Psychological Risks of Resettlers in Resettlement Planning: A Study in Moragahakanda

Resettlement Project (MRP)

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ABSTRACT

In resettlement planning literature, much has been written on economic, land valuation and compensation, infrastructure and services aspects of the land. Psychological risks and stresses of resettled communities, however, have been under-researched. The current research looks at the psychological risks of resettlers in a Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) project in Sri Lanka. Focusing on the stages of resettlement planning process discussed by Scudder and Colson four-stage model (1980) and the psychological risks discussed by Cernea's (1990) impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR) model. This study evaluates the significant level of the psychological risks faced by the communities in DIDR projects in Sri Lanka relating to before and after resettlement. Moragahakanda Resettlement Project (MRP) was selected as the case study which is located in Naula DS division of Matale District, Central Province, Sri Lanka. A questionnaire survey, documents and field observations were used to evaluate the current psychological risks. The responses received from multiple choice questions were analyzed by Significant Point (SP) index. The research findings point that there are no conspicuous changes of psychological risks related to before/after resettlement has occurred in re-settlers. The findings highlight that the psychological risk levels in transition stage have remained the same level in the potential development stage. This research provides a systematic guidance enabling the physical planners to prioritize the most significant psychological risks which should be considered in the decision-making process of DIDR projects.

Keywords: Resettlement, psychological risks, development-induced displacement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scholars have frequently reported physical, social and economic aspects of resettlement projects. Anthropologists have given the first theoretical explanation on resettlement highlighting in detail the impoverishment effects. Later many studies were taken by the social scientists (Rawls, 1971) to develop a theory to explain the ethics of DIDR. This was labelled as "Rawls general conception" of justice which states that, "all social values such as liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values, is to everyone's advantage (Rawls, 1971). In a similar vein, in 1980s Scudder and Colson developed a four-stage model to describe how people and social-cultural systems respond to resettlement. Scudder divided the entire resettlement process into four stages and these stages were labelled as, planning and recruitment, transition, potential development and handing over or incorporation. Involuntary resettlement programs, however, were not significantly addressed in the Scudder-Colson framework. As a result, to address the concerns of Involuntary resettlement Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model was developed in the 1990s. The

model discussed eight types of risks. Including, landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, increased morbidity and mortality and community disarticulation. Later Downing and others have added, loss of access to public services, disruption of formal education activities, and Loss of civil and human rights into the list. But the model has failed to acknowledge the stage which the risk becomes significant (Stanley, 2004).

In the current study, we attempted to combine the four-stage model and the IRR model to estimate the most significant psychological risks in stages two and three of resettlement planning process.

Research Design and Conceptualization

Figure 1 : Research Design and Conceptualization
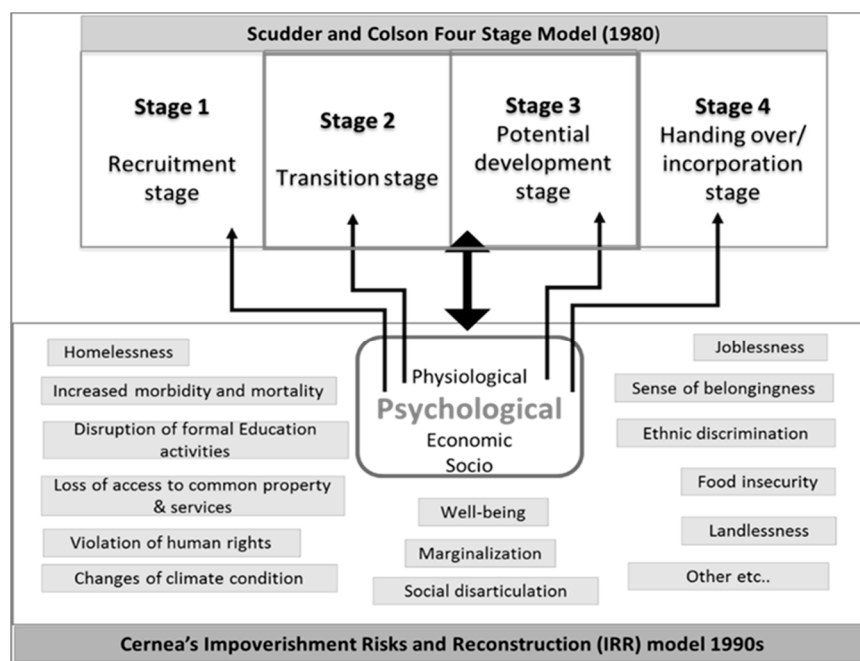
2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed methods approach to measure psychological risks associated with resettlement projects. A target sample population of 338 respondents in the transition stage and 903 respondents in potential development stage drawn from the project affected area was selected to conduct the survey. The sample was designed to be a balance of male and female representing affected GN divisions. Stratified random sampling method and systematic random sampling method were used to select the size of the sample.

In order to measure the significance level of psychological, the study used the following stages:
1. Development of ranking scales
2. Field survey
3. Calculation of Significance Points (SP)Index
4. Rating the identified psychological attributes base on its significance

The procedure for developing ranking scales are further described in Table 1. As the table

below shows, the study approach includes five indicators with separate ranking scales to assess psychological risks. Table1 was presented to survey respondents in the questionnaire and asked to complete their preferences.

Table 1: Indicators with separate ranking *scales*

Indicators				
Magnitude(M)- Life satisfaction	**Irreplaceable(I)-** loss of resources	**Duration (D)-** Length of the time over which, resettlers are able to change or be changed psychologically	**Scale (S)-** The social sector which is most vulnerable for psychological risk	**Probability(P)-** How likely that the psychological risk may occur
8- Very high	5- Very	5- Permanent	5-Community	5- Definite
6- High	4- High	4- long term (>20 years)	3-Family	4- High
4- Moderate	3- Moderate	3- Medium term (5-15 years)	2-Individual person	3- Medium
2- low	2- low	2- Short term (0-5)	1- None	2- Low
1-None	1- None	1- Transient		1- Improbable

After ranking these factors for each psychological risk, the significance level was assessed using following the equation:

$$SP = (M + I + D + S) * P$$

Finally, the identified psychological risks were rated based on the derived SP index values. The maximum value is 100.

Table 2 *:Definition of significance ratings (positive and negative*

SP Index value	Psychological significance	Decision Rule
SP > 60	High significance	Psychological risk which may influence the decision about whether or not to proceed with the project
SP 30- 60	Moderate significance	Psychological risk where it could have an influence on the decision unless it is mitigated
SP < 30	Low significance	Psychological risk with little real effect and which should not have an influence on or require modification of the project design or alternative mitigation
+	Positive significance	Psychological risk that is likely to result in positive consequences / effects

3.0 FINDINGS

In the literature review, twelve psychological risks and the dimensions of those risks separately identified as follows (Table 3).

Table 3: Selected psychological risks and dimensions

Psychological Risk	Dimensions
1.Homelessness	Loss of group's cultural space and identity/Loss of quality and the conditions of house
2.Marginalization	Drop of social status/Loss of mutual interaction between neighbors
3. Increased morbidity & mortality	Decline in health levels/Outbreak of relocation diseases
4.Social disarticulation	Dismantle of patterns of social organization and interpersonal ties/ Erosion of resettlers relationships with non- displaced relations
5.Landlessness	Drop of land extent/ Drop of productivity of land
6.Joblessness	Loss of wage employment/Shift in the occupational pattern
7.Disruption of formal education activities	Loss of Educational Opportunities
8.Loss of access to common property and services	Loss of access to some public services /Loss of access to common resources
9.Violation of Human Rights	Loss of ability to involve in making decisions regarding the project/ Insufficient compensation payment
10.Loss of Belongingness	Feeling of Isolation
11.Ethnic discrimination	Loss of religious places
12.Changes in climate condition	Difficulties face by the resettlers due to climate condition

Results of homelessness indicate that loss of group's cultural space and identity remain high in both stages 2 and 3, however, the loss of quality and the condition of the house remain low due to the lessened sense of identity. The drop of social status under marginalization has increased to high from moderate, however, loss of mutual interactions between neighbours remains moderate between the two stages. Dismantle patterns of social organizations and interpersonal ties have increased from moderate to high, yet, erosion of resettlers' relationships with host community remains at the same risk level.

Health status is a sensitive indicator of development. The decline in health in increased morbidity and mortality levels stay at a moderate level in stage 2 and 3 of the society due to already established medical establishments in stage 1. Further, counselling services were already established early stages and trauma levels were at the minimum levels. It may have helped to keep an outbreak of relocation diseases at a moderate level at all time. A serious decline in health levels results from displacement-induced social stress, insecurity, the outbreak of relocation-related diseases and psychological trauma caused by displacement.

The results indicate that drop of land extent causes high psychological in both stage 2 and 3. However, the drop of productivity of land in stage 2 causes high-risk levels in stage 3.

Joblessness causes high risk when people are resettled in a new place. In this study, two dimensions tested in the attribute of joblessness are the loss of wage employment and the shift in the occupational patterns. Findings show the loss of wage employment due to the resettlement causes joblessness in the society which increases the risk levels from moderate to high. The shift in the occupational pattern is yet another form of economic dispossession faced by the displaced people. The study data indicate that the shift in the occupational patterns causes high-risk levels at 2 and 3 stages.

It was noted in resettlement process that the loss of educational opportunities disrupts the formal education activities. As a result, risk levels may change from positive to high. It all depends on the facilities available in the newly settled destination. If the facilities are located far away from the resettlement area and also students are unable to find a suitable place in the school, the risk level is likely to escalate. In this study, the survey was conducted immediately after the beginning of the re-settlement period. Public services such as banks were not properly developed in the area during that time and hence the risk level of the respondents was unchanged between stage 2 and 3.Loss of access to common resources are usually affected between stages of the resettlement. Many people in agricultural areas in developing countries who are about to resettle experience high risk due to their dependence on common natural resources (Cernea, 2004).

The displacement of people by forced movement from their locality or environment and occupational activities is categorized as a violation of human rights. Development-induced displacement is a social problem affecting multiple levels of human organization from tribal and village communities to well-developed urban areas. In this study, two dimensions related to violation of human rights were studied: loss of ability to involve in making decisions and the insufficient compensation payments. The risk associated with the loss of ability to involve in making decisions remains unchanged at low levels in stage 2 and 3, however, it remains high during the stage 2 and 3 for insufficient compensation payments. This is a violation of human rights, nevertheless, it is happening in many resettlement projects of Sri Lanka. People are vulnerable on whether they will receive sufficient amount of compensation to rebuild their life throughout the resettlement period which makes the level of risk high.

The sense of belonging means acceptance as a member or part in a resettlement and this is a common human experience. A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with intensely painful emotions which usually occurs during the resettlement stages. As such, the risk was high during this settlement project in both stages 2 and 3 (Refer Table 4). The risk associated with the disturbance to cultural affairs remains at the moderate level in both second and third stages due to the fact that 1571 households belong to Sinhala community whereas only one family belongs to Muslim community whose religions are Buddhism and Islam respectively. This position will not lead to any social or cultural disturbances after resettlement process.

Deviation of climatic conditions is likely to cause disruptions in agricultural production which is a major cause of the high-risk situations in stages two and three. Farmers are particularly followers of the climate patterns as their production depends upon the deviation of climatic conditions. This situation is likely to get worse when someone relocates from the original place of work. Farmers are familiar with the previous location in terms of getting inputs for agricultural production and changing weather patterns, however, after the relocation re-establishment of the familiarity becomes difficult. This is the major cause of the high-risk level.

*T*able *4* : *Results of stage two and stage three*

Attributes	Dimensions (D)		*Stages	M	I	D	S	P	SP Index	
1.Homelessness	D1	Loss of group's cultural space and identity	S2	6		4	5	5.5	83	High
			S3	6.5	4.6	4	5	5.7	115	High
	D2	Loss of quality and the conditions of house	S2	6.4		3.4	3	4	51	High
			S3	1.9	2.2	3.4	3	2	21	Low
2.Marginalization	D1	Drop of social status	S2	5.5		2.2	3	4	55	Moderate
			S3	7.2	3	3.3	3	4.7	63	High
	D2	Loss of mutual interaction between neighbors	S2	5.5		2	3	4.25	45	Moderate
			S3	6.1	3.3	3.6	4.2	3.9	67	High
3.Social disarticulation	D1	Dismantle patterns of social organization and interpersonal ties	S2	6.5		2.7	3	4.5	55	Moderate
			S3	6	3	2	3	4.5	63	High
	D2	Erosion of resettlers relationships with non-displaced relations	S2	4.5		2.4	3	4.2	42	Moderate
			S3	4	4.3	2	3	4	53	Moderate
4.Increased morbidity & mortality	D1	Decline in health levels	S2	5		3.2	1	4	37	Moderate
			S3	5	2.7	2.2	1	3.5	38	Moderate
	D2	Outbreak of relocation diseases	S2	5.3		4.4	3	3.8	48	Moderate
			S3	5.3	3.3	4.4	3	3.4	54	Moderate
5.Landlessness	D1	Drop of land extent	S2	7.4		5	3	4.3	66	High
			S3	6.5	4.4	5	3	4.2	79	High
	D2	Drop of productivity of land	S2	6.5		3.4	3	4.2	54	Moderate
			S3	6.5	4.1	3.25	3	4.2	71	High
6.Joblessness	D1	Loss of wage employment	S2	6.6		3	3	4.2	53	Moderate
			S3	6.6	4.2	3	3	4.2	71	High
	D2	Shift in the occupational pattern	S2	6.4		3	3	5.5	68	High
			S3	6.4	4.2	3	3	4.2	70	High
7.Disruption of formal education activities	D1	Loss of Educational Opportunities	S2	5.3		5	5	4	61	High
			S3	1	1.3	3	5	1	10	Low
8.Loss of access to common property and services	D1	Loss of access to some public services (banks, hospitals)	S2	5.5		2.3	4.5	4.1	50	Moderate
			S3	6.2	4.3	3	5	3	56	Moderate
	D2	Loss of access to common resources (forest products, common grazing areas	S2	5.5		4.7	5	3.8	58	Moderate
			S3	5	3.5	4	5	3.5	61	High
9.Violation of Human Rights	D1	Loss of ability to involved in making decisions regarding the project	S2	2		2	5	2	18	Low
			S3	2	2	2	5	2	22	Low
	D2	Insufficient compensation payment	S2	6.4		4.4	3	4.5	62	High
			S3	5	4	4	3	4.56	73	High
10.Belongingness	D1	Feeling of Isolation	S2	5.7		5	3	4.8	66	High
			S3	3.4	4.4	4.25	3	4.4	66	High
11.Ethnic discrimination	D1	Disturbance to cultural affairs	S2	4.2		2	5	4.5	50	Moderate
			S3	5.3	3.6	2.7	5	3.53	59	Moderate
12.Climatic change	D1	Deviation of the climatic conditions	S2	5.5		5	4	4.5	65	High
			S3	6.6	4	5	4	4.5	88	High

*S2= Stage 2, S3= Stage 3

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings of this study indicated that resettled communities are very much vulnerable to psychological risks especially for 12 risks selected in the two stages of resettlement planning process. Out of the above risks, homelessness, landlessness, joblessness and loss of belongingness were ranked as the top four. These are the aspects future resettlement planners should consider seriously in relocating people in Sri Lanka.Similarly, some other researchers have also found the similar themes associated with psychological risks in development projects (Cerena, 2003; Scudder 1980; Colson, 1971; Stanley 2004; Downing, 2009; Robinson, 2003).

Drawing on the experiences and lessons learnt from MRP, this study proposes that the future resettlement mitigation or improvement associated with DIDR should consider rebuilding psychological attributes based on its level of significance. Further, it needs to increase the local capabilities to access the crucial resources which are directly involving to reconstruct the re-settlers' livelihood. The main findings of this study have implications for a broader understanding of psychological questions for the DIRR projects, especially in relation to the development of policies and programs to enhance psychological concerns through smarter and more sophisticated social and physical environmental programs. The study findings demonstrate that planners need to consider ways to improve psychological conditions and increase the emotional well-being of resettlers. It is important for planners to consider the emotional concerns of all stages of the resettlement process. If these risks are taken into account, future resettlement will be more successful and bring positive results and outcome.

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