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Project management in a disaster: A Sri Lankan study

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The discipline of project management has surfaced ever so significant in Sri Lankan context, particularly with the recent devastation caused by the tsunami in December 2004. Subsequently, disaster management agencies including the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL), local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private sector agencies, and voluntary parties were seen as the major actors in different stages of the disaster management cycle through 'post-tsunami projects'. Thus, there is a visible linkage between the stages of the cycle and the discipline of project management. Following the catastrophe, disaster recovery, relief, mitigation and re-construction projects were undertaken by the aforesaid agencies with the view of minimizing the adverse impacts inflicted upon the affected in the country. In line, this study discusses the spectra that project management in a calamity differs from those under general circumstances.

The research site was a temporary camp (Rejjipura camp of displaced families) established at Hikkaduwa divisional secretariat in Galle district. All the project components implemented by the disaster management agencies were empirically studied from the project management perspective. The adopted methodology was entirely qualitative, and interviews with the members of the project teams, observations, and field participation were used as primary sources of data. Accordingly, the study revealed that projects undertaken to improve quality of life of the affected in the camp were tripartite; projects on livelihood development, temporary shelter and camp management. Similarly, it was found that project management in a disaster differs, especially in terms of skills required by project managers and Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC), from those required under ordinary project management situations. Though, under general circumstances PMLC is lengthier inclusive of the stages of identification; feasibility study; planning; implementation; delivery and post-evaluation, in the Sri Lanka calamity, it was shorter and immediate. Equally, PMLC comprised situation analysis (instead of deep identification surveys), visualization (instead of visioning) and implementation.

Finally, the study proposes that in any disaster, project managers should possess skills on networking; coordination; visualization; effective communication; donor negotiation and conflict resolution in order to effectively manage the situation with a clear understanding of the distinction between project management under normalcy and calamity.

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Valuing non-market benefits of human dominated small mangrove forests in Sri Lanka

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The inability of economists and policy makers to recognize the values of non-market benefits including critical ecological, socio-economic and non-use functions of mangroves has been one of the major reasons for large scale conversion of mangroves into destructive uses. Recent attempts by environmental economists to put values to non-market benefits of ecosystems are far from complete. Non-market benefits of Sri Lankan mangroves have not been studied adequately. Using contingent valuation method, this study estimated the economic values of non-use benefits of mangroves in Sri Lanka, local existence value at US$1.7/hh/yr (US$883 $ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); global existence value at US$24/hh/yr (US$1398 $ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); local option value at US$2.9/hh/yr (US$1491 $ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); global option value at US$18/hh/yr (US$1039 ha^{-1}/yr^{-1}); local bequest values at US$3.3/hh/yr (US$1714 $ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); foreign bequest value at US$1.1/hh/yr (US$562 $ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$). The socio-economic factors affecting the WTP were established using tobit model. Using benefit transfer method, economic values of ecological functions of mangroves were estimated as fish breeding at US$0.55/hh/yr (US$218/$ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); erosion control at US0.01/hh/yr (US$3.6/$ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); biodiversity maintenance at US$0.05/hh/yr (US$18/$ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$); carbon sequestration at US$0.19/hh/yr (US$75.5$ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$) and the storm protection at US$0.19/hh/yr (US$76.8/$ha^{-1}yr^{-1}$). Destruction of small mangroves can be reversed by recognizing the non-market values in mangroves forest use decision making.