Moving Out of Poverty in Conflict - Affected Areas in Sri Lanka

August 2006

29, Gregory’s Road, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka
Email: info@cepa.lk, Tel: 9411 2676955-8, Fax: 9411 2676959, Web: www.cepa.lk
*Disclaimer: While the work was carried out as part of a larger 15-country study funded by the World Bank, the views expressed in this report are not necessarily endorsed by the World Bank.

This study was conducted by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) on behalf of the Moving Out of Poverty study.
1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................ 7
   1.1 Report Structure ................................................................................................................................. 8
   1.2 Changing Conflict Environment: A History of the Study ................................................................... 8
   1.3 Methodology ....................................................................................................................................... 9
      1.3.1 Sampling ...................................................................................................................................... 9
      First Stage (Choosing the Conflicts and Regions) ............................................................................. 10
      Second Stage (Choosing Districts) ....................................................................................................... 10
      Third Stage (choosing Divisional Secretariat Divisions) ...................................................................... 11
      Fourth Stage (choosing villages/communities) .................................................................................. 11
      Final Sample ....................................................................................................................................... 11
      1.3.2 Sample Change .......................................................................................................................... 12
      1.3.3 Tools for Data Collection and Analysis ...................................................................................... 13
   1.4 Issues and Hypotheses raised by the Literature Review and the National Workshop ....................... 13
      1.4.1 Livelihoods/Economic Trends ....................................................................................................... 13
      1.4.2 Market Restrictions ........................................................................................................................ 14
      1.4.3 Hope for Peace ............................................................................................................................. 14
      1.4.4 Migration ..................................................................................................................................... 15
      1.4.5 Investment Drought .................................................................................................................... 15
      1.4.6 Conflict “Winners” ........................................................................................................................ 15

2. CONFLICT ............................................................................................................................................. 17
   2.1 The Conflict Environment .................................................................................................................. 18
      2.1.1 Conflict in the North and East ..................................................................................................... 18
      2.1.2 Conflict in the South ................................................................................................................... 19
   2.2 Impacts of Conflict on Livelihoods .................................................................................................... 20
      2.2.1 South ......................................................................................................................................... 20
      2.2.3 North and East .......................................................................................................................... 21
   2.3 Threats to Traditional Livelihoods .................................................................................................... 21
   2.4 Social Identity and Conflict .............................................................................................................. 23
   2.5 Gender ............................................................................................................................................... 24

3. MOVEMENT .......................................................................................................................................... 30
   3.1 Movement at the Level of the Community ......................................................................................... 34
THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MONEY HAVE POWER. (FGD, L, M, ALLEWALA WEST)........ 87

4.3 Inequality ...................................................................................................................... 88
4.4 Democracy ...................................................................................................................... 92
4.4.1 Disillusionment with Politics.................................................................................... 94

MOST YOUTH DON'T JOIN IN POLITICS. SOME DO. (FGD, YOUTH, M, JAFFNA,
THIRUNELVELI) ................................................................................................................. 95

5. ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH ................................................................................................. 96

FACTORS THAT GUIDED YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE ................................................................................................................. 96

THERE ARE VERY FEW TRAINING WORKSHOPS (FGD, Y, F, MATARA, ALLEWALA WEST)................................................................................................................. 98

OBSTACLES FACING YOUTH ................................................................................................. 99

6. LOOKING BEYOND THE TOOLS- PARTICULARITIES OF MOVING OUT OF POVERTY 101

IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS IN SRI LANKA ................................................................................................. 101

6.1 Single Changes............................................................................................................. 101
6.2 The Conflict Cycle..................................................................................................... 103
6.3 Impact of External Institutions.................................................................................. 105

WORLD BANK IN KOLUMBUTHURAI AND THIRUNELVELI.............................................. 106

6.4 Changing Social Structures and Social Relationships................................................. 107
6.5 Threats to Traditional Livelihoods............................................................................. 108
6.6 Power and Agency....................................................................................................... 108
6.7 Conflict Made Personal............................................................................................. 109
6.8 Creating Helplessness - Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Movement............................. 110
6.9 Migration - A Way Out?............................................................................................. 111
6.10 Economic and Political Structures............................................................................. 111
6.11 Inflation..................................................................................................................... 112
6.12 Education.................................................................................................................... 112

7. CONCLUSION.................................................................................................................... 113
### Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict TL</td>
<td>Conflict Time Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Divisional Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOSL</td>
<td>Government of Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td>Grama Sevaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Technical Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPKF</td>
<td>Indian Peace Keeping Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVP</td>
<td>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOL</td>
<td>Ladder of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI</td>
<td>Key Informant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NECORD</td>
<td>North East Community Restoration and Development Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>People’s Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDS</td>
<td>Rural Development Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFL</td>
<td>Shelter For Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLMM</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>Tamil National Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRDS</td>
<td>Women’s Rural Development Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WACCO</td>
<td>Women and Child Care Organization, a project of Action Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOA</td>
<td>Zooid Oust Azië (Dutch refugee care NGO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

The “Moving out of Poverty in Conflict Affected Areas” study seeks to understand why some people have moved out of poverty, some people have remained trapped in poverty, some have maintained their wealth, and some have fallen into poverty within the historical context of the two main conflicts in Sri Lanka: the conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) from 1987 to 1989, and the conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which continues today.

Sri Lanka has experienced conflict at many different levels. These conflicts have affected the population’s ability to move out of poverty in different ways—some of which will not be illustrated by the conflicts chosen for this study. The conflicts for this study were chosen to capture maximum possible variance in conflict characteristics, historical origins and time periods. The “North and East,” where there was conflict 15 years ago (and earlier) and where there is still conflict today, and the “South,” where there was conflict 15 years ago which no longer exists.

The study seeks to “enhance the understanding of the interactions and sequencing of factors that unleash poor people’s economic potential and support broad based transitions out of poverty,” and to examine how conflict influences this transition. (World Bank 2005)

The study will focus on several key areas, including:

- How and why do some men and women move out of poverty while others are able to maintain their wealth, some fall and some remain trapped? What wealth maintenance strategies do people use?

- Do people experience mobility differently under the context of fast or slow economic growth? Does the extent of global integration affect people’s mobility?

- Do people experience mobility differently under different levels of conflict affectedness?

- Are there gender differences?

- Do networks and social identity matter in men’s and women’s upward climbs?

- Do the quality of local governance, “depth” of democracy, and freedom make a difference?

It is important to note that this is not a study on poverty, but a study on mobility and the factors that influence mobility (in the context of different levels of conflict affectedness)
1.1 **Report Structure**

The first chapter explains the lines of inquiry the study will pursue. This is followed by a section that highlights how the conflict environment was changing even as the study was being carried out; it includes an outline of the sample selection, including how it had to be altered because of the changing security situation in the conflict areas. The chapter also contains a section introducing the tools that were used for data collection.

We also use the introduction to set out some of the key issues that emerged from a literature review and from a national workshop involving local government representatives from the study districts. These issues provided the initial reference points for the study. They form the backdrop of all further inquiry into movement and conflict affectedness.

The second chapter explores conflict as the first of the study’s main themes. It introduces the two main conflict lines in Sri Lanka and explains how the conflicts interact with other issues that are central to the study.

The following chapter explores the second central theme of the study: movement at the community and individual levels. At the community level, ideas about movement are expressed and analysed in comparison with the conflict characteristics of each community. At an individual level, movement is discussed on the basis of the broad factors that underpin it. This section presents combinations of factors that have contributed to the movement status of the people that contributed to the study.

These chapters are followed by two specialised chapters, one that looks at the perceptions of freedom, power, inequality, and democracy that have been generated by the study, and the other on the aspirations of youth. We have also included a chapter that goes beyond the tools used in the study, and which analyses the particular characteristics of moving out of poverty in conflict affected areas in Sri Lanka. We end with an attempt to make some actionable recommendations.

**Quotes and Narratives**

Quotes are used extensively in this report. They are referenced with the type of tool used to gather the data, the individuals’ or groups’ gender (if applicable), and the study site. The study team has consciously attempted to frame the narratives provided by the study communities into the analytical categories proposed by the methodology, but it has also tried, as much as possible, to retain the communities’ own words (in translation) and views. As such, the team has interpreted and categorized these narratives where necessary, but for the most part has allowed the people to speak for themselves.

1.2 **Changing Conflict Environment: A History of the Study**

The field research for the study began on September 1, 2005, a time when the country was experiencing relative peace. The ceasefire between the Government of Sri Lanka and
the LTTE had held for more than 3 years. Yet, both sides still committed sporadic acts of violence and there were frequent violations of the ceasefire. The fragile no-war-no-peace situation significantly affected communities in the North and East. It allowed free movement of goods and persons to formerly restricted areas of the country. It prompted the return of many displaced persons from within the country and outside. The hope that this situation would prevail and not deteriorate back into full-scale war was expressed by all communities in the North and East that participated in the study. In many ways, this hope belied the fact that the political situation was growing increasingly restive and the fragile peace was becoming ever more fragile.

The ceasefire agreement was negotiated by the Government of Sri Lanka, with Norway’s facilitation, when the United National Party (UNP) was in office. Popular opinion was mobilised against the agreement and the conduct of peace negotiations, on the basis that it was too conciliatory towards the LTTE, during the election campaign of a coalition between the PA (formerly in opposition) and the JVP. The coalition came into power following the general election in April 2004 on what was widely perceived to be a harder, more nationalist line on the peace process. The peace negotiations stalled as a result. The situation was exacerbated by the presidential campaign of Mahinda Rajapakse, the PA candidate, preceding the presidential elections in November 2005. Rajapakse’s campaign ran strongly along nationalist lines and promised a re-examination of the terms of the ceasefire agreement. Rajapakse was elected president, and since he came into office, there has been a significant increase in overt military confrontations between LTTE, government forces, and emerging paramilitary groups—notably, the Karuna faction operating mainly in the East, led by Colonel Karuna. This group broke away from the LTTE in March 2004 and has since allegedly been responsible for numerous attacks against it.

The general election took place before the study began. The resulting sense of insecurity coloured the views of all of the communities that contributed to the study in the North and East. The presidential election took place halfway through the study, after five field sites had been completed. It changed the atmosphere in the North and East, making the communities increasingly uneasy. Violence increased in many parts of the country. In the North and East, renewed clashes between the army and the LTTE caused the reversal of many of the changes that the ceasefire had enabled. Some of the study results reflect this growing sense of unease. Many of the factors that underpin movement in the North and East were affected by this continuing conflict.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Sampling
The study used a multi-level sampling technique. The sampling was based on growth and conflict affectedness. Because the characteristics of the conflicts required that different indicators be used to capture intensity and degrees of affectedness, the sampling was done separately for each conflict area.
First Stage (Choosing the Conflicts and Regions)
The initial stage of sample selection was based on the recommendation that the study examine areas that have experienced maximum variance of conflict. Based on this rationale, Sri Lanka was divided into two main regions. First, the South, which had experienced violent conflict 15 years ago, and second, the North and East, which also experienced conflict 15 years ago (and even earlier), but which is still experiencing conflict today. This artificial distinction was made in order to capture the two types of conflict mentioned, as well as the different conflict contexts. The base recall period of 15 years was chosen for two reasons: to capture the period before the end of the conflict in the South and to address the issue of data availability in the North and East.

Second Stage (Choosing Districts)
Because this study aimed to examine the processes by which people affected by conflict move out of poverty, in choosing districts both conflict and growth indicators were used to arrive at areas that showed the maximum variation of conflict affectedness and growth for both selected regions.

Given that the nature, duration, and magnitude of the two conflicts identified for this study are different, the indicators for the magnitude of conflict were different for the regions. In the North and East, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) originating from each district was the proxy indicator for the magnitude of conflict in the region. (Ministry of RRR 2002)

In the South, the conflict was not a formal mass-scale war involving tactics such as aerial bombardment or confrontations between two armies in pitched battles and collateral damage to homes and other infrastructure. It did not cause large-scale dislocation of people, and, therefore, the number of IDPs was not an appropriate proxy for the magnitude of conflict in the South. Accordingly, the scale of the conflict in each district was determined by the number of reported killings there. (International Alert 1989)

In the absence of district level panel data on real wages, a proxy indicator was used to identify high and low growth districts in both regions. The lack of up-to-date information about the North and East further restricted the choice of indicators for measuring growth. Accordingly, changes in the unemployment rate, for which some data is available for the North and East, was chosen as the proxy indicator for growth. The assumption behind choosing this indicator is that a greater increase in unemployment could reveal lower growth in the district.

All the districts in the two regions were first identified and sorted as High Conflict or Low Conflict based on the appropriate conflict indicator discussed above. Within these two categories, the districts were identified as High Growth and Low Growth on the basis of the unemployment indicator also discussed above. The district that best represented the combination of each particular category was chosen at this stage of the sampling.
South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Conflict</th>
<th>Low Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(number of reported killings)</td>
<td>(change in unemployment rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Growth</td>
<td>Low Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Hambantota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gampaha</td>
<td>Ratnapura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North and East

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Conflict</th>
<th>Low Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(number of IDPs originating from each district)</td>
<td>(change in unemployment rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Growth</td>
<td>Low Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Mullaitivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third Stage (choosing Divisional Secretariat Divisions)
The third stage of sampling involved choosing a Divisional Secretariat (DS) division from each of the selected districts in the two regions. The DS divisions were chosen on the basis of their conflict affectedness, using the same indicator that was used at the district level. At this stage, too, the DS divisions were chosen to ensure the maximum possible variation in terms of conflict affectedness.

In this manner, a total of 8 divisional secretariats (one in each district and 4 in each region) were chosen for the study.

Fourth Stage (choosing villages/communities)
The fourth and final stage involved selecting villages for the study. Villages or communities were chosen by continuing the theme of conflict affectedness through which the DS division was selected. Therefore, in High Conflict DS divisions, a High Conflict village was chosen. As data for both conflict indicators used in this sampling framework are not currently available at the village and community levels, the identification of conflict affected villages and communities took place with the assistance of the Divisional Secretary and other key local informants.

Final Sample
The study is designed to capture the maximum variance of conflict affectedness over a 15-year period. In keeping with this rationale, it was determined that the low conflict sites in the South would not provide sufficient information on conflict affectedness over the recall period. The sample was then adjusted to include 2 sites from each district in the North and East and 1 site each from the high conflict districts in the South. The final sample of 10 sites is given below.
### Sites Sampling Rationale Districts Proposed sites Completed sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Sampling Rationale</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Proposed sites</th>
<th>Completed sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>High Conflict/High growth</td>
<td>Jaffna (Tamil)</td>
<td>Kolumbuthurai Kottai Pommaveli Thirunelveli Pannarvannai Kondavil</td>
<td>Kolumbuthurai (DS) Kolumbuthurai J62 GN division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Conflict/Low Growth</td>
<td>Mullaitivu (Tamil)</td>
<td>Mullaitivu town Ottusyddan Maanthai east Thunukkai Puthukkudiyiruppu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Low Conflict/Low Growth</td>
<td>Trincomalee (Muslim)</td>
<td>Mahamar Poovarasanththeevu Kochchikodithivu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Conflict/High Growth</td>
<td>Ampara (Sinhala)</td>
<td>Uhana Lahugala Mahaoya</td>
<td>Uhana (DS) Gonagala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Conflict/Low Growth</td>
<td>Ampara (Muslim)</td>
<td>Sammanthurai Akkaraitpattu Eragama Addalachenai</td>
<td>Sammanthurai (DS) Block J west--2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>High Conflict/High growth</td>
<td>Matara (Sinhala)</td>
<td>Allewala west Allewala east Narawelpita east</td>
<td>Allewala west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Conflict/Low Growth</td>
<td>Hambantota (Sinhala)</td>
<td>weerakaetiya Walasmulla Oorubokka</td>
<td>Weerakaetiya (DS) Gonadeniya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1.3.2 Sample Change

In the original sample, Mullaitivu was selected as the district with low growth and high conflict affectedness in the North and East. The team had difficulties getting permission to work there because it is under the control of the LTTE. The team also felt that even if tacit permission was obtained, the community would not be free to speak and the information may not be accurate, and as a result concluded that it was not advisable to proceed with the 2 sites in Mullaitivu. Instead, it was proposed that Mannar district be allowed into the sample, because it fit within the same growth criteria as Mullaitivu (based on the unemployment indicator). Mannar’s conflict affectedness was perceived to be the same as Mullaitivu (based on key informant perceptions), but the indicator used for the North and East (the number of IDPs originating from each district) does not reflect the extent of Mannar’s conflict affectedness. This district experienced high levels of displacement, but because of its geographical position, many of them sought refuge in southern...
India (and are thus classed as refugees, not IDPs). Despite this particular conflict affectedness, it is undoubtedly a high conflict area and was thought to fit the criteria for site selection. Mannar therefore replaced Mullaitivu in the final sample.

1.3.3 Tools for Data Collection and Analysis.
The study used a number of qualitative tools developed as part of the wider Moving out of Poverty Study and adapted them for the Sri Lankan context. These included:

- Focus group discussions with key informants and members of the community to establish a conflict timeline, as well as a timeline of important events in the communities’ history (dating from the 15-year recall period established for the Sri Lanka study).

- Focus group discussions using a qualitative tool known as the “ladder of life,” with a group of men and a group of women from each community.

- Focus group discussions on livelihoods, power, freedom, and democracy conducted with a group of men and a group of women in the community.

- Focus group discussions on the aspirations of youth conducted with a group of male youth and a group of female youth within the community.

- Individual, household interviews with different categories of persons identified by the community as movers, fallers, chronic rich and chronic poor.

The analysis used N6 qualitative data analysis software to organise the data. Community Synthesis Reports were prepared for each individual community. This National Synthesis Report brings together the findings from each community in the study.

1.4 Issues and Hypotheses raised by the Literature Review and the National Workshop
The initial literature review and the ideas expressed by key district level informants at the national workshop helped shape the study, providing parameters for exploring movement within the context of conflict affectedness. The review and the workshop raised many issues. Some of these were confirmed by the primary research. Others emerged in different forms following the field studies. They provide the national context and background for the issues that were explored in greater detail in the study. Some of these ideas are presented below.

1.4.1 Livelihoods/Economic Trends
“The reestablishment of farming as a livelihood was a slow process due to a combination of factors, including efforts needed to redevelop farmland and irrigation systems [and] diverse and often conflicting claims about land. In many areas commercial agriculture has given way to subsistence agriculture due to marketing problems, insufficiency of capital, infrastructure difficulties and possible looting by armed groups. Wage labour employment was increasingly important for many of the IDPs irrespective of ethnic background, prior economic activity and place of residence.” (Silva 2003)

The flexibility of wage labour makes it accessible to both IDPs and others living in conflict affected areas. It is often at the expense of traditional livelihoods that have been abandoned or temporarily suspended because of the effects of the conflict. Fishermen may turn to wage labour to support their families because their boats have been destroyed or other infrastructure, such as ice factories, wholesale markets and fishing harbours, have not yet been put in place. Farmers
may be forced to support their families through wage labour because the infrastructure for agriculture was damaged and remains in disrepair.

Because of the investment drought in the North and East and the limited livelihood opportunities, there is a scarcity of wage labour. The people with better networks and connections can access this informal system more easily and effectively.

Aspects of livelihood recovery emerged from all of the study sites. All of the communities were affected by conflict to varying degrees and have had to rebuild and recover. One feature of this recovery has been that the communities have reverted back to their traditional livelihoods. The main livelihood of the communities that contributed to the study was agriculture, and, to a lesser extent, fishing, rope making, and brick making. These activities were all impeded by the slow pace of infrastructure reconstruction and re-establishment of market links. One of the key issues that emerged from the study was that individuals and households moved out of poverty by diversifying their income sources but still retained a strong connection to their traditional livelihood systems.

1.4.2 Market Restrictions

Since the late 1990s, military operations and the general climate of violence and insecurity had an adverse impact on the regional economy of the North and East. Inter-ethnic trading networks and patterns (between the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese) were disrupted, and the checkpoints and pass system have restricted the mobility of people and goods, as well as market access. (SLE 2001) The lack of proper transport and storage facilities, and the imposition of double taxing and loading and unloading charges at the checkpoints in Jaffna, Omanthai, and Mankulam established by the army and the LTTE, are all discouraging factors. They have restricted the movement of people willing to engage in trade despite the prevailing conflict conditions. This restriction, and the increased taxation, is a significant impediment to economic activity during conflict.

1.4.3 Hope for Peace

"Most people in the war-affected areas remain prudent about the future of the fragile peace process. Nevertheless, life opportunities have substantially improved for them. The biggest changes are that people are now allowed to move more freely, the fishing ban is lifted in some though not all areas and new traders come to the areas offering market opportunities to farmers and fishermen. However, many farmers are still not able to access their agricultural resources. They may still be afraid to go to remote places. Some fields are full of mines. Some land is still occupied by the army.” (Silva 2003)

The impact of the MOU and the fragile no-war-no-peace situation emerged as a significant issue in discussions at the national workshop. Its impact on the North and East, and by extension on the entire country, is wide ranging. This situation has helped unlock economic opportunities that were constrained by the war and has allowed the free movement of goods and people through previously restricted areas.

The study also confirmed the importance of peace. All of the communities in the North and East expressed their hopes for peace. They linked the degree of recovery they were able to achieve since the ceasefire with their hopes for further recovery. They all expressed a wish for the fragile peace to take hold and stabilize. Sadly, between the beginning of the fieldwork and the preparation of the final analyses there was significant deterioration in the political situation in the North and East. Some of the fieldwork could not be undertaken because of the uncertain security
environment. The team hopes that the situation will improve and allow the study communities to realise their dreams of peace and socioeconomic development.

1.4.4 Migration
A feature largely characteristic of the North and East, out-migration has had varying degrees of economic and social impacts. Beginning in the early 1980s, the more educated, or those with better social networks, have migrated to the UK, Canada and other Western countries, while others have moved to the Middle East: in Mulaithivu, about 15% of the population has left, and in Jaffna about 15%-20%. There has been a “brain drain” of the more educated and entrepreneurial from the war-torn areas (SLE 2001), and a resulting shortage of skilled labour.

This has also created a huge diaspora, and many people in conflict affected areas depend on their remittances for survival. The impact of remittances, especially in the North and East, has emerged as a significant issue for communities and households moving in and out of poverty. At the national workshop, participants discussed the effects of the diaspora on land prices in the conflict affected areas in the North since the ceasefire. For people who are seeking to buy land this could emerge as a threat, as they are kept out of the market because of the higher prices paid by those returning or sending money from the West. It could also create opportunities for those with land to sell, because its value would have increased significantly since the ceasefire and because of the willingness of returnees and those with diaspora remittances to pay the higher prices.

1.4.5 Investment Drought
“The high uncertainty factor with regard to future development prevents the business community [from] investing in this high-risk area. The combined result of destruction and the lack of investment has triggered an economic decline [in] the region and [has] degraded its relative economic position among the country’s other provinces.” (SLE 2001)

“No one wants to go to the Northern and Eastern districts. Hardly anyone is willing to explore business and to risk investment. People who can afford to, leave the area.” (Ibid)

The investors who pulled out during the conflict period, hesitant to reinvest in the North and the East due to security factors and taxes, were identified at the national workshop as significant for the post-conflict economy of these regions. Investors from other areas in the country are willing to invest mainly in the government-controlled areas because of better security, and some towns in Vanni and in Mulaithivu have benefitted. Conversely, many smaller towns and villages in LTTE-controlled areas have lost out. This may also emerge as a significant determinant for moving in or out of poverty.

1.4.6 Conflict “Winners”
The literature review and the key informants at the national workshop indicated that although many people lost out economically and socially as a result of the conflict, it was not correct to assume that it was universal. In fact, the conflict yielded both winners and losers. The early findings from the literature review and the national workshop identified certain situations in which the conflict could result in a positive economic impact on individuals and households, including the employment of family members as home guards and the brewing of illicit liquor.

One of the factors to emerge from both phases of the research, the national workshop and literature review and the subsequent field research, was that the war (as may be expected) created a huge demand for military and auxiliary forces. Some of this new demand was met by home guards or the village police.
The state employs a large number of farmers as home guards in Sinhalese border villages, paying a monthly allowance of LKR6000. This massive inflow of direct income increases local and regional disparities. (SLE 2001)

The home guards were auxiliary police recruited from rural communities and given basic training. Their role was to supplement the police and army, particularly in providing security to villages, access roads, and other civilian and military infrastructure. They were usually assigned to work in the areas in which they lived. Home guards’ remunerations and remittances helped establish a level of economic security in areas where agriculture and other more traditional forms of occupation were threatened either directly by the conflict or indirectly by fear and a sense of insecurity emerging from the conflict environment. It also gave the guards a higher status in society and a greater ability to access limited resources, similar to the social benefits obtained by youth who joined the LTTE in the North and East.

It is interesting that the conflict, which destroyed many economic opportunities, also created a few new ones.
## 2. CONFLICT

### Conflict- Summary Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Conflict/Growth context</th>
<th>Main Conflict Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North and East: Conflict 15 years ago, continues at present</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kollumbthurai</td>
<td>High Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>The community was displaced in 1995, 1996, and 2000. In 1995, 3 girls were kidnapped from the community. They disappeared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>High Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Residents were displaced in 1987 due to Indian army attack and again displaced in 1995 due to Sri Lanka army attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>Low Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>The community was displaced in 1990; 15 people were killed during the displacement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>Low Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>Residents were displaced until 1990, and suffered loss of assets and property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>Low Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Beginning in 1995, the security condition here deteriorated. In 1999, 44 people were massacred in one night. Thefts, looting, and killings were prevalent throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>Low Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>In 1990 there was a clash (near the mosque) between Muslims and LTTE, in which 6 Muslims and many LTTE cadres were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>High Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>The community was displaced in 1990, 1994, and 1997 due to various military operations. There was large-scale loss of property and assets during this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South: Conflict 15 years ago - peace at present</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>Low Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>In 1989, 17 people were killed in one night, and public property was destroyed. Until 1991, tension and threats were prevalent in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>Low Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>Residents were affected by the insurrection in 1989-1991. In 1989, 2 people from the village were killed. Outsiders were also killed in this village, and people had to live under constant tension and threat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above summarizes each of the study communities’ main conflict experiences. It reveals the nature of the conflict in the North and East, characterized by large-scale direct attacks, displacement, and destruction of property, as well as the nature of the conflict in the South, characterized by local level killings and disappearances. It highlights the continuing conflict in the North and East and the cessation of the conflict in the South after 1991. The table introduces the broad sweep of the conflict and its main trajectory within the communities. The next chapter will examine some of the specific elements of these conflicts and their links to other issues of relevance to the study.

2.1 The Conflict Environment

2.1.1 Conflict in the North and East
The conflict between the armed forces of the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE began in 1983. It is characterized in part by its relative isolation from the rest of the country. Most of the fighting and war-related destruction has occurred in the 8 contested districts of the North and East, while other parts of the country have remained largely free of such direct destruction. Even districts within the North and East have not experienced conflict in the same way. There is a large degree of variance of conflict experiences and conflict affectedness. This chapter will introduce some of the elements that characterize this conflict in order to provide a better understanding of the context in which 7 of the study communities experienced movement.

In the high conflict areas, the conflict has taken on the character of a civil war, in that non-combatants, or civilians, are drawn in and suffer as a result. The conflict takes place within a highly contested tract of land that is still inhabited in parts.

*Once, even an army soldier was killed by the LTTE. He was going to report to duty. He had to get some help from a farmer because it was raining, and the farmer asked him to come under [his] umbrella. Then the terrorist shot at him, and even the farmer was shot. He was injured and the soldier was killed.*

*(Conflict Time Line-Ampara-Gonagala)*

The LTTE controls parts of the North and East, and in these areas the organization functions as the de facto administration. It operates with the ideology of a separate state and, in the areas it controls, acts as if this aim has been achieved. The LTTE is the law, and civilians in these areas are forced to accede to their control in various ways.

*Even though the peace agreement (sama givisuma) with the LTTE is still in effect it is only limited to a piece of paper. Even now the LTTE is coming secretly to our village and they collect information that may be used to plan attacks in the future. They do not adhere to the laws imposed by the government. They don’t even wear crash helmets when they drive motorbikes. When they get caught for violating these laws they escape the fines. During the ceasefire the LTTE collected information for future attacks. They wear their uniforms openly in the areas under their control. The hands of the government forces are tied by the ceasefire agreement. The army forces can’t take action against the Tamil tigers when they*
come into our areas. There are even times that army soldiers were killed by the LTTE. But LTTE didn’t attack any of the army camps after the peace agreement. (Conflict TL-Ampara-Gonagala)

The conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE was based on the latter party’s demand for a separate homeland for ethnic Tamils. As a result, the conflict has fractured the country along ethnic lines. This is evident in the North and East, where minority Sinhala and Muslim communities have been severely affected. Their minority status increases their vulnerability.

We were given arms for self defence by the former defence minister Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne. A group is selected from our village and they were given those arms and they operated in our mosque. In that period Home Guards were also operating in our village. Home Guards were also government forces that were used to protect the border villages from the threats of rebels. LTTE came to know about the armed group that is operating in the mosque and they attacked the mosque and 5 people were killed. (FGD Conflict Timeline, Amapara-Sammanthurai)

We don’t think that the defences or the guard (protection) we have now is enough for us because at any time the LTTE can attack us. 15 years ago we didn’t have this problem. This began in 1983 but not in a big way, and there was a peaceful environment till 1991 and 1993. It started to change since 1995 and it turned worse in 1997. In that year the Tamil tigers started their crimes. In the past we had a good relationship with the Tamil people who now live in the Tamil border. We used to get to their areas and they came to our areas and we kept on interacting with them for a long time. They brought their bullocks to our side and we used to buy milk and cow dung from them. There was a dispute between a Sinhalese person in the village and a Tamil person from outside the community about a cow. A Sinhalese person was killed as a result of this dispute. When the police became involved, the situation escalated and some Tamil people were shot. The situation became worse and the LTTE killed 44 Sinhalese people who lived near the border. The LTTE did not confine their attacks to the Sinhalese people in the area. 15-20 Tamil people were also killed by the LTTE. We don’t have enough people guarding the village. We feel like the Tamil tigers can come and kill us at any time. (Conflict TL-Ampara-Gonagala)

2.1.2 Conflict in the South
The Conflict between the JVP and the Government of Sri Lanka (for the purposes of this study) occurred between 1989 and 1991.1 The JVP was a Marxist revolutionary group that tried to seize state power and start a revolution. This conflict was characterized by varying intensity in the areas that were affected and in the way in which the atmosphere of fear and suspicion about who was involved spilled over into attacks on civilians by both sides. It was always unclear who was aligned with the JVP and who supported the

---

1 This group first attempted to seize state power in 1971.
government. Many killings and abductions occurred as a result of these mutual suspicions.

The time of insurgency was really bad. There were outsiders in our village, we had to mind our own business. They told us that we are not allowed to light lamps in houses. We underwent a lot of trouble during that time. Since we weren’t allowed to light lamps in our houses we had to light lamps and cover it with the winnowing fan to feed our children. A school teacher, “Kodikara sir,” was killed during this time. A school principal, “Jayawickrama sir,” was killed at the age of 45 on the school premises. (KI CTL, Gonadeniya, Hambantota)

The youth were affected most. Girls couldn’t walk on the roads. The students from schools were taken away for protests. The school was closed for 6 months and an army camp was set up in the school for 3 months. But we had a good relationship with the army personnel and when we asked them to take the camp away they left the village without a problem. “My son was not that old at the time of the insurrection but he was tall for his age. So I used to always bathe him whenever they came looking for him. There were days that I used to bathe my son more than 5 times a day and told them that I am bathing my son, pretending that he was still very young.” (KI CTL, Gonadeniya, Hambantota)

2.2 Impacts of Conflict on Livelihoods

All of the study communities in the South and the North and East spoke of how their livelihoods were affected in various ways by the conflict. In the North and East, where the conflict is ongoing, this impact continues. The South was affected between 1989 and 1991.

The JVP drew its core support from people in the rural agricultural sector, and thus followed a deliberate policy of not affecting their livelihoods. However, as mentioned above, one of the features of the JVP conflict was that it was very difficult to identify who was involved. Many people suspected of involvement in the JVP were kidnapped and killed by government forces. In addition, many people who were suspected of aiding the government were killed by the JVP. This created an atmosphere in which everyone was afraid of being identified as being aligned with or opposed to either party. This fear prevented people from carrying out their normal livelihood activities.

2.2.1 South

The livelihoods were severely affected from the conflict. People were not in a frame of mind to think of earning money or making profits. The only thing in their minds was to get lives saved, and it was a time where the food consumed did not digest properly. People were in hiding the whole time and the lands were just abandoned. In the beginning they worked during the day and went to places at night. Later they stopped that, too, because they could not trust the daylight as well. Under normal circumstances, for example, now people work on cinnamon
peeling until ten, eleven in the night. Those days it was a wonder to see a man walking about after four in the evening.

We had to leave everything that we had gained in our lifetime and run away to save our lives from the murderers. So we didn’t bother with our livelihoods or our property but we fled to safety. There was no livelihood spared, everything was affected and abandoned for months and in some cases years. Cinnamon peeling, being the main livelihood, was highly affected. There were incidents of mothers and daughters getting raped in stark daylight while peeling cinnamon. After these incidents people were too scared to go out in to the lands and work.

(Matara-Allewala, Conflict TL)

There was no way for us to do any wage labour and there was no way for the people in the higher steps [of the ladder of life] to engage in any business. Since they collected ransoms from the shop owners who were the well-off of the community, they were also facing difficulties. We in the lower steps protected the people in the higher steps. They also helped us to survive. If they got food they shared it with us and they lent us money sometimes even without the intention of retrieving it. Compared to that time it is much better now. There was no way for us to engage in any form of livelihood at that time. 15 years ago if we were asked to keep 25000 Rs. under a culvert we have to do that. No questions asked.
(Matara-Allewala, LOL, F)

2.2.3 North and East
During the conflict times we were not allowed to work in the paddy fields. We were chased away when we were working there. In some cases it was the LTTE, but we are not sure. It can be other armed groups who took our machinery.
(Ampara-Sammanthurai, Conflict TL)

During the insurgency people were engaged in the same livelihoods that they are engaged in now. Some of the villagers were involved in paddy cultivation, some had stone quarries, and others produced bricks. All livelihoods were affected by the conflict most during the height of the conflict in 1990. However, after the conflict, we started the same livelihoods again. This is what people in the area are used to.
(Ampara-Sammanthurai, Conflict TL)

2.3 Threats to Traditional Livelihoods

Traditional livelihood patterns impose particular restrictions on movement. These livelihoods focus on primary production without a great deal of value addition made to the final product. The products that are produced are not unique, and do not occupy a special position in the market. There is no rising demand for these products. Conflict adds other dimensions to this complex set of problems by restricting physical movement and therefore access to raw materials and markets—displacing employers and workers, limiting employment opportunities even for wage labour (one of the more stable sources of livelihood), and forcing people to abandon prosperous enterprises.
Women of this village made panpai [mats]. Now they don’t do that because they don’t get the material. Women went to catch prawns. Now they can’t go to LTTE controlled area. Compared to 15 years back our income is less. War and violence are the reasons for this effect. We can’t go to the forest or the sea all the time because of LTTE restrictions. We have to get permission from LTTE to enter the forest, otherwise we have to pay fine. After the tsunami, fishing is down. (FGD Livelihood, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

Due to restrictions by the army, doing the work is difficult now. Both fisheries and coir works are related to sea. We can’t access the coast very easily. The area is demarcated as a high security zone and is occupied by the army. The army has limited our access to the area to certain times of the day. We have to finish all our work within the given time. We also have to get special passes to go there. They have given us an identity card. Only people with this official identity card can access the area. When we go to sea, we have to produce the identity card and get a pass and when we come back we can get the identity card back when we return the pass. Fishing is allowed from 6 A.M. to 1 P.M. This is not enough time to go out to sea and return. Women are allowed to do coir work from 7 A.M. to 12 noon. But coir work cannot be done all the time. We can go to the sea only when water level is low, maybe in the morning or evening. If the high security zone is removed, we can do our work freely. If we could not finish our work and come out, the army punishes us. Sometimes they hit us. Also we have to stay in queue with carriers for a long time to get the pass. (Jaffna- Kolumbuthurai, Chronic poor, F)

After coming from India we started to do paddy cultivation. Only 1 year we did the cultivations normally. Then in 1997 there was a military operation (EDIBALA), because of that we had to displace. That displacement happened during the harvesting period so we had to face huge loss in our life because we all get credits from RDS and did cultivation and it was tenant land. We don't have our own land to cultivate. Now also they don’t allow fishing. (Mannar-Semmanthivu, Conflict TL)

Agents will come to our home and buy our ropes. We have good demand for our rope but we can't manufacture more due to the difficulties we face. If the high security zone was removed we can earn more and go back to the normal life.

We don't get profit like before. We can sell 10 feet of rope for 3 rupees, 13 feet of rope for 5 rupees and 20 feet of rope for 20 rupees. To make rope from 50 coconut husks we need 5 days. We have enough demand for our ropes but we can’t supply the demand due to the low manufacturing rate. The rope coming from Colombo is less expensive but our rope is stronger than the rope coming from Colombo because we soak the coconut husk in salty water (sea water). There are agents, they come to us and buy our ropes but we have to sell the rope to them for the price they ask because we don't have any other way to sell our ropes.
From 1990 to 1995 we had more demand for our ropes because there were no ropes coming from Colombo. Before 1995 we can work 24 hours a day but now we can't because the army don't allow us to go to sea whenever we want. Before the army captures this area we go to sea alone but now we have to go as a group. In the 1990s there were lot of coconut trees and we had coconut thatch business. We had tailor shops also in this area before. Traditionally we are making ropes and still we are doing it.
(FGD Livelihood, M, Jaffna- Kolumbuthurai)

Government Multi Purpose Cooperative Society (MPCS) doesn't buy our paddy. We don't have vehicles to market the paddy or licenses to sell it. You only get a license if you have 10 acres of land. Because of these things we lose lots of our own output.
(FGD Livelihood, M, Ampara-Sammathurai)

People were able to maintain their livelihoods in areas that were relatively less contested and experienced minimal overt violence. They were able to cope even within a wider conflict environment because of their ability to maintain their livelihoods.

2.4 Social Identity and Conflict

The introduction to the conflict section (2.1) outlined the way in which the Sri Lankan conflict affected different people and different groups of people in particular ways. One of the most pervasive issues underlying affectedness is ethnicity. The communities that contributed to the study were fairly typical Sri Lankan rural communities, and one of their defining features was their single ethnic nature. They sometimes existed in areas numerically dominated by another ethnic group but internally they remained largely mono-ethnic. They functioned as enclaves within a structure where ethnicity is used to fuel conflict. The study found direct correlations between being a minority non-Tamil ethnic community in the North and East and the likelihood of direct brutal attacks and large-scale civilian casualties.

Both communities were affected but Muslim peoples are highly affected. In our point of view Muslim people got most affected because of their displacement. In both sides there were deaths, but only Muslim peoples lost their properties. They couldn't cultivate during that period and lost their income also.
(Ampara-Sammanthurai, Conflict TL)

1990: We were displaced at this time. 15 were killed. All these were men who had gone to work. Some of them went to the jungle to cut firewood. They came to the village to protect their properties while they were staying in a refugee camp in the village school. Some of them went back to the village to check on their livestock and they were randomly killed.

1991: 4 were killed. After we resettled in the area, the LTTE kidnapped 3 people and 2 of them were killed and the body of the other one was not found. This
incident affected 2 families and they lost the heads of those households. They are all men aged 25-40. One person died in a landmine attack. One body was found in a well of his own house. We couldn’t get it out by ourselves so we went to get the army and the police. By the time we arrived in the village with the army, the LTTE people had put a rock into the well and destroyed the body. After that the body was not in a condition to take out. Then we closed the well with the body inside the well. Still these families are suffering by this incident.

2003: 3 villagers were killed by the LTTE. These people were safeguarding their agricultural land. At that time they were doing paddy cultivation. Since the LTTE people were trampling the paddy fields the watchers got afraid and asked them to walk on the bunds and not in the paddy fields. Then they got angry and cut them on their shoulders and killed the three of them. After that there was a tension within the village. Then the army got involved and the army camp was set up inside the village after we went and complained. The Security post is in the village but we are not safe.

Their bodies were found in the paddy field. The hands of their bodies were tied at the back and cut using a sharp knife.

(KI Trincomalee-Mahamaru)

The extract from a Muslim community above reveals how their ethnicity made them a particular target for the LTTE.

The study sites in the South also showed how caste sometimes prompted conflict, and how, during the JVP conflict, some communities were targeted because of their caste.

The caste differences might be another reason. Most of the people in JVP were in the caste of Wahumpura and Karawa. Even nowadays this is the case. In this village also most of the people belong to Wahumpura cast.

(KI CTL, Matara-Allewala)

2.5 Gender

Gender is a special aspect of the Moving out of Poverty study. It is included in one of the key study questions (are there gender differences?) relating to movement. The Sri Lanka study found that gender-based differences went beyond the issues dealing with movement. The study found that women and men were affected by conflict differently, and that women were victims of a different type of violence, which the conflict environment enabled.

In 1990 people displaced leaving all other than the clothes which they were wearing. (“Sahalathaiyum ilanthu kattina udaiyudan idm peyarnthanar.”). They were more troubled because of the Indian forces—language problem and raping. (“Indian armyin kedupidiyinaal mihavum pathikkappattanar-molippirachchinai, katpalippu.”). It was frightening to keep a girl at home. They did not worry about
the age of a woman; they abused all women irrespective of their age. They raped 10-year-old school children and also a 50-year-old lady. All the women were affected. All the armies are bloody. (“Veettil penpillai iruppathendral payam. ellappengalaiyum paathiththathu. Ellaa iraanuvangalum korathhtanamaanavai.”).
(FGD Youth, M, Jaffna-Kolombuthurai)

The threat of gender-based violence remains even as the conflict transforms away from overt large-scale violence and destruction toward less intensive conflict. This has severely affected women’s freedom of movement.

Men and women here have no freedom due to the conflict situation. They are always facing problems when they go out. The young women couldn’t go out at night during the conflict. This is still the same.
(FGD Youth, M, Jaffna-Kolombuthurai)

Women and youth don’t have any freedom in this village, for example, they can’t go out even if there is anything urgent to do because army personnel are on both sides of the road even at night. We can manage that problem in day times, but at night it is a big problem for us.
(Conflict Timeline, Mannar-Semmanthivu)

In this village, we do have same level of freedom for men and women, but women have less freedom than men in travelling due to the conflicts.
(FGD Livelihoods, F Trincomalee-Pudukkudyiruppu)

The threat of violence and the associated restriction on physical movement were apparent in all of the sites in the North and East, across both the Tamil and Muslim communities that contributed to the study.

In the South, where the conflict pattern was different, it seemed that women had a slightly different set of experiences. They were more active in community decision-making and said that their freedom had increased over time.

If we take the overall picture we are much better off freedom-wise now than before, those days a girl could not even think of going on the road alone.
(FGD Livelihoods, M Matara-Allewala)

The interviews from the North and East presented a much more conservative picture. The role of women was more strictly defined in traditional terms as being associated with the home and taking care of household needs.

Men have the most freedom and women have the least freedom because men are more educated than women.
(FGD Livelihoods, M, Trincomalee- Mahamaru)
We do not have any job opportunities here. Especially women.
(FGD Livelihoods, M, Trincomalee- Mahamaru)

Men have more power and women have less power. Because the men make all the necessary decisions in the meeting held at mosque.
(FGD Livelihoods, M, Trincomalee- Mahamaru)

One of the central issues affecting women was their inability to access income sources. In the North and East, this was due to the conflict situation and the constant threat of gender-based violence and consequent restrictions on their physical mobility. In the South, although some income-earning opportunities were available for women, they were restricted by the difference in wage rate.

Women have less freedom. The women do most of the paddy cultivation. We do the sowing sometimes. The only thing we don't do is use the sprayer to apply weedicides or pesticides. Mangalika akka is the only woman in the community who does that. ("tanki walin beheth nogahana eka witharai.") In the families where the husband is a drunkard, women have to run the family and they do it. Some times they have to earn not just for expenses but for their husbands’ drinking as well!
(FGD Youth, F, Gonagala)

The study found that the movement experiences of men and women were different; that women faced more restrictions and challenges in their efforts to find independent sources of income. The movement chapter shows that, sometimes, women were seen as “recipients” of the benefits of movement rather than as the catalyst or cause of movement.

The women who contributed to the individual life stories and who were defined as movers by their communities moved because of other income sources that came into their households. The existence of multiple incomes enabled the households to move, and the women in the household moved along with them. In many cases women’s incomes contributed to the collective income of the family and hence to the families’ movement.

Across the communities, there was only a single case of a household moving simply because of the economic contribution made by a woman.

The experience I had in Colombo helped me a lot to start new businesses and develop my business. From the experience I had there I got lessons on how to start a business and develop it.

In 1989 I started learning stitching and I experienced a different life from here.

My father started this small shop. And later on my father got a job in an estate. After that he gave me this small shop. And later on I developed this small shop from my own efforts and I bought more things to sell in this small shop. And after
some time I started the tailor shop and a girl was working with me. We took orders to stitch clothes from the villagers and we did it. We were earning a fair amount of income. I had to bring more things to sell in the small shop because I need money to make my house. During the JVP insurrection we had to close all the things and move to our sister's place in Ambilipitiya. I started the tailor shop five years ago. Then another one girl was working with me. But now it is failing because there’s no one to work with me. It is very difficult to work in both places, in the small shop and the tailor shop. The girl who worked with me got married and now there’s no one to do her work.

(Mover, F, Allewala)

Female-headed households were identified by many of the study communities as being low in the ladder of life that ranked all the households in the community (see table on p. 46). This was mentioned as a reason some households were not able to move out of poverty in the South, and in the North and East. In the latter regions, female-headed households emerged as a result of the conflict.

Some households are female headed
Ampara-Sammanthurai

Of these families the husbands are dead or they’ve left the families
LOL Matara-Allewela

Elders who can’t work and widows
Widows are in this category. About 4-5 young widows are living here
LOL Trincomalee- Pudukudyiruppu

Young widows who do not have income sources
LOL Jaffna – Thirunelvelli

Most often the wife is trying to earn to save her family
LOL Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai

Other members of the communities perceived female-headed households as having few economic prospects after the death of the main income earner.

This section seeks to flag some of the special issues relating to gender and highlight the way in which other such elements run through and colour the Moving out of Poverty in Sri Lanka study.

The chapter highlights some of the central conflict themes and links them with other issues raised in the study. It highlights the differences between the conflict in the North and East and the conflict in the South. The chapter introduces the conflicts’ effects on livelihoods, as well as the identity dimensions around which aspects of the conflicts are perpetuated and maintained. Conflict colours all of the findings in the study. It affects people’s ability to move out of poverty, it shapes their views on power, freedom, and
democracy and it influences the aspirations of youth. All of these factors will be discussed in the sections below.

Some reflections from the study team

As an analytical exercise, the team developed rankings of the communities based on their first hand observations in the study communities and their extensive knowledge of the field data. These rankings serve to illustrate two central ideas that could not be more fully explored because of the qualitative nature of the data.

Movement is not the same across the communities

Movement happens at many different levels. The use of this one term to characterize the experiences of individuals and households within these diverse communities sometimes hides the fact that movement in one community was different from movement in another. Different environments, conflict conditions, and levels of economic potential in the surrounding area contributed largely to movement within each study site. The rankings below, developed by the study team, attempt to highlight the degree of variance among different communities.

Table 1: Ranking of Study Communities with the Highest Potential for Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>up\ward movement</th>
<th>Growth/ Conflict status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>South Allewala</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>South Gonadeniya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>North and East</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Ranking of Study Communities with the Highest Potential for Falling Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Falling</th>
<th>Conflict / Growth status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kolombuthurai</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conflicts affectedness is not the same across communities

Like movement, conflict affectedness is not uniform across communities. The conflict in the South is different from that in the North and East.

Direct conflict affectedness in the South was confined to the period between 1989 and 1991. Conflict continues in the North and East. The analysis has picked out the main characteristics of the conflict and highlighted each community’s individual conflict experiences. These experiences could not be compared with each other to establish a ranking of degree of conflict affectedness because of the nature of the data. The research team developed a ranking based on their experiences and observations within the community, formed largely from the following factors.

Violence in the community: Experiences of violence, degrees of violence

Displacement: Number of times displacement occurred, length of time the community was displaced, losses due to displacement, and the intensity (whether the whole community or only some of its members were displaced).

Time: Immediacy of the conflict within and around the community, amount of time the community had to recover

Conflict atmosphere: Continued prevalence of fear within the community, sense of uncertainty, degree of tension

Table 3: Greatest Degree of Conflict Affectedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Growth/ Conflict status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kolombuthurai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>LC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>LC HG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>HC LG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>HC HG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. MOVEMENT

Movement out of poverty is the central theme of the study. The other issues explored are all initially examined through the following lenses:

- How do these factors contribute to movement?
- Is movement more likely in areas and situations that are coloured by conflict?
- Does gender or ethnicity make a difference?

All of these questions have been examined at various stages in the study. This section looks to capture trends in movement. It will examine factors from the community and individual perspectives and help chart the path of those who moved out of poverty in the context of Sri Lanka and its conflicts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Conflict/Growth Context</th>
<th>Reasons for Movement (Community level)</th>
<th>Reasons for Movement (Individual level)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kollumbuthurai</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>High Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Education, remittances, help from government and NGOs, peace, removal of high security zone restrictions</td>
<td>Government employment, steady income, networks, education, loans, multiple income sources, education, remittances,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>High Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Remittances, receiving dowry, aspirations, planning, good management of available resources, government aid, Samurdhi, education</td>
<td>Wage labour, leases, cultivation, masonry, networks, land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>High Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>Education, removal of high security zones, more large-scale investments in the area</td>
<td>Large-scale lease cultivation, multiple income sources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Low Conflict</td>
<td>Remittances, education,</td>
<td>Remittances, land ownership, savings, accumulation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Conflict/Growth Context</td>
<td>Reasons for Movement (Community level)</td>
<td>Reasons for Movement (Individual level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Low Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>NGO help, stable income, remittances, children’s education</td>
<td>Acquisition of livelihood assets, experience/learning on livelihood-related activities, networks, having one’s own business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>Low Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Education, money lending, ownership of land, infrastructure development, government help, education</td>
<td>Multiple income sources, ownership of land, joining the military, government welfare support, NGO support, networks, accumulation of livelihood-related assets, diversifying into small scale investment, education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Low Conflict High Growth</td>
<td>Financial management, water supply, more men in the family</td>
<td>Government employment, remittances, multiple income sources, cultivation, networks, experience, self-owned industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>Inherited property</td>
<td>Cultivation, government job of HHH, financial management, education/experience in livelihood-related activities and vocational training,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Conflict/Growth Context</td>
<td>Reasons for Movement (Community level)</td>
<td>Reasons for Movement (Individual level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hambantota Gonadeniya</td>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>High Conflict Low Growth</td>
<td>External help, work outside the community, education, more investment in the local level</td>
<td>Experience, loans, networks, savings, starting own workshop/business, migration for work, multiple income sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table summarises the main findings in relation to movement. Ideas about movement from community level focus groups are presented separately below. The table reveals that most factors spoken of at the community level are present as part of combinations leading to movement at the individual level. Group discussions identified single factors that participants believe caused movement. These were largely confirmed by the individual interviews. The individuals, however, spoke of these enabling factors in combination with other contributory factors.
### 3.1 Movement at the Level of the Community

#### Community Level Movement (Summary Findings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Reasons for Movement</th>
<th>Reasons for Stagnation</th>
<th>Reasons for Falling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kollumbuthurai</td>
<td>Education, external migration, external assistance, ‘good peace’</td>
<td>High number of dependents, low education levels,</td>
<td>High security zones, the high conflict, loss of assets, inaccessibility of key livelihoods, the loss of hope for the future due to insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>Remittances, good financial management, frugality, savings, family networks, government welfare, dowry system</td>
<td>Alcoholism, poor educational level, lack of knowledge about available opportunities</td>
<td>Fluctuating income, alcohol abuse, the repercussions of the war, dowry system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>Job opportunities, working abroad, better education, good financial management, family networks</td>
<td>Scarcity of jobs, lack of capital, too many child dependents</td>
<td>The losses suffered by households following the period of displacement, violence, alcoholism, the impact of the tsunami, misuse of funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>Foreign income, good financial management, savings</td>
<td>Limited access to education and information, lack of stable income and savings,</td>
<td>The cycle of dependency on extended families, children leaving the parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>Money lending, leasing out land for cultivation, education</td>
<td>Spending more than one earned, lack of interest and self-motivation due to the conflict environment, family disputes due to conflict</td>
<td>Indebtedness, alcohol abuse, financial mismanagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Reasons for Movement</td>
<td>Reasons for Stagnation</td>
<td>Reasons for Falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>Increasing demands for bricks for reconstruction, credit from the Samurdhi scheme Islamic bank, families with a higher number of males</td>
<td>Large number of girls in the family (dowry expenses), Higher number of dependents in the family</td>
<td>Dowry problem, marriage problems and divorces, being paid in kind for wage labour in the paddy fields, alcohol abuse,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>Ownership of assets</td>
<td>The lack of job opportunities, high number of dependants, disabilities caused by war</td>
<td>Alcoholism, children being deprived of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>Arable land ownership</td>
<td>Indebtedness in connection with the educational needs of the children, limited access to land</td>
<td>The lack of savings to face any emergency, financial insecurity and indebtedness, employed under another person, natural disasters,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>Government support, out migration of the youth, land ownership, investment in the community by community members, effort made to employ at least one member of their household</td>
<td>Constructing houses, lack of capital to start a business, lack of facilities</td>
<td>Loans, natural disasters that destroy cultivation, alcoholism, lack of own productive land for cultivation, government and policy changes that affect the government servants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table summarises findings from community level focus groups about factors that underpin different types of movement. Communities spoke of movement being enabled by individual factors. This contrasts with the individual level findings, which detail combinations of factors that enabled movement.
Conflict clearly emerges as a cause for “falling” in the North and East. In those regions, the conflict has remained active over the study’s 15-year recall period. It is a part of the everyday reality of the communities in those areas. They attribute a lot of the shocks that cause their economic and social levels to decline to the continuing conflict. This supports individual level findings from these communities.

Conflict in the South occurred largely between 1989 and 1991. The communities offer reasons for movement that are not linked with conflict in the same way as the communities in the North and East.

Movement occurs at an individual level, largely because households and individuals are able to acquire and sustain multiple income sources. At the community level, potential for movement is perceived to be based on access to a certain factor that would allow the household or individual to get the maximum benefit of the community’s main livelihoods or being able to overcome one of the common livelihood-related threats faced by other members of the community.

Members of the study communities always saw movement from their own perspectives. They spoke of movers as people that had access to things that they didn’t. Often, they saw movers as people who had more of the livelihood resources that were available to the community. Communities in which the main source of income was agriculture spoke of movers as those who had access to larger parcels of land. They spoke of inherited wealth and assets that would withstand the shocks that adversely affected the community. They spoke from an “us” and “them” perspective, often examining what they did not have access to and citing this as a reason for the movement of others.

3.1.1 Movement in the South
The communities in the South spoke of financial security, ownership of assets that would cushion the shocks caused by natural disasters such as crop failure, and personal attributes such as courage and strength as reasons for movement. They believed that people in their communities fell into poverty or remained stagnant because of natural disasters that destroyed livelihoods. Although both study communities in the South were highly affected by the conflict from 1989 to 1991, it is apparent that their current views on movement are not influenced by their conflict experiences.

3.1.2 Movement in the North and East
The communities in the North and East offered more varied views on movement. The impact of the conflict was clear in many of the communities. In contrast to the high conflict communities of the South, the high conflict communities in the North and East reveal strong links between conflict affectedness and movement. Some spoke of how conflict and displacement had destroyed livelihood assets, making it harder to move out of poverty. Others spoke of the high security zones and of farmland and houses made inaccessible in these areas. Conflict-related migration to Western countries and subsequent remittances were frequently mentioned as factors that led to the most movement up. Economic migration (mainly for women) to countries in the Middle East was also mentioned by some of the communities. This migration is made necessary in part by the general depressed economic conditions created by the conflict, though
economic migration is in no way characteristic only of conflict affected communities. The low conflict communities in the North and East spoke of other issues that affected the potential for movement. The communities in Ampara, for example, spoke of indebtedness as a reason for some people remaining in poverty, and having sufficient capital to give loans at interest as a means for others to move.

3.2 Linking Community and Individual/Household Level Mobility

The study communities’ ideas help set the tone for a deeper examination of the factors that lead to individual households moving out of poverty. They also provide general ideas about falling into poverty and the inability to move. Alcoholism, for example, was mentioned frequently by communities across ethnic groups and regions as one of the factors that cause individuals and households to fall or remain in poverty.

Communities also spoke of migration-related remittances and other combinations of income sources. The significance of these multiple income sources will be further explored in the next section of the report.

The group interviews also help provide an insight into personal and psychological factors that set apart the people who are able to move out of poverty. These are not explored in the individual interviews because people did not speak about their individual attributes in this way. The groups, however, referred to strength, innovation, frugality, money management and perseverance as characteristics variously associated with people and households that moved. It adds an interesting dynamic for the sections to follow that will examine the experiences of the individuals that moved out of poverty, fell into poverty, maintained their wealth, or remained trapped and unable to achieve mobility.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>FGD Type</th>
<th>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</th>
<th>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</th>
<th>No. of steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Allewala M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>They don’t own enough land to cultivate. They don’t have a permanent job, and perform mostly wage labour. Their houses are roofed with tile but they are quite small (9x6 riyan(^2) 13.5x9ft). They have two rooms. Most of these people have education up to grade 4. Some people, however, were able to complete their education.</td>
<td>These are doctors, proctors, businessmen, traders, people who have more than 5 acres of cinnamon lands. Mr. Gamini and Mr. Romanis have more than 5 acres. The gentleman who works in the bank (Weere) is also in the same category. There are 5-6 shops in the village. These are people who have motorcycles, cars, vans, three wheelers, etc. They also have good educations. Contractors also fall in to this category.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>About 3 or 4 families live in the same house. Of these families, the husbands are either dead or they’ve left the families, they don’t have land, they have no income, they are working under some one else, or they have no permanent jobs, 2 or 3 families live in the same house along with the parents. There are some who had gone to school up to O/Ls.(^3)</td>
<td>These people own cinnamon lands of around 4 or 5 acres, they earn a good income from these lands and they basically engage in trading both cinnamon and beedi (small local cigars). Some own 1 or 2 acres of paddy fields outside of the village as well. The cigar and cinnamon traders have vehicles, shops, etc. There are about 4 big shops. Delivery vans and wholesalers supply goods to these shops. There are moneylenders and pawnbrokers in this step as well. Some of them have a good education.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) A local unit of measurement. 1 Riyan(a) is equivalent to 1.5 feet  
\(^3\) O/L- Ordinary level a public examination at grade 10 of secondary school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>FGD Type</th>
<th>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</th>
<th>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</th>
<th>No. of steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>They don’t have permanent housing or a permanent source of income. They have only a small piece of land and no land for cultivation. The main source of income is wage labour. Their education level is low and there’s nobody to lend a helping hand.</td>
<td>They own about 5-10 acres of coconut land. They try out new business ventures. They own paddy land. They own vehicles.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>They have limited employment. Since they own only a small extent of land, which is barren (20 perches) their source of income is wage labour. What they own is only the land on which their houses stand. They manage to build small houses with a lot of difficulty. The roofs are leaking and they don’t have proper doors, even though there are young girls in the house. They have a severe scarcity of water.</td>
<td>Their houses are made better. <em>(geval pilivelakata hada gena inne.</em>) They own about 10-15 acres of coconut land. They own 5-6 acres of paddy fields. They own vehicles (tractors, motor bicycles) but these are also through loans. They have electricity and relatively less water problems. About 2-5% of the villagers belong to this category. They have about 10 – 15 lakhs with them as savings.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>These are the sub-families of the original settlers. The original settlers earned money, raised their children, and gave them an education, but they don’t have anything to give the next generation. Therefore this category consists of these dependents and the dependents of the dependents. They don’t have permanent housing; their houses are thatched. Some houses are</td>
<td>At the moment there’s only one person like this in the village: “Mudalali” He owns a rice mill, has a coconut oil mill, and a chili mill. He has a lorry which he uses for transporting the paddy, sometimes as far as Hambantota. He has paddy stored in warehouses.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>FGD Type</td>
<td>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>No. of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People in this category are poor.</td>
<td>These families have houses with all the necessary facilities.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>They have no permanent income sources. Their housing condition is poor. All are doing wage labour. Most of them are elders who have given their land and house as dowry. They have more females in the house.</td>
<td>They own about 5-10 acres of land. Some have their own brick making industry. Some own vehicles. They have a higher income than anyone else in the community. They live in good houses.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>People in this category are poor.</td>
<td>These families have houses with all the necessary facilities.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They do not own paddy fields. They have permanent housing. This is the dependants’ category. Their land is quite small. Most of the youth in this category study up to their O/Ls.</td>
<td>These are the people with businesses of their own. They have shops, rice mills, and coconut oil producing mills. In the village there about 4 rice mills and about 3 coconut oil extracting plants. The mills and plants are used by the other members of the community</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>They don’t have land of their own. They have many dependents. They survive on wage labour. Many have no work at all. They are in debt. They don’t have money to educate their children properly. Some people in this category are lazy; they are always waiting for external aid.</td>
<td>Shop owners and vehicle owners are in this category, i.e., those who own three wheelers, tractors, and farming equipment. But if somebody comes and ask for Rs. 100 in cash they don’t have money in their hand.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>They do not own paddy fields. They have permanent housing. This is the dependants’ category. Their land is quite small. Most of the youth in this category study up to their O/Ls.</td>
<td>These are the people with businesses of their own. They have shops, rice mills, and coconut oil producing mills. In the village there about 4 rice mills and about 3 coconut oil extracting plants. The mills and plants are used by the other members of the community</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>without toilets and don’t have wells. They don’t have land. They survive through wage labour and tenant farming. Although they are able to go to school because the uniform and the books are provided free, they still find it hard to do so.</td>
<td>These are the people with businesses of their own. They have shops, rice mills, and coconut oil producing mills. In the village there about 4 rice mills and about 3 coconut oil extracting plants. The mills and plants are used by the other members of the community</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>FGD Type</td>
<td>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>No. of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Some of the households are female-headed. This category of people is the most affected by dowry problems.</td>
<td>facilities. Family members are working in aboard and have foreign income.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This category consists of elders who can’t do any work and widows. They depend on their children. They have no permanent income sources. They live in thatched houses, They get help from others. They get Sadaka and Zakath. Some children go to school; others go to work.</td>
<td>They own land and livestock. Some have shops and mills. Some own small buildings as well. Some have government jobs. They have inherited property. Some work abroad. They have good housing conditions. They educate their children well and send them for tuition as well.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They depend on their children, which they have many of. They live in thatched houses</td>
<td>This category consists of those with government jobs, shop owners, and the mill owner.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Pudukkudyiruppu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>About 10% of the people in the community will be in this step, including elders who can’t do work and widows. Some depend on their children. They have no stable income, and their housing condition is poor. They get “Samurdi.” Some children go to school.</td>
<td>About 7% are in this step, which includes people who do government jobs (5 people). They receive a fixed income at the end of the month. People who work abroad also belong to this category. Some have their houses in the town and their parents live in this community. Their housing is in good condition. They educate their children well. Some houses have electricity.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Widows are in this category. About 4-5 young widows are living here. They survive by doing sewing and wage labour. They live in small houses. But, now, WACCO is going to give</td>
<td>Persons who are doing government jobs are included in this category. They have permanent jobs, and they receive a salary every month. Therefore they are able to give their children a good education.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>FGD Type</td>
<td>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>No. of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>They live in small houses. Alcohol usage very high, the education level is low, and they have many children.</td>
<td>Mainly have their own businesses or get remittances. They have their own lands and houses. Their houses made from cement.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Young widows who do not have income sources can be in this step. They do not have houses or land, and they depend on food stamps. They do not have permanent jobs.</td>
<td>People who have big shops in the village or outside of it, people in higher positions in government departments, and people who receive aid from countries such as Canada and the UK are in the highest step of the ladder. Their education level is very high and they save money in banks. They have their own land and houses. They have motor bikes.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>Kolombuthurai</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Most of them have thatched houses. Their houses were heavily damaged by the war, and as a result they do not have proper housing facilities. They have large families.</td>
<td>Their main income source is foreign income. They have houses with modern facilities. Their education level is better than others. They can invest in businesses.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>They live in small mud and thatch houses. Some family members are disabled. Most often, the wife is trying to earn to save her family. She has many children. They can’t afford to give them a good education.</td>
<td>People in this category are very rich. Most are abroad in places like France or England. They are well educated. They own vehicles such as tuk tuks (three wheelers) and motorbikes. Some members of the family live abroad. Some have a dowry house—only the parents are</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>FGD Type</td>
<td>Characteristics of Lowest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>Characteristics of Highest Step (LOL)</td>
<td>No. of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>All have houses because they were given to them by NECORD or ZOA. Sometimes they find it difficult to eat a meal once a day. They don’t have any income. They earn money by begging. The family has disabled members. They have large families (more than 6). Their kids never receive an education because of their poverty.</td>
<td>They are in government jobs or permanent jobs. They didn’t get houses that were given out by ZOA or NECORD and they can’t get any institutional assistance. They can, however, take government loans, and, using them, build their houses. Their education level is better than others (O/L and A/L).</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>There are 6 families out of 157 in this category. They don’t have permanent jobs. They beg for money. Their family size is large, at about 7 members. Four people from those families are mute. They rely on wage labour, and the children are not going to school. They have very low acceptance within the community. They live in a very unsanitary way. They get married at a very young age. Alcoholism is prevalent. But these families have houses, which were built by NECORD.</td>
<td>These are the families that are comparatively rich in this village. Some of them are government workers and some are getting their pensions after retirement. They have a constant income distribution throughout the year. There are 6 families in this category.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table summarises the ladder of life discussions held with each of the study communities and serves to illustrate the differences in movement across them. The contrast between arguably the worst off community in the sample, Semmanthivu in Mannar, and the best
off community, Allewela in Matara, reveals the polar extremes in terms of living conditions and potential for movement within the study communities. The best off in Matara are lawyers, doctors, and people with a large amount of land under cinnamon cultivation. The best off in Mannar are those with permanent jobs and comparatively low levels of education. The worst off in Matara are those who survive on wage labour. They have small houses and education levels that are sometimes as high as those in the highest step in Mannar. The worst off in Mannar are destitute; they exist by begging, they are food insecure, there are many members of each household, and some of them are disabled.

These two communities illustrate the disparities among some of the study communities. The other communities that contributed to this study fall within this range. It is important to note when examining the factors that enabled individual level movement in each of the communities that this movement happened at very different levels within very different contexts.

### 3.3 Movement at the Individual Level

Movement does not have a single causal factor or a neat explanation. It is something that happened for some individuals and households because of a combination of relevant factors and conditions. Combinations that have helped some individuals and households move are grouped into trends in order to examine the broader sweep of issues associated with movement.

This section will be organised around general trends for various types of movement. Each narrative on movement will be preceded by a thread of linked factors that characterise this particular experience. This will provide idea view of the individual specificities of the narrative while still contributing to the discussion on movement based on more general trends.
## Factors Leading to Upward Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multiple income earners</th>
<th>Own business</th>
<th>Remittances</th>
<th>Gvt. job</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Networks</th>
<th>Conflict related livelihoods</th>
<th>Masonry</th>
<th>Wage labour</th>
<th>Fishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allewala</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonadeniya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonagala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudukkudiyiruppu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolombuthirai</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semmanthivu</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most frequently cited reason for upward movement at a household level is having multiple income earners. This refers to households in which children are employed and contribute their income to a common pool of resources. It is also contingent on there being fewer dependents within the household. This reason was mentioned by 6 movers in the North and East. It was one of the ways movers took advantage of the limited livelihood opportunities available during the conflict. People in these communities moved because they combined their incomes within the households.

The second most cited reason is owning a business. These figures are bolstered by the increased demand for bricks for post-tsunami and post-conflict reconstruction. This made brick making in Sammanthurai a profitable activity, which 3 movers chose to engage in.

Remittances and government jobs are the third most frequently cited factors that enable movement. Remittances were cited exclusively in the North and East. Government employment was also mentioned mainly in the North and East, with the single exception of a mover in Matara. This may be due to the fact, during the conflict, only government services were able to function (to a degree). Other potential sources of employment, such as private enterprise, manufacturing, and services, were restricted by the conflict. In this environment, the public sector continued to provide a limited range of services and employment opportunities.

The analysis of upward movement reveals how no single factor was cited as the sole contributor to an individual’s or household’s movement. They were all mentioned in various combinations. The combinations are depicted through the use of descriptive threads and analysed thematically below.

Thirty-six individuals, who were defined by representatives from their communities as ‘movers,’ contributed to the study. This section attempts to introduce as much of their individual narratives as possible. The narratives are grouped according to the issues that made the most significant contribution to their movement. In most cases, movement occurred as a combination of linked factors. Each narrative is summarised as ‘threads’ that seek to explain how these different combinations of factors bring about movement. The threads can reflect a chronological sequence, (represented by →) or a combination of factors occurring simultaneously over a given period of time (represented by +).

3.3.1 Multiple Income Sources
Several factors influence the upward movement of individuals. Principle among them was the existence of multiple income sources, either through a diversified livelihood portfolio or through support from the existence of multiple income earners in a single family. There is also a wide range of such income sources. Traditional, agriculture-based livelihoods such as paddy cultivation, cinnamon cultivation (in the South) and fisheries, dominate and are complemented by income from diversified agricultural activity, and income from other sources, such as trading; transport; small enterprise; remittances; formal sector employment in government, private sector, or overseas; and from conflict generated opportunities such as employment in the Army or as home guards.
Multiple income sources are facilitated by and work in conjunction with many other factors that enable individuals and their families to move out of poverty. These include formal education and informal training; opportunities to learn from diverse livelihood experiences that are often the result of migration and even displacement; the existence of supportive family and social networks; external assistance (both financial and non-financial) from government and non-governmental organisations; and the capacity of individuals to manage their finances through access to credit, through mobilisation of savings, and through investments in productive assets.

Most households and individuals that experienced significant movement out of poverty over time did so because they received income from multiple sources. Within the household (or at the level of the individual), this diversification of income sources enabled them to move beyond the restrictions imposed by dependency on a single traditional livelihood-based income source.

Thread: Multiple income sources (Traditional livelihood (agriculture) + Formal sector employment (Government)) + networks

My husband is a (police) constable and he works for Kamburupitiya Police Station. We think that we are getting ahead. My husband does a job and in addition to that we have an income from cinnamon. The income from cinnamon helps us to be financially sustainable. My husband’s salary is also a great relief. (Mover, F Matara-Allewala)

Thread: Education (Livelihood experience) + External assistance (government –non financial) → diversified portfolio → social networks → formal credit → investments → multiple income sources (traditional livelihood + transport)

From working with my father I learned how to cultivate paddy and then I was able to do it on my own. And after I started the mill there was more income for us. In 1957 I started working with my father in the paddy fields and we got advice from the agricultural department and a fair amount of money which was sufficient to support our family. In 1990 I started working alone in my lands. We used to earn lot of money during President Ranasinghe Premadasa’s and President J.R. Jayewardene’s time and the time period of 1994-2004. Later on I bought a lorry in 1998 and then I was able to take rice (the harvest) to several areas of the island, like to Galle.

From the last 4-5 years since the conflict reduced we have been acquiring wealth. There were difficult times during the peak period of LTTE conflict. I got help from banks to buy the assets like three-wheeler, tractor; in terms of loans, Mr. Sarath Wijerathne helped a lot to get these loans. Also my elder brothers helped me from time to time when I had financial needs. (Mover, M, Ampara-Gonagala)
3.3.2 Owning a Business

Owning a business was another principal factor leading to upward movement. It helped individuals and households move out of poverty in the South and the North and East. It is significant to note that these businesses were possible both in the South, where the conflict had ended in 1991, and in low conflict areas in the North and East. Creating a successful business requires a degree of stability that is not available in high conflict areas. Owning a business was also linked to many other factors, such as good financial management (savings and investments) networks (family), and traditional livelihoods.

Thread: Traditional livelihoods (agriculture) → Formal sector employment → Traditional livelihoods (agriculture) → own business

At beginning I worked in the paddy field with my father, we did not own paddy land. We worked on other’s land. After 1998 we could not continue the paddy cultivation work so I went abroad through an agency. I have worked in a hospital as a labourer there, other than this I also did part time jobs outside. I stayed there from 1998 to 2002. After I returned from abroad I started to work in the paddy field again from 2002 to 2003. Thereafter I have started my own brick making place and continued it. Also I bought a lorry. Unfortunately I do my business on other’s land. Because we suffered from poverty in those days, I thought, if I go abroad can earn lot of money. I had some amount of money in hand from paddy cultivation and borrowed from others to go abroad. Now I settled all the loans. It is a big relief. Yes, after I bought a vehicle (lorry) and started my own brick making in 2003 there is an upward movement in my both economic and overall well-being. I got a loan from a Leasing Company, I think 50% of money is from the Lease Company and 50% is my own money.
(Mover, M Sammanthurai)

Thread: Education (livelihood related experience) + networks (family) → own business

I started to work when I was fourteen years old. I left school in the ninth grade. Our family was in difficulty, that's why I went to work. I did wage labour. At the beginning I got 159 rupees for a day with food. In 2000 I got 250 rupees for a day. Some gave food. Others didn’t. After my marriage I did wage labour for about two years. From my earnings I bought a small goat and I raised it. When it was big I sold it for about 10,000 rupees and bought a wandil madu. One day me and my father went to the woods to collect firewood. The LTTE caught us. My father begged and somehow we came home with the cart. After that incident I sold the wandil madu and built the bakery. I learned bakery work when I was doing wage labour — I worked in a bakery. My brother helps me with the bakery. If he is not there, my wife helps me. From the bakery I had a regular income and it helped me to develop.
(Mover, M, Mahamaru)

Thread: Managing finances (access to credit) + networks (family) → own business
I stayed in Colombo from 1987 to 1994 and worked as a mason. Now I have a bakery which was started during 1987-1988 and if it gets less profitable in the future, I will shift to something else.

I prefer to stay at home. Whether I make more profit or not, the bakery is my own business and I can stay at home and do it.

No organization has helped us. My father took a bank loan of 25,000 to start the bakery. We are not connected to any union (Samithi) in this village. We don’t cultivate anything.

(Mover, M Allewala)

### 3.3.3 Networks and Social Relationships

One of the factors that enabled some households and individuals to access and maintain diverse income sources was the assistance provided by family and social networks. In this section, networks are divided between those based on family structures and those based on political and social linkages. These networks either provided access to new income sources or, more often, cushioned the impact of shocks and provided informal credit and opportunities to apprentice and learn new livelihoods.

**Thread:** Networks (family) + savings → own business + networks (family)

When time passed by we earned money and saved some. First we had to cut the wood with the wood cutting machine which was owned by my husband’s brother. But we found that all our work and his work (husband’s brother) can’t be done with that machine. So we thought of buying a new machine. And from the money we saved and the money which my mother gave me by getting a loan from the Samurdhi bank we bought a new wood cutting machine in 2004.

Before that we had a decorative wood carving machine (beeralu) which only cost 3000 rupees at that time. The wood cutting machine cost 39000 and my mother gave us 5000 and the rest of the money was withdrawn from my bank account in Bank of Ceylon branch in Weerakatiya. Then we were able to do the work very easily and much quicker than we did before. When we didn’t have work we used to get orders for wood carving work. When we didn’t have orders we didn’t have an income. We were helped a lot by our parents, brothers. Even my husband's brother helped us by working with us.

When we found more work we were able to make this house which now we are staying in. Also we had to get a housing loan from the Samurdhi Bank. And I also hope to start a cloth selling business in this area because there is no place to buy clothes around this area.

(Mover, F Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

**Thread:** Education (livelihood related experience)→ traditional livelihoods (agriculture) + networks (family)
From the age of fourteen I did paddy cultivation and after my father started turmeric cultivation I also did it and still in the present that is my main source of income. I was gaining more and more experience. I was able to earn some extra money with the turmeric cultivation and my sons helped me with my work in the paddy cultivation. I didn’t have big expectations in my life so I got the help from my sons and from that my income went up little by little and I used it to pay for my children’s education and their medicines. (Mover, M Ampara-Gonagala)

3.3.4 Education

The study found that informal, livelihood- or vocation-based education helped develop individuals’ livelihood options. Most of this took the form of “learning on the job,” or gaining practical knowledge and insights while being engaged in livelihood activities.

Thread: Migration → Education (livelihood related experience) → own business + networks

Yes the experience I had in Colombo helped me a lot to start new businesses and develop my business. From the experience I had there I got lessons on how to start a business and develop it. In 1989 I started learning sewing, and I experienced a different life from here.

My father started this small shop. And later on my father got a job in an estate. After that he gave me this small shop. And later on I developed this small shop from my own efforts and I bought more things to sell in this small shop. And after some time I started the tailor shop and a girl was working with me. We took orders to stitch clothes from the villagers and we did it. We were earning a fair amount of income. I had to bring more things to sell in the small shop because I need money to make my house. The girl who worked with me got married and now there’s no one to do her work. (Mover, F, Matara-Alleawala)

Thread: Networks (social) → Migration → Education (livelihood related experience) → own business → savings

A few of my friends helped me in Colombo and in Dehiwala. One of my friends in Dehiwala helped me to start a business and shared the profit every month.

First I had to work in the pavement alone but I got some help from a friend. And then I worked hard and I was dedicated to what I was doing. So from living there I gained more experience and through that experience and from what I learned in school I started to develop myself, and because of that now am in a good status. Even at school I had some sort of knowledge of business, but when I went to Colombo I learnt a lot more about that field. After I started my own business I got lots of experience.
After moving to Colombo I learned a lot about business and I got many other experiences, which helped me a lot to build my life. After the experience I was able to manage the customers and could handle the people getting things for credit and don’t pay. I could also generate income from my savings. I was able to control my own business and earn money for myself. So I came up with new ideas for more sources of income and it made a difference in my life. After I owned a house I was safe about this problem. The three-wheeler helps me to develop my business and it is very easy for the transportation of goods from the town.

In the school level I had a good relationship with my friends and that is why I think that they helped me in Colombo to start a business, and those relationships helped me a lot throughout my life.

(Mover, M, Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

3.3.5 Managing Finances
One of the factors that enabled the movers to maintain their status and improve was the fact that they were able to manage their money well. They invested income that they earned and money/resources they received as inheritance back into productive livelihood assets and maintained savings for future use. Movement through better management of finances is particularly apparent in the households in the South, where conflict experiences were more historical, or in the low conflict areas in the North and East, where relative stability and security enabled important economic connections with other areas to be maintained and provided a relatively stable environment for re-investment in livelihood activities.

Thread: Multiple income earners → managing finances (Savings + formal credit) + family networks

We have a three-wheeler which is driven by my son and brings in some sort of an income. After the small shop was started, things got better. We took a loan from the People’s Bank. With effort, we came to a good level gradually. After what we have gone through we can face anything now. Now we are more strong financially, socially and politically to face problems. Because of economizing we were able to save money. I manage my expenses proportional to my income and I don’t spent money over unnecessary things like liquor. My uncles (mother’s brothers) have helped us a lot after the death of my father and they have been there for us all the time until now. They are the biggest strength we have. My wife supports me in anything and she is the one who looks after everything in the household and manages finance.

(Mover, M, Matara-Allewala)

3.3.6 Conflict Related Livelihood Opportunities
The conflict created opportunities for new livelihoods in some of the study communities in the South and in Ampara in the East. In the South, the conflict in the North and East created opportunities for young men to join the army. In the North and East conflict areas, the conflict created the opportunity for people to join the home guard service. Both these options represent stable permanent income sources in an economic environment
where such sources are scarce. These new income opportunities coupled with other income sources enabled some households to move out of poverty.

**Thread:** Conflict related livelihood opportunities (army) + external assistance (government –financial + NGO –non financial) \(\rightarrow\) Multiple income earners

The credit of helping us and doing all these things must always go to my three sons and only because of them we are able to live even in the present. But when the Samurdhi stamps were cut down from 800 to 140 rupees because my sons were working in the army forces, it was getting harder to live. Now the World Vision organization is helping us a lot and even the Samurdhi system is also helping us. The World Vision programme has provided my younger son and daughter with books and other requirements at school. Even they provide funds in the event of my husband’s death. My sons used to deposit money to my account which I used to buy the necessary goods for the house. I think that the nursery which my third son has started has given us some hope in the future. Except that I don’t have money to save or invest. Gradually we were acquiring more wealth but when my husband passed away the situation changed and the income went a little bit down. But when my sons were working we started to improve our life, but when my sons got married the situation again changed and now we are having a very bad time. My sons who joined the army got some skills and they got some knowledge about life too, so after my eldest son left the armed forces he was able to go to join the private security service sector easily. And my third son who is now working in the nursery had helped his father in his younger years. So I think from there he might learn the skills which he now requires. (Mover, F, Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

**Thread:** Networks (family + social) \(\rightarrow\) education (formal) \(\rightarrow\) Conflict related livelihood opportunities (police and navy)+ traditional livelihood .

After I came here in 1990 my husband died from sudden paralysis. From that time onwards my brother is living with me and he has been helping me to do the cultivation. When my younger son (from the second marriage) passed O/L he wanted to go to Colombo to study. First he was in Gampaha with my relative. He was studying at Thurstan. He met a friend there. Since then until now this family (friend’s) has been helping my younger son even for his educational expenses at Kotalawala academy…. After we came here my elder son got a job in the police and we earned well from paddy cultivation, even during the hard periods we worked hard and due to these reasons we are now in a better position than we were at 15 years ago.

My elder son got a job with the police in 1993, this helped our family a lot. We started building the new house after that, he got married, and then recently my younger son got his job in the Navy.

[Our sources of income are] agriculture, and the salaries of my sons, but 10 years ago we had only the income from paddy cultivation. Now we also cultivate saffron
and ginger. I receive respect from my children, my son and his wife discuss and make decisions. I also agreed with them that when they get salaries, they give it to me but I spend it according to their needs. Yes, I am confident that I can face the future, because both my children have got permanent jobs and they are saving and we are doing the cultivation, as well, so we can face the future well.

(Mover F, Ampara-Gonagala)

3.3.7 Formal Sector Employment-Government
Some people used their networks and opportunities to secure government employment. Some were able to also access these opportunities because of their relatively high levels of education. The stable income this provided enabled households and individuals to move out of poverty, providing that the income was well managed and, most often, that it was combined with other incomes and supplementary livelihood activities. Government employment was one of the few permanent income sources that continued during the conflict period. The examples below reveal how this permanent income source helped cushion the economic impact of the conflict and even helped people cope with displacement and return.

Thread: Education + networks (political) \rightarrow formal sector employment (government)
I started working in 1996. I passed my Advance level in Arts. I went and talked with the MP and got the job as a clerk in the port. As I joined I got about 5000 rupees per month. And it increased gradually. I work only five days a week. Now I don't do any other business. We developed to this level because of my job.
I have a loan facility for 50000 rupees at the interest rate of 5%. I took this loan and built the house stage by stage. I have bought some goods (TV, radio cassette player, VCD player, fridge, etc.) for the house. I have savings in HNB (Hatton National Bank) and NSB (National Savings Banks). I also put "situ." Now the period is finished. There were 15 people and one had to pay 3000 rupees per month.

(Mover, M, Trincomalee-Puthukkudyiuruppu)

Thread: Formal sector employment (government) + Education (Formal training)
At the age of seventeen I went to work in the Irrigation Department. I was working as a wage labourer for five years.... I was paid Rs.4.50 per day. In those days I did ground clearance work like cutting grass and digging trenches.
After five years of work I was promoted as a sluice controller. I was appointed to open and close the sluice by which the water level and irrigation level of the giant tank was controlled. I did this work until 1999. After that I got driving training and am now working as a driver for six years in the same department.

We were forced to leave the area and we went to India like the others. But I returned after two months because I have a secure job in the (government) Dept of Irrigation. After three years my family also returned to the village. From 1993-1997 we lived in our village. We will stay here. This is our own village. "Ennavanalum sondha oor maziri varazu." (No matter what happens no other village is quite like your own village.) We lost many of the things we owned. I
have a regular income because I work in a government department I had an income throughout the conflict period. (Mover M, Mannar-Semmanthivu)

**Thread:** Formal sector employment (government) + traditional livelihoods (agriculture)

I’m not working. My husband is working in the Dept of Irrigation as a sluice controller and doing paddy cultivation on leased land.... When we were displaced he went in for wage labour and for selling goods. In 1993-1994 I did tailoring. After we returned here my husband commenced his earlier profession. I stopped my job. In my case an organization helped us. An NGO came to Madu and took us to Colombo and gave us the training on sewing. (Mover, F Mannar-Semmanthivu)

The excerpts above illustrate how secure permanent employment also helped the household to recover and manage the shocks caused by the conflict. The fact that there was a permanent job and a guaranteed income to return to helped sustain the families’ economic situation despite conflict related hardships.

### 3.3.8 Multiple Income Earners

The existence of multiple income earners helped some households to move out of poverty. This was often coupled with an advantage in the proportion of members that were engaged in economic activities in relation to the number of dependants. This allowed members of the household to pool their money and move, despite often only engaging in the traditional livelihoods that were available in the area.

**Thread:** employment in the informal sector + multiple income earners

We are in the somewhat higher status, because my son and daughter have stable income and all three children are graduates.

I started to go to the kovil poojas with my father when I was 12 years old. Until I got married I went to the kovil poojas without high expectation of money. Once I got married I started to go for my own kovil pooja work as a special “Kurukkal.” Until 1995 I had been working as a “Kurukkal.” Nowadays I am going as a visiting special “Kurukkal.” It is my son’s and daughter’s income and my special poojas’ income from kovil.

My son is a lecturer at the Advance Technical institute (ATI). I do not have savings and I do not save. My children have savings and they do save. My form of saving is my children and they will look after us well and they have been doing well.

(Mover, M, Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

**Thread:** Multiple income earners → investments (livelihood related assets)

I was doing paddy cultivation all my life, my husband used to work in the sugar factory in Hingurana during the free time after working in the paddy fields. It is
only from agriculture that we developed, in 1998 my son (elder) who was a "gramarakshaka" (home guard) died from a LTTE attack.

We purchased the Land Master (tractor) in 1998. It was my elder son who purchased it on a leasing scheme. It helped us a lot in our paddy work but when our elder son died we faced difficulties in doing the work, but we continued work and finished paying its instalments on time. This time we purchased the paddy cleaning machine through the help of my brother also on an instalment scheme. We don’t have much savings. We will save and then buy some thing that we need. Since we bought the machine this time we have only about 2000 in the bank.

When we were working in the fields taken for lease, we got a lot of help from our landlord, Mr. Jabar. He helped us to buy the paddy land that we have now. It was his land and he gave us very easy payment schemes. This made it possible for us to have these lands, which helped us to develop ourselves.

(Mover F, Ampara-Gonagala)

3.3.9 Migration and Remittances

The conflict created a great deal of migration away from the affected areas. The remittances that migrants sent back to the members of their families helped their households cope with conflict related economic shocks, and, in some instances, combined with other factors to allow them to move out of poverty.

Migration of a member of the household was not a stand alone factor causing movement. The families that moved received remittances but also continued to have other members engaging in livelihood activities within the community. In addition, they saved the money sent back as remittances, managed it wisely, and channelled some of it into assets and savings.

The breakdown of migrants in upwardly mobile households by their origins and destinations suggest that people in the high conflict areas in the North were able to move to European countries, while people from other communities migrated to countries in the Middle East. One of the features of conflict related migration in Sri Lanka was that people in conflict areas were able to access European and other Western countries because of special considerations for conflict affected people. It is possible that people in the high conflict areas in the North and East had networks in place in European countries made up of people who had migrated before, who later helped facilitate the migration processes of others.

Migration to countries in the Middle East occurs largely because it provides opportunities for earning incomes that are greater than those available in already economically depressed areas in Sri Lanka. Economic migration to the Middle East is not confined to the conflict areas. However, migration to European and other Western countries seems a special feature of conflict areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Conflict-Growth Status</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Migration destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>High conflict-high growth</td>
<td>Kolombuthurai</td>
<td>UK, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>High conflict-high growth</td>
<td>Thirunelveli</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampara</td>
<td>Low conflict-high growth</td>
<td>Sammanthurai</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Low conflict-low growth</td>
<td>Mahamaru</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td>Low conflict-low growth</td>
<td>Pudukuddiyuruppu</td>
<td>Dubai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thread: Traditional livelihood (coir work) + remittances**

After my son went abroad we did better. It could be a reason for the upward movement.

Coir work is the main source of income. But my first son is working in UK. My daughter is also working in UK. My other son is working in Germany. They also send money. But I don't rely on their money. I earn the money I need.

(Mover, F Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

**Thread: Foreign employment ➔ remittances**

I think that we have been able to gradually acquire more and more wealth because we had foreign job opportunities for me and for my son. We have lost our properties due to the LTTE terrorism and other political problems. Due to the foreign earnings, we come to the upper level.

Our main source of livelihood/income at present: My son’s income from abroad. I started working in 1980. That time I went for cultivation work in the cultivation lands. After marriage my earning was not enough to lead my family forward. That's why I went to Riyadh for work. In Riyadh I was driver in a company.

(Mover, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

**Thread: Foreign employment ➔ remittances ➔ Savings ➔ Assets (land and house)**

When we got married we had no place to stay. We stayed in our parents’ place, but after my husband went abroad we could buy land and build a house.

Now my husband works as a driver. He learned from a driving school in our area. In the beginning I do not know how much he could earn but now he is earning about 15000 thousand rupees.

He was able to earn more than we needed so we could save money, then it helped us to build a house.

We are saving now. My husband earns 15000RS, he sends me 5000RS for expenses and the rest of the money he puts in his account, and we have opened an account for my son. We save some money in his account.

The first high point is 2003, when I went abroad. The second high point is when my husband went abroad. These are our turning points.

(Mover, M Trincomalee-Mahamaru)
Thread: Foreign employment → remittances → assets
My husband went to Iraq last year, he earns Rs.20,000/= per month. He sends us money every month, sometimes he sends it once in 2 or 3 months. He worked as a wage labourer for 15 years. Our income was enough only to manage the day-to-day needs. He wanted to come here for some period, because we have some loans to settle. We came here in 1993 and bought this house and settled here. Using the chit system (informal group savings), we saved and that money helped us to buy this house.

One of my daughters is also abroad. She sends money to us and we are building a house for her. We want to stay here and try to improve our [living] standard. (Mover, F Trincomalee-Mahamaru)

Thread: Wage labour and trading → Foreign employment → remittances
Before my husband went to France we faced so many difficulties. We have been severely affected by the 1995 displacement. Before he went abroad he did wage labour and business at the market. After my husband went to France my confidence has increased. (Mover, F Jaffna-Thirunelveli)

Thread: Traditional livelihood (Paddy cultivation) → foreign employment → diversified traditional livelihood portfolio (paddy cultivation + brick making)
At the beginning I worked at a paddy field with my father, we did not have our own paddy land. We worked on others’ land. After 1998 we could not continue the paddy cultivation work so I went abroad through an agency. I worked at a hospital as a labourer and did other part-time jobs. I stayed there from 1998 to 2002. After I returned from abroad I start to work at paddy field again from 2002 to 2003. Thereafter I have started my own brick cutting place and continue it. Also I bought a lorry. Unfortunately I do my business on others’ land. Because we suffered from poverty in those days, I thought if I go abroad can earn lot of money. I had some amount of money in hand from paddy cultivation and got loans from others to go abroad. Now I settled all the loans. It is a big relief. (Mover, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

Thread: Experience/learning in traditional livelihood activities + networks + credit → self employment → foreign employment → retail → assets (three-wheeler)
When I was young I went to paddy fields with my parents to help them. At 17 years old, I went to a brick making place to help my brother. He had a tractor which he used for loading and unloading bricks. I got to know how to make bricks. Now the knowledge I got at that time is helping me to do my own brick making job. After 17 years old I start my own brick making place. One more thing, during June 1991 I went abroad to Saudi Arabia. I worked there for 4 years. In 2003 I start a small shop in my house; my son is managing it now. When I was struggling in my business one person who is from Kalmunai helped me very well. I can not forget that help in my life. He helped in all ways with money and
things. He did not even ask for interest. From cutting bricks up to firing the bricks, he helped me.

My wife’s father teaches me how to manage the shop, because he had experience in running a shop.

Nobody help me to start the brick making business, I started it with my own efforts. After Samurdhi was introduced here I got Rs 5000 and used that to start this small shop. Also I got loan Rs 20,000 from Samurdhi and I put it into the shop as capital. I bought a vehicle to help me to do my work easily and to help me to bring the things needed for the shop. Even in the conflict time it affected my business. Now in the present the only problem I am facing in my business is rain, because during the rainy season I make bricks, without sun we can not do this job.

(Mover, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

3.3.10 Upward Movement: Early Conclusions

Moving out of poverty involves a complex series of choices, shaped by varying circumstances and conditions. This study has found that individual and households move out of poverty because they have more than one income source, and that the ability to command this diversity varies. Each person who has moved out of poverty has done so in an individual way, using a unique combination of livelihood choices and a unique way of adapting to circumstances. Most of it has been through their own effort. These individuals have sought different means of income generation and have managed to sustain their finances and use it in ways that ensure their continued maintenance and growth.

It is significant that with the exception of seeking foreign employment, all of the movers remained largely within the structures of their communities’ economic and social systems. They engaged in many of the traditional livelihoods that other members of their community also engaged in. The innovations they made fit within these systems. They invested at different stages of the same livelihood process (such as moving from cultivation to simple processing such as milling), or combined other economic activities available within their communities. They also made use of available livelihood options such as opportunities to join the armed forces or to migrate for employment. Many ensured that their income was well managed and often reinvested in livelihood assets that would open up new income sources. Informal and formal education and close networks and social relations supported their upward movement.

It is important to note that all of this movement took place in the context of conflict. The communities were affected by conflict to different degrees and often employed different means to cope with it and move despite the restrictions it imposed.

In the next sections we examine the experiences of key individuals in the different study communities who experienced different sorts of movement: those who were able to maintain their wealth over the study period and those whose economic and social situation deteriorated or “fell” over time.
3.4 Movement: Chronic Rich/Never poor

Twenty-seven people were identified as having maintained their wealth over the 15-year recall period. The experiences of people who maintained their wealth over time are similar to those of people who have moved. These people have taken advantage of opportunities that were available to them; they have made the most of the structures and conditions of their communities. The significant difference, then, is that the movers started from a lower socioeconomic position, whereas people in this category were in a better position from the start.

The section is organized in the same manner as the section above that explored factors contributing to upward movement. The threads of linked factors introduce the mechanisms by which these households and individuals were able to maintain their wealth.

It is important to note that all movement categories were established in relation to each other for each of the communities. The chronic rich, for example, are those that have been able to maintain their wealth from the perspective of others in the community. Often this “wealth” is characterized by having access to things that other members of the community lack: Land for cultivation is an important factor for many of the study communities. Much of the perceived wealth of the chronic rich is accordingly characterized by having more land for cultivation over a longer time frame than others in the community.

Another feature of the chronic rich is that they also have access to multiple income sources. Yet, in contrast to the movers, they have been able to retain these income sources over a longer time frame. This reveals in part that the acquisition of wealth by individuals or within a household is possible by moving away from the traditional pattern of having a single source of livelihood and a single source of income towards having an array of income sources, all contributing to a pool of resources, that is then well-managed, reinvested, in other income generating mechanisms, or saved for the future. The main economic activities for all communities, in the 3 regions and across the 3 ethnic groups that contributed to the study, were agriculture and other traditional livelihoods, such as fisheries, brick making, and coir rope production.

Most of the people categorized as chronic rich retained an involvement in these traditional livelihoods but supplemented it with additional income from outside sources.

3.4.1 Land Ownership

In communities where the main livelihood is agriculture, both movers and the chronic rich are engaged in agricultural production. Many of the people characterised as chronic rich in these areas owned some agricultural land. This ownership often spanned generations. They had a secure source of income from the land which allowed them to maintain their wealth over time.
In Hambantota and Trincomalee this type of land ownership was also linked with hereditary occupations. Although these are not paid occupations, they convey a great deal of social prestige.

Indeed, land ownership is linked to a high social status that remains intact over generations. The high status of these households places them in the higher steps of the ladder of life. The issue of land ownership moves the inquiry away from primarily economic lines, to the important factor of social prestige that characterises the households and causes them to be ranked high during the ladder of life discussion.

Government employment is the only other factor that confers a similar social status that helps move the discussion of movement away from exclusively economic criteria.

*Thread: Land ownership + traditional livelihoods (agriculture) + formal sector employment*

Before I got married to my wife, my father wrote the land (legally transferred ownership) to me. It was big help he provided by giving the land because it was on the land that I started the cinnamon cultivation later on. Currently we get income to our family from the paddy cultivation and the cinnamon cultivation. Also my wife is the manager of the Graameeya Bank of this village.

(Chronic Rich, M, Matara-Alleawala)

*Thread: Land ownership*

I was the “Wel Mulaadheni” (officer in charge of the paddy fields). I was responsible for getting waterways cleared, getting fences repaired and resolving any disputes over water. I held the post for 8 years, until 1963.

I had to show that I owned more than 3 acres of land with deeds to the “Disapathi” (District Officer). Also my father was the “Wel Muladani” before me. Coconuts and paddy fields are the source of income. The paddy fields are cultivated by the tenant farmers.

The lands belonged to our grandfather. He had bought them when he was “vidane arrachchi” at Rs.18 an acre.

(Chronic Rich, M Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

*Thread: Land ownership + managing finances (investment in productive assets) + multiple income earners*

From my younger days I had to suffer. Because of my mother’s and my courage we were able to save our lands which our father went to sell for money to drink arrack. I bought this land 30 years ago and I was able to buy three acres of land and the colony house just for 4000 rupees.

I bought a lorry in 1998 and then I was able to take rice (the harvest) to several areas of the island, like to Galle. We all have current accounts and we save money for some time and then we three together discuss and buy something with
that money. Even my son now works at Sampath bank in Katunayake. We think the most important thing in our life is we were able to give our son a good education.

(Chronic Rich, M Ampara-Gonagala)

**Thread: Land ownership**

I got my first paddy land from my father as a gift in 1969. It was a big thing which I got in my lifetime. After that I was able to work separately from my father’s paddy lands and I was able to earn my own income (Chronic Rich, M Ampara-Gonagala)

**Thread: Traditional livelihoods (agriculture) + formal sector employment (government)**

> land ownership

From the early days that we came here we did paddy cultivation on other people's lands, which is called lease cultivation. We got 25 acres of paddy land to cultivate and we worked there. We even did cultivation near the border. But now we have given them to other people to lease. My husband got a peon job appointment in Bank of Ceylon in 1990. And after that we bought our own paddy lands. We bought lands from our own efforts.

My husband’s job helped us a lot to buy land. From our own learning we learned how to cultivate paddy. As time passed the LTTE attack took place in 1999 and then we were unable to go to our fields which were near the border till 2002. We felt afraid going there because we felt that the LTTE will come and kill us while we are working. They killed some farmers by shooting and cutting. So that is why now we have given the lands to others to do lease cultivation.

(Chronic Rich, F Ampara-Gonagala)

**Thread: Land ownership + traditional livelihoods (livestock) + multiple income sources**

I inherited some land and cattle from my parents. I did paddy cultivation and reared cattle. Through that I raised my earnings.

Now I have a mill. I started it in 1998, I bought the land and built it. I bought the machine from Kurunegela. Two of us work on it and after paying the electricity bill, about 2,000 rupees will be in excess each month.

Now I have about 50 cows and 50 eruma madu (buffaloes). I have land and do paddy cultivation in the season. People come to work for me.

I have improved my living standard after we returned from Kinniya after the LTTE problem. We lost everything in 1990 because of the displacement. Before 1990 I had more 150 cows. Now I have only about 50.

I was the mosque “thalaiwar” for 5 years. Two months ago one of my son-in-law's got appointed as the “thalaiwar.”
I was the secretary of the trustee board from 1995 to 2005. I was the secretary of the Sewalanka in 1997. I was the secretary of the community centre from 1997 to 1998. Still I’m a member of the community centre. I helped to take the census in 2001.

(Chronic Rich, M -Trincomalee-Mahamaru)

3.4.2 Formal Sector Employment
Another factor that enabled people to maintain their wealth was the ability to retain long-term permanent jobs with steady incomes. This is important in communities where other peoples’ livelihoods do not provide regular incomes. The government was the almost exclusive provider of this type of employment. This is evident in all three of the regions in which the study was conducted (North, East and South) and across all three ethnic groups.

Thread: Formal sector employment (government) ➔ multiple income earners
Wife: Things were not all that easy (during the conflict period). I had to work away from home for several years. Financially things were not sound all the time.
[Wife used to be midwife until 1993]: Now I am a nurse at the Kariyamadiththa District Hospital.
[Husband at the Bank of Ceylon, Middeniya]
Husband: From 1972 – 1979 I worked in the police, serving in different areas of the island. It was good at that time, there was not much trouble in the country. Then I applied at the bank and I got the job; do I decided to join the bank since the salary was much better.

The army had taken me on Essential Service for 1 month and kept me there, during this time there was no way to come home. We would open the bank and within the first hour we would get a note telling to close the counters. We were in trouble from both sides. When they want us to work we have to work and then the other party starts asking us not to work. So we were in a real fix. If we go against their word it is not just one person who gets into trouble but the whole family. There were fewer problems in our village. Morayaya was where there were problems.

Wife: Our son did not study properly, he did not want to do his A/L and at the moment he is following a motor mechanical course in Matara, conducted by NYSC. So we have to do something for his future also.
(Chronic Rich, F, M Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

Thread: Education (formal training) ➔ Formal sector employment (government) ➔ multiple income earners + land ownership ➔ traditional livelihoods (agriculture + livestock)
Our monthly salary is the main source of income, presently. Also we have large piece of land. We cultivate paddy and rear chicken. These also give us a considerable amount of income. Presently our total income is around 20,000RS per month.
Before 1990, I was a volunteer teacher. From 1990-94, I was in teacher training. In 1994 I was appointed as a permanent teacher. It increased my salary. My husband has been a policeman, so our income increased after marriage in 1997. I save money under “Run Kekulu” savings for my children. However, I don’t keep the money in the bank for a long time due to the interest. And also, we buy land under a system (oththipidiththal) that gives money to land owner and cultivate in the land. After the landowner gives back the money, the land is returned. Through this, we get more benefits than the landowner.

(Chronic Rich, F Ampara-Sammanthurai)

Thread: Education (formal training) → formal sector employment (government)
I started working as a draftsman in the local government office in 2000. I took a government exam to join the local government. In 1998 I did a draftsman technical course, and then to be a draftsman I took another exam in 1999. Now I’m hoping to do an engineering course at NITA in Colombo. After I got my job in 2000, I bought a motorbike in 2004. After that there was no difficulty in travelling.

In 2004 I bought the motorbike from the money I earned and in 2005 I bought a personal computer to do my work. When we came here we had nothing. Now we are in a good position. We have developed gradually. 1987 to 1990 was the most difficult period for us.

I don’t have savings in banks but I contribute to a seettu (informal revolving savings scheme) We have a group of 32 people who each contribute 2500RS per month. I manage on my own.

I developed to this level because of my job, which I got because of my qualifications.
(Chronic Rich, M Trincomalee-Pudukkudyiruppu)

3.4.3 Multiple Income Sources
Thread: Multiple income sources (Formal sector employment (government) + traditional agricultural activity (cinnamon)) + land ownership
I didn’t do any job, I stayed at home. My husband works for the police and he doesn’t like me doing a job.

We have five acres of cinnamon land. Ten years back we were not able to cultivate it because of the violence. Now we hire people and the cultivate land. Ten years ago, my husband’s salary was the only income. Now, we cultivate cinnamon as well. Those are the two main sources of income currently. My husband is now 54 years old but he will continue work for another 5 years. He never idles if he is at home, he likes cultivation and as soon as he comes home he
takes a mamoty (hoe) and starts doing something. He has cultivated some plantains and that brings in extra income.

We were able to do better as my husband got promoted, and there were difficult times, as usual, but we managed to get by somehow. We had to plan a lot since we are a big family and all the children were schooling at the same time. But we managed to come this far somehow.

(Chronic Rich, F Matara-Allewala)

**Thread: Multiple income sources** *(Formal sector employment (government) + traditional livelihoods (agriculture)) + ownership of land + multiple income earners)*

I receive a government pension. I get Rs. 6000 as a pension. Lands belong to all of us.

There is a little cinnamon. We did not plant them. They have grown naturally. We sell cinnamon at 100Kg/year. We have about 3 acres. In 1988-89, we lived with children. At that time, I was doing the job as a postmaster. That was my first job. In the beginning my salary was Rs. 40. I did only this job all my life. I retired in 2000. Education was very useful to get the job. That time I did all work of the post office in English. Therefore, English was a support to continue my job. Our main incomes are my pension and income from cinnamon. In addition, our children are doing jobs.

(Chronic Rich, M Matara-Allewala)

**Thread: Networks (family) → multiple income sources** *(own business + informal employment)*

My husband is engaged in wage labour and I’m managing a shop. We earn about Rs.1000 per month from the shop. (Comment: Since this is the only shop in the vicinity they should be earning around Rs. 450 per day.)

I worked as (cooler) labourer and my father gave us Rs 5000 to start the business. My work and business brings in Rs. 5000 each month. 15 years ago, I got Rs. 3000.

(Chronic Rich, F Mannar-Semmanthivu)

**Thread: Remittances → Multiple income sources** *(traditional livelihoods (livestock + agriculture) + external assistance (government – financial) + networks (family))*

I worked as a teacher in a Montessori there. One of my advance level teachers asked me to take that class. Then in 1977 I went to the Middle East for 7 years, for this I sat for an interview and got through it. I had an aim to settle all my loans related to building the house, so I went.

At the present, the main source of livelihood is relief fund, poultry farm and products from the coconut tree. I think I will get RS.500 to 600 per day. Sometimes one of my brothers sends some money, but not often. For fifteen years I did not have any job. My brothers are very important now, because they look after me. They love me very much. I have confidence, it has grown over the years,
otherwise I can not stay alone as you see now. It is not easy to live alone, especially for a woman, but I can. I want to be in a good position by own efforts rather than through others’ help, that is my wish. I do not have a luxurious life, I do not like it.  
(Chronic Rich, F Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

Thread: Education (livelihood related experience) ⇒ Multiple income sources (formal sector employment (government) +Traditional livelihoods (agriculture))
Since 1986, government contracts have been my main income source. I concentrated on that. However I have 8 acres of paddy land. From time to time I also cultivate paddy.  
I did not learn these working skills through formal education. I got the working experience through my father when I was helping him after my school time.

I left school in 1979 after my G.C.E. O/l. Then I was helping my father in his work until 1986. He was a government contractor. After the death of my father in 1986, I had to continue his work. I earned money and helped my brothers and sisters to study. I’m second in my family. I’m proud to say that my brothers are well-educated. One of my brothers is a principal and another one is a LLB. Another brother is senior bursar in the South Eastern University. My sister has a B.Sc. She is working in Ashraff Memorial Hospital, Kalmunai. She got married last month.

It’s difficult to find labourers to work in paddy lands. Wages are high. Labour problem became more severe after the tsunami, because people don’t like to work as labours and there is a trend of going abroad. Some labours get experience from us and go abroad, then come back and start a contract firm themselves.

I’m proud that there are 15 employees working under me. If I had more investment I can accommodate 550 employees. Now investments are low. In earlier days I helped the people through banks by giving bank loans. In some cases I have paid the bank for recovering other people’s loans.  
Working as a birth and death registrar brings people to me more closely. It helps me to interact with all the people in the area.  
(Chronic Rich, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

3.4.4 Alternative Livelihood Options
Some of the people, perceived by their communities as maintaining their wealth over time, were able to do so because they exploited a livelihood niche that was available in the community. They have moved away from their communities’ traditional occupations and have found another source of income that they have been able to maintain because of the lack of competition.

Thread: Alternative livelihood options (own business) ⇒ Managing finances (investment in productive assets + access to credit)
Currently, my main source of income is the family bakery; it was first started by my father-in-law. He started a small shop, too. And he divided the two between two sons. My husband is managing the bakery and his elder brother is managing the small shop.

It was loans given through the People’s Bank that helped us. We took another loan once one loan was paid off. We get things done mostly on loans and we make sure that we pay them back on time. The bank has some sort of a trust in us and it is easier for us to take an overdraft.

(Chronic Rich, F Hanbantota-Gonadeniya)

**Thread: Alternative livelihood options (own business) + networks (family)**

I started to do barber work with my father when I was 19 years old. Until I got married I did this work without high expectation of money. Once I got married I started to do my own barber work on commission.

I received a house as a dowry. This is the only property that I have had or received in my life. This makes me happy, that I own a house for my family’s life.

(Chronic Rich, M Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

**Thread: Alternative livelihood options (own business)**

Since 1978, I have been doing this business. I have enough income to fulfil our daily expenses and I never had an economic crisis since that time. Conflicts did not affect me or force me to move to any place from here, therefore I have been living here since that time. There were no troubles in the village due to conflicts, village people ran here and there because of fear. I never studied. I never went to school. I did paddy cultivation through experience. Now I’m doing this business also by experience, because I have been doing this since 1980.

(Chronic Rich, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

### 3.4.5 Multiple Income Earners in the Household

Family relations and networks were important for many of the households that contributed to the study, in particular the chronic rich groups. In some cases, the family provided a means of collecting and managing multiple income sources. In the case of the chronic rich, family connections have helped cushion individual shocks and contributed to the long-term sustainability of a pot of resources that many people have contributed to.

**Thread: Formal sector employment (government) + multiple income earners**

At the present the main livelihood is pension Rs.5500 and the earning of my son, my daughter works as a teacher but is still not permanent so she doesn’t get a salary. My main source of livelihood 15 years ago is as a driver at the government marketing department: Rs.3000. I had started my work as a coolie for mason in 1950. In 1955 I became a mason. “Thuraiyappah” is the man who helped me to get this job. Then with the help of the high position people, I joined as a permanent driver in 1978. Unfortunately the department was closed in 1979. So I could not continue my work and retired. Thereafter I did not try any work.
Twice my house was destroyed, but I repaired it again. I feel confidence in myself. I trust myself, which is very important. (Chronic Rich, M Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

Thread: Formal sector employment (Government) + managing finances (savings+ dowry) + networks (family) → multiple income earners

I think we are better now. My husband and I are retired. But in these 15 years, our children studied well and entered university. Now all my 5 children are working and all are married. Earlier we had to earn for them also. Since they are married now, we are a bit free.

I went for an interview before getting this job. Mr. K.P. Ratnam (a community leader) gave me a letter which helped to get that work. With that I faced an interview and was selected as an attendant in the hospital. I studied up to an advanced level, so I tried to get work. Earlier my husband didn’t let me, but then he tried and helped me to get this work.

Now I’m retired. I’m receiving pension money. Now I’m getting about 7000/= My husband is working in the temple and getting a salary of 2000=/=. All my valuable assets are my children’s education. However we have managed to graduate all my 5 children. Since they are graduates, they are in a good position now. All of them are married, so I’m free now.

For my elder son’s marriage, we got a dowry of Rs 8 lakhs [Rs. 800,000]. Using that money, I gave dowry for my elder daughter. From the balance, I built this house. This house is built from the dowry and our earnings. Apart from this house, we built another house near the Milk Board. We gave this house to our second daughter as dowry. Our second son married in 2006 January. Using his dowry of 10 lakhs [Rs 1,000,000] we are going to give dowry for our last daughter whose registration was about one month ago.

Since my husband and I were earning and we planned well to use money in a good way, we were able to acquire more and more money. Before joining the hospital, I was a housewife and I produced small bags to sell in shops. I earned some money from this. This was when I was 33. I reduced the expenses for food and bought books for my children’s studies. With this type of savings and planning I was able to come to this state.

I had the saving habit. I was a member in the local seettu savings group. Also we have an account in People’s Bank.

As all people, I was displaced to Kachchai. When I was there also I went to Point Pedro and worked. All I did was to run from the conflicted areas to protect my loved ones and myself. (Chronic Rich, F Jaffna-Thirunelveli)
3.5 Movement - Fallers

“Fallers” are those whose socio-economic status deteriorated over the 15-year study period. Nine individuals who were characterised as fallers contributed to the study. In the study communities this occurs as the result of an external shock that is not properly managed, and leads to wide-ranging social and economic damage to individuals and households.

3.5.1 Impact of the Conflict
The conflict was one of the most significant shocks that some of the fallers were not able to deal with. All of the movement within the study communities happened in the context of conflict. Movers and the chronic rich dealt with the conflict situation in ways that either enabled them to be upwardly mobile, or to maintain their status and wealth. The fallers were affected by the conflict in a way that has prevented their recovery during the study period. It is possible that these people will also eventually be able to diversify their income sources or simply establish secure livelihoods, and then move out of poverty in the future.

Thread: Education (informal training) → formal sector employment (private sector) → Conflict (loss of assets/livelihoods) → external assistance (NGO-non financial) + networks (family + social)

After finishing my studies I have learned driving and mill work at the mill, which was the biggest mill in our village. It was located at Semmanthivu town. I have worked there for 19 years. After the mill was destroyed in 1989, I lost my job. I was a wage labour in India during 1990-95.

After came here I did farming in 1997, and then my-3 acre paddy field was destroyed by 1997’s military operation. When we were at puvarasank kulam I was a wage labourer. We came here in 2001. Then I worked in the mill until 2005. During that time I have done farming also.

I have studied up to grade 5. I have not done any vocational training courses but I have learned mill works and driving.

All properties (houses and job) were destroyed because of these two conflicts. We lost a three-acre paddy field just before harvest in 1997. The harvest alone would have been worth 40,000RS.

The mill owner helped me buy my house and land. My brothers and friends help me with cultivation. Everything else I earned by myself. (Faller, M Mannar-Semmanthivu)

Thread: Conflict (loss of assets/livelihoods) → networks (social) + Education (livelihood related experience) → alternative livelihood options (own business)

In 1995, because of displacement, I went to Mesaalai. I lost all my things. When we went there an unknown family gave us a room to stay. They helped us in many ways. I sold my wife’s jewelry and started a moulding business. But after
moulding 800 aluminium pots we were asked to go return to our original homes. I had to leave everything. I have still not been able to replace the jewellery when we came back there was nothing at our home. It was just a house. My cousin was working in a construction company. He told me about a vacancy there. When the Manager of the company came to Jaffna I was asked to do some welding work. I finished the work quickly and he was impressed. They gave me a job as a semi-skilled labourer. I was earning Rs.7000 when I joined Mascon. In 1980s I got a promotion and earned Rs.10000.

Now I am repairing motors by myself. I go to peoples’ houses and repair. Ten years back also I was doing the same. The technical knowledge that I learned during 1975-78 helped me throughout my life.

(Faller, M Jaffna-Thirunelveli)

3.5.2 Death of the Head of Household
One of the most frequently mentioned shocks was the death of the head of the household or main income earner. Some of these deaths occurred because of the conflict. In the South, nonconflict related deaths caused a similar shock to the household.

Thread: Conflict (loss of family members) + alcoholism (loss of income) → lack of steady income source

My husband got people to cultivate in our paddy fields. We were well off until my husband died in 1971. That was the turning point in our financial progress. “Makkai thibune neththe aie kaale, dan nam hinganno welai inne.” (There was nothing we did not have in those days and now look at us, we have become beggars.)

I have never worked anywhere. Our parents haven’t even allowed us to harvest paddy, they never let us get burnt in the sun. We didn’t even go for wage labour. We were one of the richest families in this village at that time. (When my husband was alive.)

Note: The daughter-in-law was the daughter of the “Gammuladani” (Village headman) at that time. He was in charge of 5 villages. It is a post with a high degree of social standing. The daughter was not allowed to work because it was beneath the families’ dignity

Now we find it difficult to survive because we don’t have the skills required for cultivation or any other kind of work that’s available around these parts. The main reason for our downfall was the drinking habit of one of my sons. There were a lot of things in this house, my son sold all of them and used that money to buy arrack. That is why we don’t even have a chair to sit on now. My eldest son died 15 years ago, he had an accident while working. My second son used to drink a lot, he fell from a tree and died 2 years back. My other son is still alive but he is not interested in looking after the land.
My grandchildren are the ones who provide us with the bare necessities at the moment. They only provide us with the most essential items and food. My grandson is 22 and my grand daughter is just 19. They are in Colombo and they find it very difficult to look into our needs, but somehow they manage to provide for us.

(Faller, F Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

3.6 Movement - Chronic Poor

The chronic poor are the members of the study community who remained poor throughout the recall period of the study. Eighteen individuals who were characterised as chronic poor contributed to the study. The issues they bring up are remarkably similar to those raised by the “fallers.” The chronic poor have been unable to improve their socioeconomic situation over time because of their inability to cope with external shocks and their inability to access some of the factors that led to movement for others in their community.

3.6.1 Conflict

Some people remained in poverty because of the economic and social shocks imposed on them by the conflict. The death of the main income earner in the household, the destruction of personal property and livelihood assets and the continuing impacts of the conflict environment (including the high security zones and prevailing weak economic conditions) prevented many individuals and households in the study communities from moving out of poverty.

It is significant that the impacts of the conflict caused people to remain in poverty not only in the North and East, but also in the South.

**Thread: Conflict (loss of family member) ⇒ lack of steady income source**

The main reason for this movement or lack of movement is my husband’s death in 2002.

I’m living amidst a lot of difficulties since my husband passed away. We don’t have children and this is my husband’s second marriage. He had children from the earlier marriage. He married me with their consent. But after he died I have nobody here. I live by myself. I do wage labour.

My brothers want me to come and live with them back in Monaragala because I’m all alone here. I do go and visit them once in a while but I can’t stay there for more than two days. I have to come back.

My husband was killed by the LTTE about one year ago. He was shot while he was working on the tractor in a paddy field that we have leased. We didn’t know till he was shot that they were there. I was also wounded but unfortunately I survived.
We did wage labour as well as tenant farming. Because of the LTTE some people are scared of going to the paddy fields. So they give the land for tenant farming. It is mainly after the Peace Accord that the cultivation was happening in a proper manner.

In the 1990-91 time period, when there were LTTE attacks against the Sinnawatta Police, we abandoned our fields. It is because of the Peace Accord that we can go and work in the fields like this.

I’m a member of the Funeral Society. I pay 250/= per season. We get 10,000/= per death from this society. I receive Samurdhi as well. That’s it.

No other committees or societies. I received the 10,000/= for my mother’s funeral.

I bought a “Kubota” tractor one year after I came here. We made an initial payment of 90 000/- and bought it from Kurunagala. We had to pay the installments for about 2 years. Now it is in Monaragala with my one of my brothers. It was while working on this that my husband was shot. Since there’s nobody to drive it here now I gave it to my brother.

There’s no saving for me as such. I gave the compensation money that I received from the government for my husband’s death to his children. From the rest I did an alms giving for my husband’s one-year death anniversary.

We never wanted to move away from home though our house is situated right at the Batticaloa border. My husband never wanted to so I also stayed with him. Anyway it was just the two of us. It was only us who didn’t even go and stay in friend’s houses for the night in this whole area.

(Chronic Poor, F Ampara-Gonagala)

Thread: **Conflict (loss of family members + loss of assets) → lack of steady income**

My husband passed away in 1997. After his death we faced serious financial problems and also the problem of not having a male in this social system.

I came to this village in 1972 after we got the land from the father (priest). We were displaced to Thachchanthoppu during the Jaffna fort attack between the LTTE and the army in 1990. We stayed there for 6 months. Then moved to Mirusuvil in the same year and stayed there for about 5-6 years. Then we ran to Sillalai in 2000. We were walking all the way when we displaced form one place to another. It was very difficult to move from one place to the other since we didn’t have any proper transport facilities. Both the army people and the LTTE made the mistakes during this period.

We lost all the properties in the house during the conflict. There were furniture, electric items, jewellery and other household goods in the house. The Indian army
killed my father and we faced many difficulties after that. Then my mother started working for the family.

My mother was helping me a lot in all ways. She was supporting me working hard. I also can’t work since I am suffering from asthma. We don’t have money to save. We were saving before the war but not now.

(Chronic Poor, F Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

Thread: **Conflict (loss of assets/livelihoods + conflict environment) → external assistance (government – financial)**

We lived in Kilinochchi from 1995 to 1996. We were forced to move from our birthplace after the conflict situation got severe. The fighting was very frequent and intense and nobody could stay at home. We were afraid of this situation and the shells were falling around the houses. The whole village was displaced after this situation. Nobody could forget that incident. We left all the things at home and carried only the necessary clothes. After this migration we couldn’t survive. Our living conditions got worse than ever before. We stayed in Puthukudiyruppu from 1996 to 2002. We were staying in refugee camps in Kilinochchi. It was very difficult to manage things in the camps, and then we moved again to Puthukudiyruppu. There we stayed in a cottage. It was better than the previous situation but not that much.

There were no jobs to do for my husband. He was jobless and life got worse. Finally he was able to get some work in a garage as wage labour.

We came back to Kolumbuthurai in 2002. After the MOU was signed we came to the village in 2002. Our house was not there when we returned here. It was totally damaged and the things at home were stolen. There were only the broken walls of the house remaining. Then we rebuilt the house with the help of the government. They gave 150,000RS for the reconstruction.

I started making coir ropes like my parents when I was young. I used to just do it as a hobby and not to earn any income. It became an income source after I got married I couldn’t continue this work after we were displaced. I lost the machine that is used to make coir rope. I don’t have money to make it now. There are restrictions on this work by the army. They allow us to the sea only for few hours.

The conflict has completely destroyed our livelihood and all assets we had. I lost my house, my husband’s bicycle, our household assets and the poultry. Nobody cared about us during our displacement. We were marginalised and called “refugees” nothing improved in that time. Things only got worse (Chronic Poor, F Jaffna-Kolumbuthurai)

Thread: **Conflict (Loss of assets/livelihoods + conflict environment) → remittances + networks (family)**
I feel better living here but the economic problem is the biggest problem for us because we do not have a permanent job here. But we have another problem, which is LTTE. We can not do anything freely because we are threatened by them.

Before 1990 we could work anywhere surrounding us, but after 1990 we were displaced by the order of the government. Then we lost our property, even our house was affected.

I got to a better status from my own efforts even though my family members and one of my daughters is abroad—she helped us. My family members helped me a lot for my daughter’s wedding, and for my children’s studies they are also helping.

I have no confidence in myself but I have confidence in my children, they will look after me in future. My daughter is abroad so I can manage my cost of living.

(Chronic Poor, M Trincomalee-Mahamaru)

Thread: Conflict (conflict environment) → Lack of steady income source

While I was in Matale, I did not work. We were not allowed to work, but we were living a good life. My father was a businessman.

Now I have home garden where I grow sweet potatoes. I sell them to neighbours, but do not earn that much profit. My husband is working, but he does not care about the family. In 2004 we sold our land in Vanni and got Rs.235 000, and we are managing to live with that money.

When we were in Vanni, I was really worried about my daughters, because I thought they may join LTTE. But I managed to stop that and brought them here. A gentleman who lives next door is very helpful. I do not have a well and a toilet. But he allows us to use his.

(Chronic Poor, F Trincomalee-Pudukkudyirrupu)

Thread: Conflict (loss of assets) + alcoholism (loss of income) + break down of family structures

I started my work when I was 10 years old as a housemaid in many houses (grinding rice, cutting Wood). Nobody helped us after marriage. My husband made things difficult. He is a drunkard. I moved away from my parents after marriage.

Now I’m working as a housemaid and am also maintaining a small farm. (Koali valarpu) My younger son has gone for job in Colombo, to work in a restaurant. He started to work only very recently. My son got married 5 months ago. I spent my own money, which was deposited in a bank account, for all the wedding expenses. We lost our properties (clothes and furniture) during the conflict. We didn’t lose anyone due to the conflict. But my brother committed suicide because my husband kidnapped me when I was in my teens. We are separated from our society. Because of that we have not enough money or any jobs. I believe in my
self but I will be very happy if my husband leaves me because he has another woman. (Sinna veedu). Our society is not caring about us. (Chronic Poor, F Mannar-Semmanthivu)

Thread: **Conflict (loss of assets) + health problems**

I do not have work and I’m a patient. I have to look after my mother, wife, son-in-law and sister. My mother goes for begging.

I do not go for business due to my breathing problem and because I have to look after my family. There are no opportunities for people like us to earn money. I can’t work hard because of this illness. The jobs available in this village are for hard workers.

I started working in 1993. I went for cultivation work in paddy fields in Aravur. Once we displaced, I only went for mobile gram sales.

We have been suffering because of poverty. We are given 5 bags of paddy every year by the Sammanthurai mosque. We normally sell that paddy and use the money for medicine, because my sister is in the hospital suffering from an ulcer and my son-in-law has fractured leg and it cannot be healed properly due to the wrong surgery.

We lost all our assets in 1989 and after that we couldn’t get ahead. That was a major break-up in our life. We still suffer that loss. (Chronic poor, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

Thread: **Conflict (loss of assets/livelihoods) ⇒ remittances + external assistance (NGO -non-financial)**

I had to displace in 1990 because of the conflict. If not for that we could have had a better life now. I could at least go to the Middle East and earn something and improve.

I am self-employed at the moment, doing chilli business and wage labour.

We left for India because we didn’t have any other choice. We were given line housing in a refugee camp. Life in India was safe and we were happy.

“The best time was while living in India.” But my mother always wanted to come back. She said that she wants to die in Sri Lanka. That’s why we came back. After getting married in 1979 I started sewing/dressmaking, and continued up until the time we were forced to flee to India. I even taught dressmaking to girls for 3 years while living in India. I learned this trade from my mother.

We are unable to continue the same type of work here; there is not enough room to keep a machine. The floor is uneven so it is not possible to keep or use a machine in this condition.
Since the return to this village in 2003 I am running a small business selling ground chilli and other spice packets within the community. I got this job training through ZOA. ZOA offered either a monetary loan or spices/condiments to start a small business worth Rs.6000. I took the second option and began a chilli packing business.

Life is difficult with little income. We are able to manage our meals and have enough to eat; beyond that there’s no opportunity for improving living conditions. Especially my sister in London helps us a lot, although she’s married and has a family of her own.

There’s another brother in London but he can’t do much hard work because he has a problem with his leg. They send money to our mother and I also depend on that, mainly.

We lost our place of residence, our homes were destroyed because of war; we left everything behind and went to India.  
(Chronic Poor, F Mannar-Semmanthivu)

Within a conflict environment it is important to note that other social and economic factors that were not directly conflict related also influenced peoples’ ability to move out of poverty. These factors include issues such as the breakdown of marital relations and related resources transfers, indebtedness and higher numbers of dependants as a proportion of the household.

3.6.2 Breakdown of Family Structures
The breakdown of family structure was another shock that prevented people from moving out of poverty during the 15-year recall period. The importance of family-based networks for movement was discussed above, and highlights the significant role that the family plays in a person’s life. The family provides economic security through the contribution of family members’ earnings for common consumption. It provides opportunities to obtain informal credit and cushion other economic shocks. The family provides access to employment opportunities and the chance to apprentice and learn new livelihood skills. The absence of these factors combines to prevent some households from moving out of poverty.

Thread: Break down of family structures
My husband’s second marriage and my daughter’s husband’s second marriage were the reasons for the downward movement in the family.

There were no males to help this family. They left us after few years of marriage. I started working once my husband left me (1975). I went for cultivation work. Nobody helped me, but my husband made things difficult for me because I was not prepared for a working environment.
It depends on the work. If I do not have work for long period, then I go for paddy collection after the harvesting. If I spend one whole day then I can get 1-3 kg paddy. I can’t remember how much we got during the past.

Yes, this period, when my son-in-law went abroad, is the only upward movement in my life. Even though he is abroad we don't get that much assistance from him. Once in a while he sends some money. From that we have to pay back the credit that he obtained to pay the agency.

I did not have schooling or any training for work.
(Chronic Poor, F Ampara-Sammanthurai)

3.6.3 Alcoholism and Ill Health
The chronic poor remain in poverty because of activities that drain away individual and household incomes. Alcoholism was commonly cited as a drain on income. It also caused other health problems and prevented people from motivating themselves to improve their situation.

In one of the narratives below, the wife had to cut short her period of economic migration because her children suffered at the hands of their alcoholic father. Alcoholism continued to affect the family because it reduced the income the father contributed to the household. The money earned by the wife and the children was not sufficient to help the household move out of poverty. The other narratives show that alcoholism also leads to ill health and loss of income, and that, because it can be shameful, goes unacknowledged.

Thread: Alcoholism (loss of income) + networks (family)
It is difficult to improve because of my husband’s alcoholism. He receives about 300/= or 400/=. But he brings home only about 100/= or 150/=. Some days no money at all. It’s a shame to tell you the truth. My husband is a bus driver. I’m rolling (local)cigars. Other than that, my two daughters are making white cigars, using a small machine. They still go to school. Whenever they find leisure time they make white cigars. All the money that my son earns is spent on the home. He is doing masonry. I went abroad with the help of a person who was in Pitawelgama. I came back after two years. My children were sending me letters saying that their father was drinking all day and they couldn't live with him. That’s why I came back.
(Chronic Poor, F Allewala)

Thread: Alcoholism (ill health caused by alcoholism) → lack of steady income source
I drove tractors. I did ploughing with the tractor. I had a heart attack, because I drink Kasippu (illegal local alcohol) So I couldn’t drive tractors anymore. That’s why I am doing wage labour now.

“Tractor weda karana gewalwala kawuruth nobi inne ne.” (People from families that drive tractors drink.) “Yakada goda eha meha karala amarui.” My first salary was about 10000/= for three months. I drove Jude Mudalali’s tractor. I
worked for about 2 years under him. After I stopped driving tractors life became tough for me. Now it’s about 6 or 7 years since I stopped driving tractors.
(Chronic Poor, F Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

**Thread: Alcoholism + Health problems**

[Comment: Started off the interview with the wife but later on the husband joined. According to the GS husband is a “drunkard” and that’s why the family is in such a position. But when questioned regarding economic well-being and the general well-being the wife looked very uncomfortable, looked at the husband, and said that there aren’t any problems now.]

I was expecting my first baby. I worked in a garment factory. I was ashamed to go for work because of my condition. My husband did sand mining. We came here around 1988/89. Before that we were in Matara, which was my husband’s village.

I didn’t work at that time, my husband did sand mining in Matara. He doesn’t do it anymore because of an ear problem which occurred due to sand mining. So now he too does wage labour. World Vision has helped us a lot. I have taken a 4000/= loan from World Vision as well. I have to pay 2000/= more. We pay 10/= to World Vision every month through the “Grama Sanwardana Samithiya” (Village Development Committee).
(Chronic Poor, F Gonadeniya)

**Thread: Alcoholism (ill health caused by alcoholism)**

I am addicted to alcohol, so I have no savings. I receive help from the neighbours. I am surviving because of those who give me food for free and I live in this temple. My duty is to open and close the temple on time. Till 2002 I was earning enough and I was enjoying that money. After I got cataract I could not work. As I said earlier I did not have a habit of saving money. When my mother was alive I gave her my money and I drank alcohol regularly. So whenever I earned I got my money on a daily basis. I drank and wasted all my money. I am not a family man, so there was no need to save. But now I feel a bit bad about that.
(Chronic Poor, M Jaffna-Thirunelveli)

Alcoholism was a factor that contributed to keeping people in poverty across the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups and across the different levels of conflict affectedness. It always functioned as a drain on income that could otherwise be invested in a livelihood activity or saved for the future. In many of the focus groups, being free of alcoholism was articulated as sufficient to move out of poverty. Examining both the people that have remained in poverty and the people that have moved reveals that although it may not be sufficient simply to be free of alcoholism, the investment of the resources saved by not purchasing alcohol could have resulted in movement for households and individuals.
3.6.4 Ill Health
Health shocks, caused by factors other than alcoholism (e.g. old age), create situations where movement out of poverty is difficult.

Thread: Health problems + conflict (loss of family members) → networks (family) + external assistance (government – financial)
I’m not earning. I’m ill, I have high blood pressure and I’m paralyzed. We have no income from home cultivation. I have what my children earn. One of my sons earns by chopping cinnamon. He gets money for the amount of chopped cinnamon. Since 1995, we are receiving Rs 600 as Samurdhi. In the period of 1988-1989, one of my sons joined the army. He passed away in 1997. During JVP rebellion, the JVP stole money from the small shop and it went out of business. We had to give them anything they asked for. We couldn’t go out of the house. They didn’t even let us light a lamp.
(Chronic Poor, F Matara-Allewala)

3.7 Early Conclusions - All types of Movement

The idea that, within communities, some people move out of poverty, some maintain their wealth, some fall and some remain trapped in poverty is central to the study. Each of the study communities has contributed its understanding of this process. People have thought about economic and social dynamism in relation to their own environments and conditions. They have presented ideas about their complex societies engaged in a continuous transformation. It is important that the idea of change and transformation runs through this study. The factors our participants spoke of are still in play and the movements they create continue to occur.

Examining the other components of the study helps to put movement in perspective. The inquiry into community perceptions of inequality, for example, reveals that the study communities do not think internal inequality exists. They are able to speak about and identify households and individuals at different socioeconomic levels. Despite this, they insist that there is no inequality in their communities, giving rise to the possibility that their sense of equality is based on acceptance, on identity, on a sense of belonging and on the associated idea that no one has power over anyone else in the community. This view challenges the study’s preoccupation with movement by providing insights into other important factors. If one were looking towards the future and examining the youth data for some indication of where these communities will be and how they will develop, it would be found that many of the youth aspire to similar economic activities within the same economic structures as their parents. They are more educated than their parents are, and value their education, yet they aspire to retain some of the features of their traditional economic and social system. It seems to indicate that movement out of poverty is not a single goal galvanising these communities. It is a process that they, to different degrees, are already a part of, but it is a process that they will engage in while continuing to retain a great deal of themselves—their ideas, aspirations and opinions.
4. FREEDOM, POWER, INEQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY

4.1 Perceptions of Freedom

A distinction can be drawn between the restricted freedoms of certain groups that have their roots in the social structures and which occur irrespective of the conflict affectedness of the community, and the restrictions on freedoms that are directly due to the impact of the conflict, which impinge generally upon all groups, to different degrees.

In the former category, the gendered norm of male dominance in the home and in society and the struggles of the poor to eke out a living have meant that women and the poor have significantly restricted freedoms. Women expressed their frustrations at not having access to education and employment and felt strongly that there were differences in the way men and women experienced freedoms in their communities. There was a feeling of powerlessness in not being able to change the existing social systems. The women from communities recently affected by conflict appear to be doubly disadvantaged owing to restrictions imposed not only by existing social structures, but also by the conflict situation. As regards the poor, without the necessary skills, education and opportunities, they were forced to engage in arduous wage labour, working long hours for little pay and living essentially a “hand to mouth” existence.

Of the restrictions to freedom that are a direct result of the conflict situation, issues of insecurity and the consequent barriers on the people’s mobility to go about their everyday lives were a common complaint raised in the focus group discussions with the communities that have experienced conflict in the recent past (the North and East). Restrictions on freedom were pinned squarely on the conflict. The frustrations of communities striving to carry out a livelihood in a conflict situation were clearly visible.

There is a distinction in the way different groups and communities conceptualised “freedom.” In most communities, the freedoms that were identified were those that were of immediate concern to them. For those most directly and recently affected by conflict in the North and East, freedom was viewed in connection with freedom of movement and freedom to carry out their livelihoods without impediments imposed by the LTTE or the army. The communities which have not been affected by the conflict in the recent past (Allewala West and Weerakaetiya, and to a certain extent the communities under study in Ampara) were more concerned with different kinds of freedom, for example, “the freedom to talk and bring out ideas, the freedom to travel, the freedom to vote for a person or a party that we like.” (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Matara, Allewala West)

Given that, in the South, the conflict is less recent than that which is affecting the North and East, one would expect people in that region to have greater freedom (particularly in connection with the freedom to move and the freedom to work). Although the study is not able to verify this assumption, it does show that the way in which freedom was perceived in the South is not linked to the region’s historical experience of conflict.
4.1.1 Freedoms Directly Affected by Conflict
Most communities from the North and East agreed that greater freedoms would come from a more peaceful and secure environment, with the resolution of the ethnic conflict. The conflict environment, particularly in the North and East, has greatly affected people’s freedoms. In particular they talked of three kinds of freedom: the freedom of movement, the freedom from an all-pervasive fear, and the freedom from militarised (army or LTTE) violence. Although all groups seem to be affected, the respondents felt that youth and females experienced the strongest impact.

*Old people and the children have the most freedom since the security forces do not check them. Youth here have the least freedom and the army arrests them, suspecting that they are LTTE people. They are always checked and ill treated by the army. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)*

*Men and women here have no freedom due to the conflict situation. They are always facing problems when they go out. The female youth in particular can’t go out in the night during the conflict time; even now it is the same. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)*

*Freedom means we are able to go anywhere without any fear. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)*

*We do not know what freedom is. I think Jaffna people do not have freedom. We are living with fear. We are not sure what is going to happen to us after giving all this information. (FGD Livelihood, M, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)*

*We have to live without any fear. That is freedom. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)*

*Conflict is the biggest obstacle to economic freedom. We lost our properties. We had big brick houses but they were destroyed and robbed by the army. The entire village had become a jungle. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)*

The militarisation of the North and East has placed severe restrictions on the communities living there. Militarisation takes the form of intimidation from the army and the LTTE.

*Violence and conflict. When we wake up in the morning the army is on the doorstep. We are threatened. (FGD, Livelihoods M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)*

*We have freedom. We can go anywhere we want to but our freedom is limited because of the LTTE problem. We cannot go out of the houses after dark, because we are scared. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Gonagala)*
Communities also saw the militarisation as an erosion of their democratic rights and freedoms.

[Freedom] is expressing one’s own thoughts to others without any fear. We are very worried to say that we do not have freedom in Jaffna peninsula. Especially young men do not have freedom. (FGD Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

We don’t have democracy at all. We have to speak in Sinhala, even in Jaffna. Army people arrest us if we don’t speak sometimes. We have no freedom to speak our own language. (FGD Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

In the East, the LTTE “pass system” placed restrictions on communities through intimidation and the imposition of “taxes” and “fines.”

[We should be] able to do a job in our area without any fear, not giving any tax. We should be able to go anywhere we want. We are afraid of fishing at night. This should not be so in the future because it is very difficult to carry on our life like this. (FGD, Y, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

We have freedom but we can’t say that we have lost freedom. We have a little fear in mind because of LTTE threats, but now we don’t have that many threats. In the past thieves used to steal our cows and sell them to the Tamil people who lived in the other side of the border. There were even some times that we used to fix guns where we stored our paddy harvest. But now we don’t have to do it because there is not much connection with the Tamil villages, and now the younger generation is more educated and they know what is good from bad. (FGD, L, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

We are not afraid of anyone because we don’t do anything wrong to anyone. Also we don’t grab other people’s things so we are not afraid of anything except the LTTE. If a man can stay without harming even an ant it is also a great power. (FGD, L, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

Among the communities in Jaffna and Manar, the high security zones operated by the military, the “stop and search” checkpoints and the restrictions on fishing and agriculture imposed by the military presence were the dominant and most pressing concerns.

...Then remove the high security zone and see the difference after 5 years, we can grow faster then. If it is there we cannot go for jobs at any time. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

The high security zone and the armed forces restrictions are the main problems for us. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

...We are living close to the high security zone. The houses in the high security zones must be given to the people to live a peaceful life. They can’t get ahead
without a house. We can’t be sure that another war will not come. (FGD Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Freedom means we are all living together without others’ power, for example, we have to leave this kind of military control. (FGD, Livelihoods F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

As we said, we have to move away from this military control because we couldn’t go out at night, we can’t do jobs at night. As we mentioned before, there are so many restrictions imposed by the army with regard to fishing. There are many high security zones in and around Mannar. So we face many difficulties to do our jobs these days. Therefore we have to leave this kind of control. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

For most groups across the various communities freedom of movement was paramount, as it was strongly linked with the ability to carry out a livelihood.

As we mentioned, we have to leave this military control because we couldn’t go out at night and we can’t do jobs at nights. As we mentioned before, there are so many restrictions imposed by army on fishing.... (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

Remove all camps around our place because we don’t do our jobs freely. LTTE come and attack on Army points, then we have to suffer. So if they removed that we can live freely. High security zones captured more cultivation land and fishing areas, so if they remove that we can live somewhat freely. If those are available there, LTTE people definitely also attempt to attack on the camp. So, to increase the freedom, removes those. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

That means freedom is taken away by other forces, like the army and LTTE. We do not have freedom now. It has been captured by dominating forces like the army and LTTE. (FGD, Youth, F, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

4.1.2 Non-conflict Related Freedoms (for the South)
People in communities where conflict is no longer directly on their doorstep conceptualised freedom in a completely different way. Among them, freedom was related to poverty and the need for hard work. So the freedom to go to “sleep on time” and “economic freedom” were seen by many as freedoms enjoyed by the wealthy, and as freedoms to aspire to. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Matara Allewala West)

Freedom to talk and bring out ideas, the freedom to travel, the freedom to vote for a person or a party that we like. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Matara, Allewala West)

We don’t have freedom, at all. From 7:30 in the morning till 12:00 noon we have to work, and then we have to come home and prepare food for our children and have lunch. And again we have to go to work in the cinnamon lands at 1:30 and
we have to work until 5:00 in the evening. We don’t even have a peaceful sleep because of the mosquitoes. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Matara, Allewala West)

We do have very much freedom. Because of the type of work we do it is very difficult to think of freedom. We have to work all the time to get some money to feed the children. We have lot of problems and the prices of things are very high compared to those of previous times. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

The people who worked in government institutions and who have steady incomes have some freedom. They are the mostly free. The senior citizens have some freedom. Even the children between the ages 5-6 have some freedom. They don’t have any responsibilities. (FGD Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

It is significant that in this community both men and women agree that people of both genders experience the same amount of freedom. People in Gonadeniya with no differentiations of sex have to suffer and we don’t have freedom (ganu pirimi bedayakin thorawa api duk windinawa), because all the time we have to think of a way of earning money and how to support our families. (FGD Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

We want to increase our income to experience freedom. (FGD Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

**4.1.3 Poverty and Freedom**

Does being poor mean you have less freedom? The link between poverty and the lack of freedom was expressed by many groups, and not just the groups in the low-conflict areas.

*Economic freedom is the ability to work and earn money without any restrictions.*

The people who have more money have more economic freedom. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Rich people of the society have more freedom. They can do whatever they want to do. We cannot be like them. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

People who have enough income for their family have more freedom. They have time to think of these things. Others have to work throughout the day if they are doing wage labour or working in their paddy fields. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

Poverty is the main reason for there being less freedom. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

The poor people can’t enjoy freedom since they have to work the whole day. Then they become very tired and don’t have time even to sleep well. They can’t even
enjoy life with their children. They spend all the money earned on food and then have to earn for the next day’s expenses. (FGD, Y, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

The people who earn a lot of money have some sort of freedom, but even they don’t have much freedom. If we are able to earn more money we feel like we are free. And sometimes we feel that if we stop this life we’ll be free from this life. (“mMe jeewithe nawathunoth api nidahas.”) (FGD Livelihood, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

At the same time, for some people living in high-conflict affected areas where both the wealthy and the poor were equally affected in terms of restrictions to their freedoms, a person’s economic status was seen as irrelevant to their ability to enjoy freedom.

Every family in this community are in same economic conditions. Some families they have their children abroad and they have more money but that doesn’t affect the freedom. There is no any relationship between economic levels of a person and freedom. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

4.1.4 Restrictions on the Freedom of Women

The female respondents generally felt that the men enjoyed more freedoms; women do not have an opportunity to gain an education or to get “proper jobs” (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Mahamaru). These views were particularly marked among the Muslim and Tamil communities. Although the roots of these restrictions in the social structures of the communities were the same for the South and the North and East the conflict added a second layer of restrictions in that females were hindered from accessing income sources due to the restrictions on their freedom of movement and the threat of violence.

For the women, several concepts of freedom seemed to intermingle in the discussion. Political freedom, which meant the removal of military forces from the area, was closely linked with freedom to engage in their local livelihood (both paddy cultivation and fishing), and it further extended to freedom of movement. Freedom of education was seen by young women as the most important freedom – there was a strong yearning for education among female groups. Women enjoyed lesser freedoms because of the society’s different expectations of men and women. These expectations were underlined in one response by a male respondent, who believed that the women in their communities enjoyed freedom: “the women have freedom to cook if their husbands or sons bring anything home.” (FGD, Y, M, Mahamaru) He was seemingly unconcerned with the women’s grievances.

Women have less freedom. The women do most of the paddy cultivation. We even do the sowing sometimes, and the only thing that we don’t do is use the sprayer and apply pesticides, but Mangalika akka here does even that (“tTanki walin bahath nogahana eaka withari”). In the families where the husband is a drunkard, women have to run the family—and they do it. Sometimes they have to earn not just for expenses but for the husband’s drinking as well. (FGD Youth, F, Gonagala)
Men have the most freedom and women have the least freedom, because we are brought up like that. If we do anything different, this society will look at us in a different light. (FGD, Y, F, Trincomalee Mahamaru).

Men have the most freedom and women have the least freedom because men are more educated than women. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Trincomalee Mahamaru)

We do not have proper jobs. If we get proper, well paid jobs then we can increase our freedom. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Trincomalee Mahamaru)

Male have more freedom in our village, because they are the heads of the family. They can do anything they want. They use alcohol in front of the children and no one can say anything. Women cannot go wherever they want because they will be abused. We cannot increase freedom because our society will have the same traditions. So it will continue to be the same. (FGD, Youth, F, Trincomalee Puthukkudiyiruppu)

We would have freedom if both of us in the family could work (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Ampara, Gonadeniya)

4.2 Power

“Power” was conceptualised in a number of different ways by the various respondents, ranging from personal qualities of the powerful, “power of arms,” the power in the hand of the conflict parties and armed groups, politicians and government workers, to the power that comes from wealth and education. The communities were mindful of the fact that power could be put to good use in the community, as well as be abused by the powerful. They expressed regret that power was inevitably in the hands of a few who were not always doing enough to develop their communities.

A person who can talk well, who has some educational qualifications, can easily move with people, can contact other organisations and do something is considered a powerful person. For example the Community Centre President is a person with power. (FGD, L, M, Thirunelveli)

Army power, government power, political power. (FGD, L, M, Semmanthivu)

Political power, money power, LTTE power and unity power. (FGD, Y, M, Mahamaru)

Power is the ability to execute the desired works and achieve the goals. Powerful means the able. (FGD, L, M, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

GS has the power that is good but giving power to a normal person is not good. If power is used for peace that is good. (FGD, L, F, Sammanthurai)
It depends on the person who has the power. If the person is good it is good to be powerful because he can help others using his power. If a person could use the power for the benefit of the people it is good. But most of the people use the power for their personal use and to harm others in the community. (FGD, L, F, Kolumbuthurai)

When those powerful people are corrupt and become involved in illegal activities they lose their power. For example, using funds for individual needs by using of their power but that fund was reserved for another purpose, corruption. These activities can be done only by powerful people. Therefore they lose their power. When politicians lose an election they lose all that power. (FGD, L, M, Sammanthurai)

4.2.1 Power Structures in Conflict Affected Times
Similar to the way freedom was perceived, views on “power” reflected the conflict environment in which many of the respondents lived. Power, particularly in those communities that have experienced conflict recently, was perceived to be in the hands of the military, the LTTE and other armed groups.

All the people in this village are experiencing the same level of freedom. Only the people who have arms have freedom [they were not able to name the armed group in the community]. (FGD, L, M, Kolumbuthurai)

We don’t have any power to control the activities done by army. If the LTTE does something harmful to the army they use their power to make us suffer. We suffer if LTTE does something to the army, because later the army comes and arrests the villagers thinking that they are LTTE. This is power. (FGD, L, F, Semmanthivu)

If LTTE come and hit us the boys from the village join the police and attack the LTTE. Then the LTTE comes and takes revenge on the boys and all their family members. We want power to fight against LTTE. (FGD, L, F, Sammanthurai)

4.2.2 Power and Politics
Almost across the board, power and politics was explicitly linked in the minds of respondents. Many respondents felt that politicians were “powerful” in the community. Some felt that politicians abused their positions of power by favouring their cronies and increasing their personal wealth. There was a general disillusionment with politicians across the communities (see section on democracy, below). Power could be accessed through working for politicians but this was inevitably short-lived, as politicians lost favour during elections or became involved in corruption.

If you can go into politics you can get some sort of power. If some others come to power they lose the power. GS also have more power than the normal people. If you are a government servant the position brings you some power. (FGD, L, M, Kolumbuthurai)
The politicians, the officials [prabhuvaru], the rich and the influential in the village have more power. (FGD, L, M, Allewala West)

4.2.3 Power in the Hands of a Few
Persons holding certain positions in the community were perceived as those yielding power at the community level.

Trustees have some power. The community centre and rural development society were functioning in 1990. (FGD, L, M, Mahamaru)

In our community the RDS leader and the GS are the top power people. All the others have equal power. (FGD, L, M, Puthukkudyiruppu)

Power is working in the government sector. Everybody in this village has power but it varies depending on the work they do. People who are better educated, have knowledge and are involved in the government sector have more power. (FGD, L, F, Gonadeniya)

In our village gramai niladari has the highest power, the leader of the community centre has the second most power and all the rest have equal power. (FGD, L, F, Thirunelveli)

4.2.4 Gender and Power
Regardless of where they were from, women generally felt that the men had more power relative to them. The men were the decision makers both inside and outside of the home.

Mostly men have power in the family, this is also one kind of power. (FGD, L, F, Semmanthivu)

At home men have more power. (FGD, L, F, Gonagala).

Men have more power and women have less power because they make all the necessary decisions in the meeting held at Mosque. (FGD, L, F, Mahamaru)

4.2.5 Link between Power and Wealth: Difference in Views
There were differences in views as to the link between power and wealth and whether the poor can truly be powerful in the community. Although a significant number of respondents believed that power came hand-in-hand with wealth, it was interesting to note that about an equal number of respondents felt that power could be captured by the poor, for example, by the temple priest or the Rural Development Society President. Those who were fortunate enough to be able to access power may be able to move out of poverty.

The people who have money have power. (FGD, L, M, Allewala West)
The mudalalis have big power in the village because they have lot of money. (FGD, L, F, Allewala West)

The person who has some sort of power tries to move out of poverty and come out of the troubles he has. And there are people who use their power to get their kith and kin rich too. (FGD, L, M, Allewala West)

People can get more power by being educated and earning more money. (FGD, L, F, Sammanthurai)

[Is there any connection between power and the possibility of moving out of poverty?] No. Even the kovil poosary [priests in the temple] are still in the poor stage. They have some sort of power, more than the ordinary people have. (FGD, Y, M, Kolumbuthurai)

The priest in the temple has a lot of power, he showed it when there was a massacre in the village where 58 people were killed. The government tried to bury the bodies without doing due religious activities but the priest stood up against it and did the burials properly. At that time he showed a lot of power; he showed it by providing leadership and standing up against injustice. (FGD, L, F, Gonagala).

If a person has power and uses his or her power to empower the poor people, then they can move out of poverty. (FGD, L, M, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

However, conflict can change the power dynamics in the community: Those who had wealth and power (and freedom) could lose it overnight due to the conflict.

If we have more money we can live a powerful life. When conflict arises we lose the power. (FGD, L, M, Semmanthivu)

4.3 Inequality

There was a range of views on inequality and on its existence in the various communities. Generally, equality was seen in terms of equal treatment on a number of issues. Groups and individuals could be treated differently as a result of belonging to a particular ethnic group, their economic and social status, the kind of occupation they carried out (and their caste) or their gender, giving rise to the existence of inequality in a particular community.

Not treating everyone in same way. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

If there is a programme in a village where there is majority of Muslims, they benefit more compared to other ethnic groups. In a village where a majority of Tamil families are living the Tamils gets more benefit than other groups. There is no equal distribution among the village. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)
Lots of students were affected due to the district basis quota system for university selection. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Inequality means variations in the living standards and way of treatment. We can clearly see the economic, social, political and educational inequalities in this community. All three are interconnected and make a combined negative impact on the community. (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

We have an economic inequality in our community and it causes other inequalities, as well. For example, when a poor child plays with a rich child the poor child wanted to get the things similar to the rich child. The poor father cannot afford it but will still try to get some things they can’t afford. It makes him suffer by forcing him to take credit and makes him poorer. Due to poverty teenagers go to work and earn money, but as they are teenagers, they spend the money on alcohol and smoking and get addicted to other habits. It also makes an educational inequality; they can’t go to school because they have to work. (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

There is no equality at all. It is only a concept and not a practical one. The rich people here get better education and the other poor people can’t have the access to better education because they can’t pay donations to these schools. We have to go to the small schools and there are no facilities for these students. Education is not equal to all; jobs access is not equal to all. We can’t understand this, but the economic status of all the people in this village have been affected in an equal manner due to the conflict. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

There are some conflicts within the community. That is why there are some misunderstandings and social inequalities. Economic and education differences are there in the community. These differences affect access to economic opportunities. There are economic and education differences among youth. (FGD, Youth, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

It means treating people by caste. Some are educated, some aren’t. The profession they are doing traditionally. Some are higher in caste, some are low. These are the differences among the people in the community. Sometimes they affect common activities. (FGD, Livelihoods, Youth, F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

Also there are differences between the educated, the castes and the ethnic [groups]. In our village we don’t have differences because of our castes but outside of our village it is there. (FGD, Youth, M, Matara, Allewala West)

There were caste issues 15 years ago but they are not in existence anymore. Now there is no problem in the case of marriages. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Matara, Allewala West)
There is no equality between the genders. (FGD, Livelihoods, Youth, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

Some do everything and some wait until the husband comes back to home. In this village men go to work women don’t do any jobs. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Samththuwaminmai [no equality]. But here we feel inequality much less. In the case of wages, it is different from male to female. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

At the Mosque we have meetings, and in them we make decisions, but as women we do not get opportunities to express ourselves. Even young males do not get this opportunity beyond a certain extent. (FGD, Youth, F, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

Another social inequality is that women are not allowed to travel alone but men can travel wherever they want to go. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Despite this range of perceptions about inequality, there were some people who were clear that, in their communities, everyone was equal.

Treating people according to individual backgrounds is inequality. We do not have any inequality in this community. We all live in this village as a family, so we do treat everyone the same. Anybody can join the community centre and any woman above the age of 18 can join the WRDS. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

In the past the whole village was ruled by the manor house [walauwwwaw]. The people had to get permission from them even to shave their beards. They had to walk with their heads bowed and remove their shawls and take their loin cloth to their hands. We were not even allowed to sit with them. That was inequality. But now it has changed. It is different now. Everyone is the same. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

There is no inequality in this community and all have the same access to resources. Compared to previous years it has declined now. When people improved, inequality comes down. Also education reduced the inequality. Anybody in this village can influence the key decisions, which affects the community. We make decisions with the help of the GS and participate in it. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

Everybody in this community is living with equality. Earlier there were people who were much more well-off, but because of the conflict now everyone fell down and is in the same heap. (FGD, Livelihoods, Youth, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

In the social level all are the same. There is no difference shown between men and women. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)
Some communities raised the issue that although there might not be inequality in their villages, when comparing the treatment of their village with other communities, for example, in connection with development projects, there was inequality. For instance, respondents from Mahamaru felt that their community was being discriminated against because it was considered a “UNP village.”

_Everybody in the village has equality but if we compare our community with the external world then there is no equality. When we take in to account the development projects in the other communities our village was not treated with equality at all._ (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

_Those things are endless and always we have to face it [ewanam ananthai apramanai]. Whenever some aid comes through the government to our village the better things won’t come. We get only the leftovers._ (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

_Politicians have a policy of achieving their targets, after which they will not see people’s problems. The people who supported political parties only get the help from them. They select their members first._ (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

Discussions about inequality raised the issue of community “unity.” It was interesting that common experiences shared by people affected by conflict, such as displacement, brought about a sense of unity and broke down differences leading to greater levels of perceived equality. For example, in Puthukkudiyruppu, respondents felt that since most of this community comprised displaced people from different areas of the country, the traditional deep-rooted cultural and social notions of caste and class were almost non-existent.

_We do not have inequality. People in this community had been displaced from several areas, so nobody believes in caste, and our economic level is also almost the same, so we do not have inequality._ (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyruppu)

_We in this community came from various areas and live together, so we do not have any caste or religious variations in this community. Economic inequality causes some social impacts, but it also does not split the community. Access to economic opportunities is not affected by social inequality. Youth in this village do not believe in the caste system and social inequality and most of them do not know which caste they belong to. We work together and do not allow the inequality to grow._ (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyruppu)

In contrast, the focus groups from Mahamaru felt that on returning from their period of displacement, economic inequality has surfaced in the community, with economic opportunities available only to the fortunate. Similarly, respondents from Gonagala
described the resettlement experience in terms of lack of social unity, leading to greater inequality.

\[ \text{It is not good to have inequality, in general there should be economic equality among everyone in the village but it is not practical. People earn more or less based on their commitment. But opportunities should be equal, before there was not any economic inequality. But after the displacement we all are not in the same economic level. (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)} \]

\[ \text{There is no equality at all. There are people from three districts in this village. Their customs, traditions, and the way they behave in the society—even their attitudes are very different from one area of the same village to the other. If there is some common thing to do, people get divided according to the bund. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Gonagala)} \]

\[ \text{There were a lot of inequalities in the village when it comes to religious events as well, for example, in the village temple committee. So people decided to dissolve it. Pala daitha gammana samupakara samithiya. The Turmeric Society is also inactive because of these problems. Only the people who are in the committee dry turmeric, they peel them all by themselves. So people are not united. These things had been happening for many years now. No matter what we initiate in the village it falls apart because of this. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Gonagala)} \]

\section*{4.4 Democracy}

The responses on the concept of democracy were mainly tied to the conflict environment and the failures of the government. Their lack of a detailed discussion and development of ideas around democracy (unlike the concept of freedom), beyond simply election time, demonstrate that for many in these communities there are more pressing needs than being concerned about remote ideas like democracy. This is borne out in the way the respondents conceptualised democracy.

\[ \text{If we can purchase enough things for 500 rupees, we have democracy. If people can live without any problems, that is democracy. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Matara, Allewala West)} \]

\[ \text{Citizenship and voting rights: Because these are the most important rights for every human being. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)} \]

\[ \text{The people who were born and bred in Sri Lanka have votes. So through democracy they can be given equal rights. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)} \]

\[ \text{It is now better here than the past. Democracy means the freedom to think and the rights we have in relation to each other. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Ampara, Gonagala)} \]
Even though democracy was there in this village, the village didn’t develop because there was poverty there. Democracy has an impact on the development of a village. The people who talked about democracy didn’t bother about the village. There is an improvement in the democracy in the village, most of the people are now educated and even in the village work now the best person gets the opportunity. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

Democracy means our needs should be fulfilled by ourselves, without interruptions from others, with freedom. We don’t have democracy at all. Personal freedom, without interfering with others’ freedom, and equality are the most important features to making democracy work. We have to achieve that through peace in our country. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

All are treated equally. (“Makkalal makkalukkaha” [for people by people]). (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

Having the freedom to say and do what you want to say and do. Unity, togetherness and representation of each and every person. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Ampara, Gonagala)

The concept of democracy was perceived by one community as “an empty word,” as a notion not worth “getting excited about.” (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

This view seems to permeate through other communities: Disillusioned by politics, politicians and broken promises, they held a dim view of the existence of democracy in their communities. The communities of the North and East felt that it was meaningless to talk of democracy within the context of a conflict, linking democracy with freedom. In the South, there were some interesting remarks about the situation now compared to the time of the JVP insurrection in terms of democracy.

Now it is only a term for us. Even the people who talk about it don’t know the meaning of it. Now people don’t have an interest to know about it. The people who speak about it most are the people that abuse democracy the most. They don’t even know what it means. It is an empty word now, without any meaning. People don’t get excited about it anymore. They do not have any interest in it.” (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

We cast our vote and that’s about it. (FGD, Youth, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

Now the people who talk about it have insulted that word. It didn’t change but it was the same even in the past. Now they have even made the word something dishonourable. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

We have to stop the war first to talk about democracy. We can’t talk about democracy when we have war. If there is a war in the community there is no
democracy, no peace. The country should be in a peace situation. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

I went to the polling station to vote for two elections but my vote was used by some others before I went there. This is the democracy we have in this society. We don’t want to talk about these groups. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

In this situation local government has limited power and it is useless to talk about local government because we want peace first; after that the local government can function. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

A government that ensures the peace in the country is a democratic government. (FGD, Youth, F, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

We don’t have democracy at all. We have to speak in Sinhala even in Jaffna. Army people arrest us if we don’t speak sometimes. We have no freedom to speak our own language. Youth don’t participate in politics. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Compared to the situation in 1988-89, now we have a very good level of democracy. Now Wimal Weerawansa is shouting on the television, if I can catch him, I will cut him into pieces. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Matara, Allewala West)

Yes there is more democracy now, during the JVP conflict period we did not have democracy. We didn’t even have the right to talk or criticize them and if we did that we were threatened by sending letters. (FGD, Livelihoods, F, Ampara, Gonagala)

4.4.1 Disillusionment with Politics

There was a general sense of disillusionment and frustration with politicians and local politics across all communities. Politicians were seen as making false promises during election times, “cheating” the villagers, especially the youth, and doing things only for their supporters. Several respondents spoke about bribery and corruption among politicians.

Anyway all the leaders in this area didn’t have any feeling for us or about the village. They only come here when the election time comes. After that we can’t find them. If they felt anything for us they could have stopped this attack and prevented the damage. They always come with their nearest supporters to the village and cheat the people by giving them expectations that they will have a good time and grab the votes and then they won’t come after the election. Even when we go to get some public work done to the village they won’t bother about that. But they always work for their closest supporters, and the supporters who come to the village and lie to the people won’t bother about the public works, they try to get their private work done. (FGD, Conflict Time Line, M, Ampara, Gonagala)
During the election time the people who work for the local politicians are involved in politics. It is very rare that we find in this village people getting involved in politics. Some help their community after winning the election. Some forget everything and come again during the next election. They can use their influence until they are in power. After that they lose all that power and influence. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Most of the government officials take bribes. There are very few who are honest. About 90% of the people are corrupt. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

The number of political parties is increasing, but nothing is happening. Normally from this community no one goes into politics. Political parties sometimes come here and do campaigning, but nothing is done. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

We vote for the candidates that stand for peace. We don’t believe the promises of politicians because now we are only focused on peace, on stopping the war. Now politicians are talking about peace talks and bringing peace to the country. The most important issue for this community is war, if they can solve the problem we will vote for them. (FGD, Livelihoods, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Although the youth have found work during elections and supporting campaigns, the perception of politicians in the minds of the adults were reflected in the views of the youth: They, too, had a low opinion of politicians. This disillusionment explains why the youth have no interest in getting involved in politics beyond election time.

Youth participate in the local politics. They support the politicians during the election period. They go canvassing with the politicians, paste the posters and go for their other election campaign activities. They only look out for their pocket, not the people. [“Avarhal avarhaludaya pocketty than parparhal.”] (FGD, Youth, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Politicians came here in election times and gave many promises, but after the election we did not see them. Now politicians come and say that they are not going to provide electricity or build roads, and ask us to support them in fighting for freedom. (FGD, Youth, F, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

There is no interest in politics and elections now. Youth also are not interested in participating during the election period. (FGD, Youth, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

Most youth don’t join in politics. Some do. (FGD, Youth, M, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)
People’s dislike for politics is growing every day. The villagers don’t like lies. They do not like to get into politics and lie, or be lied to. (FGD, Youth, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

5. ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH

The responses elicited by the questions put to the youth of the communities on their aspirations underlie, to a large extent, their lack of hope for the future, faced with the conditions of their current situation. For many, their aspirations did not go beyond the wage labour livelihoods of their parents. Although some aspired to get a good education, many seemed disillusioned with the quality of the education system and had come to believe that, rather than a formal education, it was skills training that would be most beneficial for greater access to livelihoods.

Factors that Guided Youth for the Future

For some youth respondents, support from their parents and schools was considered an important factor in guiding and preparing them for their future lives. Learning a trade from parents was seen as a good way to secure employment, but others felt their choice of employment was restricted to what their parents did.

The important thing is our parents’ help. They help us as much as they can. (FGD, Y, M, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

We have school education and knowledge from parents only. (FGD, Y, F, Matara, Allewala West)

Most of us are traditionally wage labourers. So we have this job in the future, also. Some of our parents were doing brick making and quarrying, so these skills will also help us in future. (FGD, Y, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Our parents have been giving all the facilities to continue our education. (FGD, Y, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

We need to get better jobs than the jobs our parents do. (FGD, Y, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Not surprisingly, the economic status of the family to which the youth belonged was a limiting factor.

Some children are unable to continue their studies due to the poor economic condition of their families. (FGD, Y, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

For others, neither the family nor other factors played any role in shaping their future or setting them up. Their own knowledge and actions were all they could turn to.
Because of our education, we know how to get to places and get things done. (FGD, Y, F, Matara, Allewala West)

We can not find anything to help us to prepare for the future, presently. Some years back there were some training programs conducted by an NGO on palmyrah product development. Some from this community benefited much from that program. Some NGOs recruited us in some construction projects, but now it also has decreased due to the fluctuated environment. (FGD, Y, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

Disillusionment with the education system and the quality of the teaching were real concerns among the young men and women respondents. Greater computer literacy was cited a number of times as a skill that could give youth an edge to move up. Pursuing higher education was not seen as worthwhile, given the perception of the number of graduates in the country without jobs. The frustration of the youth in not being able to have a greater choice of livelihoods was clear.

The village school gives opportunity to study up to O/Ls and also A/Ls in the arts streams. Students attend school only in the first year of the A/Ls. In fact, now the teachers cannot teach the second year syllabus because they don’t have experience; both teachers and students are at blame for this. The teachers who conduct tuition classes are not teaching at school properly. Computer education offers an opportunity for us to have an edge at the village level. Although classes are conducted up to O/Ls there are still problems. There are disruptions to English education, at times due to staffing problems. We feel that there is no point in pursuing higher education as there are graduates without jobs across the country. (FGD, Y, M, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

If we get computer knowledge in the village, it will be better for the youth. (FGD, Y, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

We lost our education. We consider education to be our main goal because it has contributed the leading role in our life. (FGD, Y, M, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

We need a better education and some sort of experience to get a better job in the future than doing rope making and fishing. (FGD, Y, M, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)

Education, computer literacy, and experience helped youth to prepare for the future. Nowadays education is not a limitation to get a job, because all the youth have an education. So experience and the attitude towards the work are important. And if we have the experience then we can get a good job. That is why we are going to a job which does not pay a good salary, but to get experience we are still there. Computer literacy brings us to the real world to earn money and learn the things which we do not know. (FGD, Y, F, Jaffna, Kolumbuthurai)
The importance of vocational training was emphasised and some youth felt there could be more made available in terms of training workshops.

Sarvodaya started 11 years ago. Now it is about 4-5 years since I have joined. There is some vocational training conducted by Sarvodaya, with the participation of the villagers. (FGD, Y, F, Matara, Allewala West)

There are very few training workshops (FGD, Y, F, Matara, Allewala West)

We should have opportunities to improve our knowledge. (FGD, Y, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Some cited village institutions like the village temple, development societies and Buddhist associations as helping to guide the youth for the future.

The help and the guidance we get from the temple are more important and helpful to build our future life. Even our parents, the school, our teachers, and the dharma school help us a lot to prepare for the future. But we can’t have big expectations of being much richer, because of our village has fallen down politically, economically and socially. (FGD, Y, M, Matara, Allewala West)

Their work in the Buddhist association has given some youth greater voice within the village. (FGD, Y, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

We can say that the WRDS [Women’s Rural Development Society] is the best organization we have in this community. It gives some sort of confidence about the future. It has been doing two key projects in this village. They are sewing training and a loan facility. Most of the women above the age of 18 serve with WRDS. After the sewing and painting training, now some of us have already started to sew garments for order. UNDP has given some amount of money to WRDS and it is given people low interest loans to form their own self-employment. (FGD, Y, F, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

Others pointed to the social structures in place in their communities and elsewhere that favoured certain groups and hindered others from getting ahead. The inability to speak Sinhala was seen as an impediment to Tamil-speaking youth.

The society system and the level of elite people have always been a great barrier to our future progress. We have the gap between the rich and the poor in this village. They always obstruct us from coming forward and they won’t give us an opportunity to develop our abilities. They always try to trample us or prevent us from taking the initiative. (FGD, Y, M, Matara, Allewala West)

We have language problems. We have to do everything in Sinhala. (FGD, Y, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)
The importance of infrastructure was stressed. For example, the introduction of electricity has had a real benefit in the educational achievements of the Mahamaru village; the lack of electricity was mentioned as an impediment in Puthukkudiyiruppu.

We have a school there up to A/L (Arts only). There are some students that have been selected to attend the university and the college of education. Some of them have finished their courses. The Electricity facility also improved our studies because it helped us to conduct classes at night. So we can be proud of these educated people. (FGD, Y, M, Trincomalee, Mahamaru)

There was nothing special or extraordinary that helped us. We don’t have electricity and we don’t have a school in our village. Most people leave school before completing their education because they don’t want to travel that far everyday 
(FGD, Y, F, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

The financial condition of our village plays a major role in our future. We don’t have any facilities in this village. We have transport problems. The factory at Ninthavur is closed. (FGD, Youth, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Obstacles facing youth
The lack of loans for young entrepreneurs was highlighted as an obstacle to starting a business. The conflict has restricted investment in the North and East. Only Samurdhi was mentioned as a potential source of credit for emerging entrepreneurs.

We have high hopes about the loans. But there is no one to help us out. I’m thinking of doing the chilli cultivation. First I have to buy a pump to get water for the cultivation. I have an idea of starting a self-employment to produce chilli packets for the market. Then I can employ 4 others (FGD, Y, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

Youth who have studied computers and tailoring should be helped to start self-employment. (FGD, Y, F, Ampara, Sammanthurai)

Samurdhi is the other help. Five people are in one Samurdhi group and pay thirty rupees as a monthly membership fee. They provide loans for people to start self-employment. (FGD, Y, F, Jaffna, Thirunelveli)

Others blamed the poor economic situation and the impact of the conflict on the community, on their freedoms and on their education as obstacles to realizing their goals for the future.
The first obstacle is the lack of good job opportunities and good education. The education was disrupted because we had to displace so many times due to the conflict. There was no possibility of travelling wherever we want to go. If we can do that then we can go wherever we want, find employment and improve. People in Colombo might have big aspirations regarding their future but for us it's very simple: If we can have food or the basic necessities to survive the day that's enough for us. (FGD, Y, M, Mannar, Sammenthivu)

Because of the civil war, youth are living in fear. Because we used to run to the jungle during the night to hide from terrorists we could not study properly, the education opportunities are very low and we don't have good schools. If we get good infrastructure, especially roads, we can develop the village ourselves. (FGD, Y, M, Ampara, Gonagala)

We in this community see the fluctuation in the security situation as the major obstacle for realizing our future goals. We cannot plan anything in this condition. We cannot predict or forecast the future. (FGD, Y, M, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

The main obstacle is the economy. Most people in the community are doing daily wage labour. They think the money that they earn from this is enough to live on. They don’t expect to develop or improve their lives any further. There is another problem, which is war. If the war begins, we have to lose all our properties. So people do not like to have more properties. We can see a big backwards movement in education in our village. Otherwise we could have continued our traditional jobs and could have a good status in the community. Transportation to Trincomalee town is very difficult. Transport facilities are very poor. (FGD, Y, F, Trincomalee, Puthukkudiyiruppu)

The problem of alcoholism among fathers and the youth was considered to be a real obstacle to youth progress.

“Kasippu” is one of the main problems. “Ganja” is popular among the youth. But it’s not popular. The Tamil people are the ones who are doing it. There are some agents in this village. Even the son and the father drink together—this happens on a large scale. The security forces catch them, but when they are released they come back and do the same business again. They are doing it for easy money. If people can find easy money they will do anything here. (FGD, Y, F, Hambantota, Gonadeniya)

Most of our youth, like 90% of this village, are jobless and they are engaged in drinks [alcohol] because they are jobless. There is no one who is responsible to guide us other than the head priest of the temple. (FGD, Y, M, Matara, Allewala West)
6. Looking beyond the Tools- Particularities of Moving out of poverty in Conflict-Affected Areas in Sri Lanka

This section attempts to go beyond the cross-comparison of ideas arising from the study tools and to provide analysis on the wider context of moving out of poverty in conflict affected areas in Sri Lanka.

6.1 Single Changes

The study communities revealed that sometimes single changes such as improved access to electricity, pipe-borne water or transport facilities is a big change in and of itself, and in many cases is valued as such. It is not simply a link in a chain leading to movement. Many of these changes are linked to improvement of living conditions and recovering from conflict. This section introduces examples of changes that have already happened and the extent to which the communities value these changes.

Before the 1990s there were no brick houses. But now we have brick houses. (LOL F Mannar- Semmanthivu)

2005 World Bank project: housing construction
This provided money for 71 families to build their houses. It paid Rs. 250 000 each for fully damaged houses and Rs. 100 000 each for partially damaged houses. Conflict affectedness data were collected from the community and priority was given to the families with disabled members, more damage and higher numbers of family members. The beneficiaries had to own their land and have a monthly income of less than 2500 RS.
(KI CTL LOL M, LOL F Jaffna- Kolombuthurai)

2004 World Bank housing project
World Bank provided 250,000 RS per family to 49 families to construct houses. The beneficiaries had to be affected by the conflict and have below Rs. 2500. Many other people have lost their houses; they were not selected because some didn’t own any land and others had a monthly income over Rs 2,500. The money had to be used only to buy the materials needed for the house. The people themselves had to do the non-technical work. As a result of this project, people got some happiness in their lives. Also they were able to invest other money to start small businesses.
(KI CTL Jaffna- Thirunelveli)

Electricity was given to us in 1993 with help of Mr. Mahroof (M.P.) when President R. Premadasa was in power. After we got electricity the education level increased. Now they conduct extra classes and children can study at night. The school now has residential facilities for some students. Electricity also increased daily brick production from 500 to 3500. Because we use an electric pump to pump the water and we start work at 2:00 A.M. to avoid the sun. Also some
businesses have improved because of electricity, like the mill and the timber workshop.
(LOL M KI CTL, LOL M Trincomalee-Mahamaru)

2002 ZOA built wells
ZOA built three wells and a tube well to reduce the water scarcity. The water table is very low and they had to dig sixty feet to get the water. It cost 300,000 RS to dig each well. It is too expensive for the villagers. They cannot pay this much money. Though the pipeline water supply line to Mannar is going very close to this village and the water resource of this village (the giant tank) is used to feed this line, the villagers do not receive piped water. The whole village depends on the wells that were built by ZOA.
(KI CTL Mannar-Semmanthivu)

2002 NECORD project
In 2002 NECORD provided 79 houses for the people in our village. This housing scheme was helpful only for the people who have been displaced from this village. These houses are cement houses and they allocated around 75 000/= for one family to build a house. They provided only building materials and one mason. Other expenses were to be borne by us (more than 25 000/=). Some houses have not been completed yet. We want to thank them because after we came from the Puvarangkulam we didn’t have places to stay, so we made ourselves temporary houses using coconut leaves and timber and had to live in them. It was so difficult to stay in those houses during the rainy seasons but after NECORD provided these houses we are living in better conditions. It is one of the important things that helped our community to prosper.
(LOL M Mannar-Semmanthivu)

2002 ZOA temporary housing project and loan system
The ZOA provided 60 houses (temporary housing scheme) for us. These have fewer facilities than NECORD’s houses. They used cement to make up the floor of the house and the other parts were completed by using iron bars, coconut leaves and tin for the roof. But now they have provided ZOA’s temporary houses to the new comers. ZOA provided wells and toilets also. In 2005 ZOA introduced a loaning system to improve small-scale chicken production in our village. They provided 12 000/= per family, and we have to repay only 6000/=. But they observed all the farmers’ activities. Other than that they provide loans to RDS (Rural Development Society) to give loans to people and Fisheries Associations also get money from ZOA to give credit to their members. Because of their help our RDS and Fisheries Associations are running successfully.
(LOL M Mannar-Semmanthivu)

2000 - Samurdhi constructed a tank in this year
60-80 acres of cultivation land depends on this tank during rainy season, but during the off season they get water from “Kaikadee tank” (It was built 60 years ago) to cultivate. In earlier periods the “Kaikadee tank” was used to cultivate 150 acres of land but now only about 60 acres can be cultivated because there is only a little water.

2004 - 10 families of this village got a water supply under a special project during this year. We were given 3.6 million rupees to fund this project. It happened due to the MP’s involvement under the PA government (Mr. Anwar Ismail and others). Because of this project more than 30 families get benefits through their neighbors’ water supply (those 10 families).

(KI CTL Ampara-Sammanthurai)

These changes viewed in isolation made a huge impact on the communities. They are referenced to the interviews in which they were first mentioned. Many members of the study communities spoke about the impact of these changes. All of the examples above are from communities in the North and East. They reveal how important a single change was to the communities’ process of recovery from conflict.

6.2 The Conflict Cycle

Communities in conflict affected areas feel threatened by the actions of armed forces, including the establishment of high security zones (Jaffna), communication between villagers and army personnel, and different treatment by the army of communities of different ethnicities. These lead to a deepening sense of insecurity and resentment toward these forces. In such an environment, it is difficult to imagine a de-escalation of the conflict at a micro level. These interactions and discriminations build upon a sense that the armed forces are the enemy and continue to bolster the psychology of conflict and division.

We had a peaceful life until 1990. We now live with fear about who will interfere at what time. Life is not pleasant. There is an army camp adjacent to the village. People living with the army are full of stress. Now the security is less than it was at the beginning.

The army camp should be removed from this place for the safety of the community. Some houses have been taken over by the army. If all the army remains in one place it won’t create much trouble. About 50 houses are in the high security zone. Although we asked the army to leave these houses, they don’t do so. For our safety either we should move out of the community or they should move out. At the beginning in the battle between the army and the LTTE, the LTTE went back to Vanni from Jaffna. All the houses were damaged. The government should make arrangements to remove the forces from here, which we can’t do. NGOs can help for this. We tried by writing to the government, the president and the army commander, but didn’t get any positive response. Now we
don’t try anymore. 65 families do not have houses to live in. Their houses and lands are in the high security zone. The army does not allow the people to go there. (KI CTL- Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

Unfair treatment by the army occurs frequently here because of the closeness of the high security zone and the army camp. Army people frequently speak to the people, both male and female, who live or go near the camp to buy goods from the shops. This is a big problem because village people think that our people have connections with the army. We fear that if the LTTE got to know that our people help the army, they will misunderstand us and think we have connections with army. If LTTE thinks this, the final result will be the end of our lives. We think the only solution for this is removing the high security zone from here. We don’t face any other unfair treatments by other government agents. (KI CTL- Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

“Athi uyar pathukapu valaiyathai akatrina engaluku entha pirachanium ellai.”
“Pathukappu padayhal emathu pathuhappukku achchuruthalaha ullaṟhal.”
(Security forces are the reason for the insecurity of our society). If they are really protecting us, they should not harm our living conditions. We are facing so many problems since the security forces arrived at the village. (LOL M –Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

We do not have freedom to even go on the road. Now we can not walk on the road because we were warned not to walk there by an unknown group (Ellalan group). When we walk on the road the army asks us to help them. They ask us to go to the shop and buy things for them. (Livelihoods M Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

In the 1990s, people were kidnapped by armed rebels and some were killed. In that time a lot of Tamil rebel groups were functioning in this area. Rebels damaged our properties and were involved in robberies in some cases; others also did some robberies using rebel groups’ names. We were given arms for self-defence by the former defence minister Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne. A group is selected from our village and they were given those arms and they operated in our mosque. In that period Home Guards were also operating in our village. Home Guards and other government forces were used to protect the border villages from the threats of rebels. LTTE came to know about the armed group that is operating in the mosque and they attacked the mosque; in that attack, 5 people were killed in the mosque. For this attack LTTE came in two groups from two directions and this caused some confusion between those two groups and they fired on each other. In the confusion the LTTE also lost a fair amount of lives. Some houses were robbed in this time. If someone was in trouble people in our village got together to fight against it. Unknown persons burned some houses. (Conflict TL Ampara-Sammanthurai)
6.3 Impact of External Institutions

Many of the study communities spoke about the impact of external institutions on their lives and livelihoods. The institutional interventions that had the most impact in socioeconomic terms were government-sponsored social welfare schemes such as Samurdhi and development projects led by non-governmental organizations. Although the effects of resource transfers and other forms of economic assistance on lives and livelihoods were made clear in this report, it is possible when looking at the combined data to also extract more general ideas about the wider role and indirect impact of these organizations’ efforts.

Many of the communities valued the Samurdhi assistance they received. The amount of assistance was not always substantial, but the programme was held in high regard among the communities. This is partly because these transfers came from the government, and thus represented the fact that these communities accessed central government services. It was a statement against marginalization. It is interesting to contrast the limited resources transfers and other benefits that Samurdhi provided and the degree of social acceptance and acclaim it received with the higher transfers and benefits provided by non-governmental organizations. The programmes sponsored by NGOs were appreciated by the recipient communities but the degree of social acceptance they gained was minimal (Hambantota, case of World Vision). The communities seemed to have an inherent suspicion of or lack of regard for these outside institutions, and to suspect that their true motives were not always transparent. It is interesting to note that despite the respondents’ criticisms against the government and professed dislike of politicians and electoral politics, they were not suspicious of government-sponsored social welfare programmes. They did not view them as political tools, or as ways in which successive governments have sought to entrench their power.

A different view is seen in the North and East where the Samurdhi programme is not active. They receive other forms of assistance from the government (especially aid to IDPs), but a large part of their aid comes from international non-governmental organisations. This deepens the gulf between the conflict affected areas in the North and East and those of the rest of the country. This is yet another instance in which the people of the conflict areas are made to feel marginalised and excluded from the social and political processes that involve the rest of the country. Their view of the INGOs was much more favourable than the views held by communities in the South because these organizations were the primary providers of assistance.

The existence of external development institutions also increased villagers’ ability to articulate their needs and encouraged them to participate in processes that may lead to their fulfilment. They have become more involved in their own development process. This involvement is always in the limited sense afforded to recipients of programme aid. The ability to articulate, to organise and contribute, however, has had a significant impact upon all of the communities.
Our village is one of the most highly affected by the war in this district. That is why ZOA built houses for our village first. If we can’t go to work daily we will have to starve. We suffered from the beginning of the war and most of us are widows. The Government has done nothing to help us.

(LOL F Mannar Semmanthivu)

Sarvodaya has been present in our village for 4-5 years. There is a bank in the village and members of Sarvodaya get loans from the bank. It is good for the village. At least the people who are in it get loans.

(Livelhoods M Matara-Allewala)

An NGO came to Madu and took us to Colombo and gave us sewing training. When we were at Madu an NGO called Valwodhayam jesu safai trained us for self-employment. I got training in tailoring.

(Mover, F Mannar-Semmanthivu)

Any organization can work in the village. We must be able to take in the good part of it, leaving out the bad part. At the far end of Suriya Wewa, a man has been religiously converted saying that his illness (meemasmoraya) will be cured. In Moneragale people have been given 150 chicks to start up chicken farming. Afterwards they are convinced to convert since under Buddhism this would be a wrongful act. We are not against Christianity but we are against being made in to slaves for the USA. They are trying to make this the whore-house of the USA.

(Amerikawe ganikamademe kereganne hadenewa.) World Vision had arranged a trip for the kids’ society of the village and we were taken to a church to stay. They just opened up the whole church so that the curious would seek to know what is there.

(Youth mixed Hambantota-Gonadeniya)

Nothing is given by government. We obtained all the help through the RDS, NGOs like ZOA, NECORD and SFL.

(Faller, M Mannar-Semmanthivu)

World Bank in Kolumbuthurai and Thirunelveli

World Bank provided funding through the government to rebuild the damaged houses. People got funds through 2 projects in 2004 and 2005. They gave a maximum of 250,000/=. Partially damaged households got 100,000/=. But it was not enough. People built their houses by getting loans. Those houses have not been completed. It is difficult to live in these houses. Also, only selected families were funded. Most of the others suffer without having houses. Government servants did not get these funds, also the families with few members did not get them. Some widows live alone without having a house or in fully damaged houses. The people who have their houses in the high security zone did not receive any assistance. The project did not help develop livelihoods. The World Bank housing project was started to rebuild the houses which were damaged during the conflict. They provided money. They started a project in 2004 and another one started in
2005. 19 houses were built by GTZ. They gave all the raw materials and paid Rs. 125,000 each as wage. They selected 19 households and provided the services. They mainly considered the people who returned from the Vanni after the MOU and had fully damaged houses. There were lot of partially damaged houses but they were not supported. Houses which are in the high security zone also couldn’t be considered.

The village people, who displaced in 1995 and 2000, started to return Kolumbuthurai in 2002 after the opening of the A-9 road and the MOU agreement between the government and the LTTE. Although they have returned to Kolumbuthurai, their houses were not in the condition to live in. The World Bank started the housing project in 2004 as a pilot project. According to the statistical record, they selected some households to provide funds and they paid initially Rs. 150,000 to each selected household. To pay the rest, the money-receiving households had to complete 2 rooms and a hall within 6 months. Most of the families completed this within the given time period, but did not receive the rest of the money. Now most of these houses are only partially completed. Some households suffered with insufficient money to complete the house construction works. They sold their jewellery or land to get money or got loans.

(Conflict TL Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

6.4 Changing Social Structures and Social Relationships

Many of the communities that contributed to the study spoke of changing social attitudes and relationships. Such changes may be due to increased migration as economic activities in the communities have become increasingly less viable. They may also be influenced by new needs and increased awareness of the outside world. It represents change and transformation, and, although this may be expected, it is important that development projects take this into account when designing their projects. It means that traditional livelihood support activities and income generation schemes may no longer be relevant.

Now values and principles have gone bad in society. Relationships between people have gone down. 24 hours a day is not enough to get the work done. The quality of life has gone down. Now people tend to forget favours that others have done for them more than they used to. (FGD LOL M Hambantota Gonadeniya)

But if we get some garment factories or any other kinds of factories (coir factories, brick manufacturing, paper etc.) it will be better for us. 10 years ago we had development in our village but now we are falling. Because of the open economic system, the social ethics were destroyed and they were lost in this society. (“Aurudu dahayakata kalin nam api diunu Lenovo. Dan api bahinawa. Wiwurtha aarthikaya nisa saradarma nathi una.”) In Ampara we had the best vocational workshop in Sri Lanka and it was closed in 1975. Even the sugar factory in Hingurakgoda was closed later on. So from that we lost job opportunities. (FGD, M, L Ampara-Gonagala)
6.5 Threats to Traditional Livelihoods

One of the reasons some people within the study communities remain in a low economic position is their continued reliance on traditional livelihoods. These livelihoods have become less profitable over time because of increasing cost of inputs such as fertiliser and pesticide, market volatility for primary products and other special issues, such as the dependence on buying seeds every season rather than reserving part of the seeds from the last harvest for replanting.

Our income is quite low and compared to that the expenses have gone up. If expenses per acre are about 15,000/= the income is about 12,000=/. Agriculture is done using machinery. There aren’t buffaloes around anymore, now we have machines even for harvesting. Even the labourers do not have work like in the past. Now you have to spend on fertilizer and pesticides. We used to get seeds for the next season from this season’s harvest but now we can’t do that because of these imported Malaysian vegetable seeds. We can’t make seeds for the next season with this new kind so instead we have to buy seeds. With the varieties that we have now if you use seeds from this season’s crop you will only get a poor harvest. This is all because there’s no proper policy for agriculture in this country. With a lesser harvest and more expenses we don’t make any profits. It’s a big problem that local products don’t get a good price. (FGD LOL M Hambantota Gonadeniya)

The prices of fertilizer and fuel are doubling and we can’t afford it, but we have to use these things in our cultivation work. With the exception of the turmeric cultivation, we have to use fertilizer to have a good harvest. We have gotten used to using fertilizer now and year by year the amount of fertilizer we have to use is also increasing. In the 1950s we used only 14 kgs of urea per acre but today we have to use 120 kgs of urea per acre. This has happened because of bad practices taught to us by multinational companies. (FGD, M,L Ampara- Gonagala)

6.6 Power and Agency

Some of the information from discussions suggests that people in the study communities feel like they don’t have any power to control their socioeconomic environment. Part of this feeling is linked with the idea that their environments are changing and they are simply not able to keep pace. It is also due in part to their not having transformed away from their traditional livelihoods. And it indicates that they feel their agency is limited and will not allow them to address the issue.

Some of the things they sell are things which we already produce here in Gonadeniya. So we have to face many difficulties in selling our goods. So we have to sell our goods for a low price and it is a big problem we have to face. If they bring up country vegetables like carrots and beetroots it will be easier for us to sell our goods here because we produce different things, low country vegetables. There have been protests over this issue. People feel very strongly about it. Once
the farmers in Angunukolapalassa (a nearby village) put kerosene oil on the goods which were brought from other areas to their market. They couldn’t sell them so they had to buy local produce. Then it stopped in their village. We might have to do something like that soon as well!
(M FGD Power Freedom- Hambantota Gonadeniya)

6.7 Conflict Made Personal

Some instances of wider conflict being used as a cover for exacting personal revenge emerged from the discussions.

My father was killed on the October 28, 1988. It was a full moon Poya day as well. He trusted too many people, especially his friends. That is why it happened to him. Those people must be from around these parts for sure. They made my mother shave her hair off and walk in the village as a form of punishment and they beat her up as well. My father could speak all three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English, fluently and everybody respected him. We were doing really well in those days and that’s what they couldn’t stand at all. (Unta eka balagena inne bari una.) It was clearly for personal revenge that they killed him. They were jealous of us. (Faller, F Matara- Allewela West)

My brother and I were working in the paddy fields on a day which the JVP announced a strike. They threatened us and asked to paste their posters as a punishment, later they had problems within the party as it was more of a personal revenge that they took. (FGD,F,L Ampara Gonagala)

The person who did the murder is in remand. He had been killed because of a water problem in the paddy field. It was made to look as if it was done by the LTTE but there is a Tamil person who has witnessed that it was this person who has done it due to a personal grudge. But he won’t come to our courts to give witness because he is afraid that the Sinhala people will kill him if he goes to court. The whole village knows that he did the murder but we can’t prove it in the courts because this Tamil person won’t give evidence. This is the situation in “these villages. Everything is accounted for under the LTTE. (“Hama dema LTTE eka pitin thamai.”) Furthermore the police want to put people in front of the law while the courts just want to release these people. (“Poleesiyata one athulata danne, usaaviya Salli aragena aliyata danawa.”) The security personnel in the camps used to come and talk to our brother to get certain information because he used to do his paddy cultivation near the border. So we think that knowing this the LTTE is helping the murderer. He is from this same village (from the Halawatha bunt). He is a Sinhala person but then these days for money anybody would do anything. In these villages whatever happens the LTTE is made the scapegoat. Though my brother’s death was blamed on the conflict it is really not so. We could have taken the compensation if we have told them that my brother was killed by the Tamils but there is no point in doing that. But this wouldn’t have happened to my brother if the war was still on. This had happened in the LTTE-
controlled area and the murderer had struck from behind after he passed through. The witness had also been out on the fields and had come running in to see what was going on when he heard the screams. (Faller, M Ampara-Gonagala)

6.8 Creating Helplessness - Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Movement

Alcoholism was mentioned frequently by many communities as the reason some households were not able to move out of poverty. Alcohol may be consumed to ‘forget’ or ‘deal with’ problems created by economic hardship or conflict affectedness but ends up aggravating these problems. It is also cyclical in that it initially affects older members of the household and is then taken up by younger members, affecting the possibility of moving away from this problem and out of poverty in the long term.

There is also alcoholism. But it is controlled to a certain extent by the cost of alcohol. Normally arrack is 325/=, but in the village it is about 500/=. (LOL M-Matara- Allewela West)

Drugs and alcohol (Arrack, Kassippu and Ganja) are the main two reasons for falling back. Some families have broken up due to them. There are few people trading these narcotics. But people in neighbouring villages do trade them. Externals come to the village and spread these habits. Some women also help them. They use them all the time, after a death of a parent, for happy events, regardless of the situation. (LOL F- Matara- Allewela West)

It’s only those in the bottom steps that waste money this way. Men drink alcohol saying that it is all because of ‘depression’ (Hithe Amaruwa) or because they are tired. But this increases the women’s grievances even more. There are people who go into debt in order to drink alcohol. (FGD, LOL, F Ampara- Gonagala)

In those days Semmanthivu was plagued by alcoholism. There were a lot of domestic problems due to alcoholism, which leads to domestic violence and child abuse. Now the village has almost recovered from that problem. They forcibly closed the village bar. But still there is the problem of smuggling illegal alcoholic beverages (kasippu) into the village. There was a theatre in the village. That caused a lot of social problems among youth. Now it is closed. (LOL F Mannar Semmanthivu)

The people who are falling are addicted to alcohol. They don’t send their children to school. Their main job is begging. Because of these things they don’t work and they become even poorer. (LOL F Mannar Semmanthivu)
6.9 Migration - A Way Out?

Migration was mentioned frequently during the study by many of the participant communities. In the areas more directly affected by conflict, migration took place as a result of the conflict. The community in Mannar displaced to India, people from other communities in the North migrated to Western Countries and some people from the East migrated to the Middle East for employment. Some of the migration was not forced upon communities by conflict-related circumstances but rather took place as the result of economic choices. Some people were able to benefit from this migration but it was not without associated risks. Households were able to move if the money that was sent back by the migrant worker was well used. However, sometimes the money was wasted and, as a result, no improvement occurred.

*Since this is a backward area the main reason for migration is poverty, because of that people go abroad, and most among these are women. Due to this some families are better off but some are not.* (LOL F Mannar- Semmanthivu)

*“Silar ingu kudiththe ... aliththu viduvarhal.” (Some will just destroy the money by drinking.) It is difficult for men to live in a house where the wife is absent. When the father goes abroad that family will develop. But when the mother is absent they get food from small shops. If I went abroad my children would suffer and my husband would become an alcoholic.* (LOL F Mannar- Semmanthivu)

*Our villagers mostly go to Saudi Arabia (the Middle East); we have no money to go to London.* (LOL F Mannar- Semmanthivu)

6.10 Economic and Political Structures

The study communities are part of the wider regional and national economies. They face the same challenges imposed by structural changes in those economies. The economic environment in which their movement (or maintenance) takes place is affected by larger macro-level changes.

Changes such as shifting expenditure patterns, rising factor prices, and the emergence of new social and economic needs pose challenges to their process of movement out of poverty. In addition, the existence of certain government policies (or their removal with subsequent changes of government) has an impact on these communities.

*Now it’s harder to make a profit because the prices of goods have increased. The price of flour and sugar makes a big difference. Cutting down on the size of the product or increasing the price also means lot of rejects. Sugar and flour cost a lot and we have to provide food for those who work, too. With all that we can’t think of saving much. We have managed thus far with the help of loans.*

(Chronic Rich, F Hambantota-Gonadeniya)
There are no big changes in these sources of income or economic activities and profit from these activities, for example, day labour wages are increasing but the prices of the goods and needs of the people are increasing relatively more than the income increase. Because of that we are finding it difficult to live. Some of us are getting new job opportunities, such as jobs in garment factories and jobs in NGOs.
(Livelihood F Ampara-Sammanthurai)

6.11 Inflation

The prices of the goods are much higher than before. We have spend everything that we earn on food and it is very difficult for us to save. Few of the Samurdhi people were able to save money....
(LOL F Jaffna Kolombuthurai)

Our earnings changed from time to time because of fluctuations in the price of paddy.
(Chronic Rich, M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

Prices of everything have been increasing every day. We could buy two bags of cement before for the price that we now pay for one. The increasing prices of goods are a barrier for us. To expand our business we can’t get loans, from Samurdhi we can get ten thousand that is not enough.
(Livelihood, F Ampara-Sammanthurai)

Because the prices of all goods have gone up and our expenses are much higher than in previous periods, our livelihoods are getting worse with time.
(LOL M Ampara-Sammanthurai)

6.12 Education

In all of the study communities in all three regions and across all three ethnic groups, education emerged as a special issue linked with the potential to move and develop in the future. Despite the fact that only a limited number of movers moved because of the opportunities their education provided, communities still continue to hold education in high esteem. This is seen particularly where households engaging in traditional livelihoods continue to struggle to give their children the best possible formal education, in the hope that it will allow them to develop in the future.

The way this factor is valued stands in contrast to the fact that many of the movers from their own communities were able to improve because of informal livelihood-related education and experience, and not necessarily formal school-based education.
We can’t save much. We spend a lot of money for our children. Our younger son and younger daughter study in Ambalangoda Central College. They are twins and they study bioscience. They are staying at our elder daughter’s house.

My son graduated from university of Sri Jayawardhenapura and after graduation he worked as a teaching assistant in the university for one year. Now he works for Union Bank.

I sat for G.C.E. Ordinary Level exam in 1968. I didn’t study for the Advance Level exam. I decided that I should not study further considering the economic situation of our family.

Education was useful for bringing up children except that I didn’t make use of my education. My husband made use of the education he had.

There was a possibility for me to find work as a teacher but, because my husband didn’t like it, I gave up that idea.
(Chronic Rich, F Matara-Allewala west)

I was only 12 when I had to stop my education. I don’t have a proper education to go work in a company or even talk in a civilized manner with people. This will affect not only my future but the future of my little ones as well. I have to take somebody else home and get them to help my little ones with their lessons or school homework. If we leave finding a job aside, I won’t even be able to go to the town in the future because education has become so important for the day-to-day life.
(Faller, M Matara-Allewala west)

I learned wiring while I was studying in school. Now I don’t remember those things. I had no chance to use my knowledge in that and now I don’t remember it. I’m very happy about the education I had. It helps me to manage this bakery well.
(Mover, M Matara-Allewala west)

7. CONCLUSION

The study has sought to explain why some people move out of poverty while some remain trapped, some maintain their wealth and some fall into poverty in the context of conflict in Sri Lanka. It has explored how issues such as democracy, power, freedom and inequality impact these processes. It has unpacked some of the social relations surrounding these issues and through narratives has helped to explain the unique interaction of all these ideas in the respondents’ lives over a period of 15 years. The analysis of these narratives is built into the report.

The study is based on the contributions of men and women of differing ages, from the three main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka in 9 communities spread over the North, South and
East of the country. We are grateful to them for sharing their stories with us and acknowledge their immense contribution to this study.

The “Moving Out of Poverty in Conflict Affected Areas in Sri Lanka” study produced a great deal of valuable information. Although it is difficult to sift through all of this data and distil neat recommendations and conclusions, it is possible to identify some outstanding issues that emerged through the study and to use them as a basis to make actionable recommendations.

**Samurdhi:** It is important that the coverage of this state-run social welfare scheme be extended to cover all areas of the North and East. Samurdhi was mentioned by all communities that received it as a vital economic input. The communities also spoke of the other functions of Samurdhi, such as collective work programmes and internal coordination and organisation of community members to achieve common development goals. These opportunities should be made available to communities in all parts of the country.

In the North and East it is especially important that communities also feel integrated into the government system through the provision of these services. It will help dispel their sense of isolation from the rest of the country.

**Structural Changes:** All of the communities that contributed to the study experienced structural changes in their economic and social environment. They felt the effects of larger structural movements in the economy, such as the waning support for the primary agricultural sector, a shift away from traditional economic activities, and migration to other parts of the country and increasingly to other countries for economic reasons. It is important that the impact of these changes be monitored and that facilitation be provided to allow people to reap the greatest possible benefit from them. Providing facilities to save and invest remittances, guidance about sustainable management of income sources, and assistance and advice for moving away from traditional livelihoods to new emerging livelihoods would all contribute to movement out of poverty.

**External Institutions providing Support:** Many communities, especially those in the North and East, spoke of the contribution made by external institutions such as NGOs to their conflict recovery and movement out of poverty. It is important that the work of these institutions continue. It is necessary, however, that they function in coordination with other similar institutions, including government agencies, to ensure that people in these areas obtain the most out of what is available to them.

**Creating Enabling Conditions:** The communities in the North and East spoke of the restrictions imposed on their livelihood activities by measures related to the conflict. If the lives and livelihoods of the people in those areas are to recover, restrictions on fishing and high security zones that impede access to agricultural land must be removed.
The conflict environment also creates a sense of insecurity that stifles outside investment. This is another consequence of the conflict that continues to restrict the movement of the people away from poverty.

Peace is a prerequisite for dealing with these issues. In addition to the macro political considerations that affect the peace process, it is vital that these and similar communities in the North and East be included in discussions. They are stakeholders in the peace process and have the right to have their views and their needs presented alongside those of all other stakeholders.

“Individual effort,” Attitudes and Movement: This study captures the experiences of many people, living in different areas of the country, confronting different hardships and pressures, who have moved out of poverty. Much of the discussion about movement has been centred on external factors and conditions that enabled their transition. In addition to these external factors, it is also important to recognise that consider that dynamism and drive contributed to their movement out of poverty. People moved because they tried to move. They moved while living in similar conditions and in the same environment as others in their communities because of their personal effort, and it is important that this initiative also be recorded and given some recognition.
Bibliography


SLE Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development (2001), ”Conflict - Threat or Opportunity? Land Use and Coping Strategies of War-Affected Communities in Trincomalee”, Humboldt University, Germany
