

**CHALLENGES FOR LIVELIHOOD AND
EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS:
A CASE STUDY OF BATTICALOA DISTRICT IN
SRI LANKA**

**Dissertation submitted to The Open University of Sri Lanka as
Partial Fulfilment of the Award of the
Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies and Public Policy**

by

SELVADHARSHINI T. CROOS
Registration No. 60699532

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
NAWALA, NUGEGODA
SRI LANKA**

AUGUST, 2010



70847

ABSTRACT

The idea of selecting the study 'Challenges for Livelihood and Employment Prospects: A Case Study of Batticaloa District in Sri Lanka' developed with the deep understanding of grievances of Tsunami affected communities faced, by the impact of conflict on their livelihood recovery process. Even though there are considerable amount of publications with regard to conflict, tsunami and the overall Tsunami recovery, being a humanitarian worker, I had a personal interest in understanding the different ways how conflict impacted on the livelihood recovery process of this natural disaster affected communities.

Sri Lanka experienced the worst ethnic conflict which protracted as civil war. In 2004, during the ceasefire between the conflicting parties, Sri Lanka experienced the worst natural disaster which heavily damaged the costal areas. Even though devastation of the Tsunami disaster was extra ordinarily high, the post disaster period with influx of foreign funds created many development opportunities for Sri Lanka. However, this opportunity was not utilized in conflict affected areas due to the escalation of conflict when the ceasefire between conflicting parties came to a halt.

The overall tsunami disaster recovery process was slower than expected due to various conflict related challenges in the field. Batticaloa District was taken as a sample due to the fact that this district was one of the worst affected districts by conflict, tsunami and other natural disasters such as floods. The other reasons for selecting the district is that Batticaloa received substantial funding from international Aid agencies in Tsunami rehabilitation process; it is the District with mixture of two minority ethnic groups and also having a good mixture of livelihood opportunities.

This study observed that the Aid agencies and their beneficiaries' experienced major challenges in taking forward livelihood rehabilitation efforts as the security situation took a negative direction in Batticaloa and in the county as a whole. Batticaloa district suffered heavy fighting and livelihood loss due to the clearing operations of Eastern province. This situation created new perceptions, challenges and priorities for Aid agencies working in conflict-affected areas over who should be assisted and how and why. Tsunami livelihood rehabilitation programmes faced major logistical challenges to continue, due to lack of access, transport difficulties, displacement of beneficiaries, incoming IDPs into their project areas and the changing priorities of conflicting actors. Even though Aid agencies operated with Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) approach, most of the time rehabilitation phase could not get linked with development as the Aid agencies went back to relief phase to response to the new humanitarian crisis created by conflict. This study analyzes various challenges faced by Aid agencies and their beneficiaries in Livelihood rehabilitation process in post Tsunami period and concludes that the ongoing ethnic conflict during the study period negatively impacted on Tsunami livelihood rehabilitation.