

Role of Religious Leaders in Post -War Peacebuilding: An Analysis of John Pol Lederarch's Peace Building Pyramid

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ABSTARCT

A post war period is the interval immediately following an end of a war. The end of a war is generally expected to be followed by an end to collective violence. However, post war societies often consist of certain generic features that trigger violence. Hence long lasting peace building efforts that address the root causes of the war should be implemented. Peacebuilding is known as the practical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction and development and various subject experts have expressed their views on how peacebuilding should be done in a post war society. John Paul Lederach's ideas are the most important among them because he has answered this question by using a diagram called "a peacebuilding pyramid" that describes the actors on social levels and what actions are best taken at each level. The levels are: top elite, the middle-range, and the grassroots. Religious leaders are included in middle level and the pyramid explores the role of religious leaders in peace building.

The objective of the study is to understand the role of religion in a post war context. In order to achieve this objective the research has been conducted in two ways; analysing John Pol Lederach's Peacebuilding Pyramid and collecting public opinions of a selected sample. In order to gather the data, a sample consisting of 20 religious leaders were chosen. A simple random sampling approach was used to select the sample. Both primary and secondary data were used in conducting the research. To collect the required primary data, the interview method was used and secondary data was collected using books, magazines and websites. Data has been analysed qualitatively.

Among the conclusions that were derived, the major factors can be extracted accordingly; John Pol Lederach's Peacebuilding pyramid has given better practical and effective community based interventions that can be recommended to rebuild strengths, adaptation, coping strategies and resilience and in that context religious leaders have an important role. The values contained in the teachings of great religious teachings are essential to eradicate root causes of conflicts. Additionally, attributes of religions including reliability as a trusted institution, a respected set of values, moral warrants for opposing injustice on the part of governments, unique leverage for promoting reconciliation among conflicting parties, a capacity to mobilize communities are important in promoting peace and reconciliation.

Key Words: Religion, Religious Leaders, Postwar Context, Peacebuilding, Peacebuilding pyramid

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