

Resettlement and Reintegration of IDPs in Post-War Sri Lanka A Case Study of a Village in Batticaloa

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ABSTRACT. Sri Lanka's violent conflict that lasted for more than three decades came to end in May 2009 with the LTTE being militarily defeated by the armed forces of Sri Lanka. Interestingly, the LTTE was defeated in the East of the country in July 2007 before the rebels were wiped out throughout the country. It is believed that although the Eastern Province was liberated from the clutch of the LTTE by the armed forces in 2007, there are many unattended issues that need to be addressed in the present context of Sri Lanka, especially in terms of resettlement and reintegration process. Aftermath of war in Sri Lanka has resulted in mass-migration of IDPs back to their places of origin. Therefore, this study mainly explores the challenges and prospects in the resettlement and the reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in village call Koraveli in the Batticaloa district, which is the central part of the Eastern Province. A specific objective of this study is to assess the initiatives/ programs undertaken in the aftermath of war in Sri Lanka to ensure the resettlement and re-integration of IDPs and to interrogate the institutional and structural mechanisms being put in place to ensure sustainable peace. Finally, this study aims at analyzing the challenges being faced by stakeholders in the post-war resettlement and reconstruction of Eastern Sri Lanka. This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods. However, it will be carried out mainly through a qualitative field research by using both ethnographic and survey methods. The data was collected through literature review, participant observation method, focus group discussion and questionnaire survey. The study found that before the end of 2007 IDPs were resettled in their own area by government of Sri Lanka with the support of international Governments, UN, INGOs and NGOs when study area was liberated. Despite the fact that resettlement was spearheaded by the abovementioned organizations, plight of the resettled people still continues as the process has not been successfully done and proper mechanisms have not been followed in terms of resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants and their families into the economic and social process. Democratization process was also initiated; Local Government and Provincial Council elections were held in year 2008 but these political bodies are powerless to help people. Further, clashes among former rebels' groups are major constraints on post-war peacebuilding/resettlement and reintegration in the area.

Key words: Resettlement, Reintegration, Democratization.

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