

**Situational Report on Tsunami IDPs of Southern Sri Lanka**  
**(Galle, Matara & Hambantota): Based on the three days field Visit**  
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**By**  
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**Introduction:**

‘The Indian Ocean tsunami hit Sri Lanka particularly hard, killing over 35,000. An estimated 40% of those killed in Sri Lanka were children. Between 441,410 and 504,440 were homeless, UNOCHA, 2005. Of these, an estimated 186,000 are thought to have been taken in by friends and family while some 250,000 were placed in welfare centers and makeshift camps. As 4,700 people were missing and Tsunami related damages have been estimated at \$1.8 billion. Sri Lanka has requested some debt forgiveness and a two-year hold on its \$8.82 billion debt.’ (CRS). Due to tsunami life and livelihood of Sri Lankan People disrupted and whole economy is in jeopardy. The natural coastal structure and environment suffered significant changes up to one kilometer from the shore. The tsunami also triggered the displacement of up to 5, 00,000 persons, with the total affected population exceeding 1,000,000, (CHA, December, 2005).

As per the UNOCHA/UNHCR report at the time of Tsunami more than 1, 00,000(More than one Million) people displaced from their habitat. Even after one and half years past after tsunami catastrophe still more than half million people staying through out the Sri Lankan island. There is a great deal of government response and right-based approaches still need to trap this problem effectively.

With the prevailing situation, I have been assigned to visit the three Tsunami affected areas where maximum number of IDPs due this mammoth disaster. During my visit I communicate with affected community, Government Agent, GS, Govt.Tsunami Official, INGOs, NGOs, Civil societies and near to the affected areas. Now affected communities researcher, government policy maker and official and international communities realizing as there is great need of developing multihazard warning system for Disaster prone areas and IDPs as well.

**Field Visit and Situational Analysis & Need assessment of the Tsunami IDPs:**

I have been visited Galle, Matara and Hambantota from 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 to study the ground realities and assess the situation mainly right related issues and present needs. It is quite interesting to study the situation and revisit the affected areas after ten months. Though the situation is quite change after one and half year of the occurrence of tsunami still there is long term impact on the survivor and affected communities. There is great need of sustainable development and protection specially the IDPs and vulnerable communities like tsunami widow women and orphan children. Though Government Agent assured to us as they are well aware the right of the Tsunami IDPs and committed to protect their right without any discrimination, still I collected information on ill treated

of women and child abuse. IDP communities also unaware about their right and there is great need of awareness and training need for the tsunami IDPs to protect their right.

As per my study I find different problem and needs to be prevailing to be attended. Galle and Matara, where most of the IDPs need livelihood restoration and recovery programme; where as in Hanbantota most of IDPs still need protection of their rights and assistance for resettlement, housing material and permanent housing .I here with depicting my study and perception during the visit.

### **Situational Report Area Wise (Human Right challenges with post math Tsunami scenario)**

#### **Galle District:**

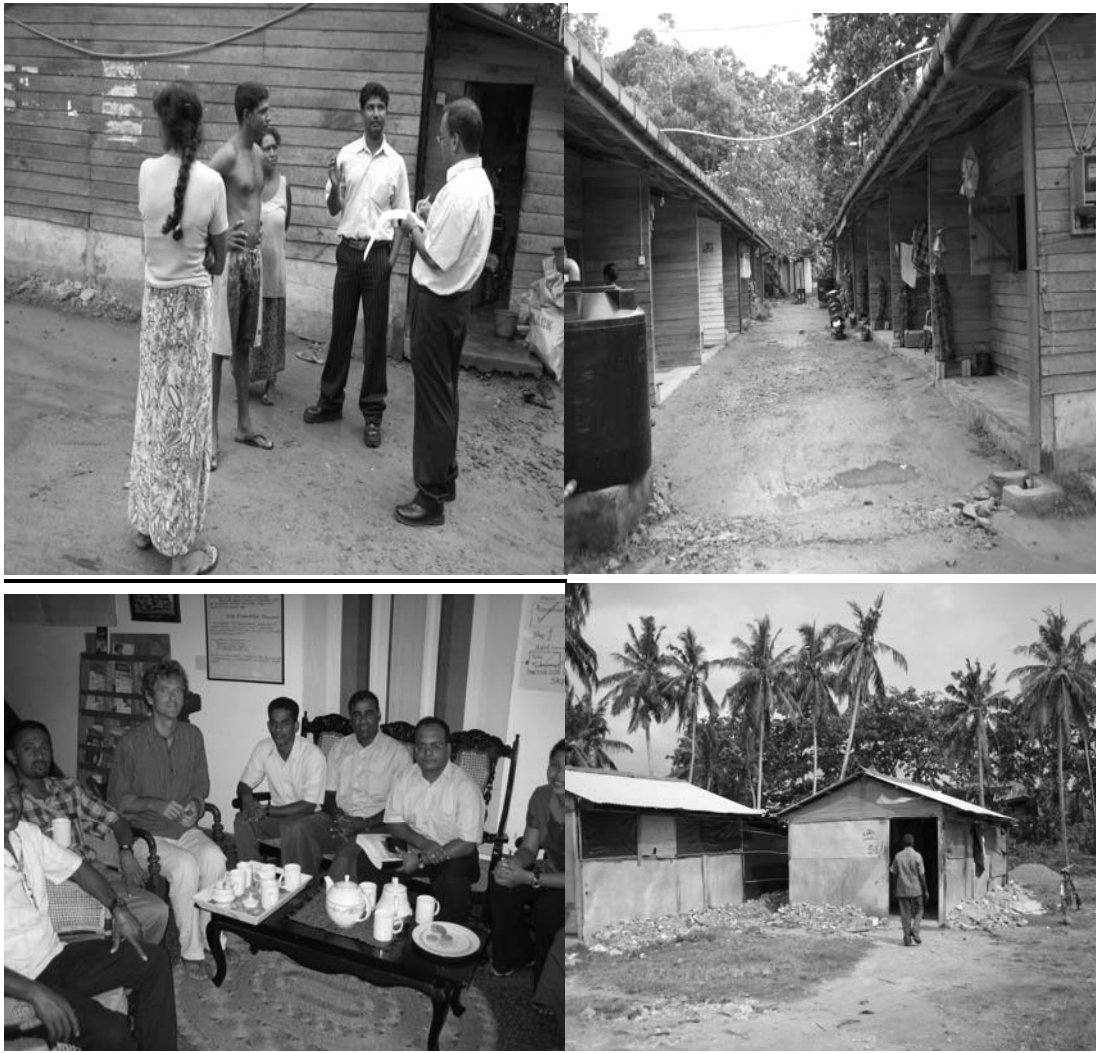


Photo: Glimps of Galle by Ashutosh Mohanty (26-28, July, 2006)

As per the UNHCR and OCHA information, Galle is one of the worst Tsunami affected areas where largest numbers of IDPs recorded. Though there are number of regions makes them to become IDPs one of the major cause is enforced of buffer Zone regulation Act. People still in the temporary shelter, though govt already started preparing building for them and soon they will back to new buildings. Though the new shelter is not adequate to their family and facilities too. Some people ill treated by Govt official and delayed to get their new settlements.

As per my study most of the people earn their livelihood tourism based and before tsunami they have easy life and after tsunami they lost their saving and leading a measurable life.

**Need of assessment of the people:**

As per my discussion and consultation with effected community, GOs, NGOs and INGOs, people want to get back their previous ways of income they need assistance from all sector for that. If their livelihood is recovered properly the whole IDPs scenario will be dramatically change. Although Government have provided the tsunami assistance and compensation, still people hard to find proper location and ways to restart of small business and get back their livelihood.

**Cases of Discrimination:**

As it is common, there are some cases of discrimination to get the new house and get their compensation in proper time. Some Government official intentionally delaying the process to rehabilitation and resettlement to some of the affected communities. Though these cases are small in number still it has some significant towards curbing the human rights and leading towards conflict.

**Protection of Women and Children:**

The guiding principles focuses on for special attention towards women and children as mostly they suffered sexual abuse and gender based violence. As we discussed with the Police OIC of Gall, as there are few cases registered as being exploited IDPs camp. Though rate of sex based industry increased with the tsunami post moth scenario. Basicall we discussed some widow after tsunami they faced lot of problem and easy to trap in to the sexual violence. We studded very few cases registered under child abuse or exploitation during our trip.

**Trafficking:**

We came to know from the police and local communities, as there are few trafficking case registered during post tsunami period. With strict vigilance of local police the child trafficking is almost over in Galle district. Local communities mention there are some cases occurring with out registered in police station.

**Access to Education:**

After discussion with the IDPs, we came to know the education facility available for them but they have to cover long distance and so most of children not interested to go to school. Most of pupil interested to earn their livelihood and support their parents rather to

go to school and spend their time. Grown up Pupils are interested for vocational training to get immediate income they are also some training like TV, electricity repairing, basic computer learning, rather to join general education. Though the prevailing situation improved still there is long time to go to make aware pupil and develop interest to join school.

#### **Access to basic services and infrastructure:**

As per our study we assume that there is great lacuna and constringent to get proper and basic infrastructure services in those IDPs areas of Galle. Basic infrastructure like health facilities(hospital),road , electricity, waste collection and management ,telephone, market place and recreation center is still far reach from them till today ,though government taken firm initiatives to provide basic services within 5-6 month.

#### **Loss of documentation and enforcement of Buffer zone:**

Most of people don't have adequate property document and it not properly documented too. Still government has provided adequate facilities and compensation as per their loss and evaluation of property. Still there are some cases people not yet get their compensation or adequate facilities. Some cases favoritism and malpractice comes on the way of their measuring loss of life and property and livelihood as well.

On the other hand with the "100" meter buffer zone people not rebuild their house or not yet started their livelihood as before tsunami. This is a great hindrance to their livelihood recovery and revives their income source. Government should take some eye-catching measure to make some tourist market complex to revive their livelihoods, as most of the IDP communities earn their bread and butter from the tourist-based industry.

#### **Participation of IDPs**

Still there is a great need of participation from the IDPs of Galle in decision making process and decide some of major activities taken by the government. Specially set up their new sttlement, provision of basic infrastructure, livelihood/income generating project and programme in their localities.

Particularly set up the new hospital, school and recreation center and tourist based market complex to improve the livelihood must be setup with the participation and decision of the IDPs. This can be potential to improve their present living standards, income level and development of the area as well. If the decision taken by the IDPs their livelihood will be secured, right and security will be well protected.

#### **Voluntary return and resettlement:**

During our study in Galle districts, we found government and international bodies have provided lot of resources and financial assistance to build up new settlements and relocate the IDPs. Still most of the people not yet returned to new location or feeling in secured and loss of livelihood in new area.

For the voluntary return and resettlement of IDPs government has to take special steps safety and dignity of the community with all basic infrastructures, rebuild/

reestablishment of previous livelihood (e.g. sewing machine, business assets, fishing boat and nets etc) or providing basic assets and training programme for developing new source of income. If some IDPs not interested to back to the selected settlements new build up locations, then they should be provided adequate compensation and property as per the loss due to tsunami. There is great need in of such step from government and international communities for Galle Tsunami IDPs .

### **Property Issues:**

There is large number of unsolved property issues among the tsunami affected IDPs. Some IDPs complain, as the compensation that they are getting is less than they lost during the Tsunami. Though government provided and taken lot of major to revive their livelihood .As most of the IDPs lost their documents and property certificates with the tsunami havoc. Mostly the widows and the orphan persons among the tsunami IDPs are more vulnerable as per our field study and discussion. Some IDPs of the Galle districts complaining the provided land or house is not sufficient for them and the relocate place also not suitable for their livelihood and basic infrastructure is not conducive for their sustainable development.

### **Matara District:**

As per our study and field visit we came know the percentage of IDPs is very less then other Tsunami affected areas of Sri Lanka. With the support of international communities and government official most of the IDPs problem already solved and there is nothing more about the right-based problem in Matara districts. Other problem some how similar with Galle districts and within few months most of the problem will be solved as per the affected community mentioned.

### **Hambantota District:**





Havoc of Hambantota ;( After one year still shade of Tsunami reminding there)  
 Photo by Ashutosh Mohanty, field visit (26-28<sup>th</sup> July, 2006).

Hambantota is one of the largest Tsunami affected area in Sri Lanka, where most numbers of minority community (Muslims) affected and loss their life and livelihood (UNHCR). We find lot of cases of discrimination and human right violation and case of favouratism. After the one and half year after the tsunami people need assistance to rebuild their house and recovery their livelihood. Though Taiwan Government has provided 640 houses for affected communities. But most of the Singhalese people benefited out of this Project comparative to Muslim communities.

**Need of assessment of the people:**

Hambantota has unique in nature as multi dimensional needs featured different parts of districts. As per our study still people needs assistance to build up their houses and training and education for better livelihoods. Mostly people waiting policy level intervention to revive their livelihood as some of the IDPs got only partial assistance and there is great need to gap filling and PRA. Actually most of the IDPs need house material to rebuild their new houses as now a day's lot of scarcity of house building materials. People also need a new market complex and emphasis for tourist center in Hambantota. The tsunami widows are still feeling insured and we find lot of prostration cases through out area due to acute and abject poverty and loss of livelihood due to Tsunami. Though

some international organization started some livelihood-generating programme but still it is not sufficient to the affected communities and IDPs as well.

**Cases of Discrimination:**

We found lot of discrimination on the basis of housing and infrastructure provision between Sinhalese and Muslim communities, Muslims are more neglected and yet to get their house and adequate compensation. Even some Muslim women request our team for house building material and other assistance as till today the government assistance far from their reach. So there is great need of vigilance to this cause and government should take appropriate action in this regard.

**Protection of Women and Children:**

With the field visit to various tsunami affected areas of Hambantota, we came to know there is great need of attention for protection of right of IDP women and children as they are most vulnerable in nature. There are lots of cases where only single widows survived and it is high time to survive with the present (increasing price of all basic commodities) situation. Though they have got financial assistance but they need some sustainable livelihood programme to survive rest of their life with sad dreams of tsunami, which snatch every thong from her life. We discuss with some IDPs, as there is also need of safety and security of women, even though some are sexually abuse and molestation cannot complain in the police station due to social structure and pragmatic condition.

**Trafficking:**

There are some cases of trafficking, though it is small in number and police has taken some positive move in this regard in Hambantota districts. During early days of tsunami the rate of trafficking was more but now it reduced dramatically, with the government and it s commitment to stop child trafficking and child labor. In Hambantota town areas the trafficking is often happening knowingly or unknowingly as some IDPs mentioned during our trip.

**Access to Education:**

Though Education is not a issue in present situation in Hambantota, still most of IDPs children is hard to find proper education facility in their locality. They mentioned the quality education not provided to their children and they want some vocational training from the professional teachers, by which they can earn their livelihood latter part of their life. Presently IDPs children covering long distance to reach the school though government taken step to setup new school relocated places through INGOs support.

**Access to basic services and infrastructure:**

As some of the IDPs in transitory stage to resettle in new settlements in Hambantota, so the infrastructure is not in a proper condition. GOs and INGOs and international communities supporting to build up proper infrastructure like hospital, road, electricity, water connection, telephone facilities now a days for tsunami IDPs .As we met government agents, he mentioned within six month all basic infrastructure will be provided to the IDPs and effected communities.

**Loss of documentation and enforcement of Buffer zone:**

As per our study and discussion with IDPs, most of the affected communities has lost their property documents and valuable certificates, government has assured for them to provided all necessary document, identity card certificates within few months. Still most of the IDPs find hard time to get their documents for adequate compensation.

With the enforcement of the 200 meters buffer zone IDPs find hard time to recover their livelihood as before tsunami. Government should strictly apply this buffer zone for all communities in respect of religion, political affiliation, race or belief. There is great need of government support for livelihood recovery and income generation activities, who are effected due to implication of Buffer Zone.

**Participation of IDPs**

As per our study, we assume that there is a great need of participation from the IDPs of Hambantota in decision-making process and decide some of major activities taken by the government. Mainly for establishing new settlements, provision of basic services & infrastructure, livelihood/income generating project and programme in their localities.

**Property Issues:**

Though out the Hambantota District, there is great number of unsolved property issues among the tsunami IDPs. It is mostly seen majority of IDPs complain, as the compensation that they are getting is inadequate/not sufficient and they are getting less than they lost during the Tsunami because loss of property certificate and documents. Though government and International communities have already taken lot of majors to compensate the loss of IDPs for revive their livelihood. Still there is great need of attention should taken for the widows and the orphan persons who lot their property and asset documents among the tsunami IDPs, as they are more vulnerable and sufferer.

**Bellow Points should be taken more attention for preserve and protection of Human Rights of Tsunami IDPs:**

- Tsunami Reconstruction and Recovery process/efforts should be guided by human right based approach and focus
- With the prevailing arm conflict and turmoil country situation, as government implementing reconstruction and reintegration programme the guiding principles should taken in to consideration, Government should not only motivated by the race, political affiliation and conflict theme rather more focusing towards disaster recovery and management process
- In decision and policy making process the affected Tsunami IDPs mostly women should included. Particularly any decision regarding planning and management of relocation, distribution of humanitarian assistance women should be included, it will also leading towards durable solution for displacement.

- With enactment of the new constitutional amendment (DM Act No.13 of 2005) of Sri Lankan Human Right Commission should be monitor the situation of IDPs and develop common and amicable methodology to formulate in action.
- UNCHR and UN-OCHA jointly take steps towards developing guidelines on human right for prevailing situation (natural disaster like Tsunami) of Sri Lanka.
- All Sri Lankan Government policy should targeted toward human right protection and sustainable development.

### **Conclusion:**

As per our study and field visit there is still great need of cooperation between government official, INGOs, NGOs, international communities and effected IDPs for recovery process and development. Still there is great need of human right protection and security for Tsunami IDPs in both Galle and Hambantota areas. Sri Lankan Government should follow the guiding principles setup by UN for human right protection of tsunami IDPs. There is also great need for a comprehensive study and research of human right issues related to IDPs for developing future strategy of effective management of human right problem/issues (mainly on future natural disaster Like Tsunami).

Finally, there is also great need of developing multihazard warning system for disaster prone areas and for IDPs for effective disaster management and recovery process. There is also link between disasters to development with successful implication of human right approach. For this process national level organization like Community Trust Fund (CTF) has taken some initiatives to start some campaign and anticipation to ward human right protection of IDPs.

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