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Identification of Policy and Regulation Gaps with Reference to Environmental and Social Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction of Beneficiaries of Tsunami Involuntary Resettlement in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Resettlement term is described basically, the movement of populations from one place to another other than their usual residence by force or voluntarily. The physical relocation is only one of the most significant results in the resettlement process: moreover, it involves multidimensional phenomena. It makes an opportunity to develop the living standards of those who were affected by the reconstruction of systems of production for poverty reduction and land use planning by human settlement and also increase the resiliency. Most catastrophic natural disaster recorded in the recent history of Sri Lanka is tsunami; more than 94,000 permanent houses were rebuilt. It draws a question of that did Sri Lanka grabs the opportunity well enough in the Tsunami resettlement. As observed during the field visits and acknowledged by several studies, some of the resettles abandoned their houses and return back to their previous places where they were before the tsunami or any other convenient places. After a decade of the disaster, it is important to review what went wrong considering the long term effects of tsunami resettlement. Environmental and social factors which make impacts on the long term satisfaction of the involuntary resettlement were identified through a desk study, interviews with the expertise and ground verifications. Policy and regulations gaps in planning and implementation phases were recognised with respect to identified environmental and social factors by a thorough literature review, series of interviews with expertise and a questionnaire survey was conducted to understand the practice of policy and regulations on real ground. For the questionnaire survey, 24 tsunami resettlement sites were selected by pre-determined criteria in Galle, Matara, and Hambantota districts. At the time of tsunami resettlement there was no existing policy that can be readily adopted for handle resettlement program in this scale. Policies were implemented after the disaster and during the resettlement program however many critical aspects were not identified or neglected. Absence of policies, strategies to adhere in the factors like Lighting and ventilation, Interior design, convenience to day to day activities, Neighborhood safety, Community development program in the planning and construction phases of the resettlement process led to sever social issues and finally abandonment of the houses.

Keywords: Involuntary resettlement, Tsunami, Satisfaction, Policy