

DHURBA RIZAL & YOZO YOKOTA

# UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

The Cases of Bhutan, Nepal, North-East India  
and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh



This book, *Understanding Development, Conflict and Violence: The Cases of Bhutan, Nepal, North-East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh* analyzes the relationship between Development, Conflict and Violence, a most controversial, debated and studied theme in the social sciences. The study revolves around the core question: Is development per se or the lack of it the cause of conflict and violence or have composite forces and factors played a role in its generation, accentuation or reduction?

The book offers a mix of theoretical, empirical and statistical analysis, focusing on analyzing conflict and violence from composite perspectives. It vividly portrays, through robust and coherent empirical and statistical analysis, the myriad factors contributing to the theme under discussion.

The book comprises an Introduction and thirteen chapters besides the Preface, Bibliography, Appendix and Index. Simple, compact, coherent and critical, it lucidly challenges some of the fragmented views and segmental viewpoints of conflict and violence; critically examines the problem of intervention and absence of honest peace-brokers in the region and provides meticulous policy recommendations to drain the swamp of problems and map the trend of conflict in the area under consideration based on conflict framework analysis.

It serves as an eye-opener to the layman, shallow academicians, donors and other professionals.

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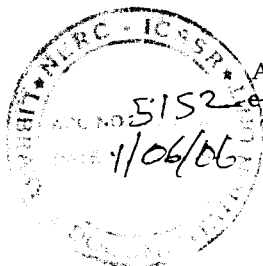


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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	11
<i>List of Figures</i>	21
<i>List of Tables</i>	23
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	27
<b>Introduction</b>	31
<b>Section One : A Bird's Eye View of South Asia</b>	<b>33</b>
1.1. Rhetoric of Democracy, Governance and Corruption	35
1.2. Poverty, Inequality, Exclusivity and Deprivation	37
1.3. Security and Militarization	38
1.4. Economic Development and Compounding Injustice	39
1.5. Population/Migration/Urbanization	40
1.6. Ethnicity/Ethno-Nationalism/Socio-Cultural	41
1.7. Weak Institutions and Destructive Politics	42
<b>Section Two : Methodological Considerations</b>	<b>45</b>
1.1. Need for the study	46
1.2. Scope of the study	47
1.3. Objectives of the study	48
1.4. Limitations of the study	49
1.5. Structure of the book	50
1.6. Conclusion	53
<b>1. From Development to Conflict and Violence: Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>56</b>
Introduction	56
<b>Section One : Development</b>	<b>57</b>
1.1.1. The Concept of Development	58
1.1.2. Overview of Theories of Development	63

## 16 *Understanding Development, Conflict and Violence*

1.1.3. Development, Change, Conflict and Nation Building	67
<b>Section Two : Conflict and Violence</b>	<b>71</b>
1.2.1. Concept of Conflict and Violence	71
1.2.2. Typologies of Violence and their Manifestations	73
1.2.3. Political Violence	75
1.2.4. Overview of Theories of Conflict and Violence	77
1.2.5. Nation Building and Violence	82
1.2.6. Conclusion	83
<b>2. Engineering Evolution Through Conflict and Violence : The Case of Lhotsampa Bhutanese and Refugee Crisis</b>	<b>91</b>
2.1. Introduction	91
2.2. Ethno-Demographic Statistics of Bhutan	93
2.3. Underlying Deep-Rooted Causes of Conflict and Violence	96
2.4. Citizens into Refugees: Response, Reaction and Exodus	123
2.5. Crisis within Crisis: Internal Colonization and Resettlement	126
2.6. The Politics of Diplomacy: Deadlock and Continuing Uncertainties	128
2.7. National, Regional and International Determinants of Refugee Crisis	133
2.8. Frustrations and Despair: Possible Militarization of Refugees and Coming of Anarchy	140
2.9. Conclusion	149
<b>3. Engineering Evolution Through Conflict and Violence: The Case of Jumma People of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh</b>	<b>157</b>
3.1. Introduction	157
3.2. An Overview of Bangladesh and Background of Jumma People	159
3.3. Enabling Conditions for Conflict and Violence CHTs	163
3.4. Resistance Movement and Insurgency	188
3.5. Exodus of Jumma Refugees	192
3.6. The Politics of Compromise: Elusive Fog of Peace	196
3.7. Concluding Remarks	201

<b>4. Engineering Evolution Through Conflict and Violence: The Case of North-East India</b>	<b>210</b>
4.1. Introduction	210
4.2. Overview of India	213
4.3. Profile of North-East India	215
4.4. Causes of Conflict and Violence	218
4.5. Insurgent Groups in the North-East	245
4.6. The Politics of Persuasion: Muddling Ahead	250
4.7. Final Thoughts	252
<b>5. Engineering Revolution Through Conflict and Violence: The Case of Maoists of Nepal</b>	<b>259</b>
5.1. Introduction	259
5.2. Setting of Nepal	261
5.3. Maoists' Demands	262
5.4. Causes of Conflict and Violence	264
5.5. Maoist Insurgency	297
5.6. The Quest for Peace: Plenty of Clouds and Few Silver Linings	299
5.7. Taking Stock	304
<b>6. Form of Cooperation Between the Reformists and Revolutionaries</b>	<b>311</b>
6.1. Introduction	311
6.2. Social Base of Violent Movement	312
6.3. Integrating Violence to a Strategy	315
6.4. Network of Insurgent and Militant Groups: Collective Diversity and Coordinated Anarchy	320
6.5. State Response and Mobilization Dimensions	329
6.6. Conclusion	330
<b>7. Evaluating the Economic Dimensions of Development</b>	<b>334</b>
7.1. Introduction	334
7.2. Political Economy	336
7.3. Economic Dimensions of Development	342
7.3.1. Nepal	343
7.3.2. Bhutan	354
7.3.3. India and the North-East	364
7.3.4. Bangladesh and Chittagong Hill Tracts	376

18 *Understanding Development, Conflict and Violence*

7.4.	Conclusion	383
<b>8.</b>	<b>Evaluating the Political and Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Development</b>	<b>387</b>
8.1.	Introduction	387
8.2.	Political Dimensions of Development	388
8.3.	Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Development	397
8.4.	Paradoxes and Experiences of Development	404
8.5.	Conclusion	416
<b>9.</b>	<b>Understanding Development, Conflict and Violence Linkages</b>	<b>420</b>
9.1.	Introduction	420
9.2.	Mutuality of Development, Conflict and Violence	421
9.2.1.	Graphical Analysis of Development and Violence	426
9.2.2.	Statistical Analysis of Data	434
9.2.3.	Post-Empirical Analysis	448
9.3.	System Model of Conflict-Violence and Composite Factors	460
<b>10.</b>	<b>Towards General Propositions of Causes of Conflict and Violence</b>	<b>466</b>
10.1.	Introduction	466
10.2.	Analyzing the Causes of Conflict and Violence	468
10.2.1.	Political Cause	472
10.2.2.	Economic	478
10.2.3.	Socio-cultural	481
10.2.4.	Agrarian Cause	484
10.2.5.	Ethnic Case	487
10.2.6.	Development and Associated Causes	492
10.3.	Conclusion	503
<b>11.</b>	<b>Costs of Conflict and Violence</b>	<b>512</b>
11.1.	Introduction	512
11.2.	Costs of Conflict and Violence	515
11.2.1.	Economic Costs /Development / Physical Costs of Conflict and Violence	515
11.2.2.	Human Costs of Conflict and Violence	523
11.2.3.	Social Costs of Conflict and Violence	530
11.2.4.	Security Expenditure, Militarization of State and Civil Society	535

<b>12. Conflict and Peace Brokers: Problems and Prospects</b>	<b>547</b>
12.1. Introduction	547
12.2. Problem of Honest Peace Broker in Conflict Resolution in South Asia	551
12.2.1. United Nations: Multilateral Imperatives and Coalition of Willing	552
12.2.2. United States of America: Problem of Pseudo-Speciation	554
12.2.3. Japan: Question of Values vs. Interests	559
12.2.4. India: Bound to Bully vs. Bound to Lead	563
12.3. Conclusion	568
<b>13. Conclusion: Weaving A New Beginning</b>	<b>572</b>
13.1. Introduction	572
13.2. Summary of Development, Conflict and Violence—Composit Factor	572
13.3. A Way Forward: Draining the Swamp	578
13.4. Future Scope and Research	587
<i>Appendix</i>	597
<i>Bibliography</i>	601
<i>Index</i>	631

## Introduction

*'Injustice anywhere is a threat to Justice everywhere'*  
*Martin Luther King: Noble Laureate and Leader of Civil Rights*  
*Movement.*

Conflict and development are two things that no human being or functioning organizations can evade nor escape. We all experience change, development, conflict and violence. Development may bring about violent conflict and destroy existing relationships or it may create opportunities for the establishment of new ones, making it both painful and promising. To explain how and why conflict and violence arise from development and related factors, what role they play in shaping and moulding the lives of human beings and dynamic international relations, and how to manage development and conflict in a manner that provides maximum benefits and opportunities is a complex and most difficult task.

In recent decades, numerous studies and debates have been generated concerning the relationship between development, conflict and violence. The theoretical interest has been sustained by long-standing puzzlement over the precise impact of conflict and violence on development and vice versa. The interest in the empirical relationship between the two has been frequently renewed by the birth of intense and escalating violence in the developing world. The relationship between violence and development is one of the largest debated theories in the social sciences and it is one of the most vexing issues. The theoretical literature written by political scientists predicts

that conflict; political violence and instability have a strong negative impact on development and growth. The notion that the lack of development generated conflict and violence, has been carried by generations of Western experts to Asia, Latin America and Africa. This optimum voice is not uncommon among the chorus of development planners and international agencies including World Bank.<sup>1</sup> They have always pointed out that the lack of development has generated conflict and violence in the developing Third World. They held the perception that development would bear fruits to reduce and serve as the death-nail of conflict and violence. However, now it is clear that this assertion was far too optimistic. The empirical literature developed by development and conflict experts and economists cannot detect the causal relationship. This has created a complex and perplexing paradox.

This book attempts to unfold this dilemma and visit political violence, development and other closely associated and related factors which have created such a paradox. The study revolves around the crucial question: "If political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of development improve, will there be relative decline in the degree of conflict and violence and is lack of economic development and negative consequences of development the only cause of conflict and violence or composite of factors and forces play and interact in an integrated way to determine the degree and level of conflict and violence?" Thus, the focus of the study attempted here is analyzing in-depth issues, which pertain to linkages of development-political violence-other factors and forces nexus. The study intends to indicate that complex variables, forces and factors have contributed collectively to determine the degree, course and direction of the political violence in the region. The experiences of the past and present robustly demonstrate that political violence is the function of composite forces and factors and development is insignificant in mobilizing and contributing variables to generate, accentuate or decrease the political violence. The study aims to incorporate the possible mix of academic research, field research and experiences of the authors.

The introductory chapter is designed to take stock of a bird's-eye view of South Asia and methodological considerations. It is divided into two sections followed by a conclusion. Section One briefly highlights the region in integrated perspectives to provide a bird's-

eye view to help understand the content of the book in a lucid way. Section Two focuses on methodological considerations incorporating the scope, objectives, limitations and structure of the book.

## **SECTION I : A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF SOUTH ASIA**

The Himalayan area constitutes a special category of backward region. It is home to Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh and other states of South Asia. South Asian nations have little or no control over their borders. It is not certain that they will do so in the foreseeable future. Geography, topography, history and a number of other variables have linked each other within the broad framework of international relations. The nations of South Asia are linguistically and culturally diverse. All major religions of the world have followers in this region. South Asian nations are multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural. These factors describe inter-state relations in one way or the other. Every country of South Asia shares at least one important ethnic group with India. Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka must take Indian sensibilities into account in dealing with issues of ethnicity and citizenship while Bangladesh must consider Indian sentiment in its network of Bengali Hindus and Bihari Muslims. Thus, it presents itself as a ready-made laboratory of majority-minority relations. Achieving and preserving national unity has become a major challenge to most of these states due to the crystallization of group identities and mobilization on the basis of race, religion and language.

It is also the home of insurgencies, militancy, desperation, conflict and growing violence. The Shangri-La to an outsider and postcard-like façade of mist-clad hills, lush green forests, smooth valleys, bewildering range of its languages, and rich colour mix of people, exotic locales and smiling faces lies in deeper emotions, grief, terror, war and all the torments, tragedies and gore that accompany them. For decades, this region has seethed with unrest, rebellion and violence. Ethnic coalitions, oral tradition and lifestyle based on respect for nature have mattered more in these regions. Here people of different nationalities share the common origin of racial, historical, anthropological and linguistic kinship. It is this affirmative that has played a role in the unrest, insurgencies, conflict and violence which

have troubled this region. The region has been a battleground for generations of national identities confronting insensitive nation states and their bureaucracies as well as internecine strife. It is a battleground that continue of ideas and arms, new concepts and old traditions, bitterness and compassion and conflict between minority and majority. Moreover, modern cities of the region have a large number of migrants and constitute floating populations, which become a potential ground for recruiting for underground activities of smuggling, drug peddling, recruitment in insurgency and terrorist groups and hired assassinations. Decisions about them are made by bureaucracies and political mandarins in national capitals removed from the realities of the indigenous environment, customs, values, norms and beliefs that govern the people of the region.

The root of conflict and violence in the region can be traced to economic, socio-cultural and political factors. It is grappling with the changes that the modern age relentlessly brings and it is these changes, inequality, deprivation and alienation that are the root of the militancy, the insurgencies, the desperation and the growing conflict and violence.

South Asia remains one of the most volatile regions of the world. Various internal problems of its constituent countries — India, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh disturb and vitiate the regional security environment. Most of the internal security crisis that plagues South Asian states is both cross-border and inter-related. For example, the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal, persistent ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, increasing use of Bangladeshi territory by Islamist extremists, the proliferation of small arms and the menace of drug trafficking and narco-terrorism transcend the national borders and each of these has significant transnational dimensions. India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal also continue to grapple with the problem of having to deal with insurgents, terrorist, extremist and subversive elements. They are based on their soil and operate against each other. Ethno-cultural diversity is inversely related with the size of the population and the territory of the state in the region.

Having explained and identified the background of the region, it is essential to highlight the core and substantive problems. The attempt here is not intended to be exhaustive but selective, highlighting some of the most important problems. Some of the pertinent problems of the region are delineated as follows:

## **1.1. Rhetoric of Democracy, Governance and Corruption**

South Asia is one of the most poorly governed regions of the world with the exclusion of the voiceless majority. It has an unstable political regime. It is ironical to note that the region, which has the history of the oldest democratic institutions, India and Sri Lanka, witnessed that the democracy that is practised is not at all conducive to the welfare of the people. It is facing the crisis of governance, which if left unchecked would halt the region's democratic progress like in Nepal and the well being of its teeming millions. Today, we witness a weak coalition government in India, political demonstration and strike in Bangladesh and dismissing the elected government in Nepal. They face the evil of endemic corruption, social exclusion and ineffective civil services. The system of governance has become unresponsive and irrelevant to the need and concern of the people. Democracy is fast rising into empty rituals with election being the only bridge between the state and society and the voter interest is fading fast.

It is estimated that if the corruption rate only in India can be reduced to those of the Scandinavian countries, investment rate could increase annually by 12% and GDP growth rate by 1.5%. We find a unique type of corruption in South Asia as it elevates the corrupted to higher position socially, politically and economically. Poor governance poses not only internal threats for South Asia but also to peace and stability in Asia as a whole and to the wider world. Governance has not made political, social and economic life of the citizen rich in its quality in South Asia. Yezekiel Dror has described South Asia as "incapacity of the governments to govern".<sup>2</sup> Despite democratization, the suffering, rights and concern of the people are still not on the agenda of the government of the day. It has malfunctioning democratic institutions, which remain influenced by the orderly socio-political dynamics of the country.

The working of democracy is full of pitfalls. For instance, Bhutan is trying to introduce basic democracy with basic democrats to legitimate authoritarian rule. We see an agitational politics such as hartals, street riots, Satyagrah, boycotts, gheraos, etc. in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. People of affluence dominate the elective institutions and infiltrated with people of criminal records. There is a usurpation of citizen's rights to access to entitlements, work, health

care, education, equality before law and freedom. It has an excess and arbitrary exercise of bureaucratic and police power. It has an executive and legislative not accountable to the electorate. Lack of democratic culture in party politics elevates families, tribal, sectarian and personality factors. In South Asia money buys coercive power, privileged access to the administration, media access and eventually even voters. We see a degeneration of democratic institutions such as intemperate exchanges, horse trading and periodic walkout by opposition and even resort to violence. Electoral game in South Asia has become a rich man game. Concept of empowerment of poor remains a hallow slogans devoid of political content. The autocratic government in Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal has undermined and eroded the independence of judiciary. We see strong judicial activism in Nepal, India and Bangladesh with strong popular support due to the failure of other arms and apparatus of Government to protect the citizen's rights from misrule. Contempt for the rule of law and order in South Asia is seen by the poor as rich man's resource to be used along with the police instruments to oppress the poor, undermine their rights and to perpetuate an unjust and inequitable social order. Law enforcement agency is becoming a negotiable commodity in Nepal, India and Bangladesh, where the rich can purchase police's intervention or inaction. Poor see it as another instrument of oppression and as a source of insecurity rather than as instruments to protect their democratic rights and ensure their security. They are seen more as a part of the problem of criminalization of society rather than solution. In administration of South Asia, political interference is designed to abuse the recruitment process as an instrument of political patronage and for polarization of administration. It protects the incompetent and corrupts and erodes quality.

South Asian state itself vie coercive apparatus of the state and become a violator of the rule of law, which became difficult to control conflict and violence. The growth of drug mafia has direct impact in accentuating violence in the region due to increasing politico-criminal nexus. Now politics-civil service- security forces – criminal nexus is building up in the region. Well-known mafia dons have entered into active politics. Political patronage and their strong links in the administration give them impunity against legal action.

Backward, less privileged and less affluent caste is suppressed.

Bleak conditions among this segment of society could be regarded as principal problem of governance relating to caste-based identities. Lack of sensitivity and political will to deal with crucial economic, political and social issues have led to a situation in which explosion of violence is left with the only outlet for the simmering tensions amongst the individuals. In actual practice, the process has produced an elective oligarchy, which is more authoritarian than democratic in its approach. Those in power behave as rulers and not as representatives of the people. Ideology, principle and ethics play a very small role in the power struggle. Police and security forces instead of enforcing the rule of law have become willing tools in the hands of the rulers of the day. When people lost confidence in the impartiality and fairness of the security forces to enforce law, they become vulnerable to the ideology of violence being propagated by revolutionary and secessionist movement.

With life so insecure and liberty so vulnerable, South Asia is in need of a new compact between people and the state reflecting on the large number of battles between the competing interests, spitting caste against caste, ethnicity against ethnicity and race against race.

## **1.2. Poverty, Inequality, Exclusivity and Deprivation**

South Asia today is divided between the hopes of the rich and the despair of the poor. Richest one-fifth earns almost 40% of the region's income and the poorest fifth makes do with less than 10%. Today, we see mutinies of poverty ridden destitute of 43% of population. South Asia has the poorest, most malnourished and illiterate people of the world. Thus, we see a highest incidence of poverty in South Asia. 43% of the population lives in absolute poverty as compared to 14% in East Asia excluding China, 24% in Latin America and 39% in Sub Saharan Africa.<sup>3</sup>

The population of South Asia is more than 1.4 billion. It has a growth rate of 1.8%. The Human Development report has highlighted that one twelfth of the world's population lives in South Asia in a state of severe deprivation, lacking sufficient access to adequate nutrition, health, housing, safer water, sanitation, education and employment. South Asia is poor in terms of gender development and rights of disadvantaged. Poverty is an unacceptable human condition yet 1.2 billion people of the world are poor.<sup>4</sup> Of these over 900 million

or 75% are concentrated in South Asia and East Asia. South Asia, which is the poorest sub-regions in the world have more than half a billion poor people, 450 million alone in India. South Asia witness existence of unequal ownership of wealth, extreme poverty, deprivation and inequality. We see ill-designed economics policies, which have failed to eradicate poverty.

South Asia has failed to focus on fundamental feature of nation building, enabling the citizens to be well fed, healthy and educated. This is mainly due to neglected primary obligations to allocate the required resources, failed to build necessary grass-root institutions and restructure the growth process for overcoming absolute poverty and deprivation of people. Moreover IMF macro economic policy of structural adjustment has increased the poverty due to liberalization of imports and withdrawal of subsidies. Conflicts as it tend to continue to produce inequality; poverty, environmental destruction and unprecedented concentration of economic power for few while the majorities are marginalized and excluded. The rampant poverty is due to inadequate income and productivity, social and political factor such as lack of power in the market, weak political system and self-perpetuating economic dependence, inequality and inequity in the household. In spite of commitments and constitutional guarantees in all countries of South Asia except Bhutan, in reality the people of South Asian countries are mostly powerless, deprived, voiceless, vulnerable and poor. The economic conditions faced by poor stop them from participating as full citizens in their societies. The region with the largest concentration of poverty ridden destitute, presents a major challenge to policy makers, planners and analysts.

### **1.3. Security and Militarization**

South Asia today stand suspended between hopes of a better life and fear of a death. The hope emanates from the tremendous human and natural resource potential, the richness and variety of its civilization. The fear arises from the fact that South Asia has the highest probability of the accidental nuclear war, perhaps greater than any other region of the world. Governments in South Asia have pursued national security through increasingly destructive military apparatus rather than seek citizen security through actualizing their creative potential. For example, South Asia spends US\$ 14 billion annually on military and

for India and Pakistan, it is increasing at the rate of 12% annually. India rank 142 in world ranks in terms of Per-Capita income but ranks first in terms of arms imports where as Pakistan ranks 119 in terms of Per-Capita rank but stand 10<sup>th</sup> in case of arms imports.

Military spending has a huge human opportunity costs in South Asia. For example, the amount spend in military can provide primary education to 119 million children for one year, provide safe drinking water for two years to about 200 million people and provide essential medicines to 117 million people for two years, who have no access to health facilities.<sup>5</sup> There is a syndrome of action-reaction, bite and counter bite vicious circle of arms buildup in South Asia. Thus, there is a big question of national security by spending on military and problem of arm race at the cost of citizen's security. A modern submarine with fully associated support system costs more than US\$ 300 million, which would be enough to provide safe drinking water to 60 millions people in the region. In South Asia, one would acknowledge what President Kennedy once said: "those who make peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable". The report of the Commission on Global Governance makes it explicit that between 1970 and the end of cold war in 1989, weapons worth \$ 50 billions were transferred to South Asia, where more than half a billion poor people lives.

It is diverting the resources from development to weapons of mass destruction. The internal social conflict and increasing cost on military spending to attain national security has directly contradicted the principle of citizen security. Free trade of arms and ammunitions as well as explosives and free spread of sophisticated arms such as AK 47 and explosives has created an environment in which the threshold of tolerance for violence has increased.

#### **1.4. Economic Development and Compounding Injustice**

Pace of economic development is slow. The economic growth rate is just around 4.2% in 2004. This sluggish GNP growth rate cannot ameliorate living conditions nor generate employment opportunities. The deterioration of security situation in some of the countries has adversely affected the economic growth and development. This has greatly contributed to internal dissension, strife, turmoil and violence. The structural adjustment has been undertaken but the burden

of adjustment fell on the poor due to import liberalization, withdrawal of subsidies and with social and development expenditure being slashed. The equity, which is highly desirable, is not possible without high economic growth. Economic growth still remains well below its needs and potentials. The sluggish economic growth has been principally responsible for high level of poverty, deprivation and poor quality of life in South Asia. Moreover, the growing economic disparity has intensified the demand for bringing about structural changes in the society. As they do not have the hope to achieve their goal through democratic means, they have taken to violence as dominant mode of political process or action. The economic costs of violence in the region includes huge expenditure on making security arrangement, retards economic growth, destroy physical infrastructures, result in loss of man-days, encourages migration of talents and scares investment.

Arbitrary functioning of the government has created an economic crisis. The politics and development in South Asia has weak base and limited space to provide them any hope for ameliorating the living conditions of teeming millions. The pace and dynamics of development has often created instability and discontentment, which has been manifested through conflict and violence. Dynamics of rapid changes has often disturbed the economic equilibrium, as it is violent in nature. Development has not been able to wipe out the effect of years of neglect and discrimination that has left the huge part of population backward and weak. The gap between expectations and the ground reality has caused frustration and anger that has frequently led to violent conflict.

### **1.5. Population/Migration/Urbanization**

South Asia is also facing the dilemma of burden phase of demographic transitions, i.e. increased population and decreased economic development except Sri Lanka. It has created massive problems of food, basic needs of water, sanitation, inter-country migration, intra-country migration and unemployment. The need for improving the material quality of life of people including adequate health care, education, housing and clothing is even greater due to population increase. We see a problem of urbanization in South Asia due to increased population. By 2050, 1.2 billion or 50% of the

population of South Asia will be in urban areas. Urbanization means increasing population, which may bring the problem of law and order and misrule. This may lead to endemic violence and none nations can shield its fallout and it tend to proliferate. Administrative system has failed to cope up with increased population. There may be massive problem of food- grains requirements. It is estimated that it will require around 650 millions tones of food grains by 2050 in contrast to the production of only 304.17 millions tones in 1997.<sup>b</sup> Stabilization of people is must by 2060 or 2070. The replacement level must be achieved i.e. it means a birth rate of 21 per thousand population. Two children should replace each couple.

The increasing population is leading to increased deforestation in countries like Nepal and Bangladesh, damaging the fragile environment and threatening and thwarting the sustainable development. Inter-country and intra-country migration is putting pressure on civil services and strains the social fabric of each country. More ever, it is creating the insider and outsider conflict in region like North East India and Bhutan. It has created ethnic violence of very explosive nature in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. This in turn gave birth to intricate political and social problems of multidimensional nature.

South Asia witness addition of labour force of more than 13 million per annum and this means the creation of job, which demands the investment beyond the reach of these countries at the present moment. There is enormous unemployment problem, which affects the material and social quality of life of the people. Endemic poverty and low income levels may create large scale intra-country migration. This may become the breeding ground of dissatisfaction, turmoil and violence.

### **1.6. Ethnicity/Ethno-Nationalism/Socio-Cultural**

South Asia witnesses a deep-rooted conflict and violence in accelerating trend, particularly the emergence of ethno nationalism and misdirected efforts to integrate the minorities into the mainstream in recent years. Historical and economic factors have combined to create a sense of injustice and insecurity among the minority groups. They articulate their grievances in the idiom of violence. Violence is being used as a tool to assert group identities.

Bhutan government itself is pursuing sectarian agenda. Instead

of preempting and controlling conflict and violence, they became major factor in aggravating ethnic conflict and violence. Violence has root and is symptom of a deeper malaise in the society and the brutal state's response through barrel of guns has lead further fragmentation of the society along religious, ethnic, linguistic and regional lines. The system is least responsive and selective to satisfy the entire claimant group in the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. The use of violence for settling political argument has weakened democratic institutions.

We also see the rise of religious fundamentalism, which is rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century militancy movements such as those of Mehdīs in Sudan and Wahabis in Saudi Arabia.<sup>7</sup> It attracts mostly the insecure and isolated youth mired in poverty and suffering from oppression like in Nepal and may happen in Bhutan from refugees. We also see the primordial violence such as religious, ethnic and racial. The extremist forces have subverted institutions of governance. In India and Bangladesh, religious bigotry is the main factors responsible for the escalation of violence. Marginalization of the minority, ethnic and religious groups and the inability of the state to harmonize conflicting demands have led to secessionist demand. When people's confidence in the state and administration and political structure get eroded, alienation degenerates into militancy.

Thus, we see the ethnic and sectarian virus engulfing the region. Caste violence in India, ethnic and sectarian violence in Pakistan and ethnic violence in Sri Lanka and Bhutan is linked to the polarization of the institution of governance on caste, ethnic and sectarian lines. Militants and terrorists have become the defenders of the minority groups.

Language, custom, traditions and religion form the core component of group identity in South Asia. It lacks the ideologically based political system offering the electorate different option of socio-economic policy. Thus, it has to appeal to primordial loyalties of language, religion and caste to espouse the causes of related sectarian interest.

### **1.7. Weak Institutions and Destructive Politics**

The key institutions of governance are parliament, the executive, civil service and judiciary. Unfortunately, parliament, cabinet and

civil services have declined greatly in quality over last five decades. Parliament does not do what it should do and tries to do what it should not do. Partisan's political issues rather than national problems receive attention in the parliament. It has become ineffective instruments of governance. The executive has shown strong instability to tackle the basic problem facing citizens. The civil services are highly politicized. Thus, we see misrule in South Asia due to failure of institutions.

The democratic inadequacies begin with the political parties of South Asia. The region is afflicted by personality cult and dynastic syndrome. As a result, the political parties tend to be weak and ineffective. Most do not have inner party democracy and what is practiced is not in the conduct of party ideology and principles. Parties are driven by single motive of capturing political power. Thus, system fails to deliver basic needs to uplift the deprived and downtrodden of South Asia.

Nations in South Asia are confronted with formidable and complex challenges of raising standards, elimination of blatant form of lawlessness, injustice and inequity and promotion of national unity. The problem are inter-oven with the demographics and plurality of the nations states of South Asia, consisting of many distinctive sub-national groups with diverse primordial or ascriptive identities such as those of religion, language, caste and tribe.

In nutshell, it is the region plagued with increasing population, religiosity, insurgency and terrorism, illicit weapon transfer, problem of migration, refugees, narcotics, territorial borders, organized crime, corruption, slow economic development, high illiteracy, incapacity of institutions, deficiencies of political parties, high infant mortality rate, poor health care and sanitation, inadequacy of democratic processes, poor quality of institutions of governance, failure of party politics, problem of ethnicity and group identity, development inadequacies, economic deprivation and poverty, failure to build education as a infrastructure of democratic governance, rise of ethnic conflict and violence, degradation of environment, shrinking size of land holdings, problems of market reforms and the problems of institutions and infrastructure resulting from globalization. The threat to the region is from conflict and violence, poverty, environmental degradation, social and economic problems that causes population

dislocation. The established separatist and communal trend loom large visa-vis the established state structure.

Rhetoric of hate and violent conflict between the opposing forces is common in South Asia. Political violence in South Asia had manifested in various forms such as insurgency, terrorism, insurrection, revolution and civil war. Violence if not readdressed and nipped at the buds and root may generate the cycle of violence and counter violence invariably develops its own momentum.

The regimes of the region have failed to develop an evolving, sagacious and rational forward looking approach that covers umbrella of national and international geo-political concerns. Big neighbors like India have simply viewed in hegemonistic way and adopted military campaign to subdue recalcitrant, small, weak, neighbors and sub-state actors. Today, the violent activities of Maoist in Nepal, Insurgency movements in North East India and Bangladesh by non-nations actors continue to play a dominant role, often challenging the authority of the state. Many of the sub-states actors have developed a trans-state dimension. Ethnic or religious or revolutionary conflicts continue to produce mass migration creating ethnic and Diaspora network that support political as well as militant struggle for the greater autonomy in their homelands. Today, insurgent groups may raise funds in one theater, train and procure weapons and arms from another theater and fight in a third theater.

Viewed from above perspectives, the region provides a disappointing picture in every social, economic and political context. This is due to the fact that region is almost perpetually plagued by various intra and inter state conflicts, crisis and problems as discussed above, stemming from tunnel vision and myopic attitudes of largely illiterate masses and the lackadaisical approach of the ruling elites towards the resolution of such problem practically. India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh is almost perpetually plagued by internal conflict and crisis based on narrow consideration of caste, religion, ethnicity, community and the like. The persistence of multifarious problems both within and between the states hampers the sustenance of environment wherein the basic essential needs of the common man are fulfilled. This lack of order in the region has retarded the economic development. Thus, inability of the ruling government to provide satisfactory levels of order and welfare leads to a crisis of political



Figure 1.0 : Map of South Asia

legitimacy. This disillusionment with the socio-economic and political policies resulted into conflict and violence. Without integrative approach, the region is doomed to tangle with each other in a series of disputes that can escalate into large clashes and fated to confront each other in savage conflicts. Should this happen, the civil wars in Bosnia, Somali and Afghanistan will be reduced to shadow of the World's memory.

## SECTION II : METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

By studying the characteristics of research methodologies and comparing these characteristics with the characteristics of the present study, Interdisciplinary Research Approach is adopted for information collection and interpretation and is based on interview, questionnaires and field visits. This is supplemented by specific thick Case Studies: Bhutanese Refugee Crisis, Maoist Insurgency of Nepal, Insurgency

of North East India and Problem of Jumma people of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The method of investigation took help of primary data as well as based on pursuit of relevant documents and records related to academic publications and other information on the subject.

This section focuses on methodological considerations incorporating the need, scope, objectives, limitations of the study and outline of subsequent chapters.

### **1.1. Need of the Study**

This is a full-fledged attempt to study Development–Conflict–Violence–Composite Factors nexus. It has its own justification in the sense that this dimensions of problem covering Nepal, Bhutan, North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh is still unexplored. There exists very limited work covering Development, Conflict, Violence and Other Factors nexus in the region. There is a paucity of information and existing information are fragmented and failed to analysis such dynamic and complex issues in holistic perspectives. The study intends to bridge these fissures, raise academic debate and add to existing stock of knowledge.

The need is felt for comprehensive study, which may help to comprehend the complex nature and dimensions of Development–Conflict–Violence- Composite Factors paradox in the region. It is meant to uncover and unfold potential theater of conflict in South Asia. The conflict in this part of South Asia has been overshadowed by crisis in Kashmir of India and Tamil problem of Sri Lanka and has received least attention even though it is plaguing the region since decades.

The crisis is deepening in the region. The conflict of North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh is more than five decades old. The violent conflict in Nepal has already crossed eight years and Bhutanese Refugee crisis is more than decade old. The social, physical, human, development and economic costs of conflict and violence have already crossed the tolerance threshold limits of human beings. This type of protected conflicts demands a deeper and comprehensive analysis and requires durable amicable solution. If timely preventive action is not taken, it will engulf the whole region due to the very fact that insurgency and militant movement has become

globalize due to local, regional and international network of the sub-state actors of the region. Despite the limited information and data on the topic, this is a modest attempt to work beyond those limitations and transcend the barriers to uncover the Paradox of Development – Conflict-Violence- Composite Factors nexus to build the base for further research.

## **1.2. Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on Development, Conflict and Violence. The study attempts to cover Nepal, Bhutan, North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The reason for attempting to study within single framework is that the region shares the common border, geography and topography. The history shows the complex combination of mainly indigenous, Buddhists and Hindu cultures often introduced through physical conquest and political control as well as through trade, travel and migration. These factors describe inter-state relations in one-way or the other. Thus, this region should be studied as a whole in context of its geographical continuation, cultural heritage and its relationships with outside world. In order to make the study more specific, the study focuses on Development –Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus.

This is due to the fact that development and violence is full of complexities and the range of manifestation of development and political violence in the region can be wide ranging and at times perplexing. Therefore, the scope of this study has been deliberately confined only to manifestations of Development–Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus, which has had or has the potential to seriously affect the state structure, either by structural transformation of the state by it or decapacitating the territory of the state. The concern here is the violence and development that is directed against the state and central power as well as take into consideration the violence against local actors with the intention of having a localized impact. Most of the cases incorporated in this study are in the form of insurgencies or are close approximations of insurgences or in the process of becoming insurgencies.

The empirical focus of the present study is only on the North East India, Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The modernization processes have already gripped these societies and

they are also confronting their share of conflict and violence. Even within the region, studying political violence is not without its complexities.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

Conflict and Violence as a subject of the study and inquiry has been a complex. The treatment has been mainly normative. Even within the realms of politics, analysts invariably take recourse to socio-psychological, cultural and anthropological explanations to understand the phenomena. This is much more pertinent in the case of Bhutan, Nepal, Northeast India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Despite the increasing use of violence, whether in the assertion of an identity or for the purposes of structural change, as a dominant mode of political action in the region, no attention and focus has been given to this problem.

The purpose of this study is to give salience to political, socio-cultural and economic explanations in understanding the causes and nature of violent political action. While it cannot be denied that psycho-cultural primordialist explanations do add to our understanding of conflict and violence, such explanations cannot delve into the roots of political violence as it exonerates the material and social bases, which nurture such action. In this study, an attempt is made to analyze whether the roots of such actions can be located in the nature of the state structures and political economies. The States are still trying to adjust to new political institutions and socio-economic structures. In a situation of scarce resources, the State becomes the principal means of access to and control of resources. In such societies, politicized social groups arrive at the view that their everyday struggles for livelihood have to be fought not only in the market and within civil society but also in the arena of the control of the state. The state and its resources thus become objects of considerable political attention. It is only when the politicized social groups fail to negotiate and bargain within the existing political space that they resort to violence.

Thus, the process of identity formation and assertion are enmeshed in secular political, economic and social interests. The demands for political autonomy to fulfill developmental aspirations are articulated in the language of ethnicity. While most separatist violence of the region is based on the assertion of a distinct identity, the question that

needs to be addressed is whether the underlying causes were political, economic and socio-cultural exploitation, economic neglect or relative deprivation. The objectives of this study are to establish linkages between the Development –Conflict-Violence- Composite Factors Nexus. How uneven development, underdevelopment and other political and socio-cultural factors have resulted in the increasing use of violence in the articulation of demands?

While the inequitable development process has engendered violence, in a paradoxical and cyclical way, violence may in turn tends to be dysfunctional in the development process and retard the pace of economic growth. This happens in two ways. Firstly, the insurgents adopt a deliberate violent strategy of economic disruption. This strategy involves damaging state and private property, disrupting the public sector economy and disorganizing public transport and other essential services and militarily targeting development projects, which might erode the support base of the government as done in Nepal. Secondly, the State is compelled to divert limited resources to counter the challenge posed by the insurgents. The environment created due to the use of violence on the other hand acts as a major constraint on the growth of the economy to enlarge the economic cake for further sharing and redistribution in the society. This process further retards socio-economic development. Thus, in a cyclical way, one process generates the other. Moreover, other factors may operate along with inequitable development process to aggravate the problem and generate violence. Thus, the focus of the study is to explore and establish, if any the linkages between the Development –Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus.

#### **1.4. Limitations of the Study**

The present study covers only Nepal, Bhutan, North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The selection of the particular region is being justified on the ground that geography, topography and a number of other variables have linked each other within the broad framework of international relations. Moreover, the whole study is confined only to Development –Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus. Since the political violence is very sensitive, availability and procurement of the published and primary data and information is difficult. This is particularly true in case of costs of

violence, human casualties and security expenditure. To compensate this lacuna, extensive published information has been used. Since this is an attempt to study the complex inter-linkages between Development –Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus, the outcome is suggestive and requires more empirical research in each of the component factors in the future.

### **1.5. Structure of the Book**

In the contemporary world engulfed by turmoil and violence, which has wreaked havoc on the lives of millions and threat to trigger wider international conflicts, this study on two countries and two regions of South Asia aims to offer an descriptive and prescriptive analysis of how conflict and violence emerge, develop and manifest themselves. In particular, an attempt is made to show not only the contours of violence and development but also the political, economic and socio-cultural causes and its impacts on development of the third world.

In most of the third world countries, which are poly-ethnic, some with few cleavages and other with numerous deep divisions, political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, linguistic and regional forces threaten the unity and development efforts that are undertaken. The violence in the region has thrown the entire society into a tailspin of almost uncontrolled conflict and turmoil. This book is about Development –Conflict-Violence- Composite Factors Nexus. The treatment of the subject is both descriptive and prescriptive. This book aims to contribute to both the understanding of Development – Conflict-Violence- Composite Factors Nexus and our ability to construct political and development processes and envision new ideas to resolve it. The approach to the Development –Conflict-Violence-Composite Factors Nexus is realistic and deals with resolution of problem futuristically.

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is the lack of economic development as propounded and embraced by many Political Scientists, Development theorists, Economists, Conflict experts and others is the only cause of conflict and violence in the region?

OR

- There are other pertinent and vital underlying causes and issues,

which has to be unfolded, dig out and analyze to find out the actual causes of conflict and violence in the region: Bhutan, Nepal, North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh to resolve the protracted burning problem once for all to convert the jungle of unrest into community of prosperity?

- What is the role of ethnicity, education, unemployment, migration, agrarian, socio-cultural, linguistic and religious factors in accentuating or decreasing conflict and violence?
- What is the role of political, economic and external factors and linkages in perpetuating the conflict and violence?
- How uneven development and underdevelopment have resulted in the increasing use of violence in the articulation of demand and does political violence decline with improvement in development process?
- Why the marginalized segment of the society resort to violent means to aggregate and articulate their grievances and what social base and strategy of mobilization is adopted for violent activities?
- What are the economic, human, social and physical costs of conflict and violence and its impact on peace, stability and development of the region?
- Is there any avenue and possibility of international intervention to resolve the conflict in the region?

It basically focus to address the root cause of conflict and violence as well as conflict and violence manifestations, mutuality of violence and development and the possibility of reducing or resolving the conflict, which has the capacity to destabilize the whole region. The raw material and inputs of the cases discussed in the book can present important comparative insights into the causes of conflict and violence and their manifestation in developing third world. The book also attempts to address the composite causes and impact of conflict and violence on development. The political dimensions of violence are explained at length. It has examined the covariance and linkages of Development –Conflict-Violence- Composite Factors Nexus of the region. Finally the work at length has focus on the human, social, physical and economic costs of conflict and violence. The cases examined in this work focuses on the development, pattern of conflict,

violence manifestation, causes of conflict and violence and its impact in the region. In brief the chapter outline is delineated below:

The chapter one commences with the brief clarification on the conceptualization of the phenomena on which the study is focused, building conceptual framework of development, conflict and violence, particularly examining concept of development and violence, change, nation building, state formation and conflict, violence and its typologies and nature of violence and nation building. It has succinctly survey the variety of theoretical arguments that have been advanced by Political Scientists, Conflict and Development experts on the Development, Conflict and Violence and their relationship.

The second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters has captured the politics of conflict and violence along with the case study of Bhutan, Nepal, North East India and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh unfolding and digging out the root causes of conflict and violence, base of violent movement, integrating violence to strategy, linkages of violence in the region and state mobilization dimensions.

The seventh and eighth chapters modestly attempt to search and locate for explanation of development process of the region focusing on political economy and development. It attempts to delve into economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions of development and paradoxes and experiences of development in the region.

The ninth chapter is designed to map out the mutuality of development and violence to find the covariance, if there is any between two. It has made a meticulous attempt to explain the link of development and violence as discussed in previous chapters to unfold and unearth the paradox of whether conflict and violence is the outcome of development per se or lack of it or there are other composite causes besides development for generation of conflict and violence. Efforts have been made to reduce the relationship between Development, Conflict and Violence into a number of Composite Variables. It has asked important questions about this relationship and help to clarify crucial issues and argue that composite of factors besides development is the cause of conflict and violence.

Chapter ten tried to sketch and seek to understand the causes of conflict and violence and examine the causes from theoretical proposition in context of region mostly scanning political, socio-cultural, economic, ethnicity, poverty, education and unemployment,

agrarian, poverty and development etc by internalizing the warning of Peter Berger's observation: 'Social Sciences can never do more than provide partial, provisional and in principle refutable interpretation of human reality'.<sup>8</sup>

Chapter eleven gave a mild effort to explore and analysis the economic, development, social and human costs of conflict and violence in the region, militarization of civil society and its adverse impact in the society and people.

The chapter twelve focuses and deals with problems and prospects of peace brokers. It has given major thrust on relative merits and demerits of intervention as well as lamented on absence of honest peace broker for intervention. Among the potential actors who can play constructive role to resolve conflict, it has highlighted possibilities of the India, UN, Japan and the US.

Finally the pen ultimate chapter of the book attempt to crystallize the content in the form of conclusion by summarizing development, conflict and violence, provided a meticulous general policy recommendations to drain the swamp of problems and attempt to capture the trends of conflict and violence. It has also highlighted the future scope of research in the concerned area of the region.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

The region even though rich in culture and civilizational history faces serious problem of governance, conflict and violence. Despite its richness in knowledge and diversity, it is unfortunate that it is the epicenter and hotbed of violence and strife, some arising from composite internal causes and some due to extraneous factors. Poor governance has cost the people of region serious deprivation and inequalities resulting in poor quality of life and physical and material insecurity. Whatever may be the problems and challenges; there are little alternatives for the countries of the region. It should pool resources and work for the marriage of common good of the region. The region has everything except the will and commitments of the political mandarins at the capitals of the region. No matter how we analysis the region, it has reached a critical and decisive stage and if the problem and issues remain unattended and unresolved through integrative, sagacious and rational forward looking approach at micro, meso and macro levels, there is a prospect of mighty upheaval

transcending the rhetoric to the reality. Let us pinned the hope that integrated and sagacious action agenda will convert the jungle of unrest into society of prosperity and conclude the introduction with the quote of UNESCO: **“War begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men, that defenses of peace must be created.”**<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. The World Bank has contended that conflict and violence and civil war in developing countries are due to lack of economic development. It is robustly demonstrated with deep resonance, when they explicitly intoned the link in following words: 'Most people think that they already know the root cause of civil war. Those of political right tend to assume that it is due to long standing ethnic and religious hatred, those in the political center tend to assume that it is due to lack of democracy and that violence occurs when opportunities for peaceful resolution of political disputes are lacking, and those on the political left tend to assume that it is due to economic inequalities or deep rooted legacy of colonism. None of these explanations sits comfortably with the statistical evidence. Empirically, most striking pattern is that civil war is heavily concentrated in the poorest countries. War causes poverty, but the more important reason for these concentrations is that poverty increases the likelihood of civil war. Thus our central argument can be stated briefly: the key root of conflict is the failure of economic development. Countries with low, stagnant, and unequally distributed per capita income that remains dependent on primary commodities for export face dangerously high risk of prolonged conflict. In the absence of economic development, neither good political institutions nor ethnic and religious homogeneity nor high military spending provide significant defenses against large-scale violence. Once a country has stumbled into conflict, powerful forces - the conflict trap- tend to looks it into to a syndrome of further conflict'. For more details see chapter 3, What Makes a Country Prone to Civil War, pp 53-54 in *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* by Paul Collier, Lani Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Anke Hoeffler, Marta Reynal- Querol and Nicholas Sambanis, A Co -Publication of the World Bank and Oxford University Press, Policy Research Report, 2003, Washington D.C. USA.

2. Y. Dror. 1980. *Crazy States*. New York, Mill Wood
3. Mahhubul Huq. 1994. *Human Development Report*.
4. Those, who earn less than one dollar per day.
5. Estimated on the basis of data provided by Huq Mahhubul. 1997. *Human Development in South Asia*, Oxford University Press.
6. *Year Book of FAO*. 1997. Production, Rome.
7. They were fanatically anti-west during the period of European colonialism and continue to be so except for a brief period during the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.
8. Berger, Peter. 1988. *The Capitalist Revolution*. New York. Basic Books. P 23.
9. Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO, 1945.