

Research Article

**Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu**

Maneesh P<sup>1</sup>, Dr. A. Jayakodi<sup>2</sup>, Dr.R.Saikumar<sup>3</sup>, Dr.K.Rajesh Kumar<sup>4</sup>, sk Yeer Mahammad<sup>5</sup>

**Abstract**

Sri Lankan Tamils fled to India with an intention to save their lives from the ethnic conflict and to seek refuge. The influx began in 1983 when the war between LTTE and the Sri Lankan army reached its peak. Hundreds of Tamil have died and many were deeply injured. India was their natural choice to seek shelter due to the linguistic affinity, geographical contiguity and cultural proximity. Upon arrival, the refugees were registered and shifted to a transit camp and thereafter transported to several government-run camps across the state. The refugees who are living in camps enjoy the benefits of welfare schemes such as free education, health care, monthly cash doles, infrastructure and pensions. The basic human rights of refugees were denied for the first time since their settlement in the camps and the government imposed strict control over refugees following the assassination of Rajeev Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India. Their right to movement, education and employment were restricted and they were confined in the camps. After 25 years of settlement in the camps, the lives of refugees have changed but they remain as 'alien' or foreigner. They do not have the right to own property, access to the government jobs is denied and freedom of movement out of the district boundary is also restricted. They are still living in a deplorable condition in the camps where there are no proper housing, sanitation and health care facilities. Accessing employment is one of the prominent challenges in the host country because they are not allowed to be employed in the public sector. Most camps are overcrowded and individual privacy was non-existent. Thus, the camp condition is not conducive to rear livestock and the possibility of farming is ruled out due to the absence of land. A few refugees have movable properties like car, auto-rickshaw and bike and a countable number of refugees possess shops and land which are either rented out or purchased by a third party for refugees. The Government has been providing free education without ensuring provision for employment in the public sector. Therefore educated people seek employment in the unorganised sector and remain as wage earners. They do not get employment throughout the period and the works available for them are very hardy which are not disposed to be done by local labourers. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.  
Email: maneeshpanakkeel21@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor, Department of Economics, Government College for women (Autonomous), Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu.

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Arts, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

<sup>5</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, KL University, Vaddeswaram, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

## Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu

Government dole of Rs. 1000 is not enough to meet basic needs and the problem of unemployment, confined life in the camp and lack of local acceptance has accelerated the problem of sustainable livelihood. The study intends to articulate the question of sustainable livelihood for Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from 50 refugees living in the Pethikuppan refugee camp in Thiruvallore district of Tamil Nadu. The livelihood framework of Department for International Development (DFID) was used to analyse the livelihood security of refugees.

**Keywords:** Sustainable livelihood approach, labour market, refugee's camp, legal status, livelihood strategies, Tamil refugees.

### Introduction

A human can last on the Planet Earth only with essentials including food, shelter, water and clothing. Through a set of actions, humans secure such necessities of life. Throughout the human history, people have to depend on the particular natural resources or activities to secure livelihood. Livelihood is defined broadly by Chambers and Conway, (1992) as: "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long-term."

The sustainable living will create livelihood to others and transmit the benefits to the future generation. How a person's livelihood creates livelihood to others? We can analyse by an example; A fisherman who depends upon the nearby river for livelihood. He catches and sells the fish in the local marketplace. Does this livelihood activity create a livelihood to others? Livelihoods are found to satisfy not only the needs of one person but also generate new opportunities of livelihood for many through an increased demand for goods and services. From the above example of a fisherman, if the fisherman sells his fish to a fish vendor in the market, the vendor will have to sell fish and secure money. If the fisherman refuses to catch fish during the trawl ban, the stock of fish will be sustained for the next generation. Sustainability is mainly associated with current availability and consumption. If resources are overexploited and no sustainable policies are in place to preserve the environment, the question of livelihood security becomes relevant.

Sri Lankan Tamils are the Tamil people of Sri Lankan origin in India and non-resident Sri Lankan Tamils. Refugees all over the globe have been neglected by both their homelands and the host countries, and the Tamil Sri Lankan refugees are no exception in this regard. Lack of security in their home countries makes them seek refuge in some other country. Lack of facilities in the countries of asylum leaves them frustrated with a lowered sense of animation. To a refugee, the most important thing is to be alive, and then being alive takes precedence over their quality of life. Most of these refugees have fled overnight giving away all that they had built in their lifetime and that of their ancestors (Gladston Xavier and Florina Benoit, 2011).

Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are living in government-owned camps with monthly financial help. Housing is the main factor that eats up the financial support of refugees. There are several rules and regulations for refugees living in the camps and they are under the surveillance of the Q branch. The major issue of refugees in the camp is the lack of access to the labour market. Even educated youth suffer from unemployment.

The ethnic violence in Sri Lanka and its allied displacement has forced the people to cross the Indian Ocean. The southern state of Tamil Nadu was their destination because Sri Lanka is just 20 miles away from Tamil Nadu and the language spoken by the people are the same. There is a close link between Sri Lankan Tamil and Indians. Tamil people migrated to Sri Lanka during the colonial rule for working in tea plantations and gradually settled in the island. They adopted Sri Lankan culture and lifestyle and their next generations lived on the island. Due to some political issues with the Sri Lankan government, the minority Tamil speaking community was brutally attacked by the majority Sinhala community. Tamil people are concentrated in the north-eastern part of the island. Most of them are engaged in plantation works, agriculture, fishing, manual labour and office works. The experience of refugees in the island was life-threatening and the murder of relatives by violent mobs, bombing, conflict between Sri Lankan Army and LTTE, torture and violence from Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and forced displacement have compelled them to seek shelter in the neighbouring country.

Settlement in the camp was not comfortable and highly congested. There is no social privacy, all the members of the family slept in the single room and the room is 10/10 with thatched or sheet ceiling. Since the settlements are in the camp, refugees have extended their homes by adding the kitchen and a small veranda. Proper toilet facilities in the camps were built with the assistance of the Government and NGOs. In some camps, there is well-connected network of roads and drainage system. The continuous efforts on the part of the government have been taken to improve the living condition of refugees. The efforts included financial assistance to each member of the family together with food grains and dressing materials. The head of the family receives Rs. 1000, each family member aged 12 receives Rs. 750 and members below 12 years were given Rs. 400, which is not sufficient to meet the basic requirements (Acharya, 2003).

India has decided not to give permanent resident status or Indian citizenship to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, expecting them to return to their homeland following the conclusion of the war. As of January 2016, 64079 refugees are living in 108 Government authorised camps in Tamil Nadu.

### **Background of the Study**

Refugees depart their home to save their lives and leave all their property and belongings and remain in a state of deprivation in the host country. The government and people of the host country are very generous in welcoming the refugees and necessary arrangements have made in accordance with the flow of refugees. The camps allotted for the refugees lack some of the basic facilities and livelihood options are limited. The food materials sanctioned by the government are poor in quality and social privacy in the camp is largely low. The number of persons living in a small hut in the camp exceeds the limit of the space. The male inmates of the camp often seek a job in the nearby labour market. The other livelihood options like animal rearing, agriculture, fishing etc are not available in the camp surroundings. The refugees are not permitted to migrate for a long distance for employment. The absence of employment in the public sector, irregular employment and poor wages have obliged them to rely on government assistance. Over the three decades of settlement, the refugees found their own livelihoods. In this context, the study aims to investigate the livelihood status of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

### **Objectives of the Study**

## Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu

The study generally analyses the livelihood condition of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in camps refugees through the performance of livelihood assets. The specific objectives of the study are the following.

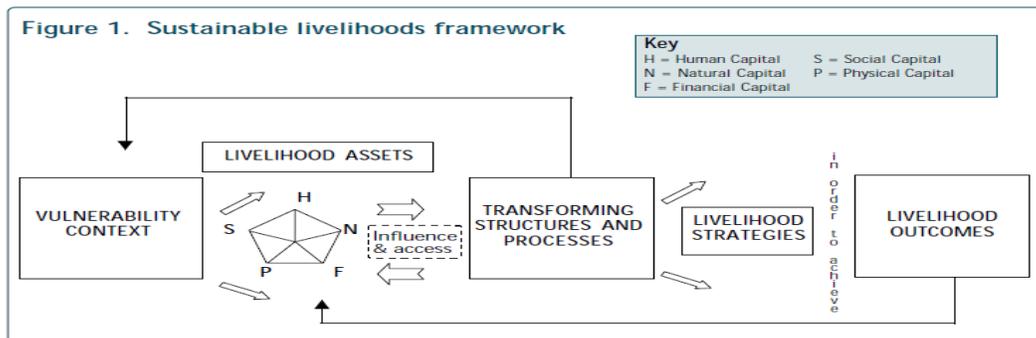
1. To assess various livelihood assets of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees like human, social, natural, physical and financial capitals.
2. To identify the problems of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in livelihood sustenance.

### Methodology

The study is based on primary data gathered from 50 camp living refugees of Pethikuppan refugee camp in Thiruvallore district, Tamil Nadu. The camp is located about 5 km away from the Gumudipoondi town and about 50 km away from the state capital of Chennai. The camp was opened for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in 1991. Majority of the respondents in the camp are settled over 25 years, that is, immediately after the inception of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The outsiders are not allowed to enter the camp. Therefore, data was collected from outside of the camp. This has induced the researcher to choose convenience sampling for selecting respondents. The refugees who are going out of the camp were interviewed with an interview schedule. The interview took a maximum of thirty minutes. The refugees who are free to talk had spent more time on the interview. The collected data were entered into SPSS for analysis. The simple percentage analysis was used to interpret the data. The sustainable livelihood approaches (SLA) of the British Department for International Development (DFID) was applied in the study.

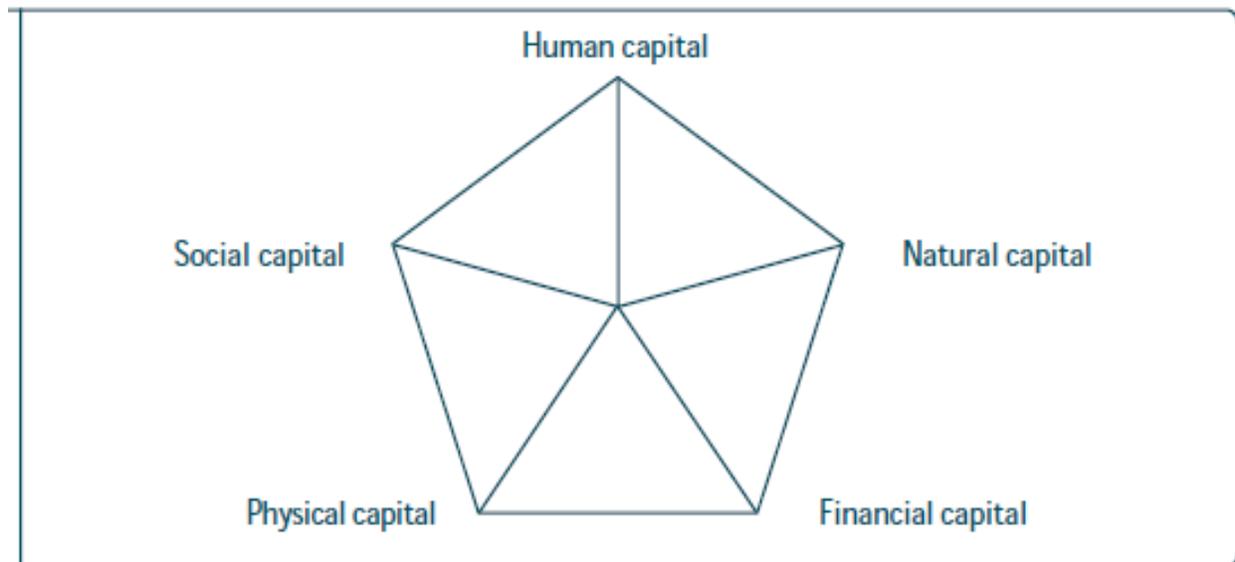
### Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework has been developed to analyse the livelihood of the poor. It is likewise useful in evaluating the strength of existing efforts to reduce poverty. Like all frameworks, it is a simplification; the broad diversity and richness of livelihoods can be read-only by qualitative and participatory analysis at the local level. The framework does not seek to furnish an accurate representation of reality. It serves, however, to provide a mode of thinking about the livelihoods of poor masses that will stimulate debate and observation, thereby improving performance in poverty reduction. In its most elementary configuration, the framework looks at people as operating in a context of vulnerability. Within this setting, they have access to certain assets or poverty-reducing factors. These gain their meaning and value through the enduring social, institutional and organizational environment. This environment also influences the livelihood strategies – ways of mixing and using assets – that are open to people in pursuit of beneficial livelihood outcomes that satisfy their own livelihood objectives.



## Livelihood Assets

The livelihood framework identifies five core asset classes or types of capital upon which livelihoods are made. Increasing access – which can take the sort of ownership or the right to use – these assets is a chief concern for DFID in its support of livelihoods and poverty elimination. It is recognised that those with more assets tend to experience a larger range of alternatives and an ability to change between multiple strategies to ensure their livelihoods. There are five types of capitals are identified under this framework-human, natural, financial, physical, and social capital.



**Human Capital:** represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At a household level, human capital is a divisor of the quantity and quality of labour available; this changes according to family size, skill points, leadership potential, health condition, etc.

**Social Capital:** comprises networks and connectedness that increase people's trust and ability to knead together and amplify their access to wider institutions, such as political or civic bodies; Membership of more formalized groups and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges that facilitate co-operation, reduce transaction costs and may supply the basis for informal safety nets amongst the hapless.

**Natural Capital:** Natural capital is the term used for the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods is derived. Models of natural capital and services, deriving from it are land, forests, marine/wild resources, water, air quality, corrosion protection, waste assimilation, storm protection and biodiversity degree and pace of alteration.

**Physical capital:** comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to sustain livelihoods. The elements of infrastructure are usually essential for sustainable livelihoods are

## **Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu**

affordable transport, secure shelter and buildings, adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation, clean, affordable energy; and access to information (communications).

**Financial capital:** denotes the financial resources that people apply to achieve their livelihoods. The definition used here is not economically robust in that it includes flows as well as stocks and it can contribute to consumption as well as production. Savings, debt, investment, income from various sources, trade and remittances are the major constituent of financial capital.

### **Sustainable Livelihood of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees**

#### **Human Capital**

The human capital is an important asset to the households in establishing sustainable livelihood. It consists of skills, knowledge, ability to work and health. In order to understand the human capital of refugees, the variables like gender, age, marital status, type of family, educational qualification, health problems, livelihoods, employment and skills are analysed.

Age of the respondents ranges from 26 years to 78 years. The average age of the respondents is 47 years with a standard deviation of 14.870. Over one-third of the respondents belong to the age group of 35-44 years, 22 per cent belong to the age group of 26-35 years, 12 per cent belong to the age group 44-53 years, and 20 per cent of the respondents are aged 62-71 years. The respondents aged above 70 years constitute 6 per cent. It is found that the majority of the respondents in the study are aged below 50 years. The overwhelming majority of the respondents are male (72.0 per cent) while 28.0 per cent are female in the study. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (70.0 per cent) are married whereas only 12 per cent are unmarried. The percentage of widow and divorcee constitute 16 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.

Education is an important asset that determines the ability to earn a better livelihood. The government in the host country has made facilities for education for refugees since their settlement and extended several schemes for free education of refugee children. The educational qualifications of the respondents reveal that the majority of the respondents (62.0 per cent) studied up to high school level, followed by 18 per cent of the respondents who studied up to primary level and only 6 per cent studied up to higher secondary level. A meagre per cent of the respondents has studied graduation (4.0 per cent) and postgraduation (2.0 per cent). The share of illiterates in the sample is 8.0 per cent. It is inferred that the refugees do not have many educational attainments. The type of family of the respondents shows that the large majority of the respondents (82 per cent) have nuclear family whereas 2.0 per cent have a joint family. The share of single-parent and single-member family form 8.0 per cent each respectively. The nuclear family system is largely prevalent among Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

The refugees are earning their livelihood from two major sources- 1) Government assistances and 2) Employment and Government assistances. There was a little more than a quarter of the respondents who earn living through government assistance. On the other hand, a large number of respondents (72.0 per cent) earn livelihood through government assistance and employment. The refugees who depend on government assistance were provided with monthly cash dole, food grains through PDS and free healthcare in public hospitals. The employment of the respondents reveals that the large number (42.0 per cent) of the respondents are in non-agriculture labour, 12 per cent of them run business/pettishops, 10 per cent are salaried employees, 6.0 per cent are self employees and remaining 2.0 per cent are agriculture labour. The unemployed respondents constitute 28.0 per cent of the total sample. The respondents who work as manual

labour in the unorganised sector are due to restriction in accessing government jobs and the absence of job in private sector. Refugees are mainly working as painter, carpenter, driver, electrician, etc. It is found that the majority of the respondents (56.0 per cent) have the skill to do the present job but 44 per cent do not have the skill to do their present job. A share of the respondents in the study is unskilled.

Health is an important factor in securing a better livelihood. The study shows that over one-fourth of the respondents suffer from health problems while 74 per cent do not have any severe health problems. The health problems of the respondents are not related to their work but age-related. Health problems are found higher among those aged above 50 years. The large majority of the respondents (80.0 per cent) take treatment from a public hospital but 20.0 per cent take treatment from private hospitals. The accessibility of health services is not a major problem for refugees as the camp is located at a very short distance from the town and refugees can move to Chennai, the capital of the state, for treatment very easily.

It is to say that the respondents do not have much human capital due to the practice of nuclear family system and the poor opportunities for education and employment. The prospects for empowerment are found very minimal in the camp. The female members in the family do not have the opportunity for employment in the camp surroundings. Therefore, they remain unemployed. The aged persons are largely depending on government schemes for meeting their requirements. The respondents lack skill, knowledge and ability to work. This indicates the absence of human capital among the refugees.

### **Social Capital**

The social capital is the mix of social resources which include informal networks, membership in social groups, organisations, relationships that creates opportunities for well-being and social status. A few factors are considered for analysing the social capital of the refugees- religion, local acceptance, participation in SHGs and NGOs and local networks and its benefits.

Hinduism is the major religion among refugees. It is visible that the large majority of the respondents (96.0 per cent) are Hindus while 4.0 per cent are Christians. Hinduism is a major religion in Tamil Nadu. The similarity in religion has acted as a bonding factor and also facilitates integration in the host society. The refugees built temple and church within the camp and celebrate the festivals together. There are no religious issues among refugees. The level of integration of refugees with local society shows that the majority of the respondents (64.0 per cent) have moderate integration, 24.0 per cent have good integration and 14 per cent have very poor integration. The refugees have developed good relations with local people in their workplaces and educational institutions. Those refugees who are born in Tamil Nadu have friends more than the Sri Lankan borns. The local friends help the refugees to find employment and assist them financially. In some cases, the refugees have the fear to make contact with local people and they limit their relationship up to the camp entrance. Local people are not much welcome inside the camp. The refugees are forced to live an isolated life due to strict camp restrictions and they are under the surveillance of special police. The LTTE connection of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees has retarded their integration in the host society to a great extent.

The household participation of SHGs shows that 18.0 per cent of the respondent's households are participating in SHGs whereas 82.0 per cent of the respondent's households are not participating in any activities of SHGs. Out of 18.0 per cent of households participating in SHGs, 14.0 per cent are engaged in savings and 4.0 per cent engage in production and marketing

of masala powder. The participation of refugees in the activities of SHGs is very low. This indicates their poor organisational ability. It is found that only one respondent is working with NGOs. There are many NGOs working for refugee welfare in the state. But the participation of refugees with these NGOs is limited.

The social capital of the refugees is very poor due to the absence of citizenship. The refugee status has retarded the participation in political parties, holding better social positions and maintaining networks.

### **Natural Capital**

Natural capital comprises natural resources like land, soil, water, forests and fisheries. Refugees do not have any right to purchase land and properties in the host country. The accessibility of natural resources is largely hampered. There are no forests and water bodies in the camp surroundings. It is found that the refugees do not have any access to natural assets. Therefore, the livelihoods from natural resources are insignificant in the analysis.

### **Physical Capital**

The physical capital constitutes basic infrastructure such as a house, water supply, sanitation, school, ICT and producer goods including tools, livestock and equipment. The physical assets like house, sanitation, water facility, home appliances and vehicles are considered for the analysis.

It is found that a large number of the respondents live in tiled house (46.0 per cent), 20.0 per cent live in thatched house, 14.0 per cent live in asbestos sheet house, 10.0 per cent live in plastic sheet house, 6 per cent live in metal sheet house and 4.0 per cent live in huts. Most of the respondents have better housing in the camp. The number of rooms in the house of the respondents shows that the majority of them have a single room house (58.0 per cent) while 42.0 per cent have double room house. The extension of the house depends upon the financial condition of the respondents and not the number of family members in the family. A large share of the households (96.0 per cent) has electricity connection while 4.0 per cent do not have an electricity connection. Only 18.0 per cent of the respondents have own sanitation facilities but 82.0 per cent do not have own sanitation facilities. They are using common bathrooms and toilets in the camp which are either constructed by the government or NGOs. The majority of the respondents (56.0 per cent) collect drinking water from a public water tap in the camp, 40.0 per cent collects water from the public well and 4.0 per cent collects water from private agencies. The drinking water is supplied for a particular period. The households have to collect a limited quantity of water that is not enough to meet the requirements of all family members.

The ownership of the vehicle shows that 42.0 per cent of the respondents have vehicles but 58.0 per cent do not have any vehicles. Of the respondents with vehicles, 9.5 per cent have a bicycle, 76.2 per cent have a bike and 14.3 per cent have autorickshaw. None of the respondents possess car and other vehicles like lorry, tractor, etc. The possession of home appliances made it clear that 60.0 per cent have an iron box while 40.0 per cent do not have an iron box. About 72.0 per cent have mixer grinder but 28.0 per cent do not have mixer grinder. Only 14.0 per cent have an induction cooker whereas 86.0 per cent do not have an induction cooker. The majority of the respondents have a television (86.0 per cent). Only 2 respondents own refrigerator and none of the respondents owns air conditioner. Only one respondent owns a computer. 28 per cent of the respondents have an LPG connection while 72 per cent do not have an LPG connection.

There is no road inside the camp and it lacks street lights. A railway station is located about 5 km from the camp. There is a high way about 2 km away from the camp. The school facility is available at a short distance from the camp. The students are able to access colleges and other educational institutions in Chennai very easily due to the well-developed network of railways and road transport.

The physical capital of the refugees made it clear that they possess the basic assets to run their houses which have no significant impact on livelihood. The respondents do not possess any equipment and tools and livestock. The absence of space to rear livestock in the camp has cleared out the scope of livelihood from it.

### **Financial Capital**

Financial capital includes income from employment, savings, investment, borrowings and remittances. The refugees are living with poor financial resources due to the constraints in employment and investment. The income of the respondents ranges from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 30000. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (86.0 per cent) earn income between Rs. 1000-Rs.10000, 12 per cent earn income ranging from Rs. 10000 to Rs. 20000 and only 2 per cent earn income above Rs. 20000. The unemployed respondents have earned Rs. 1000 per month as cash dole/pension from the government. It is found that the large share of the respondents in the study (78.0 per cent) do not have savings and 22 per cent have savings. The savings of the respondents ranges from Rs.100-700. Out of the 11 respondents who have savings, 54.5 per cent save Rs. 100 every month, 36.4 per cent save Rs. 500 and 9.1 per cent save Rs. 700 every month. It is to say that the propensity to save is very low among refugees in the study area.

As far as the expenditure of the respondents is concerned, the majority of the respondents (70.0 per cent) spend Rs.700-5750 per month, 12 per cent spend Rs. 5750-10800, 8.0 per cent spend Rs. 10800-15850, 4 per cent spend Rs. 15850-20900, another 4 per cent spend Rs. 20900-25950 and rest 2 per cent spend Rs. 25950-31000 per month to meet the requirements of the households. The average expenditure of the household is Rs. 7185 with a standard deviation of 9132.9. The households have higher spending habit. The monthly expenditure of the households is higher than the income of the respondents, indicating that the households have more than one earning hands.

The investment opportunities for refugees are very limited. They invest in jewellery, business and agriculture, depending upon the availability of investment opportunities. It is inferred that only 8 per cent of the respondents have investment while 92.0 per cent do not have any investment. The investment of the respondents ranges from Rs. 10000-50000. Of the respondents with investment, 50.0 per cent invest the amount Rs.10000-25000 and rest 50.0 per cent invest the amount Rs. 25000-50000. It is noted that refugees lack investment behaviour in the host country. This due to lack of opportunities to invest in land, business and other properties and absence of formal credit.

About 84 per cent of the respondents do not have any debt while 16 per cent have debt. The amount of debt ranges from Rs. 10000 to Rs. 300000. 6.0 per cent of the respondents borrowed Rs. 10000, 4.0 per cent borrowed Rs. 20000, 2 per cent borrowed Rs. 50000 and only one respondent borrowed Rs. 300000. The refugees have no access to formal credit. Therefore, they have to borrow from money lenders and friends.

## **Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu**

The analysis of the financial capital of the refugees shows a pathetic situation. The respondents lack income, saving and investment habit and in the meantime they are incurred in debt trap.

### **Livelihood Challenges of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees**

The refugees face several problems while accessing employment and livelihood. The researcher has given about 20 problems to mark the response on a five-point scale. The long hours of work seems not a big problem for the respondents. Only 8 per cent of the respondents agreed strongly that the long hours of work is a problem but large share of respondents (40.0 per cent) disagreed that the long hours of work is not a problem in employment and livelihood. Is a lack of bargaining power of the respondents a problem in employment and livelihood? It is made clear that 16.0 per cent strongly agreed that the lack of bargaining power is a problem while a large share of the respondents (40.0 per cent) disagreed with this. There were 24.0 per cent of the neutral respondents. The low wage rate is a problem for 18.0 per cent of the respondents. The large share of the respondents (28.0 per cent) strongly disagree that the low wage rate is not a problem in accessing employment and livelihood. The low wage to women labour is found to be a major problem. It is strongly agreed by 18.0 per cent of the respondents and about 32.0 per cent strongly disagreed with this.

Inadequate availability of employment in the camp location seems to be a major problem. About 40.0 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed with this, 10.0 per cent just agree, 14 per cent are neutral, 16.0 per cent disagreed and 20.0 per cent strongly disagree. Inadequate income to meet household needs is found to be a serious problem. 22.0 per cent said that the problem is severe. The difficulty to educate children is also a severe problem. It is estimated that 32.0 per cent strongly agree, 16.0 per cent are neutral and 24.0 per cent strongly disagree. Difficulty to take adequate food is not a serious problem. The increased price of essential commodities is not a problem for the respondents. Only 16.0 per cent strongly disagree that the increase in the price of essential commodity creates problem while 24.0 per cent strongly agreed with this.

Difficult in getting a government job is a major problem for a large number of refugees. About 42.0 per cent strongly disagree with this, 10.0 per cent are neutral and 28.0 per cent strongly disagree. The large share of the respondents strongly agrees that the inadequate supply of essential commodities through PDS is a major problem. About 24 per cent strongly agree with this. The difficulty to get benefit from government schemes is found to be a major problem. About 28.0 per cent strongly agree with this and 22 per cent strongly disagreed this. The repayment of the household is not a severe problem for the respondents. 16 per cent strongly disagree with this. The lack of freedom of movement, diseases and poor health, no right to buy land/properties, lack of investment opportunities and no right to find a job far away from the camps are the major problems of the respondents in the host country. It is therefore concluded that the major problems related to the refugees point towards the status of refugees. Due to their refugee status, they do not have the right to buy properties, have no options to invest and the absence of freedom to migrate from the camps.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals that the livelihood of the refugees is unsustainable due to the absence of several components of human, social, natural, physical and financial capitals. The refugees lack better employment opportunities, livelihood diversification strategies and sustainable sources of livelihood. Therefore, they have to rely on government assistance for their livelihood.

Independent livelihood is a long term goal for refugees due to their refugee status. They do not have access to a government job, no right to purchase land and properties, no formal source of finance for investment, and no right to seek livelihood away from the camp. The permission to migrate for employment is granted for a particular period. The employment opportunities in the camp surroundings are very limited. Therefore, refugees migrate to urban areas for employment with the permission of authorities and return before the end of the period of permission. The employment of refugees in the unorganised sector and seasonal availability of jobs have a significant impact on income. The financial capital with refugees is very minimal and even many refugees are entirely depending on the government for livelihood. The natural capital is not available for refugees in the study area. Furthermore, refugees are vulnerable in securing livelihood due to the existing problems like lack of freedom of movement, diseases and poor health, no right to buy land/properties, lack of investment opportunities and no right to find a job far away from the camps. The problems have to be curbed through efficient policies of the government for skill development and employment generation. The government should promote entrepreneurship among refugees and facilitate formal credit for them. Also, the restrictions in the movement should be removed.

### References

- Alison. M. (2004) Armed Violence and Poverty in Sri Lanka: A mini case study for the Armed Violence and Poverty Initiative, Centre for International Cooperation and Security, University of Bradford, UK. available at:[http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/cics/publications/AVPI/poverty/AVPI\\_Sri\\_Lanka.pdf](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/cics/publications/AVPI/poverty/AVPI_Sri_Lanka.pdf)
- Amirthalingam, K. and Lakshman R. W. D. (2009) Displaced Livelihoods in Sri Lanka: An Economic Analysis. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 22(4):502–523.
- Arunatilake, N. S. Jayasuriya and S. Kelegama (2001) The Economic Cost of the War in Sri Lanka. *World Development*. 29(9):1483–1500.
- Brian. G., and Khan, S. R. (1997) Refugee Protection and Human Rights Protection: International Principles and Practice in India, *Refugee*. 16(6):39-43.
- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA (2009) 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. (Online) available: <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/sca/119140.htm>. Date Accessed: 28/05/2017.
- Burn Cathrine (2003) Local Citizen or Internally Displaced Persons? Dilemmas of Long Term Displacement in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 16(4):376-397.
- Chimni, B. S. (1994) Symposium on the Human Rights of Refugees \The Legal Condition of Refugees in India. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 7(4): p.379.
- Dasgupta, Abhijith (2003) Repatriation of Sri Lankan Refugees. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 38(24):2365-2367
- Dasgupta, V. (2005) Long-term Camp Life and Changing Identities of Sri Lankan Women Refugees in India. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. 2(2):1–12.
- Directorate of Rehabilitation (2011) Government Order on Cash Dole-Enactment. [http://www.rehab.tn.nic.in/GOs/GO\\_928.pdf](http://www.rehab.tn.nic.in/GOs/GO_928.pdf). Date Accessed: 10/06/2017.
- Drishti (2015) Conflict, Refugee Situation and Human Rights: A Case Study of Tamil Refugees in the Sri Lankan Conflict. (Online) available: <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/conflict-refugee-situation-and-human-rights-a-case-study-of-tamil-refugees-in-the-sri-lankan-conflict/>. Date Accessed: 28/05/2017.

## Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in Tamil Nadu

- Federation for People's Right (2008) [Condition of Eelam Tamil Refugees in Tamilnadu – A Fact-Finding Report](http://peoplesrights.in/english/?p=12). <http://peoplesrights.in/english/?p=12>. Date Accessed: 11/06/2017.
- George Miriam (2013) Sri Lankan Tamil Refugee Experience: A Quantitative Analysis. *International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*. 6(3):170-182.
- Government of Tamil Nadu Report, Camp Population of Sri Lankan Refugees at various Camps Centres in Tamil Nadu, dated 14 July 2008.
- Grobar, L.M & S. Gnanaselvam (1993) The Economic Effects of the Sri Lankan Civil War. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. 41(2):395–405
- Hans, A. (1997) Repatriation of the Sri Lankan Refugees from India. *Bulletin on IHL and Refugee Law*. 2(1): 97-108.
- Hennayake K Santha (1989) The Peace Accord and the Tamil in Sri Lanka. *Asian Survey*. 29(4):401-415.
- Information Handbook, Department Of Rehabilitation. Government of Tamil Nadu.
- Jayapalan, Athithan. Refugee Status and Citizenship: The Refuge of Sri Lankan Tamils in India (South India)/ Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in India, 2012. <http://www.countercurrents.org/jayapalan120612.html>. Date accessed: 25/05/2016
- Jeevarathinam, Mayuran (2017) Education and empowerment: The journey of Sri Lankan refugees, *The Island*. (Online) Available: [http://www.island.lk/index.php?page\\_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code\\_title=160030](http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=160030). Date Accessed: 10/04/2017.
- Jeevarathinam, Mayuran (2017) Education and Empowerment: the Journey of Sri Lankan Refugees. <http://groundviews.org/2017/01/29/education-and-empowerment-the-journey-of-sri-lankan-refugees/>. Date Accessed: 09/06/2017.
- Kearney. R. N. (1978) Language and the Rise of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka. *Asian Survey*, 18(5):521– 553
- Mills, Megan Stuart (1993) Mental Health Resilience of Refugees: The case of Tamil Refugees. *Refuge*. 13(3):26-29.
- Raizada, Himanshi (2013) Sri Lankan Refugees in India: The Problem and the Uncertainty. *International Journal of Peace and Development*. 1(1):01-29.
- Sreekumar and Seethal (2017) Invisible People: Suspected LTTE Members in the Special Refugee Camps of Tamil Nadu. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 36: 126–145. Available: <https://oup.silverchair-cdn.com>. Date Accessed: 28/05/2017.
- Suryanarayan. V. (2003) Humanitarian concerns and security needs: Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu, in P. R. Chari, Mallika Joseph and Suba Chandran (ed.), *Missing Boundaries*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers. P.P. 39-57.
- Suryanarayan. V. and Sudarsen, V. (1993) *Between Fear and Hope: Sri Lankan Refugees in Tamil Nadu*. T. R. Publications, Chennai.
- The Hindu (2008) 96 Sri Lankan refugee families get houses. <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/96-Sri-Lankan-refugee-families-get-houses/article15364896.ece>. Date Accessed: 13/06/2017.

- The Hindu (2012) Slew of measures for Sri Lankan refugees in camps. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/slew-of-measures-for-sri-lankan-refugees-in-camps/article3219698.ece>. Date Accessed: 10/06/2017.
- The Hindu (2014) Ban of LTTE extended for five years. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/ban-on-ltte-extended-for-five-years/article6012768.ece>. Date Accessed: 26/05/2017
- The Refugee Council, London (1999) Sri Lankan refugees in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. <http://repository.forcedmigration.org/pdf/?pid=fmo:1940>. Date Accessed: 31/05/2017.
- Valatheeswaran, C. and Irudaya Rajan, S. (2011) Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in India: Rehabilitation Mechanisms, Livelihood Strategies, and Lasting Solutions. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*. 30(2):24-44.
- Weiner, M. (1993) Rejected Peoples and Unwanted Migrants in South Asia, *Economic and Political Weekly*. 28(34):1737-46.
- Gladston Xavier and Florina Benoit, (2011). Security among the Refugees and Quality of Life - Case of the Sri Lanka Tamil Refugees Living in Camps in Tamil Nadu. *Refugee Watch*, 37, 1-15.