



Socioeconomic study of returnees from India



FINAL
REPORT



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Leading in Participatory Development



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Abbreviations

ADRA	: Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CBSL	: Central Bank of Sri Lanka
CSO	: Civil Society Organizations
CWDU	: Children and Women Development Unit
DSD	: Divisional Secretariat Division
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	: Focus Group Discussions
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GII	: Gender Inequality Index
GND	: Grama Niladhari Division
GPS	: Global Positioning System
ILO	: International Labour Organization
INGO	: International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
IPID	: Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development
KII	: Key Informant Interview
LDO	: Land Development Ordinance
MRE	: Mine Risk Education
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organizations
RRI	: Refugee Returnees from India
SGBV	: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLBFE	: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
UNFPA	: United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	: World Food Programme



List of Tables

Table 1:	Different waves of refugee arrivals to India	4
Table 2:	Sample distribution across three districts	11
Table 3:	Educational level of the sampled population	12
Table 4:	Sampled RRI's receiving government social security benefits	12
Table 5:	Key informants interviewed	13
Table 6:	Fears/anxieties while living in Sri Lanka	15
Table 7:	Educational support received upon return	19
Table 8:	Impediments or problems to restoring livelihood	24
Table 9:	Organisations/Individuals accessed in civil dispute resolution	29
Table 10:	Policy implications on durable solutions	33
Table 11:	RRI's perception about irregular migration	35
Table 12:	RRI's attitude and perception about the opportunities in the guest country	36

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Key maritime people smuggling flows into, and out of, Sri Lanka	2
Figure 2:	District Wise Distribution of Sampled RRI's	11
Figure 3:	RRI's current place of residence	16
Figure 4:	Reasons why RRI's did not live in their own house	16
Figure 5:	Type of toilet RRI's have in the place where they currently live	17
Figure 6:	HH's main source of drinking-water	18
Figure 7:	Available health care facilities in the area	19
Figure 8:	No of meals RRI's had during last 07 days	20
Figure 9:	Primary livelihood/ Source of income	21
Figure 10:	Income and expenditure categories of RRI's	21
Figure 11:	RRI's perception about their financial situation after returning to Sri Lanka	22
Figure 12:	What aspect of life that concerns the most	23
Figure 13:	Documentation on the land	25
Figure 14:	Type of shelter assistance received	26
Figure 15:	Challenges upon returning to Sri Lanka	28
Figure 16:	Awareness Vs. Access of Protection service provision	30
Figure 17:	Perception about irregular migration among RRI's	36
Figure 18:	RRI's attitude and perception about the opportunities in the guest country	37



Contents

Abbreviations	III
List of Tables	IV
List of Figures	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VI
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT	1
1.2 CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT	3
1.3 IRREGULAR MIGRATION	5
1.4 IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM THE NORTHERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA	6
1.5 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR REFUGEE RETURNEES FROM INDIA AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION	7
1.6 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES	8
2 METHODOLOGY	10
2.1 STUDY DESIGN	10
2.2 DESK REVIEW	10
2.3 DATA COLLECTION	10
2.3.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	10
2.3.2 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	12
2.3.3 CHALLENGES TO DATA COLLECTION	13
3 FINDINGS	14
3.1 IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE POLICY	14
3.2 IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON RRIS	30
3.3 IMPEDIMENTS UPON RETURNING	31
3.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS	32
3.5 IRREGULAR AND OUT-MIGRATION: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS	34
3.5.1 PERCEPTION OF RRIS' ON IRREGULAR MIGRATION	34
3.5.2 PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES	36
3.6 POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	37
4 CONCLUSION & POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE	39
4.1 CONCLUSION	39
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS INCLUDING RRIS	40
4.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR REDUCING IRREGULAR MIGRATION	41
5 REFERENCES	42
ANNEX 01: RESEARCH MATRIX	44
ANNEX 02: HH QUESTIONNAIRE	55
ANNEX 03: FGD GUIDE	56
ANNEX 04: KII GUIDE	58
ANNEX 05: CASE STORY GUIDE	60
ANNEX 06: KII & FGD SCHEDULE	64
ANNEX 07: CASE STORIES	64
CASE STORY ONE: THILLAINAYAKI	64
CASE STORY TWO: PERUMAL	66



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka's armed conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which ended in 2009, resulted in an influx of internally displaced persons and Sri Lankans seeking refuge in India. Repatriation from India is a slow process, regardless of whether it is facilitated by an organization or undertaken voluntarily. Return decisions are influenced by a number of factors. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's sluggish economic situation and extreme poverty, the quality of life available in the destination countries, and the migration promotion-oriented industry that developed as a result of market liberalization policy push Sri Lankans into irregular migration.

Sri Lanka has a domestic legal and policy environment with positive steps in support of the Refugee Returnees from India (RRIs). The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement emphasizes the government's commitment to finding sustainable solutions for conflict-affected displaced populations regardless of their religion, gender, ethnicity, age, language, political beliefs, caste, or creed. Rooted on a rights-based approach to displacement, the policy assures that all those affected - both internally displaced persons and refugee returnees - have the opportunity to secure durable solutions. The policy proposes eight durable solutions to improve the quality of life for the RRIs without discrimination.

Undertaken between May and July 2023, the socioeconomic study of the RRIs explored how the National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement impacted on the lives of the RRIs. While assessing the current status of the durable solutions and identifying the degree of the achievements made so far in assessing the gaps and needs in the implementation of the durable solution, the study identified the impact of the economic crisis on the local economy and job market, potential opportunities for economic development that can benefit community members, refugees, and returnees, and reduce irregular migration. In addition, the study looked into the state of basic services in the community, including healthcare, education, and housing, and identified potential strategies for improving access and quality of services for all community members, refugees, and returnees, and reducing irregular migration. Household survey with 315 RRIs from three districts (Kilinochchi, Mannar and Vavuniya), 12 Key Informant Interviews (KII) and 04 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) brought primary data for the study.

Key Findings

- The vast majority of respondents (98%, n = 307) had not been provided with Mine Risk Education upon returning home. However, the RRIs reported no fear or anxiety about living in Sri Lanka, although losing employment was a concern.
- Majority had their own house (62%, n=196). However, there were some who lived with their relatives and others who rented a house. While some received government assistance for the construction of their houses, the process of obtaining government housing assistance for RRIs was, however, exhausting and extremely



time consuming. A vast majority had a permanent toilet within their compound. The main source of drinking water for less than half of the sample was a dug well or tube well, either their own or that of their neighbours, whereas about a quarter relied on pipe borne water.

- About three fourth of the sampled RRI and their family members were subjected to some kind of health screening or testing in Sri Lanka as a result of their status as refugee returnees. When they arrived in Sri Lanka, they underwent a health screening at the airport or at the port (for those who came by ferry). Furthermore, some received health check-ups at their respective Medical Officers of Health (MOH). The majority had access to secondary care (base) hospitals, and primary care (PMcus and Divisional Hospitals). Healthcare facilities were at a distance of 5 km for many while there were 16% of RRI who travelled about 15 km to obtain primary healthcare.
- Food insecurity is acute among 25% of RRI families who had 2 meals or less per day during the last seven days.
- Majority of the RRI said their income was not sufficient to meet their basic needs. Hence, 82% (n=258) were not at all satisfied about their current financial situation and 78% did not believe that their financial situation would improve in any way during the next 12 months.
- RRI received a cash grant to start and continue their livelihood. The major impediments were lack of tools, financial and material means to undertake any livelihood activity.
- Majority of the RRI had land attached to their houses and had some type of documentation to prove this claim. The households which were involved in land disputes tried the redress mechanism through DS and GN, police, human rights commission, court and engaging in amicable settlement.
- Sixty-five percent (65%) of RRI did not receive shelter assistance upon arriving in Sri Lanka. This is something that needs much attention as many refugees do not receive vital assistance at the times they need it most. The vast majority (86%) did not receive any assistance to reintegrate into their new surroundings.
- Majority of the RRI (86%) did not have a birth certificate; 31% (n=96) had family members with Sri Lankan birth certificates. However, some faced difficulties in obtaining citizenship in Sri Lanka due to unawareness about the procedure, delay in obtaining a birth certificate and not having sufficient finance to settle the penalty imposed on late registration. 90% had registered to vote.
- Seventy-two percent (72%) of RRI were unable to obtain an educational certificate equivalent to their level of education prior to moving to Sri Lanka. There were 28% who were able to obtain an educational certificate equivalent to their educational level.
- Vast majority of RRI said that they did not feel as if they were treated differently due to the fact that they were returnees. RRI accessed the police (52%, n=163), and GN and DS (42%, n=135) for civil dispute resolutions.
- The number of incidents of domestic violence is on the rise. RRI identified the Grama Niladhari as a person who provides services to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). However, the study found that RRI lack awareness of other protection service providers.
- About two-thirds of RRI held a positive opinion about irregular migration whereas slightly more than one third held a negative opinion, which shows the ground reality of mixed feelings RRI have regarding irregular migration. However, the majority held a negative perception about the opportunities available for irregular migrants in the guest countries.
- The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement has not been significantly



updated. Institutions such as the Office of Reparations and the Northern Province Coordination Office of the Presidential Secretariat are progressing in accordance with their policies. The policy holders at both the district and national levels were unaware of the policy, indicating that it is seldom referred to or used. There is no stand-alone program for RRI in the current service provision. RRI are eligible for government assistance once they have been integrated into the GN and DS. The selection criteria of national programs often include RRI to target vulnerable segments of society.

- Based on the findings, recommendations are clustered into two segments: Recommendations for 1) improving access and quality of services for all community members including RRI; and 2) for reducing irregular migration.



1 INTRODUCTION

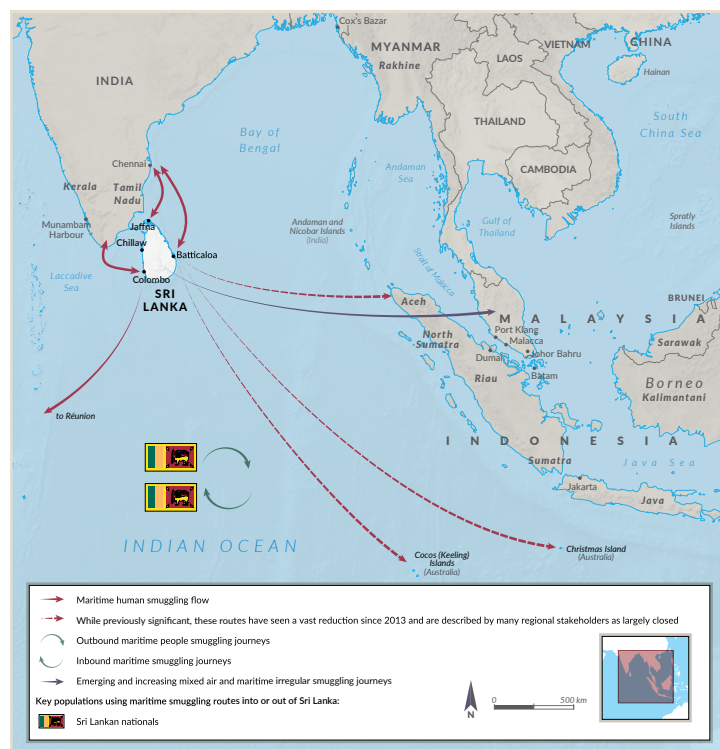
1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Sri Lanka is an island nation home to 22.1 million people (10.7 million men and 11.4 million women) (DCS, 2022). According to the Census of Population and Housing in 2011/12, Sri Lanka has 74.9% of Sinhalese, 15.3% of Sri Lankan & Indian Tamils, 9.3% of Sri Lankan Moors and 0.5 of other ethnic groups including Burghers, Malays and Chetties (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). The Gender Inequality Index (GII) value for Sri Lanka in 2023 was 0.763, placing it 115th out of 146 countries (World Economic Forum, 2023). In 2006, the first year the GI was introduced, Sri Lanka ranked 13 out of 115 countries assessed, ahead of countries such as Australia, Canada, Switzerland, and Singapore. During the past 17 years, Sri Lanka's ranking has declined by 102 places. Out of the 146 countries tracked since the GI's inception, Sri Lanka has seen the most significant decline in its ranking.

The country was upgraded to lower-middle-income status in 1997, and categorized as an upper-middle-income nation by the World Bank in July 2019 (CBSL, 2020). However, due to its high debt levels, the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is at present going through its greatest macroeconomic crisis since gaining independence in 1948. The country's public finances and foreign reserves were put under strain by the significant debt repayments expected between 2019 and 2024, thus investors maintained their caution (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022). The government developed a strict import control policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to make up for the reduction in foreign remittances and tourism revenue. Furthermore, the government introduced financing plans for business owners as well as a program to replace imports, notably in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the central bank intervened directly in the banking sector to set lending rates for particular loan categories. The combined effect of these events had catastrophic effects on the nation's already precarious economy, causing the annual real GDP to drop by -7.8% in 2022 (CBSL, 2023). Due to acute food shortages and price increases of essential goods and services such as healthcare, food, agricultural inputs, and fuel, which have effectively halted all economic activities and severely disrupted agricultural production, nearly 5.3 million people are currently in urgent need of humanitarian assistance (UNFPA Sri Lanka, 2022). Acute food insecurity is expected to have a moderate impact on more than 6.2 million people (28% percent of the population), while 66,000 people are thought to have a severe impact. The highest levels of acute food insecurity are found in the Estate sector (tea production), as well as among households headed by women, those with no education, those belonging to the Indian Tamil population in the tea plantations and beneficiaries of the Samurdhi program (FAO and WFP, 2022).

A significant decline in productivity and labour shortages may result from professional and skilled migration, impacting the country's economic growth considerably during the recovery phase and beyond. Due to the severe economic crisis, Sri Lanka experienced a mass exodus of highly-skilled personnel, such as doctors, engineers, bankers, and IT specialists. According to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), the total number of registered departures for foreign employment has increased by more than 37 percent in 2022 to 311,056, as compared to the annual average of 226,510 during 2015-2019. Professional migration has also increased by more than 87 percent. Destination of 84.7% of the total migrant departures were to the Middle East, 6.3% to Asia (excluding South Asia) and 4% to the European Union. Nearly 60% of the migrant workers are concentrated in the semi-skilled and low-skilled categories, female participation in foreign employment is highly concentrated in the semi-skilled category, while male participation is concentrated in the skilled category (CBSL, 2022). Although there are limited official statistics, permanent human capital flight has become more prevalent since 2022 in addition to temporary migration for employment. Moreover, SLBFE statistics reveal that the number of professionals migrating has steadily increased over the post-war period, recording an annual growth of over 20% on average (CBSL, 2023). Furthermore, there is evidence of increased irregular or illegal migration though statistics are limited. According to a recently released research study, there were approximately 250 people apprehended on boats departing the country in 2022. The navy intercepted approximately five boats per year before this spike. The Sri Lankan government intercepted three separate boats in 2022 over a period of 45 days ((Hedwards, Bird, & Traxl, 2023).¹

Figure 1: Key maritime people smuggling flows into, and out of, Sri Lanka



Source: Hedwards, B., Bird, L., & Traxl, P. (2023). Maritime People Smuggling and Its intersection with Human Trafficking in South and South East Asia: Trends and Issues. Geneva.

¹ See, *Sri Lankans flee to India to escape country's worst economic meltdown*, at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/sri-lankans-flee-to-india-to-escape-countrys-worst-economic-meltdown/articleshow/90395721.cms> and *Middle-class Sri Lankans are fleeing their country*, at: <https://www.economist.com/asia/2023/03/30/middle-class-sri-lankans-are-fleeing-their-country>



1.2 CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT

The Sri Lankan army's armed conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which ended in 2009, was exacerbated by the state's failure to institutionalize democracy, protect minorities' rights, and ensure the rule of law for all citizens. Religious and ethnic identity played a vital role in the creation of ethno-nationalism and implementation of government policies in favour of the Sinhala community such as identification of Sinhalese as the official language in 1956, standardization of university entrance in 1972 and a government sponsored colonization scheme in the east (Gamage & Watson., 1999; Nesiah, 2001). As a result of the dynamics inherent in conflicts, ethnicity became politicized and all aspects of social, political, and economic life began to be ethnicised. Consequently, any interaction (social, political, or economic) across identity boundaries became more volatile and confrontational. Even though military actions were confined to the island's Northern and Eastern Districts, war induced insecurity spread throughout the entire island.

Internally Displaced People: After several failed peace negotiations between 1985 and 2002, three decades of armed conflict have left a heavy toll on human lives. More than 60,000 lives were claimed and 516,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) including new and old², many of whom experienced multiple displacements. A total of nine divisional secretariat divisions in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu were deserted by June 2009, as well as five additional divisional secretariat divisions: three in Mannar, one in Jaffna, and one in Vavuniya. In the immediate aftermath, the government initiated the "Vadakkinn Vasantham" (Northern Spring) strategy in July 2009 in an effort to restore normalcy in the Northern Province.

Upon resettlement, IDPs encountered many challenges while rebuilding their lives. In many cases, people were unable to fulfil their basic needs, such as food, water, shelter, sanitation, privacy, family life, quality education, and medical treatment. A number of IDPs, particularly women, encountered harassment and intimidation from security forces (Fonseka & Raheem, 2011). Sudden separation from their traditional neighbourhoods resulted in psychological and psychiatric problems (Chattoraj, 2021). Some individuals experienced traumatic effects as a result of the change in lifestyle (Siriwardhana et al., 2013). Lack of qualifications and relevant experience, as well as the lack of employment opportunities, have made it difficult for young people to find gainful employment (Anna O'Donnell, Mohamed Ghani Razaak, Markus Kostner, 2018).

Sri Lankan Refugees in India: The influx of refugees into India occurred in four waves (Newman, 2022). The first was Black July, the anti-Tamil pogrom that began on July 23, 1983. A LTTE ambush resulted in the death of 13 army soldiers. Hundreds of Tamils were killed by Sinhala mobs in retaliation, and the exodus continued until 1987, when the Indo-Lanka Accord was signed. In the period 1983-1987, 134,000 people sought refuge in India, primarily in Tamil Nadu (Newman, 2022).

2 'Old' IDPs are those displaced prior to April 2008 and 'new' IDPs are those displaced between early April 2008 and June 2009 (See <https://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-idps-and-returnees-remain-need-protection-and-assistance>)

**Table 1: Different waves of refugee arrivals to India**

Year	Description
1983	The first wave As a result of black July in 1983, approximately 134,053 refugees
Between 1990 to 1994	The second wave The breakout of the second Eelam resulted in new arrivals of around 27,078
1995	The third wave At the end of the 100-day ceasefire between the GOSL and the LTTE, an exodus of 27,418 Sri Lankan refugees
2006	The final wave The breakdown of a peace deal mediated by Norway between the GOSL and the LTTE in 2002 resulted in an influx of 24,524 Sri Lankan refugees

Source: Compiled based on Ekanayake & Amirthalingam, 2023b; and Newman, 2022

In the period between 1990 and 1994, the outbreak of the second Eelam War resulted in an additional influx of approximately 122,078 people. This marked the second wave of refugees. With the end of the 100-day ceasefire between the GOSL and the LTTE in April 1995, the third wave began. A further exodus of 22,418 Sri Lankan refugees occurred between 1995 and 2002 during this time. In 2006, following the failure of the peace agreement mediated by Norway between the GOSL and the LTTE in 2002, the fourth and final wave of refugees from Sri Lanka arrived in India. This final wave resulted in 24,527 Sri Lankan refugees. During the early years of the conflict, Sri Lankan refugees were encouraged to flee to India, but after Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the LTTE in 1991, Sri Lankan refugees faced increasing hostility and lost the support they once enjoyed in India. Thus, the number of refugees in the third and fourth waves was significantly lower than in the first two waves (Ekanayake & Amirthalingam, 2023b).

The return of refugees from India was either facilitated by an organization or was voluntary. The UNHCR assisted 25,600 people in returning to Sri Lanka through 'organized channels' between December 1987 and March 1989 (Newman, 2022). According to official statistics available, 7,818 individuals belonging to 3,001 families returned from year 2011 to 31st December 2018 (GOSL, 2018). Tamil Nadu for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees is a 'home away from home' due to their linguistic, religious and cultural ties. A case study of Sri Lankan Refugees living in India shows voluntary repatriation depends on various factors from children's education to contacts with the relatives back in Sri Lanka (Giammatteo, 2010). Though citizenship is not assured, some prefer to remain there as their temporary life had somehow become permanent and safety had become the first concern during the active period of war. This resulted in a protracted nature of the refugee situation in Tamil Nadu, India. According to the latest statistics, about 58,000 Sri Lankan's are still in Tamil Nadu as refugees and only 3,800 of them have expressed interest to return to Sri Lanka (The Hindu Bureau, 2022).

Many factors influence the decision regarding returns (Ekanayake & Amirthalingam, 2023a, 2023b; Giammatteo, 2010). A crucial role is played by news and information collected from family and friends in Sri Lanka. When relatives assured them that the area was safe and encouraged them to return, some returnees expressed a desire to return as soon as possible (Giammatteo, 2010). RRI and IDPs are currently attempting to reclaim their land in Mullaitivu from the military. There is often a fear among refugees that they will not be able to make a living once they return home. Other RRI had advised them to delay their return until they had enough cash and the ability to start a new life. The UNHCR provided air repatriation with a luggage allowance of 60 kilograms. It was this alone, for some, that



discouraged them from returning since they had accumulated many possessions during their time in exile. As part of the repatriation process, many refugees would have been willing to return to Sri Lanka if a ship had been provided (Silvela, 2019). Upon returning, many faced challenges in their efforts to settle in. Literature identifies several such challenges to reintegration in Sri Lanka (Silvela, 2019):

- Access to information to make a well-informed decision
- Access to land: Some refugees find upon their return that their land has been occupied by others, including by the Sri Lankan government and military
- Access to livelihoods: no or fewer prospects on earning from livelihoods
- Access to education: access to higher education in Sri Lanka seems unfavourable for Tamils
- Fear for their safety, including fear of being seen as having connections to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

1.3 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The phenomenon of human migration is as old as human reality. Humans migrate for many reasons. Ranging from economic to political reasons, security plays a huge role in migrant consciousness. Migration is legal as well as illegal; however, illegal or irregular migration have increased rapidly due to the rise of violence within the states, especially among those found in South Asia.

Migration is defined differently in various fields of study: geography emphasizes mobility over time and space, sociology emphasizes the social consequences of mobility, and economics emphasizes its economic implications. A person or group of people migrate from one country, locality, place of residence, etc., to another, is the definition according to the Oxford dictionary. Furthermore, it is defined as the temporary relocation of a person, group, or people during a seasonal period. It is illegal immigration when a person crosses into another country by means other than those permitted by the general or country-specific legal requirements that apply to 'regular' migrants. Nevertheless, overstaying by legal migrants can result in them becoming illegal migrants, thereby expanding the definition of irregular immigration (Roy & Roy, 2016). It is important to note, however, that literature uses the term irregular migration to cover a wide range of terms that pertain to migrants who do not possess the necessary immigration documents or authorization to enter and/or reside within a given country. States commonly used illegal, unauthorized, undocumented, "non-compliant, prohibited," and irregular terms in this context.

The international community encouraged the use of "undocumented" or "irregular" as an alternative to the term "illegal." According to United Nations Resolution 3,449 (Measures to Ensure the Human Rights and Dignity of All Migrant Workers) issued on December 9, 1975, the term "illegal" should not be used to refer to migrants who are in irregular circumstances. The term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation, is against migrants' dignity, and undermines respect for their human rights (IOM, 2019). Human beings, including migrants, can never be illegal; they can live in irregular circumstances, but it is inaccurate to refer to them as illegal. Migrants who travel irregularly are those who do not adhere to the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing their entry into or exit from the country of origin, transit, or destination. The term irregular migration does not have a universally accepted definition, but it is generally understood to refer to migration outside of the regular migration channels.

Literature also uses the term which refers to internal migration when a person migrates to a new location within the same country, such as moving from a rural location to an urban location. Out-migration is defined as the movement of people out of one region of a country to live in another region of the same country. It differs from



emigration because during that process, people are relocating to a different country or region of the world. In internal migration, a person who arrives in a geographically defined area is called an in-migrant, while a person who leaves a geographically defined area is called an out-migrant (UNFPA, n.d.). However, in the Sri Lankan context, both out-migration and irregular migration are used interchangeably to describe those who cross the international borders without legal documentation (United Nations, 2009).

Sri Lankan citizens migrated to Western countries in the post-independence period with the hope of finding greener pastures. A culture of out-migration has developed here due to the discriminatory socio-political structures (AP RCM, 2015; Hugo, 2014; Karunaratne, 2013; Pearson, 2014; Roy & Roy, 2016); protection issues and various human rights violations against different ethnic communities and professionals since the outbreak of protracted violence, leading to irregular migration (Jayasuriya, 2014; Pearson, 2014). Despite Sri Lankans' sluggish economic situation and extreme poverty, the quality of life available in the destination countries, and the migration promotion oriented industry developed in Sri Lanka as a result of market liberalization policy in the 1970s pushed Sri Lankans into irregular migration (Hugo, 2014). Sri Lankans most commonly arrive irregularly in the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Canada, and Australia³ (Karunaratne, 2013).

1.4 IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM THE NORTHERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

According to UNHCR, Sri Lanka ranked in the top ten of asylum seeker sending countries in 2000 (UNHCR, 2001). In June 2001, the UNHCR estimated the stock of internationally displaced Tamils to be 817,000, most of whom are/were refugees or asylum seekers. Canada topped the list, hosting an estimated 400,000 Tamils, followed by Europe, (200,000), India (67,000), the United States (40,000), Australia (30,000), and another 80,000 living in a dozen other countries. With the increase of Sri Lankan Tamil migrants to foreign countries, the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic communities established close ties among themselves and instituted refugee and community organizations which play a larger role for further migration. Underdevelopment in terms of economic infrastructure and youth employment were also provided greater impetus for migration from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. These migration patterns have added new dimensions to social cultural practices also. For instance, a significant number of prospective brides/grooms of the Tamil community living in Northern Sri Lanka pursue marriages abroad with a member of a Tamil diasporic community. Tamil people who have obtained refugee status or who are allowed to stay on in developed countries, are comparably well-settled and lead a comfortable life. These persons financially help their kith and kin back at home in Sri Lanka and thereby are an example to the younger generation to seek greener pastures abroad, thus making migration a normal trend in life in the names of asylum, education and employment among Sri Lankan Tamils.

The main host countries for Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers and UNHCR agencies around the world have revised their positions to a hardline case specific approach considering the end of the civil conflict in Sri Lanka. They are in the position that there is no longer a need for group-based protection mechanisms or for a presumption of eligibility for Sri Lankans of Tamil ethnicity. However, the push factors have become multi-dimensional in Sri Lanka which is also frequently explained in academic literature that 'bogus refugees' (economic migrants) sometimes come from countries where economic failure and political instability, persecution and poverty are inter-linked (Brolan, 2003). Many times, the pushing factors overlap in between human rights violations, economic marginalisation and poverty, environmental degradation, population pressure and poor governance.

³ According to Parliament of Australia, 2013 marked the peak of irregular maritime arrivals with 20587 persons from different parts of the world (Phillips, 2015).



1.5 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR REFUGEE RETURNEES FROM INDIA AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The right to freedom of movement and to choose one's residence within Sri Lanka is guaranteed by Article 14 of the constitution, as is the right of every citizen to return to the country. Despite the fact that Sri Lanka's fundamental human rights framework does not include socioeconomic rights, the country is a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1976). Furthermore, Article 27(c) of the constitution states that the 'State must ensure the realization by all citizens of an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, the continuous improvement of living conditions, and the full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.' There were instances where Sri Lankan courts interpreted Article 12 of the constitution on equality and non-discrimination to provide remedies regarding social and economic rights. Among the international instruments, the United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons (Pinheiro Principles) are designed to provide universal guidance on how best to address the complex legal and technical issues surrounding housing, land, and property restitution.

The domestic legal and policy environment have taken some positive steps in support of Refugee Returnees from India. Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons (Special Provisions) Act No. 5 of 2009 removed the uninterrupted residency requirement, making it possible for those displaced to India as refugees who would otherwise have fallen within the ambit of the existing law to avail themselves of its benefits upon return to Sri Lanka. The Cabinet approved the National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement, which sets out the rights and entitlements of the displaced and seeks to ensure that everyone affected - both internally displaced persons and refugee returnees - can secure durable solutions⁴. The Sri Lankan government appointed a committee in 2022 to facilitate the efficient repatriation of Sri Lankan's who had fled to India as refugees⁵.

The policy is rooted in a rights-based approach to displacement and underscores the government's determination to find durable solutions for conflict-affected displaced populations, irrespective of religion, gender, ethnicity, age, language, political belief, caste or creed, or year of displacement. It sets out the rights and entitlements of the displaced. It aims at ensuring that all those affected by both internally displaced persons and refugee returnees can secure durable solutions. It highlights the need for relief and rehabilitation assistance. However, it also draws attention to other areas, particularly vulnerable populations among the displaced. These include the differently-abled female-headed households, the elderly, protection and psycho-social needs, and transitional justice processes. While addressing key aspects of displacement and durable solutions, the policy strongly recommends resettlement integration into reconciliation and development policies.

The policy recognizes that a durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons and refugee returnees no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. Hence, choosing a settlement option and the provision of shelter do not mark the end of displacement⁶. As stipulated in the policy, the IDPs and Refugee Returnees who have achieved a durable solution will enjoy the following without discrimination:

4 <https://www.news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/14291-cabinet-approval-for-national-policy-on-durablesolutions-for-conflict-affected-displacement>

5 <https://www.dailynews.lk/2022/09/06/local/286629/committee-appointed-facilitate-repatriation-sri-lankan-refugeesindia>

6 See GOSL. (2016). National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement. Colombo: Ministry of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious Affairs.



- a) Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement;
- b) An adequate standard of living above the poverty line including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education;
- c) Equal access to employment and livelihood opportunities (a secure job and living wage);
- d) Equal access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with just/equitable compensation;
- e) Equal access to and replacement of personal and other documentation;
- f) Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement;
- g) Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population;
- h) Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.

The policy also identifies major obstacles to durable solutions. This would ensure that the policy would be grounded in Sri Lankan reality and not left simply at the level of general principles. In addition, the policy identifies immediate steps that need to be taken to address key obstacles to achieving durable solutions, including but not limited to the occupation of land by state actors, lack of land, land disputes, remaining landmines, a lack of assistance, and a lack of infrastructure.

Irregular migration is a criminal offense under the Immigrants and Emigrants Act No. 20 of 1948, and when caught, irregular migrants face serious repercussions. However, the US State Department's report in 2022 states that Sri Lanka was upgraded to Tier 2 because of significant efforts to improve its anti-trafficking capacity. However, the government has not effectively addressed the vulnerabilities to trafficking faced by migrant workers. These vulnerabilities include high worker-paid recruitment fees, largely unregulated sub-agents, and policies and procedures that undermine safe and legal migration.

1.6 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Assessing the impact on Achieving Durable Solutions: The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement recognizes that a durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons and Refugee Returnees no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. Criteria for determining that a durable solution has been achieved in accordance with the policy are to be key evaluation factors. The following are the primary and secondary objectives of the study:

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the current status of the durable solution and identify the length of the achievements made so far in assessing the gaps and needs in the implementation of the durable solution.
- Evaluate the impact of the economic crisis on the local economy and job market, and identify potential opportunities for economic development that can benefit community members, refugees, and returnees, and reduce irregular migration.
- Assess the impact of conflict and displacement on the community, and identify potential strategies for addressing the unique needs of refugees and returnees, and reducing irregular migration.



- Evaluate the state of basic services in the community, including healthcare, education, and housing, and identify potential strategies for improving access and quality of services for all community members, refugees, and returnees, and reducing irregular migration.
- Assess the potential impact of different solutions on returnees, including economic benefits, social and environmental risks, and potential challenges related to integration and social cohesion, as well as the potential to reduce irregular migration.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the primary drivers of out-migration, including economic factors, social and cultural factors, and the impact of conflict and displacement.
- Assess the awareness level and attitudes towards regular and irregular migration among community members, refugees, and returnees.
- Assess the current socioeconomic conditions for community members, refugees, and returnees, including access to basic services, job opportunities, and housing, and the impact of migration on these conditions.
- Identify the needs and aspirations of the community, refugees, and returnees, including the types of services and programs that would help to support them and address the primary drivers of out-migration, and the factors that influence their decision to migrate regularly or irregularly.
- Identify potential solutions sought by the affected population to support economic development in the community, repatriation towards achieving durable solutions.

By incorporating these factors into the primary and secondary objectives, the study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in the community, refugees, and returnees, and help to identify sustainable solutions that can support their diverse needs and aspirations, and reduce irregular migration over the long-term.



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 STUDY DESIGN

A mixed method approach was used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. The study matrix dissected research objectives and the durable solutions stipulated in the national policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict Affected Displacement to identify variables and key questions. Further, the matrix identified data collection methods and stakeholders to be engaged for field interaction. Key questions in the matrix were further elaborated to develop the study instruments. The study matrix is found in Annex 1.

2.2 DESK REVIEW

The study used an adopted systematic review process to review the existing literature on the socioeconomic situation of irregular, out-migrant and refugee returnees from India. The review helped to understand the gaps and the current situation of irregular migrants and refugee returnees from India. The review assisted in designing the study matrix and some were integrated into the introduction section of the research report.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

2.3.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The **Household Survey Questionnaire** (Annex 2) was programmed into the Kobo Collect Data Collection Tool to facilitate electronic data collection using hand-held electronic devices (Tablets and Smartphones). The data collectors were selected based on a predetermined criterion and received comprehensive training.

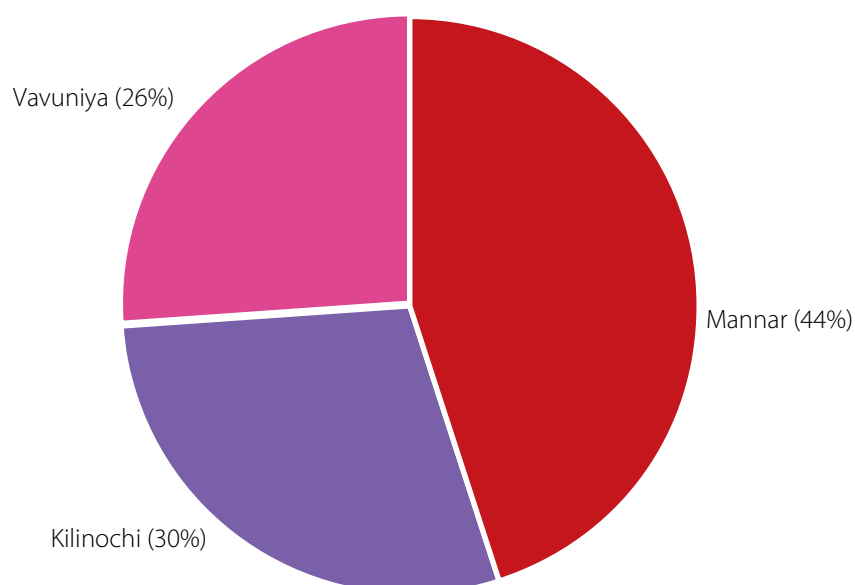
385 RRI households were selected through the list of RRI households provided by ADRA Sri Lanka. However, a total of 315 RRI households were interviewed. The following table describes the distribution of sample across three districts: Kilinochchi, Mannar and Vavuniya.

**Table 2: Sample distribution across three districts**

District	DS Division	Number
Mannar	Mannar Town	39
	Manthai West	55
	Nanattan	47
Kilinochchi	Karaichchi	92
Vavuniya	Nedunkerny	5
	Vavuniya Town	51
	Chettikulum	25

Profile of Household Survey Respondents:

- 53.3% (n=168) of the sampled population of refugee returnees from India were women whilst 46.7% (n=147) were men.
- In terms of age, 50% of RRI's were between the ages of 30 and 55; 35% were over 55 years old; and 15% were between the ages of 18 and 19.
- 44% of RRI's were from the Mannar District, while 30% and 26% were respectively from Vavuniya and Kilinochchi Districts. The following figure is a district wise distribution of RRI's in the sample.

Figure 2: District Wise Distribution of Sampled RRI's

- 63.5% (n=200) of them were the head of the household.
- Among those who had family members with hearing, seeing, speaking and walking difficulties (n=169), 18.3% (n=31) had family members with difficulties in seeing whilst 10.1% (n=17) had family members with hearing difficulties whilst one respondent had a family member with speaking difficulties. 18.9% (n=32) had family members with difficulties in walking.
- 96% returned between 2009 and 2020 while 2% returned prior to 2009. Another 2% returned after 2020.
- Educational attainment: Table 03 presents the educational level of the sampled population. Among them, 43.5% (n=137) were educated up to grade 5 while 16.8% (n=53) were educated up to the GCE Ordinary Level.



Only 1.6% (n=5) had obtained a vocational certificate. However, the sample included 10% (n=31) and 6% (n=18) of respondents who respectively completed grades 10 and 12 in the Indian system of education.

Table 3: Educational level of the sampled population

Educational Attainment	F	%
Up to grade 5	137	44%
Up to grade 10 (Indian System)	31	10%
Up to OL	53	17%
Up to grade 12 (Indian System)	18	6%
Up to AL	14	4%
Undergraduate	5	2%
Graduate	9	3 %
Post Graduate	7	2%
Vocational certificate	5	2%
Other	37	12%

Social Security Benefits:

- 50.8% (n=160) of the households received poverty alleviation assistance from the Government (Samurdhi).
- 9.8% (n=31) had a family member who received the senior citizens allowance given by the government.
- 9.8% received senior citizen allowance: 52% from Kilinochchi, 32% from Mannar and 16% from Vavuniya.
- 51% received government poverty alleviation allowance. Among them, 51% were from Mannar, 26% were from Kilinochchi and 24% were from Vavuniya.

Table 4: Sampled RRI's receiving government social security benefits

Social Security Benefits	Kilinochchi	Mannar	Vavuniya
Senior Citizen Allowance	32%	52%	16%
Poverty Alleviation Allowance	26%	51%	23%

- Only 1.6% (n=5) HHs received disability allowance by the government: from which 4 HHs were from Vavuniya and 01 HH from Mannar.

2.3.2 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): a total of 04 FGDs – two (2) with adults and two (2) with youth covering Mannar and Vavuniya were held using the FGD guide in the Annex 03.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): a total of 12 KIIs held with stakeholders representing government and the NGO sectors. Table 5 presents the sectors and location of stakeholders who were consulted.

**Table 5: Key informants interviewed**

District	Location	KII
Mannar	DS Manthai West	DS, ADP Foreign Development Office
	DS Nanathan	ADS, ADP, DO, FDO, DN
	DS Mannar Town	ADP, CRPO, WDO,
	District Secretariat Mannar	District Director Planning and NGO Coordinator
Vavuniya	DS Vavuniya Town	DS, ADP, GS, DC, DO
	District Secretariat Vavuniya	Director Planning
National Level	Colombo	Director General and Chief Executive Officer of Office for Reparations.
	Colombo	Research Manager of Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
	Colombo	President of OfERR Ceylon, Sri Lanka
	Jaffna	Independent Consultant to NGOs
	Colombo	Independent International Legal Expert, International Humanitarian Law
Batticaloa	Batticaloa	Senior Program Manager, AMCOR Sri Lanka

- Four interviews were held with RRIIs from Mannar and Vavuniya to develop case stories to understand their economic engagement, contribution to the local economy, effects of the economic crisis, challenges and constraints faced (Annex 5 includes the case story guide).

2.3.3 CHALLENGES TO DATA COLLECTION

The identified sample could not be reached as the telephone numbers were wrong or not contactable. The respective Grama Niladharis were also unaware of the RRIIs' whereabouts. Some RRIIs had migrated to other countries, while others settled in other areas of the district or country. Because of these reasons, there was a delay associated with determining a statistically valid sample to conduct the household survey.



3 FINDINGS

3.1 IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE POLICY

The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement was developed by the Ministry of National Policies, Economic Affairs, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Northern Province Development, Vocational Training and Skills Development, and Youth Affairs. It was approved by the cabinet in 2016. However, the policy development was donor-driven, and UNDP provided technical assistance and support to formulate the policy. This policy provides guidance to all stakeholders, including the government, on how to deliver durable solutions to conflict-affected communities. It sets the guiding policy framework for humanitarian and development interventions for refugees, IDPs, or returnees with consideration for voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement with a rights-based approach. This section presents findings on each durable solution as stipulated in the policy.

1. *Long-Term Safety, Security and Freedom of Movement*

RRIs who have achieved a durable solution should enjoy physical safety and security on the basis of effective protection by national and local authorities without discrimination. This includes protection from the threats that caused the initial displacement or may cause renewed displacement. The protection of RRIs who have achieved a durable solution must not be less effective than the protection provided to populations in areas of the country not affected by displacement.

Among the sampled RRIs, 1% (n=4) reported that landmines are present in their region but do not affect their daily lives. From 2002 until 2022, Sri Lanka's mine action program has cleared over 200 square kilometers of minefields, according to the National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027. The strategy estimates that there are 17 km² of hazardous areas remaining in eight administrative districts (covering both the Northern and Eastern Provinces) as of September 2022. Mullaithivu remains the most heavily contaminated district by explosive ordinances, followed by Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, and Mannar. (GOSL, 2023).

Since their return, only 3% (n=8) have received Mine Risk Education (MRE) material. Either the Grama Niladhari or the village liaison provided MRE to four of them. Others received information regarding MRE from NGOs that visited their villages as part of their demining and MRE activities. Furthermore, this indicates that the vast majority of respondents (98%, n=307) did not obtain any MRE upon returning home. The importance of making MRE information available to RRIs becomes apparent from this.

**Table 6: Fears/anxieties while living in Sri Lanka**

Fears/anxieties while living in Sri Lanka	Frequency	%
Discrimination/violence from government/police/political parties/militant group/group/another ethnic group, etc.	5	2%
Loss of family members	5	2%
Losing children's educational opportunities	2	1%
Loss of employment	151	48%
Lack of safety and security of children	9	3%
Safety and security of women	3	1%
Not having any fear	140	44%

As shown in Table 6, 44% of respondents (n=140) reported no fear or anxiety about living in Sri Lanka. For nearly half of the sample (48%, n=151), losing employment was the main concern. A total of 2% of respondents (n=5) reported fear of discrimination and violence from various parties and groups. Women's safety and security was a concern for 1% of respondents (n=3), while children's safety and security were a concern for another 3% (n=9).

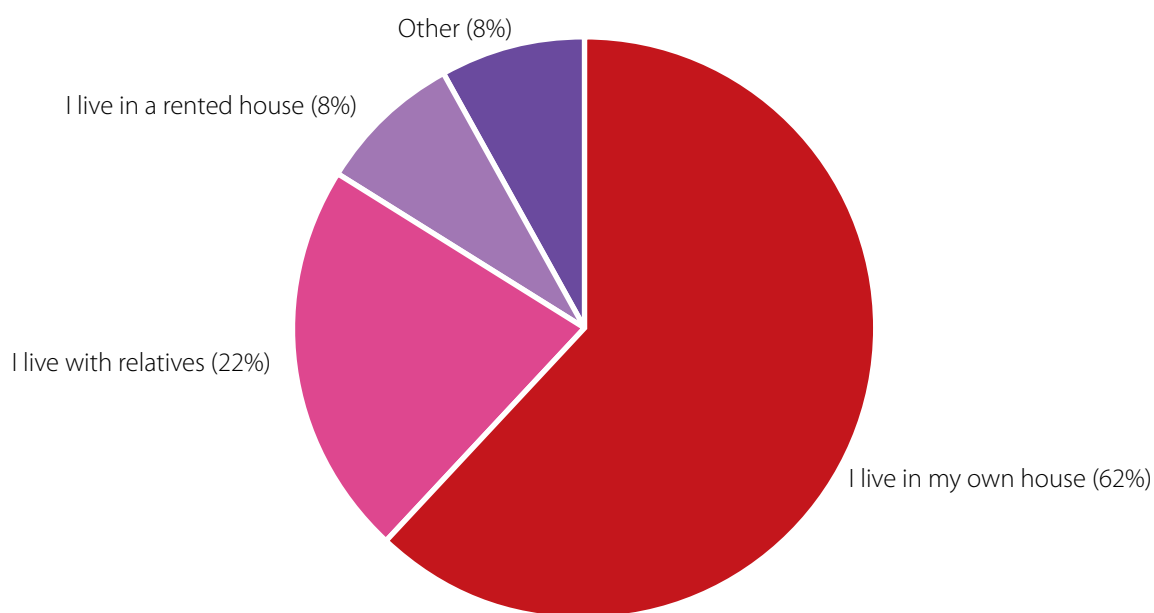
The heavy military presence in the area negatively affects RRI's sense of safety, security, and freedom of movement. According to the HH survey, 94.9% of respondents (n=299) reported that military personnel were absent from their residence area, while 5.1% (n=16) reported that there was a military presence. One of them did not wish for a military presence, although most did not view it as a problem.

2. *An Adequate Standard of Living Above the Poverty Line Including at a Minimum Access to Adequate Food, Water, Housing, Health Care and Basic Education*

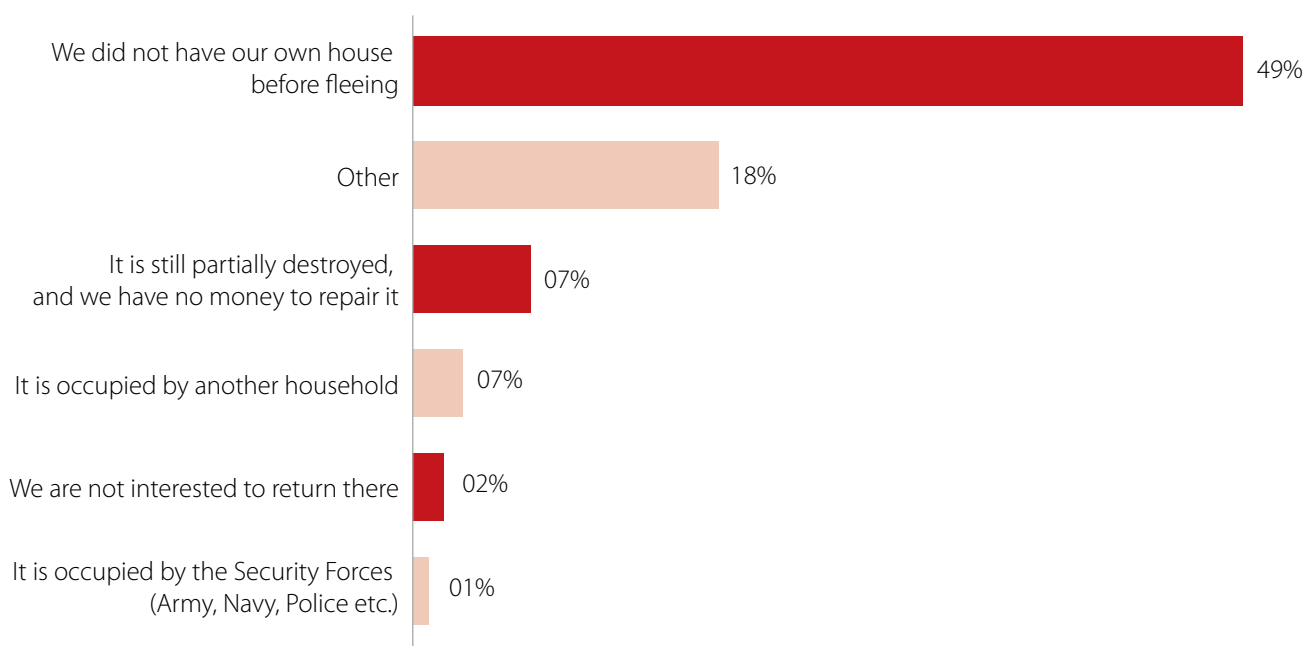
RRI's who have achieved a durable solution generally enjoy, without discrimination, an adequate standard of living, which includes at minimum: shelter, health care, food, water, sanitation and education. Adequacy means that these goods and services are available in sufficient quality and quantity, accessible, acceptable (i.e. sensitive to gender and age, culturally appropriate) and adaptable (i.e. provided in ways that adapt to RRI's' changing needs).

- **Access to housing:**

Majority of the sampled RRI's had their own house (62%, n=196). This indicates that 62% had titles for their own houses. However, there were 22% (n= 69) who lived with their relatives whilst 8% (n=24) lived in a rented house; 8% (n=26) of the respondents have other living arrangements.

**Figure 3: RRI's current place of residence**

Among those who did not live in their own house ($n=119$), 49% ($n=58$) did not own a house prior to fleeing to India. A total of 21% ($n=25$) reported that their houses were completely destroyed and they lacked the funds to repair these, while 7% ($n=8$) stated that their houses were partially destroyed, but they were unable to repair these due to a lack of funds. There were RRI's who indicated that their houses were occupied by another household (3%, $n=3$) and that they would not be interested in returning home (2%, $n=2$). Nevertheless, one respondent stated that their house was occupied by security forces. Another 18% of respondents cited other reasons ($n=22$), including the house being partially constructed ($n=15$), some giving the house to their children ($n=4$), and 2 respondents lacking property to build a house.

Figure 4: Reasons why RRI's did not live in their own house

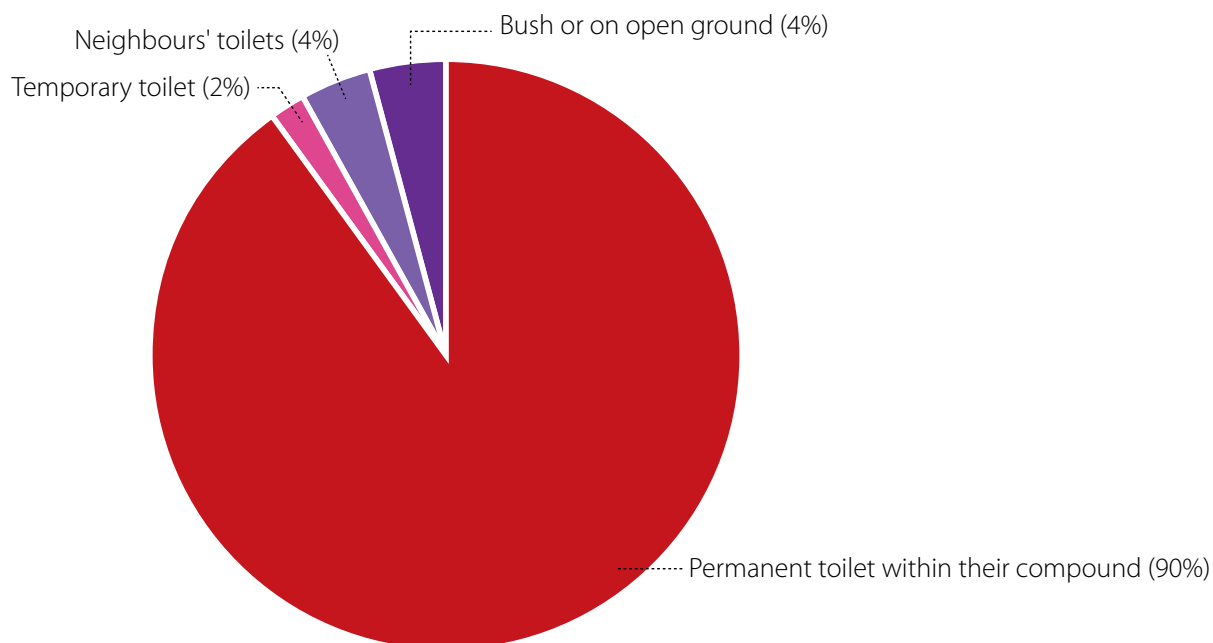


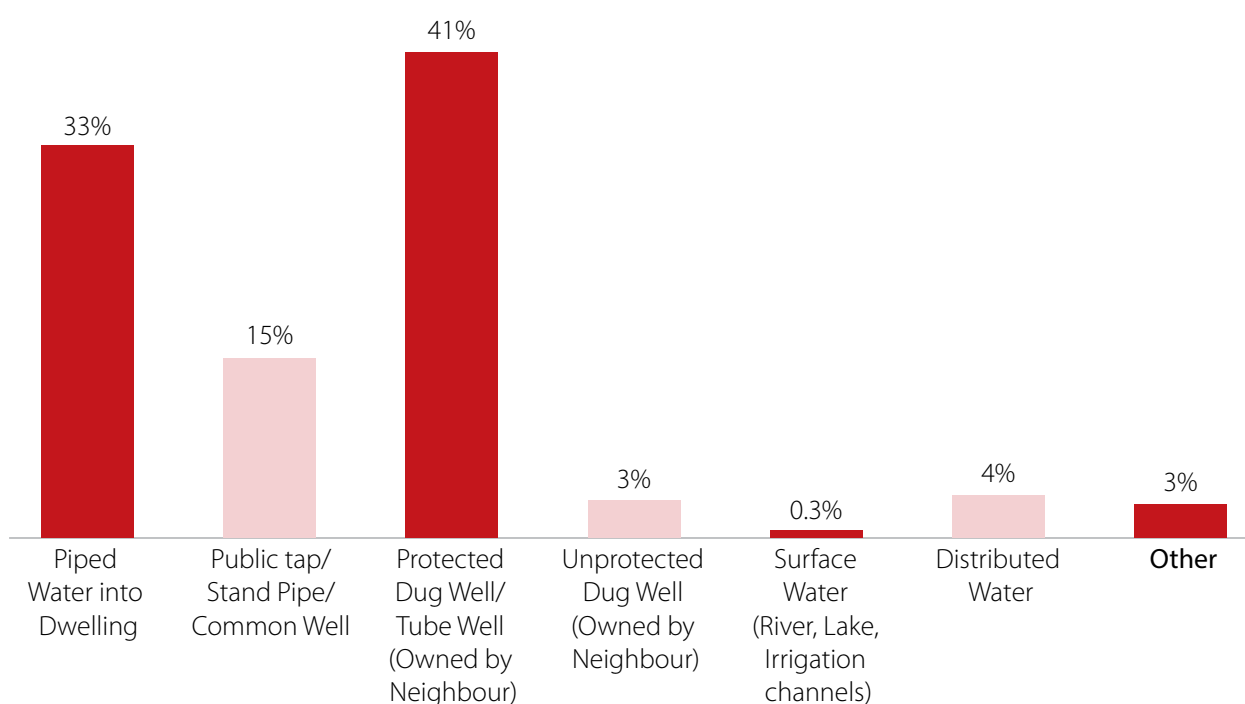
Some RRIIs had received government assistance for the construction of their houses at the time of the field study in June 2023. The process of obtaining government housing assistance for RRIIs was, however, exhausting and extremely time-consuming. Upon their return, RRIIs were forced to depend on their relatives or friends due to the lack of an immediate settlement package; however, this is not a privilege shared by all returnees. Since some people do not have relatives to live with, renting out a place was the only option until they are able to receive government assistance to build a home. Nevertheless, finding affordable and satisfactory housing can be challenging for those who are underemployed or who earn an insufficient income. For example, 45-year-old Thillainayaki returned to Sri Lanka with her husband and three children in 2005. They returned only because they would not receive citizenship in India. However, the family still lives in a house constructed of palm leaves, woven palm walls, and concrete blocks. No matter how many attempts were made by the family, their requests for permanent housing were swept under the carpet by the government officials. According to KIIs conducted with stakeholders engaged in the facilitation of housing for RRIIs (both government and non-government), RRIIs tend to acquire housing facilities for the entire family, including their grown children. Parents often give their daughters their house (constructed with the assistance of an organization) as a dowry. Thereafter, they negotiate with the government to construct a second house. It is unclear, however, as to what the actual reason was in the case of Thillainayaki. Upon searching the OFER Ceylon database, we discovered that her family was not included. Consequently, RRIIs such as Thillainayaki exist without housing assistance.

- ***Access to water and sanitation:***

A vast majority (90%, n=283) of respondents had a permanent toilet within their compound. Nevertheless, 2% (n=7) had a temporary toilet and 4% (n=14) made use of their neighbours' toilets. A total of 4% (n=14) defecated in the bush or on open ground.

Figure 5: Type of toilet RRIIs have in the place where they currently live



**Figure 6: HH's main source of drinking-water**

The main source of drinking water for 41% (n=129) of HHs was a dug well or tube well, either their own or that of their neighbours, whereas 33% (n=105) relied on water delivered by pipe. Another 15% (n=48) relied on a public water supply, a standpipe, or a common well. A small portion of households (3%, n=8) and 4% (n=14) used unprotected dug wells and distributed water to meet their household's water needs respectively. A further 3% (n=10) used tube wells and purchased water to drink. One of the individuals obtained water from surface water such as lakes, rivers, streams, channels, etc. Among the RRs, 43% purified or boiled water before consumption, while 57% consumed unpurified water. Most households (94%, n=261) obtained their drinking water from sources less than 200 meters from their homes. Nevertheless, 11 RRs had to travel over 200 meters to obtain water; 06 had to travel about 4 kilometers.

- **Access to health care:**

About three forth of the sampled RRs (77%, n=243) stated that they and their family members were subjected to some kind of health screening or testing in Sri Lanka as a result of their status as refugee returnees. When they arrived in Sri Lanka, 74% (n=176) underwent a health screening at the airport or at the port (for those who came by ferry). Furthermore, 65% (n=159) of the participants received health checkups at their respective Medical Officers of Health (MOH). A further 17% (n=42) and 1% (n=3) experienced health screenings at the hospital and at home, respectively. The tests were conducted by the Anti-Malaria Unit (83%, n=200), MBBS doctors (45%, n=109), and the Ministry of Health (42%, n=102).

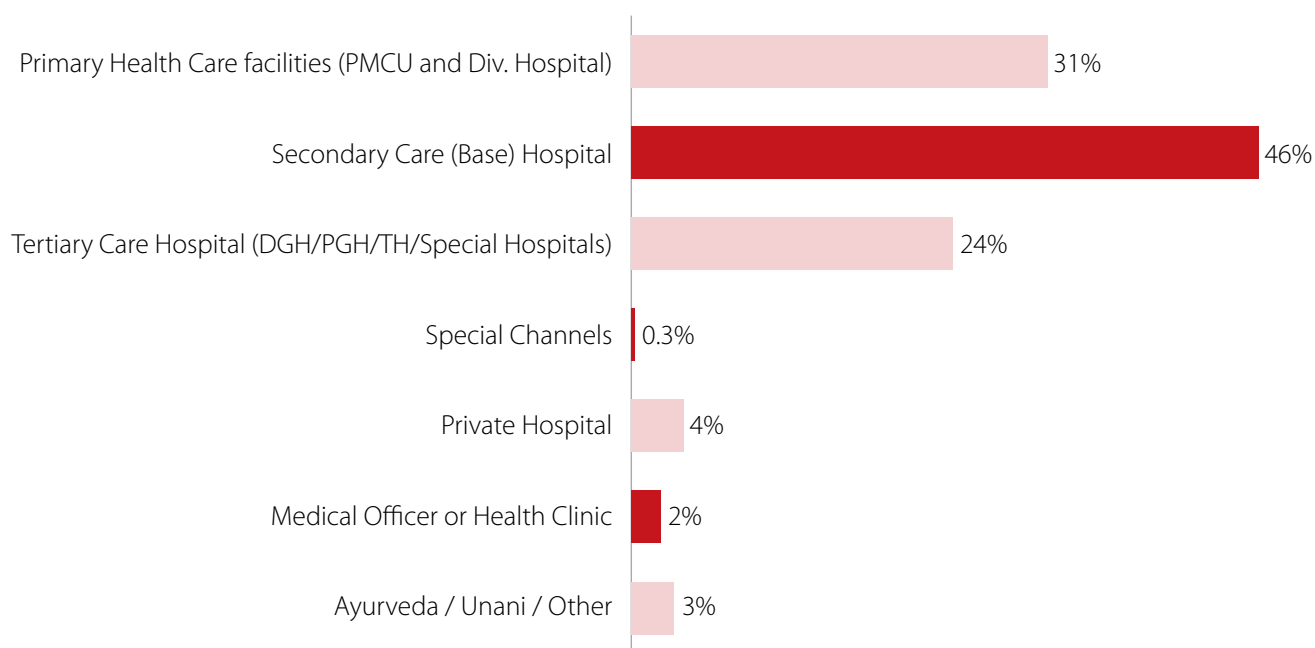
**Figure 7: Available health care facilities in the area**

Figure 7 illustrates the available health care facilities where RRI are currently located. Accordingly, 46% (n=145) had access to secondary care (base) hospitals, 31% (n=96) had access to primary care (PMCU and Divisional Hospitals), and 24% (n=76) had access to tertiary care (DGH/PGH/TH/Special Hospitals). A further 4% (n=14), 2% (n=7), and 3% (n=10) had access to private hospitals, MOH clinics, and Ayurvedic/Unani clinics, respectively. Approximately 84% of respondents (n=265) had to travel less than 5 km to reach the closest healthcare facility, while 16% (n=50) travelled between 6 and 13 km. There was one RRI in the sample who had to travel about 50 km in order to access health care.

- **Access to basic education:**

In the sampled RRI, 30% (n=95) received educational support upon their return. As can be seen in Table 6, all of them (85%, n=95) received stationery and uniforms from the school. A total of 9% of students (n=10) attended catch-up language classes in schools, while another 5% (n=5) attended Sinhala language classes. There was only one respondent affiliated with non-formal education in the sample. In contrast, 72% of RRI (n=228) were unable to obtain an educational certificate equivalent to their level of education prior to moving to Sri Lanka, as opposed to 28% (n=87) who were able to obtain one.

Table 7: Educational support received upon return

Educational support	Number	Percentage
Stationery uniform, etc. in school	95	85
Catch-up language class in school	10	9
Linkage with non-formal education/	1	1
Sinhala language classes	5	5

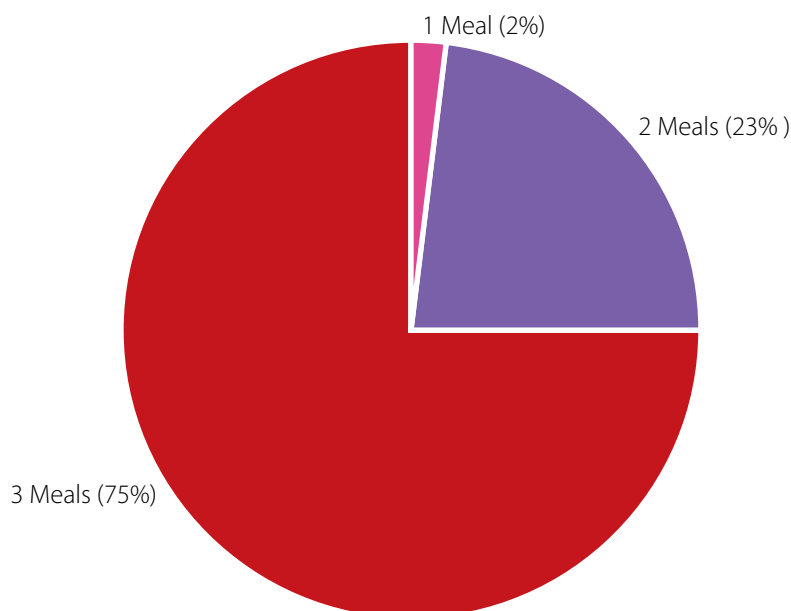
- **Food security:**

In the sampled RRI, 63% (n=199) reported that they received neither government rations nor allowances. Only 23% (n=73) received food rations and allowances from the government and 14% (n=43) from other organizations. Among those who received assistance from any of the organizations (n=116), 92% (n=107) only received assistance



once. There are only 4.5% (n=5) of respondents who are still receiving food rations and allowances, whereas another 3.5% (n=4) are not aware of receiving them. As shown in figure 6, 23% of RRI (n=72) reported eating two meals a day, while only 2% (n=6) reported eating only one meal a day.

Figure 8: No of meals RRI had during last 07 days

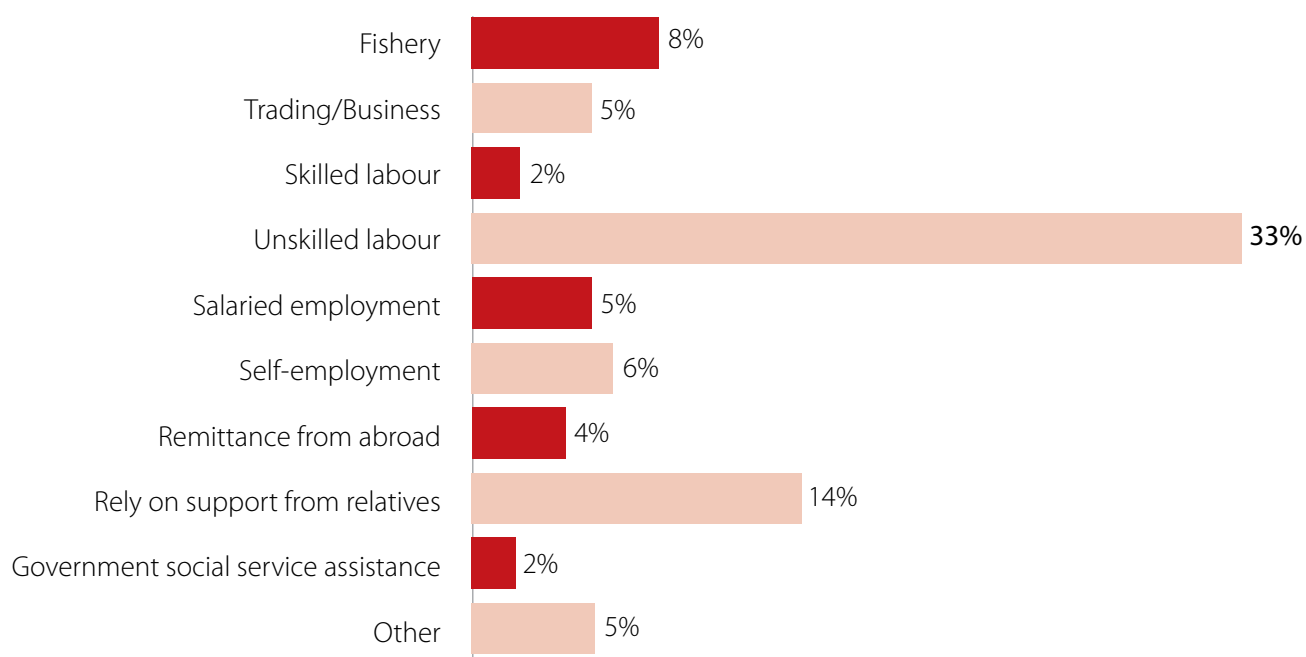


3. Equal Access to Employment and Livelihood Opportunities (a secure job and living wage)

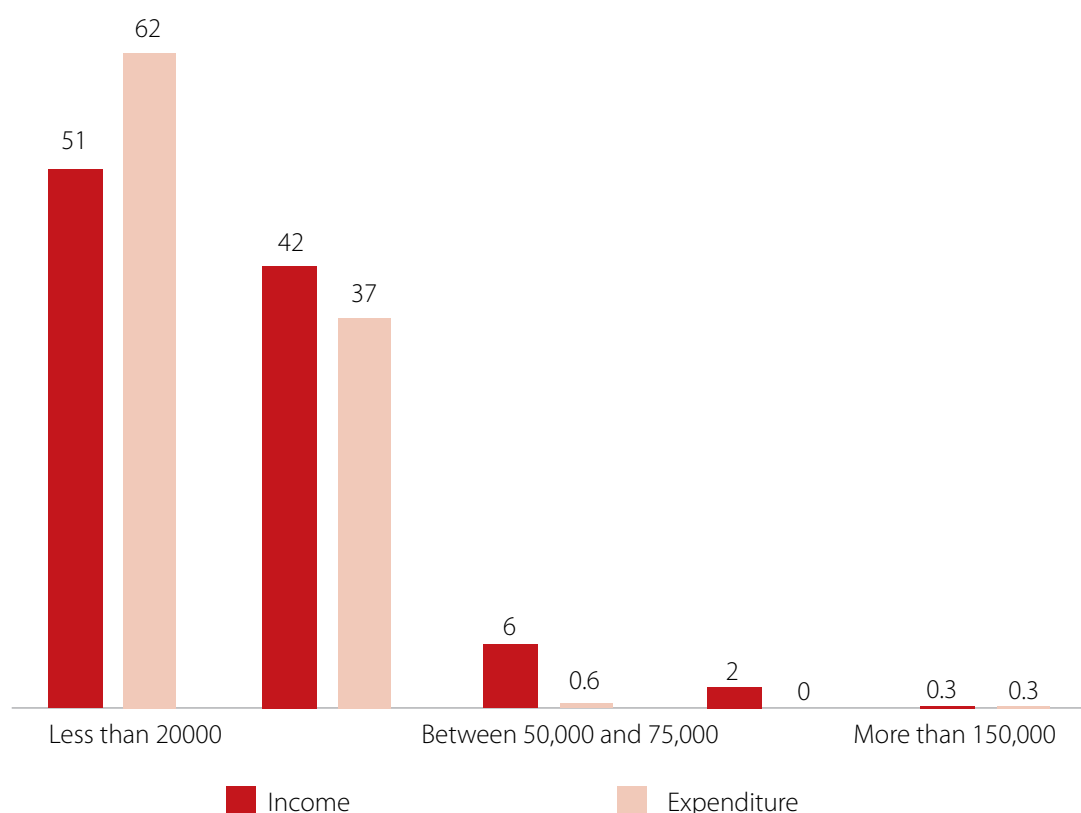
RRI who have achieved a durable solution can fulfil their basic socioeconomic needs equally with the non-displaced population. It involves access to employment and income sources, as well as to productive assets and financial services.

- Access to livelihood and employment:**

Figure 8 presents RRI's primary source of income at the time the HH survey was administered. Among them, 33% (n=103) were casual or unskilled labourers, and only 2 (n=6) were skilled labourers such as carpenters and electricians. While 16% (n=49) were farmers and 8% (n=24) were engaged in the fisheries sector, there were 5% (n=16) and 6% (n=20) of traders, businesses, and self-employed, respectively. However, salaried positions were only 5% (n=15). In addition, 14% (n=45) relied on their relatives, and another 4% (n=12) received remittances from abroad. Among the sampled RRI, 21% (n=6) had a secondary source of income: 68% (n=45) were engaged in farming, fishery, unskilled labour, social security assistance from the government and relying on relatives and foreign remittances. For 26% (n=81), their primary source of income was the same prior to their displacement to India, and for another 28% (n=87) it was different. However, 46% (n=147) were not employed before they were displaced.

**Figure 9: Primary livelihood/ Source of income**

When asked about the frequency of income from the above income sources, 15% (n=46) had a monthly income, and 6% (n=16) received a frequent daily wage. However, 34% (n=107) had an infrequent daily wage income. Close to half of the sample, 45% (n=143), had a seasonal income from their occupation, which indicates that they do not have a steady flow of income throughout the year. This shows that a large portion of the sampled RRLs did not have a steady income on which they could rely without fear or anxiety.

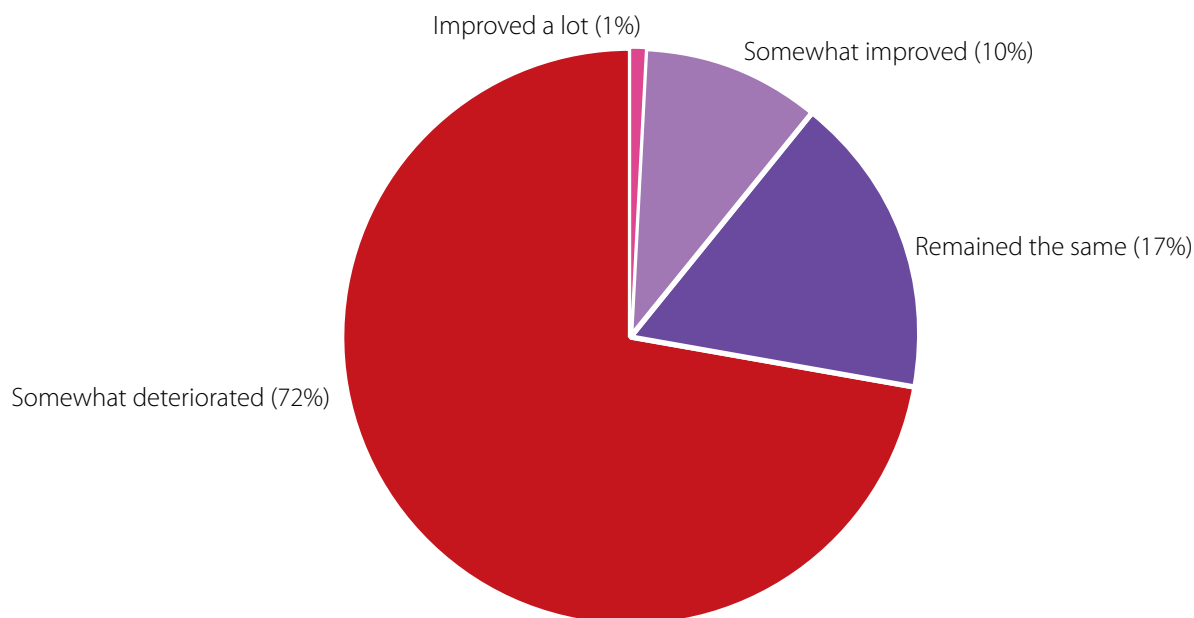
Figure 10: Income and expenditure categories of RRLs



The figure 10 categorizes the income and expenditure of the sampled RRI, Accordingly, little over half of the sample (51%, n=159) earn a monthly income less than LKR 20,000 while 42% (n=132) earn an income between LKR 20,000 and LKR 50,000. Minimum income value was LKR 4,000 while the maximum was LKR 250,000 with 26,486 mean values and 20,066 Std. Similarly, 62% (n=195) and 37% (n=117) respectively spent less than LKR 20,000 and between LKR 20,000 and LKR 50,000 per month. Minimum value was LKR 5,000 while the maximum value was LKR 180,000 with 21,714 mean values and 13,510 Std. This shows that a vast difference exists among the RRI in terms of their income and expenditure. In addition, 86% (n=270) said their income was not sufficient to meet their basic needs. The shrinking income per month pushes RRI to compare their living standard while in refuge in India.

Hence, 82% (n=258) were not at all satisfied about their current financial situation. While 16% (n=49) were satisfied, only one respondent (0.3%) was fully satisfied. However, there were 2% (n=7) who answered 'don't know.'

Figure 11: RRI's perception about their financial situation after returning to Sri Lanka

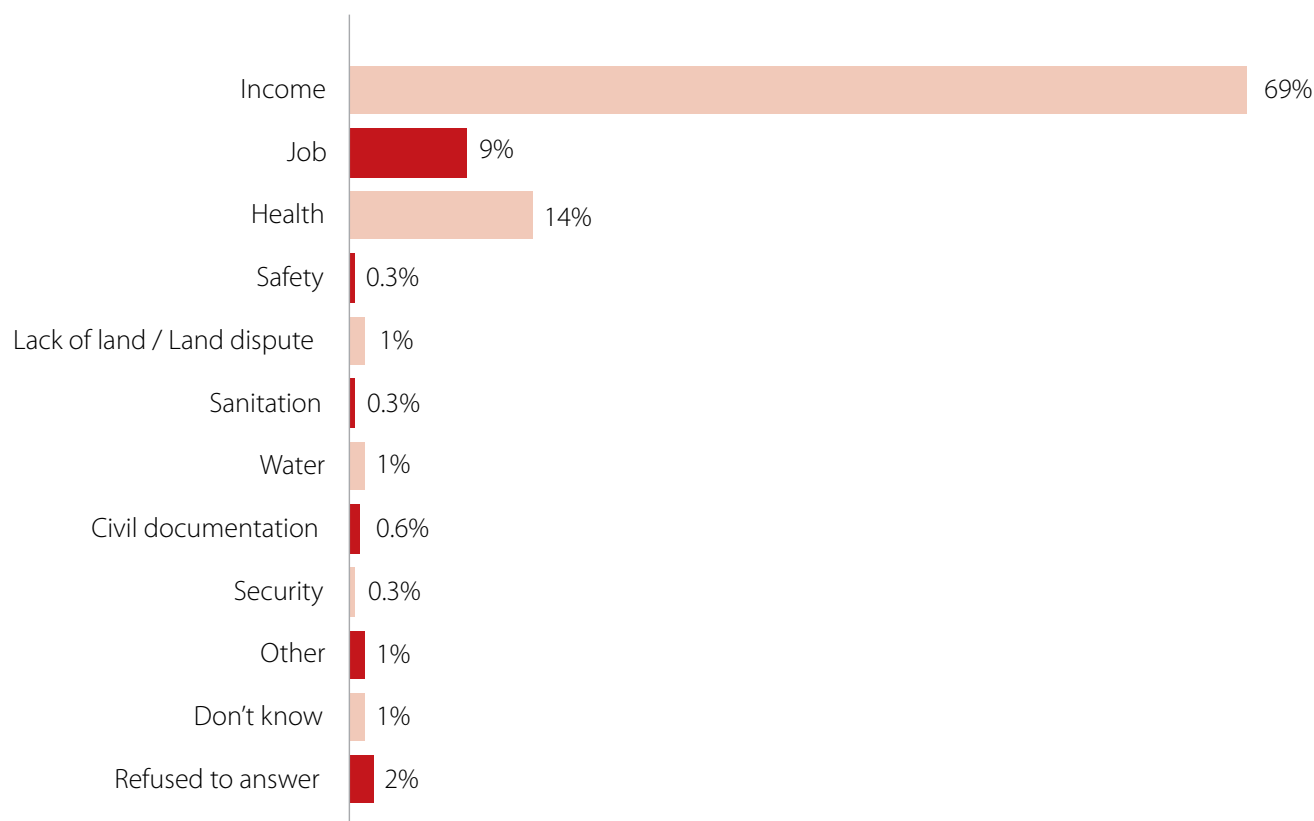


As shown in the above figure 11, the RRI were asked about their financial situation after returning to Sri Lanka. Vast majority (72%, n=221) felt that their financial situation had somewhat deteriorated since returning to Sri Lanka. However, for 17% (n=55) it remained the same while another 10% (n=31) and less than 01% (n=2) said that it somewhat improved and improved a lot since their return to Sri Lanka. Given the current context in the country, 78% (n=246) did not believe that their financial situation would improve whatsoever in the coming 12 months. However, 7% (n=21) were optimistic. Another 15% (n=48) did not know what to say when the question was posed to them.

Figure 12 presents what the RRI worries more about their current aspect of life. For 69% (n=217) of their income was the major concern while 9% (n=28) and 14% (n=45) were concerned about their jobs and health. This also shows that the RRI had less concern about their safety, security and lack of land or having land disputes.



Figure 12: What aspect of life that concerns the most



- ***Assistance to start and continue your livelihood:***

Among the RRI, 41% (n=130) received a cash grant to start and continue their livelihood, while 30% (n=94) received materials and another 8% (n=26) received services. Among those who received cash grant, the amount ranged from LKR 5,000 to LKR 140,000. The material support included items to start or continue a livelihood.

- ***Major impediments or problems to restoring livelihood:***

Table 7 summarizes the impediments or problems faced when restoring RRI's livelihood activities. Many (63%, n=198) faced the lack of tools, finances and materials to undertake any livelihood activity. While 16% (n=51) did not have access to farming land to restore their livelihood as farmers, less than 01% (n=2) did not receive a permit to fish. While 8% (n=24) could not find a suitable job similar to their previous occupation, 7% (n=22) found it impossible to find a job of any sort back in Sri Lanka. Non-recognition of qualifications by the public sector was a major impediment to 4% (n=12) of RRI. Persons with disabilities (6%, n=19) found that they were not in a position to engage in any livelihood activity.

**Table 8: Impediments or problems to restoring livelihood**

Impediment	Number	%
No access to farming land	51	16%
No access / permit to fish	2	1%
Lack of tools/ means to undertake the activity (Material and financial)	198	63%
Could not find a suitable job similar to my previous occupation	24	8%
Hostility from neighbors or community	6	2%
I was not reinstated in my previous job in the Public Sector	1	0%
My qualification was not accepted by the Public Sector	12	4%
Impossible to find a job here of any type	22	7%
Not interested to look for any job	5	2%
I am a person with special needs, I cannot do any job	19	6%
Other (Specify)	124	39%

- **Youth employment /unemployment:**

Among the RRI in the sample, 35% (n=111) had family members between 18 and 35. Out of them, 55% (n=61) were working, while the rest were unemployed. Among the employed, 31% (n=19) were in the private sector, while 33% (n=20) and 13% (n=8) were respectively in the informal sector and self-employed. Another 16% (n=10) were farmers or fishermen. However, among the employed, only 12% (n=7) had completed vocational training.

The sample had 27% (n=30) between the ages of 18 and 35 who can work but without a livelihood due to being engaged in higher studies (30%, n=9); inability to find a suitable livelihood (30%, n=9); and not interested in finding a livelihood. Among them, 83% (n=25) did not earn an income, and depended on their parents. 7% (n=2) received remittances from abroad, and 10% (n=3) were engaged in odd businesses such as unskilled labour on a temporary basis.

The FGD held with young people revealed that certification received whilst being refugee in India does not have due recognition in Sri Lanka. Therefore, they are unable to find jobs that suit their qualifications. Young people with higher educational qualifications do not receive opportunities in graduate schemes and government jobs. Government policy that provides opportunities deny the rights of Indian graduates. As an example, one participant reported that he attempted to obtain government recognition for his degree obtained in India but was unable to do so; therefore, he now works as a fisherman.

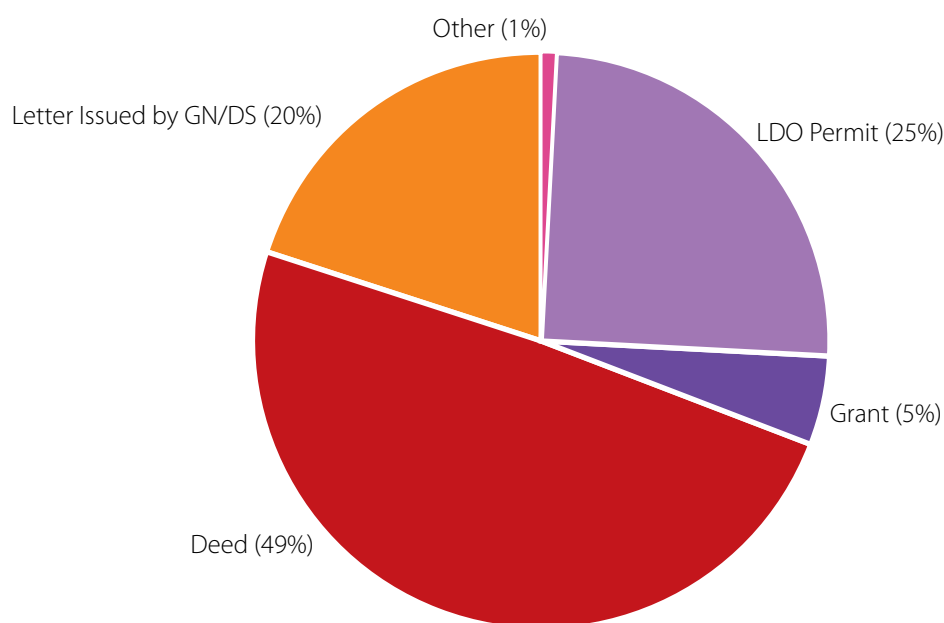
4. Equal Access to Effective Mechanisms that Restore their Housing, Land and Property or Provide them with Just/Equitable Compensation

RRI who have achieved a durable solution have access to effective mechanisms for timely restitution of their housing, land, and property. This is regardless of whether they return, integrate locally, or settle elsewhere in the country. These standards apply to all residential, agricultural, and commercial property and also to lease and tenancy agreements. Land is the most complex issue RRI are faced with. However, Sri Lanka is far behind, though there is a focus at the moment on expediting the establishment of the National Land Commission and a National Land Policy that addresses issues such as land disputes and landlessness.⁷ The sampled survey found that 81% (n=255) had land with their household, compared to the 19% (n=60) who did not. Out of those who had a land, 235 households had some type of documentation to prove this claim. Among them, as shown in the figure below 49% (n=113) had a deed for their property, whereas 25% (n=5) had a permit under the Land Development Ordinance (LDO), 20% (n=5) had a letter issued by GN/ DS while 5% (n=12) had a grant. The reason for not having a



valid land permit was because some of them applied for a permit but are waiting for responses (16 RRIs). Two RRIs lost their documents while another two said they never had such permits. While 97% (n=248) said they had the access to their land, the rest do not have access because the household land is occupied by a secondary occupant (for 6 RRIs) and due to community reprisals (1 RRI).

Figure 13: Documentation on the land

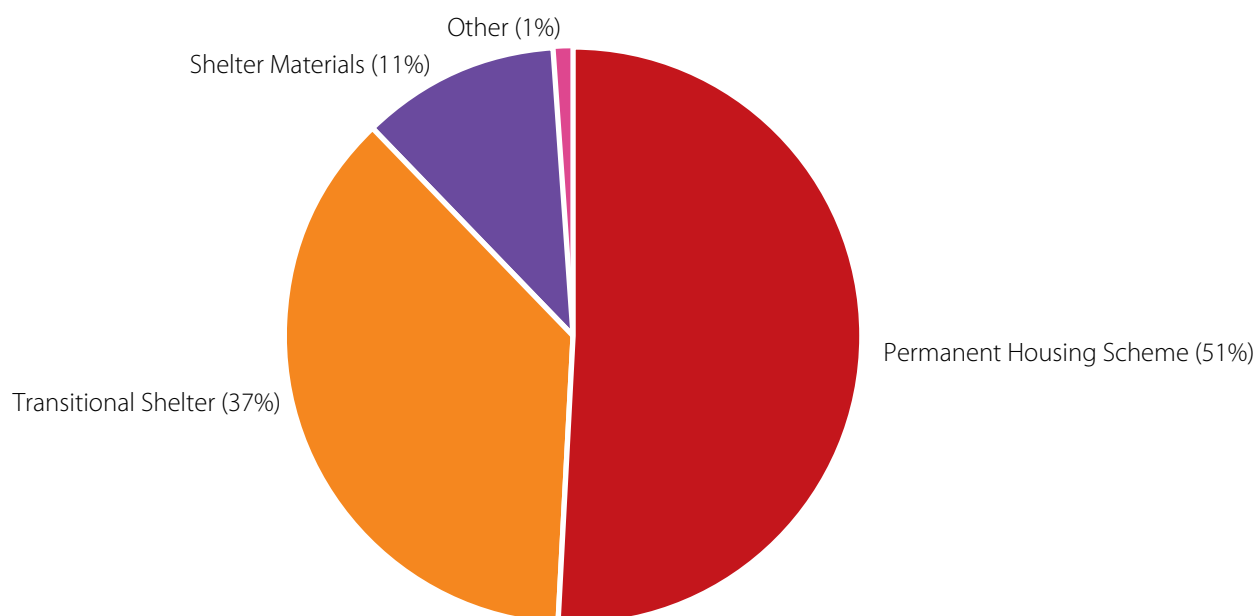


The households which were involved in land disputes tried the redress mechanism through DS and GN, police, human rights commission, court and engaging in amicable settlement. However, of the 60 RRIs who did not have land, 60% (n=36) had applied for land with relevant authorities. Among those who did not do so, 46% (n=11) were not aware of the process to submit a land application and 21% (n=5) were not interested in doing so. In addition, 17% (n=4) had the impression that it was not possible; one indicated that he or she had more urgent issues to deal with at present. Nearly 13% (n=3), other reasons which prevented them from approaching the authorities. Among those who applied for land, 97% (n=35) did so to the GN/DS/Provincial Council and one applied to another institution.

For the Indian returnees, one of the main incentives to return is owning land and property in Sri Lanka. They come back to find that their land is taken over by government or other third parties and secondary occupants. They find it difficult to prove their ownership and lack the relevant documentation. Even if they had documentation the other party can show their counter title regarding the long time that has passed. Dispute resolution regarding land ownership is a key challenge faced by these returnees. Some Sri Lankan refugees who are in India want to keep on maintaining their property in Sri Lanka whilst being settled in India. This creates issues when the DS tries to reallocate those lands to the needy.

- **Access to Housing:**

Sixty five percent (n=207) of RRIs did not receive shelter assistance upon arriving in Sri Lanka. This is something that needs much attention as many refugees do not receive vital assistance at the times they need it most. Among those who sought shelter assistance, 49% (n=53) got it through the government and 46% (n=50) did so from INGOs while another 7% (n=7) from Local NGOs.

**Figure 14: Type of shelter assistance received**

51% (n=55) received permanent housing while 37% (n=40) were provided with transitional shelter. There were 11% (n=12) who received shelter materials and 1% (n=1) received assistance in another form.

Since permanent housing takes a long process to be finalized, stakeholders recommended at least semi-permanent housing due to the struggles associated with not having a fixed, stable place to live.

- **Reintegration assistance:**

The vast majority (86%, n = 270) did not receive any assistance to reintegrate into their new surroundings. Among those who received such assistance (14%, n=45), 91% (n=41) received incentives for business start-up, whereas 11% (n=5) received material assistance for housing and shelter needs.

An RRI is entitled to receive a shelter and livelihood grant of about LKR 38,000 from the Ministry of Resettlement in 2018. An interview held with a development section practitioner said, the LKR 38,000 provided by the Ministry of Resettlement is hardly enough to construct a temporary shelter or start a career. As a RRI, he said, recognizing the special needs of returnees, there was a World Food Programme package of dry rations for the first six months. But this was stopped. "If someone can provide this again I think it will be very helpful" he said, "that way families can focus on using their money to build their lives rather than for survival."

FGD with RRIs in Vavuniya and Mannar revealed that the respective DS offices provided LKR 35,000 despite the fact that they either used an official channel through UNHCR or an illegal channel through boats. Families who returned after 2009 through a UNHCR facilitated process received LKR 50,000. The families returning through illegal channels had to surrender to the Navy, and after completing a legal process, they were listed as legal returnees. In the immediate aftermath of their return, several organizations aided RRIs with housing (IOM and the government), livelihood (the Industrial Development Board, ADRA through Department of Home Affairs of the Australian Government), and documentation (the Norwegian Refugee Council and OfERR Ceylon).

Upon return, 99% (n=313) were registered with the respective DS/GN whilst 6% (n=2) of them did not do so because of the unavailability of authority. In addition, 54% (n=171) were registered at various organizations and



groups. These included NGOs (99%, n=170) and one RRI being approached by military and other groups. Sixteen RRIs said they had visits by various stakeholders such as Government officers from the GN/DS office (12 RRIs), NGOs (1 RRI) and Military including CID/TID (1RRI) and unknown visits (3 RRIs).

Social integration is constrained by the social expectation of the host community. For instance, establishing two community organizations for host and RRIs would never facilitate re-integration. Kannati in Vavuniya has two Rural Development Societies: one having dedicated to those returned refugees from India. The village also has two Women Rural Development Societies; having one exclusively dedicated for women from RRI families. Having two structures always act as a barrier for reintegration. RRIs have to compete with the general public with already scarce resources. The societal harmful norm that “ they fled the country during the difficult time and come back because they need assistance ” denies the allocation of already scarce resources for RRIs.

5. *Equal access to and replacement of personal and other documentation*

RRIs who have achieved a durable solution have access to the personal and other documentation necessary to access public services, reclaim property and possessions, vote, or pursue other purposes linked to durable solutions. RRIs should be able to obtain or replace personal and other documentation without discrimination. During the course of displacement, people often lose documents necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of their legal rights, such as passports, personal identification documents, birth certificates, marriage certificates, voter identification cards, title deeds, school records, professional or academic certificates, or social security cards.

- ***Civil documentation:***

At the policy level, the Department of Immigration and Emigration has received a list of 2,678 Sri Lankan's living in Rehabilitation Camps in South India, and there is a plan to issue all country passports to those with both a Sri Lankan Birth Certificate and a national identity card. However, alternative sources indicate that a greater number of Sri Lankan refugees reside in India. According to the Chennai-based Rehabilitation Commissionate, the department responsible for the well-being of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu, there are 58,357 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees residing in 106 camps in 29 districts across Tamil Nadu as of May 1, 2023; 10,269 of them are children under the age of 11. There are, however, an equal number of refugees living outside the camps, according to human rights activists working for them.

HH survey found that 14% (n=44) of HHs had family members who owned birth certificates whilst the majority (86%, n=271) did not. But, 42 HHs said they possessed a Sri Lankan birth certificate at one point, but no longer have it. Among those who do not have a Sri Lankan birth certificate, 23 had applied, but not received it yet. 11% (n=5) do not possess a birth certificate registered in Sri Lanka whilst four did not have supportive documents to make a request, whilst two RRIs were not aware about the process of applying for a birth certificate. Among the sampled population, 8% (n=26) had family members who were legal adults without a National Identity Card (NIC). In addition, 31% (n=96) had family members who did not have a Sri Lankan birth certificate, 32% (n=102) did not have a National Identity Card and 47% (n=149) did not have a Sri Lankan passport.

31% (n=96) had family members with Sri Lankan birth certificate; 32% (n=102) with a NIC and 47% (n=149) with a Sri Lankan passport. However, 7% (n=21) said their family members who were born in India faced difficulties in obtaining citizenship in Sri Lanka because of unawareness about the procedure (n=11), delay in obtaining the birth certificate (n=6) and not having sufficient finance to settle the penalty imposed on late registration (n=2).

The HH survey found that 90% (n=284) had registered to vote. Among those have not done so, three RRIs did not want to do so, 22 RRIs had applied and are waiting for the document while five were not aware of the process and



procedure.

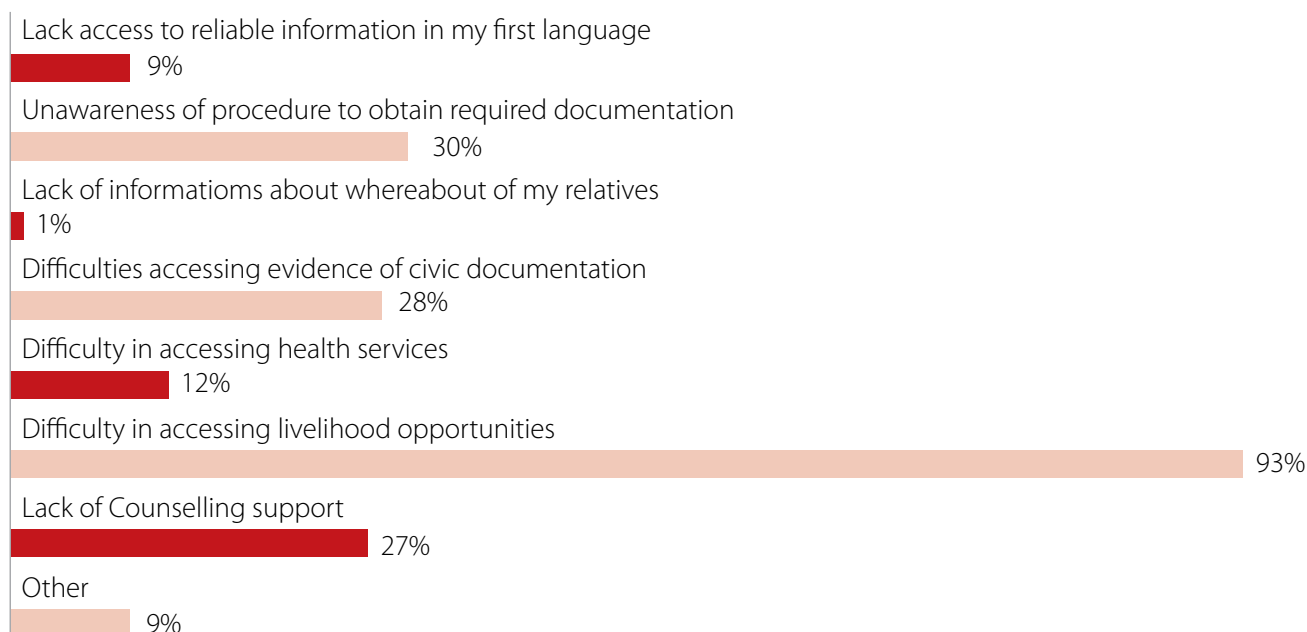
Stakeholder consultation revealed that the sub families of the RRLs who were not born in Sri Lanka face challenges in terms of documentation and accessing government services. In addition, government officials who are in charge of the RRLs' documentation process get transferred and the newly appointed officials are unaware of the cases at hand, which delays the entire process, as they are back to square one.

6. *Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement*

Family separation is a significant protection concern. The RRLs have the right to know the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives and be reunited with them. It is the responsibility of the authorities to provide such information and set up tracing and reunification measures or work with organizations that do so.

The Figure 15 illustrates the challenges the RRLs faced upon their return to Sri Lanka. The majority (93%, n=292) had difficulty in accessing livelihood opportunities. Unawareness about the procedure to obtain required documentation (30%, n=94), lack of counselling and support services (27%, n=85), difficulties accessing evidence of civic documentation (28%, n=89), difficulty in accessing health services (12%, n=39) were some of the challenges RRLs encountered when reunified with their family members.

Figure 15: Challenges upon returning to Sri Lanka



7. *Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population*

The RRLs who have achieved a durable solution are able to exercise the right to participate in public affairs at all levels on the same basis as the non-displaced population and without discrimination. First and foremost, it is not only the right to vote and to stand for election but also the right to associate freely and participate equally in community affairs, as well as the right to work in all sectors of public service.

Vast majority of RRLs said that they did not feel as if they were treated differently due to the fact that they were



returnees. However, about 3% (n=9) of RRI felt so.

RRI accessed police (52%, n=163) and GN and DS (42%, n=135) for civil dispute resolution. About 4% (n=11) accessed court.

Table 9: Organisations/Individuals accessed in civil dispute resolution

Organisations / Individuals	Number	%
GN/DS	135	42%
Police	163	52%
Court	11	4%
NGO/Legal Aid Commission	1	0.3%
Nobody, we solve it between the two parties	4	1%
Other (specify)	1	0.3%

To the question whether the HH intended to move elsewhere, 22% (n=69) answered 'yes'. Among them, one RRI intended to move within Sri Lanka; the rest showed their interest to move out of the country.

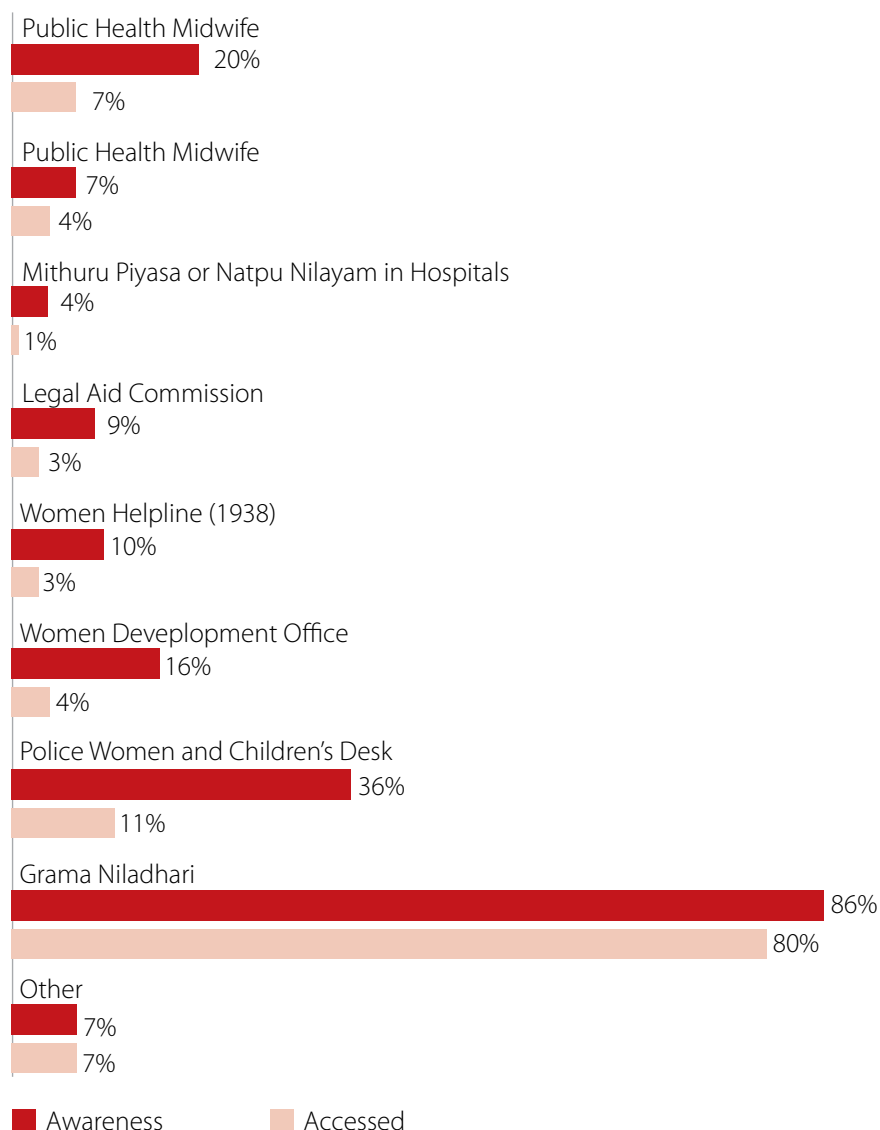
8. *Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations*

The RRI who have been victims of violations of international human rights (IHRL) or humanitarian law (IHL) which caused or occurred during displacement must have full and non-discriminatory access to effective remedies and access to justice, including, access to existing transitional justice mechanisms, reparations and information on the causes of violations in appropriate circumstances. Securing effective remedies for IHRL and IHL violations may have a major impact on prospects for durable solutions for RRI.

Despite the fact that the majority did not experience any discrimination because of their status as refugees returning from India (98%, n=310), five RRI in the sample experienced such discrimination or violence. Three of the five RRI experienced discrimination from members from other ethnic communities, and the rest were discriminated against by the police. Safety concerns were expressed by five RRI due to the death of family members (n=3), disappearances (n = 1), and arrests (n=2). However, only three RRI sought redress from the authorities. Furthermore, 93% of respondents (n=293) felt that their host community accommodated them in a way that made them feel safe.

• *Protection service provision:*

Stakeholders, especially divisional secretaries, reported that incidents of domestic violence are on the rise. Hence, creating awareness on available services on redress and referrals would help victims / survivors dealing with their issues. Figure 16 illustrates RRI's awareness of the organizations and individuals engaged in providing protection services for women and girls affected by Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Furthermore, it illustrates how they can access it when necessary. Approximately 86% of respondents (n=271) identified Grama Niladhari as a person who provides services to survivors of SGBV, while 80% (n=147) reported having received these services. Thus, RRI were comfortable in obtaining protection from the GN. In spite of the fact that 36% (n=114) and 20% (n=62) were aware of the police Women's and Children's Desk and the public health midwife, respectively, only 12% (n= 1) had ever been to the former and 7% (n=12) had accessed the latter. Additionally, the figure indicates that RRI lack awareness of other protection service providers.

**Figure 16: Awareness Vs. Access of Protection service provision**

Among those who responded to the question as to why they did not access the protection services (n=35), 83% (n=29) indicated that they did not know about the services. Two RRI said they did not access the protection services because of the perception that RRI were not welcomed by the service provision. Another RRI believed protection service provider would not help/ or RRI had already known about other women who were not helped.

3.2 IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON RRIS

The current economic crisis has adversely affected the RRI. Here is a summary of the information gathered through the focus group discussions and key informant interviews conducted with government and civil society stakeholders.

Construction of housing cannot be completed within the grant amount due to the price hike in essential construction materials. The current economic engagement of RRI does not provide sufficient income to provide the required balance for saving or to invest for future.

Due to the redundancy-prone nature of local employers, many people are unemployed or underemployed. There is a challenge in finding work for skilled craftsmen, as the community also limits construction work. As a result of price increases, the lack of raw materials, and unaffordable transportation costs, small businesses have also reduced their production scale. The increased electricity rates result in higher production costs and lower sales.



Farmers' yields were reduced as a result of lack of fertilizer. The FGD participants from Vavuniya reported that they had already been affected by COVID-19. Before they had recovered from the effects of it, they faced a fertilizer issue that they were unable to manage. Furthermore, certain farmers were unaware of how to register with the Agrarian Services, which led them to purchase fertilizer at a higher price.

Irregular migration is one of the negative effects of the economic crisis. As an example, 305 families fled to India as a result of the current crisis in Vavuniya District. This number includes RRIIs (as confirmed by the DS Office in Vavuniya).

However, participants believed that the economic crisis provided an opportunity to create an enabling environment by encouraging exports and offering lenient licensing procedures.

3.3 IMPEDIMENTS UPON RETURNING

While in India, RRIIs experienced a living standard that was urbanized and unique, both inside and outside the camp. Due to the fact that they received land in Sri Lanka, away from the town without basic amenities, they are led to believe that their life in India is comfortable and luxurious. A culturally vibrant and active lifestyle in India becomes stifled following a resettlement in a remote northern village in Sri Lanka. Although they find food and water here every day to get by, but do not have the same level of social interaction as they did in India.

Local communities often oppose the prioritization of RRIIs as recipients of assistance programmes. Because of the scarcity of land resources, returning refugees create tension among local communities. As a result, despite its negative environmental effects, some people see deforestation as a solution to the problem of land allocation. A recent cabinet memorandum on 'resolving land matters through sustainable forest management' in June 2023 may open up more lands for landless people, although environmental concerns may arise.

The local system provides a social benefit, or allowance, for persons with disabilities. The waiting list for this benefit is long, and only when one dies does another have a chance to receive it. Thus, if there is a differently abled person among the RRIIs, they will have to compete with a long waiting list in the local community in order to obtain these benefits. The vulnerability of these individuals are not particularly considered. Access to government buildings and infrastructure is not easy for those with disabilities.

The education system in Sri Lanka is very insensitive to transitioning RRIIs when they come out of the Indian school system. There is a language difference between Indian Tamil and Tamil used in Northern Sri Lanka, which is not understood by teachers in Sri Lanka. They try to correct it or look down upon it being used even though it is not incorrect.

When adolescents who completed their +2 in India enter schools in Sri Lanka, they are demoted to a lower grade. It is possible for children who have completed their +2 in India to enroll directly in A-level classes. In the local school system, they are placed in Grade 9. Male students are required to wear white shorts and shirts to school. Wearing short trousers causes mental distress in grown-up adolescents. As a result, they become demotivated and cease to attend school. Most of them do not feel a sense of belonging or camaraderie among their new classmates.

Young RRIIs should be directed to effective mechanisms for obtaining further vocational training, equalization, and certification. As such systems are not available, young people are sometimes forced to pass through intermediaries, who can be corrupt. Participants noted that, for example, a woman qualified as a nurse in India could not find employment in Sri Lanka because the qualification was not recognized by the Department of Health. Recognizing prior learning could be an alternative method for certifying previously acquired professional and vocational training.



3.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS

The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement has not been significantly updated since it was launched in March 2019. Implementation of policies is piecemeal when different organizations are responsible for them. The ministry responsible for developing and launching the policy has ceased to function as per its original mandate. Certain ministry portfolios have been reshuffled into other ministries; therefore, there is no longer a single authority or institution responsible for the implementation of policy. Institutions such as the Office of Reparations and the Northern Province Coordination Office of the Presidential Secretariat are, however, progressing in accordance with their policies. There is an overlap between these policies and the National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement. Based on the findings of the present study, policy holders from the district and the national level were largely unaware of the policy, suggesting that it is rarely referred to or used. On the other hand, the newly adopted policy on the office of reparations identifies anyone affected by conflict, which means RRIIs also fall under this category, even though policy holders are unaware of policy overlap.

The current service provision illustrates the lack of a stand-alone program for RRIIs. Once RRIIs have been integrated—once they have registered with the relevant GN and DS—they are eligible for government assistance. Often, national programs are designed to target vulnerable segments of society, in which RRIIs are identified as a criterion for selection. An example is the National Housing Development Authority's allocation of 43 new houses for the Mannar District, of which a portion has been allocated for RRIIs.

RRIIs arrived in Sri Lanka in large numbers before the policy was approved. Their concerns were addressed through a single-window approach (a one-stop shop). In the absence of such a system, RRIIs have to turn to multiple sources to resolve their issues, which is another factor contributing to their unwillingness to return.

**Table 10: Policy implications on durable solutions**

Durable Solution	Policy Implication
1. Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement	The findings suggest that RRI's need to be provided with MRE upon returning home.
2. An adequate standard of living above the poverty line including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education	<p>The findings suggest that certain RRI's were left without housing support. A careful assessment of as to why some did not receive the housing support is necessary in providing support to RRI's in order to access decent housing to achieve their durable solutions.</p> <p>The findings suggest that vast majority of RRI's need to obtain educational certificate equivalent to their level of education. Food rations may be needed by RRI's who consume less than three meals per day until they are able to afford their food expenses.</p>
3. Equal access to employment and livelihood opportunities (a secure job and living wage)	RRI's: both unskilled wage labourers and unemployed youth would need skill development guidance and assistance to start and continue sustainable livelihoods. Those engaged in self employment may find additional inputs in product diversification to deal with the demand in the market in times of economic crisis. Youth returnees suffer tremendous distress due to lack of proper employment opportunities and lack of sensitization; therefore, they require psycho-social support to cope with these issues.
4. Equal access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with just/equitable compensation	To reduce bureaucratic delays and resolve land disputes, RRI's need assistance and guidance regarding the process of obtaining land permits. Approximately half of the sample lacked permanent housing, which is a prerequisite to achieving durable solutions. Additionally, public awareness to dismantle harmful societal perception would be needed to enable environment for RRI's to effectively integrate into society.
5. Equal access to and replacement of personal and other documentation	Civil documentation is part and parcel of the reintegration process. RRI's would need assistance and guidance regarding the process for obtaining civil documentation such as a birth certificate and National Identity Card.
6. Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement	Aiding and guidance regarding livelihood support, evidence of civil documentation, and how to obtain required documentation would facilitate effective reintegration.
7. Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population	In the current context, the majority of the RRI's are likely to migrate to another country. In fact, if the RRI's are interested in migrating, they may need guidance regarding safe migration. Furthermore, enhancing sustainable livelihoods through market linkages would result in an increase in income, which in turn would result in a change in mind-sets.
8. Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations	The findings suggest that the RRI's do not have a sound awareness about gender-based violence protection service provision and referral mechanism practiced in the country.



3.5 IRREGULAR AND OUT-MIGRATION: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

The majority of unsafe migration occurs through maritime routes or with forged passports and visas. Frequently, this process is assisted by an agent who resides near the potential irregular migrant. In the absence of data on irregular migration, it is difficult for authorities to track its occurrence. Government officials are lenient towards migration, which creates a norm that encourages everyone to consider the option. The success stories are publicized, and hardships associated with such migration are rarely discussed. In spite of the Australian government's large expenditure on advertising the downsides of unsafe migration, a stakeholder said the fund should be better utilized to actually help elevate people's living conditions and eliminate the reasons for them to take such desperate measures. The study identified several factors that contribute to irregular migration.

- As RRIIs were at the camps or transitioning from one camp to another, they established connections with individuals belonging to the diasporic community. Having access to these links enabled them to gain a greater understanding of how to migrate illegally or without documents.
- After women fall into the debt trap of microfinance, they force their husbands to migrate illegally in order to pay off the debt.
- Scams are promoted by agents or agencies, such as using tourist visas to travel and earn enough money to lead a decent life at home.
- Creating false narratives - such as the mode of travel being the only prevailing risk in the situation and encourages people to risk their lives.
- Poor and vulnerable individuals who are unable to meet the requirements for safe migration (both regular and legal), such as the document requirement, show money, registration at the Foreign Employment Bureau, choose to migrate irregularly.
- The loopholes in this visa system are exploited by visa agencies, smugglers, and illegal traffickers in order to exploit vulnerable individuals.

3.5.1 PERCEPTION OF RRIIS' ON IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The following table contains statements that measure the RRII perceptions of irregular migration. 44% of RRIIs perceived that both regular and irregular migration increases social status. Another 43% believed that both irregular and regular migration provide better living standards. However, 51% disagreed that lack of job opportunities in the country acts as a factor for many people to migrate irregularly. 44% perceived that people try to leave the country because they are frustrated with the governing structure. For this statement, 31% RRIIs held a neutral position. Overall, more than one-third of the RRIIs hold a neutral position regarding their perception and awareness of irregular migration, as evidenced by the percentage distribution.

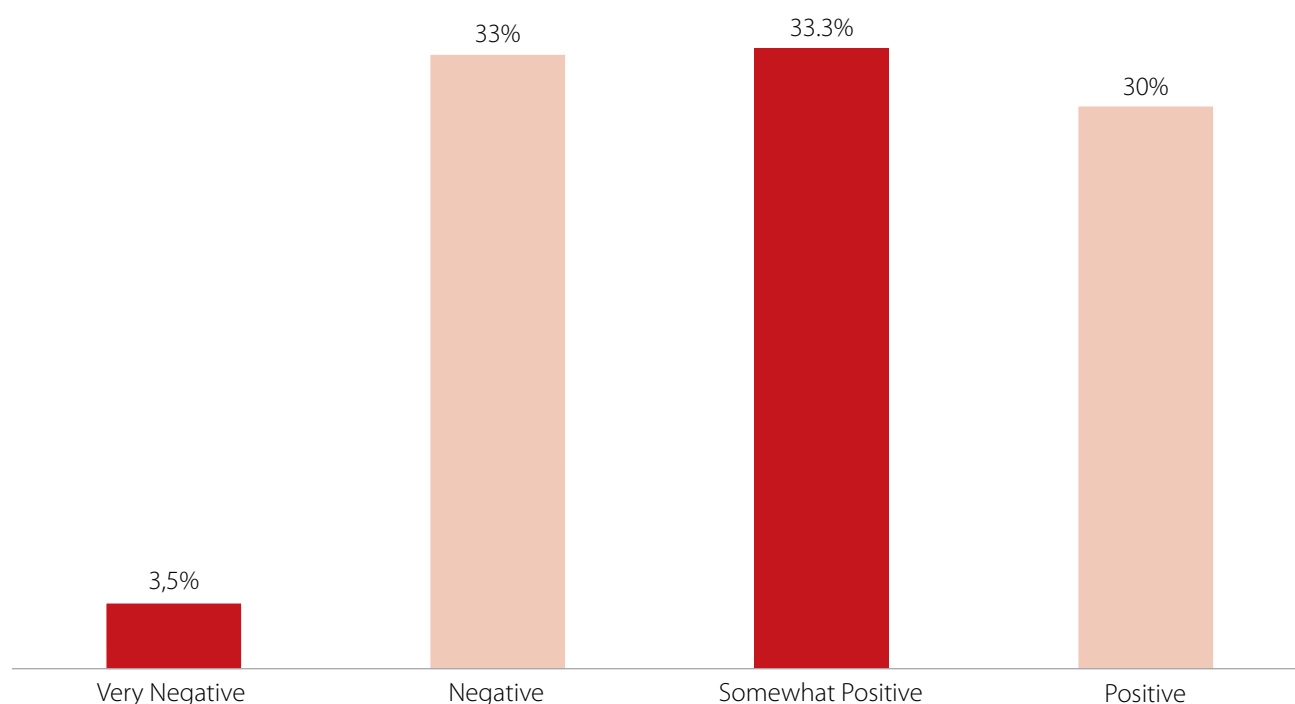
**Table 11: RRI's perception about irregular migration**

	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Both regular and irregular migration exposes people to resources	10%	19%	44%	27%	0%
2.	Both regular and irregular migration increases social status	11%	32%	33%	23%	0%
3.	Both irregular and regular migration provide better living standards	8%	35%	34%	23%	0%
4.	Poverty pushes people to search for greener pastures through irregular migration	6%	28%	35%	31%	0%
5.	Lack of job opportunities in the country acts as a factor for many people to migrate irregularly	3%	18%	28%	51%	0%
6.	People try to leave the country because they are frustrated with the governing structure	4%	21%	31%	44%	0%
7.	Success stories of irregular migration motivate others to use the same	6%	30%	26%	38%	0%

The following figure presents the consolidated values of statements used to measure total perception score about the irregular migration. Total value was calculated as follows:

- Between 7.0 and 12.6: Very negative;
- Between 12.7 – 18.2: Negative;
- Between 18.3 – 23.8: Somewhat positive;
- Between 23.9 – 29.4: Positive;
- Between 29.4 – 35.0: Very positive. .

Thus, 33.3% (n = 105) and 30.2% (n = 95) of the RRIs perceived irregular migration as somewhat positive and somewhat positive, respectively. A total of 33% (n = 104) and 3.5% (n = 11) possessed negative or very negative perceptions. According to the figure, about two-thirds of the sampled population held a positive opinion, whereas slightly more than one third held a negative opinion. Furthermore, the figure illustrates the ground reality of mixed feelings RRIs have regarding irregular migration.

**Figure 17: Perception about irregular migration among RRI**

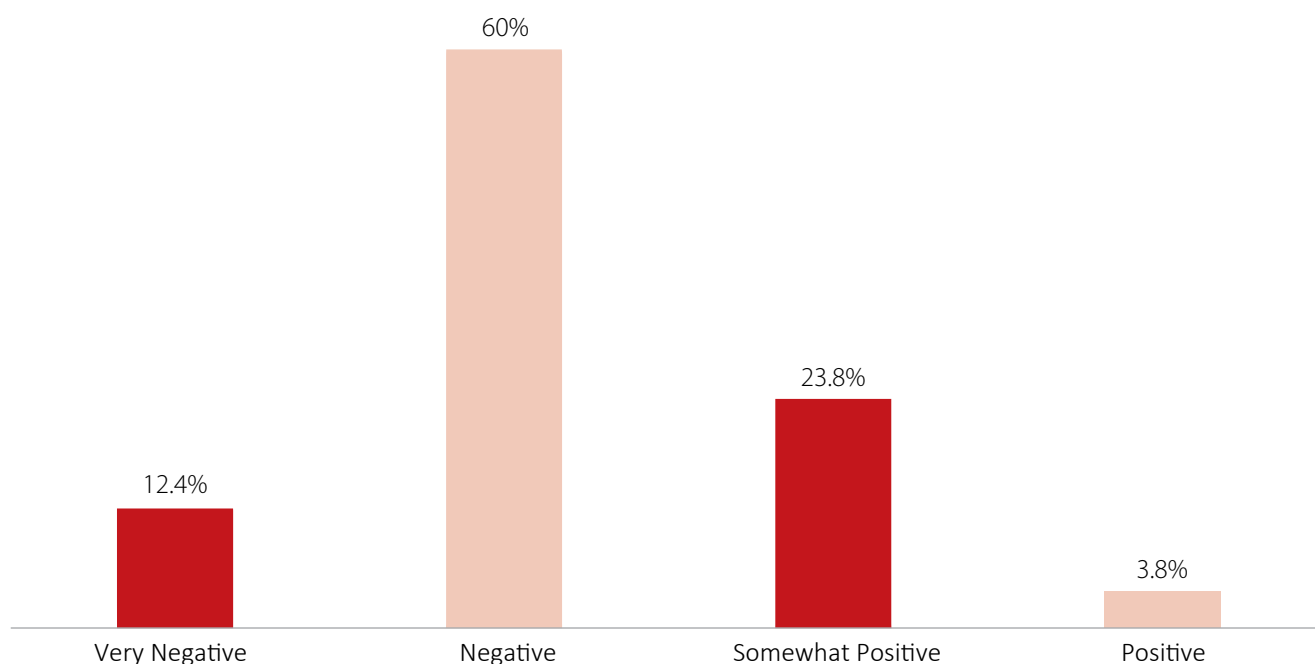
3.5.2 PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES

The following table summarizes RRI's attitudes and perceptions regarding opportunities in guest countries. Over one-third of RRI held a neutral position on the statement "The guest country offers good employment opportunities". For the rest of the statements, nearly half of the RRI took a neutral position. The table further shows that RRI are unaware of opportunities in the receiving countries. On the other hand, such opportunities do not act as a pull factor for many people to migrate illegally.

Table 12: RRI's attitude and perception about the opportunities in the guest country

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The guest country welcomes the people from other countries	7%	26%	51%	16%	0%
The guest country has good job opportunities	4%	20%	38%	37%	0%
The guest country offers good quality life	4%	19%	48%	29%	0%
It is easy for people from other countries to get a visa to come to and live in the guest country	10%	34%	49%	6%	0%
It is easy to get welfare benefits in the guest country	6%	26%	42%	26%	0%

The following figure presents the consolidated values of statements used to measure perception about the opportunities in the guest countries for people who migrate irregularly. Total value was calculated: 7.0 - 12.6 Very negative; 12.7 - 18.2 - Negative; 18.3 - 23.8 - Somewhat positive; 23.9 - 29.4 - Positive; and 29.4 - 35.0 - Very positive. Thus, the majority of sampled RRI held a negative perception (60% being negative and 12.4% being very negative) about the opportunities available for irregular migrants in the guest countries.

**Figure 18: RRI's attitude and perception about the opportunities in the guest country**

FGDs with young people and RRI's pointed out that the general public believes that guest countries are better off in terms of creating opportunities for their citizens. Due to the fact that they are developed countries, guest countries have better living standards, facilities, and employment opportunities. In many cases, people leave the country in order to earn and save money that can be used in their home country.

3.6 POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As part of the study, stakeholders were consulted to identify potential economic development opportunities for RRI's. Suggestions are summarized below.

- **Focus on the export market:**

- The potential of the export market for local products should be maximized, with a particular focus on the Sri Lankan diaspora communities. Products derived from Palmyra, batik, and seafood may be considered for inclusion.

- **Tourism promotion:**

- Both locals and foreigners can enjoy the tourist attractions on the islands that surround Mannar. Willpattu National Park is located on the route to Mannar via Puttalam. Some of the other attractions that can be promoted include Allirani Fort at Arippe, Kattakarai Dam in Murungan, Thriketheeswaram Temple, and the largest banyan tree. There are also a number of tourist attractions in the area, such as bird and coral watching, mangroves, and a local seafood restaurant. The potential of these resources has never been fully realized.
- The promotion of tourism can benefit local businesses, such as the preparation of authentic food that is culture friendly, and the promotion of accommodation facilities. The establishment of an official website or an e-platform devoted to tourism would provide tourists with the information they require.



• *Value chain development*

- Providing value-addition support for existing local products aimed at export markets. The value-addition support includes technology training, modern equipment, as well as product diversification.
- Considering Vavuniya's particular affluence in the agriculture sector, rice-based, black-gram, and dairy products could be promoted.
- Local cultivation requires some support in order to flourish and to be sustained: seeds, irrigation equipment, fertilizers, and modern technology in order to maximize yields.



4

CONCLUSION & POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

4.1 CONCLUSION

The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement, developed in 2016, emphasizes the government's commitment to finding sustainable solutions for conflict-affected displaced populations, regardless of their region, gender, ethnicity, age, language, political beliefs, caste, or religion. This policy, which is based on a rights-based approach to displacement, ensures that all those affected—both internally displaced persons and refugee returnees—have the opportunity to find sustainable solutions to their problems. Eight durable solutions are proposed in the policy in order to improve the quality of life for RRIIs without discrimination.

Since its launch, the National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement has not been significantly updated. Implementation of RRI in a piecemeal manner fails to take a holistic approach to addressing its issues and concerns. The ministry that was responsible for developing and launching the policy no longer functions in accordance with its original mandate. The portfolios of some ministries have been reshuffled into other ministries; therefore, there is no longer a single authority or institution responsible for policy implementation. In spite of this, institutions such as the Office of Reparations and the Northern Province Coordination Office of the Presidential Secretariat are progressing in accordance with their policies. The National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement overlaps with these policies. It was found that policy holders at both the district and national levels were unaware of the policy, indicating that it is seldom referred to or used.

The decision to return was difficult since RRIIs experienced an urbanized lifestyle, one that was luxurious and vibrant—a lifestyle that is unique to the Indian culture. The information provided by Sri Lanka concerning reintegration, basic amenities, and the education system was not sufficient to entice return. The RRIIs, however, received a grant upon their return, whether through their own travel arrangements or through a facilitated process, for their immediate housing needs, financial support, and material support to rebuild their lives. However, many RRIIs were unable to lead a decent life due to the changing economic landscape of the country. RRIIs had no concerns regarding safety and security; rather, they were concerned about losing their jobs and access to decent employment, which provides them with an income sufficient to cover their living expenses. The current economic crisis negatively affected their housing construction, increased unemployment among young RRIIs, and reduced productivity in their enterprises.



There is no stand-alone program for RRI in the current service provision. RRI are eligible for government assistance once they have been integrated into the GN and DS. The selection criteria of national programs often include RRI to target vulnerable segments of society.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS INCLUDING RRI

It is critical to start review of the policy in a transparent and inclusive way to ensure the development of an effective instrument to inform the governmental response to the general public, particularly RRI and IDPs. The following are specific recommendations to improve the quality of services delivered to RRI.

Coordination:

- Dialogue with relevant policy holders is required to streamline implementation of the policy at divisional / district and national level. Institutions such as the Office of Reparations and the Northern Province Coordination Office of the Presidential Secretariat with similar mandates should be included in the coordinating body in order to avoid overlaps and duplications.

Information:

- Provide MRE and information to RRI upon their return to Sri Lanka.
- Information and awareness about safe migration would help RRI and general public to make well informed decisions about their migration process to another country.

Livelihood:

- Conduct a value chain study in Mannar focusing on tourism & destination marketing and in Vavuniya focusing on agriculture products.
- Assist and guide RRI with product development and diversification in order to be competitive in the local market.
- Provide value-addition support for existing local products aimed at export markets. The value-addition support includes technology training, modern equipment, as well as product diversification.
- RRI engaged in agriculture may need extension services from the agrarian services. In addition, assistance in terms of seeds, irrigation equipment, fertilizers, and modern technology will help maximize yields so that they can be resilient to the effects of the economic crisis.
- Most of the RRI are engaged in livelihood activities. Further assistance, in terms of technical guidance, linkage building and provision of material and financial support is a need to push the businesses to be sustainable. Assistance in business expansion may help in generating additional employment opportunities for communities in the vicinity.
- Assist RRI to assess and engage in exporting local products with a particular focus on the Sri Lankan diaspora communities. Products derived from Palmyra, batik, and seafood may be considered for inclusion.
- Provide vocational skills to RRI and youth that match with the labour market demand and their career aspiration.
- Link the RRI and youth with the recognition of prior learning system to acquire national vocational qualification in order to be compatible in the local labour market.



Housing support:

- Conduct an assessment to identify the reasons why some RRIIs did not receive housing support.
- Introduce need-based livelihood support after assessing capacities of the recipient.

Reintegration:

- Provide assistance and guidance regarding livelihood support, evidence of civil documentation, and how to obtain required documentation would facilitate effective reintegration.

Documentation:

- Introduce a mechanism to obtain educational certificate equivalent to their level of education.

Food security:

- Introduce food rations for those who consume less than three meals per day until they are able to afford their food expenses.

Access to services:

- Awareness creation upon return would help RRIIs gain an adequate understanding about the service provision by different service providers (both state and non-state).
- Awareness campaign to dismantle harmful societal perceptions about RRIIs may help their reintegration.
- Create awareness among the general public, particularly among the RRIIs, about the state service provision on SGBV: services provided by the Children and Women Development Unit (CWDU); referral mechanism and its benefits to the community.

4.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR REDUCING IRREGULAR MIGRATION

- Information and awareness about safe migration would help RRIIs and general public to make well informed decisions about their migration process to another country.
- Accessible service providers who can raise awareness (Foreign Employment Bureau, visa consular services, high commissions, embassies), on punitive measure of irregular migration, risks associated with irregular migration
- Introduce a mechanism to obtain replacement documentation and educational certificates lost while fleeing.
- Support in reintegration, livelihood and other basic facilities to lead a standard lifestyle.
- More interim and sustainable measures integrating this community to the local community need to be prioritized and rolled out with a multi-sectorial coordinated approach. Any interventions meant for this community needs to be done with consultation and buy-in with the community's needs assessments and contextual studies.
- Regularisation of job recruiters and agencies is needed.



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ANNEXES

ANNEX 01: RESEARCH MATRIX

Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
Primary Objectives				
1. To assess the status of the durable solution and identify the length of the achievements made so far in assessing the gaps and needs in the implementation of the durable solution.	1. Durable solutions to refugee returnees from India	1.1.1. What are the durable solutions provided to refugee returnees from India? 1.1.2. What achievements have so far been made in the implementation of durable solutions to irregular and out migration?	KII KII	Government officers, I/NGOs
	1.2. Achievements so far made in the implementation of durable solutions 1.2.1. Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement;	1.1.1. How does the presence of landmines in your area (if any) affect your daily life? 1.2.1.2. Have you or your family received any Mine Risk Education (MRE) Information since upon your return? 1.2.1.3. If Yes, from where did you receive MRE? 1.2.1.4. Do you have military presence in your area? 1.2.1.5. How do you feel about military presence in your village/area? 1.2.1.6. What are the fears/anxieties do you have while living in Sri Lanka? - Discrimination/violence from government/police/political parties/ militant group/other ethnic group, etc. - Loss of family members - Losing children's educational opportunities - Loss of employment - Lack of safety and security of children - Safety and security of women - Not having any fear Access to Housing 1.2.2.1 Where do you reside right now? What is the reason that you do not live in your own house? Access to water and sanitation 1.2.2.2 What type of toilet do you have in the place where you currently live? How many individuals share this neighbor's/ common toilet? 1.2.2.3 What is the main source of drinking-water of your household? How far is it to your house? (Main source of drinking-water) Can you drink that water without purifying/ boiling? Access to Housing 1.2.2.1 Where do you reside right now? What is the reason that you do not live in your own house?	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	1.2.2 An adequate standard of living above the poverty line including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education;	<p>Access to water and sanitation</p> <p>1.2.2.2 What type of toilet do you have in the place where you currently live? How many individuals share this neighbor's/ common toilet?</p> <p>1.2.2.3 What is the main source of drinking-water of your household? How far is it to your house? (Main source of drinking-water) Can you drink that water without purifying/boiling?</p> <p>Access to health care</p> <p>1.2.2.4 Were you or any member of your family subjected to any health screening or testing in Sri Lanka because you are a refugee returnee?</p> <p>1.2.2.5 If yes, from where? (Multiple answers possible) By whom?</p> <p>1.2.2.6 What are the available healthcare facilities in your area? How far do you have to travel for the closest healthcare facility in your area?</p> <p>Access to basic education</p> <p>1.2.2.7 How many of your children (Grade 10 or below) are not currently attending school?</p> <p>1.2.2.8 If any, why are they not currently attending school?</p> <p>1.1.2.1 What educational support did you and your family received?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stationary uniform, etc. in school - Catch-up language class in school - Linkage with non-formal education/ - Sinhala language classes <p>1.1.2.2 Were you able to obtain an equivalent educational certificate in Sri Lanka?</p> <p>Food security</p> <p>1.1.2.3 Upon your arrival, did your family receive any food rations/allowance from the government any other organization?</p> <p>1.1.2.4 If Yes, for what period?</p> <p>1.1.2.5 During last 07 days, how many meals per day did household members have?</p>	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees



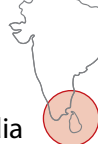
Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	1.1.3 Equal access to employment and livelihood opportunities (a secure job and living wage);	<i>Access to livelihood and employment</i> 1.2.3.1 What is your primary livelihood/ Source of income? 1.2.3.2 How often do you get an income from the said source? 1.2.3.3 What is your secondary source of income? 1.2.3.4 What was your primary source of income prior to displacement? Was the income sufficient to pay for basic expenses? 1.2.3.5 What is the average expenditure of your household? How much is the expenditure on food items? 1.2.3.6 What assistance did you receive to start and continue your livelihood? 1.2.3.7 Did you face any obstacles in receiving the assistance? 1.2.3.8 If yes, what are they? 1.2.3.9 What are your major impediments or problems (if any) to restoring livelihood? 1.2.3.10 How satisfied are you with your current financial situation? Fully satisfied / satisfied / not at all satisfied / Don't know / Refused to answer 1.2.3.11 Do you feel that your financial situation in the past 3 years has ... improved a lot / Somewhat improved / Remained the same / Somewhat deteriorated / Don't know/ Refused to answer 1.2.3.12 Do you think that in the next 12 months your financial situation will be ... Improved a lot / Somewhat improved / remain the same / Somewhat deteriorated/ Don't know / Refuse to answer 1.2.3.13 What is currently the aspect of your life that concerns you the most? Income / Job / Health / Safety / Landlessness/land dispute/ Sanitation/ Water/ HoH/income earner is disable/ Civil documentation / Security / Other / Don't know / Refuse to answer	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
		Youth employment /unemployment 1.2.3.14 Do you have family members between the ages of 18-35 employed? 1.2.3.15 If yes, which sector is he/she employed in? 1.2.3.16 Have they obtained vocational training or any livelihood training? 1.2.3.17 Do you have family members who are between the ages of 18 – 35, able to work but without a livelihood? If yes, how many? 1.2.3.18 If yes, what is the reason for the unemployment? 1.2.3.19 If they make an income without any livelihood, how do they do so?	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees
	1.1.4 Equal access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with just/equitable compensation;	Access to Land 1.1.4.1 Does your household have land? What document do you have regarding your land? If you don't have land document(s), why not? 1.1.4.2 Does your household have access to your land? If no, why can't you access your land? 1.1.4.3 If there is a dispute regarding ownership of the land, where did you go to resolve this dispute? 1.1.4.4 If your household is landless, did you apply for land with the authorities? 1.1.4.5 If not, why? 1.1.4.6 If yes, what institution/person did you apply to for land? Have you obtained land? If not, why? Access to Housing 1.1.4.7 Did you receive any shelter assistance upon your return? If yes, from whom? What type of shelter assistance?	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	1.1.4 Equal access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with just/equitable compensation;	<p>Reintegration assistance</p> <p>1.1.4.8 Have you got any reintegration assistance? If yes, mention them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - House/ shelter material/repairs - Educational expenses - Start a business - Legal expenses (e.g., to claim land, solve a dispute....) - Medical expenses - Everyday expenses (food, clothing etc.) Other (specify): _____ <p>1.1.4.9 Is your family registered with the DS/GN?</p> <p>1.1.4.10 If not, what is the reason?</p> <p>1.1.4.11 Has anyone / group come to your house to register your family, other than DS/GN authorities?</p> <p>1.1.4.12 If yes, who are they?</p> <p>1.1.4.13 Other than registration, has your household been visited by anyone/ group for interviews?</p> <p>1.1.4.14 If yes, who are they? How many times have they visited your house?</p> <p>1.1.4.15 Does anyone restrict or register your movements in and out of your village?</p> <p>1.1.4.16 If yes, who are they? Civil documentation</p> <p>1.1.5.1 Do you have family members in your households who do not have any birth certificate?</p> <p>1.1.5.2 How many in your household who had a Sri Lankan birth certificate, but now do not?</p> <p>1.1.5.3 What is the reason why these members have not applied for Sri Lankan birth certificate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have applied, not yet received - Haven't applied because I don't know how - My birth was not registered in Sri Lanka - Lack of supportive documents - Other (specify): _____ 	HH Survey	Refugee returnees



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	1.1.5 Equal access to and replacement of personal and other documentation;	<p>1.1.5.4 Do you have family members in your household who are above 18 years of age who do not have a National Identity Card (NIC)?</p> <p>1.1.5.5 Do you have family members do not currently have any of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sri Lankan birth certificate - National Identity Card (NIC) - Sri Lankan passport <p>1.1.5.6 Do you have family members who were born in India, who have faced with problems obtaining Sri Lankan citizenship? Y/N</p> <p>1.1.5.7 If yes, what is/was the main obstacle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delay in obtaining the birth certificate - Not aware of the process - I do not have money to pay the late registration/penalty fee - Other (specify) <p>1.1.5.8 Have all adult family members got registered to vote? If not, what is the main reason?</p> <p>I/our family didn't want to register Applied. Waiting for a response Applied. But, rejected by the authorities I/we are not aware Other (specify) _____</p>	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees
	1.1.6 Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement;	<p>1.1.6.1 What challenges did you face upon returning to Sri Lanka?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack access to reliable information in my first language - Unawareness of procedure to obtain required documentation - Lack of information about whereabouts of my relatives - Difficulties accessing evidence of civic documentation - Difficulty in accessing health services - Difficulty in accessing livelihood opportunities - Lack of counselling support - others (specify) 	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees
	1.1.7 Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population;	<p>1.1.7.1 Do you feel that your family is treated differently by the community because you are a returned refugee?</p> <p>1.1.7.2 If your family has a civil (not Criminal) dispute with the community/ neighbor, where will you go to solve it?</p>	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	1.1.8 Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.	1.1.8.4 Did you approach the concerned authority in case of any discrimination or violence? 1.1.8.5 Did you get justice from the authority for the discrimination and violence you faced, if any? 1.1.8.6 Has the host community accommodated you enough or you feel safe in their presence?	HH Survey	Refugee Returnees
	1.2 Existing gaps and needs in durable solutions to irregular and out migration	1.2.2 What are the existing gaps and needs in durable solutions to irregular and out migration?	KII and FGD	Refugee Returnees Government officers. I/NGOs
2 Evaluate the impact of the economic crisis on the local economy and job market and identify potential opportunities for economic development that can benefit community members, refugees, and returnees, and reduce irregular migration.	2.1 Impact of the economic crisis on the local economy and job market	2.1.2 How has the economic crisis impact on the local economy and the job market? Questions to be asked: What obstacles and constraints did you face as a result of current economic crisis?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs
	2.2 Potential opportunities for economic development	2.2.2 What opportunities are there for economic development?	KII and FGD	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
3 Assess the impact of conflict and displacement on the community and identify potential strategies for addressing the unique needs of refugees and returnees, and reducing irregular migration.	3.1 impact of conflict and displacement on the community	1.1.2 What is the impact of conflict and displacement on the community?	KII and FGD	Government officers. I/NGOs
	3.2 potential strategies for addressing the unique needs of IDPs and returnees	3.2.2 What are the unique needs of IDPs and Refugee returnees from India?	KII and FGD	Government officers. I/NGOs
	3.3 Push and pull factors for irregular migration	3.3.2 Why do people migrate to other countries without documentation? What are the pulling factors? (relatives and networks / social media groups) What are the pushing factors?	Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship	Refugee returnees from India, Government officers. I/NGOs



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
4 Evaluate the state of basic services in the community, including healthcare, education, and housing, and identify potential strategies for improving access and quality of services for all community members, refugees, and returnees, and reducing irregular migration	4.1 Basic services in the community	4.1.2 What are the available healthcare, education, and housing services for the community? 4.1.3 What services have the community accessed? 4.1.4 What do the community think about the services received?	HH survey, KII and FGD	Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship Refugee returnees from India, Government officers. I/NGOs
	4.2 Potential strategies for improving access and quality of services for all community members, refugees, and returnees	4.2.2 How can the available services be improved for all community members, refugees, and returnees?		Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	4.3 Potential strategies for improving access and quality of services for reducing irregular migration	4.3.2 How can the available services be improved to reduce the irregular migration?		
5 Assess the potential impact of different solutions on returnees, including economic benefits, social and environmental risks, and potential challenges related to integration and social cohesion, as well as the potential to reduce irregular migration	5.1 Impact of different solutions on returnees	5.1.2 What are the different solutions provided to issues and problems faced by the Refugee returnees from India? 5.1.3 What changes have these solutions made in their lives? What solution did ADRA provide? 5.1.4 What changes have made ADRA's solutions on refugee returnees from India?	KII, FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	5.2 Economic benefits	5.2.2 What economic benefits have the refugee returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs? 5.2.3 What economic benefits have the refugee returnees from India received by the solutions provided by ADRA? 5.2.4 How has ADRA's support contributed to local economic development?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	5.3 Social benefits	5.3.2 What social benefits have the Refugee returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	5.4 Social and environmental risks	5.4.2 What social risks derived by these solutions provided by government and CSOs? 5.4.3 What environmental risks derived by these solutions provided by the government and CSOs?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	5.5 Potential challenges related to integration and social cohesion of Refugee returnees from India	5.5.2 What are the challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of refugee returnees from India? 5.5.3 What are the potential challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of refugee returnees from India?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	5.6 Potential to reduce irregular migration	5.6.2 How can we reduce the irregular migration?	KII and FGD, Case story	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
6 Identify the primary drivers of out-migration, including economic factors, social and cultural factors, and the impact of conflict and displacement.	See above 3.3.1			
7 Assess the awareness level and attitudes towards regular and irregular migration among community members, refugees, and returnees.	7.1 The awareness on regular and irregular migration among community members, refugees, and returnees.	7.1.2 What is regular migration? And what are the means of regular migration? 7.1.3 What is irregular migration? What are the means of irregular migration? 7.1.4 Why do people use regular means of migration? 7.1.5 Why do people use irregular means of migration?	KII & FGD	Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
	7.2 Attitudes towards regular and irregular migration among community members, refugees, and returnees.	<p>7.2.2 Likert scale to measure attitude and perception about regular and irregular migration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both regular and irregular migration exposes people to resources - Both regular and irregular migration increases social status - Both irregular and regular migration provide better living standards - Poverty pushes people to search for greener pasture through irregular migration. - Lack of job opportunities in the country acts as a factor for many people to migrate irregularly. - People try to leave the country because they are frustrated with the governing structure. - Success stories of irregular migration motivate others to use the same. <p>7.2.3 Likert scale to measure attitude and perception about opportunities in guest country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guest country is a place where human rights and the law are respected - The guest country welcomes the people from other countries - The guest country has good job opportunities - The guest country offers good quality life - It is easy for people from other countries to get a visa to come to and live in the guest country. <p>It is easy to get welfare benefits in the guest country</p>	HH survey and FGD	Refugee returnees Government officers. I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
8 Assess the current socioeconomic conditions for community members, IDPs, and Refugee returnees from India, including access to basic services, job opportunities, and housing, and the impact of migration on these conditions.	See above 1.2 and 4.1			



Objective	Information needed	Questions to be asked	Data collection method	Stakeholder category
9 Identify the needs and aspirations of the community, IDPs, and Refugee returnees from India, including the types of services and programs that would help to support them and address the primary drivers of out-migration, and the factors that influence their decision to migrate regularly or irregularly.	9.1 Existing needs of the community, IDPs and Refugee returnees from India	9.1.2 What are the existing needs of IDPs and Refugee returnees from India in Sri Lanka? 9.1.3 What are the needs and aspirations of the 1st generation and 2nd generation members among the Refugee returnees from India?	KII and FGD	Refugee returnees from India, Government officers, I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
	9.2 Primary drivers of irregular or outmigration	9.2.2 What are the primary drivers of irregular/ out- migration? 9.2.3 What factors influence their decision to migrate?	KII and FGD	Refugee returnees from India, Government officers, I/NGOs Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship
10 Identify potential solutions sought by the affected population to support economic development in the community, repatriation towards achieving durable solutions	10.1 Challenges / obstacles and constraints 10.2 The way challenges were mitigated 10.3 Additional support needed	10.3.2 What challenges / obstacles and constraints do you face back in Sri Lanka? 10.3.3 How did you mitigate the challenges you just mentioned? 10.3.4 What additional support do you need to address the challenges you mentioned?	KII and FGD	Female and male entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship



ANNEX 02: HH QUESTIONNAIRE

ADRA_HOUSEHOLD_SURVEY_QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire No: 2023-07-16T19:31_

Record your current location

latitude (x,y °)

longitude (x,y °)

altitude (m)

accuracy (m)



Name of the Interviewer:

Select Appropriate

- ☐ 1. Navaratnam Arulananth
- ☐ 2. Nithimurukan Muhinthan
- ☐ 3. S.Sujanika
- ☐ 4. Robert Roxcy
- ☐ 5. Selvam Senthamiliny
- ☐ 6. Vinojica Mahendran
- ☐ 7. Lingnathan Isaivanan
- ☐ 8. Other

8. Other

Date and Time Interviewed:

yyyy-mm-dd

hh:mm



ANNEX 03: FGD GUIDE

Participants' register: Women..... Men:.....

Venue:

Facilitator:

Date:

1. *Introduction:*

1. Introduce all the facilitators by name, objectives of the focus group discussion and explain COVID-19 protocol: maintaining 1.5 metre distance, wearing surgical face mask (face mask to be distributed when they enter the hall after their temperature is checked) and washing the hands. (Explain about the recording and how to maintain confidentiality).
 - Facilitator asks participants to:
 - Introduce themselves
 - One thing you love about yourself
2. Facilitator helps group to set rules.
 - There are no wrong answers
 - Even if you do not agree with another person's view, do not interrupt
 - Reduce movement during the discussion so we don't have to take too long
 - Only answer mobile phones during a break as this is a confidential discussion
 - DO not repeat any of this discussion outside this space
 - Ask participants to add any other rules
3. Facilitator asks: Please can I turn on the recorder? TURN RECORDER ON
4. As I have now turned on the recorder can I just ask everyone to consent to the recording of this discussion? Each person needs to say 'yes'. The facilitator then confirms for the recording that everyone has given their consent.
5. Please feel free to participate and be as honest as possible. Please do not give your name or the name of any other person. Any questions? Let's begin.

2. *Durable solutions*

- 2.1 What are the durable solutions to irregular and out migration?
- 2.2 What achievements have so far been made in the implementation of durable solutions to irregular and out migration?
- 2.3 What are the existing gaps and needs in durable solutions to irregular and out migration?

3. *Economic crisis*

- 3.1 How has the economic crisis impacted the local economy and the job market?
- 3.2 What opportunities are there for economic development?

4. *Conflict and displacement*

- 4.1 What is the impact of conflict and displacement on the community?
- 4.2 What are the unique needs of IDPs and Refugee Returnees from India? What do people think about the IDPs and Refugee returnees from India?



- 4.3 What are the different solutions provided to issues and problems faced by the Refugee Returnees from India?
- 4.4 What changes have these solutions made in their lives?
- 4.5 What economic benefits have the Refugee Returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs?
- 4.6 What social benefits have the Refugee Returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs?
- 4.7 What social risks derived by these solutions were provided by government and CSOs?
- 4.8 What environmental risks derived by these solutions were provided by the government and CSOs?
- 4.9 What are the challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of Refugee Returnees from India?
- 4.10 What are the potential challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of Refugee Returnees from India?
- 4.11 What are the existing needs of IDPs and Refugee Returnees from India in Sri Lanka?
- 4.12 What are the needs and aspirations of the 1st generation and 2nd generation members among the Refugee Returnees from India?
- 4.13 What additional support do you need to address the challenges you mentioned?

F5. Irregular and out-migration

- 5.1 What is regular migration? What are the means of regular migration? Why do people use regular means of migration?
- 5.2 What is irregular migration? What are the means of irregular migration? Why do people use irregular means of migration?
- 5.3 Why do people migrate to other countries without documentation? What are the pulling factors? (relatives and networks / social media groups) What are the pushing factors? What are the primary drivers of irregular/ out- migration? What factors influence their decision to migrate?
- 5.4 What do people think / tell about the guest countries?
- 5.5 How can we reduce irregular migration?

6. Available services

- 6.1 What are the available healthcare, education, and housing services for the community?
- 6.2 What services have the community accessed?
- 6.3 What do the community think about the services received?
- 6.4 How can the available services be improved for all community members, refugees, and returnees?
- 6.5 How can the available services be improved to reduce irregular migration?

7 Community solutions

- 7.1 What challenges / obstacles and constraints do you face back in Sri Lanka?
- 7.2 How did you mitigate the challenges you just mentioned?
- 7.3 What additional support do you need to address the challenges you mentioned?



ANNEX 04: KII GUIDE

Name of the DSD:

Name of the interviewee:

Name of the interviewer:

Date:

1. *Durable solutions*

- 1.1. What are the durable solutions to irregular and out migration?
- 1.2. What achievements have so far been made in the implementation of durable solutions to irregular and out migration?
- 1.3. What are the existing gaps and needs in durable solutions to irregular and out migration?

2. *Economic crisis*

- 2.1. How has the economic crisis impacted the local economy and the job market?
- 2.2. What opportunities are there for economic development?

3. *Conflict and displacement*

- 3.1. What is the impact of conflict and displacement on the community?
- 3.2. What are the unique needs of IDPs and Refugee Returnees from India? What do people think about the IDPs and Refugee Returnees from India?
- 3.3. What are the different solutions provided to issues and problems faced by the Refugee Returnees from India?
- 3.4. What changes have these solutions made in their lives?
- 3.5. What economic benefits have the Refugee Returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs?
- 3.6. What social benefits have the Refugee Returnees from India received by the solutions provided by government and CSOs?
- 3.7. What social risks derived by these solutions were provided by government and CSOs?
- 3.8. What environmental risks derived by these solutions were provided by the government and CSOs?
- 3.9. What are the challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of Refugee Returnees from India?
- 3.10. What are the potential challenges related to the integration and social cohesion of Refugee Returnees from India?
- 3.11. What are the existing needs of IDPs and Refugee returnees from India in Sri Lanka?
- 3.12. What are the needs and aspirations of the 1st generation and 2nd generation members among the Refugee Returnees from India?
- 3.13. What additional support do you need to address the challenges you mentioned?



4. *Irregular and out-migration*

- 4.1. What is regular migration? What are the means of regular migration? Why do people use regular means of migration?
- 4.2. What is irregular migration? What is the means of irregular migration? Why do people use irregular means of migration?
- 4.3. Why do people migrate to other countries without documentation? What are the pulling factors? (relatives and networks / social media groups) What are the pushing factors? What are the primary drivers of irregular/ out- migration? What factors influence their decision to migrate?
- 4.4. What do people think / tell about the guest countries?
- 4.5. How can we reduce irregular migration?

5. *Available services*

- 5.1. What are the available healthcare, education, and housing services for the community?
- 5.2. What services have the community accessed?
- 5.3. What do the community think about the services received?
- 5.4. How can the available services be improved for all community members, refugees, and returnees?
- 5.5. How can the available services be improved to reduce irregular migration?



ANNEX 05: CASE STORY GUIDE

1.	Name:	
2.	Address:	
3.	DS Division:	
4.	Telephone (Mobile):	
5.	Age:	
6.	Education:	
7.	<p>Background:</p> <p>Tell me about yourself</p> <p>Probe in:</p> <p>What did you learn when you were in India?</p> <p>What careers have you engaged in? Why?</p> <p>What vocational training did you obtain? Why?</p>	
8.	<p>What support did you receive when you were back in Sri Lanka?</p> <p>Probe in:</p> <p>Who provided the support?</p> <p>What changes have these solutions made in your life?</p> <p>What do you think about the support received?</p>	



9.	<p>What support did you receive from ADRA?</p> <p>What changes have these solutions made in your life?</p> <p>What do you think about the support received?</p>	
10.	<p>What challenges did you face when you are trying to integrate into society / community?</p> <p>What support has the project provided to overcome the challenges? (probe in)</p>	
11.	<p>What would be the future challenges that you would face a returnee refugee from India?</p>	
12.	<p>Have you got any support to start the business?</p> <p>If so from whom and what kind of support?</p>	
13.	<p>What were the major challenge or challenges you faced when you were starting the business? (Probe in)</p> <p>How did you overcome these challenges?</p>	
14.	<p>What challenges did you face when operating and sustaining the business?</p> <p>What support has the project provided to overcome the challenges? (probe in)</p>	
15.	<p>How has the economic crisis impact on the local economy and the job market?</p> <p>Questions to be asked:</p> <p>What obstacles and constraints did you face as a result of current economic crisis?</p>	



16.	Name of the Business:	
17.	Date started:	
18.	Registration (Y/N): If not registered, what are the reasons? What steps have you taken to register the business after joining the project?	
19.	No of years in Business:	
20.	The Size of the Market:	
21.	Has this changed after joining the project?	
22.	Type of business engaged: Sectors engaged in Why do they engage in several as well as different businesses?	
23.	Type of Ownership:	
24.	Type of product/s:	
25.	Reason for starting the business or businesses:	
26.	Number of Employees (full time):	
27.	Number of Employees (part time):	



28.	What were other programs organised by ADRA you participated in? How did these programs help you?	
29.	Networking organisations: How has the project helped in expanding the network?	
30.	Reasons for networking:	
31.	Linkage and connection with state service provision: Have you obtained services from the state sector and / or private sector? If so, what are they? Have faced any challenges in obtaining services?	
32.	What is the most significant change in your life and business after you joined the project?	
33.	Vision for the future	
34.	How do you intend to support other growing businesses by women?	
35.	Social Media usage for business promotion: Do you use social media to market your products? Obtain log details Types of social media	



ANNEX 06: KII & FGD SCHEDULE

District	Location	KII
Mannar	DS Manthai West	DS, ADP, Foreign Development Office
	DS Nanathan	ADS,ADP, DO,FDO, DN
	DS Mannar Town	ADP, CRPO, WDO,
	District Secretariat Mannar	District Secretary, Director Planning and NGO Coordinator
Vavuniya	DS Vavuniya Town	DS, ADP, GS, DC, DO
	District Secretariat Vavuniya	Director Planning
National Level	Colombo	Director General and Chief Executive Officer of Office for Reparations
	Colombo	Research Manager of Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
	Colombo	President of OfERR, Sri Lanka
	Jaffna	Independent Consultant to NGOs
	Colombo	Independent International Legal Expert, International Humanitarian Law
Batticaloa	Batticaloa	Senior Program Manager, AMCOR Sri Lanka
FGD		
Mannar	Pesalai, Thullukudi, Kudiyiruppu	Refugee returnees
	Pesalai	Refugee returnees
Vavuniya	Kannadi	Refugee returnees
	Thalikulam	Refugee returnees
Case Stories		
Mannar		02 Case stories
Vavuniya		02 Case stories

ANNEX 07: CASE STORIES

CASE STORY ONE: THILLAINAYAKI

"I built the foundation of the house with the savings I made from the profit"

Thillainayaki is 45 years old and lives in Mannar. Her school career ended at grade 9. She is married and has three children. Her husband is a casual worker. Their elder daughter is married. Her family left to India in the year 1990 due to the civil war and multiple displacements her family faced during this time in Sri Lanka. They returned Sri Lanka in 2005. Thillainayaki started this business because of her family's situation. She is the main breadwinner of the family because her husband has not studied and he cannot read or write. He can only do labour work. The family lives from the income generated from this business.

Thillainayaki, sharing her thoughts on what she felt when she was in India said when I was in India, I felt I was a refugee. I came back because I wanted to get citizenship. When we arrived in Sri Lanka in the year 2005, IOM supported us by building us a temporary shelter. ZOA supported us by providing a toilet facility. We were promised a house from an Indian Housing Scheme which we are still waiting to get.

She heard about ADRA through the DO when she met him to request support for her business. ADRA supported her with some iron sheets and storage containers. I am making an Oddial product (Palmyra food value addition



product). My house is a temporary shelter and I needed a separate place to do this business. It was then that the ADRA provided iron sheets to building a temporary hut. She also participated in the 1 day of Business Skill Training conducted by the ADRA.

Thillainayaki was happy with her business and said from this business, I earn more and save the profit. I built the foundation of the house with the savings I made from the profits.

When Thillainayaki was asked about any challenges she faced when she started her business, she said she has not faced any challenges.

She said she learnt how to make Oddial from a friend. She also obtained a loan of Rupees Twenty Thousand (Rs.20,000/-) from WRDS and repaid this from the profit she earned.

Thillainayaki has faced social challenges, particularly as a woman and economic challenges too, in stating, operating and sustaining the new business. When I started this business, it was new to me. As woman, starting a middlemen's business was very challenging because we deal with men. Society looked at it in a different way. During the off session, she collects Oddial from others for some amount of money and sells it at a wholesale price to another businessman. Here, since she is breaking gender stereotypes so she facing challengers from community.

She faced more challenges as when she started her business, the Palmyra seed cost only two rupees but now, the price has increased to ten rupees because of the demand. Due to the economic crises and the high cost of fuel, transport and labour chargers are really high. She finds it difficult to manage as during harvesting time, she needs to employ more labourers.

Other challenges Thillainayaki faced are finding markets, bargaining prices and the lack of business knowledge.

Obtaining a Business Registration was another challenge, because she needs a suitable place to make Oddial. If she applies now, the PHI will reject her application. If her house is built, then she can apply for registration.

Competition has also increased as government officers also started this business as a part-time occupation.

Integrating with society is important to improve my business but there have not been any networking initiatives or expansions done by the ADRA project. I built a network with others on my own initiative.

Social media platforms are not used to promote her business.

My vision for the future is to register my business and earn well said Thillainayaki in conclusion.



CASE STORY TWO: PERUMAL

"Through this business, I earn more and save the profits."

Perumal, 46, lives in Vavuniya. He was educated up to the 9th grade. He has been engaged in vegetable cultivation since 2017. His wife helps him too. They sell their produce to the local market.

Due to the civil war during which time his family experienced displacements on a few occasions, they fled to India seeking refuge. Perumal and his mother left Sri Lanka in 1990. They were joined later on by his father and sister. While Perumal was in India, he engaged in labour work.

His father returned to Sri Lanka in 1993, and lived in a camp and unfortunately passed away at the camp. Perumal returned to Sri Lanka with his mother 2016 but his sister stayed back in India as she felt life was better there. His mother is very old and visually handicapped and therefore, needs support.

In 1990, we lived in Kilinochchi at which time, my father owned 2 acres of land. However, when we came back to Sri Lanka and went to Kilinochchi, we found that our land was occupied by 8 families and they had built houses and settled there. If we work towards getting back our land, it's a long drawn out legal process which will take a long time.

They purchased land for Rupees Two Hundred Thousand and moved to Vavuniya. Speaking on how he felt when he was in India, Perumal said "When I was living in India, I felt like a refugee and that's why I came back because I needed citizenship." He added that he had married a beautiful lady recently.

Upon my return to Sri Lanka, I decided to start vegetable cultivation as a business for family income and I needed some kind of a job or work. Then I started vegetable cultivation. I had saved some money, two hundred to three hundred rupees a day to spend on starting this business.

When they arrived in Sri Lanka in the year 2016, the UNHCR gave him Rupees Twenty Thousand and the Grama Niladhari also supported them by giving them some dry rations.

A UK-based voluntary organization provided some iron sheets and bricks to build a semi-permanent house. He added that they were promised Government housing which they are still waiting for and the Government Officers told him to wait. However, the Government supports his mother who receives a monthly disability allowance of Rupees Five Thousand.

ADRA supported Perumal by granting them Rupees One Hundred and Seventy-Five Thousand (Rs. 175,000/-) to build a fence surrounding the cultivation area. Without a fence, the cultivation area is affected by wild animals and after receiving the support from ADRA, my crops are saved and I get more harvest. I cultivated more crops such as manioc, peas and chillies. He also participated in a one-day Business Skills Training programme.

The ADRA project changed his life as he said through this business, I earn more and save the profits.

There have not been any networking initiatives or expansions by the ADRA project. However, Perumal has on his own initiatives independently built a network with other farmers. Perumal said networking is important to integrate with society, because people's support is important.

Perumal faced a few challenges initially. When I came here, the CSOs did not enroll me as member of the Samurdhi Society, but I continuously participated at meetings and lent my support to this society. Later on, I become the



President of the Samurdhi Society! Now people are very close to me and they take advice for all activities. They call Indian man. He went on to say that there are no RDS, WRD in this area.

Perumal also said that as a refugee returnee, they will face land issues because due to the war, they lost all documentation and neither do they have money or power to fight with the people who encroached their lands or the government. Finding employment will also be very difficult.

He went on to say that adapting to a new area, moving to a new place and cleaning the land are a few major challenges he faced. "I still need a water tank facility because if I pump water directly, the electricity bill will be very high and I can't bear the cost to operate and sustain my new business."

Sharing his views on the Impact of the economic crisis on the local economy and job market, Perumal had this to say; "Transport and utility bills are high rather than cultivation is more profitable because cultivation is the root of the country's economy. Due to the high cost of transport, we sell our produce to the middlemen and so, the profit is low." Perumal says there has been no change in the size of the market after the project's interventions yet. He does not use any social media platforms to promote his products.

In conclusion Perumal shared his future vision which is to expand his cultivation on more acres of land and employ workers.



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