

## **Rehabilitation and Reintegration as a Key Activity of Post- War Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

*More than ten thousand former combatants who were fighting on behalf of the LTTE surrendered to the government forces during the last stages of 26 years of civil war in Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka conducted a formal programme to reintegrate them into the society. The aim of this programme was to rehabilitate them by transforming their minds from war to peace. The aim of this paper is to look into the successful of the government's project as a partner of building long lasting peace in post war era in the country. To fulfil this task this paper uses primary and secondary data appropriately.*

*UN theory and other theories of post-conflict peacebuilding focused on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants under the DDR process. Although, the programme illustrate a significant progress of the beneficiaries changing their minds towards peace, some problems have been affected related to their livelihood matters and civil life.*

*Key words: rehabilitation, reintegration, peacebuilding, ex-LTTE cadres, vocational training*

### **1. Introduction:**

The 26 years of protracted civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009 and was defeated the LTTE the separatist militant movement by the government forces. The government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) commenced the peacebuilding and post war reconstruction in the post war country since then. Among the peacebuilding process rehabilitation and reconstruction of former illegal militant groups was a key activity in order to achieve a long lasting peace and confirm the security of a war affected country.

The case in Sri Lanka pointed out that more than ten thousand former LTTE combatants surrendered to the government forces during the last stages of the war. Among those combatants were men, women and children who were fighting on behalf the LTTE over several years. Most of them were experts at using arms and had been brainwashed by the LTTE. Therefore, it is an important undertaking to rehabilitate them by transforming their minds from war to peace. On the one hand, it is very important to reintegrate those combatants to ensure the future security of the country and on the other hand, as individuals it will help to secure their future in civil society as productive and useful citizens. Rehabilitation and reintegration of those former combatants will help to secure a better life for them as well as safeguard the security of the country. The UN documents on post conflict peacebuilding and the other scholarly work of post-conflict peacebuilding focused on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants under the DDR process, which stands for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. This would demilitarise the paramilitary groups and other illegal militant groups that took part in the civil war. The government could then reduce the numbers of its armed forces personnel and lower the defence expenditure. Reintegrate process involves with former combatants to integrate them into the social, economic and political spheres (DPKO,1999). A successful DDR