanka army. They are commonly detained for being bold and patriotic. The duration of love for the great intimates causes great arousal.

On the other hand, we can see that a sheer economic requirement drove them to recruit men and women. They were children of distant rural hamlets whose parents were impoverished. So it was financial disappointment rather than patriotism. According to this idea, he was convinced that soldiers had joined on behalf of the motherland. However, Kamal Gunarathna has forgotten the economic necessity behind it.

A writer who wrote *Mahawansa* has glorified the majority victory through history. In parallel to these books or literature that have been written recently, which also celebrated the majority victory. Researchers who have investigated *Mahawansa* established that the imaginative construct, which *Nandikadal* indeed is not, is a fictional construct. In *Mahawansa*, *Dutugamunu* has been glorified by the author in the conflict between *Dutugamunu* and *Elara*. The author further glorified *Elara* in the *Mahawansa* to illuminate the glory of *Dutugamunu*. Gunarathna also uses this method in his book. Gunarathna seems incapable of dealing with complexity, taking instead a simple way of seeing things in sharply contrasting categories: good versus evil; the brave versus fanatical; the state is always good and right; it is its opponents, evil and wrong. *Gota's war* has been written by the secondary party to glorify the elite class. Unlikely, many stories are authored by journalists.

Moreover, *Gota's war* is also no different. It is also divided into two parts. *Gota's War* was written by *Chandraprema*. He looks at the conflict through the lens of the media. In another way, it was written in the newspaper author's eye. It has a sense of Sinhala Buddhist nationalistic ideology.

The writer starts his book by examining the origins of the conflicts in the thirty years immediately after independence. Right from the beginning, *Chandraprema's* flag is nailed firmly to his masthead, never moving. Never relented throughout the chapters. As a result, the Tamils are not right, they have

always been wrong, and nobody in this protracted conflict can be blamed on the Sinhalese as the state. The blame is mainly directed at the Tamil political leadership, which, as per Chandraperuma's radicalisation and nationalisation of Tamil politics, over does perfectly fair lows and acts by the state. According to his description of the riots in the 40s and 50s, another downplays the violence against Tamils and often highlights the violence against Sinhalese. He claimed he depicts the state and the police as doing everything they could to quell these programmes, which Chandreperuma believes were the weakness of the Tamil politicians in the first place (Chandraperuma, 2012).

To keep Gotabhaya central to the narrative, Chandreperuma is persuaded to keep the trench level view of the war while looking at the same events, such as the eruption of youth insurgencies in the southern part of the country. The political confrontation between the Rajapaksha and their opponents.

In the creation of conflict, the writer describes the opposition of Tamil leaders against Sinhala only. The satyagraha as a way of displaying protest was never meant to be peaceful. It was violence-free only to the extent that actual physical violence was not used by the satyagraha. In every other aspect, the Satyagraha was a way of waging war. All over, Chandraperuma consistently refuses to apportion any responsibility for the fight to the Sinhalese or the state's policies. Instead, he blames the Satyagraha themselves for the violence committed against them. He continuously blames the 1958 riot on Chelvanayagam's tarring of the Sri “ඉ” letter and the 1983 riot on Prebhakaram's killing of thirteen soldiers in an ambush. Nowhere does he claim the right to protect nor the authorities' responsibility to uphold the rule of law (Bastian, 2023).

Chandraperuma holds widely held beliefs that even he could agree with and use to colour what was a troubling history. The war was all the more interesting because the good men were not clear. The bad guys did a great thing, and none of the players knew what was going on or that it would be the end. Taking a heroic character as the theme (Gotabhaya Rajapaksha), Chandraperuma strains the historical record to the point of disbelief (Chandraperuma, 2013).

Sinhala Buddhist authors have written both these books from the perspective of majority Sinhala Buddhist nationalism. In these books, the Sinhala army is considered efficient, brave, and heroes. Similarly, the LTTE members have been described as brutal, passive, and Gota's war is a profoundly biased book on a fascinating subject, Sri Lanka's civil war. It mixes compelling details to trigger underwater mines with absolutely subjective and generally misleading opinions. Overall, Chandraprema's story as a whole is so biased as to be absurd at times, and it is utterly misleading unless people have other sources or memories to refer to.

The book “Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata” was written by Thamilini Jeryakumar. She was the former leader of the LTTE's female political section.

After the group got crushed by the Sri Lankan government army officers, Thamilini became a prisoner. However, she was pardoned by the government. This could be seen on the other side or the losers' side of the story, as a narration from one who is within the core of the armed struggle itself. This book has given a good depiction of the other side of the war which is not commonly heard or brought to attention. She has described under this book the excellent version of LTTE had towards civilians initially, the pain her people suffered in war, and the guilt feeling that LTTE is responsible for it. She has described her memories of the destruction of the war. Destruction, loss of lives, and loss of lives and casualties were the primary losses of the war.

The perspective through which these three books have written is about the elite of each ethnic community. Both parties' elite personals have written these books with their perspectives. Therefore, the memories regarding ground-level victims of the war or community could not be identified.

Theoretical Perspectives of Memory and Reconciliation

Table 1: Charles A. Kupchan's Four-Phase Process of Lead to Sustainable Peace

Phase	Behaviour	Qualities Evaluated	Resulting Affect
Phase I	Unilateral Accommodation	Intent	Hope
Phase II	Reciprocal Restraint	Motivation	Confidence
Phase III	Societal Integration	Character	Trust
Phase IV	Narrative Generation	Identity	Solidarity

Source: Kupchan, 2011

According to the above table 1, it could be identified that if a particular country or society wants to achieve sustainable peace after the conflict or war, it should address these four phases in the post-war situation. According to Kupchan, unilateral accommodation builds a foundation for reciprocal restraint, which later sets the stage for societal integration. The final generation of new narratives and identities forms a sense of solidarity and communal identities between the two conflicting parties (Kupchan, 2011).

Materials and Methods

The present study has been carried out on the role of war memories and ethnic reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka, which needed both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the primary data for in-depth inquiry of the war victim's memory and its impacts on ethnic reconciliation. Therefore, this study falls into both qualitative and quantitative research designs, known as mixed research design. Against this backdrop, the researcher adopted a rapid ethnographic view for this study.

The data collection methods for qualitative research are conducted in a natural setting. Thus, books and articles can only give limited information about insights into human relations and their deeper perceptions and thoughts. First-hand participation is therefore needed to understand how the social world is functioning. For this reason, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted in the data collection process.

The quantitative research approach was also helpful for this research to get information on their income level, education level, opinions on both parties who were conflicting etc. To analyse their living conditions before the war, during the war and post-war situation, quantitative data was essential. A questionnaire survey was used as a quantitative data collection method.

The selection of the study area is based on the gravity of the effects of the war in the Batticaloa District in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the study selected Karadiarunaru village in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat area in Batticaloa District for primary data collection, one of the villages mostly destroyed by the war. As a result, the primary data for this study was gathered in a village called Karadiyanaru in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division in the Batticaloa District of Sri Lanka's Eastern Province.

The study used non-probability sampling techniques. The research strategy that was used to select sample respondents for this study was two-way. First, respondents to the qualitative data collection were selected purposely to represent various segments of society. They include the elderly (men and women), village elites, war widows, ex-LTTE combatants, including gender, civil society leaders, politicians, university lecturers, and religious leaders. In the meantime, respondents to the quantitative data collection methods were selected through a simple random method.

Further, the collection of primary data from respondents of Karadiyanaru village was done using various methods. They were observations, semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews, and questionnaire methods.

Qualitative data analysis is more appropriate to analyse the war victim's memory towards issues and challenges of post-war peace-building in the country because the data gathered from in-depth interviews is more descriptive than numerical. In

this backdrop, thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data, such as across a number of interviews, to identify repeated patterns, themes, concepts, and meanings.

However, quantitative data is also added to the analysis before any comparative analysis or any concluding arguments. Both the primary and secondary data were mainly analysed through qualitative methods, while using quantitative methods as appropriate. The research was done primarily on the war memories of victims and their impact on ethnic reconciliation.

Further, the researcher used simple statistical methods such as tables, bar charts, pie charts, etc., to present quantitative data. And it was only used to manually tabulate data and generate fundamental correlational analysis of quantitative data. However, it presented data in simple statistical methods like using charts, tables, and graphs etc.

Results and Discussion

Impact of Memory on War to Reconciliation

The war ended twelve years ago, and people are still waiting for the dawn of sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. To achieve sustainable peace, it is essential to receive reconciliation. In the process of reconciliation, memory is significant. Community-led memory initiatives that do not have state sanction can, and indeed has, taken more liberal and creative forms over the years. Memory initiatives can assist entire communities. Special community memories are significant, which directly affects the initiation of the reconciliation process.

The personal memorialisation effort, like community initiatives, take various forms to express and to remind that, if not which may have been forgotten. They hold deep meaning and personal significance in a way that no other initiative can afford the space to express. Individual memory initiatives encompass anything about arms giving, book dedication, art installation, documentation of incidents, photographs and storytelling.

Even after a settlement is reached and a peace agreement is signed, this is by no means the end of the war. The settlement has to be implemented. If it is just a war between two people, this may not be hard: those two people do what they agree to do, and past problems may be solved. In addition to the elite who negotiated the agreement, their constituents also have to agree to the settlement, or else the agreement is likely to fail. Usually, there is a long period of peacebuilding from the grassroots level, eventually culminating in apology, forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation itself is a highly complicated, contested term. Some see it as simply coexistence; others respect, and for some others, mutual forgiveness.

Trust is the keystone of reconciliation, and also trust is the glue that holds relationships, societies, and economies together. War results in the breakdown of trust, and that is why its rebuilding is a core element of peacebuilding. It is essential to overcome fragmentation and reduce animosities for the successful implementation of peacebuilding.

Even though visible wounds are recovered, invisible wounds from the war are so devastating and harder to repair.” The bombing had started. Every moment we saw a flight, we thought it was a military plane that dropped shells. We could not even come out of our houses. We had to suffer from hunger and poverty. How should we forget the past, when such incidents recall our memory (Saniya, who was 46 years old Tamil woman, 09.07. 2018).

War had torn social fabric. Mistrust roams in all relationships. In such a sense, even minor problems can increase into significant violence. Inner peace helps societies re-establish trust through the collaborative identification hurdles towards existing peace and solutions to common issues by giving secure places for discussions. Reconciliation is a process of community involving interpersonal understanding of the past suffering and the changing of hostile attitudes and behavioural patterns into creative and hopeful relationships towards lasting peace (Milton, 2014). This definition focuses on the critical building blocks of post-conflict reconciliation. It acts on changes in emotional attitudes and behaviour. The definition emphasises that reconciliation is a social process after armed struggle and works on differences within and between former riotous groups after ending war. Eventually, it shows that reconciliation is a process, not a specific situation at one particular moment in future. This definition parallels others who see reconciliation as a pragmatic process of rebuilding relations to enable coexistence and sustainable peace. According to the responses, it could be identified that it had been a friendly relationship among this area's people before the war. These people are waiting to build a relationship that they had maintained before the black July in 1983. Following statement witnesses this waiting situation. It means they are waiting to reconcile with society again.

We want to live together as we were before the war. With the war, our relationship collapsed. We hope for justice. It does not mean everyone who engaged in the war should be arrested or punished. We want only the harmony between one another as before we had (a war victim who has lived 72 years in Karadiyanaru).

Concreted memories are a symbolic resource that can be assembled to legalise the political agenda for the present and future. A typical example of communicative memory is generational memory, which spans about 80–100 years (or three or four generations). In this case, memory is lived, which tends to be more influential in public discourse and personal behaviour. Sometimes the memories they faced in the past come to the surface, from time to time, and then those memories directly affect the reconciliation process of society.

According to social identity theory, people get much of their identity from the groups they belong to. Therefore, the significance of having a positive self-image is essential for humans and by comparison with other groups, this target is obtained by accessing one in-group more reasonably than the out-group of significant problems. Be a part of that favourable group by bearing similar beliefs and sharing the group's views.

The research wanted to get some overall responses to the war situation and their feelings during the war. According to their responses, it has been tabulated as follows: During the war, how they live and how the living conditions affect their consciousness and how they still live with those consciousness and psychological issues are explored. Psychological issues should be addressed to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation.

The Way of Memorialisation

The subject of memory is crucial in building political reconciliation and unity in a post-conflict environment. Prospects for lasting peace grow dimmer when the politics of memory are not addressed carefully. The researcher asked the respondents regarding the mode of memorialisation. Those answers were categorised into five categories. Those are constructing monuments for memories, introducing a national day for remembering, renaming buildings or streets by the names of war heroes, building proper burials and giving death certificates, and so forth. Among them, many of the respondents' answers were given as death certificates and then established as proper burials. According to their responses, it could be inferred that they hope to provide dignity to their closest friends that lost their lives during the war. According to that, it has been indicated that they don't expect significant monuments or national day ceremonies. Only they ask for fair living conditions for their heroes and those closest to them.

Table 2: The Way of Memorialization of Civilian of this Area

The Method	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Construct Monument Memories	3	6	3	5
Introduce a National day for Remembrance	0	0	0	0
Rename Building or Street	8	16	6	10
Give Dead Certificates	29	58	13	22
Proper Burials	10	20	38	63
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018.

Table 2 represents the responses regarding the method of memorialisation of lost people during the war. According to that, it could be identified that men and women have different options and those options are varied. Male respondents have expressed their responses regarding memorialisation, as foremost, giving death certificates, building proper burials, renaming buildings or streets, and finally constructing the monument. The percentages of these responses were, 58%, 20%, 16%, and 6% respectively. Parallel women's responses were first to build proper burials, then give dead certificates, and then to rename a building or road. In percentages, they were 38%, 22%, 10%, and 5% respectively. Males wanted to memorialise war-affected deaths by giving death certificates, while females wanted to have proper burials. The notable fact here is that no one wanted to introduce a national day ceremony to memorise dead people due to the war. However, everyone wanted at least one mechanism for the memory of these people.

Respondent's Ideas about Memorialization of War victim on Reconciliation

Drawing on the Durkheimian concept of collective memory developed by Alwachs (1992), Middleton and Edwards (1990) locate both discourse and memory as external to the minds of individuals, arguing that memory is a social process of "collective remembering." War heroes or dead people should be remembered because of the war to achieve reconciliation in the post-war period. After the war, society should be reconciled, and everyone wants to normalise their lives. Memory and reconciliation are both sides of the same coin. To achieve reconciliation in society, it is essential to address the memories of war victims. When the researcher inquired regarding the importance of memorialisation to achieve reconciliation, their responses were as follows.

Table 3: Respondent’s Ideas about Memorialization of War Victims for Reconciliation

Ideas	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Memorialization is important for reconciliation	40	80	51	84
Memorialization is not important for reconciliation	6	12	0	0
No opinion	4	8	9	16
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018

According to the respondents, memorialisation is very important to achieving reconciliation. Both men and women have agreed to acknowledge that memorialisation is essential for reconciliation. Among the respondents, some didn't have any opinion in terms of memorialisation. For war heroes, certain dates and locations are significant for memorialization. Heroism is different from person to person, place to place, or community to community. On this ground, no one can hope to recall the same person, same day, or same place in terms of heroism. When the researcher observes this area, it could be concluded that heroism and memorialisation are different in various ways. Four out of every five males have expressed that memorialisation is essential to reconciliation. Nearly the same number of female respondents also said their responses were memorialised as memorialisation is essential to reconciliation. According to respondents, it will be helpful to heal their unforgettable memories. Then they can mentally and physically be settled in the current situation and can experience the reality of life.

The war was ceased by the government. But we have no chance to live as before the war period. We could not even go outside because there were army camps everywhere. We cannot do anything with a free mind (A 45 year old in Karadiyanaru).

We always have problems. Especially for girls, when they see a beautiful girl, they tend to loiter in this area. Many problems were created by the war. We have to live with that unforgettable memory. When we remember the past, we hate both parties who were involved (a woman who was 54 years old).

Tourism has gradually become popular with the end of the war in war-torn areas. That is called war and peace tourism. It continues to grow as tourist attractions, and hundreds of thousands of local and international tourists visit former battlefields, military cemeteries, and memorials throughout the year. With the popularisation of war tourism in the post-war period, the scale of memorialisation

and the profusion were maintained. The monuments have also been overshadowed by the interpretation of the battlefields.

Tourism encapsulates economic, security, and development agendas in concrete ways. Tourist sites mobilise fear of potential terrorism and a return to the rule of the LTTE if vigilance and militarisation are not maintained. In such a context of risk, development is best done by the military. Within this logic of securitisation, militarisation becomes a common-sense approach.

According to these respondents, war memory in the past is repeatedly memorialised because of war tourism and peace tourism. With the advent of war tourism and peace tourism, military troops began to control and govern those areas. That was a kind of militarisation of these areas. These conditions were painful and brought the most profound memories to the surface again and again. According to them, these activities have been caused to get the forgotten memory back so they can recall them. They stated that recalling such a memory prevented them from feeling friendly.

Ideas of War Victims to Achieve Reconciliation

The inability to come to terms with anger or strife can often lead to stress disorders, mental health disorders, and relationship problems. Forgiveness is a personal decision. Those focus on individual experiences and the truth. It mainly focuses on transitional justice.

Forgiveness and truth are terms that connect with reconciliation. This is because truth can be hard to find in a society with so many versions of it, and when there is ambiguity, who shall forgive and who shall receive forgiveness? Ideally, forgiveness should be given by all to all. However, at least the first step in such a process needs to acknowledge, affirm, and understand the opposite side. Forgiveness, with its focus on the past rather than the future, does not alone provide a psychological basis for how people can overcome past events and reconcile (Halpern, Weinstein, 2004). Forgiveness is critical when achieving a reconciled process. It is not only after the war but also after any ordinary conflict. According to respondents, they have expressed their ideas on war victims to achieve reconciliation. Within that discussion, they have mentioned that forgiveness is critical to reconciling a society after a war. Otherwise, people who were victimised by the war may try to create revengeful thoughts within themselves based on their past gloomy memories.

According to this idea, apologising is another crucial factor in reconciling war victims. According to some respondents, they have expressed their ideas on public apologies. According to them, they hope not only to receive personal apologies but also a public apology as a country.

According to respondents, compensation is another tool for justice. Compensation should be provided for the victims of lost lives, destroyed claims, and lost lands. Still, these victims do not have permission to access their lands. The 30 year-long war has dispersed their houses and other properties. Even their family members and closest friends were lost, and they waited to meet them. However, if they do not have any chance to meet them or build up their property, they should be given compensation for those things. Otherwise, their memories regarding these have affected them as a barrier to reconciling their mentality.

Civilians in war-torn areas had violated every type of right, and yet they were denied their rights. They have fought on behalf of their rights, and the authorities still have not taken a proper step to create a program to establish the process. However, they hope for equal rights as citizens. When the researcher was observing these areas, it could be seen that there were no equal rights to education and health. So they ask for equal rights. According to them, it could be identified that if they have equal rights, they can quickly achieve reconciliation.

Power-sharing is another requirement for reconciliation, according to them. Power-sharing is a political process. It should be done by the government and then at the state level. When the researcher inquired into the necessity of power-sharing, they expressed that the provincial-level power-sharing process is successful. Power-sharing relates to peaceful reconciliation. In the Sri Lankan context, losers are still requesting power-sharing to reconcile society.

These ideas can be presented as follows: Many respondents have expressed that power-sharing and compensation are very important in reconciling. Therefore, if the authorities concerned can proceed to solutions, they think it is effortless to achieve reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

Civilians in war-torn areas had been violated in every way, and they still had no chance of achieving their rights. According to them, they have fought on behalf of their rights, and still, authorities' concerns have not taken a proper step to create a programme to establish a process. However, they hope for equal rights as citizens. When the researcher was observing these areas, it could be seen that there were no equal rights to education and health. So they ask for equal rights.

These ideas can be presented in the following way: Many respondents have expressed that power-sharing and compensation are very important in reconciling. Therefore, if the authorities' concerns can proceed to solutions, they think it is elementary to achieve reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka.

When the researcher inquired about the ideas of war victims to achieve reconciliation, their responses could be categorised and depicted as follows: According to their answers, it could be tabulated as forgiveness, apologies, compensation, giving equal rights, and power-sharing.

Table 4: Ideas of War Victims to Achieve Reconciliation

Activity	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Forgiveness	6	12	6	10
Apologies	3	6	7	12
Compensation	16	32	24	40
Give Equal Rights	7	14	13	22
Power sharing	16	32	10	16
Self-Autonomy	2	4	0	0
Total	50	100	60	100

Source: Field study, 2018.

According to the respondents, compensation and power-sharing are essential ways of achieving justice. As revealed by respondents, compensation was the most appropriate activity, as revealed by respondents, to achieve reconciliation, and secondly, power-sharing. According to female respondents, they have expressed giving compensation as the most suitable activity to achieve reconciliation. Many of them achieve reconciliation. Both males and females did not respond, as forgiveness would be necessary for reconciliation. It means they are not willing to forgive people who are responsible for war crime-related activities. Self-autonomy was the lowest response from both males and females as an activity to achieve reconciliation.

In this article, the researcher has discussed the memory of war victims and its impact on the ethnic reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. First, the nature of wartime memories has been discussed with the experience during the war. Then, the researcher discussed “how personal memories become societal memories or collective memories, and finally how collective memories can affect the reconciliation process in the post-war period in Sri Lanka.”

Based on the nature of the war experiences in the context of Sri Lanka, the researcher identified two levels of war experiences as follows;

Individual-level war experiences

Community-level or societal-level war experiences

The researcher also divided these experiences into two parallel parts based on their embedded relationships with the former;

Personal or individual memories

Collective memories

The memories were identified as very important in the period of transitional justice. It was advantageous to consider cultural, religious, ethnic, social, and political pluralism in a reconciliation process. The memorialisation process was identified as a critical consideration in the process of transitional justice. For the healing process, memorialization was also very important. The researcher categorised different types of memories. Almost all respondents had war-related experiences and memories related to those experiences. Both male and female respondents had been affected, yet they were still suffering from war-related memories.

Effects of Memory on Personal Reconciliation

It was found in the analysis that people who were interviewed still live with fear in an insecure condition in society. War has created a negative situation in the affected area. They have faced tragic experiences during the war, which have

remained bitter memories in their lives. However, they are finding a way to heal the memories that they still suffer from.

Any successive governments that have come to power have been unable to address the problems caused by the war. Many people living in the war-affected areas are still waiting for justice for relatives who were abducted, imprisoned, and disappeared. Most of them are suffering from PTSD with wartime memories. PTSD related experiences badly affected the healing process of these people. Still, they suffer from nightmares and flashbacks of bitter memories.

Effects of Memory on Societal Reconciliation

Before the war, Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims who lived in harmony maintained mutual relationships and used to do business collectively. Every Sinhala family left due to the war also gave up their businesses. Although the civilians did not create the war, the main consequence is that it has divided the community of these areas. Mistrust and insecurity have been deepened throughout society by the war.

Revenge and hurt have become the main targets of some people in these areas. People who were repaid and hurt during the war are still waiting to retaliate against those who committed such crimes.

Although social relationships in this area have improved in the post-war era, many things are yet to be achieved. They don't have the time and opportunity to memorise the closest of their friends. They are waiting to remember their relationships and most intimate moments on a ceremonial day.

Effects of Memory on Interpersonal Reconciliation

People living in war-affected areas are still waiting for a proper mechanism to build up the social relationships that they used before the war. They had been seeking a way to come together to work as a society again. Unfortunately, there is no proper mechanism that strengthens social cohesion by rewording norms such as forgiveness and repentance. As a result, individual memory has become a collective memory, which in turn creates psychological issues as a community instead of healing.

Effects of Memory on Political Reconciliation

Responsible parties that ignore their responsibilities emphasise governance far away from those seeking a proper way to create governance in these areas. People's memories of the role of local government and provincial councils in the affected areas are bringing these people from the past to the present in the reconciliation process and thus they have no trust in these two government agencies at all. Notably, the central government has not adequately addressed

educational opportunities and livelihood-related activities for the youth. And also, the community memorialisation process is essential to political reconciliation. In terms of these people, they are waiting to commemorate their community and build memorial sites to remember them.

Reconciliation is shaped by various factors: the experiences and memories of the victims; their roles in a conflict situation; their positions and predicament in the post-war environment; and by their individual and collective attitudes and perceptions. Individual memories that originated from personal experiences have become collective memories in another stage of their lives. For example, the memory of a wounded person has led not only to a dark future but also to a collective negative impact on the reconciliation process.

The reconciliation process restores social ties and boosts social capital more broadly. In this process, people may have more willingness to interact with one another after the community has acknowledged their suffering and after individuals have forgiven each other. In this regard, reconciliation may strengthen social networks. These social networks erase war memory, which will be successfully affected by an intense reconciliation process. Finally, it needed to highlight a big gap in the policy adopted to reconcile the ethnically fragile society of the country. The government policy package aimed at reconciliation lacks proper elements to address the collective memory of the war-victimised community. It was observed that the government is ignorant of the necessity of looking at the link between collective memory and reconciliation and is disinterested or has no gut to engage in such a process in a political setting wherein electoral politics is run on an ethno-religious moral registry. As Sri Lankan academia is bound by a positivist trap, the researcher leaves the issue to be addressed by normative social and political theorists on what needs to be done.

Conclusion

Two identities exist in memory. One must carefully restore one's health because it is a delicate creature that is continuously in danger of going extinct. The memory of a violent past may be lost if victims and survivors are not allowed to tell their tales, and with it, any chance of learning the truth or obtaining justice. The most effective means of achieving peace in a post-war society will be for people to remember their war heroes and their loved ones.

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