Conflict is an inherent part of society. It is a problem when a society cannot manage or resolve its differences through the normal political means. Conflicts are generated by incompatible goals, scarce resources, and communication barriers. Many civil wars have an ethnic dimension, resulting from a systematic discrimination against a particular group. Ethnic identity of a group whether it be language, religion, culture, territory or any other defining feature is always a mobilising factor. In order to mobilise support, the group leaders play upon the grievances of the community. The threat coming from other groups gives them legitimacy. People who question the existing social order and argue for a multi-ethnic society are often repressed or marginalised.

Most conflicts are not static and they have certain degree of intensity and involve interactions between the parties. If fighting breaks out, both parties to the conflict try to resolve it through political negotiations. In a conflict situation, the government spends public money for military purposes, thereby neglecting the socio-economic development of people affected by the conflict. Extreme poverty and poor local conditions also give impetus to internal conflicts. Therefore, peace-building activity is undertaken by international actors in internal conflict situation with an assumption that, peace encompasses economic, social, political and cultural justice. It is also something more than absence of violence and includes ideas about sustainable development and peace. The approach is implemented to strengthen the prospects of peaceful co-existence and decrease the likelihood of outbreak, recurrence or continuation of conflicts.

Peace-building encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programs and measures. To undertake peace-building activities, definite skills are needed. This is well served by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and donor countries. There is an increased awareness that the donors must involve in peace-building in internal conflict situations because, unless the conflict is resolved, sustainable development will not be possible. Therefore, the objective of development assistance has expanded from the traditional focus on economic development to cover governance, liberal democracy, human rights, development of civil society, peace-
building and conflict resolution. The increasing role of NGOs in peace-building is the result of massive involvement of humanitarian aid agencies in civil wars. These NGOs are often believed to be more efficient and suitable to work for peace than state actors because of their political neutrality and flexibility to adopt the challenges of internal conflict. The provision of relief to the socially and economically weak and the protection of human rights are important motivating factors for the involvement of these organisations.

Since the breakdown of negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in 1995 conflict has resulted in large scale violence, loss of life, destruction of property and human rights violation. The excessive spending on defence has undermined some of the human development gains of earlier decades. There was increasing burden on the government to provide basic services to the people. In these circumstances, where the government lacked expertise in providing such services, representatives of NGOs and donors extended their cooperation to rebuild the society. The CFA and peace process has provided scope for peace-building activity. The increase in foreign aid has also resulted in the development of NGO activity. International community’s assistance is closely linked to the substantial progress in the peace process.

In such a context within Sri Lanka, the main objectives of the study will involve examining the strategies of peace-building, the motives and character of the different actors involved in peace-building and arriving at an analysis of the response of the society to strategies for peace-building as well as its impact on conflict resolution.

Therefore, the analytical framework of this study includes, an overview of what constitutes peace-building and its various objectives and strategies. The second chapter deals with the emergence of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the rise of Tamil militancy and steps taken by successive Sri Lankan governments to resolve the conflict through peace-making and its implications on conflict resolution process. The third chapter delves into the nature of conflict and its impact on Sri Lanka’s socio-economic development. This chapter also gives a profile of peace-building actors and their objectives. Fourth chapter deals with the strategy for peace-building through socio-economic development particularly aid provided to the North-East for reconstruction and rebuilding. Fifth chapter delves into NGOs and INGOs advocacy
and mobilisation activities to promote peace process. Sixth chapter critically evaluates the strategies for peace-building and its impact on Sri Lanka.

The following hypothesis will be tested during the course of present study.

- Peace-building activity has facilitated conflict resolution process in internal conflict situations due to availability of aid for development purpose.
- Peace-building activity of NGOs and donors can lead to withdrawal of state from its responsibilities of providing basic necessities to conflict affected population.
- Lack of common approach to the problem by the parties as well as by international actors can lead to failure of peace-building approach and polarisation.

**Review of Literature**

There has not been any serious study undertaken to look into various aspects of non-governmental and donor initiatives in peace-building in Sri Lanka. Orjuela’s (2004), provides an insight into the role of civil society actors in peace-building, particularly the role of NGOs in developing a peace movement in Sri Lanka. Camilla’s in-depth study of the role of civil society and its impact on Sri Lanka gives an analysis of the peace activities like mobilisation and advocacy, and its role in moulding people’s perspective on conflict resolution. Manogaram (1987), deals with the historical perspective of Sinhalese-Tamil relationships in Sri Lanka. It also provides a historical perspective on the issues between the two major communities and the sequence of events that followed. In conclusion, the author advances mechanisms for developing legislative, executive and administrative powers to regional governments in order to solve the ethnic problem. Goodhand and Nick Lewer (1999), analyses the impact of violent conflict at the community level and also NGO intervention and their peace-building work in Eastern Sri Lanka. It also analyses the response of the community to peace-building activities.

De Silva, K.M and G.H. Peiris (ed) (1999), deals with various attempts at resolving the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka during the past twenty years. It also deals with the separatist movement and how federalism can help in resolving the ethnic conflict. Rupasinghe, Kumar (ed) (1998), deals with the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, Premadasa – LTTE talks and Kumaratunga-LTTE negotiations. It makes an assessment of the
history of peace process and points out the short-comings in various strategies of conflict resolution. Mayer, Markus et.al (2003) discusses the key issues of development and humanitarian concerns in the context of peace-building in Sri Lanka. By taking a broad view of the conflict and how day to day problems accentuated the conflict, they explore the challenges ahead in the rehabilitation and reconstruction in the North-East. The book also tries to find out how capacity building and development can stop further polarisation of the society.

Wickramasinghe (2001), gives an in-depth analysis of the role of civil society in shaping the developmental policy of the state. Sahadevan (1995), analyses the conflict management process in Sri Lanka and the ways to conduct peace process, especially after the failure of the 1987 Accord. Sahadevan (1997), deals briefly with the history of ethnic conflict and the effort of both parties to solve the problem. In the process it highlights the characteristics of intractable conflict and the ways to resolve it. Rotherg (ed.) (1999), analyses the causes for the civil war, economic costs of conflict in Sri Lanka and peace-making efforts of president Kumaratunga. It also explains how peace could be sustained and encouraged in a fractured society like Sri Lanka through negotiation and devolution. Winslow and Michael. D. Woost (ed) (2004), tried to articulate the link between economic policy of successive Sri Lankan governments and the ethnic conflict and violence.

The proposed study is based on historical and analytical method. The study includes both the primary and secondary sources. The former includes various books and articles on Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict, peace and conflict resolution and the later include various government documents. A field work to Sri Lanka was undertaken for data collection and to conduct interviews with some of the NGOs, representatives of donor agencies and political leaders for in-depth understanding of their peace-building efforts to resolve the conflict.