

CHAPTER SEVEN

People's Perception on Socio-Economic Infrastructure Development in Peace Building - A Case Study of Thankavelayuthapuram Village in Ampara District

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Abstract

This study argues that apart from economic infrastructure development resulted from different programmes implemented by the government, international agencies and donor agencies aiming at resettlement, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, people are in need of social development. The main research question was to examine how socio-economic development changes have contributed to building positive or negative peace in Sri Lanka's post-conflict society. The study was mainly based on the mixed method approach. In most cases the evidence on the impact of infrastructure development of Thankavelayuthapura village in Ampara District showed that despite sustained economic infrastructure development the lack of social infrastructure development in war affected areas can adversely affect the peace building process. This study concludes that building both social and economic infrastructures is equally important, and neglecting one of them will weaken the peace building process.

Key words: *Peace building, Positive and negative peace, socio-economic infrastructure*

7.1 Introduction

Conflict can be healthy and enrich relationships in many ways and it is an inevitable part of day-to-day life. In the case of largescale conflicts, where the norm is escalating conflicts, only a few countries have managed to control the situation and resolve it. The end of Sri Lanka's national conflict in 2009, through non-peaceful means, has opened the doors for a new era of development. The conflict was embedded in, existing social, political, economic and cultural structures. The thirty-year brutal war has had a devastating effect on all ethnic groups, causing widespread misery including displacement, loss of property, injury, death and the fragmentation of communities (United Nations, 2012).

Sri Lanka gained independence from British colonial rule in 1948. After independence, ethnic issues and insurgencies occurred derailing the development of the country. The causes of conflict were complex and the country received international attention during its process of trying to find a solution to the conflict.

The Sri Lankan conflict lasted more than 30 years. From 1985 to 2008 there were many efforts to find a negotiated settlement. However, the finally decision was taken to eradicate terrorism by countering-terrorism. On the 19th of May 2009 the Government of Sri Lanka officially announced the end of the decades long conflict, liberating the entire land. Since then, significant changes can be seen in terms of the country's economic, social and cultural sectors. However, the peace building process has encountered a lot of challenges.

The conflict ended in 2009 and the country has already completed six years in a post-conflict phase. Thus what significant

changes it has made during this period should be studied. In addition, this change should be measured in order to find out whether it is positive or negative in terms of different socio-economic perspectives

Strategies to achieve peace are often implemented from the beginning to the end of a conflict, regardless of the stage of the conflict. For instance, peace-making, peace keeping, negotiations, mediations, peace talks, and peace building, conflict transformation and reconciliation concepts are applied and discussed in different phases. Among these concepts, peace building plays a vital role in post-conflict societies.

The civil war in the country had devastating socio-economic and socio-political impacts on people, particularly those living in the North and East provinces of the country. Statistics on the actual levels of poverty and deprivation caused as a direct result of the war were not systematically recorded. According to Sarvananthan (2007) per capita income, as assessed by the Central Bank, were consistently at lower levels in the North and East. Health and education indicators for the North and East have also been consistently lower than the national averages. Long-term exposure to violence and instability also created a society deeply fragmented and lacking in confidence about its future. The economic cost of the war has been estimated to be around US\$ 200 billion in the last decade alone (Sarvananthan, 2007).

This research argues that the socio-economic dimension of peace building should be understood as a multiple-faceted long-term process which might incorporate both short-term and long-term priorities. While the short-term priority should target providing the economic dividends of peace in the immediate aftermath of

the conflict, the long-term priority should be geared towards addressing the socio root causes of the preceding armed conflict as well as laying the foundation for inclusive economic development.

With the liberation of the Eastern Province, the Sri Lankan Government implemented a three years plan (2007 - 2010) called the 'Eastern Revival'. The programme was steered by the President's Office and the Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure Development (now the Ministry of Economic Development). There are many other stakeholders in this context. The other project is the 'North Spring' mega development plan for the northern peninsula. The LLRC was also established in order to identify what went wrong in the past and ascertain what can be done for the future prevention of conflicts. In addition, international agencies, donor agencies, NGOs and INGOs are widely involving in different project to help ensure the socio-economic well-being of the people in this area. However, building sustainable and peaceful communities in post-conflict Sri Lanka has proved to be a challenging task.

7.2 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the present study was to identify the social and economic perspectives of peace building in post-war Sri Lanka. This study was carried out at Thankavelayuthapuram village, in the Thirukovil Division of Ampara District, Sri Lanka.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study can be organised as follows:

1. To explore the present condition of knowledge and related strategies of the peace building process based on socio-economic conditions.
2. Identify the gaps between positive and negative peace building.
3. Identify the impact of peace building on people's lives in terms of socio-economic aspects.

7.3 Research Problem

The main research problem was to examine how the socio-economic development changes had contributed to building positive or negative peace in the post-conflict society in Sri Lanka. The specific research questions were:

1. How do people of Thankavelayuthapuram see the social changes in the aftermath of the conflict?
2. How do people of Thankavelayuthapuram see the economic changes in the aftermath of the conflict?
3. What are the strategies implemented to build sustainable peace in Thankavelayuthapuram?

7.4 Importance of the study

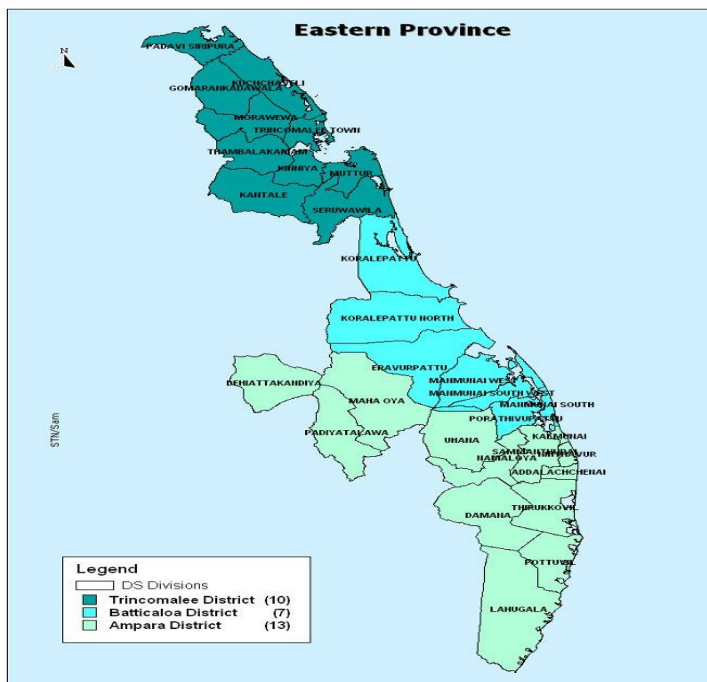
Sri Lanka has managed to arrive at a point where the violence stage of the conflict is over and is in post-conflict peace building. The major challenge currently faced by country is confronting

post-conflict contexts. This study sought to understand how the conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE affected the livelihood of local communities, while seeking answers to the question of how socio-economic changes can contribute to the peace building process.

The research also focused on how peace building activities are carried out by the Government and other stakeholders in the post-conflict phase. As for social stability and harmony, as with ethnic peace and cohesion, the erosion of economic disparity is compulsory. When analysing the socio-economic data from an ethnic perspective, the Tamils are lagging behind in contrast to the Sinhalese. Even when compared geographically, the North-East suffers badly compared to most of the other provinces.

Based on these facts the study looked at what the perceptions of people in Thankavelayuthapuram were regarding socio-economic changes in the village in aftermath of the conflict. Thus, the objective of this research is to identify and analyse the socio-economic condition of the peace building process and to find out where it is heading.

Study area



Source: Google images - Eastern Province, Sri Lanka, 2016

The Eastern Province comprises of three districts; namely Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee; and covers an area of approximately 10,000 square kilometers, which is about 15% of the total land area of the country. The topography of the province is relatively flat in the coastal areas, with a varied landscape consisting predominantly of paddy fields, forests, scrublands, wetlands and lagoons. The population of the province is approximately 1.54 million which is about 7.5% of the total population of Sri Lanka (Eastern Provincial Council, 2011).

Thirukkovil is a town in the Ampara District of Sri Lanka and Thankavelayuthapuram village was the study area for this research. The village is situated along the eastern coast of the island, 30 km north of Pottuviland 35 km south of Kalmunai.

Thirukkovil was severely affected by the tsunami tidal waves of 26th December 2004. Due to the tsunami, many people lost their relatives and properties including houses, livestock and paddy fields. The people are returning to their normal life with the help of the Government and NGOs. Thirukkovil division has 22 Grama Niladhari divisions and one Pradeshiya Sabha, Thirukkovil Pradeshiya Sabha. (Resource profile, 2014).

7.5 Review of literature

Peace building is an intervention that is designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict by creating a ***sustainable peace***. Peace building activities address the root causes or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution, and stabilise society politically and socio-economically.

Post-conflict societies face numerous peace building challenges to get back on their feet. The challenges include disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of forces, organisation of elections, protection and promotion of human rights, resettling refugees and displaced persons, security sector reform, and fostering national reconciliation. Effectively dealing with these challengers can help achieve a sustainable peace.

Sustainable peace building in a violence ridden society is a challenging task, not only for the particular country involved but also for the international community. Peace operations were originally received with great optimism, and were mistaken as a panacea for overcoming violent social orders and creating a better world. As peace negotiations have resulted in the settlement of intra-state violence and wars since the late 1980s, more than two dozen societies have been going through difficult phases of post-conflict transformation.

The peace building process has been defined by many scholars in different ways, based on which what can be identified as a peace building process also differs. The term 'peace building' originated in the field of peace studies more than 30 years ago. In 1975 Galtung coined the term in his pioneering work 'Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peace building.' In his article, he posited that "peace has a structure different from, perhaps over and above, peacekeeping and ad hoc peacemaking. The mechanisms that peace is based on should be built into the structure and be present as a reservoir for the system itself to draw up. More specifically, structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur. (Galtung, 1975). These observations constitute the intellectual antecedents of today's notion of peace building: an endeavor aiming to create sustainable peace by addressing the 'root causes' of violent conflict and eliciting indigenous capacities for peaceful management and resolution of conflict.

In his 1992 report 'An Agenda for Peace', the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced the concept of peace building to the UN as "... action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in

order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Over the years, various efforts have been made to elaborate on this definition.

Peace building needs to enhance trust between individuals and between groups in a society. It also needs to restore the legitimacy of state institutions. Peace building is about bringing together the different actors that are engaged in the rebuilding of a country. People from inside and outside a conflict-affected country need to work together to understand their different views and define priorities. This will enable a better alignment of national policy making, external assistance, and local priorities. It is strongly believed that peace building is about deep, long-term transformations. This requires an integrated approach engaging a diverse range of actors.

Peace building involves a process comprising of various functions and roles. It often requires a wide range of sequential activities, from ceasefire and refugee settlement to the establishment of a new government and economic reconstruction. The end of a violent conflict has to be accompanied by the rebuilding of the physical infrastructure and the reconstruction of essential government functions that provide basic social services.

Social reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation are essential elements that make a peace process durable and sustainable (Galtung, 1996). Overcoming physical, mental and emotional challenges remain a crucial challenge for those who have to rebuild their own society.

Researchers are working to define the concept of ‘quality peace’ — one that goes beyond the end of violence to include durable peace as the outcome of successful peace processes. In 44% of

all post-conflict situations, war resumes in the first five years after violence has stopped and approximately 50% of post-conflict countries revert back to war in the first decade of peace (Christopher, Collier, & Victor, 2008). Recent violent conflict, therefore, is the best predictor of future large-scale violence.

Lederach (1997) defined peace building as a long-term project of building peaceful, and stable communities. This requires building on a firm foundation of justice and reconciliation that strengthens and restores relationships and transforms unjust institutions and systems. Lederach (1997, p.20) challenged the idea of peace building as just a post-conflict action saying that it "... is more than post-accord reconstruction" and defined peacebuilding "... as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships". This definition contains elements from concepts defined elsewhere as preventive diplomacy, peace keeping or peace building. More recently, Ricigliano (2012) has defined peace building as a holistic approach that provides a collective framework under which peace, security, humanitarian support, rule of law, human rights and development initiatives should work together.

Inequality and its eradication are identified as linking factors transforming conflict into co-existence. The struggle for social justice is part of the process of building peace. Three conditions are identified as central to the peace building process. The first necessitates the establishment of inclusive, autonomous communities, that are free to express religious, cultural and national aspirations and identity. The second requires the recognition of the legitimacy of each community to assert rights

and claims without denying those of the other. This premise supports the view of the individual in relation to others and notes that co-existence can only be advanced through the building of mutual relationships. Finally, peace building requires recognition of human rights as a tool to promote relationships both within and between societies.

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse T. and Hugh's (2005) chapter on post-war reconstruction in 'Contemporary Conflict Resolution' looks at building peace in fragile states where war ends but peace is not secured. In Norbert Ropers words "giving up the reconstruction might also be interpreted as giving up the right to return to resettle and to rebuild the homes and livelihood for all those affected by war" (Ramsbotham et al., 2005). The book analyses the role of the international community in post-war reconstruction. It states that there is a stage of withdrawing from the post-war reconstruction which helps to distinguish that from post-war peace building. That process is generally referred to as 'intervention reconstruction and withdrawal' (ibid). It describes a post-war reconstruction/withdrawal matrix which is composed of different phases. Those are firstly, security and then law and order, government, economy and society respectively.

7.6 Research methodology

In this study the methods utilised for data collection were both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The primary data was collected from female and male war affected people in Thankavelayuthapura village (Thirukovil DS division) of Ampara District and from some of the administrative officers and various village level service organisations in Thirukovil DS Division.

Since the aim of this research was to see how peace building process was being carried out, a qualitative research was the most appropriate method to find this out. With the qualitative research strategy it is possible to ascertain the perceptions of the interviewees. Data collection tools, such as observations, opinions, community attitudes, psychology of communities and views, have been used.

To quantify the perceptions of the people on socio-economic infrastructure and livelihood improvements the study used the Likert Scale approach. However, the researchers would like to note that the study was mainly based on a qualitative approach. This methodology lays emphasis on the way individuals interpret their social situations (Bryman, 2008). Information for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

7.7 Sample of the study

A simple random sampling method was used to give equal opportunities to all members in the village. Researchers took the list of war affected people from the Village Officer at Thankavalayuthapuram and used it as a sample frame. From the list of 160 people, 40 people were selected. There was no age limit to participate in the interviews and participants were drawn from different levels of education. They were asked how they benefited from the different development projects implemented after the war. Part of the interview also focused on obtaining information about their lives during the war. This was intended to help ascertain how stakeholders, including the Government, changed their way of supporting the communities during and in the aftermath of the conflict.

There searchers interviewed different administrative officers from both government and non-government sectors of the Eastern Province based on judgmental sampling. They were the key informants. Hence researchers met 5 key informants from various organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and European Union (EU) as well as some of the local NGOs in the Ampara District.

Table 7.1: Population by Religions in Thankavelayuthapuram

Religion	No. of families	Men	Women
Hindu	383	536	580
Catholics	36	49	60
Other	8	12	17
Total	427	599	657

Source: Thirukkivil DS Division, 2014

Table 7.1 presents the population by religious category. It clearly shows that the dominant religion in this area is Hindu.³ There were no Buddhists or Muslims.

³There are three places: Weerappadiappanai, Murugan, Pilleyar for Hindus' to worship. Sahaya Aththei Church which was a Catholic place of worship has been destroyed.

7.8 Results of the study

The socio-economic aspect of peace building is very important in post-conflict societies. It is believed that based on these societal and economic aspects people will be able to return to normalcy. The same situation was observed in Thankavelyuthapuram, a village affected by decades of conflict.

Sri Lanka has suffered many years due to vicious war and now it is time to develop a framework for building positive peace and preventing negative peace. The challenge with this kind of disaster is to persuade people at all levels of society to engage in building a peaceful and stable environment within the society.

Based on some empirical studies the following challenges can be seen in many post-conflict societies (Kalegama, 2011). Accordingly, similar features were apparent in Thangaveluyuthapuram. Some of the most important challenges can be summarised as follows:

1. Poverty
2. Economic infrastructure development (road, water, electricity)
3. Social infrastructure (education, health, skills development)
4. Employment generation
5. Environmental and natural-resource balance

7.9 Economic and social infrastructure development

The lack of infrastructural development in war affected areas can adversely affect the peace building process. Limited access by rural households to essential basic infrastructure and services leads to increased transaction costs in the marketing of agricultural products and purchasing inputs. This in turn results in a lack of competitiveness and profitability in agricultural activities. It is believed that the development of socio and economic infrastructure can potentially lead to wider socio-economic consequences. As revealed by Sri Lanka's experience, the lack of economic and social infrastructure development due to the war results in a drop in infrastructure stock accumulation, thereby impacting the growth of output and livelihoods. Since the end of the war, the Government of Sri Lanka has allocated more funds and implemented many projects to uplift the economic and social well-being of the people in war affected areas. In the meantime international agencies and donor agencies have played a crucial role to help bring peace through sustainable development.

To examine people's perceptions regarding the role of infrastructure development and livelihood development in the peacebuilding process an estimated mean and standard deviation using descriptive statistics applying response rates were developed based on Likert's Scale. Values for all statements were assigned as follows: 1= Very Satisfied; 2= Satisfied; 3= No Specific Idea; 4= Dissatisfied; 5= Very Dissatisfied.

Table 7.2: People’s perception of infrastructure development during the post-war period

Sector	Mean	Standard Deviation
Livelihoods development	2.95	1.323
Road	3.61	1.553
Electricity	3.2	1.388
Water	3.12	1.22
Education	2.63	1.33
Health	3.23	1.342

Source: Primary survey, 2016

The perceptions of the respondents about road development, as revealed by Table 7.2, indicate that the majority of people were satisfied with the road development during post-war period in this area. The mean value of the response rate 3.61 and the standard deviation of 1.553 show that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the role of the Government on road development. Rural road development, in particular, can yield a variety of economic benefits: (1) providing access to distant markets for producers, (2) drawing labour, cheaper inputs, and customers thereby increasing production efficiency, and (3) making an impact on land prices and development patterns (Gunasekara, Anderson, & Lakshmanan, 2008). Thirty-five percent of the respondents were ‘very satisfied’ and 25% ‘satisfied’ with road development.

However, the study data also indicated that the majority of respondents' perceptions were indifferent about the water, electricity, and health and education development in the post-war period.

The mean value 3.20 indicates that a majority of the respondents had no specific idea about the electrification in the study area. With regard to health, the free public healthcare system has made a significant contribution to improving health levels among the poor. However, as revealed by the data, only 40% of the respondents were satisfied with the public healthcare system.

The development of physical and human infrastructure has high social and private returns, hence making a major contribution to the process of rebuilding livelihoods and alleviating poverty. As revealed by the study findings, the majority of people in the study area were neutral to the livelihood development activities which have taken place during the post-war period (refer Table 7.2).

Generally, it is believed that the majority of population in Ampara District live in rural areas and they have less access to the socio-economic and infrastructure facilities than those living in urban areas.

When interviewed about the economic aspect of peace building this is what an administrative officer had to say about the Government's contribution to building the economic infrastructure.

"[The] Government [is] usually involved in uplifting agriculture, livelihood, housing, infrastructure, environment, micro-credit finance and tourism sectors". He further stated that, *"currently [the] government is focusing on*

construction and enhancement of road networks for development."Administrative Officer, Ampara District Secretariat Office, Ampara

Poverty is more severe in rural areas and rural households are severely affected by poverty. The poverty level in Thirukkivil District Secretariat Division was 10.56 while it was 5.4% in Ampara District in 2012/13 (Department of Census and Statistics, 2015). According to the poverty estimates, rural poverty in Sri Lanka recorded a steady decline between 2002 and 2012/13 (It declined from 25% in 2002 to 7.5% in 2012/13). It is believed that the increase in overseas migration (largely to Middle Eastern countries) that has taken place in the recent past had an important impact of remarkably reducing poverty in rural areas. Evidence shows that a large number of people even in this area are engaged in employment in the Middle East. It is believed that the increasing inflow of remittances has had an appreciable impact on the income of people in the study area.

Families which remain in poverty may be associated not only with its individual features but also with characteristics of the environment in which they live. The first requirement of a strategy to reduce poverty is to provide an enabling environment and resources for those in the area that engage mainly in agricultural production and fisheries industry.

7.10 Agriculture development

Traditionally, people in the North and Eastern Provinces have been dependent largely on agriculture and fishing, and related small scale industries and services. The North and East regions of Sri Lanka are significant producers of agricultural food and cash

crops, livestock, and fish as well as industrial production in the immediate post-independence era in Sri Lanka. As the amount produced was generally far greater than the requirements of their populace, the North and Eastern Provinces became net exporters of many agricultural products to the rest of the country. Thus, a vibrant commercial agriculture sector developed in the region during the pre-conflict period (Sarvananthan, 2007).

In the post-conflict era the development of agriculture continues to be very important not only for peace building but also for poverty alleviation. However, during the conflict period distorted policies of the Government, such as trade embargos, taxes, as well as the neglecting economic infrastructure, irrigation and land development, imposed by the military groups contributed to the decline of agricultural production and employment in these areas. In the context of quick restoration of human livelihood, the Government has paid more attention to agricultural development.

The fisheries industry was restricted in the conflict affected areas by the LTTE and government security forces, and on some occasions totally banned. However in the post-war period, the Government has implemented different measures with the aim of quickly restoring the fisheries industry. The government has lifted all barriers for fishermen and provided a large number of equipment such as boats, tractors and other equipment etc. Various microcredit programmes have also been implemented by state banks, NGOs and INGOs. For example, the European Union Assistance for Conflict Affected People (EU-ACAP) started a project in Thirukkivil targeting 1,825 families in July 2009 to July 2013 prioritising areas such as livelihood capacity building,

community infrastructure development, protection and gender and conflict mitigation.

However, during the study, with regard to the role of the public sector in infrastructure development respondents had different perspectives.

*“It is true that [the] government is implementing a rapid development plan in every corner of the country. But it is not what people need. They only focus on road construction. But people who [are] affected by war, need something more than road constructions. What is the use of nice carpeted roads when people cannot use it”.*Kumaran (37 years old), villager from Thankavelayuthapuram.

Some specific sectors, such as construction, agriculture and small scale industries, livelihoods, housing, primary education, special needs children education, vocational training, irrigation, and environmental protection have been targeted by different public and private projects. These projects can have short and long term effects on the conflict affected people. All these projects are aimed at resettlement, rehabilitation, reconciliation and finally reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure.

“[The] Government while planning the budget, has allocated 42.49% of the investment for improving infrastructure and sanitation. It included the improvement of electricity supply, roads, transport, ports, water supply and sanitation, and development of rural infrastructure. To see the final results it will take some more years. But in future you may see beautiful Sri Lanka with new construction. And those constructions will not remain only in urban [areas] sectors and but also in rural

[areas] sectors where none of the organisation have [been] interested."Administrative employee, Kachcheri - Ampara

The above statement shows how positive they are about the future.

7.11 Livelihoods developments and economy

Conflict affects the livelihoods and economic status of individuals through the direct and indirect transformations it entails. Direct effects include changes in household composition due to killings, injuries and recruitment of fighters; changes in household economic status due to the destruction of assets and livelihoods. Indirect effects can take place at the community level or at the national level. Local indirect effects include changes in households' access to, and relationship with, local exchange, employment, credit and insurance markets, social relations and networks, and political institutions. National level indirect effects include changes in economic growth and in distributional processes that impact household welfare.

The livelihoods of the population in the Eastern region mainly depend on agriculture and fisheries. In this regard, various support programs have been initiated for conflict affected communities, involving activities such as the rehabilitation of irrigation, fallow field and agricultural activity, and related to capacity building for economic and social reintegration. In addition, some poverty alleviation programmes such as the 'Samurdhi' project are in operation.

In Thankavelayuthpuram people are engaged mainly in the farming industry, such as poultry farming, and goat, cattle and buffalo husbandry. After the war these people have been supported by the Government and other organisations in an effort to uplift the farming industry. During the study it was observed that people feel they have progressed after the war and they are expecting a better future.

The livelihood development in conflict affected areas would positively serve the peace building process, enabling people to achieve sustainable livelihoods that ensure socio-economic security and human dignity. Such a process of development can provide an evolutionary basis for peace building.

Table 7.3: Income distribution (Thangavelayuthapuram)

Less than 1,000.00	28
Rs. 1,001.00 – 5,000.00	161
Rs. 5,001.00 - 10,000.00	38
Rs. 10,001.00 - 15,000.00	21
Above 15,001.00	04

Source: Divisional Secretariat, Thirukkivil 2014

Table 7.3 shows the variation of income among the villagers in Thankavelayuthapura. However, it was apparent from the responses at the interviews that their income has increased since then. More than half of the respondent said that they were making over Rs. 15,000 per month as income.

However there are issues that are not being addressed, as expressed by one of the villagers interviewed in the study.

“We do not expect that the government or any other organisation should fulfil all our requirements. We have requested an elephant fence and one bus for public transportation. We can live without electricity. But, we cannot fight with elephants. Last week at night when I went to protect my crop from elephants, elephants came to the village and they broke my house. See, you can see it with your own eyes. How much these elephants trouble us. And see those people they came to go to Thirukovil town. But that lorry just went collecting crops. So, now they have to go back to their house. After they missed the lorry there is no other way to go there. See, you can see with your own eyes. We all do not have our own vehicles. So, many people die here without medicine. All medical facilities are at Thirukovil. And there are no transportation facilities available to get medical services.” 40 year old war-victim from Thankavelayuthapuram.

According to him, what they really need is to be protected from elephants. Some houses had been destroyed by elephant attacks. Their livelihood is growing crops. Therefore for their safety and their livelihood they want to be protected from elephant attacks.

“Every night we go to sleep with the fear. After coming back here I did not sleep a single day with a free mind. I am not afraid to die. But, my children! Oh my god they are still very small. I cannot see anything happening to them because of this elephant issue. So, my only wish in this moment is [for an] elephant fence. And another

thing is public bus. Children get sick all the time. So, we face so many difficulties while getting medicine for them” 35 year old war-victim women from Thankavelayuthapuram

Furthermore, when they were asked as to what they needed most, approximately 60%, of the people said that they needed transportation and electricity. Forty percent of them said they need to be protected from elephants.

Talking with the people in Thankavelayuthapuram, Ampara and Thirukovil DS areas researchers found some evidence of post-war development activities such as road construction, school developments and community conference hall development. During the study it was revealed that the Urban Development Authority in Ampara had implemented some projects to assist housing development in the area and the North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP) has also implemented several housing projects for people in the Eastern Province. However, there are many issues yet to be addressed. Though Thirukovil has established development facilities, Thankavelayuthapuram village is still in need of development assistance.

7.12 Progress of social infrastructure

Sri Lanka is a pluralistic society where one has to live amidst diversity. After experiencing decades of conflict people need to be particularly sensitive about the society in which they live and make peace with other. Therefore better education, good healthcare and decent social connections will help make peoples' lives better.

“There are some more specific things like social transformation [that] need to be considered, building up ethnic harmony between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities. Then only can it [be] assured that there will be no war occurrence in future”. Villager from Thankavelayuthapuram

According to DS Division reports Thankavelayuthapuram was inhabited by only Tamils, and has no other ethnic groups. However, the researchers met one Sinhalese woman who was married to a Tamil man. Her father was Sinhalese and her mother was Tamil. After her marriage her ethnicity also changed. Indeed, she was not representing herself as a Sinhalese woman.

In the aftermath of the conflict one of the most important challenges has been providing social protection, in the form of meeting short term needs such as food, water, sanitation etc. This has been more important for IDPs.

As part of building the social infrastructure, the education system must play a vital role in creating a productive workforce, and developing skills and knowledge in relevant and appropriate sectors. Many rural schools have empty classes while urban schools are overcrowded. This may be due to the lack of human resources and other physical facilities in the study area. In Thankavelayuthapuram, there is a newly built school but it was not open at the time of the study. It is time that the Government and INGOs give higher priority to strengthening the education facilities in the region.

7.13 Positive peace and negative peace

Peace is a dynamic process in which multiple actors practice to make amicable and fair conditions by utilising different resources. The contemporary status of Sri Lanka can be described as a 'no war-no peace' stage, which according to theoretical understanding it would be referred to as 'negative peace'. The society gives the impression that war has disappeared from it. However, the actual status of the society is that of a win-lose situation. To achieve positive peace, society should reach a win-win situation. Until then, people in the state are under threat, and there are possibilities for a second war to emerge in Sri Lanka. Given this situation, the Government, INGOs and other respective organisations should implement projects to build understanding and respect for the needs of other ethnic communities.

During a post-war stage, conflict can mainly be mitigated through infrastructure development and by providing opportunities for economic and social well-being of the people. A holistic peace building process should be based on grassroots level development. In order to achieve success in the post-conflict peace building process the Government, international community and many NGOs and INGOs should also focus on the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed during the war, which is considered to be the backbone of the economy.

The Government has changed its war focus to one of immediate restoration and development of the North and East; significantly, the dark period of political instability resulting from ethnically-motivated violence has disappeared for the moment. However, by and large, the root causes that induced political instability

within the country remain unaddressed. It is time to adopt an approach to rebuild their lives through spiritual and religious, educational and vocational, psychosocial, recreational, social and family and creative art initiatives. Of course some programmes have already been implemented by the Sri Lankan government and civil society. However, such processes need to be scaled up and taken to the heights it deserves in order to pave the way for a positive peace.

7.14 Conclusions

The study revealed that the economic infrastructure in the study area has been developed and updated during the past six years. It can also be concluded that people have benefited from the economic and social peace building processes.

According to the research findings, although the gains in social development were impressive on education, health and nutrition there remain many problems to be solved. The country may have reached a point where it can decelerate expenditure on economic infrastructure and channel more funds towards the development of social infrastructure: health, education and social welfare.

The study reveals that apart from economic development, people are in need of social development; social development in the sense that more attention needs to be paid to developing the country's social interconnectivity. Therefore, on-going reconciliation effort would be a stimulator for that process. It can be concluded that in the post-conflict peace building process the major focus is on economic development and this has created a background for a negative peace. In order to achieve sustainable

or positive peace the root causes of conflict should be properly addressed.

Current policies often put a priority on the 'hardware' of rebuilding countries after conflict: infrastructure, government buildings, demobilising soldiers, the timing of elections and police stations built. Very often, these efforts fail to focus on the crucial 'software' such as reconciliation between former antagonists, trust in public institutions, and traditional practices of dispute resolution.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance to pay due attention to adopt a sound and credible development approach for conflict affected areas, aiming at achieving twin goals, which are economic prosperity and durable political stability, not only in this region but also in the rest of the country.

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