

RESEARCH NOTE

# Recovering from the tsunami: people's experiences in Sri Lanka

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*ABSTRACT* The present research note is based on the results of a survey conducted among the tsunami-affected communities in different regions of Sri Lanka—east, north and south (the former two are conflict-affected regions). The paper also compares and contrasts tsunami recovery efforts in other affected countries such as India and Indonesia. The major findings of the survey are that the outreach of relief has been good, that the government, donors and the civil society have not sufficiently adhered to the five cardinal principles they had agreed upon for tsunami reconstruction and recovery process in Sri Lanka, and it appears that Sri Lanka lags behind India but ahead of Indonesia in terms of quantity and quality of tsunami assistance to victims. The study also enunciates a set of proposals to improve the performance in the remaining reconstruction and recovery work to be undertaken in Sri Lanka.

The present article is an empirical research study based on a questionnaire-based survey of 3000 tsunami-affected households in the east, north, and south of Sri Lanka,<sup>1</sup> incorporating 1000 households in each province, and secondary data and literature. The objectives of this study are as follows. (i) To provide a comparative perspective of the impact of the tsunami and the recovery process. (ii) To assess the socio-economic background of the affected people in different parts of the country prior to and after the tsunami. (iii) To evaluate the services rendered and the disbursement of relief to the affected people in different regions of the country. (iv) To assess the provision of temporary and permanent housing to the affected people in different regions of the country. (v) To identify particular issues and concerns pertaining to women and children. (vi) To determine the expectations of the affected people as regards their future employment. (vii) To find the opinions of the affected people about various aspects of the recovery process. The survey was conducted between December 2005 and April 2006 (i.e. 12–16 months after the tsunami).

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