

**Transition from a Conflict Affected to a Post-Conflict Setting:  
A Qualitative Study on Two Resettled Sinhala Communities in Post  
Conflict Sri Lanka**

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The global issue of conflict-induced displacement is considered a perpetual catastrophe for the people who are forced to leave their material possessions due to insecurity driven by armed conflict. According to the nature and sequence of the conflict, they may have to find temporary refuge for several years pending return to their places of origin. Perhaps, even in the post conflict situation, resettlement of the displaced may be undermined. This is more or less the situation experienced by the resettled conflict-induced Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka today. Unlike the Tamil and Muslim IDPs, most of the Sinhala IDPs from the conflict affected peripheral villages have already returned to their places of origin, after the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009. But they are still struggling to counter the negative consequences of the prolonged armed conflict. Hence, it is timely and relevant to understand the manner of their transition from a conflict affected to a post-conflict setting and to identify the issues and challenges faced by them during the transition stage. The success of various actors in resettling IDPs depends to a large extent on how the IDPs adjust or escape from a conflict to a post-conflict setting. A key problem in this equation is that the resettlement actors focus primarily on homelessness and destitution. Hence this paper argues that a durable solution for resettlement cannot be found solely through the provision of material support. Such assistance programmes should comprehensively address the challenges faced by IDPs in re-establishing their normal life. To understand why this is so, this paper attempts to identify the transitional issues and coping strategies, through the experiences of two resettled Sinhala communities struggling to rebuild their socioeconomic and cultural life. For this purpose, a qualitative investigation was carried out in two villages in the North Central and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. Research results brought out four types of transitional issues faced by resettlers viz. ensuring security, sustaining livelihoods, socio-cultural adaptation and policy implementation. However the level of success of the transition process is a relative one and depends on the attitudes and capabilities of resettled IDPs. The paper

also focuses on the multi faceted coping strategies adopted by them in transiting from a conflict to a post-conflict situation.

***Key words:*** *Displacement, Resettlement, Transitional issues, Coping strategies*