

Evaluation of the interventions performed by support agencies towards the impact of the quality of life of resettled IDPs

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Abstract

The IDP issue is a key challenge faced by countries that experienced wars and natural calamities. In this regard Sri Lanka too faced this challenge with a large number of IDPs where the national government and other organizations have taken the responsibility for providing protection and reconstructing their lives for achieving a lasting solution. This article focuses on what degree the interventions performed by governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations have impacted on the development of quality of life of resettled IDPs. The government was expected to play the pivotal role here. The non –governmental agencies were \ expected to support the IDPs by providing basic survival needs and interventions that can be useful for IDPs to revive their lost lives with dignity ensuring a QOL. In order to realize these objectives many agencies have been providing survival services mainly while some have been engaged in providing development support services.

Key words: Internally Displaced Persons, Resettlement, Quality of Life

Introduction

The population of IDPs in the world is increasing. This has become a key issue in countries with IDP populations, like Sri Lanka got into it from 1983 due to the ethnic conflict (The Refugee Council, 2003). Many organizations have developed various definitions to identify IDPs. However, the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement (GPID) defined IDPs as “Internally displaced persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (Burn, 2005)”.

The issue of having IDPs creates many challenges to a country, which if not addressed effectively, can cause negative impacts. Internal displacement ends when IDPs return to their original homes or places of origin (Cohen, 2004). Therefore, it is understood that the related challenges will not end once they are resettled but many more interventions need to be implemented until such time that they enjoy normal life just as the other members of civil society. In this context the roles and their impacts of the interventions of support agencies during the in-camp period plays a crucial role, which is the focus area of this research.

In Sri Lanka, the protracted armed conflict between the government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended in May 2009. During the armed conflict , more than 280,000 people were displaced (IDMC, 2011). Over 55,000 Muslims (Daily News, 1990) IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) who were displaced from Jaffna and Mannar districts had remained displaced until 2009 from 1990 which year they were forced out by the LTTE. They were located as IDPs in the western part of Sri Lanka (Puttalam) and form the crux of this study.

How to support the IDPs to find a durable solution for their problems was the major issue faced by the Sri Lankan government. In this background the key responsibility was to

manage the IDP camps with the long-term objective of resettling all IDPs and ensuring their welfare after they were resettled. In this process, the government had to work in collaboration with local and international agencies with need-based programs.

Interventions by support organizations

The GPID emphasizes addressing the specific needs of IDPs worldwide. The GPID can be identified as an “important tool for dealing with situations of internal displacement” and they welcomed the fact that “an increasing number of States, United Nations agencies and regional and non-governmental organizations are applying them as a standard” (GPID, 2004). It was supported as a base document to formulate policies and improve institutional arrangements to respond to the protection and assistance needs of IDPs. Therefore, National Governments have a clear responsibility for the protection and assistance needs of IDPs which should be incorporated with international human rights and humanitarian laws. Egeland (2005) explains that “the collaborative approach plays a vital role in the coordination of activities in camps. This approach must respond to the needs of the internally displaced well beyond the capacity of any single agency. It is required that the agency pulls together and maximizes comparative advantages of government officials, UN agencies, and international organizations and international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Apart from formal NGOs, the local community also is an important stakeholder in this process. Thompson, S (n.d) noted that community-based camp management supports maintaining relationships with camp communities in providing services.

International organizations can work with national government infrastructure to support the ending of displacement and find durable solutions. However, South (2008) pointed out that government has the primary responsibility for the welfare and safety of IDPs. An example of this is that “International organizations in Burma began to realize the benefits of working in partnership with local NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in order to gain access to vulnerable and remote communities (South, 2008). Therefore, national governments are responsible for providing services to enhance the standard of living at camp level and after resettlement as well. Especially, displaced persons should enjoy without discrimination an acceptable standard of living, including shelter, health care, food, water and other means of survival.

IDPS and their life in IDP camps in mannar, Sri Lanka

In the 1990s, the LTTE carried out massacres of Muslims in Jaffna and Mannar. Thereafter they issued an ultimatum to the remaining muslims to leave the areas in October 1990. All the Muslims, numbering over 75,000 from the Northern Province were evicted (The Refugee Council, 2003) by the government. According to the Daily News of 30th October 1990, Muslims numbering over 45,000 were chased out from Karisal, Tarapuram, and Erukumpiddy in Mannar. With the expulsion, Muslims houses were looted and jewelry, money and their other belongings were taken away, effectively making them paupers within 24 hours. The Muslims escaped empty handed , with only kith and kin including children and the elderly by boat from Mannar and Jaffna mainly to Puttalam and Kalpitiya and to some parts of the Anuradhapura district. The Muslims coming over to Puttalam district were welcomed by the host community where the fishermen of Kalpitiya in the Puttalam area teamed up to collect and provide for their basic immediate needs such as food and clothing, etc. They were housed temporarily in schools and mosques (Farook, 2009). During the camp

stage, the IDPs were also provided with facilities by the government and other agencies to satisfy their basic needs.

Interventions by support organizations in IDPs during camp stage

The stakeholders such as FORUT, Red Barna, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), RDF (Rural Development Foundation), Oxfam UK and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) had to meet IDPs' needs and aspirations by intervening with appropriate sustenance and development support. The Government provided its support via Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents. The IDPs in Sri Lanka had to be supported by various agencies including the GoSL at all stages of the resettlement process. The stakeholders had to meet the IDP's needs all throughout the process until resettlement by way of providing sustainable interventions and maintenance support.

National and local government institutions, NGOs, CBOs, religious institutions and host communities have played a vital role in supporting the IDPs by implementing projects, services and programs. These include the governmental RDF and the Community Trust Fund (CTF). Iraqi organizations were involved in providing shelter, water, school facilities and other basic needs. International agencies and organisations such as UNHCR, World Bank (WB), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and other organizations have provided water and sanitation facilities, awareness programmes, education facilities, shelter, roads, etc. For example, the World Bank launched a \$34.2 million project in 2007 aimed at assisting over 7,800 IDP families with permanent housing, water and sanitation, and assistance with the regularization of land titles while also extending some assistance to the host community. By 2009, the Organization for Habitation and Resources Development (OHRD) had assisted 1671 beneficiaries providing loan facilities in 2007 and 2008 (UNHCR, 2009). The OHRD issued these loans through the respective women's rural development societies of the area. Further, it has conducted a skill development program for construction laborers within the beneficiary communities. On the aspect of development oriented interventions there have been various support provided to IDPs by INGOs, NGOs and Government institutions.

The Ministry of Resettlement has a management mechanism to support IDPs. This Ministry provided relief, resettlement and relocation to all IDPs, including Northern Muslim IDPs. They have productively contributed to sustainable development by minimizing the adverse effects on the economy, society and environment as a result of various disasters (Ministry of Resettlement, 2011). The Resettlement Authority is also working for IDPs under the Ministry of Resettlement whose main objective is Resettlement or Relocation of IDPs in a safe and dignified manner (Ministry of Resettlement, 2011). Among the main functions of the Ministry are;

- Co-ordinate efforts of government and donors in order to end displacement,
- Formulate and implement specific programmes and projects for resettlement and relocation of IDPs & refugees in a safe and dignified manner,
- Provide infrastructure facilities, education and health, and
- Assist in the mobilization of both local and foreign financial resources to implement planned programmes.
- The Secretariat for Northern Displaced Muslims (SNDM) based in Puttalam under the Ministry has been responsible for providing all essential requirements of IDPs through the camps (Ministry of Resettlement, 2011).

International organizations introduced various programmes for IDPs in camp situations. Especially, UNHCR developed programmes based on international humanitarian laws and international human rights (Ministry of Resettlement, 2011). As revealed during the focus interviews, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNCF) assisted with water sanitation, child health and nutrition, and mine risk awareness; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assist with providing seed and agricultural equipment; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is assisting with livelihood, and early recovery; the World Food Programme (WFP) is assisting through the provision of essential food items; and the World Health Organization (WHO) is assisting with health and nutrition support. This study suggests a research gap between what had been implemented during the camp stage and the impact of such interventions on the post-resettlement sustainability and development of IDPs.

The key research question is “what are the roles played by the governmental and non governmental agencies in resettled IDPs?” The Research objective is to evaluate to what degree the interventions performed by governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations have impacted on the development of quality of life of resettled IDPs.

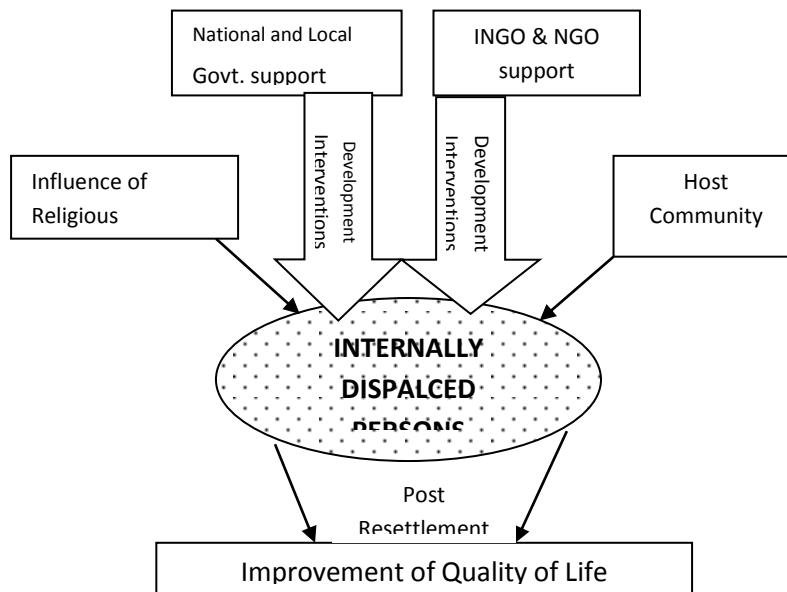
Methodology

The researcher selected a random sample from a sampling frame of resettled IDPs in Mannar district. The researcher sought the support of diverse sources of data while the primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher herself and secondary sources such as published and unpublished materials and literature found locally and internationally were used. The structured questionnaire was administered for a selected group of 100 resettled families in Mannar. Further, field visits were undertaken to collect historical and situational data and to five IDP camps namely Saltern 1 & 2, Palavi, Nagavillu C & D in Puttalam division in the Puttalam district to conduct individual and focus interviews with IDPs, Camp Managers (CM) and other stakeholders such as Government Organizations (GOs) Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), religious groups and the host community. The field visits to IDP camps were undertaken prior to resettlement and also during the transition period from camp stage to resettlement stage. Hence, the research processed data collected using appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in arriving at findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework is constructed by the researcher based on the research objective and the research question after studying relevant literature in the field of study. Independent and dependent variables were identified considering the research problems and identified research objectives. Identified variables are connected with the context of the development impact of the interventions carried out during the camp stage on IDPs. Variables were identified for each of the institutional and level of interventions. Accordingly, the research identified independent variables as the interventions of government and non-governmental organizations, the role of the host community and religious groups. The dependent variables are the impact of such interventions on the quality of life and the environment of resettled IDPs. The conceptual framework formulated is depicted below;

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher's construction

Discussion of the Study

The discussion presents the processed data collected using the structured questionnaire administered to the sample of 100 resettled IDPs. The data is presented under key areas of development interventions studied, in the form of graphs. From 1990 onwards the IDPs who came to IDP camps in Puttalam, were supported by the National, Local governments and Non- governmental organizations with dry rations and other survival support within the camps that included basic facilities for *education*, health, water and sanitary services etc. Apart from the governmental and non-governmental organizations religious organizations and host community also were involved in the process.

Interventions of the National and Non -governmental institutions

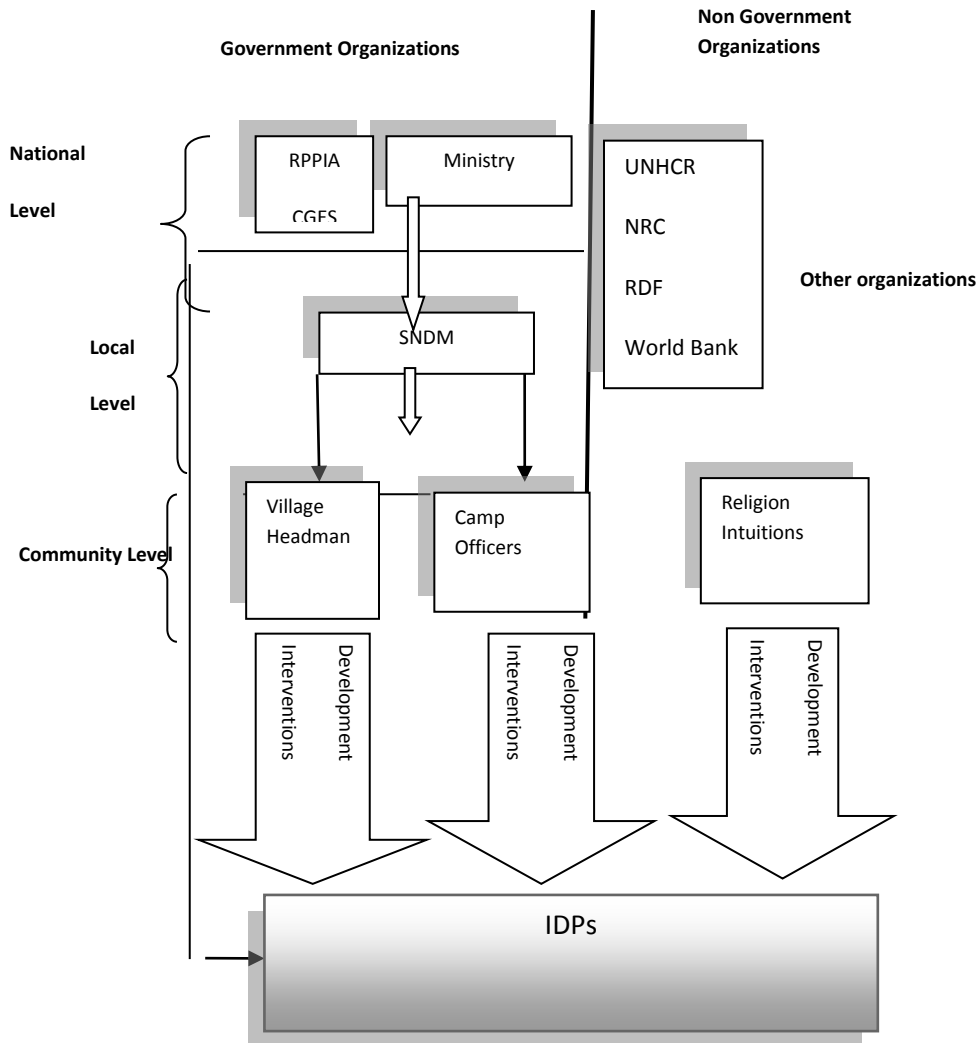
According to Brun (2005), IDPs are those who remain within the borders of their countries under the protection of their own governments. Therefore, government has a main responsibility to protect IDPs. As observed the government had the main responsibility of looking after IDPs through civil administrators, local political representatives and staff of the Ministry of resettlement. In general, all IDPs are required to register with the local government authorities in each district before they can receive regular assistance. The Ministry of Rehabilitation and Resettlement has supported IDPs with basic needs such as education, housing equipments, water supply, toilets and drainage facilities and livelihood programs etc. According to empirical data, basic educational requirements such as pre schools (92%), schools (72%), and free books have been provided mainly by the GOs. But it was found that although the IDPs perceive GOs interventions less effective compared to NGOs, the overall impact of the interventions channeled through the camps had only a marginal impact on QOL of IDPs during the post resettlement period. The livelihood project to IDPs included vocational training for women in sewing, and for men driving, computer literacy. Unemployed IDP youths were also given loans to initiate own micro businesses.

Sewing machines were distributed after training women enabling them to commence self employment. Fishermen were provided with fishing nets and other needed fishing equipment. SNDM based in Puttalam under the Ministry of Resettlement has been responsible for providing all essential requirements to IDPs through the camps such as dry ration, roofing materials, educational support and other facilities, Government appointed CMs to manage camps and coordinate assistance programs of support agencies etc. According to IDPs level of satisfaction for providing survival and resettlement support (materials, houses, advise, money etc) they have preferred GOs (94%) over NGOs (67%).

There were a number of non-governmental agencies who supported IDPs such as The Human Rights Commission (HRC), UNHCR , World Bank (WB), Rural Development Foundation (RDF), FORUT, Norwegian Refugee Council(NRC) and other agencies such as religious organizations. Some of the organizations provided basic facilities such as water, sanitation facilities, health facilities, education facilities. UNHCR provided assistance in the form of shelter materials and construction, water and sanitation, non-food items and other essential items as required. WB initiated the Puttalam Housing Project aimed at upgrading and improving the habitat, water and sanitation facilities and providing houses for IDPs. They also provided housing, drinking water, and sanitation facilities for IDPs in Puttalam as well as rehabilitated selected internal roads in the welfare centers. RDF and NRC also provided shelter materials to them. FORUT supported Infrastructure such as toilets , wells, roads , school buildings , pre- school cum community centre , shelter , roofing , micro credit, capacity building , home gardening, and also established 3 district level organization to work for the IDPs and host community as well.

On the aspect of development interventions, with UNHCR assistance women's groups were formed and micro-credit schemes initiated to support income generation projects. Another local NGO , RDF that supported IDPs by providing social mobility towards socio-economical developments through awareness programs in income generation, saving and training and in empowerment and protection of Human Rights especially women, children and IDPs. According to RDF sources, they have been engaged in promoting target group ventures, assisting infra-structure development and encouraging educational programs Further, they have provided training services on health ,education , relief , income generation activities, vocational training , water and sanitation , conflict resolution, peace building, shelter, sewing ,leather production, computer skills , wiring, masonry, carpentry, food preparation, agriculture farming and animal husbandry. FORUT also worked specially for women to improve the gender and economic empowerment among the IDPs. HRC, UNHCR, RDF was involved in creating awareness on protecting human rights especially amongst women and children. In terms of the level of IDPs satisfaction and perceived effectiveness on development interventions 43% preferred NGOs compared to GOs which accounted for 35%.

Figure: 2 An integrated system of development interventions

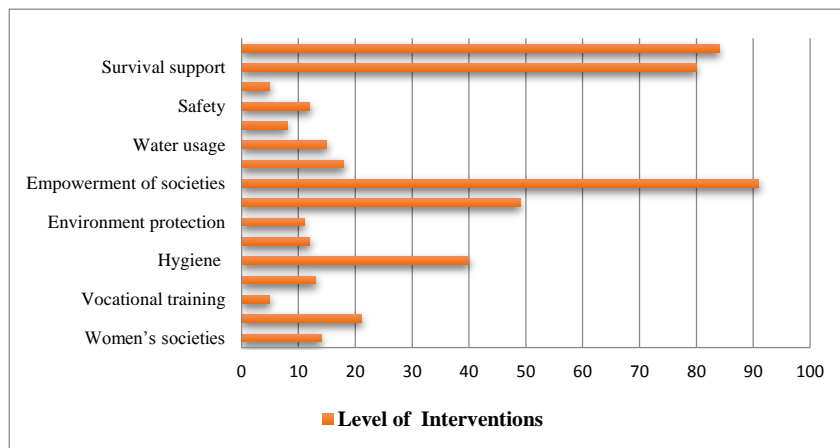


Source: Researcher's construction

OInterventions of the other organizations: Religious Institutions

Mosque was the key religious institution that supported IDPs. The religious leaders kept close contacts with IDPs in every facet of IDPs lives and they were ready to help them by way of advising and supporting economically and also in maintaining lives. The close religious relationship with the mosque made IDPs keep their confidence high and they relied on the support of the religious groups as and when they needed. This was also a psychological relationship that kept them motivated to survive. In terms of IDPs satisfaction over the support they received from agencies a satisfaction rate of 91% was recorded with the religious institutions indicating the level of influence the mosque can have on the Muslim IDPs.

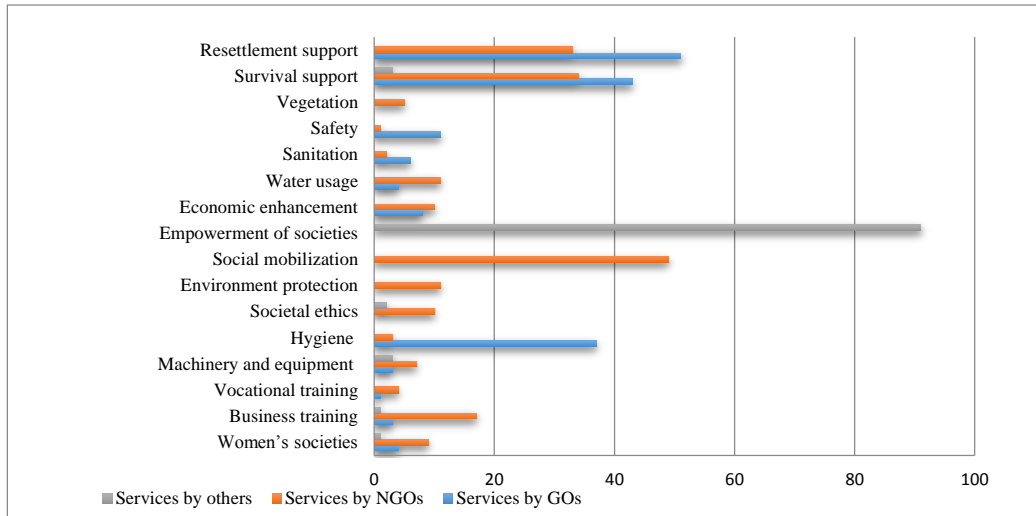
Figure 3: Illustrates the level of development interventions within the camp stage



The figure 3 shows that out of 16 interventions the highest level received is of religion based empowerment of societies (91%) followed by social mobilization, GAD & micro-credit and Health/hygiene improvement (40%). Further, they have in a low level been able to receive services such as self-employment/business training (21%), economic enhancement awareness, training, seminars, advice, guidance (18%), and water usage, diseases (15%). This scenario suggests that the IDPs have been given significant amount of development interventions that should have a positive impact on quality of life improvements of IDPs. However, it is seen that vocational training (5%) and vegetation: plant, crop for home economy, home gardening (5%) were not figured prominently or received adequate development interventions during the camp stage.

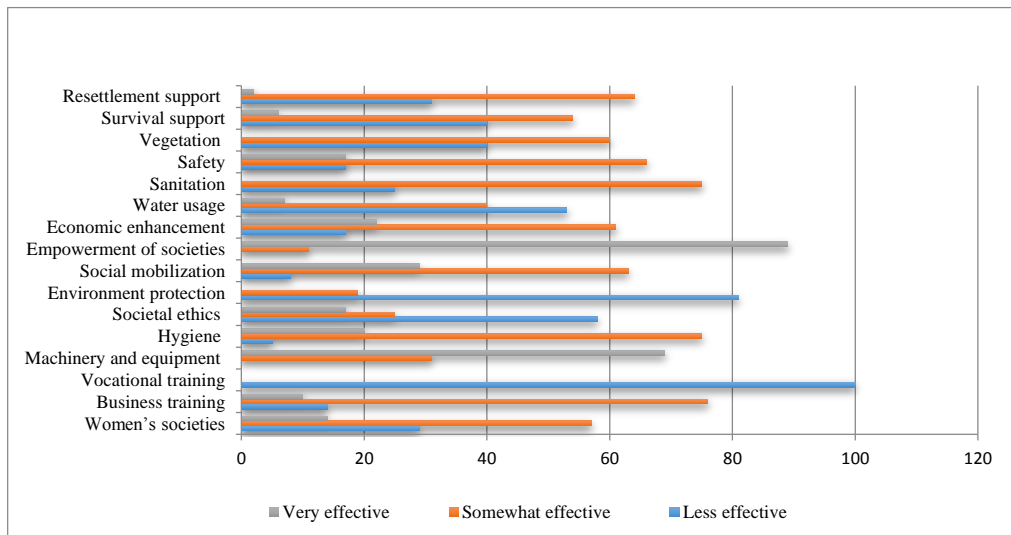
Further, self employment, economic enhancement and life skills programs or interventions are not sufficiently received in order to ensure creating a positive impact on post resettlement development of IDPs. They further shows that provision of welfare facilities (survival support) 80% and Resettlement support (materials, money) 84% have figured prominently having received highest priority compared to development interventions. It is also seen that the IDPs have a strong relationship with their religious entities. This suggests in one hand that although traditionally the interventions for IDPs have been welfare oriented, in this case it is evident that the IDPs have not adequately been exposed to development interventions that could have been utilized to enhance their quality of life in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects.

Figure 4: Type of organizations and level of interventions within the camps



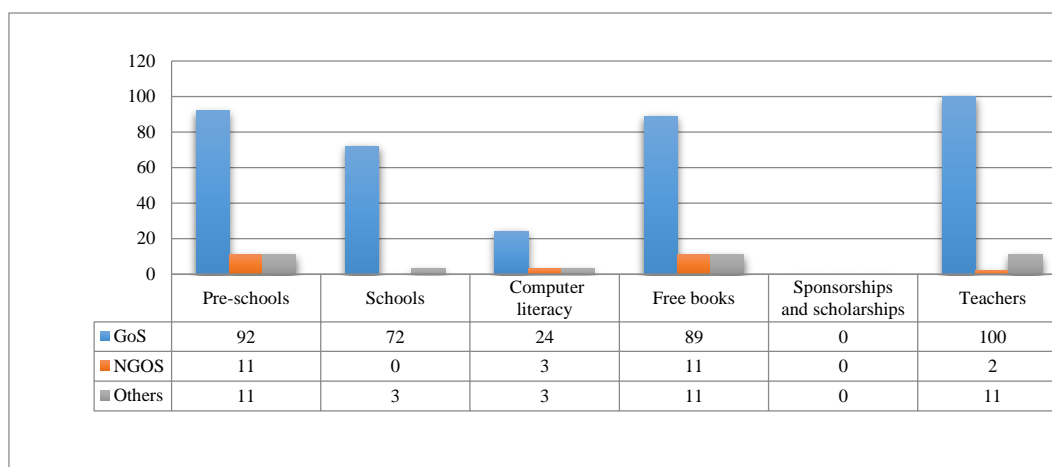
According to the data (See Figure 4) it is seen that the level of efforts towards development interventions was done by NGOs (43%) followed by GOs (35%) and other organizations interventions (22%). Among the key interventions NGOs have provided are self employment/business training and social mobilization: GAD, Cheettu or system of micro finance while the GOs have concentrated on health, welfare and resettlement facilities which are mainly maintenance oriented interventions. The other agencies mainly the religious institutions have provided interventions aimed at religious empowerment.

Figure 5: Impact of Interventions in camp stages



The Figure 5 reveals the effectiveness of development interventions provided during the camp stage. Accordingly, the IDPs have rated religion based empowerment of societies as the most satisfied (84%) intervention. Interestingly with life skills and vocational training, a 100% of IDPs are not satisfied while it can be seen that overall, most of the IDPs have responded as ‘somewhat effective’ for development interventions which suggests that the impact on quality of life is perceived to be not very significant.

Figure 6: Educational support by organizations



The research identified access to pre-schools, access to schools, and exposure to computer literacy, receiving sponsorships and scholarships and adequacy of teachers as key contributory factors that enhances the level of education of the IDP students. Accordingly, it indicates that the IDPs were (See Figure 6) primarily provided with basic requirements such as pre-schools (92%), schools (72%), and free books mainly by the GOs. The NGOs and other support agencies have played a low key role in this regard and only marginal support in terms of pre-schools and free books (11%) had been provided by them. The other important areas such as exposure to computer literacy etc which has become a mandatory intervention was marginal. It was also evident that other support agencies such as religious institutions etc have not made any significant contribution with regard to educational support.

The interventions can be broadly identified as survival, resettlement and development interventions. At survival level the interventions mainly focused on maintaining the IDPs lives inside the camps by fulfilling their minimum daily needs such as food, shelter, water, health etc while the resettlement support or the interventions were focused on preparing the IDPs to move to resettlement areas that included dry rations and material support such as seeds, roofing sheets, mosquito nets etc for a limited period, documentation, transport etc. The development interventions this research focused are the support or intervention that helped them to increase their abilities, skills and competencies that can be used by them to ensure a quality life after resettlement.

Conclusion

The Government provided livelihood assistance and guidance for self-employment to IDPs but it is not expected to significantly impact on the IDPs economic enhancement after resettlement. Further, low purchasing power affects healthy market development and demand for goods and services whereby affecting the economic enhancement and contribution to overall economic development. Ministry of health, local government health organizations and non government organizations supported IDPs while providing better health facilities through hospitals and Health Officers in Puttalam area. Most of the IDPs had access to government hospitals which were situated around the city area. This has made the IDPs to sustain their

health conditions except in cases where aging created health issues. Moreover, the SNDM also delivered quality water to IDPs. After displacement, most of them used well water as well as few of them were using pipe bore water. Governmental and non-governmental organizations have supported the IDPs by providing them with survival and development support. Government was the sole provider of dry rations for their survival. The development interventions have been done by NGOs followed by GOs and other agencies such as religious organizations, and CBOs (Community Based Organizations). However, IDPs seemed to have enjoyed a strong relationship with their religious entities. A review of data suggests that the IDPs have been exposed to development interventions in this case going against the traditional approach of providing maintenance support. However, the development interventions may not be able to adequately produce effective results that can enhance IDPs meeting their development needs after resettlement.

One of the key responsibilities of CMs is that they collect baseline data information to be given to support agencies to make the interventions more user friendly and need based. The other important task was to arrange with local authorities and make available National Identity Card (NICs), birth certificates, marriage certificates etc for IDPs as they had lost them during the displacement. It was revealed during focus interviews that many programs were conducted by SNDM with the support of CMs. They think those services were useful to IDPs, but they do not have any ideas or opinion about the situation of IDPs after resettlement as they were terminated as camp managers along with the commencement of the resettlement of IDPs. Only those who were registered with United Nations Housing Construction Project (UNHCP) were given houses. The housing project seemed to have not been so successfully implemented. When officials were interviewed what they said was the funds they received for the projects were not sufficient.

According to CMs, the Government has not implemented any precautionary measures in order to protect environment and minimize environment pollution in camps where displaced persons lived. The reason for this was that the respective Municipal Councils were not financially compensated by any agency for removal of garbage from the camps the IDPs lived. With regards to health too the hospitals were not updated with facilities and except for minor illnesses, for other health requirements the IDPs had to travel to remote urban areas where the hospital had facilities. As such access to health facilities was a challenge to the IDPs when they were in the camps. This was observed when the researcher visited the camps as part of the field survey and many IDPs shared the same opinion.

It was the government that was expected to play a key role in the IDP resettlement process. The other agencies that included NGOs, CBOs, religious organizations and host community was expected to support the IDPs by providing basic survival needs and interventions that can be useful for IDPs to revive their lost lives with dignity ensuring a QOL enjoyed by others in the society. In order to realize these objectives many agencies have been providing mainly survival services while some engaged in providing development support services. However, it was found that these services were not very effective in improving quality of life of resettled IDPs. Further, except in the areas of education and health the effectiveness of services were poor and not being able to make the IDPs satisfied.

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