

PLANNED RECONSTRUCTION AND RESETTLEMENT OF EASTERN PROVINCE MUSLIM 'TSUNAMI' VICTIMS IN COASTAL ARE - 200 METERS FROM THE SEA

M.I.M Mohideen



When we talk about planned resettlement of Tsunami victims in the 200 metre buffer zone area, we are talking about an extremely diverse population. In addition to their socio-economic differences, there are also other characteristics that need to be taken in to account. These include ethnicity, religion, culture, age, health condition, and gender. All these factors need careful attention in the process of resettlement. If not, it can lead to serious problems.

The biggest challenge the Government is facing to-day is the immediate restoration of the lifestyle of the "Tsunami" affected people to normalcy. This requires reconstruction of their damaged houses and providing them livelihood assets.

For planning the rebuilding and resettlement programme in the 200 metre buffer zone area, it is essential to have reliable and accurate informations about the impact on the lives and properties destroyed by the "Tsunami". It is a complex process that should be handled with care with the full participation of all stakeholders at the grass roots level. If this is not done properly, it can have adverse effects on the quality of life of the victims.

The extent and the value of land and other assets owned by the affected families cannot be ignored in finding solutions to their resettlement problems. No arbitrarily designed resettlement should be imposed on helpless victims of Tsunami as such solutions are likely to aggravate the problems of the people who are already traumatized. Makeshift housing should be replaced by solidly built structures at a reasonable distance from the beach.

The Muslim areas and the families affected by the Tsunami in the Eastern Province are within the administrative and security control of Sri Lanka Government (GOSL). All those who are engaged in resettlement related activities should work within the framework of the local bodies. At present all the local bodies in the predominant Muslim Area in the Eastern Province stand dissolved and do not have the capacity to manage a massive planned resettlement and reconstruction programme of this magnitude.

The people affected expect individual attention and specific solutions to suit different families. The agencies that deal with issues of livelihood restoration will be required to visit each family and or household to find out how best they can be assisted. This is a painstaking exercise but we have no choice in the matter if the objective is to ensure that people who lost their livelihoods regain their economic strength within a reasonable period of time.

Buffer Zone

The government has relaxed the hotly-debated 200 metre buffer zone due to the difficulties in finding alternate land to resettle the Tsunami affected people.

The buffer zone in Mutur, Kinniya, Kuchchaveli in the Trincomalee District has been relaxed to 60 metres, Kattankudy in Batticaloa District to 80 metres, Pottuvil and Arugambay to 50 metres, and Kalmunai to 65 metres in the Ampara District from the earlier 200 metres.

Former residents within the buffer zone who were told to move out but wanted to return to their original location of residence, such instances would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Urban Development Ministry Secretary confirming the relaxation of the buffer zone regulations said that the revisions came after representations from various quarters seeking permission for construction purposes.

Land Owned by Muslim Tsunami Victims in the 200 Metre area from the Sea - 2000 Acres.

Ampara District

Maruthamunai 120 Acres, Kalmunai 220 Acres, Sainthamaruthu 20 Acres, Ninthavur 220 Acres. Oluvil 20 Acres, Addalachchenai 50 Acres, Akkaraipattu 70 Acres and Pottuvil 280 Acres

Total 1,000 Acres

Batticaloa District

Kattankudy 240 Acres, Palamunai 40 Acres and Poonochchimunai 20 Acres

Total 300 Acres

Trincomalee District

Mutur 140 Acres, Kinniya 435 Acres, Kuchchaveli 90 Acres and Trincomalee Town 35 Acres

Total 700 Acres

Survey by Muslim Reconstruction and Resettlement Organisation - MRRO

The Muslim Reconstruction and Resettlement Organisation - MRRO conducted an assessment survey by visiting each and every family in the Tsunami effected Muslim areas in the Eastern Province to evaluate the damages to residences and occupations of the Tsunami affected Muslim people.

Data collection instruments (questionnaires) were so designed that some key indicators could be obtained with the following objectives:

- Systematically assess the damages caused to the Muslim victims by visiting each and every family.
- Prepare a comprehensive report based on the field investigations on a professional basis.
- The final Destruction Assessment Survey Report to be submitted to the Government of Sri Lanka and the International Community for assistance to rebuild the affected areas and resettle the victims.

Since, few affected families were not available in their original places at the time of the survey, it was not possible to obtain the required details of all the victims. However the informations have been collected from 20,091 families which is about 70% of the total Muslim victims in the Eastern Province.

Destructions

1.0 Residential Destructions

1.1 Fully Damaged

Families	Land Value	House Value	Total
6806	2,536,025,700 (US\$ 25,360,257)	2,428,825,650 (US\$ 24,288,256.50)	4,964,851,350 (US\$ 49,648,513.50)

1.2 Partialy Damaged

Families	Land Value	House Value	Total
7079	2,883,388,143 (US\$ 28,833,881.43)	2,363,360,600 (US\$ 23,633,606)	5,246,748,743 (US\$ 52,467,487.43)

1.3 Nature of Damage Not Given

Families	Land Value	House Value	Total
2096	918,999,700 (US\$ 9,189,997)	1,103,272,690 (US\$ 11,032,726.90)	2,022,272,390 (US\$ 20,222,723.90)

1.4 Residential Destructions Total

Families	Land Value	House Value	Total
15981	6,338,413,543 (US\$ 63,384,135.43)	5,895,458,940 (US\$ 58,954,589.40)	12,233,872,483 (US\$ 122,338,724.83)

2.0 Occupational Destructions

Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
20091	1,768,518,711 (US\$ 17,685,187.11)	3,133,241,525 (US\$ 31,332,415.25)	4,901,760,236 (US\$ 49,017,602.36)

2.1 Businessmen

Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
2383	391,348,494 (US\$ 3,913,484.94)	517,125,949 (US\$ 5,171,259.49)	908,474,443 (US\$ 9,084,744.43)

2.2 Casual Labours

Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
4245	80,663,535 (US\$ 806,635.35)	615,978,618 (US\$ 6,159,786.18)	696,642,153 (US\$ 6,966,421.53)

2.3 Doctors

Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
19	4,274,000 (US\$ 42,740)	3,065,300 (US\$ 30,653)	7,339,300 (US\$ 73,393)

2.4 Drivers			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
434	22,820,550	101,107,000	123,927,550
	(US\$ 228,205.50)	(US\$ 1,011,070)	(US\$ 1,239,275.50)
2.5 Farmers			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
1310	66,760,770	250,008,300	316,769,070
	(US\$ 667,607.70)	(US\$ 2,500,083)	(US\$ 3,167,690.70)
2.6 Fishermen			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
5762	921,187,479	692,674,008	1,613,861,487
	(US\$ 9,211,874.79)	(US\$ 6,926,740.08)	(US\$ 16,138,614.87)
2.7 Government, State Employees and Retired			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
527	16,881,013	97,819,550	114,700,563
	(US\$ 168,810.13)	(US\$ 978,195.50)	(US\$ 1,147,005.63)
2.8 Skill Labours			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
959	68,753,030	146,871,900	215,624,930
	(US\$ 687,530.30)	(US\$ 146,871.9)	(US\$ 2,156,249.30)
2.9 Tailors			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
217	16,874,450	30,066,900	46,941,350
	(US\$ 168,744.50)	(US\$ 300,669)	(US\$ 469,413.50)
2.10 Teachers			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
277	29,946,550	73,343,180	103,289,730
	(US\$ 299,465.50)	(US\$ 733,431.80)	(US\$ 1,032,897.30)
2.11 Weavers			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
225	54,266,150	55,757,400	110,023,550
	(US\$ 542,661.50)	(US\$ 557,574)	(US\$ 1,100,235.50)
2.12 Others			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
417	16,514,378	78,361,445	94,875,823
	(US\$ 165,143.78)	(US\$ 783,614.45)	(US\$ 948,758.23)
2.13 Occupation Not Given			
Families	Business Value	Other Value	Total
3316	78,228,313	471,061,975	549,290,288
	(US\$ 782,283.13)	(US\$ 4,710,619.75)	(US\$ 5,492,902.88)
Total			17,135,632,719
			(US\$ 171,356,327.19)

UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – Tsunami Victims

Over 8,000 tsunami survivors have complained to the Disaster Relief Monitoring Unit (DRMU) of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka about the delay and the violation of their rights.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights and Economic and Social Council in 1998.

Rights of IDPs

Persons who have been forced to flee or to leave their homes or place of habitual residence, as a result of armed conflict, violence, natural or man-made disaster and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border, are known as Internally Displaced Persons. Those who have been displaced due to Tsunami fall into the category of IDPs. They are entitled to all human rights enjoyed by the other citizens. In addition, they have special needs which should be addressed by the state authorities.

Choice of Residence

Principle 15: The IDPs have the right to remain in the area they used to reside before the displacement or have the right to move to any other part of the country or another country on their will. This right is crucial for those who have lost their families, homes and belonging and have completely been uprooted.

Family Unit

Principle 16 and 17 highlight the importance of preserving the family unit. The responsible state authorities should help the IDPs in protecting the family unit by assisting in seeking family members who have been separated. A family unit provides security to a persons. Separation from one's family also leads to violation of other human rights. Where the families insist on remaining in the same location during the period of displacement the authorities should facilitate it.

Adequate Standard of Living

According to Principle 18, the state is responsible to provide the IDPs with an adequate standard of living including essential food, potable water, shelter, appropriate clothing, essential medical services and sanitation. The highest number of deaths among IDPs is caused by malnutrition. Vulnerable groups such as children, elderly and single heads of households should be given special attention in providing an adequate standard of living.

Property Rights

The IDPs have abandoned their property in haste and are not able to secure them. Especially, the boundaries of the lands may not be visible due to natural disasters such as the Tsunami. The property remaining in the possession of the IDPs is also prone to theft. The responsible authorities have to take steps to protect the property of the IDPs against such occurrences.

Right to Return or Resettle

IDPs have the right to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their previous homes or resettle voluntarily in another area of the country. Right Return or resettle is vital especially when the cause of the displacement is ceased. As for an example, Tsunami victims are entitled to return or resettle when the danger of another Tsunami is not in existence.

After resettlement, the IDPs should not face discrimination as a result of having been displaced. They, like all other citizens, have the equal right to participate in public affairs and to have access to public services.

M.I.M. Mohideen,

Chairman,

Muslim Reconstruction and Resettlement Organisation - MRRO

18th January 2006

National Digitization Project

National Science Foundation

Institute : South Eastern University of Sri Lanka


1. Place of Scanning : Main Library, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Oluvil

2. Date Scanned : 2018.02.03 15

3. Name of Digitizing Company : Sanje (Private) Ltd, No 435/16, Kottawa Rd,
Hokandara North, Arangala, Hokandara

4. Scanning Officer

Name : I. W. A. C. J. Chandrasena

Signature : 

Certification of Scanning

I hereby certify that the scanning of this document was carried out under my supervision, according to the norms and standards of digital scanning accurately, also keeping with the originality of the original document to be accepted in a court of law.

Certifying Officer

Designation : Acting Librarian

Name : M. M. Mashroofa

Signature : 

Date : 2018.02.03 15

"This document/publication was digitized under National Digitization Project of the National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka"