

Place making for displaced

Providing User Friendly Housing Settlements for internally Displaced Persons.



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Introduction

Homelessness is described in two ways; one is lack of a place to live; the quantity problem on the other the lack of opportunity to make the place one is living homely; the issue of quality. Every person has a private as well as a public existence. A house forms these two realms into particular ratio depending on the way of thinking, feeling and the behaviour of the user. In the public realm, a house has to satisfy the social aspect while in the private realm it has essentially to satisfy the personal requirements for having user friendly housing solutions.

IDP s are Internally Displaced Persons due to a reason of natural or manmade disaster. After an end of long lasting war situation in Sri Lanka, for IDPs who live in internment camps need a solution for their housing problem.

The experience of the author, the existing process of such settlement planning in such context is with lack of identification of user needs by the service providers in which failing to address the real need. Therefore from this study author expect to form a guideline for IDP housing, which to be used by the policy makers, professionals and service providers, who involve in this process.

1 Shelter Situation Analysis

1.1 Basic General Data

Geography and Administration

Sri Lanka also sometimes called Ceylon is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, located in southern Asia, Southeast of India. It has total area of 65610 km² with 64740 km² of land and 870 km² of water.

Sri Lankas climate includes tropical monsoons, the Northeast monsoon (December to March) and the Southeast monsoon (June to October). Annual rainfall in Sri Lanka is 2024 mm in 2006. Average temperature in the island is in the range of 17 °c to 31.7 °c while it is 28 °c in Colombo. Its terrain is mostly low, flat to rolling plain, with mountains in the South Central interior.

Sri Lanka has a parliamentary democratic system of government, where the executive authority is exercised by a cabinet of ministers, presided over by an executive president. The president and the members of parliament are elected directly by the people. For the purpose of administration the country is presently divided in to 8 provinces, 25 districts and 302 divisional secretary areas. The provincial administration is vested in the provincial councils, composed of elected representatives of the people, headed by governor nominated by the central government.

Demography and Health

The last census in 1981 recorded a population of 14.85 million. The mid year population in 2003 was estimated to be 19.25 million. The annual population growth rate in 2003 was 1.2 percent. The total fertility rate during 1995-2000 was 1.9. [Demographic and Health survey (DHS) 2000].

The population is projected to stabilize at 23 million by the year 2036 with annual growth rate of 0.3 percent. The population growth rate is declining,

although the absolute population will continue to increase at over 0.2 million a year until 2006.

Sri Lanka has passed through the classical phases of demographic transition to reach the third phase of a declining birth rate as it has stabilized at 19 per 1000 population during 2000 – 2003 and showed a relatively stable low death rate at 6 per thousand populations during the same period. (Statistical pocket book – 2004, Department of census and statistic Colombo Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka is at present in a critical stage in the evolution of its society and economy. An effective physical planning and urban spatial strategies are to overcome the difficulties in future. There are few ethnic groups and different religions in practice.

Ethnic composition

Sinhalese	74%
Tamil	17%
Moors	08%
Burghers, Malay and others	01%

Religious Composition

Buddhist	77%
Islam	8.3%
Hindu	7.7%
Roman Catholic	7%

Economy

Sri Lanka is a developing nation with a gross domestic product of about \$32 billion in 2007. This translates into a per capita income of \$ 1475. Despite the resumption of the civil war, Sri Lanka's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by an estimated 6.7% in 2007. Growth was led by telecommunication, ports, construction and manufacturing exports. Growth in 2006 and 2007 came at the cost of 15 – 20 % inflation, which eroded domestic purchasing power.

The Sri Lankan economy is remarkable for its resilience. Although suffering a brutal civil war that began in 1983, Sri Lanka has seen GDP growth average around 5% in the last ten years. Even the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami which killed 32000 people, displaced 443000 and caused an estimated \$ 1 billion in damage, failed to dent GDP growth, which was 6% in 2005 and 7.4% in 2006;

this was due to in part to the damage having offset by reconstruction. After a long lasted war situation now the government of Sri Lanka is aiming to achieve an accelerated economic development especially in North and East parts of the country which have been totally destroyed due to the war.

1.2 Shelter Related Fact and Figures

Until around 1970's there were no clearly defined government policies on urban development or specified criteria to guide the spatial development. Although the development activities and economic liberalization policies had an impact on urban development. Even the policy package of 1977 and subsequent policy initiatives till 1987 did not address the role of the urban sector in the main stream of development. However, in respond to the needs of the changing social and economic conditions of the late 1980,s the government decided to devolve powers to provincial councils. Consequently micro spatial approach of the physical development was adopted in order to transform existing administrative biased urban system into a hierarchically structured settlement network for rational based development.

In 1981 residential activities occupied about 0.78 Mn Ha. Or 12.0% of the total land area and urban centres about 0.09 Mn Ha. Or 1.4% of the total land area. Since then the residential activities along with other economic activities and services have expanded leading to increase in the extent under residential and urban uses. Studies have revealed that urban centres occupied about 0.55 Mn Ha. Of land or 8.35% of the total land area and rural settlements nearly about 1.0 Mn Ha of land or 15.3 % of the total land area. Collectively, they account for 23.65 % of total land area. Therefore it's very clear that urban and rural centres have to be planned in an integrated manner, because an additional land area of 34,000 Ha. Required for residential purposes and about 52000 Ha is required for the provision of urban facilities. In general the settlement structure of the country would occupy about 25% of the total lands in minimum. This could go up to 30.0% in the year 2030. This implies that minimum of 86000 Ha of new lands are needed for settlement development in 2030 because of the addition of 1.335Mn housing units by 2030. In 2030 there will be about 5.2 Mn to 6.0 Mn residential units in the country. With the expected replacement of 55.0 Mn percent of existing housing

stock it is projected that approximately 3.5 Mn housing units will have to be constructed over a period of 30 years to meet the demand.

In addition to this demand, from 2008 to 2010 approximately 300,000 of people displaced due to the civil war situation. However 240 days after the end of civil war 64% (188,000) of the Internally displaced persons had been released to returned to their places of origin with more than 106,000 still being in Internment camps.

1.3 Housing Policy

Until 1953, public sector housing was limited to lending activities of Housing Loan Board. The first ministry of housing established in 1953 and National Housing Department was former under it. This was empowered to lend for housing and to undertake construction of houses. After 1978, housing and urban development became one of the major investment programmes of the government. In 1979, National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) was established with the objective of accelerating the housing development activities. The NHDA Act empowered the authority to operate in a much wider spectrum of activities, which included re-development of slum and shanty areas.

However, after 1983, due to the civil unrest of the country, the funds allocated for housing were reduced and diverted towards defence activities, resulting a drop of housing development activities. As a result, the country's homeless population increased and the government had to change the traditional policy of 'provider' to 'facilitator' approach, resulting in lesser emphasis on direct construction housing programmes. Accordingly, the government launched a housing programme of 100,000 houses to both urban and rural homeless population.

After completion of 100,000 housing programme, Million Houses Programme was implemented during 1984-1988 and revised as the 1.5 Million Housing programme and implemented during 1989-1993. The concept of 'people Participation in the Housing and Community Development programme in slums and shanties' was the main theme of this project.

In 1994, with the change of the government, a policy change has occurred in the urban housing sector. Realizing the need for high density housing in the urban areas with increasing land scarcity, the government gave up the assistant given to

the slum and shanty upgrade and initiated a new programme to relocate them in flats built up by the government. The informal and under privileged housing sector of the city of Colombo is about 50% of the total resident population of the Colombo Municipal council limits consuming 11% of the land area. The government had realized that the most of this informal sector occupied areas are very valuable and could be used for commercial developments. Hence as policy, the government has decided to acquire these lands from occupants and to find alternative locations for them. In this respect, the aim of the government is to sell the acquired land to prospective private sector investors to develop and to construct new multi storied flats by investing the income generated, in reasonably accessible locations.

After 2004 Sri Lankan government focused on Tsunami reconstruction programmes to provide housing for tsunami affected people in coastal areas. This was implemented with the help of donor agencies, private sector developers and NGOs.

Main aim in the housing sector in Sri Lanka with the present peaceful environment is to provide shelters for Internally displaced persons in the North and East provinces. Ministry of resettlement and Disaster relief services is the main body involved in this process with the mission of “Expeditious and effective facilitation of the process of relief, resettlement and rehabilitation, paving the way for the persons displaced owing to man-made and natural disasters to integrate into the mainstream of society”.

1.4 Actors in Shelter Delivery and their Roles

1. National Housing Development Programme

The objects of the National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) include the alleviation of the housing shortage, the clearance and re-development of slum areas and, making land available for housing development. The Authority may also provide financial or other assistance to persons engaged in any activity similar to any of the objects of the Authority. The following programmes are being implemented by the authority at present:

- Providing housing assistance to low income families
- The direct construction programme.

- The “sevana piyasa” programme- Provides permanent roofing materials.

2. Sustainable Township Programme

Another state housing initiative has been the STP, under the purview of the ministry of housing. The implementing arm of the STP is the Real Estate Exchange (pvt)ltd (REEL), whose shareholding comprises a number of statutory authorities including the NHDA. The objective of the programme is to house the approximately 66000 slum and shanty dwellers in Colombo while at the same time releasing prime land occupied by such dwellers for development purposes.

3. Housing Programmes by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Numbers of housing schemes have been initiated since 1970s to assist fishing communities.

4. Mahaweli Development Scheme

This is the largest resettlement scheme in the country. A large proportion of the displaced due to Mahaweli Development projects have been relocated in the Mahaweli area. However, resettlement under the scheme is not limited to those displaced due to dam constructions. There are three other types of settlers: inhabitants of the “purana” (ancient) villages from the area, early encroachers on state land in the area and landless people.

5. North East Housing Reconstruction Programme

The NEHRP has been implemented with World Bank support in January 2005, to provide housing assistance to conflict- affected areas of the North East. The programme is to be implemented for a four year period in eight districts of the North East and the basic beneficiary selection requirements are that the:

- Land title should be regularised.
- House should be damaged or destroyed in the conflict.
- Beneficiary should not have been affected by the tsunami
- Land should not fall within the buffer zone

- Beneficiary should be permanently resettled in the village
- Monthly family income should be less than Rs. 2500

The North East provincial council in Trincomalee is the implementing agency for this programme, while a National Steering Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary to the Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation is charged with overall monitoring. The programme is being managed by the North east Housing Reconstruction Unit (NEHRU) established by the NEPC.

6. Rehabilitation of persons, properties and industries Authority.

REPIIA established in 1987, provides assistance in the rehabilitation of persons and properties affected by civil commotion, terrorist activities or political violence. The Authority is empowered to assist owners or, in certain cases, tenants of any affected property to repair and restore such property either by way of an outright grant or subject to reasonable conditions.

7. Tsunami Housing Reconstruction Unit

This has been established under the purview of the Urban Development Authority to deal with post – Tsunami housing needs. Under the Tsunami reconstruction plan, houses will be built on small plots donated by the state for those whose houses were damaged within the buffer zone, and housing loans will also be offered to repair houses situated outside the buffer zone.

8. Uthuru Wasanthaya Programme.

This programme was established under the Ministry of resettlement and disaster relief services to develop North and East area of country destroyed due to the war situation. Housing settlement planning, Infrastructure development projects, and other mass scale development activities have been implemented under this.

Mainly above mentioned government agencies take main part of housing development with the support of donor agencies, NGO s and private sector developers.

1.5 Shelter Design

There are 16 municipal councils and 52 urban councils in the island. Urban Development Authority established under UDA Law no 41 of 1978 is empowered to prepare development plans for the urban areas. Zoning and other planning and building regulations are part and parcel of these development plans. Accordingly development plans provide guidance for sub-division of land, preliminary planning clearance, safety, accessibility, parking, fire fighting, light and ventilation, mechanical ventilation and air conditioning, sanitation, water supply etc. Apart from that “Form C” of the development plan provides statutory guidelines for No. of floors, building height, road width, rear space, front space , space on either sides, plot coverage and floor area ratio.

2 Organisation

The Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB) is a semi government organization in Sri Lanka was founded in 1977 as a statutory organization, to cater to the growing need for multi-disciplinary consultancy service, in Sri Lanka. It has different sectors and provides wide range of services, such as Buildings, Transportation, Roads, Bridges, Ports and Courts, Airports, Town Planning, Water resources and Irrigation. The organization has a wide experience in designing and construction of all types of buildings from the simple to complex and entire townships. Its role varies from project identification and planning, detailed designing, implementation to completion.

It gives the full package of Architectural, structural and other technical support for reconstruction programmes, mass housing programmes throughout the country, using its thirty years of experience in the process. Accordingly, this institute handles several low cost housing projects, resettlement programmes for tsunami affected people and presently involves in North East development projects. CECB has named as the “service provider” of “Uthuru Wasanthaya” reconstruction programme for North and East.

3 Shelter Problem

The civil war in the country almost 30 years has had its impact on land and housing in Sri Lanka. Around 800,000 persons in the North and East were displaced by the armed conflict. The number had reduced to 362,000 by the end of June 2005. Due to the predominant population in the North and East being Tamils, they have been the largest ethnic group to be displaced. Estimates are that 78% of those displaced are Tamils, 13% Muslims and 8% Sinhalese. Many internally displaced persons do not own land to which they can return.

IDP is short for Internally Displaced Person. They were forced to flee their homes because their lives were at danger, but unlike refugees they did not cross international borders. IDPs have been forced to live away from their homes for many years, or even decades.

There are two types of IDPs in Sri Lanka.

1. Conflict - Affected IDPs
2. Tsunami - Affected IDPs

The main programme to address the housing problems facing North East IDPs was the North East Housing Reconstruction Programme referred to above. However a basic requirement for assistance under this scheme is that the beneficiaries should construct on land which they own. It is therefore not directly a scheme to assist the landless. Furthermore the war resulted in damage to 58% of the housing stock in the North East. NEHRP covers only about 11% of the required housing.

After the Tsunami concerns rapidly arose over equity for conflict-affected and Tsunami – affected people. With the massive outpouring of international financial assistance it was soon clear that there would be enough funds to meet the housing need of all Tsunami affected persons. But there appears to be no rational basis on which to treat those affected by a natural disaster differently or more favourably than those in equally desperate circumstances caused by human conflict. Some donor agencies are attempting to take a holistic view and provide assistance based on district-wide needs and priorities instead of focusing only on tsunami-affected areas or people within a district, which would indicate a more equitable and

sustainable approach to rebuilding and development. In present situation there is an urgent need of providing shelters for conflict affected IDPs in North and East. Because with the war situation Thousands of people flee to secured areas which were under government control. They live in rehabilitation camps with the aids of the government. But large number of people living in such camps is a difficult situation for providing food, services and security. The government is trying to resettle them as soon as possible. Presently the government of Sri Lanka is initiating plans to resettle these people by Uthuru wasanthaya programme.

When considering the existing resettlement programmes the main objective has been the quantitative aspects ignoring the qualitative aspects. This has caused for the main failure for such projects. Achieving a user friendly housing settlement is a difficult task for service providers due to different issues.

Most of the housing provided for IDPs were unsuccessful due to different issues.

1. Tendency to return to their former living conditions
2. Reluctance to live in flats/ apartment complexes.
3. User modifications to have an identity.
4. Insufficient Infrastructure.
5. Inter community conflicts
6. Problems in Individual house plans.
7. Social problems.

Ignorance of concern on Socio-cultural, religious, community, psychological and economic patterns of users has been the major weakness to arise above problems. IDPs are coming from different societies; some are rich in their previous life while others are poor. They are in different religious groups. Their life styles were different. They lose every thing. Their houses, lands other properties and some times their families. Accordingly their psychological conditions also are different. Then providing housing for them is a big challenge for professionals.

Prevailing methods for housing now need to be changed to satisfy the demand of the occupants. Designers need to cater their family, community, religious needs to overcome these problems. Most of the prevailing housing concepts, plans and designs are based upon borrowed notions, in relevant technology and alien

materials which do not facilitate local participatory process of housing. As the result of that situation there can be seen prototypes and standardize various kinds of housing without catering to the local context. This has often lead to construction of stereotype, sterile, dull and out of context settlements polluting the natural environment as well as the built environment.

According to “Rapaport”,

“The creation of built environment is an interplay of many factors such as climate, technology, politics, social systems etc. in which socio cultural factors are the primary determinants of ultimate built form”.

This lack of fresh thinking is urgently needed to be changed to an effective approach for sustainable user friendly resettlement proposals. So the consultants need to be correctly trained to capture the real needs of users only than satisfying the service provider’s requirements.

4 Proposal for Change and Improvement

Providing Housing settlements for conflict affected IDPs Should be a process of activities. Government should have a methodology for this resettlement process.

First of all Proper survey needs to be carried out to identify the scale of the shelter need of each family. There are three types of shelter situations in these families.

1. People having houses on their own lands. But houses have been partly damaged
2. People have their own lands without houses or their houses have been completely destroyed.
3. People who don’t have lands or who are not willing to live in places where they previously lived.

These people needed to be divided in to groups and should start resettling them in step by step.

- **First step should be the reconstructing of existing partly damaged houses.**
- **Second step will be the constructing of houses for who already have their own lands.**
- **Third step should have a resettlement programme for landless people.**

For these resettlement programmes there should have a proper strategy for implementation. People need to be categorised in to groups as their ethnical background, religious practces, income levels, living patterns, community life, and psychological conditions. This could be done by a proper socio cultural survey done by qualified persons with a quantitative analysis.

By having considering such surveys these people could be divided in to settlements as villages with mixed communities. (Sri Lankan government has an ambition of mixing different communities in villages especially in North and East to minimise the opportunities for ethnical gaps).

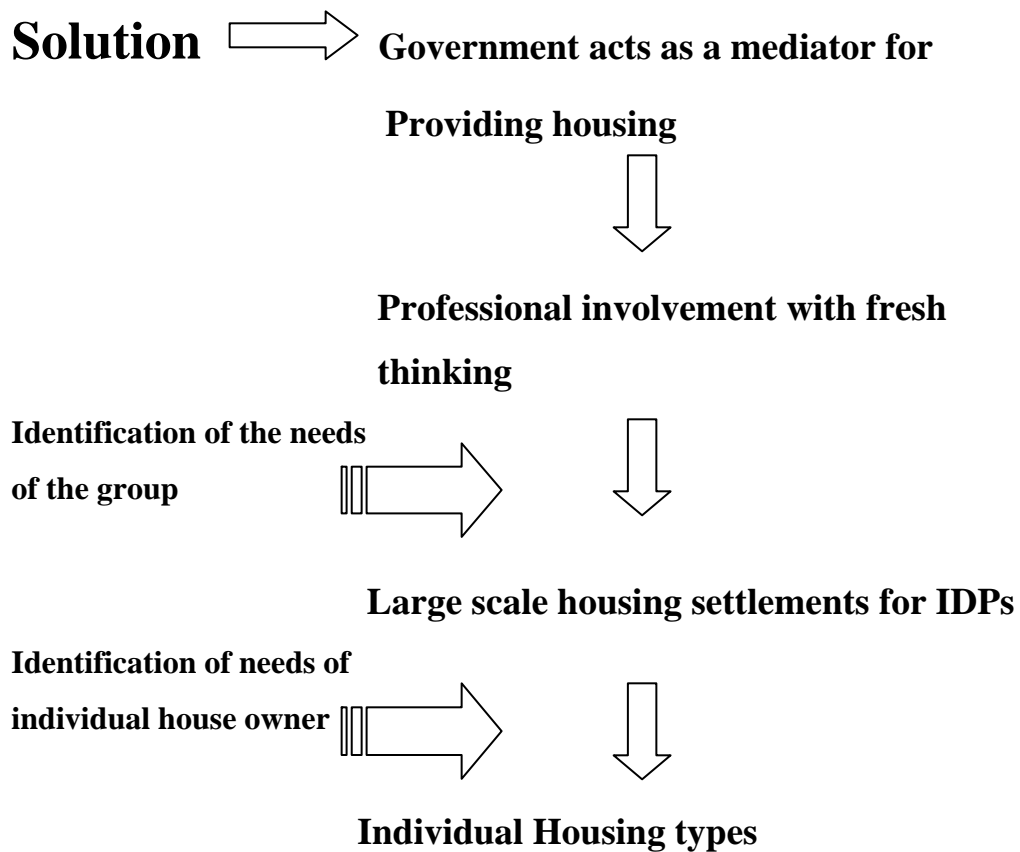
When planning such settlements following aspects need to be considered.

1. Settlements should have a hierarchy of spaces.
2. There should be places to have socio-cultural activities.
3. Religious spaces need to be defined
4. Inter connected community spaces need to be provided
5. Easy accessibility for services
6. Community identity for each cluster
7. Easy accessibility for economic activities.
8. Security
9. Environmental factors.

After having more sustainable settlement plans next phase will be the designing of housing typologies. Designing of housing typologies should have a top to bottom approach with a holistic view. Different aspects of users need to be satisfied without disturbing the pattern of the planned settlements. Different facts should have to be considered.

- Number of family members
- Indoor and outdoor comfort

- Status of the family
- Living patterns
- Economic activities
- House identity
- Safety and security
- Appearance of house types
- Neighbourhood relationships
- Gender issues



The end product will have the correlation of spaces in micro and macro level to enhance the harmonisation of built environment. This process should not have a full stop by constructing housing types. It should be continued with feedbacks and active participation in maintaining the sustainability of inhabitation by

providing economic activities and by having brain storming sessions to forget their past experiences.

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