Making Peace-Keeping Peace
A study on community conflict management in Puttalam

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Poverty and Conflict (PAC) Programme - Centre for Poverty Analysis

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Acknowledgements

The study examines the development and resolution of six conflict incidents in Puttalam. It examines the dual impact of the sudden influx of IDPs. There is further examination of other issues which added to the complexity of the conflicts and their resolution. There is also detailed discussion of the local socio-economic situation. The study also analyses various local mechanisms for dispute resolution.

List of Abbreviations

AGA	-	Assistant Government Agent
CBO	-	Community Based Organisation
CEPA	-	Centre for Poverty Analysis
CFA	-	Cease Fire Agreement
CHA	-	Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies
CPA	-	Centre for Policy Alternatives
CTB	-	Ceylon Transport Board
CTF	-	Community Trust Fund
DCS	-	Department of Census and Statistics
DS	-	District Secretary/Divisional Secretary
DS division	-	Divisional Secretariat Division
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FLICT	-	Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation
GA	-	Government Agent
GS/GN Division	-	Grama Sevaka / Grama Niladari Division
GTZ	-	German Technical Corporation
HCI	-	Head Count Index
IDMC	-	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	-	Internally Displaced Person
IFSP	-	Integrated Food Security Project
INGOs	-	International Non Government Organisations
ISRC	-	Islamic Relief Committee
KI	-	Key Informant interview
LRC	-	Land Reform Commission
LTTE	-	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MOH	-	Medical Officer of Health
MP	-	Member of Parliament
NGO	-	Non Government Organisation
PLOTE	-	People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
RDF	-	Rural Development Foundation
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
DEPT	-	Women's Organisation for Development, Equity, Peace and Temperance

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

The study follows 6 conflict incidents, their development, and resolution. These lines or conflict incidents all play out in these ethnically mixed DS divisions. The study finds that ethnicity influences many of the conflicts, and that conflicts triggered off by other factors become ethnicized because of the existing tensions among these groups.

The sudden change in the population composition created by the influx of IDPs changed the ethnic mix and brought in a distinct population group with different support structures and political power, creating the foundation for tension and conflict. These differences are rooted in the demographics and socio economic picture of the district.

National statistical data shows that Puttalam is a poor district and that its poverty profile was affected by its population of IDPs. Changes in the head count index measure which was 22% in 1990 and increased to 31% in 1995 could be attributed to the influx of IDPs with a low personal resource base. The resources within the district were not sufficient to support this sudden influx and it put a strain on its already fragile economy. The latest poverty figures (2006) however show a dramatic change with the head-count index decreasing from 31% in 2002 to 13%. It is possible that the inflows of aid began to have an impact some years after they began to be received and thus improved the consumption patterns of the people in Puttalam. The infrastructure development in the area has been rapid after the arrival of the IDPs. They have also contributed to the local economy by making productive investments, and starting small businesses. While the initial impact of the arrival of the IDPs on poverty may have been negative, more recent figures show that they may have contributed significantly to reversing and improving consumption based poverty in the district. Despite these macro economic changes there continues to be a perception among the host community that the IDPs are impacting negatively on the district economy. As a result of this enduring perception many of the conflicts the study examined were linked with socio-economic competition.

Migration appeared repeatedly in the study, linked to the conflict environment and the socio economic changes in the district. Puttalam has had many instances of migration from ancient kings arriving from India with their royal entourage (in the case King Vijaya coming to Sri Lanka in 543 BC from the area called Thammana, which is situated in the present Vanathavillu DS division) to the ancient kingdoms and their economy based settlements such as the activity surrounding the trading ports of the ports of Chilaw, Puttalam and Madampe in the reign of King Parakramabhahu VI, to post colonial irrigation settlement schemes including the Thabbowa which settled 29 farmer families and the Vijayakatupotha Scheme which brought in 327 families. The most recent in migration was that of the IDPs who were forced out of their homes in the North and East by the LTTE in 1990-1991.The majority of these people have been Muslims from the Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts of the North following their expulsion by the LTTE.

The study explored six main conflict lines in Puttalam. They were selected for their diversity, their stages of resolution, and the parties involved. One of the incidents involved a dispute between the three communities who shared the cemetery in Sirimapura, seen as a conflict incident raising tension among the respective communities. In this incident, the Buddhists and Catholics had the cemetery for themselves until the arrival of the Muslim IDPs. When the Muslims IDPs asked for a section for themselves, there was disagreement amongst the other two parties, which created some social tension. A local NGO, the RDF (Rural Development Foundation), intervened in the incident as a neutral actor, following which the conflicting parties agreed to share the cemetery with the Muslim IDPs. Third party intervention succeeded in resolving this situation, but it is not always successful in resolving other similar conflict incidents.

The incident of the Noraicholai Clinic concerned the use of the mosque building for a clinic. The mosque committee felt that the normal functioning of the mosque was being disrupted by the crowd coming to the clinic which had increased following the arrival of the IDPs. The Islamic Relief Committee in collaboration with USAID intervened, and established a new clinic outside the mosque compound. The provision of a new resource changed the conflict dynamic, diffusing the situation.

In Nagavillu, there was a dispute between two groups of Sinhala and Muslim three wheeler drivers about a parking area for their vehicles. This dispute spilled over into violence and created a lot of tension in the surrounding area.The tension in the area continues, but the violent has been controlled because a police checkpoint has been created close to the disputed area. Beyond that the conflict continues to remain unresolved.

In Poonapitiya, Udappu, a dispute took place between Hindus and Catholics in the area over a piece of land where a Hindu temple was built. Clashes between the youth from both communities took place, which disturbed the peace and harmony of the area. The conflict was finally resolved when a person from the area donated land to one of the parties in dispute after a protracted period of negotiations.

The conflict in Vanathavillu arose as a result of competition for fishing between the Gangaivadi and Serakkuliya communities who for long periods asserted each others' rights over sea access and dockyard for fishing boats. A solution was given by the GA along with other local officials and the armed forces involved because of the sensitive nature of the area. The GA assigned a 4 acre site to both disputing communities to share, for landing their boats and selling their catch.

Issues such as identity, land, and political power added to the complexity of the conflicts, and in many cases made their resolution more tenuous and difficult. The conflict lines allow for a deeper reflection on these issues within the study and add to the sense that the conflicts are not separate incidents but elements of a complex social situation which we have selected to illustrate the range of conflicts and resolution mechanisms.

The IDPs have been present in the area for 17 years, challenging the notion that their stay in the district is temporary. According to a 2006 UNHCR survey, 94% of IDPs have said that they choose to settle in Puttalam and not return to their places of origin 74% of the IDPs surveyed claim to have acquired land in Puttalam and 58% reported that they also possess a house in Puttalam. The host community raises questions about the continued vulnerability status of the IDPs especially given that other more vulnerable groups exist among the host community. This perception that the IDPs are unfairly assisted because of their status is at the heart of the social disaffection in the district and plays itself out in some of the conflicts the study examines. Feedback on the study report identified female headed households, migratory fisher people and families of migrant workers as particularly vulnerable groups that required special assistance from development institutions. Successive development projects and assistance initiatives have made the mistake of defining vulnerability too narrowly and have fuelled existing social discontent. In order for this discontentment to be avoided in future or to stop it spreading more widely, the relevant authorities should be more aware of the ground situation and plan and implement their activities in a more sensitive manner.

All of the conflict issues were resolved by the conflicting parties with external assistance and involvement. The resolutions were always collective. The timing of the external intervention always proved to be important in achieving a positive solution. All the conflicts seemed to have a window of opportunity where the communities were not yet disenchanted with each other, and were willing to accept a compromise. This solution had to be comprehensive and timely

if it were to succeed. By far the most successful resolutions took place before the conflict had boiled over into general social unrest, or developed into an intractable situation between the groups involved. Examples from the resolution processes of each of the conflicts illustrates this further, in the main report.

When the conflict was based on the legal ownership of land the parties sought redress from the formal justice system. The parties involved in the land dispute in Palavi, for example, brought the case before court seeking justice, knowing that this dispute could not be resolved by existing local structures such as peace committees and religious leaders because they too were polarized by the dispute.

In the case of conflicts over common property, those involved would approach development institutions for a solution. Women's groups in Nuracholai approached ISRC when they had a problem with sharing the clinic which was used by the host community before the arrival of IDPs.

When government structures and actors became involved in dispute resolution it was important for the conflicting parties to see that their interventions were unbiased. The experiences of the communities in Vanathavillu, Udappu and Nagavillu shows how the success of the resolution depends on all parties being satisfied about the fairness of the solution.

Peace committees were formed in some instances in response to different disputes and as a result functioned on many different levels. Community level peace committees were made up of local religious leaders, community leaders and representatives of development institutions working in the area. These committees deal with local level disputes by direct intervention. The groups are organic and stem from the locality. They are not created as a peace-building or support mechanism by external institutions. Much of their success was due to their links with the community and the respect that each of the constituent members had among the people involved in the dispute. As such, individual religious leaders also play a role in dispute resolution in their own right. They meet with some success in resolving disputes that involve members of their own faith, and play an important role in preventing further escalation of the dispute. These leaders are the first point of contact for disputants from their faith and are therefore able to deal with conflicts at a very early stage.

Other resolution processes involved individuals of influence within the community, politicians, administrative officers, and formal legal mechanisms such as courts and the police. All these institutions had varying degrees of success in their interventions to resolve conflict. The study reveals that it was combined efforts of many of these actors, initiated by the parties to the conflict that resulted in more permanent and sustainable solutions.

The study found that disputes and violence do take place in Puttalam despite the appearance externally that it is a peaceful district. The existence of conflict has also led to the creation of different local mechanisms for dealing with conflict and maintaining a relative peace.

What is vital is that external institutions seeking to work in the district recognize the fragility of this environment and do not act in ways that make the situation worse. The awareness that the competition for economic resources is driving conflict requires that institutions seeking to implement projects in the district, do so in a manner that would share out the resources equally, among the many communities and groups that are vulnerable. In the event that projects are unable to include respondents from all vulnerable groups, the selection criteria and process should be transparent in order that people do not interpret beneficiary selection as being biased.

Local and international institutions working in Puttalam are now starting to adapt a conflict sensitive approach in their development projects. Some development institutions working in the area for the welfare of IDPs have now decided to include a proportion of local people in their projects and this in turn has reduced potential conflicts between the host community and IDPs.

The study identified different local mechanisms that have adapted out of the conflict environment in Puttalam and recommends that any external actor that seeks to address conflict in the district, supports and enhances the capability of these actors, rather than replacing them with other institutions, or techniques of conflict resolution and peace promotion.

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මෙම අධ්‍යයනය ගැටුම් අවස්ථා 6 කින් ද ඒවා වර්ධනය වූ ආකාරය හා විසඳනු ලැබූ ආකාරයෙන් ද සමන්විතය. මෙම ගැටුම් අවස්ථා ඇතිවන්නේ මිශ‍්‍ර ජාතීන් ජීවත්වන්නා වූ ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් කොට්ඨාශවලය. මෙම අධ්‍යයනය මගින් ජනවර්ගය ගැටුම්වලට ඇති කරන බලපෑම හා ගැටුම්වලට බලපෑම්වන අනෙකුත් සාධක මත ඔවුන් අතර පවත්නා ආතතිය ජනවාර්ගිකත්වය මත රඳා ඇති බව සොයාගෙන ඇත.

අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන්වූවන් හෝ ජනවාර්ගික මිශ‍්‍රණය නිසා ප්‍රදේශයේ ජනගහනයේ යලිත් වෙනස් වීම මතත් ඇති වූ ජන කොටස්ශයන්ගේ විවිධ වූ ආධාර ක‍්‍රම හා දේශපාලන බලවේගයක් නිසා ද ආතතිය හා ගැටුම් ඇති වීමට පාදක වී ඇත. මෙම විවිධතාවයන් දිස්ත‍්‍රික්ක ජනගහන විවිධත්වය හා සමාජ ආර්ථික විතරය තුළ මුල් බැසගෙන ඇත.

ජාතික සංඛ්‍යාත්මක දත්ත පෙන්වන පරිදි පුත්තලම දිළිඳු දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කයක් වන අතර එයට හේතු වී ඇත්තේ එහි සිටින අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන් වූවන්ගේ ජනගහණයයි. 1990-1995 ජන සංඛ්‍යාත දර්ශකයේ මිනුම්වල වෙනස එනම් 22% සිට 31% ක් වූ වර්ධනයට හේතු වී ඇත්තේ අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන්වූවන්ගේ ආගමනය හා අඩු පුද්ගලික සම්පත් පසුබිමයි. දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කයේ පවතින සම්පත් ප‍්‍රමාණය හදිසි ආගමනයට ආධාර කිරීම සඳහා ප‍්‍රමාණවත් නොවන අතරම එය පවතින දුර්වල ආර්ථිකයට තවත් පීඩාකාරී වේ. 2006 තවමත් දරිද්‍රතා දර්ශකවල අනුව ජන සංඛ්‍යාත දර්ශකයේ 2002 දී 31% සිට 13% දක්වා ඉතා පහළ බැසීමක් පෙන්වයි. එයට ප‍්‍රධාන ලෙසම ආධාර ගලා ඒමත් සහ ජීවා ලබා දීමටත් ඒ අනුව වර්ධනය වූ පුත්තලම ජනතාවගේ පරිහෝජන රටාවන් මෙයට හේතුව විය හැකිය. එසේම අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන් වූවන්ගේ ආගමනයත් සමඟ ප‍්‍රදේශයට යටිතල පහසුකම් වර්ධනය වීමක් සිදු වී ඇත. ඔවුන් දේශීය ආර්ථිකය සඳහා කුඩා ව්‍යාපාර අරඹමින් තම නිෂ්පාදන ආයෝජනය කිරීමෙන් දායක වී ඇත. ඉතා මෑතකදී දක්වා දත්තවලට අනුව ඔවුන් දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කයේ පරිහෝජන වර්ධනය අවමකිරීම මත පදනම් වූ දුප්පත්කම සඳහා දායක වන අතර දුප්පත්කම සම්බන්ධයෙන් අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන් වූවන්ගෙන් ඇති බලපෑම මූලිකව සෘණාත්මකව පවතින්නා වූ විශාල වූ ආර්ථික වෙනස්කම්වලට අමතරව සත්කාරක ප‍්‍රජාවගේ සිතුවිලි වලට අනුව අවතැන්වූවන් දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කයේ ආර්ථිකයට සෘණාත්මක ලෙස බලපෑම් කරයි. මෙම සංඥානවල උරා ගැනීමෙහි ප‍්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස අධ්‍යයනය කළ ගැටුම් සියල්ලම සමාජ ආර්ථික තරගයකට සම්බන්ධ වී ඇත.

අධ්‍යයනයේ දක්නට ලැබුණු ආගමනයන් සියල්ලම ගැටුම් පරිසරය හා දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කයේ සමාජ ආර්ථික වෙනස්වීම් සමග බැදී ඇත. පුත්තලමේ ආගමනයන් පිළිබඳව උදාහරණ විශාල සංඛ්‍යාවක් ඇති අතර විශේෂයෙන් ඉන්දීය රජවරුන් සමඟ (ක්‍රි.ව. 543 විජයගේ ශ‍්‍රී ලංකා ආගමනය සිදු වූ තම්මැන්නාව අද වනාතවිල්ල ප‍්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් කොට්ඨාශයට අයත් වූවකි.) ආර්ථික පදනම් මත පදිංචි වීම හා ඒ හා බැදුණු වෙළඳාම් තොටුපළවල් ආශ‍්‍රිත ක‍්‍රියාකාරකම් සඳහාත් උදාහරණ ලෙස හලාවත වරාය, පුත්තලම, මාදම්පේ, එසේම vi වන පරාක‍්‍රමබාහු රජ සමයේ සිට පශ්චාත් යටත්විජිතවාදී වාරිමාර්ග ජනපද යෝජනාක‍්‍රම ක‍්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම හා තබ්බෝවේ පදිංචි කළ ගොවි පවුල් 29 හා විජයකටුපොත ජනපදයේ පදිංචි කළ පවුල් 327 උදාහරණ වේ. ඉතාම මෑතකාලීන ආගමනයක් වන්නේ උතුරු නැගෙනහිර පදිංචිකරුවන්ට LTTE මගින් 1990-1991 සිය වාසස්ථාන අතහැර යාමට සිදු වූ පසු ඇතිවූ අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන්වූවන්ය. මෙලෙස අවතැන්වූවන්ගෙන් බහුතරය යාපනය, මන්නාරම, මුලතිවු හා කිලිනොච්චිය යන උතුරේ දිස්ත‍්‍රික්කවල පදිංචි LTTE විසින් නෙරපා හැරීම්වලට ලක්වුණු මුස්ලිම් ජනතාවයි.

මෙම අධ්‍යයනය ප්‍රධාන ලෙසම පුත්තලමේ සිදු වූ ගැටුම් අවස්ථා 6 ක් ගවේෂණය කරයි. ඒවා තෝරාගෙන ඇත්තේ එහි ඇති විවිධත්වය, විසඳුම් අවස්ථා හා ඒවාට සම්බන්ධ වූ පාර්ශ්වයන් යන කරුණු සැලකීමෙනි. එක් අවස්ථාවක් වන්නේ ප්‍රජාවන් ත්‍රිත්වය අතර වූ සිරිමාපුර පිහිටි පොදු සුසාන භූමියක් සඳහා වූ ගැටුමකි. මෙම ගැටුම නිසා ප්‍රජාවන් අතර ආතතියක් වර්ධනය වන බව ද දැකිය හැකි විය. මෙම සිදුවීමේ දී බෞද්ධ හා කතෝලික බැතිමතුන් සුසාන භූමිය භාවිතා කළ අතර මුස්ලිම් අවතැන් වුවන්ගේ පැමිණීම සමඟ ඔවුන්ටත් වෙනම කොටසක් ඉල්ලීමේ දී පාර්ශ්වයන් එහි එකගතාවය බිඳීමෙන් සමාජයේ ආතතියක් ඇති විය. දේශීය රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධානයක් වන ග්‍රාම සංවර්ධන පදනම (RDF - Rural Development Foundation) මැදිහත් වීමෙන් සිද්ධිය සමථයකට පත් කරන ලද අතරම ගැටුම් පාර්ශව දෙක මුස්ලිම් අවතැන් වුවන්ට ද කොටසක් වෙන් කර දීමට එකග විය. තුන්වෙනි පාර්ශවයක් මැදිහත් වීමෙන් ගැටළුව නිරාකරණය වූ නමුත් එය සැමවිටම අනෙක් සමාන ගැටුම් විසඳීමේදී සාර්ථක නොවනු ඇත.

දෙවන අවස්ථාව වන්නේ නොරොච්චෝලයෙහි මුස්ලිම් පල්ලියේ ගොඩනැගිල්ලක් සායනයක් උදෙසා භාවිතා කිරීම සම්බන්ධවයි. මුස්ලිම් පල්ලියේ කමිටුවට දැනුණු පරිදි මෙම සායනයට ජනයා පැමිණීම නිසා වැඩිවූ අවතැන්වුවන්ගේ පැමිණීම පල්ලියේ සාමාන්‍ය පැවැත්මට බාධාවක් වූ බවයි. මුස්ලිම් සායන කමිටුව හා USAID මැදිහත්වීමෙන් පල්ලියෙන් පිටත නව සායනයක් ආරම්භ කරන ලදි. නව සම්පත් සැපයීමෙන් පසුව ගැටුමේ ගතිකයන්වල වෙනස්වීමක් ඇති වූ අතර එම සිද්ධිය ද නිරාකරණය විය.

නාගවිල්ලුහි දී සිංහල හා මුස්ලිම් ත්‍රීරෝද රථ රියදුරන්ගේ කණ්ඩායම් දෙකක රථ ගාලක් පිළිබඳව ආරවුලක් ඇතිවුණි. මෙම ආරවුල ප්‍රචණ්ඩකාරීත්වයක් දක්වා ගොස්, එම ප්‍රදේශය පුරා යම් ආතතියක් ඇති කරන ලදි. එම ආතතිය නොකඩවා පැවති අතර පොලිස් මාර්ග බාධකයක් ඒ අසල ප්‍රදේශයේ ඇති කිරීමෙන් එය ප්‍රචණ්ඩකාරී නොවීය. නමුත් ඒ ආරවුල විසඳුමක් රහිතව අඛණ්ඩව පැවතිණි.

උඩුප්පුහි දී හින්දූ කෝවිලක් ගොඩනගන ලද ඉඩම් කොටසක් උදෙසා හින්දූ හා කතෝලික බැතිමතුන් අතර ආරවුලක් ඇතිවී. දෙපාර්ශවයේ තරුණ ප්‍රජාවගේ ගැටුණු නිසා ප්‍රදේශයේ සාමකාමී වාතාවරණය බිඳ වැටුණු අතර, ගැටුම් අවසානයේ නිරාකරණය වූයේ පුද්ගලයෙකු විසින් සාකච්ඡා කිරීමෙන් පසුව ඉඩම් කොටසක් පරිත්‍යාග කිරීමෙන් අනතුරුවයි.

වනාතවිල්ලුව ප්‍රදේශයේ ගැටුම් ඇති වීමට හේතු වී ඇත්තේ ගගේවාඩිය සහ සේරක්කුලිය ධීවර ප්‍රජාවගේ ධීවර කර්මාන්තය සහ එකිනෙකට අයිතිව තිබූ ප්‍රවේශ මාර්ග හා බෝට්ටු ස්ථානගත කරන ප්‍රදේශ පිළිබඳව වූ තරගකාරී ස්වරූපයකිනි. ප්‍රදේශයේ පැවතුණු සංවේදී අවස්ථාව නිසා ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් හා අනෙකුත් නිලධාරීන්ද හමුදා නිලධාරීන් ද එකතු වී විසඳුමක් ලබාදෙන ලදි. ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් විසින් අක්කර 4ක භූමි ප්‍රමාණයක් ප්‍රජාවන්ට වෙන් කර දුන් අතර, එහිදී ඔවුන්ට එකතුව සිය මාළු වෙළඳාම හා බෝට්ටු ගාල්කර තැබීම කළ හැකි විය.

අනන්‍යතාවය පිළිබඳ ප්‍රශ්නය, භූමිය හා දේශපාලන බලය ගැටුම්වල ප්‍රබලතාවය වර්ධනය කරන ලද අතර මේ නිසාම විසඳුම් සෙවීම අපහසු සහ අසීරු කාර්යයක් විය. මෙම ගැටුම් අවස්ථා ප්‍රශ්න පිළිබඳව ගැඹුරු ප්‍රතිබිම්භයක් කිරීමට යොමු කරන අතරම ඒවා සංකීර්ණ සමාජ තත්වයක් පවත්නා කොටස් බවත්, වෙනම කොටස් නොවන බවත් විවිධ වූ ගැටුම් හා නිරාකරණ යාන්ත්‍රණයක් සඳහා උදාහරණ ලෙස අපි මෙම අවස්ථා තෝරා ගත්තෙමු.

ප්‍රදේශයේ වසර 17ක් පුරා පදිංචිව සිටි අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන්වුවන්ගේ විශ්වාසය වන්නේ ඔවුන් මෙම දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ තාවකාලික පදිංචිකරුවන් බවයි. 2006 UNHCR සංගණනය අනුව අභ්‍යන්තර

අවතැන්වූවන්ගෙන් 94% පැවසූ පරිදි ඔවුන් පුත්තලමේ පදිංචිය සඳහා තෝරාගෙන ඇති අතර යලිත් ඔවුන්ගේ මුල් පුදේශ කරා නොයන බවත් ඔවුන්ගෙන් 74% පුකාශ කරන පරිදි පුත්තලමේ ඔවුන්ට අයත් ඉඩම් කොටසක් ඇති අතර 58% කටම ඔවුන්ට හිමි නිවසක් පුත්තලමේ ඇත. සත්කාරක පුජාවෙන් පුශ්න කිරීම්වලට අනුව ඔවුන්ගේ අදහස වන්නේ, ඔවුන්ගේ තත්ත්වය අවදානම් වන අතර එය සමාජයේ වෙසෙන අනෙක් තර්ජනාත්මක කොටස්වලට බලපෑමක් කරන බවයි. අභ්‍යන්තර අවතැන්වූවන්ට ඔවුන්ගේ තත්ත්වය පදනම් කරගෙන ආධාර දෙනවා'යැයි යන හැඟීම නිසා දිස්තික්කයේ සමාජ අපුසාදයක් ඔවුනට හිමිවීමත් ඒ නිසාම ගැටුම් ඇතිවන බවත් අධ්‍යයනය කර ඇත. අධ්‍යයනයේ පුතිපෝෂණයට අනුව නිවාස සියල්ලකම කාන්තාව ගෘහමූලික වන අතර ඔවුන්ගෙන් සංචාරක ධීවර පවුල් සහ කම්කරු පවුල්වලට තත්ත්වය තර්ජනාත්මක වන අතර, ඔවුන්ට සංවර්ධන ආයතනවල විශේෂ ආධාරයක් අවශ්‍ය වේ. සාර්ථක සංවර්ධන ව්‍යාපෘති සහ ආධාරයන් ලබාදීමේදී අවදානම් බව පටු ආකාරයෙන් අර්ථ කථනය කිරීම යන වැරැද්ද හේතුවෙන් එය සමාජයේ අසන්තෝෂයට ලක් වී ඇත. මෙම අසතුට නැති කිරීම හෝ පැතිරීම අවම කිරීම පිණිස අනාගතයේදී අදාල බලධාරීන් විසින් වඩා සංවේදීව හා ඔවුන්ගේ මූලික තත්ත්වය පිළිබඳ අවබෝධයෙන් සැලසුම් කිරීම හා කියාත්මක කිරීම කළ යුතුය.

සියලුම ගැටුම් හා ගැටළු විසඳීමට සිදුව ඇත්තේ බාහිර උදව් ඇතිව හා සාමූහික විසඳුම් වශයෙනි. මීට පෙර බාහිර මැදිහත්වීම් ධනාත්මක විසඳුමක වැදගත් බව සෑම විටම ඔප්පු කර ඇත. පුජාව එකිනෙකා අතර වෛරයකින් පසුනොවන නිසා තවමත් ඔවුන් යම් එකඟතාවයකට පත්කර ගත හැකි නිසා ගැටුම් නිරාකරණයට අවස්ථාවක් ඇත. මෙම විසඳුම සාර්ථක වීමට නම් කාලීන හා අවබෝධාත්මක විය යුතුය. මෙතෙක් සාර්ථකව විසඳුණු ගැටුම් සියල්ලම ජනතාවගේ සාමාජීය නොඉවසුම්කාරී මට්ටමකට හෝ පාර්ශ්වයන් දෙකක් එකඟනොවන තත්ත්වයකට පත්වීමට පෙර නිරාකරණය කියාවලියෙන් දක්වා ඇත.

ගැටුම් නීත්‍යානුකූල ඉඩම් අයිතිකරුවන් පදනම් කරගෙන සිදුවීමේදී පාර්ශවයන් සාම්පුදායික යුක්තිය විසඳීමේ කියාවලිය මගින් උපදෙස් පතන ලදී. නිදසුනක් ලෙස පාලවිල ඇති වූ ඉඩම් ආරවුලේදී මිනිසුන් උසාවියේ පිහිට පතන ලද්දේ මොවුන් අර්බුදය හේතුවෙන් ධ්‍රැවීකරණය වී සිටි හෙයින් සාම කමිටු, ආගමික නායකයින් වැනි පුාදේශීය ව්‍යුහයන් මගින් විසඳුමක් ලබාගත නොහැකි බව දැනුණු හෙයිනි.

පොදු දේවල් සඳහා ගැටුම් ඇතිවීමේදී සංවර්ධන ආයතන වලින් විසඳුම් ලබා ගැනීම සඳහා ඉදිරිපත් විය. නොරොච්චෝලෙහි අවතැන්වූවන් පැමිණීමට පෙර සත්කාරක පුජාවේ කාන්තා කණ්ඩායමකට ඇතිවූ පොදු සායනයක් පිළිබඳව පුශ්නය ISRC වෙත යොමු කරන ලදී.

ආණ්ඩුවේ යාන්තුණ හා කියාකාරීන් ආරවුල් නිරාකරණය සඳහා මැදිහත්වීමේදී ගැටුම් පාර්ශ්වකරුවන් ඔවුන් අපක්ෂපාති ද යන වග දැනසිටීම වැදගත් විය. වනාතවිල්ලුල උදප්පුල නාගවිල්ලු පුජාවේ අත්දැකීම් පෙන්වන පරිදි ගැටුම් විසඳීම සාර්ථකත්වය රඳාපවතින්නේ පාර්ශ්ව දෙකම විසඳුම සාධාරණදැයි සෑහීමකට පත්වූ විටයි.

ඇතැම්විට විවිධ වූ ආරවුල් විසඳීම සඳහා කමිටු පත්කරන ලද අතර ඒවා විවිධ වූ ආකාරයන්ගෙන් කියාත්මක වී ඇත. පුජා නායකයන්ගෙන්, ආගමික නායකයන්ගෙන් හා පුදේශයේ සංවර්ධන ආයතනවල නියෝජිතයන්ගෙන් පුජා මූලික සාම කමිටු සමන්විත වී ඇත. මෙම සාම කමිටු පුාදේශීය ආරවුල් සඳහා සෘජුව මැදිහත් වේ. මෙම කණ්ඩායම් මූලිකව ම පුාදේශීය වශයෙන් ගොඩනැඟී ඇත. මේවා බාහිර ආයතන මගින් සාමය ගොඩනැංවීම හෝ ආධාරක යාන්තුණය සඳහා නිර්මාණය වී නැත. ඔවුන්ගේ සාර්ථකත්වය රඳා පවතින්නේ ඔවුන්ගේ ඇති පුජා සම්බන්ධකම් හා ඔවුනට ගැටුමට සම්බන්ධ වූ පුද්ගලයන්ගේ ඇති ගෞරවය පදනම් කරගෙනයි. එසේම පුද්ගලිකව ආගමික නායකයින් ද ආරවුල් නිරාකරණයේ දී ඔවුන්ට හැකි ආකාරයට යම් කාර්යයක් ඉටු කරයි. ඔවුන් තමන්ගේ ආගමික

බැතිමතුන්ගේ ආරවුල් සමථයකට පත් කිරීම සම්බන්ධයෙන් හා එම ගැටුම් පැතිරීම වැළැක්වීම සඳහා වැදගත් හා සාර්ථක මෙහෙයක් ඉටුකරයි. ඔවුන්ගේ විශ්වාසය සහ ගැටුම සමඟ ගනුදෙනු කිරීමට සමත් නිසා මෙම නායකයින් ගැටුමේ මුල් අවස්ථාවේදීම අර්බුදකරුවන් ඔවුන්ව මුලින්ම සම්බන්ධ කරගනු ලබයි.

අනෙකුත් විසඳුම් කියාවලින්වලදී ප්‍රජාවටම බලපෑම් කළ හැකි තනි පුද්ගලයන්, දේශපාලඥයන්, පරිපාලන නිලධාරීන් හා සාම්ප්‍රදායික නීතිමය යාන්ත්‍රණයන් එනම් උසාවිය, පොලිසිය වැනි ඒවායින් සමන්විත වේ. මේ සියලුම ආයතන ගැටුම් නිරාකරණයේ මැදිහත්වීම් වලදී විවිධ වූ සාර්ථකත්වයන් දක්වා ඇත. අධ්‍යනයෙන් නිරාවරණය කරන පරිදි මෙම ක්‍රියාකාරීන්ගේ හා ගැටුමට මූලික වූ පාර්ශ්වයන්ගේ සාමුහික උත්සහයක ප්‍රතිඵලයක් බවත් එමඟින් වඩා ස්ථීර සහ ස්ථීරසාර විසඳුම් ලබාගත හැකි බවත් පෙන්වාදී ඇත. අධ්‍යයනයෙන් සොයාගත් පරිදි පුත්තලම බාහිර වශයෙන් සාමකාමී දිස්ත්‍රික්කයක් ලෙස පෙනුණත් එහි ආරවුල් හා ප්‍රචණ්ඩත්වයෙන් යුක්තය. පවත්නා ගැටුම විසින් විවිධ වූ ගැටුම් නිරාකරණ ප්‍රාදේශිය යාන්ත්‍රණ නිර්මාණය සඳහා යොමු වී ඇති අතර එමඟින් සාමාන්‍ය සාමකාමී වාතාවරණයක් පවත්වාගෙන යයි.

වඩාත් වැදගත් වන්නේ දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ කටයුතු කරන බාහිර ආයතන පාරිසරික දුර්වලතාවය වටහාගෙන එම තත්ත්වය වඩාත් අයහපත් වන ආකාරයට වැඩ කටයුතු කිරීමෙන් වැලකී සිටීමය. ප්‍රදේශයේ ආර්ථික සම්පත් සඳහා තරගකාරී බවක් ඇති බව දැන සිටීමත් එය ගැටුමක් සඳහා යොමු විය හැකි බවත් අවදානම් සහිත විවිධ වූ ප්‍රජාවන් හා කණ්ඩායම් අතර සම්පත් සමානව බෙදී යන ආකාරයෙන් කටයුතු කළ යුතු බවත් දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ විවිධ වූ ව්‍යාපෘති ක්‍රියාත්මක කරන්නන් දැනුවත් විය යුතුය. අවදානම් කණ්ඩායම්වලින් ප්‍රතිචාර ලබාගත නොහැකි ව්‍යාපෘතිවල දී ඔවුන් තෝරා ගන්නා ක්‍රියාමාර්ග විනිවිද පෙනෙන සුළු විය යුතු අතර, එමඟින් ජනතාවට එම තෝරා ගැනීම පක්ෂග්‍රාහී නොවූ බවට අර්ථකථනය කර ගනියි.

පුත්තලමේ ක්‍රියාත්මක වන දේශීය හා ජාත්‍යන්තර ආයතන තමන්ගේ සංවර්ධන ක්‍රියාකාරකම් ගැටුම් සඳහා සංවේදී වන ක්‍රියාපිළිවෙලකට හැඩගස්වනු ඇත. ප්‍රදේශයේ ක්‍රියාත්මක වන ඇතැම් සංවර්ධන ආයතන අවතැන් වූවන්ගේ සුභ සාධනය සඳහා පැවතිවත් ඒවා සඳහා සත්කාරක ප්‍රජාවගෙන් යම් කොටසක් ඇතුළත් කර ගැනීමට තීරණය කිරීමත් සමඟම අවතැන්වූවන් හා සත්කාරක සමාජය සමඟ වූ ගැටුම් අවම කරගැනීමට හැකියාව ලැබී ඇත.

පුත්තලමේ ක්‍රියාත්මක වන විවිධ ප්‍රාදේශීය යාන්ත්‍රණ ගැටුම්කාරී වාතාවරණයට හැඩගැසුණු දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ පවත්නා ගැටුම් සඳහා ආමන්ත්‍රණය කරන බාහිර ක්‍රියාකාරීන් සඳහා සහයෝගයක් ඔවුන්ගේ හැකියාවන් වර්ධනය කිරීමත් අනුමත කරන අතර ඔවුන් වෙනුවට අනෙක් ආයතන ගැටුම් නිරාකරණ ක්‍රියාමාර්ග හා සාමය වර්ධනයක් සිදු නොකරයි.

நிறைவேற்று சுருக்கம்

இக்கற்கையானது ஆறு முரண்பாட்டு சம்பவங்களை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு அவை எவ்வாறு உருப்பெற்று எவ்வாறு தீர்க்கப்பட்டன என்பவற்றை நோக்குவதாக அமைகின்றது. இவ் ஆறு முரண்பாட்டு சம்பவங்களும் இனக்கலப்புடைய பிரதேச செயலர் பிரிவுகளில் இடம்பெற்றனவாகவே அமைகின்றன. இக்கற்கை இனம் பல முரண்பாடுகளில் செல்வாக்கு செலுத்துவதையும் இனம்சாராத காரணிகளினால் உருவாகும் முரண்பாடுகள் கூட குழுக்களிடையே ஏற்கனவே காணப்படும் பதட்டங்களினால் இனத்துவப்படுத்தப்படுவதையும் கண்டறிகின்றது.

இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் வருகையானது சனத்தொகைச் சேர்க்கையில் திடீர் மாற்றத்தையும் இனக்கலப்பையும் உருவாக்கியதுடன் பதட்டங்களுக்கும் முரண்பாடுகளுக்கும் அத்திவாரமிடும்வகையில் ஆதரவு மற்றும் அரசியல் சக்தியைக் கொண்ட வேறுபட்ட ஒரு குழுவினரையும் உள்ளே கொண்டுவந்துள்ளது. இத்தகைய வேறுபாடுகள் மாவட்டத்தின் சனத்தொகைப் பரம்பல் மற்றும் சமூக, பொருளாதார நிலைமைகளை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டவையாக அமைகின்றன. தேசிய புள்ளிவிபரத் தரவுகளின்படி புத்தளம் ஒரு வறிய மாவட்டமாக இருப்பதுடன் அதன் வறுமை தோற்றப்பாடு இடம்பெயர்ந்த சனத்தொகையினால் பாதிக்கப்பட்டதாகவும் அமைகின்றது.

1990ம் ஆண்டில் 22% மாக இருந்த தலைக்கணிப்பு சார் வறுமைகுறிகாட்டி அளவீடு 1995ல் 31% மாக அதிகரித்தமை குறைந்தளவிலான தனிநபர் வள அடிப்படையைக் கொண்ட இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் சனத்தொகையின் ஓர் அம்சமாக இருக்கமுடியும். மாவட்டத்திலுள்ளே உள்ள வளங்கள் இடம்பெயர்ந்தோரின் திடீர் வருகைக்கு போதுமானதாக அமையாததோடு ஏற்கனவே காணப்பட்ட பொருளாதார நெருக்கடிகளில் மேலும் அழுத்தம் ஏற்படுத்துவதாக அமைந்தது. 31% தலைக்கணிப்பு சார் வறுமைகுறிகாட்டி 2002 இல் 13% ஆக வீழ்ச்சியடைந்தது அண்மைக்காலத்தில் தரவுகளின்படி சடுதியான மாற்றத்தைக் காட்டுகின்றது. உதவிகளைப் பெற்றுக்கொள்ள ஆரம்பித்து சில வருடங்களின் பின் உதவிகளின் வருகை தாக்கத்தை ஏற்படுத்தியதுடன் அது புத்தளத்திலுள்ள மக்களின் நுகர்வுத் தன்மைகளில் முன்னேற்றத்தை ஏற்படுத்தியது என்பது சாத்தியமாகும். இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் வருகையின் பின் உட்கட்டமைப்பு அபிவிருத்தி விரைவாக ஏற்பட்டது. அவர்கள் பயனுள்ள முதலீடுகளை ஏற்படுத்துவதன் மூலமும் சிறிய வியாபாரங்களை ஆரம்பிப்பதன் மூலமும் உள்ளூர் பொருளாதாரத்திற்குப் பங்களிப்பு செய்துள்ளனர். வறுமையில் இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் வருகையின் ஆரம்பத்தாக்கம் எதிர்மறையானதாக இருந்தாலும் மிக அண்மைய கால தரவுகளின்படி மாவட்டத்தின் நுகர்வை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்ட வறுமையை குறைப்பதற்கும் பொருளாதார நிலைமைகளை முன்னேற்றுவதற்கும் அவர்கள் முக்கிய பங்களிப்பை செய்துள்ளனர். இப்பாரிய பொருளாதார மாற்றங்கள் ஏற்பட்டிருப்பினும் உள்ளூர் சமூகங்கள் மாவட்டத்தின் பொருளாதாரத்தில் இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் எதிர்மறையான தாக்கத்தையே ஏற்படுத்துகின்றனர் என்ற நோக்கை தொடர்ச்சியாகக் கொண்டுள்ளனர். இத்தகைய தொடர்ச்சியான நோக்கின் விளைவாக கற்கையில் ஆராயப்பட்ட முரண்பாடுகள் சமூக, பொருளாதார போட்டிகளுடன் தொடர்புபட்டனவாகவே உள்ளன.

இக்கற்கையில் அடிக்கடி பேசப்படும் இடம்பெயர்வு என்ற விடயமானது மாவட்டத்தின் முரண்பாட்டுச்சூழல் மற்றும் சமூக, பொருளாதார மாற்றங்களுடன் தொடர்புடையதாகவே காணப்படுகின்றது. இந்தியாவிலிருந்து வருகை தந்த வரலாற்று பெருமையுடைய அரசர்கள் மற்றும் அவர்களது கூட்டத்தினர் (அரசன் விஜயன் கி.மு 543ல் இலங்கையில் வருகை தந்த "தம்மன" என்று அழைக்கப்படும் இடமானது தற்போதைய வனாதவில்லு பிரதேச செயலர் பிரிவிலேயே அமைந்துள்ளது) முதல் 4ம் பராக்கிரமபாகுவின் பண்டைய ஆட்சிபீடங்கள் மற்றும் வர்த்தகத் துறைமுகங்களான சிலாபம், புத்தளம், மாதம்பை முதல் 29விவசாயக் குடும்பங்களை கொண்ட தப்போவ மற்றும் 327 குடும்பங்களைக் கொண்ட விஜயகட்டுப்போத போன்ற காலணித்துவத்திற்குப் பின்னான நீர்ப்பாசனக் குடியேற்றத்திட்டங்கள் வரையான இடம்பெயர்வு நிகழ்வுகளை புத்தளம் கொண்டுள்ளது. 1990 ற்கும் 1991 ற்குமிடையில் வடக்கு மற்றும் கிழக்கிலிருந்து LTTE யினால் வலுக்கட்டாயமாக இடம்பெயர்ந்த மக்களின் இடம்பெயர்வே மிக அண்மைக்காலத்தில் ஏற்பட்ட இடம்பெயர்வாகும். LTTEயினால் வெளியேற்றப்பட்ட மக்களில் பெரும்பான்மையினர் வடக்கிலுள்ள யாழ்ப்பாணம், மன்னார், முல்லைத்தீவு போன்ற மாவட்டங்களிலிருந்து வந்த முஸ்லிம்கள் ஆவர்.

இக்கற்கையானது புத்தளத்தில் இடம்பெற்ற ஆறு முக்கிய முரண்பாட்டு சம்பவங்களை ஆராய்வதாக அமைகின்றது. அவை பல்வகைத்தன்மை, தீர்வு மட்டங்கள் மற்றும் ஈடுபடும் தரப்பினர் போன்றவற்றின்

அடிப்படையிலேயே தெரிவுசெய்யப்பட்டன. இம்முரண்பாட்டு சம்பவங்களில் ஒன்றான சிறிமாபுர சம்பவத்தில் மூன்று சமூகங்கள் மயானத்தைப் பகிர்ந்து கொள்வதில் உண்டான மோதலானது அந்த சமூகங்களிடையே பதட்டங்களை அதிகரித்த ஒரு முரண்பாட்டு நிகழ்வாக காணப்பட்டது.

இச்சம்பவத்தில் இடம்பெயர்ந்த முஸ்லிம்களின் வருகைக்கு முன்பாக பௌத்தர்களும் கத்தோலிக்கர்களும் இம்மயானத்தைத் தம்முடையதாகக் கொண்டிருந்தனர். இடம்பெயர்ந்த முஸ்லிம் மக்களில் அம்மயானத்தில் தமக்கும் ஒரு பங்கு கேட்கப்பட்டபொழுது மற்றைய இரு குழுக்களும் மறுப்பு தெரிவித்தவிடத்து அது சில பதட்டங்களை சமுதாய மட்டத்தில் ஏற்படுத்தியது. RDF (கிராமிய அபிவிருத்தி மன்றம்) என்ற நடுநிலை வகிக்கும் உள்ளூர் அரசசார்பற்ற நிறுவனத்தின் தலையீட்டில் முரண்பாட்டுக்குழுக்கள் இடம்பெயர்ந்த முஸ்லிம்களுடன் மயானத்தைப் பகிர்ந்துகொள்ள சம்மதித்தனர். இந்த சூழ்நிலையைத் தீர்த்துவைப்பதற்கு மூன்றாம் தரப்பினரின் தலையீடு வெற்றிகரமானதாக அமைந்தது. ஆனால் இது போன்ற சூழ்நிலைகளைத் தீர்ப்பதற்கு இது எப்போதும் வெற்றிகரமாக அமைவதில்லை.

நுரைச்சோலை சம்பவத்தில் பள்ளிவாசல் சிகிச்சைநிலையமாக செயற்பட்டது. இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் வருகையுடன் மருந்தகத்திற்கு வரும் கூட்டத்தின் அளவு அதிகரித்ததையடுத்து பள்ளிவாசல் செயற்குழு தமது வழமையான செயற்பாடுகளில் இடையூறு ஏற்படுவதாக உணர்ந்தனர். இஸ்லாமிய உதவி ஆணைக்குழு மற்றும் USAID ஆகியவற்றின் தலையீட்டில் ஒரு புதிய சிகிச்சை நிலையம் பள்ளிவாசலுக்கு வெளியே உருவாக்கப்பட்டது. புதிய வளங்கள் வழங்கப்பட்டமையால் முரண்பாட்டின் இயக்கநிலை மாற்றமடைந்து, சுமுகநிலை உருவாகியது.

நாகவில்லுவில் இரண்டு சிங்கள மற்றும் முஸ்லிம் முச்சக்கரவண்டி சாரதி குழுக்களிடையே அவர்களின் வாகனங்களின் தரிப்பிடம் தொடர்பான பிரச்சினை ஒன்றிருந்தது. இந்தப் பிரச்சினை வன்முறையாய் உருவெடுத்து அந்த பிரதேசத்தையும் சுற்றுப்புறங்களிலும் தீவிர பதட்டநிலையைத் தோற்றுவித்தது. பிரதேசத்தில் இந்த பதட்டநிலை இன்னும் தொடர்கின்றது. பிரச்சினை ஏற்பட்ட இடத்திற்கு அண்மையில் பொலிஸ் சோதனைச்சாவடி ஒன்று அமைக்கப்பட்டதனால் இந்த பதட்டநிலை வன்முறையாக உருவெடுக்கவில்லை. இதற்கு மேலாக, அந்த முரண்பாடு தீர்க்கப்படாமல் இன்னும் தொடர்கின்றது.

உடப்பில் இந்து ஆலயம் ஒன்று கட்டப்பட்ட காணித்துண்டு தொடர்பாக இந்துக்களுக்கும் கத்தோலிக்கர்களுக்குமிடையில் பிணக்கு ஏற்பட்டது. இருதரப்பையும் சேர்ந்த இளைஞர்களிடையே ஏற்பட்ட கைகலப்புகள், அப்பிரதேசத்தின் அமைதி நிலையைச் சீர்குலைத்தன. இந்த முரண்பாடானது இறுதியாக நீண்டகாலமாக பேச்சுவார்த்தைகளுக்கு பிறகு, அப்பிரதேசத்தை சேர்ந்த ஒருவர் பிணக்கில் ஈடுபட்டிருந்த ஒரு தரப்பிற்கு காணித்துண்டொன்றை வழங்கியதன் மூலம் தீர்க்கப்பட்டது.

வனாத்திவில்லு பிரதேசத்தில் முரண்பாடானது கங்கைவாடி மற்றும் சேராக்குளி சமூகங்களுக்கிடையிலான மீன்பிடிக்கான போட்டியின் காரணமாக தோன்றியது. இந்த இரண்டு தரப்புகளும் நீண்டகாலமாக கடலைப் பயன்படுத்துவது மற்றும் படகுகளைக் கரைசேர்ப்பது தொடர்பாக தமது உரிமைகளை வலியுறுத்தியுள்ளது. அரச அதிபரால் மற்றைய அதிகாரிகளும் இணைந்து தீர்வு ஒன்று வழங்கப்பட்டது. பிரதேசத்தின் பதட்ட சூழ்நிலை காரணமாக ஆயுதப்படைகளும் தீர்வு வழங்கலில் இணைத்துக் கொள்ளப்பட்டனர். அரச அதிபர் பிணக்கில் ஈடுபட்டுள்ள இரண்டு தரப்புகளும் தமது படகுகளை கரையேற்றம், மீன்களை விற்பனை செய்யவும் பகிர்ந்துகொள்வதற்கும் 4 ஏக்கர் காணியை ஒதுக்கினார்.

அடையாளம், காணி மற்றும் அரசியல் அதிகாரம் போன்ற விடயங்கள் முரண்பாட்டின் சிக்கற்தன்மையுடன் சேர்ந்து, பல சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் தீர்வுகளை நலிவான மற்றும் கடினமானவையாக ஆக்கியுள்ளன. இந்த முரண்பாட்டு பாங்குகள் இந்த கற்கையினுள் அவற்றின் ஆழ்ந்த பிரதிபலிப்பு ஏற்படுவதுவதற்கு வாய்ப்பளிப்பதுடன் முரண்பாடுகள் தனிப்பட்ட சம்பவங்கள் அல்ல. அவை நாம் விளக்குவதற்காக எடுத்துள்ள முரண்பாடுகளின் வீச்சுகள் மற்றும் தீர்வு பொறிமுறைகளின் சிக்கலான சூழ்நிலையில் மூலகங்கள் என்பதை உணர்ந்துகொள்ளவும் வாய்ப்பளிக்கிறது.

உள்நாட்டில் இடம்பெயர்ந்த மக்கள், அவர்கள் மாவட்டத்தில் தற்காலிகமாக தங்கியுள்ளார்கள் என்ற பொதுவான புரிந்துணர்வுக்கு சவால்விடும் வகையில் 17 வருடங்களாக அப்பிரதேசத்தில் இருக்கின்றார்கள். 2006 இல் UNHCR நடாத்திய கருத்துக் கணிப்பில், 94% ஆன இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்கள் தாம் தமது சொந்த இடங்களுக்கு செல்ல விரும்பவில்லை எனவும், புத்தளத்திலேயே குடியேற முடிவுசெய்துள்ளதாயும் முடிவுசெய்துள்ளதாக தெரிவித்துள்ளனர். ஆய்வு செய்யப்பட்ட இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்களில் 74% மக்கள்

புத்தளத்தில் காணி வாங்கியுள்ளதாயும் 58% ஆனவர்கள் தங்களுக்கு புத்தளத்திலும் ஒரு வீடு இருப்பதாக தெரிவித்துள்ளனர். உள்ளூர் சமுதாயம், சிறப்பாக உள்ளூரில் மிகமோசமான நலிவடைந்த நிலையில் வாழும் குழுக்கள் இருக்கும்போது, இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்கள் தொடர்ச்சியாக நலிவடைந்தவர்கள் என்ற அடிப்படையில் நோக்குவது தொடர்பில் கேள்வி எழுப்புகின்றது. இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்கள் நியாயமற்ற முறையில் மதிப்பிடப்படுகின்றார்கள் என்ற எண்ணம் மாவட்டத்தில் சமுக வெறுப்பின் மையத்தில் உள்ளதுடன், இக்கற்கை பரிசீலிக்கும் முரண்பாடுகள் சிலவற்றிலும் செல்வாக்கு செலுத்தியுள்ளது. பெண்கள் தலைமை வகிக்கும் குடும்பங்கள், புலம்பெயர்ந்து மீன்பிடிக்கும் மக்கள் மற்றும் புலம்பெயர் பணியாளர்களின் குடும்பங்கள் என்பன குறிப்பாக அபிவிருத்தி நிறுவனங்களிடமிருந்தான விசேட உதவி தேவைப்படும் நலிவான குழுக்கள் என, இக்கற்கையின் பின்னூட்டம் கூறுகின்றது. தொடர்ச்சியான அபிவிருத்தித்திட்டங்கள் மற்றும் உதவிகள் பாதுகாப்புநிலையை மிக மெல்லிய வரைமுறைகளுள் வரையறுப்பதன் மூலம், ஏற்கனவே சமுகத்திலுள்ள அதிருப்தி நிலையை அதிகரிக்கச்செய்யும் தவறைச் செய்துள்ளன. எதிர்காலத்தில் இந்த அபிவிருத்தி நிலை தவிர்க்கப்பட அல்லது மேலும் பரவுவதை தடுத்து நிறுத்த, உரிய அதிகாரிகள் தள நிலவரங்களை சரியாக அறிந்து கொண்டு அவர்களின் செயற்பாடுகளை, அதிக உணர்திறனுள்ள முறையில் திட்டமிடவும் அமுல்படுத்தவும் வேண்டும்.

சகல முரண்பாட்டு பிரச்சினைகளும், முரண்பாட்டில் தொடர்புபட்ட தரப்புகளால் வெளி உதவி மற்றும் ஈடுபாட்டுடன் தீர்க்கப்பட்டன. தீர்வானது எப்போதும் சேர்ந்து எடுத்த தீர்வாகும். சாதகமான ஒரு தீர்வை எட்டுவதற்கு, புறத்தலையீடு சரியான நேரத்தில் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட வேண்டும் என்பன அவசியம் என்பது நிரூபணமாயுள்ளது.

சகல முரண்பாடுகளும், இதுவரை ஒன்றையொன்று சரியாகப் புரிந்துகொள்ளாத, விட்டுக் கொடுப்பிற்கு தயாராயுள்ள சமூகங்களிடையே தீர்விற்கான ஒரு வாய்ப்பை கொண்டிருக்கின்றன. இத்தீர்வானது வெற்றிகரமாக அமைய பூரணமானதாயும் சரியான நேரத்தில் வழங்கப்படுவதாயும் அமையவேண்டும். இதுவரை வழங்கப்பட்ட வெற்றிகரமான தீர்வுகள் யாவும், முரண்பாடு பொதுவான சமூக குழப்பமாக, அல்லது அதில் ஈடுபட்டுள்ள குழுக்களிடையில் கட்டுப்படுத்தமுடியாத சூழ்நிலையாக உருவெடுக்க முன்னர் வழங்கப்பட்டவையாகவே உள்ளன. பிரதான அறிக்கையில், இந்த ஒவ்வொரு முரண்பாட்டினதும் தீர்வு செயன்முறைகளிலிருந்தான உதாரணங்கள் விரிவாக விபரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

முரண்பாடானது, காணி மீதான சட்டரீதியான உரிமையை அடிப்படையாக இருந்தபொழுது, முரண்பட்ட தரப்புகள் முறையான நீதி செயன்முறையை நாடிச்சென்றுள்ளனர். பாலாவியில் நிலப் பிணக்கில் ஈடுபட்டிருந்த தரப்புக்கள், உதாரணமாக, உள்ளூர் அமைப்புக்களான சமாதான சபை, சமயத்தலைவர்கள் போன்றவர்கள் பிணக்கில் பக்கச்சார்பாக உள்ளதால் அவர்கள் மூலம் நியாயம் கிடைக்காது என அறிந்து, வழக்கு தாக்கல் செய்தனர்.

பொதுச்சொத்துக்கள் தொடர்பான முரண்பாடுகளில், சம்பந்தவர்கள் தீர்வுக்காக அபிவிருத்தி நிறுவனங்களை அணுகுவார்கள். நுரைச்சோலையில் உள்ள பெண்கள் குழுக்கள், இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்களின் வருகைக்கு முன் உள்ளூர்வாசிகளால் பயன்படுத்தப்பட்ட சிகிச்சை நிலையத்தை பகிர்ந்துகொள்வது தொடர்பான பிரச்சினையின்போது ISRC ஐ நாடினார்கள்.

அரச கட்டமைப்புகளும் செயற்பாட்டாளர்களும் முரண்பாட்டு தீர்வில் ஈடுபடும்போது, முரண்பாட்ட தரப்புகளுக்கு, தீர்வாளர்கள் பக்கச்சார்பற்றவர்கள் என்பதை தெளிவுபடுத்துவது அவசியம். தீர்வின் வெற்றியானது எவ்வாறு சகல தரப்புகளும் அதன் நியாயத்தன்மை மீது திருப்தியடைவதில் தங்கியுள்ளது என்பதை வனாதிவில்லு, உடப்பு மற்றும் நாகவில்லு சமூகங்களின் அனுபவங்கள் காட்டுகின்றன.

வேறுபட்ட பிணக்குகளைத் தீர்க்கும் முகமாக சமாதானச் சபைகள் அமைக்கப்பட்டு பல்வேறு மட்டங்களில் செயற்பட்டுள்ளன. சமூக மட்டத்திலான சமாதான சபைகள், உள்ளூர் சமயத்தலைவர்கள், சமூகத்தலைவர்கள் மற்றும் பிரதேசத்தில் செயற்படும் அபிவிருத்தி நிறுவனங்களின் பிரதிநிதிகளை உள்ளடக்கி அமைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. இந்த சபைகள் உள்ளூர் மட்டத்திலான பிணக்குகளை நேடியாகத் தலையிட்டு கையாள்கின்றன. இந்த குழுக்கள் உள்ளூர் நிலைமைகளிலிருந்து தோற்றம் பெற்ற இயல்பான குழுக்கள். அவை, வெளிநிறுவனங்களால் சமாதானத்தை கட்டியெழுப்பும் அல்லது கட்டுமானமாக உருவாக்கப்படவில்லை. அவற்றின் வெற்றி பெரும்பாலும் அவற்றின் உறுப்பினர் சமுகத்துடன் கொண்டிருந்த தொடர்பாலும், சபையின் முடிவெடுப்பவர்கள் கொண்டிருந்த மதிப்பாலும் சாத்தியமாயிற்று. அதே போல, தனிப்பட்ட சமய தலைவர்களும், முரண்பாட்டு தீர்வுகாணலில்

தத்தமது அதிகார வரையறைக்குப்பட்டு ஒரு முக்கிய பங்கு வகித்துள்ளார்கள். அவர்கள் தமது சொந்த மதத்தைச்சார்ந்தவர்களிடையே பிரச்சினைகளைத் தீர்ப்பதில் வெற்றி பெற்றுள்ளதுடன், பிணக்குகள் வன்முறையாகப் பரிணமிப்பதைத் தவிர்ப்பதிலும் பங்களித்துள்ளார்கள். பிணக்குகளில் ஈடுபட்டுள்ளவர்கள் முதலில் அணுகுவது சமயத்தலைவர்களாக இருப்பதால், இவர்களால் பிணக்குகளை மிக ஆரம்பக்கட்டத்திலேயே தீர்த்துக்கொள்ள முடிகின்றது.

இதைவிட, வேறு முரண்பாட்டு தீர்வு பொறிமுறைகளாக, சமூகத்தில் செல்வாக்கு மிக்க தனிநபர்கள், அரசியல்வாதிகள், நிர்வாக அதிகாரிகள், நீதிமன்றங்கள் மற்றும் பொலிஸ் போன்ற முறையான நீதி கட்டமைப்புகளை நாடுதல் போன்றவை அமைந்துள்ளன. மேற்குறிப்பிட்ட அனைத்து அமைப்புக்களும், முரண்பாட்டை தீர்ப்பதற்கான அவற்றின் தலையீட்டில் வேறுபட்ட அளவிலான வெற்றிகளை பெற்றிருந்தன. பிணக்கில் ஈடுபட்ட தரப்புகளால் முன்னெடுக்கப்பட்டு, மேற்சொன்ன தரப்புகள் பல ஒன்றிணைந்து உருவாக்கிய தீர்வுகளே நிரந்தரமானதாயும் நீண்டகாலம் நிலைத்து நிற்பதாயுமான தீர்வுகளாக நிலை பெற்றதை, இக்கற்கை காட்டுகின்றது.

புத்தளம், ஒரு அமைதியான ஒரு மாவட்டமாக தென்பட்டாலும், அங்கு பிணக்குகளும், வன்முறையும் இடம்பெறுவதை இக்கற்கை கண்டறிந்துள்ளது. முரண்பாட்டின் தன்மை முரண்பாட்டை கையாள்வதற்கும் ஒப்பிட்டளவில் சமாதானத்தை நிலவச்செய்யவும் பல உள்ளூர் பொறிமுறைகள் உருவாக்கப்பட காரணமாயிருந்துள்ளது.

மாவட்டத்தில் செயற்படமுனையும் வெளிநிறுவனங்கள், சமூகத்தின் பிளவுறுநிலையை புரிந்துகொண்டு, சூழ்நிலையை இன்னும் மோசமாக்கி விடாமல் செயற்பாடுகளை முன்னெடுக்க முனைவது இங்கு முக்கியமான ஒரு அம்சமாகும். பொருளாதார வளங்களுக்கான போட்டி முரண்பாட்டை தூண்டும் என்பது பற்றி விழிப்புணர்வு காரணமாக, நிறுவனங்கள் மாவட்டத்தின் பல்வேறு சமூகங்களிலுமுள்ள நலிவான குழுக்களிடையே வளங்களை சமமாக பகிர்ந்து கொள்ளக்கூடியவகையிலான திட்டங்களை அமுல்படுத்தவேண்டியுள்ளது. அவ்வாறு அனைத்து சமூகங்களையும் சார்ந்த நலிவான குழுக்களை உள்ளடக்கியதாக திட்டம் அமுல்படுத்தப்பட முடியாத சூழ்நிலையில், மக்கள் பயனாளிகள் தெரிவு பக்கசார்பானது என்று புரிந்துகொள்ளாமலிருக்க தெரிவு செயன்முறை வெளிப்படையானதாக அமையவேண்டும். புத்தளம் மாவட்டத்தில் பணியாற்றும் உள்ளூர் மற்றும் வெளிநாட்டு நிறுவனங்கள், தமது அபிவிருத்தி திட்டங்களில் இப்போது ஒரு முரண்பாட்டு உணர்திறன் அணுகுமுறையை எடுக்கத்தொடங்கியுள்ளன.

இடம்பெயர்ந்தோர் நலனுக்காக செயற்படும் நலனுக்காக செயற்படும் நிறுவனங்கள், தற்போது தம் திட்டங்களில் உள்ளூர் மக்களில் ஒரு பகுதியையும் உள்ளடக்கத் தீர்மானித்துள்ளார்கள். இந்த நகர்வானது, இடம்பெயர்ந்தவர்களுக்கும், உள்ளூர் சமூகங்கத்திற்கும் இடையிலான முரண்பாட்டிற்கான சாத்தியக்கூறைக் குறைத்துள்ளது.

கற்கையானது, புத்தளத்தின் முரண்பாட்டு சூழ்நிலையில் பயன்படுத்தப்பட்ட பல்வேறு உள்ளூர் பொறிமுறைகளை அடையாளம் கண்டிருப்பதுடன், மாவட்டத்தின் முரண்பாட்டு சூழ்நிலையைக் கருத்திலெடுக்க நினைக்கும் புறசெயற்பாட்டளர்களுள், உள்ளூர் அமைப்புக்களுக்கு பதிலாக, வேறு அமைப்புக்கள், முரண்பாட்டுதீர்வு நுட்பங்கள் அல்லது சமாதான முன்னெடுப்புகளை ஏற்படுத்துவதைவிட, உள்ளூர் செயற்பாட்டாளர்களுக்கு உதவி அவர்களின் ஆற்றலை மேம்படுத்த உதவுதல் சிறந்த அணுகுமுறையாக இருக்கும் என சிபாரிசு செய்கின்றது.

1.   Introduction

This study and the linked communication process was undertaken to meet the overall objective of contributing to the development of community level conflict management and peace among war-affected communities and contributing perspective gained through research in Sri Lanka to the wider discourse on conflict and peace.

The above objective will be achieved through the facilitation of the use of local knowledge in conflict management and resolution, by strengthening the capacities of community organisations and working with them to develop perspectives on conflict transformation at the community level that can be incorporated into existing and new methodologies.

The project is committed to using an iterative process combining research with sharing, networking and training in order to achieve these objectives. The target group for the project is communities and community based organisations, initially in the Puttalam District, with the communications extending to institutions and individuals who can in turn assist the project to influence the policy and practice of government and the international development community.

The research was conducted within an analytical framework, determined by the mandate of the Poverty and Conflict (PAC) programme at the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA). This framework helped draw out the complex socio-economic factors that contributed to conflict in Puttalam, the processes and mechanisms that helped manage these conflicts and the longer term processes that ensured that peace was maintained over time. The analytical focus on poverty enabled the study team to move some way beyond the original focus on making peace and keeping peace, to examine in greater depth the competing vulnerabilities that were at the root of much of the conflict in Puttalam.

2.   Background

Introduction

This section brings together the information from the secondary data that was reviewed as part of the study process. It synthesizes socio-economic and demographic data on Puttalam and forms the background including the facts that emerged from the study in the form of findings. There is a clear link between the demographic structures of Puttalam, its socio-economic trends and the emergence of conflict. In order to study the mechanisms and processes of conflict resolution, it is important to be aware of and understand these demographic and socio-economic patterns. This section draws data and information on population composition and distribution, poverty and migration in the district linking the secondary and the primary data analysis.
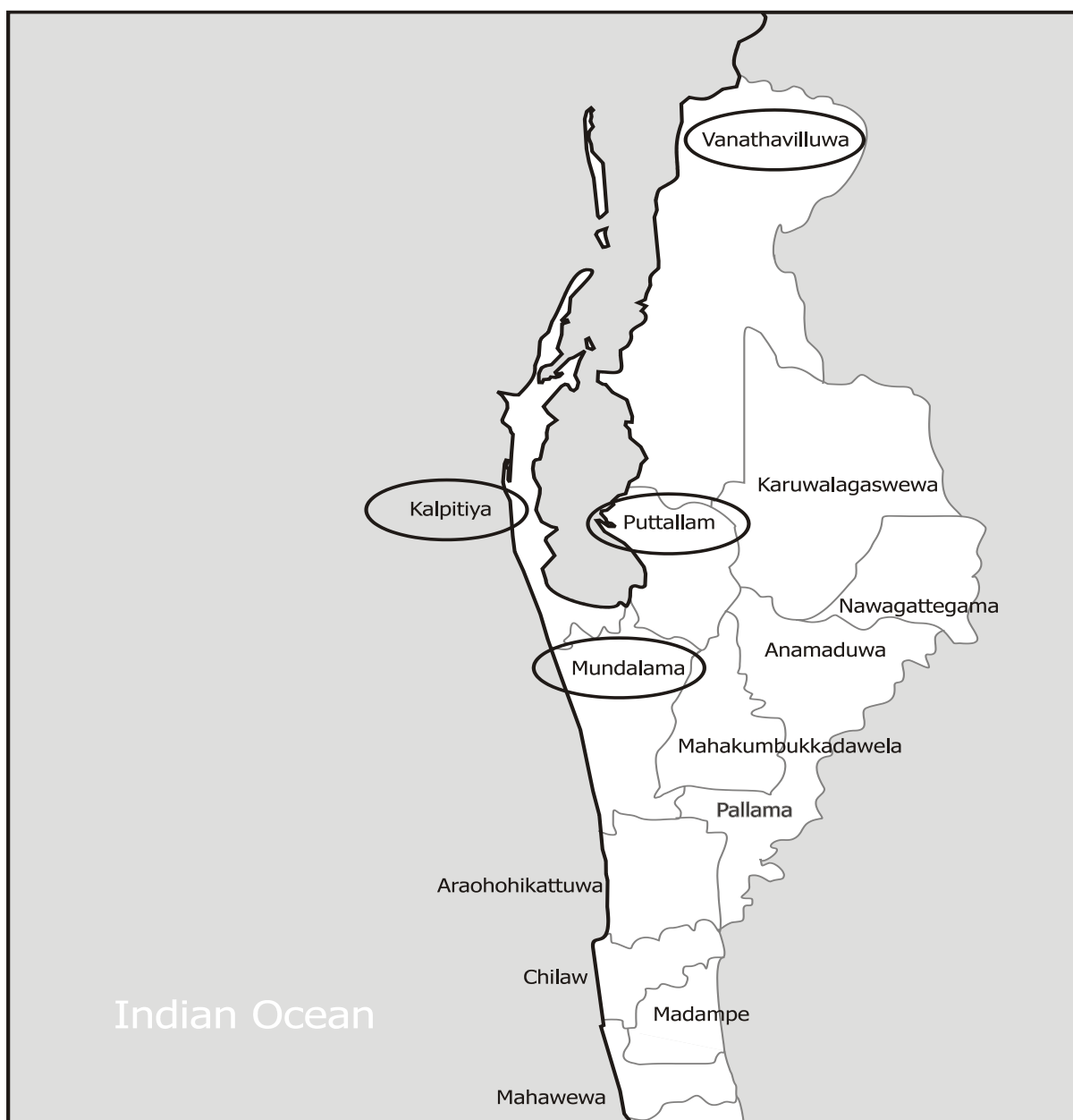
Figure 2.1 Map of Puttalam District (DS divisions where the study was conducted are marked with circles)

2.1   Population Composition

The population composition of Puttalam district presents a very mixed picture. According to the 2001 Census statistics, out of the total population of 709,677, there were 523,116 Sinhalese, 133,134 Sri Lankan Moor and 48,078 Sri Lankan Tamils. While this mixed ethnic composition is not unique, the influx of IDPs into the district in the early 1990's no doubt had a great impact, particularly in the areas that they settled along with the local people. According to the data gathered by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka under the National Protection and Durable Solutions for IDPs Project in 2004, Puttalam District consists of an IDP population of 61,585 out of the total population of 705, 342 and 99% of the IDPs belong to the Muslim community. This substantial migration of IDPs from the Muslim population resulted in the subsequent shift in the ethnic composition of the population of the District of Puttalam. For instance, the population of 66,200 Muslims that fled from Mannar itself accounted for 10% of the total population of the district in 2003.
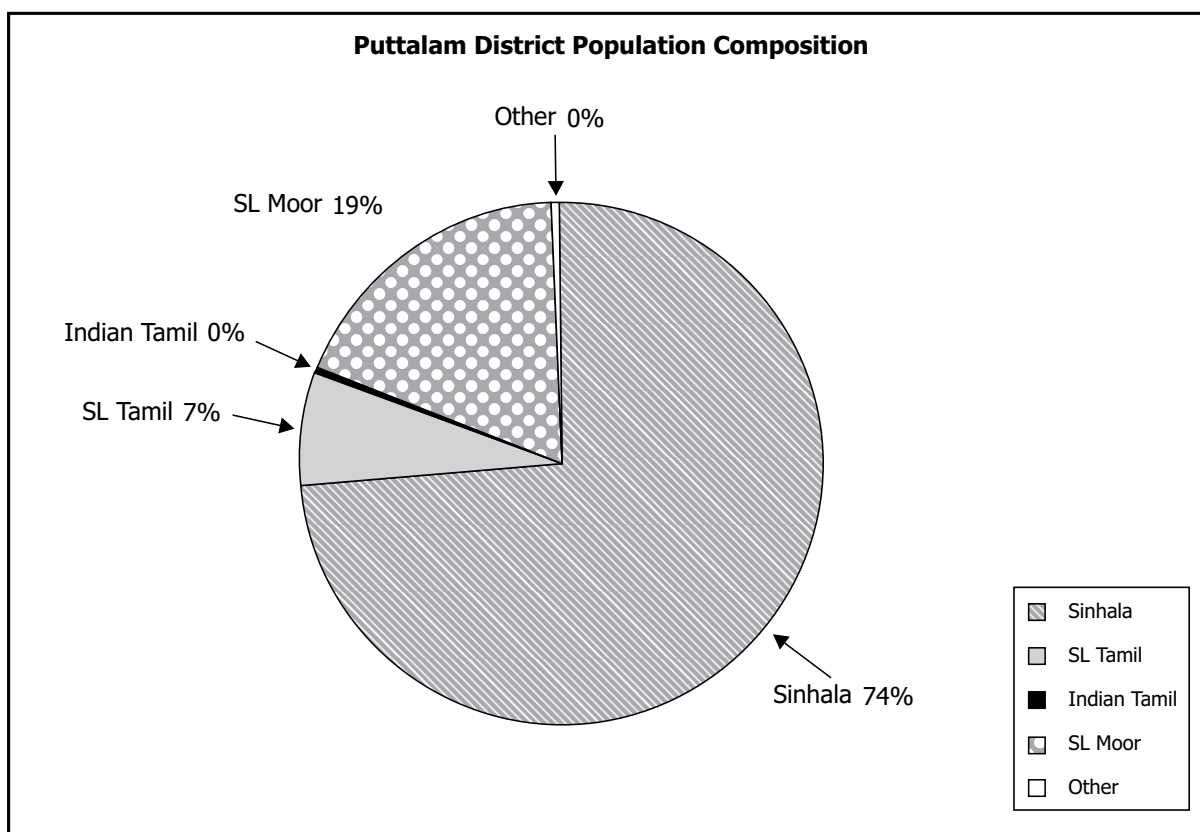
Figure 2.2 Population Composition of Puttalam District

(Source: Derived from Department of Census and Statistics data, 2001)

2.2 Population Distribution

The presence of multiple ethnicities in Puttalam, and the way these demographic factors influenced the conflict, is significant for the Making Peace-Keeping Peace study.

As can be seen in Table 2.1 most of the Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions have a population of which the majority ethnic group is Sinhalese. Sinhalese account for more than 90% in most of the DS divisions other than Chillaw and Natthandiya. A few DS divisions have a greater number of other ethnicities and the district includes a few DS divisions where other ethnicities form a majority. Sri Lankan Moors for example are the majority community in the Puttalam and Kalpitiya DS divisions.

Some DS divisions of Puttalam such as Kalpitiya, Puttalam, Mundal and Vanathavillu are ethnically very mixed. The study follows 6 conflict incidents, the way they developed and the way they were resolved. These lines or conflict incidents all play out in these ethnically mixed DS divisions. The study finds that ethnicity influences many of the conflicts, and even conflicts triggered off by other factors become ethnicized because of tensions among the groups within the area.

The sudden change in the population composition created by the influx of IDPs changed the ethnic mix and brought in a distinct population group with different support structures and political power, creating the foundations for tension and conflict. These differences are rooted in the demographics of the district and the way different groups use these demographics to create and maintain grievances, allegations of unequal treatment and bias.

"There are no conflicts among the people in general. It may be because of fewer IDPs and more numbers of host community people."
(KI , M, Vanathavillu)

The study found out that there were more conflicts in areas where there were significant numbers of IDPs that lived separately and were not mixed or integrated with the local community. In contrast, areas where the IDPs are present in smaller numbers and were more integrated into the local communities had lesser conflicts.

Table 2.1 Population Composition by Ethnicity by DS Division

DS Division	Sinhala %	SL Tamil %	IndianTamil %	SL Moor %	Other %
Puttalam District	73.71	6.77	0.31	18.76	0.44
1. Kalpitiya	28.90	12.16	0.40	58.19	0.35
2. Vanthavillwa	54.40	5.97	0.68	38.69	0.26
3. Karuwalagaswewa	98.86	0.71	0.03	0.27	0.13
4. Nawagattegama	97.35	2.59	-	0.02	0.04
5. Puttalam	29.54	11.10	0.23	58.00	1.12
6. Mundal	40.82	21.26	0.26	37.40	0.20
7. Mahakumbukkadawala	96.29	3.45	0.05	0.14	0.08
8. Anamaduwa	97.45	0.60	0.02	1.80	0.13
9. Pallama	83.06	1.70	0.07	15.10	0.09
10. Arachchikattuwa	91.37	7.10	1.84	0.48	0.26
11. Chilaw	81.76	9.93	0.53	8.14	0.65
12. Madampe	91.41	2.57	0.52	5.24	0.26
13. Mahawewa	97.38	2.19	0.10	0.15	0.18
14. Natthandiya	87.00	2.99	0.17	9.56	0.29
15. Wennappuwa	96.51	2.46	0.42	0.21	0.40
16. Dankotuwa	95.88	2.26	0.25	0.59	1.02

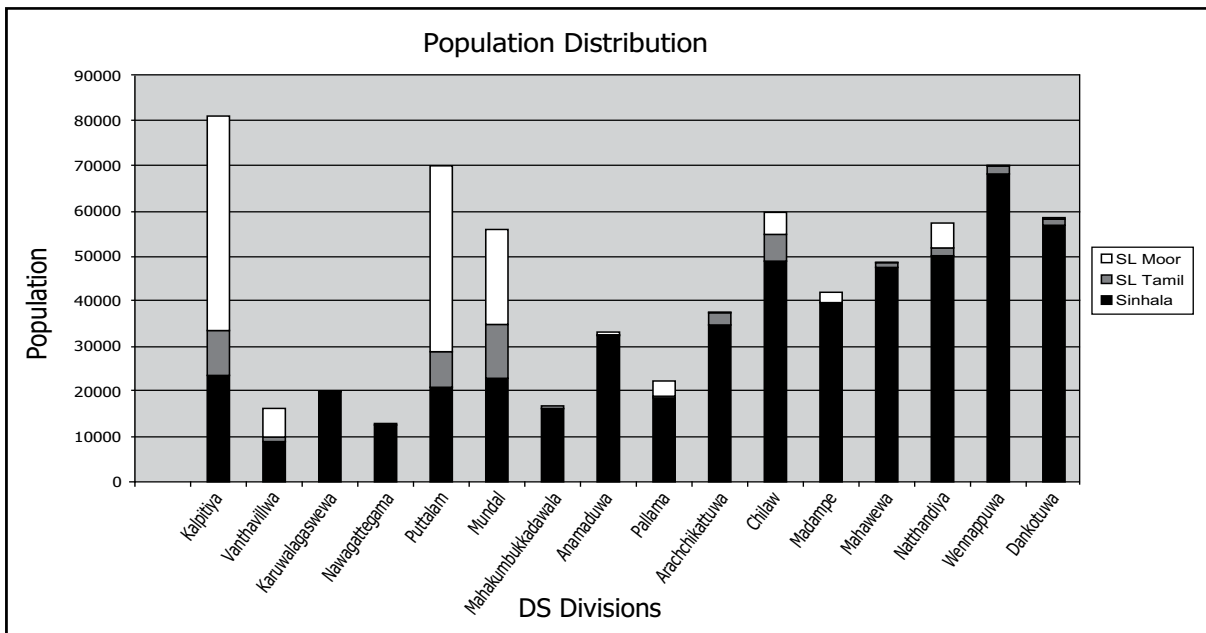*Source*: Department of Census and Statistics, 2001

Figure2.3 Population Distribution by DS Division

Source: Derived from Department of Census and Statistics data, 2004

2.3 Poverty in Puttalam

The Head Count Index[1] of the Puttalam district was 22% in 1990 and increased to 31% in 1995 when the IDPs were included. This increase in HCI may be due to the increase in the poor population in the district because of the in-migration during this period of many IDPS, who were expelled from the North of Sri Lanka or left because of the increasing violence. Other factors may also play a role in the increase in HCI because similar increases in HCI during this period were observed in other districts (see table 2.2 below). The resources within the district were not sufficient to support this sudden influx and it put a strain on its already fragile economy. Many development projects have been working in Puttalam district since then. Despite this there has been no significant improvement in the HCI which remained unchanged at 31% until 2002. The latest poverty figures released by the DCS show that the poverty level in Puttalam has reduced quite dramatically from 31% in 2002 to 13% in 2006. Based on economic trends and other qualitative information about poverty and social conditions from the various study communities, it is difficult to understand how such a dramatic change could have taken place. It is possible but not likely that the inflows of aid began to have an impact some years after they were received and thus improved the consumption patterns of the people in Puttalam.

Another possible contributing factor could be the increase in investment in the district by the people from the area. The infrastructure development in the area has been rapid after the arrival of the IDPs as revealed by most of the study respondents. These improvements and the tacit acceptance that they will not return to their places of origin may have prompted many IDPs to make productive investments, start small businesses and improve the economic climate of the district. It is possible that the increase in poverty in the 1995/6 HIES which may have been caused in part by the inflow of IDPs, was improved as a result of the economic activities of these IDPs in later years. The drastic shift shown in poverty HCI during 1990 to 1995 from 22% to 31% and the stagnation and later decreasing trend of HCI tend to relate the contribution of IDPs in determining the economic status of Puttalam district.

The positive trends in the agriculture sector in the area may also have contributed towards the decrease in poverty levels. Dry zone vegetable cultivation has been taking place in Puttalam for many years but additional infrastructure such as a new market in Nuracholai constructed in 2002 may have contributed to an increase in economic returns for those engaged in small-scale agriculture. Increasing prices of coconut, one of the district's main crops, may also have improved the incomes of those owning large estates as well as smaller scale producers.

Field research for this study was carried out from February 2006 till October 2007. The information given by the respondents during this time suggested that poverty levels among the households within the study communities have not improved. Rapid increases in the prices of basic food and fuel since 1995 may have made the present poverty situation worse.

All the conflict incidents that were studied have at their root a socio economic issue. Though the poverty levels have gone down according to macro data, the existing socio-economic conditions still continue to cause conflicts or disputes among the communities in the area.

Despite the numerical improvements, socio economic factors continue to be important and contentious within the district. The improvements in poverty in Puttalam have not been matched by a simultaneous improvement of social cohesion or peace.

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[1]   Head count Index is defined as the percentage of population below the poverty line.

Table 2.2 Head Count Index by District

Districts	1990/91	1995/96	2002	2006/07
Sri Lanka	26.1	28.8	22.7	15.2
Colombo	16	12	6	5
Gampaha	15	14	11	9
Kalutara	32	30	20	13
Kandy	36	37	25	17
Matale	29	42	30	19
Nuwara Eliya	20	32	23	34
Galle	30	32	26	14
Matara	29	35	28	15
Hambantota	32	31	32	13
Kurunegala	27	26	25	15
Puttalam	22	31	31	13
Anuradhapura	24	27	20	15
Polonnaruwa	25	20	24	13
Badulla	31	41	37	24
Monaragala	34	56	37	33
Ratnapura	31	46	34	27
Kegalle	31	36	33	21
Batticaloa	*	*	*	11
Ampara	*	*	*	11

* Data unavailable

According to the Census in 2001 as given below, there are 3 DS divisions from Puttalam district among the 10 poorest DS divisions of Sri Lanka. These are Kalpitiya, Mundel and Vanathvilluwa.

Table 2.3 Ten Poorest DS Divisions in Sri Lanka

DS Division (District)	Head Count Index
1. Siyambalanduwa (Monaragala)	51.8
2. Rideemaliyadda (Badulla)	51.2
3. Meegahakivula (Badulla)	46.5
4. Kandaketiya (Badulla)	45.1
5. Kalpitiya (Puttalam)	45.3
6. Mundalama (Puttalam)	41.1
7. Madulla (Monaragala)	40.7
8. Vanathavilluwa (Puttalam)	40.3
9. Elapatha (Ratnapura)	40.1
10. Weligepola (Ratnapura)	39.2

Note : Head count index : percentage of population below poverty line

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2001

The perception that Puttalam district is poor because of the presence of the IDPs was widely held among non IDPs within the district. Because the IDPs were provided with various relief benefits, the host communities were forced into a state of competing for resources and benefits with the IDPs. This has pushed the proportion of the host community population that was on the edge of poverty to fall into poverty and made the poor poorer. The macro data in some DS divisions seems to support this perception. As shown in the table below, Kalpitiya holds 55.14% of the IDP population in the district and the HCI of Kalpitiya is 45.3% making it the fifth poorest DS division in the country.

In contrast, Puttalam DS division is home to 33.25% of the IDPs in the district but shows a HCI of 25.08%.

Despite this apparent link between the secondary data and the perceptions of some people in the district, the study team contends that there is no simple, direct correlation between the presence of IDPs and the rates of consumption poverty.

Table 2.4 IDP population and the poverty head count ratio of the Puttalam district

Category	1990-1991	1995-1996	2001-2002	2006
Poverty Head count ratio	22	31	31	13
IDP Population	80, 000	52,555	81,707	63, 145

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, CPA, UNHCR

Table 2.4 shows the IDP population and the poverty head count ratio of the Puttalam district, which does not show a clear correlation between the IDP influx and the poverty status of the district.

The high proportion of IDPs in Puttalam DS division and the comparatively lower poverty rates may be better attributed to the DS division possessing better infrastructure and services and better livelihood opportunities because of its relatively urban character.

Table 2.5 Distribution of IDP Population in Selected DS Divisions

Division	Total	Percentage
Kalpitiya	34,821	55.14
Vanathavilluwa	2,008	3.18
Puttalam	20,994	33.25
Mundel	5,322	8.43
Total	**63,145**	

Source: UNHCR, 2006

Poverty in Puttalam does not exist only in the areas where the IDPs are living. Mahakumbukkadawala, Nawagaththegama and Pallama DS divisions fall in to the poorest 119 DS divisions in Sri Lanka with the Head Count Ratio of between 20.2 - 30.9. According to the UNHCR statistics on IDPs, the IDP population seems to be limited to a few DS divisions like Kalpitiya, Vanathavilluwa, Puttalam and Mundel.

2.4 Migration Trends

Migration appeared repeatedly in the study, linked to the conflict environment and the socio economic changes in the district. Looking back at the history of the district it is apparent that Puttalam has always been at the centre of major migration inflows. The demographic identity of the district was subject to change at many different times as a result of in migration.

Migration in Puttalam- A brief history

Puttalam has a long historical association with migration. In 543 BC King Vijaya came to Sri Lanka via the area called Thammana, which is situated in the present Vanathavillu DS division. During the period of the Kotte kingdom, and the reign of King Parakramabhahu VI, the ports of Chilaw, Puttalam and Madampe were trading ports hosting ships from other trading nations. The Portugese that came to the island in 1505 had been able to bring Puttalam under their control in 1559. Following an attack by the Mughal emperor in the Southern parts of Rameshwaran in India, a group of 18 families had come to settle down in Thalay-Mannar, then in Mannar and faced with difficulties in finding drinking water, moved to Kalpitiya and ultimately settled down in Udappu. The descendents of this group remain in the area to this day and engage in fishing. In 1695, Kalpitiya had been taken over by the Dutch.
(Source- Additional study report- Vinividha)

Thabbowa Scheme

As part of the first phase of peasant settlement development in the dry zones, the colonies like Nachchaduwa (Anuradhapura district), Beragama (Hambantota district) and Tabbowa (Puttalam district) were developed to serve the purpose of rehabilitation of their existing reservoirs and channels and to distribute the land provided with irrigation to the peasants (G.H.Peiris 2006). Thabbowa, Kottukachchiya and Maha Uswawe in Puttalam district, were among the first 28 irrigation settlement schemes in the country. 29 farmers were granted 5 acres of land through the Thabbowa scheme in 1928. These settlers belonged to all three ethnicities: Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim.

Village expansion schemes

Though the land distribution schemes were there since 1927 with various developments in time, land distribution under the Village Expansion Schemes had increased vigorously after independence. When the rural areas became crowded and crown land was scarce, new legislation under the Land Acquisition Act of 1950 came into force enabling the government to acquire private lands to implement the Village Expansion Schemes. These schemes had been implemented under the rural development strategy within the scope of poverty alleviation by distributing lands to the landless peasants (G.H.Peiris 2006).

Vijayakatupotha Scheme

This was launched in 1951-1953 providing 3 acres of paddy land and 1 ¾ acre for house plots for 327 families. Between 1956 and 1960, 510 families had been given 5 acres each under the Vilpotha Goda Govi Janapadaya settlement scheme. Other land that was taken over by the government in 1972 was redistributed among the landless from time to time. In 1988, the Gamudawa project was implemented focusing on the Anamaduwa division and parallel to this, the Udagam concept where land ownership was given to people together with aid to construct houses, was introduced in the selected areas.

In 1990-1991, due to the conflict, people from the North and the East migrated to the Puttalam district. These people were forcibly evicted from their homes and forced to migrate against their will.

The additional study found out that the biggest influx of people in to the district occurred on the 21ˢᵗ of October 1990. The majority of these people have been Muslims from the Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts of the North following their expulsion by the LTTE.

According to the additional study, parallel to this event, another large movement of people took place from villages bordering the Mannar district towards the more remote interior areas of the Vanathavillu DS division. 85 families from the Rālmaduwa village, 60 from the Parana Eluwankulama and another 97 from Aluth Eluwankulama moved in this manner. Sinhala and Tamil families also moved to Puttalam during this period.

Table 2.6 Number of Families by Area of Origin

DS division of current residence	Original area of residence	No. of families
Vanathavillu	Mannar	585
Vanathavillu	Rālmaduwa, Aluth Eluwankulama, Parana Eluwankulama (from the border villages)	242
Mundal	Mannar, Mulaithivu, Jaffna	1442
Kalpitiya	Mannar, Mulaithivu, Kilinochchi, Jaffna	8759
Puttalam	Jaffna, Mannar, Mulaithivu	6156

Source : Vinivida District Research 2008

The reasons for these movements were direct threats, forced expulsions and the fear of violence in the North and in the border villages. The people that were displaced by these factors have since then been residing in Mundal, Kalpitiya, Puttalam and Vanathavillu, most of them for periods of time exceeding 18 years as per the Additional Study.

The additional study further highlighted that what was given as support at first for the IDPs by the host communities, had evolved into rights of the IDPs and from there into a perception of manipulation or control of the existing resources and services by the IDPs.

The impacts were summarised as,
- Increase in the inequality in resource distribution has been commonly felt by the host communities of Puttalam district with the arrival of the IDP population.
- Competition for employment opportunities had increased with the influx of IDPs and led to a situation of sharing of opportunities that were earlier enjoyed solely by the non-IDPs of the district.
- Problems created by inadequate service provision
- Providing help and support to the IDP community had begun to be perceived by the host community as a burden on them, particularly given the permanent nature of their stay in the district.
- Certain privileges being given only to those displaced people and not to the rest of the communities of Puttalam.
- Due to the trend of the purchase of lands by the IDPs, the land prices in the area have increased drastically and created greater challenges for the host communities.
- Having to provide a continuous supply of dry rations to the internally displaced in the Vanathavillu DS division had been seen by the rest of the community in Vanathivillu area as special treatment.
- Increase in the abuse and use of narcotics also had been observed in certain areas.
- Difficulties in maintaining normal administrative processes (caused when some groups take the power of NGOs in to their own hands)
- NGOs targeting only the displaced people in their project implementation had contributed to differences between the two communities in the areas of the district, the project is implemented.

The impact of the migration was also seen in the political situation of the places where the IDPs came from. The expulsion of a non-disputing community like the Muslims from conflict affected regions like the North and East have also contributed to a change in the nature of the conflict situation in those areas.

There is a perception prevailing among the people in Puttalam that IDPs from the North are the largest influx of people in the district. The history of the movement of people from various districts of Sri Lanka in to the Puttalam district shows that most of the immigrants are from Kurunegala and Gampaha districts. Though the IDP population from the North consists of a majority of Muslims and the local population of Puttalam District also has a considerable number of Muslims in its total population, the branded identity on the influx population from North as IDPs had played a significant role in determining the status of IDPs, the relationship between the communities concerned and the viability of influx community to fit in with the host communities and live in complete harmony.

Following the eviction by the LTTE in 1990 IDPs arrived from Mannar, Jaffna and Mullativu. Most of these migrants are Muslims. Other Sinhala and Tamil migrants came to Puttalam during the war in 1995. Because the eviction of Muslims had been done systematically in the LTTE controlled areas, it burdened the receiving districts with the mass migration of IDPs in a short period of time.

Further, some respondents gave the impression that with the influx of the IDPs the development organisations that came into the area are concentrating on the IDPs as their target group, usually excluding the other geographical areas and other vulnerable people in their interventions. This fact was highlighted in some of the key informant interviews with members of the peace committees. They thought that most of the project interventions, especially during the first few years of the IDPs arrival in Puttalam were targeting the IDPs and the areas that they are concentrated in. They were of the view that the implementers should also be aware that there are other groups and areas that need the support of these organisations. They also stated that the frustration levels of these almost isolated communities in the interior of Puttalam towards the Anuradhapura district might come to a point where it could result in violent conflict.

Figure 2.4 Migrant Population by District of Origin
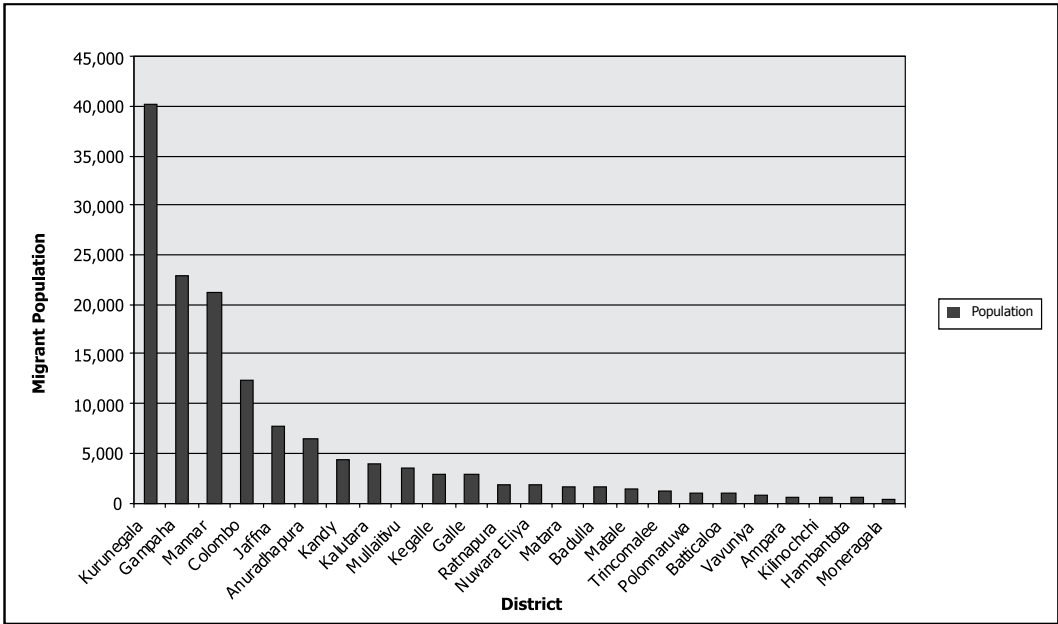
Source: Department of Census and Statistics 2001

2.5 Study process

The study process was structured around communications principles and sought to make its findings relevant and useful for local organisations. The initial series of interviews identified institutions and key partners who were likely to use the information in future. They were involved in a detailed feedback loop about study progress and emerging results at various stages of the study. They will be the main users of the final study results.

Initial field research-

The initial series of field interviews enabled the study team to speak to representatives of the local organization, Vinivida, whose head first proposed the research. These visits helped identify other key informants (KI) and also enabled the study team to first experience the various political and social interests shaping and running through the study issues.

Snowballing institutional, key person and group interviews-

The team used a snowballing sampling method to identify respondents. Five field visits were conducted to gain an in depth understanding of the conflict environment in Puttalam and to identify key players and a range of conflict lines that would form the basis for further study.

Identifying conflict lines and conflicting parties-

The data from the institutional and key person interviews was coded and analysed using N6 qualitative analysis software. The initial analysis was used to identify 6 conflict lines from 4 DS divisions that would be tracked and examined in greater detail in the second phase of the research. The analysis also identified individuals and groups involved and affected by each of the conflicts. It also identified the different conflict resolution mechanisms and structures that the different conflict parties used.

Purposive sampling based on conflict lines-

The second phase of the study examined the 6 conflict lines in greater detail through focus group discussions and individual interviews. The sampling frame for this stage was created to get as many (relevant) perspectives as possible on each of the conflict lines.

Sampling Frame

Table 2.7 Sampling Framework

Conflict Line	Respondents	Sample
1. Nagavillu- Three wheeler stand	Sinhala three- wheeler drivers Muslim three wheeler drivers Mosque Committee CBO Representative Mundal DS	1 FGD 1 FGD 1 KI 1 KI 1 KI
2. Palavi Land	Buddhist monk Landowner Temple Committee (Dayaka Sabhawa) IDPs who purchased land Mosque leader (peace committee) Muslim businessmen	1 KI 1 KI 1 FGD 2 Individual interviews 1 KI 1 Individual interview
3. Cemetery- Sirimapura	Muslim Community Catholic Community Buddhist Community NGO Representative	3 Individual interviews 3 Individual interviews 3 Individual interviews 1 KI

4. Clinic- Nurocholai	NGO Representative	1 KI
	Local Muslim community	3 Individual Interviews
	IDPs	3 Individual Interviews
	MOH	1 KI
5. Fishing Vanathavillu	Eluwankulama fishermen	1 FGD
	Gangeiwadi fishermen	1 FGD
	Serakkuli fishermen	1 FGD
	Pradeshiya Sabha President	1 KI
6. Udappu Kovil-Church land	Kovil Priest	1 KI
	Kovil trustees	1 FGD
	Church priest	1 KI
	Church Committee	1 FGD

Secondary data survey

Relevant secondary data including national and district level statistical abstracts, media reports, published studies, and reports from human rights organisations was reviewed as part of the study process. Information from these sources provide the background of the district with regard to socio-economic and demographic data. It also allowed the study team to contextualise the selected 6 conflict lines. The secondary data also feeds into the analysis of these conflicts and community responses to them.

Initial analysis

The analysis combined data from the first and second stages of the primary research with findings from secondary data. It was used to draw lessons and experiences of conflict management by community institutions. These lessons were shared with all study partners identified during the first and second stages of data collection during the sharing workshops.

First sharing workshop

The first sharing workshop was held with the following objectives

- To share the findings with the stakeholders of the study; the respondents at the institutional levels
- To obtain the initial respondents' feedback and to fine tune the initial study findings
- To feed the above knowledge into the agendas of local level development organisations

At the end of the workshop the participants suggested areas and issues for further exploration that would complement the main research. Political power was suggested as a strong cross cutting issue; an exploration of the historical background of the migration patterns was suggested, especially given the context of the Puttalam district; and 3 vulnerable groups were identified as special groups who would face implications of conflicts and disputes differently to the others.

Additional Studies

Following the first sharing workshop of the initial study findings held in Puttalam, the following areas were suggested by the stakeholders for further exploration. Our partner organisation for the study, Vinivida, was responsible for carrying out these additional studies with the view of complementing the main study findings. The themes that were studied further were:

- Political power
- Migration patterns of the Puttalam area through a historical timeline

- Vulnerable groups
  - Female headed households
  - Traditional fishermen engaged in seasonal migration
  - Overseas migration of mothers and the impact on their households

The tools and the sampling of the additional studies were developed at CEPA with the consultation of Vinivida and a short training on tools and research methods was provided for Vinivida's research assistants.

Vinivida was responsible for the data collection and analysis of the additional studies.

Second sharing workshop

The objectives of this workshop were

- To improve the quality of the findings
- To share the findings with a larger audience beyond the direct stakeholders within the district

This workshop brought together a wider group of stakeholders, moving the discussion to issues at the district level and bringing together actors that were not already involved in the research. This ensured a wider 'buy in' from people in the district and helped to maintain the profile of the project.

Some suggestions that emerged from this workshop about ways of taking the project forward challenged some of the initial ideas the team had formed. In particular the relative ineffectiveness of training programmes was mentioned by local stakeholders. This prompted a re-evaluation of the final components of the project, which triggered a move away from formal training to a less structured communications and skills sharing exercise.

3.   Key terms

Conflict

Conflict existed within the complex social environment this study sought to examine. Instances and incidents of conflict were selected from this wider environment in order to explore the twin issues of making peace and keeping peace.

Conflict is often defined as a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have, or think they have incompatible goals (Working with conflict, 2000). This definition allows for the possibility that conflict is based on the perception of incompatibility of goals. Conflicts that had reached some level of resolution in the present study, were those where this perceived incompatibility was dealt with directly and decisively.

Conflict is also often defined as a social situation in which two parties are competing for the same resources (Wallensteen, 2002). The present study contributes a level of complexity to this rather simplistic binary definition. Conflict as is revealed through the case studies is often rooted in resource competition. However, this sometimes binary competition becomes linked with and expressed through other socially contentious issues such as ethnicity or religion, making the original binary competition harder to address and resolve.

Conflict is not (necessarily) negative. It sometimes also presents an opportunity to change damaging and antagonistic social relationships, into something more positive. This is dependent on how the parties to the conflict and those that are external to it use the social situation to bring about change. Wallensteen also echoes this view stating that "beneficial social change arises from conflict in terms of competing, if not always incompatible interests" (2002). The cases of conflict in Puttalam have revealed many opportunities to do similar things and improve the social situation that led to tensions. Not many of these opportunities, however, were utilised to bring about positive change.

Response

There are various dynamic approaches to address conflict and the conditions that give rise to it. Conflict has been dealt with at different stages. A range of different terms has evolved to explain different means of addressing conflict including conflict prevention, conflict settlement, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Conflict prevention is where the aim is to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict. When the violent behaviour is ended by reaching a peaceful agreement, it is described as conflict settlement. But when future violence is limited and avoided by promoting positive behavioural changes in the parties involved, then it amounts to conflict management. Conflict resolution is another stage where the causes of conflict are addressed and building a new and lasting relationship between hostile parties is sought. Finally, conflict transformation addresses the wider social and political sources of conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war into positive social and political change (Working with conflict, 2000)

In the 6 conflict lines or incidents that the study explored, conflict prevention, settlement, management and resolution approaches have been used by various parties. A more detailed analysis will follow in the conflict analysis and conflict resolution sections of this report. Conflict transformation could not be observed among the incidents and the responses due to the fact that the scope of the conflicts that were studied were not sufficiently wide or intense.

Study definitions

'Conflict' for the purposes of this study is defined as situations of social tension with the potential to escalate into social violence. This determined the range of situations that were chosen for case studies. The study took place within a social environment that was full of tension, competition and discontent. The 'conflicts' that were chosen for the case studies were not the only conflicts taking place in Puttalam; they highlight the range of responses, causal and contributory issues and stages of resolution of the conflicts in the study environment.

'Responses' are defined as the attempts to reduce the tension and to minimise social violence. The definition of responses captures all levels of working on conflict that were defined with the exception of conflict transformation. There is some doubt whether the actors entrenched in the conflict have an interest in transforming it, if they are capable of doing so, and if the vested interests would allow this to take place. Perhaps as a result of these restrictions the responses that were seen in the case studies stopped short of transformation and focused instead on resolution, prevention and management of conflict.

Both definitions were formed at the initial stage of the study during the key informant and the institutional interviews. These definitions informed the research and resulted in the identification of 6 conflict lines and responses for further inquiry.

4.   The Conflict environment

The study explored six main conflict lines in Puttalam. They were selected for their diversity, their stages of resolution, and the parties involved. These conflicts and the responses to them are intended to achieve the objectives of the study in identifying community level solutions that could in turn support other communities dealing with similar issues. These six conflicts took place within a wider environment where many other complex social tensions existed and played out, contributing to a web of interconnected underlying conflicts.

One of the incidents involved the clash between the three communities having shares in the cemetery in Sirimapura, seen as a conflict incident raising tension among the respective communities. In this incident, the Buddhists and Catholics had the cemetery for themselves until the arrival of the Muslim IDPs. When the Muslims IDPs asked for a section for themselves, there was disagreement amongst the other two parties, which created some social tension.

The incident of the Noraicholai Clinic concerned the use of the mosque building for a clinic. The mosque committee felt that the proper functioning of the mosque (not only for prayers but also for the *madrasa* - Quran teaching classes for school children) was being disrupted by disturbances caused by the crowd coming to the clinic. With the unexpected increase in the number of users of the clinic following the arrival of the IDPs, hosting the clinic at the mosque premises became a problem.

> "...every Friday the area becomes very crowded. People come for prayer, school and the clinic to the same place. Women especially faced many problems. This led to some communal tensions because the problem was seen as one taking place between IDPs and other local people."
> (F, 32, Noraicholai).

Because the clinic was located within the premises of the mosque, there were disturbances faced not only in conducting the *madrasa* classes, but also by the patients to the clinic. The people coming for the clinic make the mosque premises even more crowded and "dirty". This became an issue for the mosque committee because, as a place of worship, it is essential that

it is kept clean and orderly. The clinic was established to take care of women and pregnant mothers and it was difficult for them to come to the clinic when the mosque was crowded.

In Nagavillu, there was a dispute between two groups of Sinhala and Muslim three wheeler drivers about a parking area for their vehicles. This dispute spilled over into violence and created a lot of tension in the surrounding area.

> "IDPs did not allow the local Sinhalese to park their three wheelers in front of the Mosque. This led to a conflict between IDPs and the host communities and the battle continued for few days. Police intervened to solve this problem. Then they put a new police checkpoint in the area. There is still tension among the groups."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

In the Udappu case, a dispute took place between Hindus and Catholics in the area over a piece of land where a Hindu temple was built. Clashes between the youth from both communities took place, which disturbed the peace and harmony of the area.

> "Poonapity village was ½ km away from our village. Some youth came to our village and took alcohol also. They attacked and scolded us using bad words. But we weren't violent towards them."
> (FGD 1, Udappu)

The main conflict in Vanathavillu arose as a result of competition for fishing between two communities, the Gangaivadi and Serakkuliya communities. The Eluwankulam community is also involved, although not to the extent of the other two communities.

> "During that time our Muslims who were living in those areas [Gangaivadi] got displaced to here [Eluwankulam]. About 50 Sinhala Christian families moved to Serakkuliya because this place [Gangaivadi] is useful for fishing. So now they wouldn't allow these Muslim people to catch fish even though they were from the same area."
> (KI, M, Vanathivillu)

4.1 The conflict lines- Mini Case Studies

The conflicts that were examined in detail are presented as case studies below. This more detailed examination allows the final analysis to draw out insights about how peace is made and maintained in Puttalam.

Vanathavillu

The dispute exists among three communities respectively from areas including Serakkuliya, Gangewadiya and Eluwankulam in the Vanathavillu DS division. The area as a whole depends on fishing as the main source of income and the dispute arose as a result of one group preventing the others from fishing in a particular area.

Gangawadiya is considered to be a complicated area and a main fishing location with an army check point within the high security zone bordering Wilpattu. There had been an attack in 1986 from the Tamil militant group, PLOTE, in that area, and also LTTE attacks in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. Following the PLOTE attack some people who used to live as migratory fishermen in the area moved to Serakkuliya and Eluwankulam. The LTTE attack in 1996 had been the most intense, killing 17 villagers.

Fisherman from Serakkuliya and Eluwankulama used to fish in the sea area bordering Gangewadiya until the time they moved out of Gangaivadi in 1986. Due to its close proximity to uncleared areas fishing is allowed only from 5am to 6pm. Currently there are about 50-60 Sinhala Christian families in the Gangewadiya community, originally from Chilaw. Both men and women engage in fishing as a livelihood. Serakkuliya is also populated mainly by Sinhala Christians that originated from the Chilaw area and have been living in Serakkuliya for several generations and are engaged in fishing. Eluwankulam mainly consists of Muslims, whose main livelihood is fishing, supplemented by some agricultural activities.

Prior to 1996, people from the Serakkuliya have been fishing in the sea bordering Gangewadiya while residing in Gangaivadia. The Serakuliya fishermen reside in Gangaivadia during the fishing seasons. But the children of the Serakuliya fishermen study in Serakuliya. Then their children and the rest of the family join them in Gangaivadi during the school holidays. Following the LTTE attack in 1996 the military said that they could not provide them adequate protection. Thus, these people left Gangaivadia and moved back to Serakkuliya.

According to the Serakkuliya community, they had engaged in prawn fishing in the lagoon while the people from Gangewadiya had been fishing in the Kala Oya. After the Serakkuliya people left the area following the LTTE attack they started fishing in the sea. The Gangewadiya community states that it is mainly the fishermen from Serakkuliya engaging in large scale fishing that are creating the dispute and that they exploit the fish or prawn population.

Since the people of Serakkuliya of are denied access to the lagoon bordering Gangewadiya, they have to travel about 15 miles by sea to a point beyond Gangewadiya for fishing. The government has built a jetty close to Serakkuliya but do not use it. The Gangewadiya community was of the opinion that people from Serakkuliya come for fishing only during a certain season and that at one point they have destroyed the fishing nets of some of the Gangewadiya fishermen. People from Gangewadiya reacted to this by not allowing them to fish in the lagoon bordering Gangewadiya.

Attempts at resolution

A solution was offered by the GA, the AGA, and heads of the army, police, and navy officials who were posted at the time in the Puttalam area on 13th of November 2006. There was a 4 acre space on the sea side used to store the boats and nets, unload the fish and as a wholesale market. The GA and others decided to give that land to all 3 communities for use (eg: keeping the boat and net, unloading and holding the whole sale market) in the following manner:

Elavankulam – 1acre
Gangewadi – 2acres
Serakkuliya – 1acre

Evidently however, the solution has not yet been implemented because of political interference. All parties have powerful links with politicians. The people from Gangaivadi, enjoying greater support from the army and navy officials and one of the MPs from their location have created barriers to the implementation of the decision of the GA.

In 2007, there was a meeting between the GA, the AGA and representatives from all three communities. The agreement reached was to re-implement the decisions taken in 2006 but there remain concerns as to whether the agreement will in fact be implemented.

Plan showing the agreement reached with the GA in 2006

A	100m x 30m:T be alienated to Gangewadiya fishermen
Puttalam Lagoon	
B	50m x 30m:T be alienated to Eluwankulama fishermen
C	50m x 30m:T be used by Serakkuliya fishermen
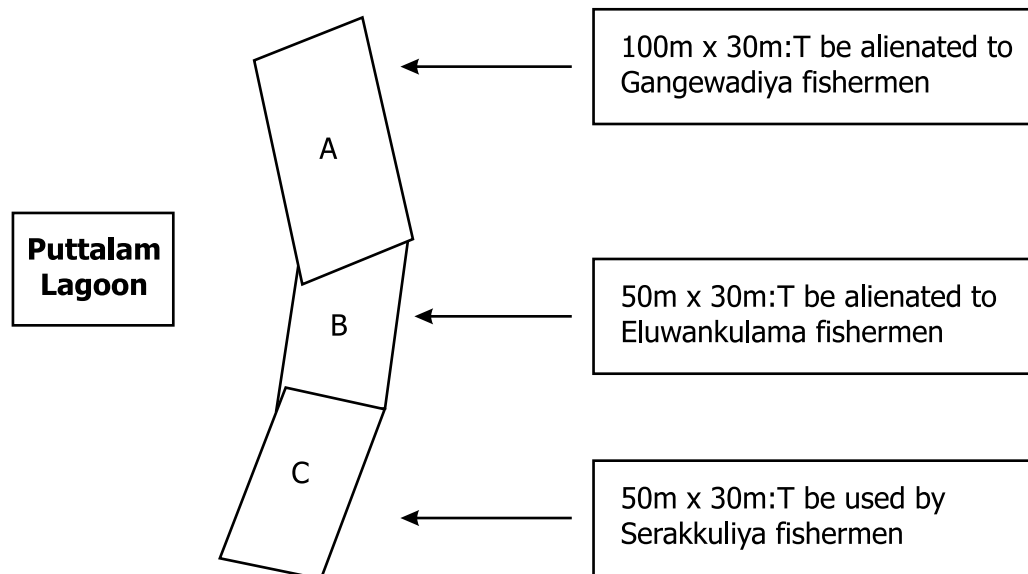
Nagavillu Threewheelers

This dispute began with a confrontation that took place in 2006 between Sinhala and Muslim three wheeler drivers in the Nagavillu area because of the competition for parking spaces for their vehicles. The area that the Muslim drivers parked was on a small road about 75-100m away from the main road, opposite the boundary wall of the mosque in the area. The Sinhala drivers parked their three wheelers about 50m away from the mosque on the opposite side of the main road. Because a shop was being constructed in the area the Sinhala drivers were using, they requested an alternative place to park from the Pradeshiya Sabha (or Town Council). In response to this request, the Sinhala drivers were given a space in front of the mosque on the main road.

After they were given this space, the Sinhala drivers planned to cover a drain running parallel to the mosque and across the side road with concrete blocks and levelled the land to prepare a parking space. The Muslim drivers opposed this action because they considered the new parking area as being too close to the mosque and in contravention of a law stating that no parking is allowed near hospitals, schools or religious places[2]. In response, the Sinhala drivers alleged that there is a law stating that 2 three wheeler parking spaces cannot function within 100m of each other and given their current locations, with the parking space of the other group being only about 75m away, both groups were contravening the law.

The Muslim group also said that they could not use a space so close to the mosque because the religious institution had to be respected, and that they were concerned that if the other groups began parking in the same area, there would be noise and music that would disturb religious activities.

The Muslim three wheeler drivers believed that the other group moved to their area because a police checkpoint was established in the space they had been using for parking earlier. But the information supplied by some of respondents suggested that the police checkpoints have been placed subsequent to the conflict between these two groups of three wheeler drivers. The Sinhala three wheeler drivers claim that their parking space is registered with the Pradeshiya Sabha for which they are paying a fee.

Politicians, other members of the Pradeshiya Sabha and the police who are involved in trying to settle the dispute, have not been successful. The solution, according to the Muslim three wheeler drivers, was to provide adequate space for both parties to park their three wheelers in the same location and proposed a space near an adjacent bus stop. The dispute continues.

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2   The Motor Traffic Act of 1951.

Noraicholai Clinic

The Noraicholai Antenatal Clinic is an example of an intervention that prevented a conflict almost before it occurred. The existing clinic was housed within the mosque premises on Fridays. The same building was used for the *madrasa* (Quran teaching classes for school children). Before the arrival of the IDPs in the area, the clinic was used mainly by local Muslim women.

The arrival of the IDPs resulted in the number of users of the clinic increasing unexpectedly. The overcrowded clinic caused a disturbance for the Quran classes as well as for the Friday *jumma* prayers at the mosque. The local Muslim population in the area began to feel resentment towards the IDPs as a result of these disruptions and several Muslim Women's Societies attached to the Islamic Relief Committee (ISRC) requested the ISRC to provide a solution.

CARE International facilitated the building of a new clinic, securing the funds from USAID. ISRC implemented the project and constructed an entirely separate building for the clinic on part of the mosque land. Since then services of the clinic have expanded to people from 5 villages (Pallivasalthurai, Sammattivadi, Vellangeni, Periyasandikkiraamam and Ammaththottam) belonging to the 3 main ethnic groups. Today, the clinic is considered a 'symbol of peace' by many of its users.

Palavi Land

The conflict in Palavi concerns competing claims of ownership over a piece of land. It is complex and remains unresolved during the study period. The many parties involved and the recourse by some parties to the formal justice system, have added additional complexity to this conflict.

The land in question is a block of about 29 Acres, bought jointly by 3 Muslim businessmen, sub divided into smaller plots and sold to IDPs.

A total of almost 29 acres had been bought jointly and resold to around 170 - 215 people. The land was sold for a price of 10 perches for Rs.15,000 /= and the buyers were given title deeds for their lots.

The ownership of the land has been challenged in several cases of litigation. Recently the High Court ruled in favour of one of the parties, the Muslim landowners. However, the other party, the Buddhist temple and the *Dayaka Sabhawa* (temple committee), has filed an appeal to the decision.

According to the *Dayaka Sabhawa,* there had been several attempts by the *Samatha Mandalaya,* a local mediation body, and NGOs working in the area to arrive at a settlement for this dispute. However, the Muslim landowners have not shown much interest in these alternative approaches.

According to the Muslim landowners, the land under dispute was originally owned by a Muslim settler from Puttalam. The current owners bought the land in 1996 and they have title deeds for 5 separate lots comprising lots of 10 ¾, 2, 2, 2 and 12 acres.

In addition to one lot of 2 acres, whose ownership has been disputed by the temple, the ownership of some of the other lots have also been challenged in court.

Because of the pending legal dispute, no one can make use of these lands. The landowners claim that a Buddha statue that now stands on this land had been erected immediately after the High Court decision. In addition, a landowner from the land adjoining the land in dispute, had received threats not to carry out any construction on his land; subsequently his shop and merchandise were attacked causing damages upto approximately Rs.200,000/=.

The landowner alleges that this incident is also connected with the dispute relating to the temple. The monk at the temple is, according to the Muslim landowners, under the influence of a group of youth from the area trying to promote their own political agenda. They also think that the Sinhalese in the area are concerned about the growing Muslim population in the area and this dispute is a result of them trying to prevent other Muslims settling down in the area.

According to the *Dayaka Sabhawa,* earlier the land had been bare land belonging to the LRC and, later about 15 years ago, the temple was constructed in an area of 20 acres by the members of the committee and they have been using that land since the temple's construction. Originally the villagers had illegally encroached and built the temple on a 20 acre plot with the belief that the land belonged to the LRC. Their main argument is that they have been using this land for 15 years and that the Muslim landowners are now trying to prove ownership for the same land with their deeds. The respondents from the temple committee allege that a Muslim person had prepared illegal deeds for the LRC land and sold it to the three businessmen who then subsequently divided it to 215 plots and sold them to IDPs from Jaffna.

The Divisional Secretariat, the *Pradeshiya Sabhawa,* the police and some politicians have been involved in trying to resolve the issue but the matter is now before the court system.

Sirimapura Cemetry

The village of Sirimapura was populated mainly by Sinhala Catholics and Buddhists for about 2 - 3 decades; the IDP Muslim community had been resettled in the adjoining lands about since 2002. Initially there had been some resistance by the original settlers to the influx of the IDPs, but this eased when an understanding was reached between the two groups. This was mainly due to the allocation of housing loans to those that needed them in the host community and not just the IDP settlers.

One incident that took place was an organised group from another village setting fire to some of the IDPs' houses. Some of the respondents from the IDP community thought that this action was politically motivated. This incident is separate from the issue of the cemetery.

The cemetery with a land of 2 acres had been used by the Buddhists and the Catholics. After the arrival of the IDPs, there was competition for space because the Muslim burial grounds that were used by the IDPs were situated a substantial distance away. This caused tensions in the community and even led to the disruption of a funeral when the family of a deceased person was not allowed a place for burial in the Sirimapura cemetery.

Following this, a discussion was held among the community leaders and representatives of the Rural Development Foundation (RDF), a local NGO. The RDF with financial aid from USAID facilitated a process of division, demarcating separate areas in the cemetery for Catholics, Buddhists and Muslims. The RDF initiated this project with the intention of promoting peace and co-existence among the communities in Sirimapura.

This dispute is between two parties from the Parippadu village. The immediate trigger for the conflict was an attempt by a group of youths from a Catholic community to erect a statue on a piece of land adjacent to a *kovil*. The ownership of this piece of land is not clear because of the lack of legal documents.

The Parippadu village was populated during the last 2 decades by Tamil Hindus, mainly from the Udappu DS division. People from Parippadu engage in fishing in the sea around their village; people from Udappu have also been coming to fish in the same area. Earlier Paripaddu had only 10 families. But later, people started moving from Udappu to Parippadu to occupy the bare lands there. During the time of the study, there were 150 to 160 Hindu Tamil families living in Parippadu village.

According to the Parippadu community, they built the *kovil* (Hindu place of worship) on an LRC land that was later marked as *Devalaya Bumi* (Temple Land) in 2007. The *kovil* was a basic structure with a thatched roof, until 2002, when the community began to construct a more permanent structure. The population has grown rapidly and increasing numbers of people use the *kovil* for worship.

The village of Poonapitiya adjoins Parippadu and is situated slightly more inland. The turn off to the main church in the area along the coastal road is at the point where the *kovil* stands.

Poonapitiya community members claim that they had originally partitioned off the plot of land where the *kovil* now stands as belonging to them, and later, upon a request by the Parippadu community, had allowed them to use the land to construct a pre-school. They allege that instead of constructing the pre-school, the community constructed the thatched *kovil*. The group from Poonapitiya now wants to put up a *suruwama* (A statue or cross), on this particular plot of land to mark the turn off towards the church.

The dispute arose when the people of Poonapitiya went to survey part of the land where the *kovil* stood, in order to erect the *suruwama*. The people from Parippadu had called the police to complain about the surveying of the *kovil* land.

There have been various attempts at resolving this dispute. The *aiyar* (priest) of the Udappu *kovil* is of the view that the dispute came to an end when an individual donated his own land to the church to erect the statute to resolve the dispute.

Both groups stated that the AGA had tried to find a solution to the dispute. The group from Parippadu stated that a separate 10 x 10 ft piece of land was offered for the construction of the statue, but the group from Poonapitiya rejected the offer. According to them, the AGA had negotiated with the Parippadu group to offer an area of 10 x 10 ft but after discussing the matter with the bishop, they were not satisfied with the decision; they wanted half of the contested land. They had discussed this further with the AGA and received an offer for half of the land but the other group had opposed this saying that they needed room around the *kovil* especially during their festival season.

4.2 Interlinked incidents and contributory factors

The conflict in the Puttalam district between communities are often linked and the tension in one place often sparks off tension and conflict in another. This has been observed widely across many of the incidents that were not covered by the main focus of the study within the scope of the six selected conflict lines, but which emerged and were explored during the process of the study.

> "There was an ethnic riot in 2001 in Madurankuliya between Sinhalese and Muslims. They start rioting here if there is anything happening in Madurankuliya."
> (Women Society, Srimapura Cemetery Incident)

Sometimes the clashes between communities came about as the result of individual actions of members of either or both communities.

> "In Jayarajapura, in the Kumbuk kadawala DS division, [there's a group of cattle thieves and drunkards]. In 2001, they got involved in a brawl in Madurankuli and their leader's hand was cut off. This led to a conflict between the Muslim and the Sinhala people in Madurankuli and a lot of shops owned by the Sinhalese and some owned by Muslims were destroyed."
> (M, 41, Srimapura)

Differences in identity emerge and lead to violent and latent conflict often as a result of competition for resources or benefits. These economic issues become politicized and ethnicised, and are expressed as inter community tension.

> "Before 2001, [the clinic] had been functioning at one of the buildings at the mosque. The mosque was also used for the *madrasa*. The clinic was only open on Fridays and on that day Muslims have the special *Jumma.* Every Friday the place was overcrowded, with people coming for prayer, school and clinic to the same place. Women in particular faced many problems. So there was some bitterness among the people, especially the Muslims. The dispute was between the IDP and local community."
> (F,32, Noraicholai)

Some conflict incidents were triggered or took place as reactions to political events and changes at the national or district level. In Vanathavillu, the Muslim fishermen lived in Gangaivadi and had to move away from the area because of an attack on the navy camp nearby. When they moved out, another community with a better relationship with the navy took over their fishing grounds, leading to a resource-based conflict, spurred on in this case by macro political events.

> "There was a navy camp in Gangaivadi area. In the 1980s PLOTE attacked the camp. During that time our Muslims who were living in those areas got displaced and came here."
> (KI, M, Vanathavillu)

Other than the 6 main conflict lines, some conflicts within the district have resulted in a great deal of violence: tension between communities spill over and manifest themselves in extreme ways.

> "There was an incident in 2006 when the police asked a vehicle to stop and they didn't. The police fired shots towards that vehicle. The incident caused a lot of tension in the area: people started protesting by closing the road, burning tyres and disturbing passengers and other vehicles."

> "We found a rotting body in the area a few months back. It was totally decayed and we could not identify the body. Even the police could not find the perpetrator of the murder."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

Puttalam has a long history of this type of violence. Another incident in the Mundel DS Division took place in 1976 when Muslim IDPs began to settle in the area. Resistance by the Sinhalese hosts spilled over into violence following an assault on a Sinhalese worker at a cement factory by a group of Muslims.

> "In 1976 there was a clash between Sinhalese and Muslims because Sinhalese who were working at a cement factory were assaulted by Muslims. Those Muslims were driven away from those lands."
> (M, 62, Sirimapura)

The study took place within this complex environment, where at times, tensions continued over a great length of time, and where many competing tensions and links make the situation ideal for large-scale communal violence. The relative success of Puttalam has been in limiting these outbreaks of tension and violence through community based mechanisms.

4.3   Responses to conflict

In the 'cemetery' case a local NGO, the RDF intervened in the incident as a neutral actor, following which the conflicting parties agreed to share the cemetery with the Muslim IDPs. Third party intervention succeeded in resolving this situation, but it is not always successful in resolving other similar conflict incidents.

> "There are no major problems, but we were facing difficulties when there were *janasas* (funerals). Even when our daughter died, we could not bury her because we did not have access to a separate cemetery for Muslims. The local people did not allow us to use this cemetery. We approached a representative of the RDF and a peace meeting was held. A Sinhala MP and a Muslim MP became involved in the incident and a conflict developed between them. Finally the issue was resolved by the RDF. They helped us in resolving this problem."
> (F, 39, Srimapura)

In case of the Noraicholai Clinic dispute, the Islamic Relief Committee in collaboration with USAID intervened, and established a new clinic outside the mosque itself. Since the conflict was based on difficulties about sharing common space and resources, the provision of a new resource changed the conflict dynamic, diffusing the situation.

> "Finally there were some complaints made by people to the mosque and ISRC. Then ISRC realized the existence of the problems and made plans to shift the clinic away from the mosque. So finally it was shifted to a new building near the mosque. USAID funded this project. Now people are using that clinic centre without any problems but we have not been able to recruit a doctor it yet. We discussed this with the MOH many times but there are no solutions for that yet."
> (F, 32, Noraicholai)

Peace Committees are created in response to some conflicts. They are made up of local religious and community leaders. They are respected by the parties involved and have had some success in dealing with conflict issues.

> "Peace Committee members helped us in many ways like connecting us with lawyers, ministers, and others to consult with regarding our issues and problems."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

Sometimes resolution of a dispute is less clear-cut and depends on some extraordinary action from an individual or group. The Udappu incident for example was finally resolved by the donation by an individual of land to one of the parties in dispute after a protracted period of negotiations.

> "The AGA, the Udappu Kovil trustee board, the father from the church, and the Parippadu village committee, held discussions about this matter, but were unable to resolve it."
> (FGD1, Udappu)

> "Religious leaders got involved to seek a solution for this problem, but the problem was resolved by an individual who gave his private land to put the statue up."
> (KI, M, Udappu)

The extent of the conflicts and the range of responses to them provide the background for the study. They introduce the complexity of the social environment and the interplay of conflict and resolution.

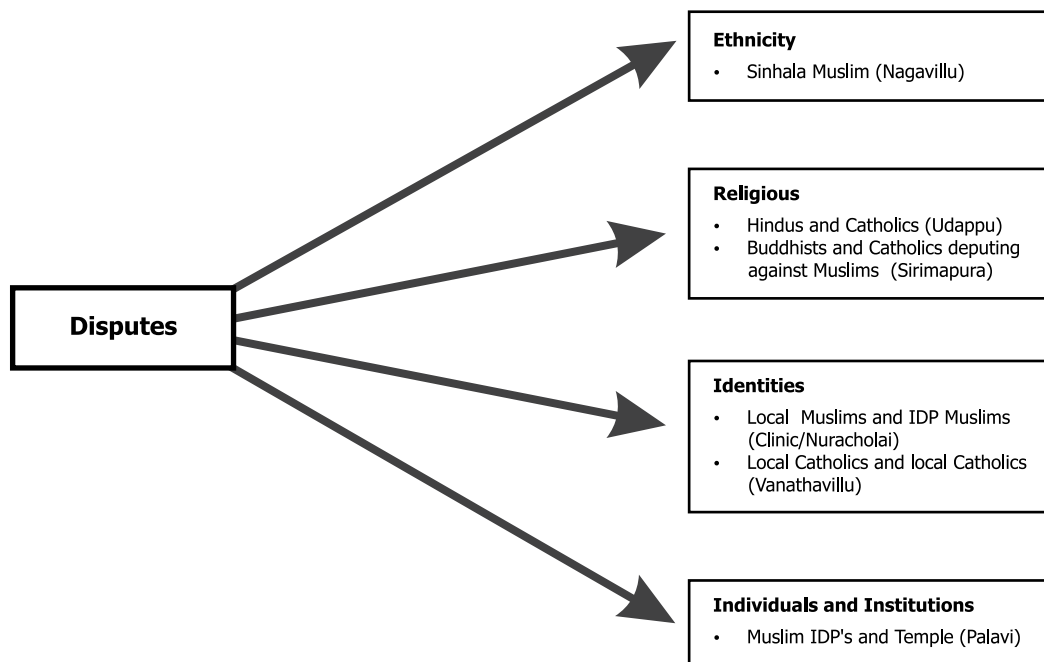## 5. Conflict in Puttalam, dynamics, contributory factors and cross cutting issues

Ethnicity
- Sinhala Muslim (Nagavillu)

Religious
- Hindus and Catholics (Udappu)
- Buddhists and Catholics deputing against Muslims (Sirimapura)

Identities
- Local Muslims and IDP Muslims (Clinic/Nuracholai)
- Local Catholics and local Catholics (Vanathavillu)

Individuals and Institutions
- Muslim IDP's and Temple (Palavi)

Figure 5.1 Types of Disputes Studied

5.1 Types of disputes/conflicts

There are two main categories of conflicts observed during the study such as inter-community disputes and disputes between institutions and individual/s. Most of these conflicts are initially based on competition for resources.

Inter-community disputes can be between two **ethnicities**, two **religious communities** or between two communities holding different/similar **identities.** The second type is where the conflicts take place between **institution/s and individual/s.**

The dispute that arose in Nagavillu over parking space for three-wheelers involved the Muslim and Sinhala **ethnicities**. The conflict in Udappu was between two different **religious groups**; Hindus disputing with Catholics over land for a Hindu temple and space to construct a Catholic statue. In Sirimapura, Buddhist and Catholic **religious groups** were in conflict with Muslims over a land for cemetery.

The dispute in Noraicholai over the use of a clinic on the mosque premises, although within the Muslim community, was between two groups holding different **identities** as local Muslims and IDP Muslims.

Conflicts can also take place between communities holding similar identities and ethnicities. For instance, the main conflicting parties of Vanathavillu conflict are the communities of Gangevadiya and Serakkuliya. Both these communities are Sinhalese, Catholics and both are fishing communities. The dispute took place over access to fishing areas, because one party is denied access by the other.

The conflict over a piece of land in Palavi can be seen as a dispute between **institutions and individuals**. The individuals who bought the land from a landowner in Puttalam claims the ownership of the land, whereas the Buddhist temple and its committee claim that these

individuals have encroached onto the land which belonged to the LRC and which they have been using for some 12 years. Also, this conflict event has an inter religious and ethnic angle to it. The identities of individuals who bought the land as Muslims and the Buddhist temple and its committee as Buddhist had contributed to the furthering of the dispute.

5.2 Different stages of development and resolution

It is clear that some conflicts have existed only for a short period of time whereas others have remained unresolved for many years. The persistence of conflict depends on the issue in question and the complex nature of conflict, the type of conflict, the different parties involved and the capacity of the local structures involved in resolving the conflict.

The conflicts that existed for **short time** periods were resolved by interventions of various institutions and individuals. When the existing local structures have the capacity, emerging problems and less complex disputes can be resolved without much difficulty. The conflict lines studied showed that the actors that intervened in this type of conflict had an interest in resolving the conflicts and sufficient resources that could be used for conflict resolution. Some institutions intervened because conflict resolution was in their institutional mandate.

The conflict in Noraicholai was resolved by the intervention of ISRC. The issue was relatively less complex than some of the other conflicts and was resolved with little difficulty. The disputants of this conflict were local Muslims and Muslim IDPS. It was also easy to achieve resolution since the number of parties involved in the dispute was low. The local NGO, ISRC together with USAID assistance, have identified potential conflicts for resources and attempted to manage them by providing those resources. In some cases the intervention by development institutions from the area also provided solutions by giving access to resources or improving services when there is a dispute over resources or services because of limited availability. When a dispute arose in Sirimapura over the use of the cemetery by Muslim IDPs, the RDF (a local NGO) got involved and partitioned the land separately for Sinhalese Catholics and Muslims. USAID financed the intervention through one of their 'peacebuilding' projects.

Some of the conflicts last for a long time. They grow in complexity as more and more people become involved. For example, the dispute in Vanathavillu for fishing ground still remains unresolved because of the large number of parties involved. There are three conflicting communities in this conflict. Even though Gangevadi and Serakkuliya communities are the main conflicting parties, there is another community called Eluvankulama, which is also involved. Politicians representing all three disputing parties add another layer of complexity. The duration of the conflict also seems to depend on how sensitive the issue that caused the dispute is. For instance, if the dispute is between the two religions or ethnicities based on a common resource, institutions and individuals feel that it is difficult to intervene and the capacity of the local institutions is not sufficient to resolve this. Often these kinds of disputes seek the assistance of the formal justice system such as courts and the police. This is also a reason why the conflict remains unsettled for a long time.

5.3 Range of intensities

The intensity of the conflict differs, depending on the type of conflict. The study came across a wide range of conflicts with varying intensities. Not all the conflicts that were studied have turned violent. Some were not very intense in terms of issues and parties involved. 'Invisible' conflicts, which reside in the minds of the people, unexpressed have not resulted in any violence. The dispute studied in Noracholai over the use of a clinic was almost 'invisible' and did not create any violence. Issues like sharing the limited resources with the IDPs who have

settled in Puttalam for more than 10 years have created frustration and a sense of annoyance in the minds of the host community, but these feelings can feed into another dispute with a different immediate cause, or it can become the trigger for the dispute.

> "The host community thinks that it has lost out on potential jobs and government employment due to the arrival of IDPs."
> (F, 22, Noraicholai)

There are some conflicts that have emerged and are visible, but did not lead to any violence. The Sirimapura conflict has created some tensions among the communities that were part of the conflict, but it did not result in any violence since the intervention was done before it reached a violent stage.

One reason for conflicts becoming violent is if the issues are very contentious and not addressed by the responsible authorities. In certain instances frustration among the people about not being able to resolve them can lead to violent conflict. If one of the conflicting parties believes that the individual or institutional intervention is favouring one party, conflicts are more likely to become violent. The Nagavillu Three Wheeler conflict became violent when both disputing parties failed to accept the intervening actors. The Muslim community believed that the institution representing the Sinhalese drivers were biased towards them, and vice versa. This situation created violence and finally the police were involved to control the situation by putting a police post in the area. Of course, the presence of physical violence makes the dispute very intense. This violence has led to the destruction of physical assets of individuals as well as the community and at times harmed lives.

5.4   Complexity of conflicts

Generally the conflicts examined in this study possess enormous complexity in terms of actors, issues and agendas. The complexity of a conflict of course depends on the number of actors involved. Many of the conflicts studied had only two conflicting parties, but there were instances where more than two parties were involved in a particular conflict incident. The Vanathavillu conflict consists of three conflicting parties over fishing land (the Gangevadi, Serakkuliya and Eluwankulama communities). Actors that are only peripheral to the conflict become more heavily involved at other times. Further, in some instances, Actors that are not the conflicting parties can in some instances make the situation worse. They have different agendas, manipulate the conflict situation and sometimes prevent resolution, for their own ends. The Nagavillu conflict for example has grown very complex with time, due to the increase in peripheral actors. Involvement of development institutions, religious institutions, politicians, the police and community leaders made the situation even more complex. Politicians visit the area from time to time giving promises to one party to reach a solution.

> "It is a highly politicised event because many ministers and MPs are involved in this issue."
> (KI, M, Nagavillu)

The type and the nature of the actors that get involved in disputes differ depending on the nature of the conflict. If the conflict is based on the competition for limited services, possibly a development institution in the area is able to act, for example the involvement of ISRC in the Noracholai Clinic Incident. But if it is between the two religious groups or ethnicities, more parties quickly become involved, which leads to more difficult conditions to resolve. The attempt by Catholics to put a statue near the Hindu temple turned into a conflict in Udappu. The associated values and faith that both parties have regarding the subject matter of the dispute is brought in, and makes the conflict difficult to deal with. These parties react in

different ways; some attempt to resolve the situation but some also exacerbate the problem. In this kind of situation, the relevant religious institutions and personalities get involved.

> "We informed this to the GS, DS, AGA, GA, ministers and, MPs, but we didn't find any solution for this issue."
> (KI, M, Nagavillu)

In the case of a dispute between Sinhalese and Muslims, for example, the mosque committee and its leader and the temple committee and its leaders become involved, since the problem is usually first reported to these institutions. These institutions and individuals try to settle the dispute by voicing their views or facilitating a dialogue between the two parties.

If the conflict has turned violent, the police intervene to stop further escalation of the violence. Even though this is seen as a temporary solution it is important at key stages to avoid worsening the situation.

Government officials become involved in conflicts that are concerned with competition for natural resources, benefits and livelihoods. They try to provide solutions by demarcating the physical boundaries for livelihood activities for different groups of people. In Vanathavillu, the competition over space to moor boats on the seashore, led to the involvement of the GA and AGA who demarcated the boundaries for all three conflicting parties using their authority. The Mundel AGA had tried to provide a solution for the Udappu conflict by offering land for the Catholic community that could be used to erect the statue.

International NGOs and their local counterparts also play a significant role in some of the conflicts. They were seen to intervene in conflicts with the help of local NGOs usually by means of providing financial assistance to put in place new infrastructure or provide other assistance to balance the existing grievances. USAID, for example, provided funding to resolve conflicts in Sirmapura and Noraicholai for the implementing partners RDF and ISRC. This type of intervention leads to resolution when the dispute is based on common property and the issues are not very complex.

When the IDPs began to arrive, soon after their expulsion from the North INGOs worked on short term emergency relief activities. Competition and resentment came out of their continued engagement over long periods of time with these groups, excluding the local host community from the assistance projects and programmes. This exclusion caused tensions between the host and IDP communities. Through a gradual awareness of these tensions and the fact that there existed vulnerabilities within the host community that were sometimes greater than those faced by the IDP community, these INGOs have more recently shifted their focus to also assist the host community.

> "There wasn't even a single NGO before the arrival of IDPs. There were no problems between Sinhalese and Muslims here. Now there are problems even between local and IDP Muslims. The arrival of IDPs is disadvantageous for both Sinhalese and local Muslims. IDPs have a greater standard of living. They even have vehicles and deeds for their lands, but the locals are still where they were."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

5.5 Cross cutting issues

The following issues emerged as common to many of the conflicts studied. These issues define the conflict environment in Puttalam and they are linked to the underlying causes of many of the conflicts in the district, adding different dimensions to efforts at resolution.

Identity

'Identity' in a broad sense emerged from the study as an issue that affects the whole spectrum from conflict trigger to conflict resolution. There are two main approaches popularly followed with respect to the concept of identity. Firstly, the primodialist approach which takes the sense of self and belonging to a collective group as a fixed thing, defined by objective criteria such as common ancestry and common biological characteristics. The second approach derives from the social constructionist approach where the identity is formed by a predominantly political choice of certain characteristics. In between these two approaches, various alternative approaches can be also identified. The idea of identity as an evolving process that reacts to diverse and ever changing social experience was an alternative approach that the study identified. In this regard the primary characteristic of identity seemed to be that it was not static and fixed, but kept changing to suit the need. This liberal nature of the definition seems to recognize the role of an individual in social interaction and the construction of identity. The study found out that in some instances identities seemed to be 'created' on the basis of the changing social experiences.

> "When we came here in the 1990s we were scattered everywhere. So we gathered together the Mannar IDPs and found this place. We levelled the forest by ourselves and built houses; developed the community up to this level. That's why we used to call this place 'Erukkalampitty - Nagavillu'. Because we created this village, no one had identified it."
> (KI, M, Nagavillu)

In certain instances in the study identity has been defined as belonging to a certain collective, bound by a common ancestry or a history. But this common ancestry or history was also different in different instances. There were identities within communities; intra religious/ethnic divisions such as those between IDP Muslims and 'native' Muslims.

> "Even though they are Muslims there are considerable cultural differences between us and the IDPs."
> (M, 50, Norachcholai)

CHA in its Practitioner's Kit of 2004 found that the experiences of the displaced differed. Although overall, they share a common experience in that they have been uprooted and forced to flee, their particular situations differ depending on their geographic location, ethnic background, their relationship to the local population, and other factors[3]. The study also supports this idea, to a large extent. It also found that even within the IDP community there were further divisions depending on the geographical origin of the IDPs. These differences then were seen manifesting themselves in the resource allocation and in defining the social networks that a certain group could gain access to.

> "Jaffna IDPs don't have an MP for themselves, but Mannar IDPs have.
> Their MP should be responsible for all, but there is some
> unfairness in his activities, with priority going to people from Mannar."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

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3   Practitioner's Kit for Return, Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Development by CHA and the Brookings-SAIS project in Internal Displacement (2004).

> "The Resettlement Ministry treats Jaffna and Mannar IDPs differently. The development of Mannar IDPs is very visible."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

The way identity was used or where the issue of identity was brought out was interesting. Sometimes it seemed that aspects of identity become important only when they are threatened or when there was a certain advantage by belonging to a certain group. The same identity, depending on the situation, could bring advantages and in other situations, disadvantages.

Identity is also linked to power. The identity of an individual is important in certain contexts if s/he holds some sort of power in the area or with regard to the issue at hand. It could be power in numbers, manifested by belonging to a certain group with a collective identity. Power in numbers obviously becomes crucial in conflict situations, when the conflict is played out between two or more groups.

Belonging to a certain identity group would mean that the social networks that you have access to and become part of, would depend on that grouping. This can have a myriad of implications. In a general context, the access to opportunities that one has could depend on the types of contacts that the group has with the relevant authorities and these could themselves depend on the identity that one possesses. In a conflict or a dispute context, the social networks are important in the resolution process; the dispute is more likely to be settled in your favour if the party with the most power can intervene on your behalf.

The 'cultural mixing' that has taken place has resulted in positive and negative outcomes, as perceived by the respondents. The respondents felt that inter-marriages between IDP and local Muslims are lessening the gap between the two groups, by linking the two groups through the new relationships. A second example of positive changes is in relation to the mixing between the Sinhalese community and the IDP community. Initially there had been conflicts arising out of the inability of the IDPs to speak and understand the Sinhala Language. These conflicts lessened as the IDPs became accustomed to the Sinhala language and able to communicate with the Sinhalese community around them.

Some perceived mixing of culture causes negative consequences in the community since new cultural aspects are brought into the community. For instance, the locals believe that the dowry system that prevails in the community is a result of this cultural mixing.

> "Even though they are Muslims there are considerable cultural differences between us and the IDPs. We did not have the problem of dowry in Puttalam before their arrival, but now it exists in our community because of their culture." (M, 51, Noraicholai,)

Land

The issue of land is significant in that almost all of the conflict incidents studied had, at their root, the issue of land or a competition for 'space'. Puttalam is an area where substantial tracts of land have not been utilized due to the sparse population and the topography of the location, which made agriculture impossible in some of the areas. There have been settlement schemes as discussed in the background section above, under migration patterns, where people had been settled with a certain extent of agriculture land and up land for housing purposes.

> "There are cultivation lands in Thavasamadu which was distributed among us. They gave only 1 acre of land per family so it wasn't enough for us. So we didn't support that system for two reasons. First, the land is not enough – the upkeep cost might actually be more than the income so it becomes a loss. Secondly, there is a high risk of elephant attacks. The land was then given to many outsiders, some 300 Wanathivillu and Karathivu people."
> (FGD1, Vanathavillu)

The land prices had been relatively low in the area prior to the influx of IDPs, but their arrival drastically changed the land use patterns and land prices. Initially the IDPs were given LRC land or large tracts of land were bought by the government from private owners and distributed among the IDPs.

> "All these lands were bare land earlier. But even now, an MP has bought private land and is building around seven hundred houses for the IDPs."
> (FGD, Palavi)

> "The population in Puttalam has increased compared to the past. According to the electoral register, the majority, some 78%, are Sinhala Buddhists. Now there is a huge number of IDPs and there are about 200 families in an IDP camp. There is a proposal to build 700 new houses and settle IDPs here."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

As the IDPs became more settled in Puttalam, they started buying land from the local Muslims as well as the Sinhalese. As the IDPs started realising that they would not get a chance to return to their original areas soon, they started using their savings, jewellery or earnings from their business ventures and buying land in the area. Some sold the assets they had in the original areas and bought land in Puttalam. As the demand for the land increased the land prices went up alarmingly.

> "Earlier there was not a higher value for these lands. However after the arrival of IDPs, demand for land has increased and nobody could purchase a small piece of land without a few lakhs."
> (KI, Palavi)

> "We sold about 20 perches for each family. We sold 10 perches land for Rs.15,000. But now it can fetch for more than Rs.200,000. We thought of all living in one area together."
> (M, 50, Palavi)

The current situation becomes further aggravated with the need to provide land to different family members resulting in the need for more land. This shows that a well considered strategy by the government regarding the land usage in the Puttalam area is urgently needed to control the situation that could soon become explosive.

"Available land area for cultivation and for living is becoming less and less. This problem will affect both locals and IDPs as well. IDPs get only 10 perches of land for housing. Now it is being fragmented to be given to their children as dowry."
(M, 51, Noraicholai)

"I bought this Palavi land in 1997 with the help of my relative. I decided to buy that land for two reasons. Thinking of my children: I have two daughters so in future I must give dowry to them and also, so that our displaced people can live together in one place."
(M, 52, Palavi)

"Now there is a discontent among IDPs and locals over some issues when sharing common community resources. Now there is a trend in Alankuda and Pallivasalthurai where available land for cultivation is becoming limited due to an increase in population and higher utilisation of land. This could cause a serious problem in the next 10 years; it is also difficult to find solutions for problems like this."
(F, 22, Noraicholai)

The encroaching of by the IDPs of LRC land was regarded with distrust by the local settlers, especially Sinhala communities.

"There are many problems emerging in Puttalam because of lands. Some people develop government land using bulldozers. If nobody interferes, the IDPs settle down there. The Minister also does the same thing. The police should be made responsible mainly for this. They take bribes and do not try to offer a resolution."
(KI, M, Palavi)

"There is no conflict with other villages. At the time the IDPs came here, there were some problems because the lands that belonged to the Sinhalese were acquired to establish the IDP camp. Later those Sinhalese were given lands from another area and the problem was solved."
(F, 39, Sirimapura)

On the whole, whether the IDPs were given land and settled there by the government, whether they encroached onto LRC land or whether they bought land from the locals, there is a feeling mainly among the Sinhala community that the newcomers are taking over their land.

"There are Muslim villages right around our village. It's their empire in these areas. First they came to IDP camps as refugees and then they bought land from this area. People in these areas partition the land and sell it, to be paid in instalments. We are the ones who are facing problems and suffering because of this. They are using our resources. We can't tell anybody about this problem, even if we did the ones at fault will eventually be us."
(FGD, Palavi)

"Even if the war is over and there is peace, they won't go back. They have land in their original villages as well as here, but we are losing our land. They are taking over our land bit by bit."
(FGD, Palavi)

The IDPs on their part are also trying to establish a collective identity or preserve what is left of their shared identity by trying to buy land en masse and settling down in their original locality.

> "We were evicted from Jaffna in 1990 (4300 families). First we went to Colombo and Negombo. We had been living there from 1990 to 1996. We came back here in 1996 under Mr.Ashraf's resettlement project. Then we planned (approximately 300 families) to buy a land and live together here (Palavi) only because of the Jaffna identity."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

IDPs settling or being settled on land that is not suitable for living without further development is becoming an issue in the area. This leads to difficulties when they build houses and some of these lands are seemingly situated across natural water-ways or drainage systems. Flooding is already a serious problem in the area and this could become aggravated given the population expansion.

> "This place was a jungle when we came here. I don't think anyone would buy this land if IDPs did not. We had to clear this land for many days to enter the land." (F, 22, Sirimapura)

Power

The study reveals how complex and power laden the discussion about community level conflict is in the Puttalam district. The exercise of power, in an insensitive and damaging way, has contributed to many of these conflicts. Other incidents continue to take place, for example where changes are made without proper consultation for the benefit of one group or community at the expense of another. This is seen frequently in the renaming of villages and other common spaces. Names are associated with identity. Changing names of common spaces offends many people in the district. The spaces being renamed are those that are well known to people who have lived there for many years.

> "IDPs occupy all these areas. Now they have changed the name of the village into Erukkalampitty. The original name of the area is Nagavillu. Will they allow us to change the name of an area in Mannar or Jaffna? They have houses, properties in Puttalam and also in Mannar. But look at what our people have. We don't know who is coming to visit them. Their friends and relatives come here to trace our areas; it is a threat for us also."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

> "They have renamed the villages here. Periyakulama is now called Ijjirakkulama. They have renamed the ancient village of Nagavillu with a Muslim name and put up name boards. Even the Railway station has been renamed."
> (FGD, Palavi)

These names are being changed in a way that allows certain groups to assert their identity and the changes they have wrought in the district. Many in the district see these groups as 'outsiders', and many conflicts have occurred between these groups. The exercise of power within this tense environment has wide-ranging and damaging repercussions.

This exercise of power is linked with the national political environment. The types of nationalism that exist in Sri Lanka, the way they influence politics, and other nationalisms that are stoked in reaction, has created a sense of intractability. This cannot be allowed to remain unchallenged. Actors cannot use this complex environment to score political points, to shore up a divisive support base and to undermine peace at a community level. The best efforts made at this level will not be effective if they are stifled by action and actors at a higher level.

This study explores the successes and failures of community based conflict management within a complex and power laden atmosphere. Through the communication of these study results it

is hoped that there would be some recognition of the need to resolve these conflicts and others in Puttalam by actors at all levels.

Politics and political actors

The role of the politicians in the conflict resolution process was spoken of by most respondents. It was believed that irrespective of the political party, all politicians in power should be considered representatives of the general public, holding a fundamental responsibility to minimise threats to a community. Therefore, the perception of the majority was that it was important for the politicians to examine the causes of the particular conflict and intervene based on those facts in conflict resolution.

The additional study identified several ways in which the politicians could intervene in the conflict resolution process as follows,

- In identifying the conflict and the root causes
- As a representative of the conflicting party
- As a mediator external to the conflict
- As an arbitrator
- As an unbiased individual

The general opinion was that disregarding the divisions and separations created by party, race or religion, politicians should have a genuine interest in contributing towards resolving conflicts. Respondents believed that intervention should happen as early as possible, as a conflict begins to develop or while underlying issues seem to be coalescing towards conflict in order for the intervention to be successful and sustainable. It was also stated by one political representative that some incidents occur based on a relatively minor issue but then would escalate into large proportions and then would be labelled as 'ethnic violence' or political violence. Institutional and community level representatives also mentioned that politicians could act for their personal gains and focus on getting votes which could then aggravate conflict situations. The lack of awareness by politicians about religious practices and codes could also create conflicts.

The involvement of politicians in the conflict resolution processes has been mainly with regard to political violence during election time (both within their own political parties and with other political parties). Several political representatives intervened in solving two disputes between the Muslims and the Sinhala communities. The political violence was resolved successfully, but other conflicts between Muslim and Sinhala groups had taken longer to resolve because of the initial reluctance of both parties to compromise and because the issue became linked with two powerful opposing politicians.

The following tactics and methods have been used in resolving these conflicts.

- Getting into the discussion with genuine interest, focusing only on the resolution disregarding their personal interest.
- By explaining the long term disadvantages to the party members and supporters
- Identifying the correct facts/information regarding the conflict and communicating it effectively to people holding strong opinions and those creating and manipulating strong opinions within groups
- Legal measures involving official complaints to the police, and the filing of cases in court.
- Identifying the individuals at the focal points of the conflict and engaging them in discussion and reaching agreement

5.6 Socio-economic conditions

Livelihoods

Competition for limited resources grew faster than its normal rate which then created changes in the livelihoods of the people. Ever since the IDPs moved to Puttalam in 1990, after being forced from their homes in Jaffna and Mannar by the LTTE, there have been tensions over resources between IDPs and their host community. Although the government allocates resources towards the IDPs living in Puttalam, the funds continue to be sent to their areas of origin, and the host community and IDPs in Puttalam are forced to compete for scarce resources in sectors such as health and education (IDMC 2007)[4].

Many of the conflicts that are examined in this study occurred as a result of competition for the limited resources and livelihood opportunities. The increase in population within the district further exacerbated this competition. The conflict in Nagavillu for example erupted between Muslims and Sinhalese as a result of the competition for parking space for three wheelers.

Puttalam has a wide range of livelihoods despite the lack of natural resources compared to other districts. Many in the district are engaged in the manufacturing industry and in agriculture. A considerable number are engaged in the wholesale and retail industry as their main source of employment. The information given below is aggregate of most important employment categories available in the district. Manufacturing is much more developed in the urban areas, whereas in the rural areas, most people engage in agriculture and fishing. The type of employment varies depending on the geographical location. Fishing is the main livelihood in the coastal areas whereas people living in inland parts of the district are engaged in agricultural related activities.

Table 5.1 Employed Population by Main Industry

All industries	229,425
Manufacturing	46,120
Agriculture and Forestry	41,485
Whole sale and retail trade	28,534
Industry in elementary occupation- Unidentifialble or inadequate	21,180
Fishing	20,712
Public administration and defence	13,436
Transport, storage and communication	12,724
Construction	12,696

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2001

The main employment opportunities available in the areas where the research was conducted are fishing, agriculture, retail business ventures, government employment, and the garment industry. Migration for overseas employment is a recent trend in the area due to the lack of opportunities in the area. This migration can be legal low skilled migration and some illegal migration also mentioned by the respondents.

> "Everybody's trying to stop cultivation and migrate overseas for work. Since it's difficult to make ends meet, they put their lives at risk and travel by sea for a month or so to get to Italy. There are instances where lives have been lost. However the ones who make it across have improved their living standards. It's wrong to enforce laws like these and stop this migration for work. We understand that for the sake of international relations

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4   Information from IDMC interviews with internally displaced persons in western Sri Lanka and staff of international and local agencies assisting them, June and July 2007

these laws have to be put in place, but I think that the government can be a bit more lenient on implementing the laws. After all they bring a lot of money from other countries to Sri Lanka helping to develop the country."
(FGD1, Udappu)

"Half of the women here have started working because of problems at home. There are about 20 women working in the Middle East as housemaids. A few are engaged in their own businesses."
(F, 35, Norachcholai)

Fishing is a key livelihood activity for many communities in the district. Based on figures from table 5.1 it is the fifth largest source of revenue in Puttalam. Those engaged in the sector are employed in deep sea fishing, lagoon fishing and prawn fishing. Many of them were undertaking wage labour and some invested in fishing boats and nets for fishermen. Restrictions on deep sea fishing due to security reasons during certain periods of time, constrained the fishing industry. The macro level conflict also affects the livelihoods of the communities living closer to the conflict-affected region. Fear of attacks from the LTTE also prevents these communities accessing the sea at certain times.

"Most of the people are engaged in deep sea fishing, catch prawns, masonry and carpentry."
(FGD1, Udappu)

"Fishing is a traditional and a major source of income for most of us in Udappu. There are restrictions for fishing in the night which could affect this livelihood in the future."
(FGD1, Udappu)

"The crisis has been increasing in the fishing sector every year. We can't fish at night because of security problems - the LTTE might attack in the night. Petrol prices are hiking, so if they are allowed to fish there, I think it would be most helpful to reduce fuel expenses. We have the pass system here; the fishing period is between 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. … There is a high demand for prawns in these areas."
(KI, M, Vanathaviillu)

Undertaking wage labour is common among many families as a primary livelihood activity that generates income. Since the skill required performing this job is minimal, it is easy for the unskilled to find work. This labour depends on the type of work available in the area, ranging from agriculture to industry. The work can also be seasonal.

"We are mainly engaged in wage labour. The type and nature of the work changes from season to season, depending on opportunities. There are people that are engaged in making cement blocks; both as self-employment ventures as well as wage labourers. Some are working with coconut plantations, a few are working in the government sector and some have their own land and are getting an income from them. There are some working in the Salt Corporation and in private salterns as labourers."
(FGD, Palavi)

Agriculture is an important livelihood option that could provide employment in the rural areas of the district. Vegetable, onion and paddy are the main crops grown in the district other than the coconut plantations. It was mentioned that there is a shift from paddy cultivation to prawn farming in the area due to the lack of availability of water for cultivation and poor soil conditions for cultivation. This shift has caused movement of labour outside the community for employment.

"We have onion, and other vegetables. The vegetables are being taken either to market or to Colombo for sale. Also, the IDPs have a lot of shops over here."
(F, 35, Norachcholai,)

"Most of the people are mainly engaged in cultivation - onions, chillies, tobacco and fishing. About equal numbers are engaged in these two activities. There are about 4 or 5 government servants. There are some young women staying in towns like Maarawila or Chilaw and working in garment factories. A few men are also staying outside the community and working. There are a few families that are maintaining prawn farms and some own coconut plantations of ½ to 2 acres. They can pluck about 300 - 500 coconuts per season from these lands. They make *thallala* (coconut crush) - a sea-sonal form of livelihood and the poorer families in the community engage in this once a year."
(FGD2, Udappu)

"We don't do any cultivation in this community because of the water problem. For irrigated agriculture we need to renovate the nearby tank and this would cost 40-50 lakhs."
(M, 41, Sirimapura)

Changes in livelihood patterns

The pattern and types of livelihoods available in the area where the research was conducted seems to have changed after the arrival of the IDPs. This change was positive during the early stages since new livelihood activities, technologies and methods were introduced by the IDPs to the local communities. When these opportunities became saturated, different groups of people competed with each other for limited opportunities and this tense situation has led to conflict in many instances.

"Livelihoods of the local people are affected by the IDPs because now there is a competition between IDPs and locals for many livelihood activities such as fishing and business. The available land area for cultivation and living is reducing. This problem will affect both locals and IDPs. IDPs got only 10 perches of land for the housing, now it is being fragmented to be given to their children as dowry."
(M, 51, Norachcholai)

According to Amarasiri de Silva, the competition for wage labour jobs between IDPs and the local community in the salt manufacturing areas is a classic cause of IDP-host tensions in Puttalam. In Puttalam, the IDPs are used in salt manufacturing as labourers, since they are more willing to engage in manual labour, taking up those jobs in competition with the Sinhala labourers, the traditional workforce in the area. The traditional workforce in Puttalam who worked in the salt producing areas are now finding it difficult to get jobs. The IDPs in Puttalam have now started fishing in the lagoon and the sea, which is considered a 'violation' of the fishing rights of the traditional fishermen of the area. (de Silva 1999).

Competition regarding livelihoods can also create conflict between different communities on identity based divisions. They are manifest in different ways in the natural resource based livelihoods and also in the formal sector. Puttalam district by nature is seen as a district that is limited in terms of natural resources, essential for employment generation and in providing a diverse livelihood portfolio for the area. Given these limitations, the arrival of IDPs has meant that what little was there, is highly competed for. Certain groups claim ownership for natural resources that are essential for the continuance of these livelihoods, which will then prevent

other communities accessing these resources. This situation creates tensions between the communities when other groups attempt to access these resources.

In the formal sector, the tensions erupt because the postings and positions that are available within the district, especially in the government sector, are perceived to be limited and the competition to fill these posts is high. What aggravates this situation is the feeling of certain groups that those who are in power favour one group over another in recruiting people for these positions. For example, there is a perception that the administrative posts and vacancies for teachers are being filled in this way.

Specialised techniques and new livelihoods had been brought into the host community by IDPs. Many of the villages developed small village centres after the arrival of IDPs since they invested in new business ventures. The host community feels unable to compete with the IDPs in these new livelihoods. This condition leads them to develop a perception that the IDPs are further exploiting the available livelihoods given the limited opportunities available for the host community.

The arrival and the lengthy settlement of the IDPs in the areas have started to undercut the wage labour market and push the local people from the employment market. Given the limited employment opportunities in the area, a higher labour supply has created a reduction in wage rates. The financial and material support in the form of food rations provided by the state and non-state welfare programmes, which have specifically targeted the IDPs, were perceived by the other groups to act as a crutch that enabled the IDPs to work for lower wage rates.

> "Other than this, employment opportunities, water and transport have also become problematic. If local people are paid Rs.500 per day as wage labourers, IDPs offer to work here for Rs.200 per day. Working for a low wage is not a problem for IDPs, because they are given subsidies. Therefore, they can also save what they earn as labourers"
> (KI, M, Palavi)

> "The main problem that emerged after the arrival of IDPs is the employment crisis. The majority of people who are working in offices are Muslims. The locals' employment opportunities have been given to Muslim IDPs. Even the government gives priority to these people. We do not know whether the situation will change in the future."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

When the opportunities became limited and the competition grew, people started shifting their focus to the other areas, which then induced out-migration. Out-migration happens within Sri Lanka and also overseas. Migration within the country to certain areas for livelihood activities seems to create suspicion when a certain identity group is involved. For example, when Tamils migrate to Mullaitivu for fishing, others in the area regard it as suspicious. A common perception of women is that overseas employment is an important way of getting income, given the lack of opportunities in the area.

Services

Many of the IDP settlements are located close to main roads and towns. They were settled there by authorities who are key political figures among IDPs, a well as NGOs working towards the resettlement of IDPs. There are also those that settled in the area without any external assistance. This close proximity to road networks and towns improves their access to many services such as transport, health and education.

> "We are located along the Colombo – Puttalam highway. It is easy to access the facilities like health and education, because we have good transport services. When we came here it wasn't so developed."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

> "We are living near the main road, so transport is easy. However travelling charges are very high, and they are increasing. We can access educational facilities and medical facilities because of the easy transport services."
> (KI, 50, Sirimapura)

The perception of the host community is that the IDPs are provided better services, given the fact that there are local people even poorer than the IDPs. In contrast, however, there are still some IDP camps that remain underserved.

> "There are some IDPs still living in camps. They do not have proper housing facilities, drinking water or a permanent means of income."
> (M, 51, Norachcholai)

> "Even though the service provision in the area has improved, the scarcity of available resources still present has worsened as a result of the higher demand for the services brought about by arrival of the IDPs."
> (M, 51, Norachcholai)

The hike in land prices is also an indication of the scarcity of resources in the area. The price hike is purely demand-driven and reveals the extent of the limited supply.

People that still live in IDP resettlements, frequently face health hazards and fast spreading diseases. Improper drainage in the settlements causes flooding which can later cause health problems. Since the toilets and wells are located in close proximity to each other, the chances of spreading diseases are relatively high.

> "Toilets and wells are close to each other in many houses. They have only 10 perches of land and it is not sufficient to maintain a suitable distance between the wells and toilets."
> (F, 22, Norachcholai)

> "We don't have drainage systems in this settlement. We face serious problems during the rainy season. There is flooding during that time and we get affected by so many different diseases."
> (M, 50, Sirimapura)

Even though the education service has improved after the influx of IDPs, whether this is sufficient to cater to everyone seems to be an issue. There were issues regarding the number of teachers, the physical space, and number of schools in the area.

> "We are still having problems regard education. For example, the buildings are not enough and we have to send our children long distances for tuition. These schools don't have science and mathematics subject streams."
> (F, 49, Norachcholai)

Some communities feel they are marginalised by the government and development institutions due to their identity and ethnicity. There are only a few development interventions taking place in these areas both from the government and non government institutions. Local structures

such as the temple committee and religious leaders are engaged in facilitating the development activities with the help of individuals. Lack of transport facilities in this has hindered access to other services such as education and health.

> "They take fish from here to all parts of the country, but they wouldn't even construct this road. Earlier we used to construct the road by ourselves, but now we have stopped doing that. We are tired of it. It's been close to a year since we got electricity."
> (FGD2, Udappu)

> "Due to a lack of transport facilities the education level of the children has reduced. There's no school for the children in the village after grade 5. People who are better off get their children to stay outside the community for their education."
> (FGD2, Udappu)

> "The government doesn't provide enough teachers for the school, because from their point of view, we are a minority group."
> (KI, M, Vanathaviillu)

5.7 Internally Displaced Persons and conflict

Puttalam currently hosts over 60,000 IDPs who have lived in the area since 1990, over 17 years. According to UNHCR over 80,000 IDPs arrived in Puttalam during 1990. During 1995, the IDP population dropped to 52,555 and again increased to 81,707 during 2001/2002. According to the source, there are discrepancies in available information on IDP population in Puttalam.[5]

A large number of Muslims arrived due to eviction by the LTTE from the Northern part of the country representing Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya districts. The majority of the IDP population originate from Mannar (72%). Some 14% came from Jaffna, 10% from Mullaitivu and 3% from Kilinochchi. There were also families from Vavuniya. As of 2004, almost all (99%) of those IDPs surveyed indicated that they were Muslims by ethnicity. A number of Sinhalese and Tamil families are also displaced in the Puttalam District, but this percentage is just above 1% in total (UNHCR 2006).

The number of IDPs in Puttalam slightly varies depending on the reporting source. According to the figures released by the UNHCR, 63,145 IDPs were living in Puttalam during the year 2006. According to the study conducted by de Silva in May 2003, there were 66,200 Muslims registered in Puttalam who fled from Mannar during the war. They represent 10% of the total population of the district. (Amarasiri, 1999)

Definition of IDPs

> IDPs are defined as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their home or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or humanitarian disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.
> Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, United Nations (1998)

Protracted displacement

"IDP is understood as a 'category of need' (those who need immediate assistance) and, secondly, IDPs are regarded as being only temporarily present at the place of displacement" (Researching Internal Displacement, 2003). IDPs have the nature of being 'temporary' since they are living in a new environment with the hope of returning to their homes. The conditions of living in temporary shelters, their inability to own land, unavailability of livelihood opportunities, insufficient service provision and risks associated with displacement make them more vulnerable.

The IDPs in Puttalam are present for 17 years challenging the above notion of 'temporariness' of the IDPs and the manifestation of it. In a situation of protracted displacement IDPs have a slightly more permanent nature than immediate displacement situations. In the case of Puttalam, the presence of IDPs for more than 17 years has brought a considerable amount of change among the IDP communities. IDPs in Puttalam need to be looked at in a different way from the 'ideal' IDP definition, and from other more 'temporary' IDPs in the country.

According to the 2006 UNHCR survey, the majority of Puttalam IDPs have already *de facto* integrated into Puttalam. 74% of the IDPs surveyed claim to have acquired land in Puttalam; further, 58% reported that they also possess a house in Puttalam. This seems to indicate that IDPs in Puttalam are different. During the Cease Fire, between 2002 and 2006,

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5   UNHCR Report of 1990, 1995, 2001-2002.

418,500 out of 735,000 IDPs had returned their homes.[6] This trend of wishing to migrate back to places of origin started declining with the collapse of the CFA. The young generation of the IDP community does not show willingness to return since they are accustomed to the environment and culture of Puttalam.

They are locally integrated and have established relationships during the course of their lengthy stay. This could be seen in their ownership of assets and by the social changes that have taken place over the years. This study also provides evidence of the integration of IDPs into Puttalam; owning permanent houses and land, starting new business ventures.

> "They have houses and properties in Puttalam, and also in Mannar."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

The more subtle changes that lead to integration can be seen from the way the social fabric has changed in the area, with regard to both IDPs and the host community.

> "IDPs came here familiar with the existing careers and also started new careers. Their education levels developed. Most students entering universities from this region are IDP students. When the IDPs were living in their native places, Muslim ladies did not come out from the house. After coming here, this has changed. Now we can see intermarriages between IDPs and locals. When the IDPs were in their native places, they associated only with Muslims and only undertook limited jobs. However after coming here, they have made connections with every ethnic group and also engage in different types of jobs."
> (KI, NGO in Puttalam)

As a result of this integration, the Muslim culture that prevailed in Puttalam has been strongly influenced by the cultural practices of the IDPs. There were obvious differences between the cultural practices of IDPs and the local host communities. Initially, when the IDPs started interacting with the local Muslim community, the incompatibility of different cultures caused problems and the local host community showed some resistance to mixing with them. However, gradual and continuous interaction of IDPs with the host community started to influence the local host community through intermarriages, and sharing of cultural practices in schools and trade.

Some cultural practices of IDPs, such as dowry and their manner of dress, have gradually penetrated the host community as well. According to the information gathered from the local host community, the dowry system was not that prevalent among Puttalam Muslims before the arrival of IDPs, but presently it is becoming a more common practice.

Performance of IDP children in education was higher when compared to locals. Mostly, the girls of the host community were not encouraged to follow secondary education before the arrival of the IDPs. IDP children, including the girls, completed their tertiary education as well. This has changed the practices of the local host community to encourage girls to follow secondary and tertiary education.

> "The Puttalam Muslims' tradition has now changed because of the IDPs. Their culture of dressing and behaviour are different from the locals. If an outsider sees this, they would think that these are Puttalam people, but actually they are not."
> (KI, M)

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6   UN Central Emergency Response Fund, 2006.

"Even though they are Muslims, there are considerable cultural differences between us and IDPs. We did not have the problem of dowry in Puttalam before but now it exists because of their culture. They used to bargain for dowry but we are not like that. This dowry culture is now there in our community as well."
(M, 51, Noraicholai)

Even though a considerable level of integration has taken place in the area, IDPs feel that the local host community treats them as a separate group of people. A sense of marginalising and discrimination prevails among the IDPs. Referring to the children of IDPs as *'ahathi'* (refugee) in schools is a simple example of this situation. At the same time, the IDPs like to be treated as a separate group in other ways, in relation to administration, assistance and political power.

"People treat us as refugees even after so long. In schools some local teachers call our students *ahathi.*"
(F, 39, Sirimapura)

The choice of Puttalam as a place of settlement

Most of the IDPs expelled from Jaffna and Mannar during 1990/91 arrived in Puttalam due to various reasons. Most of the displaced from Mannar arrived in Kalpitiya by sea when they felt that travelling by land was not safe. Further, Puttalam is close to the Mannar district and people had trade links between the districts prior to displacement. Puttalam was a market for people who lived in Mannar. They used to sell their agricultural produce, farm animals and fish in Puttalam. People from Mannar could access Puttalam via sea and road. Those who did not have previous links with Puttalam followed their communities and settled in Puttalam. Further it was easier for them to settle in Puttalam due to the fact that most of the displaced are Muslims and the host community also had enclaves of Muslims. This gave them the feeling of having something in common with their hosts.

The IDPs felt more secure in Puttalam because of their long-standing economic links and common ethno-religious identity. At the time of displacement Puttalam was relatively sparsely populated and the cost of living in the district was reasonable. The IDPs chose to settle in Puttalam for these reasons.

"They did not have any options to choose from, but they had very close relationships with the people Puttalam of even before the displacement. That was mainly through trade links. From the beginning they used to market their paddy, fish and livestock in Puttalam. Mannar is much closer to Puttalam than any other place where mostly Muslims live. It is only 35-40 km from Puttalam to Mannar."
(KI, M)

"This is a peaceful district and a smaller population was here when they arrived. The cost of living was very low here. They liked to live with their communities who are also living here."
(KI, Kovil priest)

Changes in living conditions

Most of the IDPs were poor during the time of displacement since they were not allowed to bring their wealth with them. Some managed to bring or sell their assets later and became economically stable while others continued to be poor.

They were living in IDP welfare camps for a long time until the late 1990's with the expectation of return. Living conditions in those welfare centres was not very conducive for them to remain there. When people began to sense that their resettlement would not be imminent, these welfare centres were gradually transformed into more permanent housing settlements. Some of them bought land in Puttalam and some were given land by politicians and the local government administration. Each IDP family was given 10 perches of land to build their own house. This helped increase the number of permanent houses in welfare camps. Many of these welfare camps are now upgraded and contain more improved housing units with sanitary facilities, electricity and water. There are some underserved camps in the area though some camps have the best of facilities. The IDPs who live in the camps with the best facilities appear to have some political support. Those with political support use it to obtain lands and get houses built. This political support has helped to draw the attention of government and NGOs in relation to assistance. IDPs with relatively higher levels of education and influential social networks are able to progress much faster than those without these advantages. IDPs from Mannar have more political support than the IDPs from the Jaffna district.

While the vulnerability and poverty of the IDPs cannot be denied or undermined, there are also people and communities in the host population that are similarly and sometimes more poor and vulnerable. Many development projects working in Puttalam focus solely on the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs. This limited focus has created tension because groups in the local community also see themselves as deserving of external assistance.

> "Almost 90% of the NGOs work for the IDP's but there are also poor marginalised locals in this area. They have been neglected in these conditions."
> (KI, NGO in Puttalam)

> "Now there is no big conflict in this area between IDPs and locals, but locals feel that they are being marginalised by the government, NGOs and INGOs. Most of the assistance such as housing, free rations and livelihood assistance target the IDPs. Local poor people are not receiving any assistance. Now the living standard of the locals is relatively lower than the IDPs."
> (KI, M)

According to de Silva, "The rich IDPs have bought land and houses in the Puttalam DS division, particularly in the urban area so that it helps them [in] augmenting their businesses. The children of these affluent families are sent to better schools in the urban area and they get better infrastructure facilities that are available in the division. These rich Muslims are powerful, politically as well as economically. They have now gone into manipulating political power in different ways in the urban sector." (De Silva 1999)[7]

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7   M.W. Amarasiri De Silva (1999)," Some socio-political Implications of conflict related internal displacement in Sri Lanka," Paper presented at the 7th Sri Lanka Studies Conference, Canberra, Australia. Dec. 3-6 1999, republished http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~vdesilva/mwadesilva/Articles/102.pdf.

Attitudes of the host community

It is interesting to see how the attitude of the local host community regarding IDPs has changed over the past 17 years. Immediate assistance was provided by the local communities when the IDPs first arrived. Some locals donated their land for use as IDP camps. The IDPs were treated as a special, vulnerable group. When it became clear that their presence was not temporary, and when the IDPs began to put down roots, members of the host community began to resent their presence.

Most locals did not expect the IDPs to settle in Puttalam. Fear of losing out on resources available in the district by sharing them with a larger group of people was the primary source of resentment and hostility. This situation fuelled the competition for land, livelihoods, government jobs, wages and services such as health and education. Competition to qualify for university education is widely mentioned by many respondents. The district quota available for the Puttalam district is now shared between the locals and IDPs. The host community perceives this as a disadvantage because there is greater competition for the same number of places.

At different times this competition has been the source of conflict and violence. This resentment remains in Puttalam and is made worse by political figures manipulating the grievance of groups for their own gain. It is also not helped by development projects who continue to see the IDPs as the most vulnerable group in Puttalam and are not flexible and open minded in their approach to project implementation in the district.

> "So far there haven't been many problems in the area. As you know Puttalam is the only district where all three ethnicities are living together. However there still remains a 'resource based conflict'. For example, the university entrance quota is unfair because everyone is in the same district. The number of people going to university from Puttalam has increased because the IDPs who originally belong to other districts sit for exams here with the host communtiy. It is a disadvantage for the local Puttalam people. Every one shares the same percentage."
> (KI, NGO in Puttalam)

> "If you take university education, the district quota is the same as it was in 1990's. Now locals have to compete with the IDP students. They are higher in number and also more educated than the locals. The number of locals entering the universities has gone down now. Most of them are IDPs." (KI, M)

> "If you consider our education resources it is also exploited by IDPs. Because of their arrival we have to compete with them highly to enter universities. Most of the IDPs enter the universities. The district quota is beneficial to them."
> (KI, Mosque leader)

The perspective of IDPs about the issues of sharing resources is slightly different from what locals feel. Given this present protracted displacement condition, their perception centres around the 'right to live' anywhere in the country since there is no viable solution presented by the government with regard to the 'resettlement' or 'integration' of IDPs.

> "The host community thinks that they have lost their potential jobs and government employment due to the arrival of IDPs which is unfair because we are also human beings who need to make a living. We have the right to live anywhere. If the LTTE does not allow us to live in our own place, where else we can live? Can we be expected to live as refugees forever? There should be justice for us also."
> (F, 22, Norachcholai)

Impacts of IDPs in Puttalam

Many of the respondents spoke about how areas that the IDPs settled in experienced rapid improvement since their arrival. They saw improvement chiefly in the areas of infrastructure, service provision and enterprise development. It was, however, stated that this improvement was not sufficient enough to cater to the increased population in the district.

The IDPs' investments in the area contributed to a more diverse and vibrant economic environment in the district, providing employment opportunities for both IDPs and locals. The increased competition this presented to traders however, caused some of them to view this as a negative development.

A lot of fallow land was purchased by IDPs who then began to invest in them and use them in a productive manner, increasing their economic resources.

> "After [the IDPs] came here Puttalam experienced much development because unused lands were used by them and many schools, buildings and business centres emerged here. The educational level of this district became highly developed. Obviously we could see living standards increase for these people. After they came here their situation improved from what it was before they were displaced."
> (KI, Kovil Priest)

> "It's because of the arrival of the Muslims that our village has developed; it's because of the resettlement scheme of Ashraff who was a minister with SLFP in 1996."
> (M, 72, Sirimapura)

> "You couldn't even find one shop in Palivasalthrai before - now when you travel there you can see many shops. Health services have also improved, one example being the clinic centre."
> (F, 32, Norachcholai)

IDPs- structural separations and perception of the host communities

It was observed that many IDP camps are located in isolation, away from the host communities. IDPs are also separated in terms of political representation, institutions, and local administration.

The Ministry of Resettlement handles issues linked with the IDPs. The IDPs are able to elect their own political representatives since they are registered to vote in their places of origin and not in the host district. A Special Commission for the North and East was set up under the Ministry of Resettlement to solely serve IDPs in the area. This commission is engaged in providing dry rations, electricity, water, transport, and other infrastructure such as schools and hospitals for IDPs living in the Puttalam district. There are development institutions that originated in the North only working with and assisting IDPs.

> "We have limited resources here. Now it has to be used by both communities. The host community got irritated on some occasions because all the NGOs only wanted to help the IDPs, but now some NGOs also support the host communities. They use our resources and they also have a separate ministry. For example, they use both district quotas: university entrances and government job opportunities."
> (F, 32, Norachcholai)

> "They have more power in numbers and in politics. They get food rations from the government. They have all the infrastructure facilities such as electricity and water. Though we have been living here for years, we still don't have those facilities. For the past 20-30 years we have been trying to get the deeds for our lands but still couldn't get it done. The IDPs got the deeds within 2-3 days of their arrival in the area."
> (FGD, Palavi)

There are divisions among the IDPs as well when it comes to political support. IDPs are treated differently by politicians based on where they originated from.

> "Jaffna IDPs don't have an MP for them but Mannar IDPs do. An MP should be responsible for all. This is unfair as the priority of the Mannar MP goes to the Mannar people" (KI, M)

> "The MP always gives more support to Mannar Muslims than Jaffna Muslims. He is selected as a MP by Mannar IDPs, but he is also Minister of Rehabilitation and Resettlement."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

The existence of separate institutions that provide assistance to IDPs gives people in the host community the impression that they are being discriminated against. It also underlines the separation between the IDPs and their host communities. The IDPs are seen to enjoy the best possible outcome because of their IDP status and the assistance that they receive linked with this status. Separate political representation for IDPs skews the power structure in the district and at the national level, giving people in Puttalam the impression that the IDPs have more political influence. Many people in host communities question why IDPs who have been in the district for so many years, and are integrated economically, need separate representation and separate assistance, especially when these forms of assistance are not available to other vulnerable groups in the district.

These separations and the impressions they create are at present an undercurrent in all of the conflicts this study explores.

Re-examining vulnerability

The study has explored vulnerability and different responses to vulnerability. The main study and the additional study conducted following the initial sharing workshop identified and explored other vulnerable groups in the area, the characteristics of what makes them vulnerable, some of the methods that they are using to cope with these vulnerabilities or responses by external actors with regard to these vulnerabilities.

One of the main findings of the study that came out from the 'Keeping Peace' section - that attempted to identify the important factors in maintaining peace in the area - was the people's concern that if the vulnerable groups other than the IDPs are not paid sufficient attention by the government authorities as well as the development organisations in the area, the existing 'peace' in the area could not be maintained.

> "I would like to say that the locals have been suffering many disadvantages for the last 16 years. Religion links the IDPs and locals, but when both of them go beyond this, it will change into violence. Therefore, you should solve this problem before these things happen."
> (KI, Mosque leader)

IDPs and their representatives maintain their vulnerable status, supported in part by the separate political and administrative framework that deals with them. They maintain their right of return and confirm their status as temporary residents of Puttalam. This temporary status has existed for over 18 years and is maintained because of the advantages associated with it.

Development interventions from government and non-government sources must be sensitive to the fact that while IDPs are vulnerable because of their status, there are also other vulnerable groups in Puttalam.

> "IDPs even have vehicles and deeds for their lands, but the situation of the locals has not improved. They do not have even deeds for their lands. Muslims also have political help.
> (KI, Buddhist Monk)

> "In this area being poor is a tragedy for a Muslim woman because there is little possibility of her getting married. People ask for Rs.300,000 to get married; how are we to find that amount of money? We don't even have lands. These talks about mutual understanding are all a farce because such people don't actually exist."
> (KI, NGO in Puttalam)

> "Many people in this area are living alone. Some don't have their parents. Some don't have husbands, either they are dead or they have abandoned the families. Many have the potential to engage in business but they don't have money for it. However some have developed from their own effort. One lady has started a coconut business and she is doing well. Others have started small boutiques and they are doing well. The coconut business got assistance from Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies (CHA); that lady is educated, she has some background knowledge."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

The initial sharing workshop identified several other groups in the Puttalam area, including original inhabitants from poor, female headed households, households with migrant parent/s or migratory fishermen that were thought to be vulnerable. Information about them is included

to broaden the discussion about vulnerability and to ensure that users of this research from the development sector are aware of the breadth and depth of vulnerability in Puttalam.

At the initial sharing workshop, women were identified as a particular vulnerable group that warranted special attention. The existence of female headed households created by divorce, the death or disappearance of the head of the household, were seen to be quite common by some of the respondents of the main study as well as by the participants of the initial sharing workshop. As the follow up research conducted by Vinividha organisation found, the majority of these women were Samurdhi recipients and engaged in wage labour, agricultural activities, fishing (both in the lagoon and the sea), self employment and a few managed small retail shops.

The families of migrant workers were also seen as a vulnerable group by the participants of the initial sharing workshop. Most of the migrant workers' family members that remained in Puttalam felt that it was better to make do there rather than going abroad, especially considering the social issues that attach when a family member – more acutely in the case of the mother of the family – is away from the country. Some of the returnee migrants felt they were facing more financial problems now than when they were away, but they also felt that migrating for work in the first place might not be the best possible solution for their problems.

The migratory fishermen and used to fish in the North and East before the conflict. During the ceasefire these fishermen have gone to areas like Vakarai, Kukulawa, Pulmoddai, Kallarawa, Nayaru, Vannikulam, Semmanthurai, Kunda and Sellakanni. These fishermen were of the opinion that the east is now relatively peaceful for them to engage in their fishing but the northern areas are not. They had faced economic problems during the off-season because they couldn't engage in migratory fishing. They have also been victims of attacks in the past when they had gone fishing to those areas and there had been incidents where they had had to abandon their fishing equipment and come back suffering serious financial losses.

These groups are only some of the groups that the study identified and explored. Development activities taking place in Puttalam should not ignore these groups. Successive development projects and assistance initiatives have made the mistake of defining vulnerability too narrowly and have fuelled existing social discontent. In order for this discontentment to be avoided in future or to stop it spreading more widely, the relevant authorities should be more aware of the ground situation and plan and implement their activities in a more sensitive manner.

6.   Making Peace and Keeping Peace

At the core of this study is the management of conflict by communities. The preceding sections provided a great deal of information on the conflicts, their causal factors and the way these factors interact with each other. The analysis of the conflicts also alluded to how these conflicts were settled, and how successful the various attempts at resolution have been. The following sections returns to this core area of inquiry, namely 'Making Peace and Keeping Peace', to summarise issues that have been dealt with in detail above.

'Making Peace'

All of the conflict issues were resolved by the conflicting parties with external assistance and involvement. The resolutions were always collective. None of them relied solely on an external agent or process.

The timing of the external intervention always proved to be important in achieving a positive solution. All the conflicts seemed to have a window of opportunity where the communities were not yet disenchanted with each other, and were willing to accept a compromise. This compromise solution had to be comprehensive and timely if it were to succeed. By far the most successful resolutions took place before the conflict had boiled over into general social unrest, or developed into an intractable situation between the groups involved. When this opportunity was missed the conflict moved beyond the stage where it could be resolved using a single focused intervention. The RDF for example identified the potential conflict in Sirimapura over space for the cemetery and intervened before the conflict erupted. The RDF intervened early enough, and decisively enough to prevent the conflict from escalating. In contrast the new fishing jetty provided for the Serakuliya Fishermen in Vanathalvillu was less successful at minimizing the conflict in the area. The fishermen were not satisfied with the jetty the government provided and the conflict remains partially resolved.

When the conflict was based on the legal ownership of land the parties sought redress from the formal justice system. The parties involved in the land dispute in Palavi, for example, took the case to court seeking justice, knowing that this dispute could not be resolved by existing local structures such as peace committees and religious leaders because they too were polarized by the dispute.

In the case of conflicts over common property, those involved would approach development institutions for a solution. Women's groups in Noraicholai approached ISRC when they had a problem with sharing the clinic which was used by the host community before the arrival of IDPs.

When government structures and actors became involved in dispute resolution it was vital that the conflicting parties saw their interventions as being unbiased. The experiences of the communities in Vanathavillu, Udappu and Nagavillu reflects the fact that the success of the resolution depends on all parties being satisfied about the fairness of the solution.

Different actors used different methods and approaches to deal with the conflict issues in Puttalam. Among the most successful were the peace committees and individuals who mediated in these disputes. They were widely perceived as neutral and were able to initiate discussions among the conflict parties and act as arbiters and mediators. These interventions most often resulted in verbal agreements. They were not legally binding but were effective because they were based on trust and respect between the parties, established through discussions and personal mediation.

In contrast the conflicts that go through the formal justice system and formal legal processes were resolved with a legal ruling enforced by the police and other authorities. This method has proved to be less successful especially in the case of the Land dispute. The conflicting party which feels wronged by the verdict simply takes the case to a higher court. As a result of a series of appeals and delays in the justice system, this conflict remains unresolved.

Peace committees

Peace committees were formed in response to disputes. The committees were not permanent. Instead they were dissolved after the conflict was resolved, and reinstituted if another need arose.

> "There are peace committees operating in the area which includes representatives from all Sinhalese, Muslim and Tamil communities, including the IDPs. This committee consists of 45 members and 6-7 officers. The core work of the committee is to bring all ethnic groups together."
> (KI, F, Nagavillu)

Peace committees were created in response to different disputes and as a result functioned on many different levels. Community level peace committees consisted of local religious leaders, community leaders and representatives of development institutions working in the area. These committees deal with local level disputes.

There is a higher level peace committee in the district which is not seen to function very well. The district/regional level peace committee in Puttalam consists of important religious leaders such as a Buddhist monk, a Christian priest, the Mosque leader, a Hindu priest and the District Secretary. The understanding and relationships among the religious leaders is perceived to be the reason for the success of the committee. The District Secretary acts as the president of the committee. Divisional Secretaries and representatives from key development institutions also take part in the committee by invitation.

> "Peace committees are not functioning these days because they get together when an incident has taken place. The GA is the president of that committee."

> "The District peace committee wasn't properly involved in this issue. Today that IDP person is going to Colombo to meet a Minister to discuss this issue. We plan to talk about that with a Buddhist monk from the area. He went to India and after he comes here we plan to meet him again regarding this issue."
> (KI, Mosque leader)

Members of this higher level peace committee use religious and cultural events as an opportunity for them to meet and discuss issues.

> "There is a strong relationship among religious leaders in this area. As religious leaders we all participate in every special festival. Religious leaders meet often in these festivals. If we do not meet often, intermediaries try to create conflicts among us. Their efforts do not succeed because we meet and discuss things together. Once, someone lied about me to the Buddhist monk. However the monk discussed this with me and he found out what the truth was."
> (KI, Church priest)

It was apparent that the trust and respect that the religious leaders had for each other was as important as the trust and respect that the members of the community expressed towards their religious leaders.

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Peace committees and religious leaders seem to be more easily accessible to parties with disputes compared to other redress mechanisms. These committees also functioned as an initial point of contact and a link to other institutions. Community leaders appointed in the IDP camps, for example, bring the issues arising in those camps to the notice of the religious leaders or peace committees.

> "Peace committee people helped us in many ways like linking us with lawyers, ministers, some people to consult about this issues etc."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

Religious leaders

Individual religious leaders also play a role in dispute resolution in their own right. Representatives of Buddhist Temple trustee boards Mosque trustee boards, Hindu temple trustee boards and Church committees have all been approached at the early stages of disputes. They meet with some success in resolving disputes that involve members of their own faith. These leaders play an important role in preventing further escalation of the dispute. These leaders are the first point of contact for disputants from their faith and deal with conflicts at a very early stage.

> "When a problem comes up, first we go to the mosque and the Mosque Trustee Board tries to solve the problem. Otherwise we would go to the police, but up until now we didn't have the experience of going to the police."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

> "Our community issues are dealt with by the mosque. The mosque plays a main role in the Muslim community. We can't deny that; all would agree with this. As far as I know, one or two issues were solved by the police, but lots of events have been solved by the Mosque Trustee Board."
> (KI, M, Nagavillu)

Individuals of influence

Sometimes individuals who have influence within the communities were able to intervene in conflicts directly and move the parties towards resolution. This role can be either positive or negative depending on their personal biases and agendas. Religious leaders, community leaders, CBO leaders, and in some instances, politicians can also act as individuals of influence.

One community leader, for example, is a key influential individual in the Sirimapura community who has gained respect from other ethnicities despite being from the local Sinhalese community. Both the Sinhalese and Muslims who live in Sirimapura approach him to resolve problems and disputes.

> "There was an increase in the problem of alcohol two years ago as a result of unemployment. As employment opportunities are few, youngsters tend to become addicted to alcohol. .... (The community leader) gave them employment opportunities outside the village and solved the problem."
> (M, 28, Sirimapura)

> "People who are here at the moment are all very peaceful. If there is a problem we would go to (The community leader) and he would try to solve it. There's also the GS and the police."
> (M, 70, Sirimapura)

These individuals often have a good track record of dealing with disputes in a just manner. Their ability to handle contentious situations however is based on trust. If one of the conflicting parties does not trust them, or thinks they are biased, their influence over the conflict is limited.

Politicians

Politicians were seen as powerful individuals who would manipulate conflict for their own political gain, irrespective of how it was caused and who was involved. The wide ranging perception that these actors are biased, and that they would seek to provide a solution that was advantageous to their supporters makes their role in conflict resolution contentious and controversial. People with a certain ethnic or religious identity, or belonging to a certain political party would approach the politician who they might think favour them or who they have elected to represent them at the local or national level. For example, IDPs from the north prefer approaching a Minister who is also from the North rather than one who represents the host community.

The view of the respondents with regard to the suitability of involvement of politicians in conflict resolution varied widely. Some were of the view that they should get involved because they have a responsibility towards their constituents as their political representatives. Others thought that getting involved would not be productive if they acted according to political, ethnic or group interest. Many felt that this type of engagement would preclude independent judgment and fair resolution.

Many of the communities believed that politicians can play a larger, more constructive role in resolving conflicts than they do at present. There are instances where politicians have intervened in a conflict sensitive manner in serving IDPs and instances like these should be adopted more widely in order to minimize potential conflicts.

> "In the past most people were opposed to establishing an IDP camp here. They even beat up the owner of this land. Then Minister Ashraff promised to develop infrastructure facilities in the Sinhalese areas also and was able to get the camp established here. If not, we might not have had electricity yet."
> (M, 62, Sirimapura)

Legal Institutions

The resolution provided by the courts and the police were perceived as being biased and ineffective. Police intervention in the form of temporary road barriers and checkpoints were provided as an immediate response to conflicts that were escalating into widespread social disturbance. This kind of intervention was perceived by the public as being temporary and not addressing root causes of the problem. Many respondents also saw the police as being biased. Even decisions of the court are perceived as partial towards certain identity groups and those with more power.

> "There are some problems regarding the police here. Poor, helpless people are not able to get services from the police. Further all the benefits are given to people who have connections with politicians. Poor, helpless people do not have any help."
> (KI, Church priest)

Formal institutions will continue to be ineffective unless they are able to establish an independent identity and maintain the trust of the general public.

Administrative Officers

In many instances, the government administrative officers such as the District Secretary, Divisional Secretary and *Grama Sevaka* (GS) also provided solutions when the parties are not willing to come to a settlement. For example, the dispute over fishing land between three parties was resolved by the Government Agent (GA) allocating land to the different parties involved. They resolve conflicts by providing alternatives, addressing the source of the dispute.

"When a small problem emerges, it is solved with the involvement of *Grama Niladhari.* Some cattle come from outside and enter our lands, destroying our cultivation. Mostly these cattle come from the villages where we get water. When we tie up these cattle in our lands, those people say that they would not give water for us. Even the Samurdhi Society gets involved in solving these problems. The *govi niyamaka* (Agriculture Research and Production officers) helps us to get compensation for crop losses." (F, 46, Sirimapura)

There are instances when the interventions and decisions of government administrative officers are not successful, when one party prevents them. In this kind of situation, the parties look to different individuals or institutions for justice.

> "They didn't allow the Elavankulam people to engage in fishing even after the GA had given a final solution."
> (KI, M, Vanathavillu)

Development Institutions

Development institutions intervened in disputes by providing additional resources or common property.

> "They provided this cemetery with the help of USAID. Before that it was common to all ethnic groups. Now it has been divided into three and a fence has been constructed. It is a peace building project."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

Informal systems such as the peace committees, religious leaders and individuals of influence were widely seen to be more accessible than formal legal mechanisms. The experiences of these informal actors provide lessons about how conflicts can be dealt with within local communities by people they trust and respect.

Keeping Peace

This section looks at the challenges faced by communities and local organisations as they attempt to sustain these solutions, manage conflicts and maintain peace over time.

Complexity and intractability

The unwillingness of communities to compromise and reach a potential solution is a main factor that seems to prevent making peace. The perception that they must wait for a perfect solution, and that they should not compromise or adjust in order to reach a solution that is acceptable to others was apparent in some of the study interviews. This attitude of intractability is a barrier preventing long term resolution of conflict.

The divisions between communities with distinct identities become more prominent when a conflict arises between them. Although the communities have co-existed in the past in relative peace they seem to be able to put aside their commonalities and dwell on their differences

when there is a dispute. The enduring example of this is the constant tension between IDPs and members of the host community.

Arriving at sustainable solutions between these parties, or focusing on developing an understanding of their commonalities remains a challenging task.

> "It is not revenge because before this problem came up we didn't have any issues with them. We had smooth relationships. They might be thinking of this as an issue regarding reputation. That's why they are all against us."
> (KI. M, Udappu)

> "We will be pleased if this case resolves quickly. Earlier we tried to resolve it without going to court, but they did not agree to it."
> (KI, M, Palavi)

Another important issue observed in some of the incidents was the difficulty that arose in implementing or accepting the decisions passed by a neutral party to the dispute. The resolution failed when one or both of the parties refused to accept the recommended solution.

> "They didn't allow Elavankulam people to engage in fishing even after the GA gave a final solution."
> (KI, M, Vanathavillu)

Some of the incidents are so complicated in nature that they get worse, rather than reach a resolution. The involvement of outsiders and the harassment and violence caused as part of the conflict by one party to the other are some of the factors that prevent 'making peace'. The interference of third parties, not as intermediaries in solving the dispute, but as persons supporting the parties in dispute, further complicates the original problem and adds layers that prevent a simple or direct solution.

> "Once a group of people from Veerapura came and told us not to let Muslims stay in our village. They came and harassed them. They imprisoned three people in a house, barred the door and set fire to the house. They had some water inside the house and managed to keep the fire under control with that. They were screaming for help but nobody dared go there because of the warnings that we received earlier."
> (M, 70, Srimapura)

External Factors

Deteriorating political situation and renewed conflict

The breakdown of the Ceasefire Agreement and the renewed conflict in the North and East prevents the IDPs from returning to their places of origin.This plays into the hands of those who seek to maintain the conflict between the IDPs and the host communities. The renewed restrictions preventing IDP return continues to maintain a level of competition between them and groups in the host community for development assistance and aid, in turn maintaining the root causes of conflict in Puttalam.

> "Some of us went to Jaffna after the CFA and came back the next year due to the insecure situation in our own places. A few families live in Jaffna even now, but they are also trying to come down after this war."
> (M, 60, Sirimapura)

"The IDPs are observed in a different way by host communities because of resource competition."
(M, 60, Srimapura)

"If the government solved this ethnic problem we will return to Jaffna."
(KI, M, Palavi)

Maintaining Peace over time

The study found that disputes and violence do take place in Puttalam despite the appearance externally that it is a peaceful district. The existence of conflict has also led to the creation of different local mechanisms for dealing with conflict and maintaining a relative peace. Despite the challenges outlined above, their relative success can be built on.

What is vital is that external institutions recognize the fragility of this environment and do not act in ways that make the situation worse. The awareness that the competition for economic resources is driving competition, requires that institutions seeking to implement projects in the district do so in a manner that would distribute the resources equally among the many communities and groups that are vulnerable.

Local and international institutions working in Puttalam are now starting to adapt a conflict sensitive approach in their development projects. Some development institutions working in the area for the welfare of IDPs have now decided to include a proportion of local people in their projects. This has reduced potential conflicts between the host community and IDPs.

> "CARE International is going to introduce a new water supply project which includes 175 families in this area. They are now working in a conflict sensitive way to avoid conflicts between IDPs and the host community. They are actually following the 'Do No Harm' concept. Now all their projects include 25% of the host community.
> (KI, NGO Consortium)

Best practices such as providing services to locals while serving the IDPs, may reduce tensions in the area in future. Some politicians adopted ways to avoid conflict between communities in development related activities. Several respondents from the host community believe that they have access to certain facilities because of the IDPs.

> "Our villagers didn't like the IDPs coming and settling down here but then Minister Ashraff called a meeting with us and discussed the matter and then we agreed to let them stay. He said that it doesn't matter whether people are Muslim, Sinhala or Tamil - that everybody would be treated equally. He said that he'll also give us Rs.32,500 each. A lot of people built their houses with that money."
> (M, 70, Sirimapura)

> "In the past most of the people opposed establishing an IDP settlement camp here. They even harassed the owner of this land. Then Minister Ashraff promised to develop infrastructure facilities in the Sinhalese area and was also able to establish the camp here. If not we might not have had electricity yet."
> (M, 62, Sirimapura)

7. Conclusions

The Puttalam area was selected for the study, on the suggestion by the head of Vinivida, a development network in the area, based on the observation that despite the presence of potential conflict triggers, Puttalam has enjoyed a degree of peace in the past. In order to maintain peace in the area, actors and parties in the area have used local knowledge and existing mechanisms and structures.

The aim of this study was to explore the community level conflict management knowledge in the Puttalam area that the various actors have used to diffuse the tensions in the area and maintain 'peace'. It has led to a deeper understanding of the structures that have grown out of the conflict experiences of different communities, which have proven success and continued community acceptance and respect.

Migration in Puttalam is not a recent phenomenon. Although it is true that the biggest influx of people in to the area happened in 1990 from Jaffna and Mannar, the figures show that people have migrated to the area from Kurunagala and Gampaha districts in greater numbers than from either Mannar or Jaffna before the 1990s. They seem to have integrated into the district much better while the conflict related migrants continue to be seen as outsiders in the district. Most respondents don't even seem to have noticed these larger migrations, but continue to speak of the impact of IDPs.

Poverty in Puttalam has followed the general increasing and decreasing poverty trends in the country over the past 15 years. The IDPs arrived in Puttalam in 1990 and the poverty level has increased from 22% in 1990 to 31% in 1995/6. The situation was stagnant until 2002 and remained at 31%. However the most recent poverty figures (2006) show a dramatic change with the head-count index decreasing to 13%. While the negative change in 1995 may be attributed to the arrival of the IDPs the most recent positive changes could also be attributed in part to the assistance they received and their investments into the economy of the district.

Situated in the dry zone, without the presence of the main characteristic of the other parts of the dry zone of irrigated agriculture, Puttalam has a relatively low natural resource base and is limited in livelihood options. With the influx of about 60,000 IDPs into the area, a competition for the available natural resources, services and livelihood options was created. All the conflict lines/incidents that the study identified were based on this competition either within the host communities or between the IDP and the host communities. Some of the cross cutting issues that ran through these incidents were issues based on identity (for example, between host/IDP, IDP/IDP, host/host); ownership and user rights of land; issues related to service provision (for example, health); access to livelihood (for example, undercutting of the wage market); and political power of the actors that were involved with the conflict incidents.

There are about 40-50 development institutions working in the district. Local government funding and assistance from the central government level, through the ministers that represent the area, also feature in the development work in Puttalam. The majority of the development work in Puttalam takes place in the areas where the IDPs are located. However there are other vulnerable groups in Puttalam apart from the IDPs as identified by the study including the chronic poor, female headed households and the migratory fishermen, and there are tensions and undercurrents present in the area based on the perceived bias, towards the IDPs. If these other vulnerable groups continue to be given less attention by those engaging in development activities, these tensions might escalate into visible and violent conflict. During the time period the study was conducted, some of the organisations had already realised this prospect and have incorporated the concern into their planning and beneficiary selection. Other organisations, both government and non-governmental, should also mainstream this issue into their strategic planning.

Mechanisms used for resolution of these conflicts and the actors involved in the process vary according to the nature and intensity of the conflict incident. The same resolution structure cannot be applied to all conflict incidents. CBOs and local NGOs, individuals of influence (such as religious leaders, community leaders, politicians, local government officers, local administration officers and peace committees) were all involved in conflict resolution processes. They have used different mechanisms in trying to resolve conflicts providing the necessary platform for discussion for the conflicting parties, providing advice and guidance towards alternative resolution, or providing the resource or service that was competed for. These local structures have achieved a great deal despite their rather ad hoc and reactive nature. In many ways it is their ability to respond quickly and effectively through people whom the community already has a great deal of trust and respect, which is the basis of their success.

As previous research conducted by CEPA in Mannar has found, communities prefer to access the local structures with their disputes or conflicts (Thalayasingam 2006). The current study supports this and shows that the local actors and structures have been successful to a large extent in resolving or managing the conflict incidents or disputes that are arising in the area. As the earlier study in Mannar suggested, these institutions need to be given the necessary support and the links among these committees as well as with the local government offices and the police needs to be strengthened. It is imperative that external institutions that seek to contribute to conflict resolution and peace promotion in Puttalam, work with and through these established structures, rather than supplanting them or creating parallels.

Some of the conflicts have gone beyond local level mechanisms and turned to the state justice system, in situations where one or more parties have not been satisfied with the local level resolution mechanism or where the local level mechanism has not been successful in resolving the incident, due to the complexity of the conflict incident. The complex nature of conflict incidents caused by the involvement of several parties with varying backgrounds and holding varying power levels (for example, politicians) and also the nature of the issue that the conflict issue is based on has made the resolution process prolonged and tedious for some of the conflict incidents.

IDPs have been present in the area for almost 18 years and some integration has occurred over time. Despite certain economic and social links developing between the IDPs and the hosts there continues to be a sense of separation between these groups. Government and non-governmental organizations that support this district need to be aware of this enduring sense of separation. This will continue to exist as long as IDPs retain their status as displaced and temporary residents in Puttalam. In the absence of a stable environment that allows those that wish to return the chance to do so, it is important that these divisions are not exacerbated, and their potential to cause conflict in the district acknowledged and dealt with in a just and equitable manner.

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The study examines the development and resolution of six conflict incidents in ethnically mixed Divisional Secretariat divisions in Puttalam, selected for their diversity, their stages of resolution, and the parties involved.

The study examines the dual impact of the sudden influx of IDPs – the dominant view in the host community that this influx created the foundation for conflict by increasing the competition for resources in the area, and the contribution made by the IDPs towards the local economy. There is further examination of other issues which added to the complexity of the conflicts and often made their resolution more tenuous and difficult. These included factors such as identity, land, and political power. There is also detailed discussion of the local socio-economic situation.

The study analyses various local mechanisms for dispute resolution including administrative structures, legal institutions, development institutions, religious leaders and organisations and Peace Committees examining their impact and effectiveness in dealing with local conflicts.

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