

DISPLACEMENT, RESETTLEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT - INTERRELATIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS: A CASE FROM AMPARA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA

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The study seeks to understand interrelationships between key issues of post-displacement scenarios. It is often expected that displaced people go through a set of stages after displacement if steps were taken for displaced to recover from the displacement. Relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and development are some of commonly referred terminologies found in the literature in this respect. Quite often outcomes of these interrelationships differ from one other and not necessarily follow the sequence of post-displacement scenario mentioned above.

The study is an assessment of two resettlement schemes in Ampara District. Questions were asked why and how resettlement scheme becomes a source conflicts in a country like Sri Lanka. Conflict is found between perceptions of newly settled families and available opportunities in the place of resettlement. Often settlers compare pre-displacement living situations such as socio-economic and cultural ways of life and livelihood adjustment with the new opportunities that are available in the present location of resettlement.

The study was based on case study investigations. Investigation was conducted in two newly settled resettlement villages. Data were collected through an intensive field investigation using interviews, and focus group discussion from the displaced people due to the disaster and development. The case study villages are located in an Addalaichanai Divisional Secretariat Division of Ampara District which has experienced series of displacement due to development, war and tsunami in the recent decades. The settlers in the two villages, however, were from a traditional village called Oluvil along the Ampara coast. Before displacement they were doing fishing for their daily livelihood and family management and make contribution to their social well being. Educationally they had limited benefits and economically they were very poor.

The study found that majority of the settlers was not very happy about many aspects of life in the two newly settled villages. Failure of not fulfilling the expectations of the settlers points to issues such the location selection of the resettlement villages, design of the houses, infrastructure facilities, etc. Those weaknesses, in fact, have caused a new round of conflict instead of creating conflict free life for the resettles according the findings of this study.

Keywords: Displacement, Resettlement, Development, Interrelationships, Contradictions