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Contents

Dimensions of Preparedness for Countering Violent Extremism: Methods, Approaches and Operations

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Abstract

Terrorists and extremists who travel worldwide to carry out attacks are not a new notion, and they have become more common since global travel became more accessible during the twenty-first century. In response to their violent acts, several governments of the world have endeavoured to take several anti-terrorist and anti-extremist measures. This study focuses on extremism and its many manifestations, including violent extremism (VE) and counter-violent extremism (CVE), as well as related ideas, programs, processes, and tools. Moreover, it investigates the basic principles of extremism and violent extremism, and various aspects of the domain, such as the factors that contribute to extremism and violent extremism. It also discusses how to tackle violent extremism and defend both internal and external threats, by the development of multifaceted approaches to combating violent extremism on international, regional and multilateral, and domestic levels. Extensive literature reviews, both electronic and written, allowing the exploration of knowledge unique to the research area and offering a system of references for successful subject evaluation.

Keywords: Countering violent extremism, extremism, global collaboration, modern terrorism, radicalization, violent extremism.

Introduction

We should seek alternate methods to eradicate extremist networks within and outside the country. The legal changes can improve the state's capacity to deal with extremism. Taking various initiatives that are focused on global collaboration can be more successful in resolving current extremist issues and reducing their impact. As a consequence, counter-extremist policies and activities foresee global interaction and engagement. This could be effective in suppressing elements of extremism and redressing their ongoing efforts. This paper draws on a wide body of related scholarly literature, as well as authoritative reporting from both electronic and print media, to find information exclusive to the challenge of violent extremism, as well as guidelines for how states can effectively collaborate with global powers to prevent and eradicate extremism as well as offering a structure for successful subject assessment.

Meanwhile, the paper investigates further the principles, behaviours, and implications of VE. The paper also looks at the internal and global risks of extremism, as well as the factors that enable extremist activities to evolve and expand. It also discusses the catalysts that encourage transnational extremism; and, how efficient preparedness can reduce increased internal and external channels and activities. These sources will provide useful contexts for the major research issues, shedding light on the topic's current relevance and providing several points of view on the issue. In summary, the paper aims to build on established knowledge and develop the field of countering violent extremism by proposing instruments for evaluating the efficacy, standard methods and procedures. This paper provides a brief discussion of the dynamic and rapidly developing phenomenon of VE.

Understanding 'Extremism' and 'Violent Extremism'

The notions of extremism and violent extremism are often conflated. The term extremism is used in this paper to refer to the phase of possessing radical ideologies and convictions. To be accepted and retain their membership and position within the group, the group member will be driven to conform and impress other members (Sarah, David & Katie, 2019; p. 1). According to Alex, the idea is that one can hold extremist beliefs without being inclined to

use extremist methods to realize them when the opportunity presents itself (2014; p. 11). His study on Peter Coleman and Andrea Bartoli"s work described extremism as follows: "activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary. Extremism is a relative concept, where to answer the question: "what is extreme?", one needs a benchmark, something that is (more) "ordinary", "centrist", "mainstream" or "normal" when compared with the (extreme) political fringe" (ibid).

The following table contains Schmid P. Alex's (2014; p. 21-22) list of twenty extremism monitoring indicators that can be used to detect harmful tendencies in individuals and groups driven by ideological extremism, particularly but not exclusively of the Islamist variety:

Table: Twenty Indicators for Monitoring Extremism

1. Situate themselves outside the mainstream and reject the existing social, political or world order;
2. Seek to overthrow, with the help of a revolutionary vanguard, the political system to (re-) establish what they consider the natural order in society – whether this envisaged order be based on race, class, faith, ethnic superiority, or alleged tradition;
3. Are usually in possession of an ideological program or action plan aimed at taking and holding communal or state power;
4. Reject or, when in power, subvert the liberal-democratic conception of the rule of law; use the political space provided by it to advance their cause in efforts to take state power;
5. Reject universal human rights and show a lack of empathy and disregard for rights of others than their own;
6. Reject democratic principles based on popular sovereignty;
7. Reject equal rights for all, especially those of women and minorities;

8. Reject diversity and pluralism in favour of their preferred mono-culture society, e.g. a worldwide Islamic state;

9. Adhere to a (good-) ends-justify (-any)-means philosophy to achieve their goals;

10. Actively endorse and glorify the use of violence to fight what they consider "evil" and to reach their political objectives (e.g. in the form of jihad);

11. Show a propensity to engage in mass violence against actual and potential enemies when in power or when enjoying impunity;

12. Are single-minded, black-or-white thinkers who want to purify the world and demonize, debase and dehumanize their enemies in hate speech, characterizing them as "inferior" and earmarking them, implicitly or explicitly, as expendable;

13. Subordinate individual freedom to collective goals;

14. Refuse to engage in genuine (as opposed to tactical and temporal) compromises with the other side and ultimately seek to subdue or eliminate the enemy;

15. Exhibit intolerance to all views other than their dogmatic one and express this in anger, aggressive behaviour and hate speech;

16. Exhibit fanaticism, portray themselves as threatened and embrace conspiracy theories without necessarily being irrational in their strategic choices;

17. Exhibit authoritarian, dictatorial or totalitarian traits;

18. Are unwilling to accept criticism and intimidate and threaten dissenters, heretics and critics with death;

19. Expect obedience to their demands and commands rather than allowing them to subject their views and policies to discussion even within their group;

> 20. Have fixed ideas and closed minds and believe there is only one truth –
> theirs. In its pursuit, they are often willing to face punishment or even death
> and sometimes actively seek martyrdom.

As with the idea of 'terrorism,' there is no globally acknowledged meaning of the phrase 'violent extremism,' and the phrases are occasionally used interchangeably, according to the UN General Assembly report A/70/674. It further pointed that in general, the multiplicity of definitional approaches display some coherence in that 'violent extremism' is seen as a bigger problem than terrorism. This is reflected in the VE Action Plan, in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) stated that violent extremism embraces a broader category of expressions than terrorism because it includes forms of ideologically motivated violence that do not constitute terrorist attacks (General Assembly report, 2015).

Definitional approaches to 'Violent Extremism': Governmental and Intergovernmental

The idea of violent extremism has many distinct governmental and intergovernmental definitional approaches. Violent extremism, according to the Australian government, is defined as the use or encouragement of violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political aims. Canada's view is that, when an offence is motivated mainly by extreme political, religious, or intellectual convictions, it is referred to as "violent extremism." Some definitions specifically state that radical views are not a problem in and of themselves, but that they constitute a threat to national security when they are violently implemented.

Violent extremism is defined by the FBI as encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals, while violent extremist activities are defined by USAID as advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives. Violent extremism is defined in Norway as the activities of individuals and groups willing to use violence to achieve political, ideological, or religious goals; and in Sweden, a violent extremist is defined as someone who has repeatedly displayed behaviour that

not only accepts but also supports or exercises ideologically motivated violence to promote something.

Extremism is described in the United Kingdom as the vocal or active hostility towards fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of diverse faiths and beliefs, as well as calls for the killing of UK military personnel at home or abroad. Extremism is a term used in Denmark to describe groups that have simplistic views of the world and "the enemy," rejecting core democratic values and conventions and employing unlawful and potentially violent techniques to achieve political/religious ideological aims. Different approaches to extremism is demonstrated by these diverse definitions.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has stated that propagating views that foment and instigate violence in the pursuit of particular beliefs, as well as create animosity that may lead to inter-community violence, are both unacceptable. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: a guide for policy-makers recognizes that there is no internationally agreed-upon definition. According to this document, the most prevalent understanding of the term refers to the ideas and acts of persons who advocate or use violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political aims. Terrorism and other types of politically motivated violence" can be included in this category (Human Right Council Report A/HRC/31/65 - Advance Unedited Version, 2016).

Drivers of Violent Extremism

UN Secretary-General put a great deal of emphasis on the context and drivers of violent extremism in the Action Plan, along with the mechanisms of radicalization, the 'push' and 'pull' factors. 'Push factors' are the conditions that encourage violent extremism and the institutional context in which it occurs. Lack of socioeconomic prospects; marginalization and discrimination; poor governance, human rights abuses, and the rule of law; long-running and unresolved disputes; and prison radicalization are among them. Individual factors and procedures contribute to the conversion of thoughts and complaints into violent extremist action. This is what we refer to as 'pull

factors.' Individual backgrounds and motivations, collective grievances and victimhood as a result of dominance, tyranny, subjection, or foreign involvement, misuse and manipulation of ideas, political objectives and racial and cultural disparities, and leadership and social networks are few examples (General Assembly report A/70/674, paras. 23 and 32-37; United Nations, Swiss Confederation, 2016, p. 4).

"Violent Extremism" refers to the practice of engaging in violent acts. Some, perhaps even the majority, of those with radical ideologies and violent justifications do not engage in terrorism. Actors may opt to carry out a violent attack because they believe the groups are insufficiently severe and extreme and may feel a greater personal need to act to achieve terrorist goals. Violent extremism is seen as a threat that eventually contributes to terror. This has been acknowledged and expressed in both increased anti-terrorism support and efforts to deter and fight extremist violence.

In terms of extremism and violent extremism, we should also expect differences in the factors that underpin their activities. Extremists, for example, maybe violent because they can use violence for a variety of causes, but extremists may choose nonviolent action because they operate in an environment that limits their opportunities to build a capacity for violence. Transnational violent extremism has risen dramatically in recent decades, particularly among uprooted persons alienated from their original ethnic or national culture.

Almost a decade after the United States of America (USA) declared war on terrorism if not before, it is now clear that while eliminating terrorists from the battlefield and disrupting terrorist attacks are and should be, high priority targets, they are not enough to neutralize the global threat of violent extremism. An effective attempt to counter violent extremism (CVE) would try to avoid the tide of new radicals and the destructive activities of new extremists (Borum Randy, 2011; p. 8).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

In general, the literature on combating violent extremism focuses on policies aimed at responding to or preventing violence through policy guidelines rather

than understanding how CVE is defined and manifested in real ways in transnational networks. Bridget, Katerina, and Gilbert have positioned current violent extremism and terrorism as global tendencies. Pollard (2007: 237) puts it like this: "Modern globalization has culminated in modern terrorism." Furthermore, changing networks, continually mutating combinations and constellations constitute the "new" transnational hazards. However, others argue that contemporary violent extremism differs sufficiently from earlier forms to qualify as a "modern" form of violent extremism or require the development of "new" techniques to countering violent extremism (Bridget, Katerina, & Gilbert; p. 16).

The current literature agrees that global forms of violent extremism and terrorism necessitate the integration of domestic and international responses, implying that the traditional separation between the domestic and foreign policy is no longer valid. Furthermore, the 'networked' existence of modern violent extremism is understood to imply a networked reaction. The literature emphasizes the creation of alliances and multilateral solutions to address networks. This involves alliances for military, law enforcement, intelligence operations and regional governance and security cooperation between governments of allied nations. Such collaborations must be encouraged by the framework for international and regional cooperation as well as global governance. However, inconsistencies in state anti-terrorism law, national security policies and practices, political and social principles, and possibly internal limits can cause complications (ibid; p.17).

Approaches to CVE

CVE entails a variety of prevention and intervention strategies aimed at strengthening communities and individuals' resistance to radicalization and violent extremism. The following are some various approaches to dealing with violent extremism:

1. Offensive Approaches

Military, legislative and policy approaches may be offensive tactics to tackle violent extremism. In the literature concerning these fields, a prevailing trend is that new types of violent extremism and terrorism need new forms of response (ibid; p.41).

2. Defensive Approaches

Defensive approaches to combating violent extremism are aimed at deterring and decreasing attack vulnerability and reacting to and containing an attack after it has occurred. This entails knowledge and techniques for the security of infrastructure, crisis preparation and protection of borders. The prevailing structures that form the interpretation and execution of these methods are those of risk control and risk management and preparedness (ibid, p.43).

3. Ideological Approaches

Ideology is considered a cause of violence in terms of radicalization and extremism. Many models of radicalization and methods of de-radicalization stem from the implicit belief that thought comes before action, i.e. demonstrating a cognitive bias. Therefore, they concentrate on preventing the development of anti-democratic views and beliefs in the utility of violence or the development of a clear ideology by individuals (ibid, p.46).

4. Communicative Approaches

The modern types of violent extremism are understood to have penetrated the terrain and action of communication, knowledge and symbolism, and the relationship between the media and terrorism is often portrayed as symbiotic. Communicative approaches to fighting violent extremism seek to undermine terrorist-generated narratives and representations and facilitate 'western' counter-narratives and representations through techniques of public diplomacy to win over the 'hearts and minds' of actual and future voters and sympathizers. In this 'battle of ideas' on a communicative terrain, states and violent radicals clash for authority and reputation (ibid; p.49-50).

5. Political Approaches

Democratic grievances galvanize many violent radical groups. Democratic approaches to the battle against violent extremism are also aimed at addressing concerns through involvement in mainstream politics and legislative processes.

6. Social policy Approaches

For Violent Extremism oriented with the socioeconomic, social group membership and social citizenship is social policy approaches to combating

violent extremism. The goal of these approaches is to prevent violent extremism by addressing social factors that give rise to violence or create support for violent extremists and by helping members disengage themselves from militant or terrorist groups and by offering alternative routes (ibid; p.55).

Operationalizing Counter Violent Extremism: International, Regional and Multilateral, and Domestic Measures/Instruments

Countering violent extremism has become a global problem and a high priority for communities in the last few years. Several important steps which reflect this concern have been taken.

International Instruments: United Nations Framework

The United Nations is the Global collaboration to combat threats to international security. The role of the General Assembly (GA) is to establish a normative structure on terrorism and to promote cooperative action between states.

While the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) could focus on preventing acts of terrorism through cooperation between security, law enforcement and wider control authorities, through the power of budget allocations, the GA will form the global response to terrorism. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime's terrorist prevention branch provides legislative support to various nations in conjunction with the passage and enforcement of anti-terrorism treaties and UNSC resolutions, according to Thakur. R (p. 185-185).

In response to the growing phenomenon of foreign fighters joining terrorist groups such as ISIL and Al Qaida, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2178 (2014), which is described in its preamble as: "individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict, and resolving to address this threat." The need to approach this in a systematic and multidimensional way, was of particular relevance to violent extremism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)/CVE efforts, by:

> "[P]reventing radicalization to terrorism, stemming recruitment, inhibiting foreign terrorist fighter travel, disrupting financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, countering violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, countering incitement to terrorist acts motivated by extremism or intolerance, promoting political and religious tolerance, economic development and social cohesion and inclusiveness, ending and resolving armed conflicts, and facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation (S/RES/2178 Preamble, 2014).

The GA's efforts were made in tandem with those of the Security Council. In general, it alludes to violent extremism and PVE/CVE issues in the context of the UN Counter-Terrorism (CT) Policy and its annual assessments (e.g., General Assembly Resolution 70/2911) (UNODC – The Doha Declaration). The Pillar I of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy applies to violent extremism and discusses the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, meanwhile, has been actively involved in PVE/CVE-related matters, especially through the implementation of his VE Action Plan. The key objective of the Plan is to encourage and support the implementation of a holistic strategy that includes not only ongoing, critical security-based counter-terrorism initiatives, but also systemic preventive measures that directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of these new and virulent groups (General Assembly report A/70/674, para. 6). To this end, the Plan makes over 70 recommendations to the Member States on preventing the spread of violent extremism, through the implementation of multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches to national and (sub) regional strategies that represent more local and regional contextual factors and priorities (ibid).

Regional and Multilateral Instruments

A variety of programs have been carried out by regional and sub-regional bodies, ultimately aimed at preventing and combating violent extremism. The following is a short description of regional and multilateral instruments:

1. The African Region

In response to the rise of terrorist attacks and violent extremism, which have been the source of major threats to peace and security in the African region, the African Union Peace and Security Council, a forum for member states of the African Union (AU) to project their foreign policy interests to peace and security issues (AU PSC), has firmly denounced 'violent extremist agendas and narratives' and the central role of these trends in the ultimate execution of terrorist acts. Consequently, the Council emphasized the need to fight extremism and urged member states to make every effort to resolve effectively the root causes and underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism (ibid).

The following instruments or measures have been introduced to deal effectively with the danger of violent extremism:

a) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) - Political Declaration of ECOWAS and Popular Stance against Terrorism.
b) AU PSC (last updated 21 November 2017) - The 728th session of the Peace and Security Council of the AU: Open session on the theme: „the role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa'.
c) AU PSC (last updated 14 February 2018) - Communiqué of the 749th session of the Peace and Security Council of the AU at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the theme: 'Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Combatting the Transnational Threat of Terrorism in Africa'.

d) AU PSC (last updated 2 February 2017) - Communique of the 650th session of the PSC: CISSA briefing on the latest international developments in the war against terrorism and its effect on Africa (ibid).

2. The Asian Region

The Asian region is committed to addressing these concerns in response to the decade-long presence and effect of violent extremism and related practices, including the funding of regional organizations. For example, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has called against all forms of terrorism and violent extremism; whilst the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has emphasized the need for the Comprehensive Convention on Countering

International Terrorism to be accepted and finalized and then implemented (ibid).

One of the first international organizations to implement a binding treaty against terrorism was the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Key counter-terrorism resources from SAARC are SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (adopted 4 November 1987, entered into force 22 August 1988), an Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention (adopted at the 12th Summit in Islamabad 2-6 January 2006, entered into force 1 December 2006) and the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (adopted 8 December 1985) (ibid).

Furthermore, The East Asia Forum, a research institute focusing on the Asia Pacific region, for instance, has also acknowledged the diverse role women can play in helping to prevent the spread of fundamentalist ideologies. Similarly, the Monash Gender, Peace and Security research group - specializing in the role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism - recognized an "impressive variety of ways in which women are individually and collectively" involved in Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE)" in its paper *Preventing Violent Extremism: gender perspectives and women's roles*. (ibid).

3. The European Region

Major results due to violent terrorist acts have also been seen in the European region. About the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), "within its membership which encompasses countries from beyond the European region, its efforts are framed around "Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism" (VERLT) and linked to its 2012 Consolidated Framework in the Fight against Terrorism (OSCE, Permanent Council, 2012), together with two Ministerial Declarations adopted in 2015 (OSCE, Ministerial Council, 2015) and 2016 (OSCE, Ministerial Council, 2016). Concerning the 2012 Framework, this identified VERLT as one of its eight "strategic focus areas" (OSCE, Permanent Council, 2012, paras. 14-17). Negative socio-economic factors, abuses of human rights, bigotry and intolerance, along with violent conflicts, are among its established

drivers. Similarly, the European Union (EU) has been increasingly involved in PVE and CVE-related matters, especially after its Policy to Combating Radicalization and the Recruitment of Terrorism, first implemented in 2005, (European Union, European Council, 2005), which is periodically updated" (ibid).

4. The Inter-American Region

The consequences of violent extremism have also been witnessed in the Americas, with the most important attacks to date being those of 9/11, which dramatically increased the regional attention given to issues related to terrorism and violent extremism. For instance, shortly after the attacks, the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism was adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2002. Except for the occasional resolution or instrument adopted by the OAS General Assembly on terrorism - related issues, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism is the body most actively engaged in counter-terrorism activities (ibid).

5. The Middle East and the Gulf Regions

The following instruments or measures have been introduced to deal effectively with the danger of violent extremism:

a) League of Arab States (LAS) (2015). Report of the conference on "Regional Security and Challenges Facing the Arab Region". February.

b) OIC, Council of Foreign Ministers (2017). *Report of the 44th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (Session on Youth, Peace and Development in a World of Solidarity). 10-*11July. Abidjan, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. OIC/44-CFM/2017/REPORT/FINAL.

c) Islamic Conference Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2016). *Joint OIC Youth Strategy. DRAFT.* ICYF-DC/ICYSM-3/2016/01/Rev.1.

d) OIC (2016). *Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW)* . Adopted by the Sixth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of OIC Member States. 1-3 November. Istanbul, the Republic of Turkey" (ibid).

6. The Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF)

Formed in 2011, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) is an intergovernmental body composed of 29 Member States and the EU. It serves as a policy platform, bringing together experts and professionals to share knowledge and experience in combating violent extremism and terrorist approaches. The body produces and promotes, through its working groups, non-binding Memoranda of Good Practices for the use of the Member States and non-member countries. Several of the memoranda discuss concerns related to the prevention or combating of violent extremism by criminal justice initiatives (ibid).

Domestic Measures / Instruments

The UN Member States have also worked to enhance counter-terrorism initiatives at the national level. The execution of their multilateral counter-terrorism agreements at the national level is among the countries' main counter-terrorism priorities. The emergence of complex global counter-terrorism commitments and undertakings places a considerable burden on the Member States about the national efforts needed to enforce them. As a corollary, it is important to enhance the exchange of knowledge at and within global, regional and the national levels, as the Member States face major challenges in achieving an efficient flow of information on global developments to inform national efforts and vice versa, which is a necessary enabling condition for effective national implementation (Vienna International Centre, 2009).

Effective implementation of the global structure at national level involves the continued participation of a wide range of different national actors participating in a wide range of different areas of work, requiring contributions not only from security and law enforcement agencies, but also from a wide range of stakeholders in non-traditional counter-terrorism sectors, including the areas of human rights, education, social services, development aid, financial sector, and civil society. Synergies of strategies at the state level and productive inter-agency/departmental coordination are essential to the effective implementation of national counter-terrorism initiatives. Furthermore, the powerful medium for communicating specific policy issues

and exchanging knowledge and experiences more generally between countries and between national, regional and global levels, in particular the United Nations, is critical. For example, national ministries, including ministries of justice, interior, finance, and intelligence, which have the primary responsibility for countering terrorism, will need to be made aware of the importance of global measures to their national work, and foreign ministries may need to take steps to ensure that "technical" ministries are better informed of developments on the international front (Ibid).

Member States have chosen various ways of meeting this need for an efficient flow of knowledge. Some of them have opted for a focal point (mostly an official in the foreign ministry/department) to be nominated. Some of these focal points perform several additional roles, such as monitoring or coordinating national policies for the United Nations and other multilateral bodies (ibid).

Conclusion

Violent extremist activities have increased drastically over the world in recent years. Governance flaws and structural inequities heighten vulnerability to violent extremism by feeding the fundamental causes of violent extremism. This paper attempted to comprehend violent extremism through several lenses. As a word that is frequently used to characterize a stage in the cycle of behaviour that leads to terrorist attacks, violent extremism is vital to separate it from terrorism. Otherwise, efforts to resist violent extremism will be focused solely on stopping actual acts of terror rather than addressing the concepts that motivate people to commit such crimes. Overall, as shown in this study, a comprehensive plan for preventing or combatting violent extremism should be initiated to address all varieties of violent extremism and it should also be recognized that the threat posed cannot be addressed exclusively by reactive measures. To proactively confront and negate factors conducive to violent extremism, a whole-of-society and whole-of-government strategy is required. As a result, a wide range of stakeholders (both government and non-government) should be included in the effort to mitigate this threat. Meanwhile, controlling the risks connected with violent extremism necessitates a thorough grasp of the localized danger landscape. Additionally,

decisions about how to manage the conditions that can lead to extremism must be taken at the local level, based on local risk assessments.

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Teenage Pregnancy in Sri Lanka: Trends and Causes

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to examine the trends and factors affecting teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. This paper draws mainly upon secondary data, reviewing the available research findings to describe the patterns, trends and causes for teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. When taking into account the trends of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka, the percentage of teenage mothers is lower than the other countries in South Asia. However, on the island, the percentage of teenage pregnancy varies from district to district and the prevalence of teenage mothers in certain areas is high. Social factors such as sexual violence, extreme poverty, the impact of war, lack of social opportunities and family conflicts could be identified as the main factors associated with teenage pregnancies. However, patriarchal culture, negative attitudes on poverty, social pressure and misuse of technology or social media as identified in this paper are the root causes for the teenage pregnancies in the country. In order to eliminate the problem of teenage pregnancy, short term and long-term solutions need to be planned. Taking strong actions against gender-based violence, expanding educational opportunities, eradicating poverty and also rehabilitating social systems devastated by the effects of the long-drawn civil war, motivating children and families for engaging with institutions such as schools and religious institutions will be helpful to solve this problem up to some extent. The engagement with the institutions of the health sector should also be implemented in providing sex education, family counselling, and educating parents on alternative income schemes. Awareness programmes in the areas where teenage pregnancies are high also can be implemented and human resources available in the particular area can be utilized for this purpose.

Keywords: Teenage mothers, Sri Lanka, Social, Economic, Cultural

Introduction

Teenage pregnancies are a global problem that is mainly addressed by the health sector due to the life risk that is associated with the problem. It also has adverse connections with the socio-economic sectors of a country. When considering "motherhood" in the South Asian context, giving birth is seen as a special event and is often celebrated. Even though there are slight changes in the ideology, the birth of a child into a family is seen as a blessing for the family and it is seen as a sign of the family's success (Paranavitana, 2008). According to the historical evidence, teenage motherhood is considered a normal thing in many countries in the world (Santelli & Melnikas, 2010; Vinovskis, 2003). However, current research has identified that a girl entering motherhood before reaching adulthood leads to many health-related issues and it is connected with several socio-economic issues. Many countries in the world, especially American and European countries consider the issue primarily as a health concern and are in the process of finding remedies for it, whereas, in many Asian countries, the increase in teenage mothers is seen both as a medical as well as a social and cultural issue (Akella & Jordan, 2015).

According to the United Nations Child Rights Convention, those who are below the age of eighteen years are considered children. The United Nations Organization further identifies the stage of the children below 18 years as school period and playtime while underscoring the fact that they grow up into strong and confident individuals based on the love and encouragement they receive from their families. For this reason, they point out that a safe environment where the children can live without fear and suspicion should be facilitated and if the children face any form of violence or harassment it would adversely impact the entire society (UNICEF, 2005).

However, different countries define childhood in different ways. In India, children are defined as those who belong to the age category lesser than 15- 18 years (Sikdar, 2012) and in Japan; those who are below 17 years are considered children. According to the 1939 Sri Lanka Children and Young Persons Ordinance, those who are below the age of 14 are

considered children and those who are between 14 to 16 years are considered young adults (UNICEF, 2004). Sri Lanka has signed the United Nations Child Rights Convention like many other countries and considers those who are below eighteen years as children. Going by this definition, girls below the age of eighteen who become pregnant or give birth can be identified as teenage mothers. In other words, this can be defined as a child giving birth to another child.

However, formally the definition of teenage motherhood refers to a girl belonging to the age group of 13-19 years becoming pregnant or giving birth to a child or it also can be defined as, a girl who has not attained the legal age of adulthood becoming a mother. This is defined by the term teenage motherhood (Akella & Jordan, 2015). To define the term in other words, a teenage mother is a girl who becomes pregnant or gives birth to a child before reaching her 20th birthday. This definition disregards the legal provisions for marriage and/or how adulthood has been defined legally (UNICEF, 2008).

As I stated earlier, many researchers have focused on health-related research and much attention is needed on the socio-economic issues related to teenage pregnancies. In most developed countries, especially in Europe, teenage pregnancies are considered as a health risk rather than a social or economic issue (Part et al, 2013) and therefore, research is focused on finding ways out of it. However, in most developing countries, issues related to teenage pregnancies are more connected with social, cultural and economic issues in parallel with health risks (Ahinkorah et al, 2019). In general, teenage pregnancy is not a popular topic in the research field in many of the developing countries and very little focus has been given to research or policymaking discussions to mitigate the problem. There are a few reasons that can be identified with this trend; one major fact is this topic is more connected with other social issues of these countries. For example, sexual harassment, rape, violence against girls, the impact of war etc. may be reasons for teenage pregnancy and hence, more research needs to be done in connecting the problem of teenage pregnancies with these broader issues. Even though a few research studies have been done

on teenage mothers in developing countries including Sri Lanka; more attention has been given to identifying the impact of the problem for both teenage mothers and to society.

With this background in mind, this study sets out to describe the patterns of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka with two objectives. The first is to describe the trends of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka and the second to examine the main causes for teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka.

This paper draws upon mainly secondary data and reviewing the available research findings and tries to describe the patterns, trends and causes for teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. The official reports such as reports of the Family Health Bureau, reports of the Department of Census and Statistics, non-governmental reports, academic literature and research outputs were used and analyzed.

Theoretical background

Although specified theories associated with teenage pregnancy are yet to be developed, it is possible to discuss the main reasons that result in the teenage motherhood through the theories developed regarding sexual behaviour and risk-taking behaviour (Capaldi, Crosby, & Stoolmiller, 1996, Perkins, et al, 1998). For instance, these theories are the "social bond theory", "social learning theory," "problem behaviour theory" and "family development theory."

The social bond theory can be linked to the attachment theory introduced by Bowlby. The attachment theory explains emotional relationships and bonds among people and how those bonds develop from the time a person is born. Bowlbey believed that a child's future is determined by the relationship they develop with their parents in childhood. The social bond theory carries this idea further and mainly shows that the bond a person builds with him/herself spread to other family members, friends and the community and through that he/she expresses the inherent preference to build relationships. The social bond theory further posits that social bonding behaviour is created as a result of three factors.

The first factor is that the shaping of a person's behaviour is decided based on the mother-child bonding process and the relationship with the environment. The second is that relationships and behaviour are determined based on the behaviour and relationship of the other family members, friends and members of the community. The third is that for people to choose their behaviour, the strength or the weakness of the relationships with the subgroups in their primary environment affects them to some extent, consciously or unconsciously. Many researchers show that if an individual develops the attitude that society is important for their benefit, that person will develop a strong relationship with his/her mother, family members and the community while the lack of such attitudinal development is likely to result in the development of deviant behaviours in them. Therefore, if a girl does not build a strong relationship with her mother as well as the other family members, and if the family members including the mother are distant from each other, and if society does not fulfil the needs of the child, they would go looking for those needs through other means. Researchers show that teenage pregnancy can be a result of these reasons and especially that there is a close connection between attachment, bond and teenage pregnancy (Ravoira & Cherry, 1992; Hockaday, 1998).

According to the "social learning theory" introduced by Albert Bandura (1963), the social environment has an immense impact on a person's behaviour. Although theoretical ideas about humans "learning process have been developing since the 1940s, Albert Bandura was the first person to present his ideas on the impact of the social environment on a humans" learning process. There are five basic principles identified in this theory. The first is that the learning process is not merely a reaction to the stimulation but a result of a cognitive process that occurs in a wide social system. The second factor is the presence of various social reinforcements affecting an individual's learning. The third is that observations impact a person's learning. Fourthly, an individual builds his/her learning behaviour that is unique to them. The fifth is that no one absorbs the information given to him/her in the same way and the three factors of cognition, environment and behaviour equally impact a person's learning process (Joan, 1992).

As per these principles, this theory emphasizes four other factors that determine a person's learning behaviour. They are; Attention, Retention, Reproduction and Motivation. Here the term "Motivation" explains that motivation is based on a person's expectations and expectations are solely based on social factors; social environment and the value given by society for various behaviours (Bandura, 1972). If a child needs to build up high expectations, then the respective social environment background should provide the necessary motivation and the value for it. If these factors do not take place in the right manner, there is a possibility of children opting for deviant behaviour and teenage pregnancies can be seen as one of the consequences.

The "problem behaviour theory" was introduced by Jessor and his team and this predominantly highlights alcoholism among adolescents along with the problems and factors associated with drunkenness. This theory defines "problem behaviour" as a type of behaviour that is not accepted by society and they show that the reaction of society for such behaviour can range from normal to severe. To a great extent, this theory has been presented from a socio-psychological approach and it has presented the factors that affect problem behaviour such as drunkenness, addiction to drugs, etc. from a psychological angle. According to Jesser (1987), this theory assumes that every behaviour of an individual is a result of his/her interconnection with his/her environment. The theory further reiterates that a person's behaviour is shaped by the person's personality, the environment in which the person lives as well as the behaviour system of a person.

Thus, this theory emphasizes that an individual's attitudes and personality, as well as the influence from society, leads them to engage in socially unacceptable practices. This theory specifically focuses on the socialization process and peer group influence on problem behaviours. Therefore, the problem behaviour theory is used to study and examine various behaviours of adolescents, particularly alcoholism, drug addiction and sexual behaviour. Accordingly, this theory can also be used to examine and identify the main factors that influence teenage pregnancy in Sri Lanka and identify to what extent attitudes and personalities of

adolescents as well as the support they receive from their social environment contribute to teenage pregnancy.

The above-mentioned theories explain the factors associated with teenage pregnancies from different angles. Therefore, in understanding teenage pregnancy in the context of different societies and countries, the theories that can be used may differ. However, when analyzing these varying theories, there are common factors that can be identified and they can be listed down under three main domains. These are the social background factors, family relationships and individual factors. (Capaldi, Crosby, & Stoolmiller, 1996, Perkins, et al, 1998; Camacho & Chandra- Mouli, 2010).

1. Social Factors

According to the above theoretical discussion and the research done in this field globally, it can be mentioned that there is a clear link between stressful social environments and teenage pregnancy. For instance, extreme poverty, lack of educational facilities and low achievement or failure in education, lower level of education of parents as well as the lack of welfare opportunities are some of them (Jewell, Tacchi & Donovan, 2000, Raj, et al, 2010; Akella & Jordan, 2015). Camacho and Chandra-Mouli, (2010) state that poverty has a direct impact on teenage pregnancy and teenage pregnancy on the other hand further increases the level of poverty and this cycle keeps perpetuating. They have explained it as mentioned below.

Figure 1

Source: Camacho & Chandra-Mouli, (2010: 15)

A study conducted by Fernando et al (2013) has also confirmed that social pressure has a direct link with teenage pregnancy. They have based their research in Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Colombo districts in Sri Lanka and the sample size was 510 teenage mothers. The objective of the study was to identify the risk factors affecting teenage pregnancy in Sri Lanka. According to this study, personal characteristics, low educational attainment, poor parental supervision and poor support from teachers were identified as risk factors for teenage pregnancy.

Apart from this, researchers have confirmed that teenage pregnancy has a direct relationship with factors like ethnicity, and race, cultural and social variables. Especially in many developing countries, there is a higher number of teenage mothers within their minority communities and the main reason for this is being ignored by the dominant groups, economic background, and their customs etc. (Akella & Jordan, 2015).

2. Family Matters

Most of the research on teenage pregnancy conducted thus far has ascertained that broken and distant relationships that girls have with their

families result in them opting for underage sexual relationships and this can be a reason for teenage pregnancy. Family-oriented theories (family system theory, family development theory) have tentatively confirmed that the relationship between children and parents directly impacts children's personality development (Brennan, Mc Donald & Shlomowitz, 2005; Sharma, et al, 2002; Khandait et al, 2000). Apart from this, children becoming violent inside families, the use of drugs by parents, the level of education of parents, early marriage of parents as well as single-parent family also impact teenage pregnancy (Haldre, et al, 2009; Healthy Teen Network, 2008; Akella & Jordan).

For instance, Ekanyake, Thennakoon & Hemapriya, (2015) have conducted research based at the Kandy General Hospital in Sri Lanka. The objective of their study was to find out socioeconomic risk factors, obstetric outcome and perinatal depression in pregnant teenagers. They have used 182 teenage mothers who registered in the hospital within a seven months as teenage mothers. According to this study, 79% of the teenage mothers were from low-income families and 21% from lower-middle-class backgrounds while no teenage mothers reported from middle-class and upper-class families. One reason for this could be that middle-class or upper-class children are more likely to access private hospitals. Nevertheless, this study shows that the majority of these teenage mothers have been reported from broken families and families with lots of problems such as violence, single parent, and divorce of parents and so on.

3. Individual Factors

The researchers' opinion is that there is a close correlation between the individual factors or personal experiences of young girls and teenage pregnancy. Among these; sexual factors, psychological factors, school achievements and peer relations are key (Lottes & Kontula, 2000; Imamura, Tucker & Hannaford, 2007; Bardone et al, 1996; Habitu, Yalew & Bisetegn, 2017). When considering sexual factors, the natural inclination towards sexual intercourse, the lack of awareness or knowledge about the consequences of having sexual intercourse and the

lack of knowledge on contraception, directly impact teenage pregnancy (Chung, Kim & Lee, 2018). When considering psychological factors, it has been found that there is a greater possibility for impulsive as well as violent girls to become pregnant at a very young age. Moreover, researchers also mention that there is a strong correlation between drug addiction as well as being engaged in other illegal activities with teenage pregnancies (Bardone et al, 1996; Yamaguchi & Kandel, 1987). It can be shown that these findings are consistent with the problem behaviour theory because the problem behaviour theory explains that smoking, drug consumption, and negative behaviours of peers during adolescence are reasons for early sexual activities. It can directly impact teenage motherhood (Donovan & Jesser, 1985). Accordingly, drug addiction, as well as peer group influence can be strong impacts on teenage motherhood.

However, as mentioned earlier, these factors that influence teenage pregnancy may sometimes change from one country to another or even from one area to another within the same country. For instance, in one country social factors might impact the increase in teenage motherhood while in other societies it might be because of "individual factors". In some societies" family conflicts might be a reason while in others it might be a mix of all these factors that increase in early pregnancy. Numerically in Sri Lanka, there hasn't been a significant increase in the number of teenage mothers though it can still be identified as a social problem in some districts where the numbers are high. Therefore, this theoretical approach will be utilized to explain the nature of Sri Lanka's situation regarding teenage motherhood.

Global Teenage Mothers

"Teenage pregnancy and motherhood" is not a new concept and there is evidence to show that it has been socially accepted as a normal phenomenon since ancient times. For instance, in European societies even in the 20th century, teenage motherhood has been treated as a normal phenomenon and it has been a social need that many girls produce children either prematurely or during the second decade of their lives (Santelli & Melnikas, 2010). The best example related to this is that

it has been mentioned that Margaret Beauford, who was the mother of King Henry VII; King of England and Ireland from 1457 to 1509, was only a 13-year-old girl when she gave birth to King Henry. Even the second wife of the Roman Emperor Charlemagne (772 AD) gave birth to their son when she was 14 years old (Vinovskis, 2003). Teenage motherhood which has been treated as a normal phenomenon throughout history is now viewed differently. Mainly, teenage pregnancy is questioned from a medical point of view and even sociologists have joined the effort. For instance, after about 1950 apart from the experts in the medical field, religious leaders, policymakers, sociologists as well as the general public have been trying to build a discourse against teenage motherhood (Cherry & Dillon, 2014).

However, even today teenage pregnancies can be seen in every country in the world. For example, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are about 16 million girls between the ages of 15 to 19 who become teenage mothers annually and among those who are below 15 years of age, there are about a million who become teenage mothers (WHO, 2020). However, it has been found that at present, the majority of teenage mothers are reported from developing and middle-income countries which possess weak healthcare systems. For instance, according to UNICEF (2008) reports, one out of five children born is born to a teenage mother and 80% of these have been reported from developing countries. However, a considerable number of teenage mothers were also reported from developed countries. Although they have advanced healthcare systems, they consider teenage pregnancy as a serious issue and actively discourage teenage pregnancies. Based on the above information it can be noticed that there is a considerable anomaly in the reporting of teenage mothers regionally. This is further explained by Tables No.1 and 2.

Table 01: Countries with highest teenage pregnancy- 2019

Country	percentage
Niger	20.3%
Mali	17.5%
Angola	16.6%
Mozambique	14.6%
Guinea	14.17%
Chad	13.71
Malawi	13.69%
Congo	12.29%
Madagascar	11.74%
Uganda	11.48%

Source: Change Care Foundation, 2019

Table 02: Countries with lowest teen pregnancy- 2018

Country	Percentage
South Korea	0.1%
Denmark	0.3%
Singapore	0.3%
Switzerland	0.3%
Netherlands	0.3%
Andorra	0.3%

Liechtenstein	0.4%
Japan	0.4%
Norway	0.4%
Cypress	0.4%

Source: United Nation Population Fund, 2019

Tables No 1 and 2 show that the highest numbers of teenage mothers in the world are reported from countries in the African continent. In general, the ratio is 1000:143 and it is relatively an unsafe situation. Also, when analyzing the above tables as pointed out by UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank, there is a direct link between teenage motherhood and the social, economic environment of developing countries.

Trends of Teenage Mothers in Sri Lanka

According to social indicators, Sri Lanka is considered to be well ahead of its neighbours in South Asia. Due to this, Sri Lanka has been able to reach the level of other developed countries in the world, especially in the areas of health and education (World Bank, 2020). An analysis of the situation of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka under such circumstances shows that although there are teenage mothers in Sri Lanka, the percentage is low compared to other countries in South Asia. The table below confirms this fact.

Table 03: Teenage mothers in South Asia- 2017

Country	Percentage
Afghanistan	12%
Bangladesh	8.2%
India	7.9%
Nepal	6.05%
Pakistan	4.4%
Sri Lanka	4.4%
Maldives	0.7%
Bhutan	No data

Source: World Population Prospects, (2019), Sharma & Sharma, (2021), Gurung et al, (2020), UNFPA, (2020)

According to Table 3, in comparison to other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka holds a favourable position in terms of the number of teenage mothers reported, second only to the Maldives. Although this is the overall situation, Table 4 confirms that in some districts in Sri Lanka, the prevalence of teenage mothers is high.

Table 04: Teenage mothers in Sri Lanka (By District)

District	2000	2006	2010	2015	2018
Colombo	5.2	3.4	4.3	3.8	3.1
Gampaha	8.3	4.4	4.4	4.3	3.7
Kalutara	9.0	5.7	5.7	4.4	3.5
Kandy	5.7	3.7	5.2	4.6	3.5
Matale	7.8	5.1	6.7	4.3	3.9
Nuwara Eliya	6.6	4.7	6.1	5.4	4.6
Galle	8.3	5.3	5.7	5.9	4.4
Matara	6.1	4.8	5.5	4.9	3.6
Hambanthota	9.4	6.7	6.6	4.9	4.1
Jaffna	5.9	4.2	4.5	3.3	3.7
Killinochchi	8.3	5.8	11.3	6.4	5.3
Mannar	6.7	7.5	7.4	4.3	4.6
Vavuniya	7.7	6.0	8.6	5.9	4.7
Mullaitivu	9.6	7.4	9.3	7.4	6.9
Batticaloa	12.2	10.2	11.2	8.7	7.8
Ampara	8.9	7.1	8.6	5.2	3.8
Trincomalee	12.6	8.3	12.1	9.0	9.3
Kurunagala	8.8	5.0	5.7	4.0	3.5
Chilaw	14.5	9.0	9.6	8.0	6.8
Anuradhapura	11.3	6.7	8.5	7.0	4.9

Pollonnaruwa	10.9	6.8	7.8	4.3	3.8
Badulla	7.7	5.7	7.8	5.9	5.0
Moneragala	9.8	8.4	7.4	5.1	4.3
Rathnapura	10.5	6.5	7.1	5.1	4.2
Kegalle	6.2	4.2	4.9	4.5	3.5
Total			6.5	5.2	4.4

Source: Family Health Bureau reports

According to the table above, reviewing the annual reports of the Family Health Bureau reveal several facts regarding the problems that prevail among teenage mothers in Sri Lanka. The first fact is that the number of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka is gradually declining. However, since this table only shows the number of teenage mothers registered with the Family Health Bureau, the Bureau believes that there may be more teenage mothers than what is officially reported. The declining number of teenage mothers can be pointed out as a positive development.

The second point is that although there is a decrease in the number of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka in general, some districts show this number to be on the rise. For instance, according to the table above, the highest number of teenage mothers reported are from the districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu, while the lowest numbers are reported from Colombo, Kandy and Kalutara districts. It is clear from these facts that there is a relative decrease in the number of teenage mothers in the districts where educational and other facilities are available than in the other districts. For instance, in districts such as Gampaha, Galle, Matara and Kurunegala, the proportion of teenage mothers is less than 4%. The analysis of this table also reveals that the number of teenage mothers is relatively high in areas that have been impacted by poor facilities and civil war. For instance, although Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu districts have been identified as districts with the highest number of teenage mothers, the other districts are Kilinochchi, Puttalam, Badulla and Vavuniya. There is a tendency for

adolescent girls to become mothers in districts where facilities are low, and poverty is high. However, although there is a decrease in the number of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka compared to other South Asian countries, it can still be pointed out as a social problem that exists within the Sri Lankan society and urgent attention should be taken to this regard.

Factors influencing the emergence of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka

Like other countries in the world, Sri Lanka also pays special attention to teenage pregnancies because teenage mothers and infants born to them are likely to face various health problems. In the long run, this could affect the social and economic indicators of the country as well. Table 4 shows that, despite the declining number of teenage mothers compared to other countries, Sri Lanka still records a tendency towards teenage motherhood in certain districts and among different ethnic groups. Three major factors which contribute to this scenario worldwide have been discussed above. And as per that discussion, social factors, individual factors and family factors are identified as key factors that influence teenage pregnancy. When analyzing the research done in Sri Lanka, it can be observed that trends and causes for teenage pregnancies are going in the same direction. But within those common factors, there are a few causes that could be identified as unique characteristics which contribute to teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka and those factors have been discussed below.

1.   Sexual Violence

In many European countries, the main cause behind teenage motherhood is "individual factors" such as sexual intercourse among multiple partners and non-use of contraceptives, and consumption of alcohol, drugs and tobacco have become major causes for teenage pregnancy (Fernando, et al, 2013). The trends, patterns and causes for teenage pregnancies thus in developed and many European countries mainly consist of „problem behaviour theory which is introduced by Jessor and his team stated through this theory that alcoholism among adolescents contributes to many socially unaccepted behaviours.

However, in most of the South Asian countries, it has been identified that "social factors" have mainly contributed to teenage pregnancies rather than "individual factors." Countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India, have the highest numbers of teenage pregnancies within South Asia. The cultural practices, poverty, and lack of access to social opportunities have been identified as the main social factors for teenage pregnancies among these countries (Shrestha, 2002; Goonesekera & Amarasuriya, 2013). Among those "social factors" child marriages have been identified as the main cause for teenage pregnancies in many of the said countries.

For instance, based on the studies done by Atwood & Hussain (1997) and Pathak et al (1993), Nandi et al (2014) pointed out that child marriage is the leading cause of teenage pregnancy in India. Further, Nandi et al (2014), state that 22.8% of the mothers who were admitted to the Nadia District Hospital in West Bengal in India during the first six months from 02.02.2013 to 02.08.2013 were teenage mothers and child marriage was identified as the main reason for their pregnancy. Although the age to get married in South Asian countries is accepted as 18 years or above (Goonesekera & Amarasuriya, 2013), 92.34% of these child marriages were arranged by their parents, while the main reason behind this issue is extreme poverty. For instance, 68.93% of parents pointed out that extreme poverty caused their daughter to be married off at such a tender age. 71.5% were married under social pressure and 46.27% due to large family sizes (Nandi et al, 2014).

When analyzing the research and reports of the Family Health Bureau on teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka, it is clear that "social factors" are the main cause for teenage pregnancies. However, the root causes within the "social factors" differ from other South Asian countries. Because many researchers have highlighted that sexual violence is one of the major causes of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. For instance, Tissera (2020) states that the main reason for teenage motherhood is girls becoming victims of sexual abuse or child marriages. Goonesekere & Amarasuriya (2013) stated that child marriage occurrences in Sri Lanka when compared to other South Asian countries are very low. But they also have

confirmed that sexual violence as the main reason for teenage pregnancy in Sri Lanka.

For instance, a study done by Vidanapathirana et al (2011) has confirmed that sexual violence affects teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. They have researched in 2009 and 2010 using 19 teenage mothers who were admitted to the Forensic Medicine Department of the Karapitiya Medical Faculty in Galle, Sri Lanka for a medico-legal examination. Of these, 04 became pregnant having been abused by close relatives, 10 girls got pregnant by the person they identified as their husband and five have also become pregnant due to physical abuse suffered at the hands of their boyfriends. This study revealed that 9 cases out of 19 have become pregnant due to the sexual violence of close relatives or friends. The above discussion revealed that even though all the cases of teenage pregnancies is not happening due to sexual violence, most of the cases were a result of such. All the theories discussed above related to teenage pregnancies highlighted that a safe environment and the favourable relationships that children build up with their mother, family members and the community or society will make a trustworthy person to society. For instance, Bowlby highlighted the idea that through his attachment theory, a child's future is determined by the relationship that they develop with their parents and family members in childhood. Albert Bandura believes through his "social learning theory" that the social environment has an immense impact on a person's behaviour. However, when children are raped or abused by their close relatives or family members when their social environment is not safe as Bandura highlighted, a child can develop deviant behaviour which can negatively affect the child victim as well as the whole of society.

2. Poverty

Many of the research done globally highlighted that poverty is also one of the major causes for teenage pregnancies. Few pieces of researches are done in Sri Lanka also have confirmed that poverty is one of the major causes of this problem, but these researches are limited to studying a very small space and it is difficult to get a clear idea of the situation of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. However, when analyzing the Family Health

Bureau reports from 2000 to 2018, a clear link between poverty and teenage pregnancies could be observed. According to Table 4, the highest number of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka is reported from Batticaloa, Mullaitivu and Trincomalee districts, which are also considered to be the poorest in the country. For instance, according to the poverty indices compiled between 2006 and 2016, the highest number of poorest households were reported within these three districts. For instance, in Colombo, Kandy and Kalutara districts where the lowest number of teenage mothers were reported, the proportion of poor households in 2016 was 0.6%, 2.3% and 4.2% respectively, while Mullaitivu, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts where the highest number of poor households were recorded, marked the proportion of poor households as 11.2%, 8.1% and 6.8% respectively. The personal conversation with the few medical doctors who work in the maternity ward in Batticaloa teaching hospital (20.12 2020 to 25.12.2020) revealed that manly parents push teenage girls to marry early in their age hence, they can get rid of their burden and teenage girls find out a partner since they lack even their basic needs at their own house. Even though child marriage is not common in Sri Lanka, it is quite high among the Tamil community and poverty has been identified as the main reason for this trend. Therefore, as pointed out by Camacho & Chandra-Mouli (2010), there is a strong link between teenage pregnancy and poverty in Sri Lanka, in a cyclical system in which poverty causes teenage pregnancy which in turn leads to teenage pregnancy further perpetuating poverty.

3. Fewer education opportunities

As pointed out by Bandura (1972) a person's learning behaviour is determined by four factors such as attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. According to Bandura, motivation is based on a person's expectations and expectations are solely based on social factors; social environment and the value given by society for various behaviours. When this applies to teenage mothers in Sri Lanka, most of these teenage girls lose motivation for education and the social environment has highly contributed to this. For instance, as described above, the highest teenage pregnancies reported areas are considered as poorest districts while these

areas are with least education facilities. de Mal & Kumarage (2013) have stated that there is a big inequality in the education sector in Sri Lanka in terms of performance, participation and the allocation of resources. Due to these inequalities, de Mal and Kumarage have identified that Killinochchi, Mulative and Trincomalee as the poorest performing districts at G.C.E. O Level Examination. They further highlighted that Mulathive, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara districts are categorized as under-performing at university entrance and this happens mainly because of inequality of resource allocation. These findings show that the social environment does not provide motivation for children to achieve successful results in education and does not provide adequate value for it in some areas. Therefore, as mentioned in table no 4, they cannot build up expectations and organize their life which may lead to starting their adult life early.

4. The impact of War

Analyzing the data in Table 4, on the problem of teenage pregnancy in Sri Lanka, it is highlighted that the civil war in Sri Lanka which dragged on for more than 30 years has been a major factor in this regard. According to Table 4, not only does war-affected districts like Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu have the highest number of teenage mothers, but other war-affected districts such as Puttalam, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya also have a high percentage of teenage mothers compared to other districts. Commenting on this, Thesera (2020) points out that Sri Lanka has the highest number of teenage mothers in war-affected areas and rural areas. One of the reasons for this was that parents married off their daughters at a tender age to prevent them from being recruited as child soldiers or volunteers at the battleground. Although the war has not had a direct impact at this point, it can be pointed out that the social opportunity they lost due to the war as well as poverty, lack of education and social opportunities has contributed to this.

5.   Family conflicts

According to the "social bond theory" the first step of shaping a person's behaviour is the bond that person builds up with his/her mother and the

second step is to build up a relationship with the family members. Research done all over the world on social problems has confirmed that many of these social problems have caused and started due to the lack of relationship, attention and love and care some of the children get from their family. When it comes to teenage pregnancies, broken relationships with the family and the conflict of the family has caused enormously this issue in most of the developing countries. Mothers go abroad as domestic workers when the children are young, the parents getting divorced and getting remarried, parental negligence etc. which may result in children becoming insecure and exposed to teenage pregnancies. For instance, Vidanapathirana et al (2011) have revealed that family structure and the social environment directly contributed to early pregnancies and father's drug addicts, divorce of parents and remarrying and violent behaviour of parents are main reasons among those family problems. Fernando et al (2013) also have confirmed through their research that the absence of mothers at home has highly contributed for teenage pregnancies among the sample.

From the above information, it is clear that social factors and family factors are directly associated with teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. Individual factors such as drug addiction, peer pressure may be contributing but not at a high level. Therefore, when studying and examining teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka, more inputs can be obtained from the social learning theory, social bond theory and even the theory of culture of poverty introduced by Oskar Levis since these theories are more consistent with the situation of teenage pregnancy here than the problem behaviour theory relevant to developed countries.

Discussion

Every country in the world seeks to minimize or completely eradicate teenage pregnancy to minimize the burdens faced by the mother as well as the infant(s) born to that mother as well as other socio-cultural problems that may arise within society. It has been shown by the above discussion that though there is a slight decrease in the number of teenage mothers at present, it remains a significant social problem in every country. It was discussed that there are three main factors affecting this

phenomenon in general. However, according to the above discussion, the factors influencing teenage pregnancies in many countries or regions of the world can be differentiated according to the socio-economic and cultural factors that exist in those societies. When discussing the trends and factors associated with teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka, it can be noted that the social and cultural set up within the country has a direct link with this problem.

For instance, "patriarchal culture" can be mentioned as one of the root causes for teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka and this might be common to the South Asian region. Most of the decisions on girls and women are taken by men and this is one of the major causes for early marriage, sexual violence, and domestic violence. The women leaving for Middle Eastern countries as domestic workers have once again influenced teenage pregnancies. For instance, as discussed above Nandi et al, (2014) have stated that through their research in West Bengal, India, child marriage is the main cause for teenage pregnancies and 92.34% of these child marriages were arranged by their parents and in many scenarios by the father of the child. When analyzing the research done in Sri Lanka, patriarchal attitudes can be mentioned as the hidden reason behind teenage pregnancies. For instance, the research was done by Fernando et al (2013) based on the Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Colombo districts has revealed that in the sample that they were selected, 79.9% of teenage mothers have expressed that they became mothers because of their partner's wish to be a father. These findings have revealed that gender inequality in decision making and men's power over girls and women directly contribute to many issues including teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries.

Negative attitudes towards poverty and other social issues can be mentioned as another cause for teenage pregnancies. Research done in many countries even in Sri Lanka has stated that poverty was one of the main causes of teenage pregnancies. Even when analyzing the data that are mentioned in table no 4, there is a clear link between poverty and teenage pregnancies. However, when going into a deeper analysis,

"negative attitudes" over poverty can be mentioned as the real reason rather than actual poverty.

Through the culture of poverty theory, Oscar Lewis states that living in conditions of extreme poverty for a long period will lead to the development of a culture or subculture. This kind of culture is shaped by dependency, powerlessness, marginality and helplessness. Lewis further states that people who live within a culture of poverty have no sense of how to get rid of the situation or they do not want to and rather enjoy autonomous behaviours. Most of the people who belong to these cultures do not get any effort in alleviating their problems and they pass this behaviour from generation to generation (Harvey & Reed, 1996). Oscar Lewis identified four characteristics of the people who live in poverty. The first one is the lack of participation, lack of trust in formal organizations, lack of commitment to the institutions and values of the society. The second one is the low level of local organizations. The third one is different and deviant family and sexual practices and the fourth one is attitudes of dependency, fatalism, apathy etc. (Howe, 1998).

Even though many researchers have confirmed that poverty contributes to teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. The negative attitudes of poverty as described in the culture of poverty theory may contribute to this issue. For instance, Sri Lanka has free access to education and children must go school. However, in many of the districts where the teenage pregnancies rate is high as highlighted in table no 4, the school drop-out rate is also high. For instance, based on the 2016 household income and expenditure survey, Nanyakkara (2021) states that 4.7% of poor children dropped school between the ages of 5-14 and 19.6% per cent had dropped out between the 15 to 16 age categories and poverty was identified as the main reason. Poverty may contribute an increase in the school drop-out rate. However, in the Sri Lankan education sector, school children receive free textbooks, school uniforms and sometimes even a meal. Therefore, if children and their families are willing to have education, such a chance is provided. But as the culture of poverty theory highlights, they do not have trust in education institutions hence they do not participate. These children and parents continue deviant and sexual practices.

In a personal conversation, many doctors in Batticaloa where the highest teenage pregnancy rate was confirmed, stated that parents push their daughters to go for an early marriage. This shows how they continue their life patterns through the generations.

"Social pressure" is another reason for teenage pregnancies among other causes. Sexual violence, effects of war, lack of education, poverty and non-communicable diseases are causes for social pressure and teenage pregnancies can be mentioned as the result of all these factors. For instance, according to the table no 4, the districts with a higher rate of teenage pregnancies from 2000 to 2018 are identified as the poorest of the districts. These are also war-affected and with low education performance and with the highest non-communicable disease. Therefore, as Bowlby and Bandura stated through the attachment theory and social learning theory, teenage pregnancies can be mentioned as a result of a stressful social environment.

Much of the research done in the South Asian region including Sri Lanka has confirmed that "social factors" and "family relationships" as the bordering factors for teenage pregnancies while "individual factors" serve as the main cause in many of the developed countries. However, when closely analyzed, the trends of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka, "individual factors" contributed to the issue. For instance, Fernando et al (2013) stated through their research that teenagers with higher confidence in decision making were also at risk of becoming pregnant. This study highlighted that mainly teenagers in urban areas try to develop individualistic personalities.

From the above information, it is clear that social factors and family factors are directly associated with teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka. Individual factors such as drug addiction, peer pressure, the influence of European culture and technological revolution in the country might be contributing but not at a high level. Therefore, when studying and examining teenage pregnancies, more inputs can be obtained from the social learning theory, the social bond theory and even the theory of the culture of poverty introduced by Oskar Lewis since these theories are more consistent with the situation of teenage pregnancies in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of this paper was to identify the main factors leading to teenage pregnancy in Sri Lanka. As per the study, the number of teenage mothers in Sri Lanka is currently declining compared to other South Asian countries. It is clear from the above discussion that, it remains a social issue, in the war-torn and disadvantaged districts of Sri Lanka that needs to be discussed. The main reasons for this problem in Sri Lanka are social factors such as sexual violence, extreme poverty, the impact of war, lack of education, as well as family conflicts such as parental divorce, parental quarrels, parental negligence and illicit relationships, leaving young children alone at home.

These are the factors that are common to many developing countries. The patriarchal culture, negative attitudes on poverty and other social issues, social pressure and technological revolution in the country are identified as root causes for teenage pregnancies. Therefore, to minimize or eliminate the problems of teenage pregnancy, both short term and long-term solutions needed to be planned. For instance, a comprehensive long-term program needs to be formulated in the country to reduce gender-based violence, expand educational opportunities, eradicate poverty and also rehabilitate social systems devastated by the effects of the long-drawn civil war. However, short-term measures such as motivating children and families to engage with institutions such as schools, religious institutions and institutions of the health sector to develop their childhood and also to provide sex education, family counselling, limits on parents leaving young children alone at home, as well as educating mothers on alternative income schemes are important. Conducting workshops at the rural level, giving short lectures at schools regularly can be implemented in practice and existing human resources can be utilized for this purpose. For instance, resource persons such as the family health worker in the area, the *Grama Niladhari* and the local doctors can be utilized for this purpose. All that is required is to identify teenage pregnancy as a social problem and conduct open discussions within the society and facilitate homegrown solutions.

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The Effectiveness of Pre-marital Program "PREP" in the Relationships of undergraduate couples in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Pre-marital counselling is designed to enhance premarital relationships as leading to more satisfactory and stable marriages with the intended consequence of preventing divorce. Pre-marital education programs are knowledge and skills-based training applications. The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) is an empirical intervention program to support the prevention of marital distress and divorce with short and long term effectiveness. PPEP is one of the intervention programs that promote pre-marriage counselling. The literature review shows that little is known about pre-marital counselling and no prior research in Sri Lanka has evaluated the effectiveness of PREP on the relationships of undergraduate couples. The data were collected using the mixed method approach comprising of pre-test and post-test quantitative questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This research selected 15 undergraduate heterosexual couples (15females and 15male) from the University of Peradeniya for the quantitative analysis and 3 couples were selected for the qualitative analysis. The T-Test and thematic analysis were adopted as the data analysis method. The research findings indicated that the T-Test was significant at <0.05 level indicating the program was successful. Moreover, there was a significant difference between before and after PREP (t=15.040, p<0.00025) in lessening vulnerability and risk in marriage by strengthening protective factors among the couples. The mean score of the 15 university undergraduate couples for the test was 146.13 (SD=14.738) before the PREP program and it increased to a mean of 176.47(SD=6.892) after they had participated in the PREP program. Couples stated that premarital programs are necessary for their lives and they recommended the PREP program for both married and unmarried couples.

Keywords: Pre-marital counselling, PREP program, Pre-marital programs, Effectiveness, Pre-marital couples, Marriage

Introduction

"Marriage is a social construct, and therefore, by definition, an external (outside) influence. It is normal, but not natural. Humankind has existed for hundreds of thousands of years. The institution of marriage, on the other hand, is just centuries old. Marriage is a contract where the husband provides shelter and security in exchange for sexual exclusivity. This way, there is no doubt as to the identity of the father of any children born during the marriage. Nowadays, we have highly accurate paternity tests that determine parentage" (Antonino, 2016).

Marriage counselling methods have been developed and tested over the years, allowing you to choose the right type of marriage therapy to address your relationship's unique set of issues. It is also called couples therapy. Marriage counselling helps couples of all types recognize and resolve conflicts and improve their relationship. Through marriage counselling, you can make thoughtful decisions about rebuilding and strengthening your relationship. Pre and post - marriage are the two types of marriage counselling.

When considering the history of pre-marital counselling, its beginnings can be traced to the west. First, it originated within the church and other religious places, and then it developed to the state of premarital education programs. Some of the techniques and therapies used in premarital education programs are related to the field of counselling. But in Sri Lanka, It has not gained a wider attraction among couples.

The purpose of this research is to find out the effectiveness of the premarital program, PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) on the relationship of couples. Premarital counselling generally refers to a process designed to enhance and enrich premarital relationships leading to more satisfactory and stable marriages with the intended consequence being to prevent divorce (Stahmann, 2000).

In 2004, Dr Jayatunge published a book named "*Psychological Counselling*". According to his book, pre-marital counselling was defined

as an "intervention" which takes place at the initial stage of the family development lifestyle. As such, its goals are more likely to be preventive and educational rather than remedial and therapeutic. The aims of pre-marital counselling are developing persona; making awareness in the couples about the implications of their decision to marry, discussing aspects of themselves and their partner that may affect their marriage, acquiring functional communication skills, help couples to gain insight into themselves and their relationship, negotiate contracts to compromise and to make joint decisions, train couples in problem-solving process".

"Pre-marital education programs are best defined as knowledge and skills-based training procedure which aims at providing couples with information on ways to improve their relationship once they are married" (Senediak, 1990, as cited in Caroll & Doherty,2003, p 13).

Prevention & Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) is a community or school-based program. It is for married and pre-marital couples and is designed to encourage couples to improve their bonds by learning communication strategies, identify and resolve concerns together, develop and improve their relationship. Evaluations of PREP provides some evidence that participation in the program is associated with lower rates of pre-marital breakups and improved marital satisfaction, increased positive communication and decreased negative communication.

PREP utilizes cognitive behavioural therapy techniques to improve couples' relationships. During the intervention period, a trained consultant facilitates the program which typically includes three to eight couples. The topics that are addressed in PREP are, improving communication, enhancing conflict resolution skills, strengthening commitment and friendship, exploring sexuality and sensuality, developing problem-solving skills and fostering emotional supportiveness. More than 19,000 leaders have been trained to deliver PREP at various community-based centres, military bases, prisons, universities and religious organizations across the United States. (Prevention & Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), 2015).

Objectives of this research

The key goals of this research are to use premarital counselling to increase positive communication among undergraduate couples. The sub-objectives that the research was used are,

- To help couples maintain marital satisfaction
- To increase awareness among couples about the importance of premarital counselling.
- To measure the effectiveness of the premarital program, (PREP) among the undergraduate couples at the University of Peradeniya.

Significance of this research

First, this research is timely. The way human beings experience marriage and relationships breakups and the way of acting towards it can vary. Currently, we are witnessing many crime incidents and suicide resulting from divorce cases, misunderstanding of couples, lack of good and communication system between the spouses. Therefore, I think pre-marital counselling or pre-marital education programs are necessary to develop valid and reliable information and knowledge to build healthy relationships. Then, it is needed to make the people aware of the need for pre-marital counselling in society.

Secondly, there is a rare amount of research in Sri Lanka in the given topic area. Society has a risk of marital distress and divorce. This study provides the opportunity to recollect the relationship problems positively. The research findings can be used to help people in many ways as allowing people to rethink their rewards critically, identifying the personal strength within. The people around can also gain knowledge of breakup by providing their support. The research can be a complement to the Sri Lankan research gap.

Thirdly, the pre-marital counselling program can provide educational awareness for couples on marriage and lives which is timely and valued. These programs are focused mainly on educational support and technique.

This study will use PREP as an intervention. It is one of the best pre-marital educational programs in the world. It consists of eleven lessons with practical activities focusing on the couples.

Additionally, the following significant aspects can also be seen in the present study. Pre-marital Counceling and Pre-marital education can create solutions for marital distress, divorce and other problems in marriages benefiting both pre-marital and married couples.

Literature Review

The review of literature presents and evaluates existing research. The review focuses on the relationships of arguments, methods, and theoretical frameworks between different sources their It also asks what is missing from existing research or what else could be said. According to the above definition, the review of literature in the present study extends through a few subtopics.

The first is a discussion of marriage. Marriage is shown as a divine, precious, purposeful and beautiful experience, relationship and lifelong bonding between two mature individuals (Male & Female), based on certain familial, social, cultural, religious and spiritual principles aiming to maintain our progeny, family and society. A successful married life can be achieved through pre-marital counselling programs. Therefore, the second subtopic is pre-marital counselling.

In the discussion of the topic, it was proved that pre-marital counselling can be one of the most enriching experiences of a couples' life. This experience is set up to help them uncover aspects of their future spouse of which they may be unaware of it may confirm their beliefs about him or her. Either way, pre-marital counselling is a valuable process. Many couples have found that completing a rigorous pre-marital counselling program gives them a greater sense of peace before heading into marriage. Furthermore, the two research articles mentioned below prove this.

The concept of pre-marital education is discussed next. The research, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Premarital Education*: A review of

outcome research by Caroll J.S and Doherty W.J in 2003found that due to the high rates of marital distress and divorce numerous scholars, educators and policymakers have advocated for premarital programs. (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). They try to present a comprehensive and critical evaluation of this research literature about the effectiveness of premarital education. They used 12 experimental and quasi-experimental studies, 10 non-experimental studies and two ex-post-facto studies. They suggested that a pre-marital education program is generally effective in producing immediate results. And it is effective for all couples, in strengthening marriages and preventing divorce. Finally, they said that couples who participated in the premarital program are at no greater risk for marital difficulties than couples who don't participate in such programs (Carroll & Doherty, 2003).

Kelper Amanda (2015) in, *Marital Satisfaction: The impact of Pre-marital and couples counselling* describes the connection between pre-marital and marital counselling and marital satisfaction for couples. They used a cross-sectional design and the chi-square analysis for measuring data. They selected 20 individuals who were previously married and currently married as samples. They found that spouses who participated in Pre-marital counselling have a higher level of marital satisfaction and less rate of divorce.

The other main reason is the lack of research done about pre-marital counselling and pre-marital programs in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this topic has to be discussed to prevent marital distress and divorce for both married and unmarried couples.

A discussion of pre-marital couples who are ready to get married is the fourth sub-topic. There are four types of premarital couples; vitalized, harmonious, traditional and conflict. The present research focuses all four categories because pre-marital counselling program affects all.

The PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) is selected for this research among other Pre-marital programs (PREP, PREPARE, RELATE, PAIRS, REP, CAE, etc.). PREP pre-marital program is a new approach to the conventional pessimistic viewpoint of

building a good marriage life or preventing divorce. PREP is a type of education program and focuses on the enhancement of relationships of couples in aspects of sex, money, economics, love, commitment, friendship etc. It is a kind of program with sessions, not therapy (Prevention & Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), 2015)

Renick et al. founded that the positive side of the PREP program in the article named "*The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP): An empirically-based preventive Intervention for couples".* They showed PREP is an empirically based intervention to prevent marital distress and divorce and to discuss the distinction between primary prevention programs and therapeutic intervention. They used 135 pre-marital couples with 3 sessions in 3-4 months by measuring self-report inventories. They asked couples to complete questionnaires and to engage in videotaped interaction tasks. Finally, it was identified that who participated in PREP has maintained significantly more stable relationship than the other couples (Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992).

In the other section, the research revealed that the pre-marital counselling had applied for lay volunteer leaders with qualitative observations and pre-post measured with the learning of concept, communication etc. Renick Blumberg (1992) revealed that the premarital program PREP was applied for couples to prevent marital distress and divorce.

Some of the researches talked about the pre-marital education programs. There are various kinds of premarital programs (Types Of Premarital Education Program, 2016). Some evaluate the effectiveness of premarital prevention programs with a Meta-analytic review of outcome research (Carrol & Doherty, 2004). The research summarizes some reasons why the present research is emphasized on the PREP program.

In contrast, pre-marital education programs appear to be effective at improving couple communication with studies that employed observational measures rather than self-report measures producing large effects. Still, given the mixed, modest results, there is ample room and a

real need to improve the practice of premarital education (Fawcett, Hawkins, Blanchard, & Caroll, 2010)

Lastly, the present researcher is decided to conduct the study on the PREP program design for pre-marital couples because the research article of Gurenery (2003), explains that, why couples are enrolled in PREP faced. According to his research PREP program is statistically significant in having a lower chance of premarital breakups, four to five years later. It was the main program that prevention and enhancement were implemented.

Finally, based on the general summary of the previous literature, the present researcher is determined to conduct the study on "The effectiveness of pre-marital counselling program, PREP on the relationship of undergraduate couples". The research is carried out to examine the "The effectiveness of the pre-marital program, the PREP on the relationship of couples"**.** Furthermore, it also tries to answer if the PREP fits with the couples?

The summary of the review of the literature shows that the researchers depict many findings of the research topic. The main aim of the research is to examine the connection between the main variables of the research. There are two main variables according to the research. They are the pre-marital counselling program (PREP) and the pre-marital couples. The present research is ready to find out how the above variables affect each other.

Methodology
Research Design
The current research was carried out in the mixed-method approach. Data were collected using the following methods.

- Quantitative - Pre Questionnaires & post questionnaires
- Qualitative - Semi-structured Interviews

According to the analysis path,

- T-test analysis with SPSS for quantitative data
- Thematic analysis for qualitative data was used for the analysis of data gathered from both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews

In this research, pre and post questionnaires and the PREP program was used to gather primary data. Additionally, the research used interviews for collecting data from participants. A portable audio recorder was used to tape the interviews.

Sample

The research has employed convenient sampling techniques. The researcher is intended to draw a sample of 15 heterosexual couples (15 males and 15 females) from participants representing 3 couples (3 male and 3 female) for interviews. The sample was selected purposely by paying attention to the participants who hoped to get engaged within one year.

Tools/ Apparatus

The research utilized a questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the pre-marital program, the PREP among the relationship of couples in Sri Lanka. It used the free Online Marriage Premarital Couple Matching Compatibility Assessment Test, a State-of-the-Art & Scientific Premarital Compatibility Assessment Method by Dr Purushothaman. It includes 100 items with the Likert scale (Purushothaman, 2006). However, the present researcher chooses only 40 items that affect the research topic. The questionnaires (both pre and post) contain five categories as follows.

1 Introduction to Premarital counselling
2 Expectations in marriage
3 Friendship, commitment & having fun
4 Safety/ structure and communication
5 Sensual and sexual relationships

Then, the PREP was developed by Dr. Markman and Stanley is one of the most comprehensively researched marriage enhancement programs in the world. PREP has created fourteen lessons. The core content of PREP includes two key areas lowering risk and raising protection. The lowering risk is as follows: *interaction danger signs, communication, key issues and conflict management, problem-solving, expectation clarification, and forgiveness making it happen* and the raising protection are as follows: *commitment, priorities and sacrifice, preserving friendship, keeping fun alive, sensuality and sexuality, spiritual and religious intimacy and core belief exploration*. The goal of PREP is to lessen vulnerability and risk in marriage by strengthening protective factors. The fourteen lessons are listed with information adapted from the PREP couple's manual, 2006. (Bath, 2010)

Procedure

First, the research formulated a research question with the desired research data and formulating questions for the interview. Then, the present study referred to the journal articles, books and studies that are relevant to the research topic and selected the sample.

When doing the PREP Program, a pilot was conducted before moving the PREP program-related questionnaire. The chosen 15 couples were asked to sit in a classroom r and answer the questionnaire separately. A little introduction of the program was given with consent forms to the couples. Then the 15 pretest questionnaires were given. The researcher explained the PREP program and asked to do some activities related to it. Then, in the middle of the program, the researcher asked them some questions and discussed them. Sometimes both the girl and the boy practised some activities like speaking and listening techniques in 10-minute activities. Lastly, the present researcher gave pretest questionnaires 2 hours after they participate in the above. Finally, the data were analyzed.

In the present research, in semi-structured interviews, interviewees were given open-ended questions for 30-40 minutes and portable audio recording devices were used to record the interview and data will be

transcribed with Microsoft word Program selecting the 3 couples who participated in the above PREP program. Then, after 2 hours of the PREP program, the research asked questions related to the semi-structured interview. While interviewing them, the study observed their behaviours and attitudes about the research topic and asked questions and discussed it with others.

Data Analysis

Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. T-test was calculated for the entire sample (n-15) with questionnaires. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing semi-structured interview data.

Results/Analysis

According to the research, fifteen undergraduates were given a Pre-test questionnaire before the PREP program and the mean obtained was 146.13(SD=14.738). After they had participated in the PREP program and the same test questionnaires were given to them as a POST test. The mean achieved was176.47 (SD=6.892).

A T-Test was conducted with the pre and post-test results and it was statically significant at < 0.05 level indicating that the program was successful (t=15.040, p<0.00025) in reducing the vulnerability and risk in marriage by strengthening protective factors among couples. The protective factors were commitment, priorities and sacrifice, preserving friendship, keeping fun alive and sensuality, sexuality, spiritual and religion, intimacy and core beliefs. A paired sample t-test conducted a significant difference to compare before the condition of the PREP program and after the condition of the PREP program. It depicts there was a statistically significant difference in the score of before PREP program (M=146.13, SD=14.738) and the after PREP program (M=176.47, SD=6.892) condition; t (29) = -15.040, P=0.000"

There was a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. These results suggest that the PREP program has a positive effect on couples before marriage. We can now see the above statistics confirmed by sub-themes according to the questionnaire. Except for sub-themes (introduction to premarital counselling, marriage, security, structure and

communication, friendship, communication and entertainment, pornography or sex), samples of the couple are analyzed with the T-test. It also represents a significant difference.

The aim is to identify the effectiveness of the pre-marital program on the relationship of undergraduate couples at the University of Peradeniya. The qualitative part of the study was based on semi-structured interviews. In the semi-structured interviews, some of the participants in the PREP program were asked about their experience of participating in the PREP program. They were also asked about the sub-content of premarital counselling and their experience with premarital counselling. The data analysis section highlights five main themes and sub-themes. It includes a questionnaire related to the PREP program, couples' views on the PREP program, the need for pre-marital programs, the benefits of attending the PREP program, and suggestions on pre-marital counselling.

According to the analysis, the T-test analysis confirms the significant difference in risk and risk reduction in marriages by strengthening the safety factors between the couples. On the other hand, the thematic analysis of this research emphasized that the positive attitudes and behaviour under the above sub-themes with pre-marital couples.

Discussion

First, considering the findings, the research seeks to explain how it came about and what caused it, and the success of the PREP program and the factors that influence it. The research shows that the PREP has a positive effect on these undergraduate couples according to the T-Test analysis.

The present research thinks that the PREP program could be covered all lessons with couples. There were 14 lessons and those lessons were completed by interviewees. They had no clear idea before they submitted the PREP. It proved to be a beautiful quiz but they followed all the lessons because the quantitative analysis can show a significant difference from the whole test. According to the couples who followed all the lessons, the overall test alone did not show a significant difference, then the sub-themes are relevant to the questionnaire which represented a significant difference between the pre and post period. This is because

the PREP program had a good sub-theme reaching them. The couples can succeed with the PREP program. All subthemes contribute to the success of the program.

PREP is a concept of Western culture. In the western context, marriage, commitment, sexuality, pornography, premarital counselling, premarital treatment and techniques are discussed and the American research shows that Sri Lankan marriage is different from that of the western. But according to the T-Test analysis mentioned in Chapter Four, PREP was successful. Therefore, we can say that there are some similarities in marriage between Sri Lanka and western countries. It confirms that PREP's knowledge, themes, techniques and concepts are relevant to Sri Lanka.

We can expand it for our culture of successful marriages. The government can also give this opportunity to married and unmarried couples. I think PREP can provide an educational experience about marriage to have a happy married life. It also proved to be a sub-theme of marriage and friendship, commitment and fun.

Thus, I strongly believe that PREP can focus on our attitude, behaviour and skills. This is because the structure of the PREP program was successful with the T-test analysis. So we can use it inevitably for future generations. The second part of the thematic analysis can be discussed and the PREP program is essential for all couples. Thematic analysis is discussed one by one according to the themes.

In consideration of the history of premarital counselling, the beginnings can be traced back to the west. First, it had started at the church and other religious places. It was developed as a premarital education program later. Some techniques and therapies are related to the counselling field. But in Sri Lanka, it is not a popular topic among couples. PREP is not therapy. It is a kind of education; very much like learning to play tennis or golf. There are many ways couples can learn through the PREPs' common sense approach. Couples can learn on their own using various PREP materials including videotapes, audiotapes, and books, they can also attend public workshops ranging from Weekend

Workshops to six weekly sessions with two hours length, to One-Day workshops taught by independent PREP instructors. Couples may also be coached in the PREP approach by a private counsellor and clergy member. PREP has undergone several revisions since 1980, as the research provides up to date information on the critical factors in relationship functioning. The program is currently available in two formats. In the extended version, couples attend a weekly session and in the shorter version, they attend one day sessions. The above facts can be derived from the previous research as following.

The journal of contemporary family therapy published an article named, *"Premarital education: an assessment of program efficacy"* in 2006. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of a premarital educational program, with the secondary goal of determining if the structure (conjoint versus group) and the participants' gender influenced program effectiveness. The goal of the 8-week intervention was to improve couples' readiness and preparation for marriage as measured by the PREP-M. The findings suggested that the educational program achieved its stated goal (McGeorge & Carlson, 2006).

The PREP is a community or school-based program which is designed to encourage couples to improve their bonds by learning communication strategies, identifying and resolving concerns together, and developing and improving their relationship. Furthermore, it teaches couples communication skills and ground rules for handling conflict and promoting intimacy to prevent future marital problems and divorce.

The PREP was developed by Dr Markman and Stanley and is one of the most comprehensively researched marriage enhancement programs in the world. PREP has fourteen lessons. The core content of PREP includes two key areas; lowering risk and raising protection. The lowering risk component comprises of: *interaction danger signs, communication, key issues in conflict management, problem-solving, expectation clarification, and forgiveness* and the raising protection component comprises: *commitment, priorities and sacrifice, preserving friendship,*

keeping fun alive, sensuality and sexuality, spiritual and religious intimacy and core belief exploration. The goal of PREP is to lessen vulnerability and risk in marriage by strengthening protective factors.

The benefits of participating in the prep Program

The current study follows some advantages of western culture and there are some advantages which discuss the couples that show similarities in western researches. Western researches show that the main advantage is effective communication or positive communication among couples. The following advantages which are explained by the couples and the previous research are proved. PREP is the educational experiencing of the program, the use of the speak-listener technique and CBT is the main path of PREP, solving the problem as a team gives many benefits for the couples and encourage them to improve their bonds by learning communication strategies. Therefore, PREP is the most suitable program for couples and it always can change the behaviour of couples. This education is important for all couples who are married and unmarried. It also benefits the school children.

The necessity of Pre-marriage programs

Research shows that couples should participate in the PREP program one year before they get married. That is because the current Sri Lankan society accepts the necessity of PREP. The DS office and other government or non-government organizations should contribute because they have good motivation and also PREP had good effectiveness for them because the content of PREP has a clear positive image.

Suggestions

The pre-Marriage counselling field is spreading a broad area hence, it is more helpful for the couples and it always affects society. The current study records, some practical activities related PREP program. The current study hints at the ways to practice some implications as mentioned below.

In Sri Lanka, people should be aware of premarital counselling services provided by the religious places (temple, church, Kovil, Mosque)

Sri Lanka is a multiethnic country and it practices various religions. According to the PREP Program pre-marriage counselling is necessary to strengthen the societal bonds. Therefore PREP can also be initiated by religious places like temples, churches, Kovil and mosques. These religious places have various types of perspectives and visions.

Understanding how cultural issues affect a relationship is an advantage of pre-marriage counselling as it explains how the family of origin and cultural beliefs affect the partners and their relationships. It also affects day-to-day behaviours such as eating, working, and managing money. Religious leaders can promote activities and programs about pre-marital counselling at their places of worship.

The Department of education can update the psychological counselling course's syllabus focusing on pre-marriage counselling and marriage counselling.

Premarital counselling is a substantial component of marriage counselling. We know that many counselling courses offer abnormal psychology, development psychology, child psychology, and other applied psychology fields but do not focus on marriage counselling or pre-marriage counselling.

Pre-marriage counselling is a necessary field for all human beings because it teaches cooperation in society and between family members. It also teaches safety, positive communication, and sensuality. It is strongly believed that school counselling courses offered by the education department should update their curriculum by including pre-marital and marital counselling.

The government should train counsellors in the field of marital counselling

The next proposal is primarily concerned with employment opportunities. The current research studies focus on the fact that there are two opportunities for graduates and students at vocational institutions such as the VTA (Vocational Training Authority) and the TO (Technical

College). Graduates who have completed a degree in psychology or counselling should be trained at the Divisional Secretariat, the Family Counselor, the Attorney General's Office, the marriage counsellor. This series of courses can be updated and train the student.

16+ students in schools should be provided with the knowledge in premarital counselling

School counselling plays a major role in Sri Lanka nowadays because it is always focused on our future generation and teacher's role. The education system allows maintaining the perfect pupil covering a broad area. Students of age 13-19 and 16+ always try to change and imitate others. We should make them aware of society because they are developing physically, mentally and socially. Some students are curious about marriage, sex, future targets, selecting a partner and balancing the marriage life. School counselling should focus on pre-marriage counselling, Students after O/L, get engaged without any awareness. Therefore they should be given pre-marriage counselling.

At the rural level, free counselling services should be established with trained counsellors for couples getting married.

Sri Lanka does not have adequate counselling centres in both rural and urban areas. The government should set up a free counselling service or A centre through the Attorney General's Office to promote pre-marital counselling. There are also difficulties in their marriage. So they need good services to do that. Marriage counsellors can promote pre-wedding programs such as PREP. The government should have a good structure to build an advisory system collaborating with the *Grama Niladhari* offices, the Attorney General's Office, the Secretariat, and non-governmental organizations.

Finally, premarital counselling is an opportunity for marriage education. The couples learn to nurture their relationship over a lifetime. They learn communication techniques and tools that nurture intimacy and how to turn conflict into an opportunity to build understanding and a richer connection. The counselling describes the patterns of a lifelong relationship, including information on periods that are typically high-

stress in a marriage. The specific areas such as work-life integration, time management, children, money, spirituality, sex, support system, infidelity prevention, and extended family that often challenge marriages are described.

Recommendations for future research

Similar studies should be replicated in different ethnic and social groups to overcome the issue of lack of studies in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka does not have adequate research on premarital counselling. Future research should focus on this area. 15 Sinhalese couples were selected from the faculty of arts at the University of Peradeniya. Similar research based on ethnic groups such as Tamils, Muslims and Christians will be conducted. Various social groups like schools, NGOs, apparel industry workers, rural individuals will also be used for research. Researchers can use a larger sample size to obtain different types of data.

Conducting similar research using a different premarital program such as PREPARE, FOCUS etc.

PREP is one of the pre-marriage counselling programs. It is not the only program designed for couples. Western research shows that different counselling such as FOCCUS (facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study), PAP (Premarital Assessment Program), PCI (Premarital Communication Inventory), and PREPARE (Premarital Personal AND Relationship Evaluation), RELATE (Relationship Evaluation has achieved robust scientific validity) and SYMBIS (Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts) can be done on couples. Therefore the current study urges doing research based on various kinds of premarital programs for couples.

Ideas for Future research topics

Future research can measure the satisfaction from various premarital programs mentioned above and compare the effectiveness of the PREP program with them. Further, comparison can be identified with various premarital programs other than the PREP program.

Limitation of the study

Qualitative data cannot be generalized
The qualitative path that has been used here has a limited sample. Therefore the qualitative data cannot be generalized.

Time limitation
The PREP program is large, therefore the current study did it simply to accommodate it easily. Conducting the program had time but explaining.

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Post Conflict Reconstruction: Resettlement Issues and Challenges in the Peace-Building Process in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The protracted armed conflict in Sri Lanka between the government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) ended in May 2009. The three-decades-old conflict displaced over half a million people and devastated their lives; particularly during its final stage (2006–2009). Post-conflict resettlement initiatives are hardly considered the permanent resettlements of these displaced people in their traditional villages. This study sets out to explore the resettlement issues and challenges to the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building process in Sri Lanka. The process of reconstruction and peace-building has come under several programs and projects. Nevertheless, the internal displacement has become a dreadful outcome of armed conflict in Sri Lanka and resettling IDPs in their places of origin became a prime task under the reconstruction programs to rebuild the peaceful life of the people. The study focuses on understanding the role of the various factors that negatively affected the resettlement of people in their original places of residence. The study has revealed a mixture of factors that have negatively influenced the entire process of return, resettlement, reconstruction and peace-building in conflict-affected areas. As a result, multiple factors need to be understood about the rebuilding of their normal lives in the respective areas. Fieldwork was carried out in villages in the district of Vavuniya. The paper is based on qualitative methods. Long interviews and key informant interviews were mainly used for the qualitative data.

Keywords: Return, resettlement, IDPs, challenges, original villages

Introduction

The past three decades have witnessed a worldwide increase in the frequency, spread and intensity of conflicts (particularly internal conflicts), which have resulted in a large increase in the number of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The conflicts have resulted in devastating social and economic consequences at the individual, family, community and societal levels; and the collapse of development gains, which hampers countries' ability to achieve sustainable development. A number of these conflicts are now evolving into peace processes (with varying degrees of success). This change is a positive development, but also poses new challenges for humanitarian and development actors, who will have to complement each other's efforts to ensure sustainable post-conflict recovery. The UNHCR's mandate is to provide in collaboration with other actors, international protection to refugees and to assist them in finding permanent solutions through voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement. The UNHCR must also increasingly consider other groups affected by conflict, such as IDPs.[1] As a concept, resettlement of IDPs generally, becomes the main focus for the government of each particular state.

The three-decades-old internal conflict in Sri Lanka displaced over half a million people and devastated their lives, particularly during its final stage (2006–2009). The economic and social life in the main theatres of conflict was disarticulated. Damage to physical assets and the infrastructure of the economy was considerable. With the end of the conflict came the need for urgent reconstruction and rehabilitation of the lives of the people in these areas. The resettlement of the IDPs at their places of residence is a huge strain on the responsible bodies unless done properly. Therefore, this process needs international assistance to prevent those strains and to prevent further related conflicts. In the framework of the resettlement of conflict-induced IDPs, it is necessary to exercise basic

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[1] See UNHCR, Internally Displaced Persons: The Role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (March 2000).

pre-conditions for the families before they are resettled. In most of the policy-oriented discussions and the United Nation's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, attention was focused on the repatriation and return of displaced persons, and the resultant policy was to be implemented immediately after the cessation of conflict. In Sri Lanka, post-conflict resettlement initiatives are hardly considered the permanent resettlement of these displaced people in their traditional villages. However, the government's post-conflict resettlement and reconstruction initiatives were seriously challenged by many factors. This paper investigates the resettlement issues and challenges for the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building processes in Sri Lanka.

The processes of reconstruction and peace-building have come under several programs and projects such as "Nothern Spring" *("Uthuru Wasanthaya")* and "Eastern Revival" *("Negenahira Udanaya")*[2]. Nevertheless, internal displacement has become a dreadful outcome of armed conflict in Sri Lanka, and resettling IDPs in their places of origin became a prime task under the reconstruction programs. This study focuses on understanding the role of the various factors that negatively affect the resettlement of people in their original places of residence. Moreover, it is hoped that the understanding of the Sri Lankan situation gained in this study, will at least to some extent, be relevant to other contexts and contribute to a more extensive understanding of the general situation of the return and resettlement process.
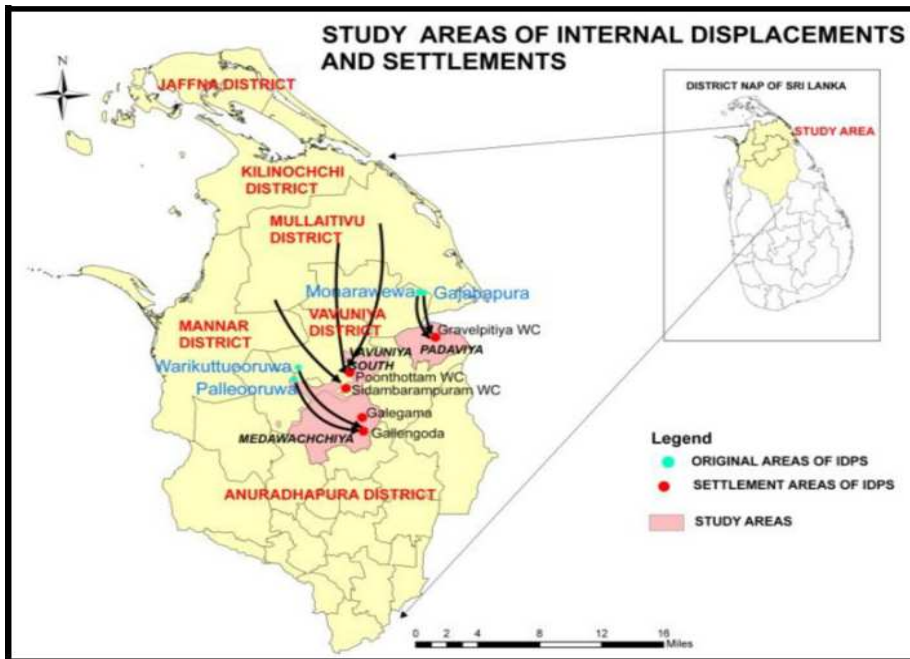
Methodology

The study has mostly assumed a qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers are debatably more vigilant in explicating their perceptions, particularly as there are several approaches to such research, each with a different set of assumptions. For instance, both Miller and Rasco (2004) and Bracken (2001) are clear in demarcating their methodological

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[2] Two main development projects initiated by the Sri Lanka government in Northern and Eastern provinces, named *"Uthuru Wasanthaya"* and *"Negenahira Navodaya."* These two projects were initiated in the last phase of the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

assumptions on their refugee-related research. The reader is directed to more in-depth discussions on some of the more common perceptions of qualitative research, which mainly relate to research on refugees such as narrative analysis and qualitative research. This is an exploratory informed study, in the sense of collecting subjective meanings while seeing practically those who live them. For an understanding of the relevant factors, the research adopted an exploratory approach that aims at analyzing and understanding factors that are important in terms of settlement, resettlement and reconstruction processes in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Data for the research has been collected using primary as well as secondary sources. The qualitative data was collected mainly through interviews, including long interviews, key informant interviews and ethnographic observations. The aim was to understand the people"s thoughts subjectively. Secondary sources have been used to help interpret the primary data. The study has used published materials such as books, research papers, journal articles, research reports, newspaper articles, and internet resources. All the data offer avenues toward uncovering and understanding the multiple interpretations and meanings of IDPs.

The main research techniques used for the study were long interviews with people settled in host areas and resettled in their original areas. The interviewees were selected using a combination of snowball, stratified, and random sampling. The rationale was to obtain a wide range of positions and to have a variation on aspects such as age, class, occupation, education, and time duration of displacement. Altogether, 15 long interviews were conducted: 07 with settled IDPs in host areas and, 08 with those resettled. Several persons made very useful contributions to this study as key informants. "Grama Niladari" (GN) and Samurdhi Niladari were the most important among them. The main purpose of using key informant interviews was to guide and explore information and to confirm and clarify some data collected through the long interviews.

Figure 1: Study Areas of Displacements and Settlements

Source: Wanninayake, S. (2017)

Vavuniya district was selected for the fieldwork of the study. It is one of the districts in the northern region which enormously suffered repeated displacements during the period of the conflict. Vavuniya suffered enormous displacement of families, homelessness and loss of livelihood during the period 1990 to 2009. The whole area of Vavuniya North, part of the Vavuniya and Vengalchettikulam divisions were affected seriously during the conflict. Most of the affected families of the Vavuniya North division and the cleared areas of the mainland North of Vavuniya fled to the south of Vavuniya. During the fieldwork, the *"Uthuru Wasanthaya"* programme had been implemented in the area. This paper focuses attention on Sinhalese IDPs displaced from their original villages. This does not mean that the Tamil and Muslim communities were not living in the threatened villages. The majority of the affected communities in this study area were Sinhalese, and also the Sinhalese community was forgotten regarding the displacement and resettlement process affected by

the conflict. Nevertheless, in this study, some data was gathered from the Muslim and Tamil IDPs as well.

When analyzing the data of all the interviews, interview guides were followed regarding several main themes that were identified through previous literature. All the themes focused on were connected to the main research problem and aim, and they were elaborated on the design of interviews. All the written and recorded data was transcribed as a 'verbatim transcript'. In analyzing the transcripts, the aim was to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that inform the respondent's view of the world in general and to identify and expand central themes, concepts, and descriptions of the proceedings and processes in a way that could further help in understanding the role of factors affecting the resettlement and reconstruction processes.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed on post-conflict peace building and reconstruction and resettlement has highlighted post-conflict resettlement and reconstruction as important and urgent factors for peace-building in the country which faced a long-term civil conflict (United Nations, 2009). It has also been seen that the early stages of the post-conflict period are more crucial than later periods in terms of the establishment of long-term peace. The first step of the establishment of the reconstruction and peace building effort is to resettle people in the areas which they originally occupied. Successful resettlement and reconstruction processes are crucial factors for achieving post-conflict development and peace building.

"Peace-building", according to the UNHCR, refers "to the process whereby national protection and the rule of law are re-established. More specially, it entails an absence of social and political violence, the establishment of effective judicial procedures, the introduction of pluralistic forms of government, and the equitable distribution of resources." (UNHCR 1997, p.159). Likewise, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) has noted that "peace-building may involve the creation or strengthening of national instructions, monitoring elections, promoting

human rights, providing for reintegration and rehabilitation programmes and creating conditions for resumed development" (UN 1998, p.14).

Resettlement is one of the most misinterpreted concepts in the field of forced migration. The term has often been used interchangeably with other types of human movements such as return, relocation and repatriation, or even settlement, etc. Resettlement involves the planned and controlled relocation of populations from one physical location to another. It is different from the return, as it involves the relocation of individuals and even entire communities to a new place rather than going back to one's place of origin (Muggah, 2008). Though frequently conflated with the other forms of human movements such as migration, resettlement can occur only when the choice to remain in one's original place is fundamentally constrained by real or perceived coercion. It is coercion that distinguishes resettlement from voluntary relocation (Muggah, 2008). Furthermore, resettlement is a permanent process and indicates much more than physical movement. It is figured out and designed to catalyze self-sustaining and self-reliant communities, and it should in theory and practice, result in new communities which are permanent, self-reliant and self-sustaining (Muggah, 2008). The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement sets the normative framework and fundamental standards for the return and resettlement of IDPs in line with international standards and practices. Successful resettlement of conflict-affected populations must be administered so that the process is 'equitable and free of discrimination, accounting for the safety and dignity of beneficiaries, ensuring full compensation for lost land, income and assets, and involving the full participation of the internally displaced in public affairs (UNHCR, 2007).

In Sri Lanka, the term "resettlement" has been used to describe all movement from transit camps or places of temporary stay to either the original residence or to different parts of the country (Ariyarathne, 2011). As previously discussed, this ambiguity in the understanding and use of the term occurs in almost all key government documents, institutions and agencies relating to IDPs. Some Sri Lankan authors (Ariyarathne, 2011) believe the ambiguity around the term "Resettlement" is unavoidable

given the complex nature of the process and is therefore of no great significance or consequence. But others think the interchangeable way in which the terms "Return" and "Resettlement" are used means that the authorities assume the resettlement process is complete when IDPs return to their original district, even if they have not returned to their own homes or land (Fonseka, 2010).

In terms of Principle 28 of the UN Guiding Principles, competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions as well as to provide for the means, to allow the IDPs to return voluntarily, to their homes or places of habitual residence in safety and with dignity, or to settle voluntarily in other parts of the country. The principle says such authorities should facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled IDPs. As a member country of the United Nations, Sri Lanka is expected to comply with these normative standards relating to the resettlement of displaced persons (OCHA, 2004). However, literature shows that the issues and challenges related to returning and resettlement and reconstruction and peaceful life of the IDPs come out with practical problems such as socio-economic and many other related factors.

Factors of Rerun and Resettlement

Both policymakers and academics have primarily argued that return home at the end of the refugee cycle is a stable option as well as the ideal durable solution to refugee crises (Allen & Morsink, 1994). Studies of refugees and IDPs who had gone back "home" indicated the complexity of their experience, characterized by socio-economic, psychological and other difficulties (Bascom, 2005; Wanninayake, 2017). However, literature depicts various factors that negatively affect IDPs' returning and resettling in the original villages after the protracted displacement (Muggah, 2008; Fonseka, 2010; Kelegama, 2011; Shamini, 2012).

Discussing social settings among the conflict-induced displaced is important to examine the social relationship when they are resettled and reintegrated into the original areas. The degree of the strong social bonding and networks provide the attracting/displeasure people to

resettlement areas. IDPs to stay in the host community and weak relationship/network between the IDPs and the original villages (with other ethnic groups) is a factor that contributes to pushing people from the area/community (Wanninayake, 2017). According to recent experiences, social relations with relatives, kin, and friends have played a vital role in protecting the process of displacement and settlement (Evans, 2007; Wanninayake, 2017).

Economic relationships and livelihood situations are important and influential factors for the IDPs to determine the place of residence. It was found among the IDPs in Sri Lanka that economic and livelihood factors include access to land for cultivation and residential purposes, opportunities to continue former occupations, availability of infrastructural facilities, farming and trading, and financial aid and relief. The lack or poor conditions of the economic factors in the original areas of residence act as a key push factor or obstacle for returning (Muggah, 2008; Wanninayake, 2017).

Along with the previous concept, the resettlement of IDPs generally become the main focus for governments of each particular state. 'Resettlement' as it is termed by the United Nation's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, means local integration in the areas in which IDPs initially take refuge or relocation to other parts of the country. Related to Sri Lanka's situation, where they have entered into the post-conflict phase, IDPs' issues are considered a vital factor in their peacebuilding, development and reconstruction processes. Usually, the resettlement of the IDPs at their places of residence causes huge strains for the responsible bodies unless done properly. Therefore, this process needs various forms of assistance to prevent those strains and to prevent further related conflicts. In the framework of the resettlement of conflict-induced IDPs, it is required to exercise basic pre-conditions for the re-settling families before they are resettled. Hence, this paper explores and deals with the issues of IDP resettlement about their socio-economic and other various levels of infrastructure facilities and conditions for reconstruction and peace-building in the post-conflict society.

A brief sketch of the Resettlement Process in Sri Lanka

Resettlement is a vital tool, an international responsibility-sharing mechanism about the protection which can be a key element in comprehensive solution strategies. It aims to protect refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental human rights are at risk in their country of asylum (UNHCR, 2009). In this regard, IDP resettlement in Sri Lanka has nearly the same timeline as internal displacement history.

The protracted armed conflict between the government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) ended in May 2009. Decades of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is estimated to have left around 800,000 IDPs (Fonseka, 2010; IDMC, 2014). Some estimates put the figure at more than one million people. On average, one in every eighteen Sri Lankans was displaced, and in the Northern Province, it was one in every three persons. It appears that the majority of displaced people are from the northern and eastern provinces (IDMC, 2014). Displacement is not new to the nation as there have been a series of displacements, especially of ethnic Tamils following the anti-Tamil riots in 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983. It also triggered the displacements of Muslims and Sinhalese, from predominantly Tamil areas (Brun, 2003). The IDPs were scattered mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the island and to a certain extent in the south.

However, with the end of the conflict in May 2009, displaced persons came under government control and were concentrated mainly in the northern and eastern regions. Displacement and resettlement issues have been on the agenda in the recent past because of the civil conflict that had a significant impact on Sri Lanka. The conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1983 to 2009, devastated lives and the livelihoods of people, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country.

Civil conflict in the country claimed the lives of an estimated 1.7 million people who were displaced at different periods between 1983 and 2009 (IDMC, 2014). According to many studies and the situation of the

country as observed, the issue of displacement continues to remain a matter of concern although the conflict ended more than a decade ago. Both policy-makers and academics initially expected that when refugees returned to their homes, the problem of displacement would be over. Thus, some policy-oriented studies such as by the UNHCR and other policy-makers have argued that internal displacement ends only upon the reversal of displacement, that is, upon the IDPs return to their places of origin (Cuny and Stein, 1990; UNHCR, 2012).

Early in the civil conflict, the Sri Lankan Government policy was voluntary resettlement, and no compulsion was exerted to resettle the IDPs. They were at liberty to choose the proper time for resettlement. If they did not wish to resettle, they stayed in the Welfare Centers (WCs), and the government had to look after their needs. After the end of the civil conflict, the government embarked on an ambitious program of resettlement and reconstruction to rebuild normalcy in the areas. Hence, the government and other organizations initially paid some attention to the IDPs return and resettlement; however, with time, they changed their position about resettlement, self-settlement, and relocation of the IDPs.

Resettlement and reconstruction Programs

Specifically, the Government of Sri Lanka implemented some programs, in the post-conflict period infrastructure development initiatives. These include *"Randora"* (national-level infrastructure development) and two initiatives which focus on the North & East: *"Uthuru Wasanthaya"* and *"Neganahira Udanaya"* that provided incentives for the IDPs to return to their original villages[3] (Kelegama, 2011; Shamini, 2012). However, in reality, the prevailing environment discouraged this return. Return was not always possible or even desired by the IDPs. The major issue faced by the Sri Lankan government was, how to support the IDPs and find a

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[3] The rehabilitation of roads and tanks are a primary focus of these programmes. In the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, which covers the five districts of Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Jaffna, resettlement commenced in 2009 under the "Northern Spring" *(Uthuru Wasanthaya)* program which was launched to resettle people.

durable solution for their problems. In this process, one key responsibility was to resettle a majority of the people with the long-term objective of resettling all IDPs and ensuring their welfare after they are resettled.

The return and resettlement process varied in complexity in the Sri Lankan context during the post-conflict period. Return and resettlement in the North commenced in 2009 and has been steadily moving forward. Over 300,000 new IDPs were living in camps, with host families and other places for several months, creating a huge financial burden for the Government, the UN, INGOs and donors. With IDPs trickling in from the Vanni since 2008, the Government created closed camps and depended on the UN and INGOs for assistance (UNHCR, 2012). The expenses in maintaining and upgrading camps and helping IDPs had to be factored in by donors and agencies who were facing fund slashes. Coupled with the Government's inability to provide comprehensive care for all affected communities, this resulted in speedy return and resettlement. Another key political development that impacted the speedy return and resettlement in the north was the presidential election in January 2010. The sudden relaxation of the closed camp model combined with return and resettlement drives in December 2009 raised questions as to whether it was politically motivated, with the politicians having a sudden change of heart to reach out to potential voters (Shamini, 2012). The combination of the above resulted in thousands suddenly being moved from closed camps to their districts of the origin or being resettled.

Nevertheless, the resettlement process was not implemented properly as expected by the government and other agencies due to many reasons (Godagama, 2011; Wanninayake, 2017). Resettlement was part of the rehabilitation of the IDPs and others who were affected. Many programs were required for those resettled to regain their lost status and enter mainstream society. The productive and socio-economic infrastructure had been very badly affected in the areas of conflict. Human rehabilitation is linked to rehabilitation and reconstruction of the infrastructure. Public services such as health, education, and administration were not functioning as desired mainly due to a lack of staff. Many displaced people were unable to return. Their houses and

surrounding areas were occupied by armed forces or paramilitary groups or by other displaced persons because their homes were partially or fully destroyed (IDMC, 2014).

The government of Sri Lanka made efforts to find durable solutions for the IDPs immediately after the end of the civil conflict between the two parties. However, a lot more need to be done. Initially, in response to the humanitarian crisis, the government launched measures such as mobilizing international aid for providing basic amenities to displaced persons residing in various camps. The packages for returning IDPs comprised of building materials, cash grants with additional subsidies for farmers, and a six-month food supply, including USAID commodities distributed by the UN World Food Program (WFP) (USAID (2009). The government assured the international community of resettling all the displaced within 180 days. With the liberation of the Eastern Province in July 2007 from the LTTE, the government under the *Negenahira Navodaya* programme initiated the return, resettlement, rehabilitation, rebuilding, and reconstruction. However, the effectiveness of the government's response has been limited by organizational difficulties. The Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief is the nominated focal point, but the overlapping mandates and responsibilities of ministries and agencies have led to delays, poor coordination and duplication of activities (Fonseka, 2010).

However, it appears that in Sri Lanka, IDPs had faced many practical problems for which no solution could be given by any party. It was clear that in the protracted situation of the conflict, they would not be able to go back to their original villages easily. This is despite some issues having been resolved by the government as well as by some NGOs. In the process, the NRC, FORUT and WB were engaged in providing some facilities such as shelter for resettled people. The government continued to provide health, water, dry rations, education facilities and other facilities. However, while the entire country has suffered, as a result, districts of the North and the East have been devastated to a large extent. Families have been displaced on multiple occasions, often having been forced to leave their homes for many years. When people eventually

returned, most of their houses had been either badly damaged or destroyed. As the majority of people affected are relatively poor with marginal income and with little or no savings, they have been unable to sustain major financial shocks such as loss of livelihood and housing. To respond to these challenges, the international community in Sri Lanka formulated strategies to provide comprehensive and coherent responses to the many problems faced by IDPs when they return and resettle in their original places of residence. This research is mainly focused on determining the main factors that affected their proper resettlement when they return to their former residential areas after 15-20 years of displacement.

Empirical Findings

When the resettlement program was initiated by the government in 2010, all IDPs in the Vavuniya district were expected to be resettled before the end of 2011 in their places of origin. The villages in Vavuniya South were occupied by some Sinhalese and Tamil returnees more or less, and some of the villages consisted of only Tamil newcomers who were resettled after displacement from areas originally occupied by them during the conflict period; some of the villages consisted of both Tamil and Sinhalese people as newcomers. Some of the paddy lands were cultivated by the newcomers, while some lands had been abandoned because there were only a very few persons in the area. The highland was overgrown with natural vegetation, and to facilitate resettlement some lands had been cleared under *the Uthuru Wasanthaya* programme. Hence, it was difficult to identify the boundaries of individuals' lands because they had disappeared and the ruins of some houses were observed. Most of the other houses had perished. However, there was a complex situation regarding the return and resettlement process.

According to the responses of those resettled regarding the efforts implemented under the "*Uthuru Wasanthaya*" program, more than half of the respondents felt that their lives improved after they resettled in their traditional homelands compared with their previous life in the Vavuniya district. However, those responses clearly showed that physical

resettlement did not gain satisfaction even though they remained in their places. The long interviews and key informant interviews revealed their sense and feeling regarding the resettlement situation and the ongoing process in the areas of the original residence. The problems and issues they were facing could be explained as follows:

Social Setting

> In our village, there were more than 300 families. We were all relatives. Many of them were married among their relatives. Hence, we had a good relationship with each other. People worked together in our paddy field and exchanged labour mutually as "attama"[4], and we participated and helped each other in every activity. But now, only a few families have returned while others are still scattered. The mutual relationship has vanished and we feel lonely now (Int.7).

One farmer aged 58 from Vavuniya South has responded as above and shows displeasure regarding the social environment of the resettled area. One of the main issues was the poor arrival of the resettled people in the original village, which is the main obstacle for re-building their social relationships. Generally, the scattered individuals become alienated and isolated. In the same way as the former relationships, networks had disappeared, and when they returned for settlement, they had to face and develop a new lifestyle. Agricultural and labour-based lifestyles need to have reciprocal relationships among them to continue their lives in the area.

According to some of the respondents, the Sinhalese, Tamil, and other ethnic groups were not discriminated against based on ethnicity, and they had maintained links and social relationships, networks, reciprocity such as economic transactions and also cultural and political affiliations.

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[4] "*Attama*" is a labour exchange pattern practised by peasantry who lived in Sri Lankan traditional villages. Agricultural and labour-based lifestyles need to have reciprocal relationships among them to continue their lives. It is a way of working in harmony and sharing the necessary labour among the group members.

According to many people, although these problems existed earlier, they helped to form positive attitudes toward social life. But often, fleeing from the village and having been away for 20 years – rebuilding those relationships to a level of confidence and trust, is an enormous challenge. One 60-year old farmer from Vavuniya North who was rich before being displaced, responded as follows:

> *The conflict has demolished everything. We lost our land, house, and other property as well as people and our mutual relationships. We need at least our land and other property that remains here. In my case, one family has taken our land* (Int. 8).

About this statement, there are two problems that they had to face as returnees in their original villages. One was losing their physical property and the other was losing social property or capital along with the other ethnic groups. It is indicated that trust between the two groups of people was lost and distrust has widened. Since a large part of the land previously owned by the IDPs is now occupied by new residents (most probably they are also IDPs from other areas), the issue of ownership is further complicated. While discussing with most of the displaced persons, they recalled those events and state that going back to their original land with this new situation may not be possible.

Distressed Livelihoods

> *Rural societies in war-affected areas can be described as experiencing 'distressed livelihoods': they experience a dramatic increase in risk and uncertainty* (Korf, 2002, p 10).

The civil conflict is not a temporary crisis, but a long-enduring feature. Rural societies in the war-affected areas are characterized by "distressed livelihoods" or "livelihoods at risk". (Korf 2002). People who resettled in Vavuniya's resettled villages had faced multiple risks and uncertainties caused by many factors. The loss of economic assets due to displacement and the conflict is huge, and the majority of the returnees need to restart their livelihoods from scratch. In addition to lost revenue due to

displacement, the situation was as follows: Farmers have lost their livestock – cattle, goats, chicken – agricultural implements, tractors, carts, fertilizer, seeds, harvest, etc. Forests have engulfed the land, and it needs reconditioning before it can be used for agricultural purposes. Coconut plantations have been devastated by aerial bombings and shelling. Businesspersons have lost their equipment, property, and business leases.

In many of the border villages in the entire area, many of the Sinhalese men depended on working as home guards for their livelihoods. However, according to the majority of the IDPs, all the earlier livelihood activities had been under a frame of constrained conditions in the original villages. Hence, it can be called a situation of *distressed livelihood*.

> *Our village was big and rich compared with other villages in the area and we had a small town that is where Lionel mudalali (a businessman) had his trade centre. Now everything has vanished. We grew vegetables using groundwater through agro-wells. Our village was a very fertile one those days. Everything was sent to the Colombo market from here. Now that attraction has disappeared* (Int. 10).

Paddy cultivation was the most important livelihood source. The chena cultivation and growing other field crops due to seasonal variations or when the rainfall is not sufficient was also done before they were displaced from the area. Some of them were engaged in vegetable production, particularly using groundwater through agro-wells. Banana, chillies, shallots (red onions), beans, and cabbage were the main crops for highland cultivation. In these villages, several persons had been engaged in small-scale businesses; there were also traders, and a few people were occupied with businesses. In addition, there were also a few who were occupied in the state sector with middle-class jobs in the villages.

When they returned during the post-conflict period, they had found that all the economic conditions, properties, and facilities had been lost. The land had been engulfed by overgrowth. They could not identify their

paddy lands, and could not locate where they were, and there was no evidence of fences or hedges that separated their lands. All the houses and buildings were ruined, and almost everything in the area had been demolished. The temple, school, hospital, market, shops, roads, and other properties and facilities had vanished from the area at that time. All these facts pointed out that the resettled people were not happy with the situation that had been prepared by the government and other agencies.

Landlessness and joblessness

> *Those who resettled are asking for deeds. For the convenience of those who have lost these documents, we have to survey issuing them (new) documents. Many of them have lost their legal documents. It's very difficult to find a proper owner of the land.* (Key informant int.1).

The above response was given by one of the Grama Niladaris who was involved in issues regarding the division of lands. Land issues are at the heart of many of the difficulties faced by IDPs when returning to their areas of origin, and it often delays the resettlement process. Access and ownership of land in a context of protracted displacement is fundamental to regaining normalcy. Some major legal difficulties have occurred as time goes on and more land becomes re-occupied. Many problems are arising out of the legal and practical issues with land rights are possible, such as disputes over land boundaries, identifying property for second-generation IDPs, former homes having been occupied by new tenants, as well as tensions among the resettled families. However, regardless of whether a person wants to resettle, cultivate, or sell the land, it is important to be able to prove ownership by presenting legally acceptable documents. A follow-up survey by the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees (MRRR) and the UNHCR, conducted during the ceasefire period in early 2004 in the Vavuniya District, identified landlessness and joblessness as the main reasons for people not to return home. (MRRR & UNHCR, 2004).

Another major issue is the inability to identify the boundaries of the land to claim ownership, as the fences had disappeared. Some people claim

that their lands had been included in security zones. The Additional District Secretary Vavuniya said that 'we would not be able to return because our lands are still in the High-Security Zone (Key informant Int. 2). Both the government forces and the LTTE had separated land as their security zones in the northern areas. An important problem was identified regarding the present land mine-removal activities. Safe land is urgently needed for them, not only for their secure residence but also for cultivation since it is their means of income generation. However, no one was reported to have had the experience of dealing with landmines. Hence, the establishment of high-security zones was one of the main obstacles to poor accessibility to the former lands.

Property Damage and Homelessness

Many people in this district have experienced loss and damage of assets as well as movable and immovable properties. After they were resettled, they could not generate enough income and as a result, they were facing more challenges and problems regarding their survival. Due to multiple reasons[5] most of them were not satisfied with the restitution and compensation for repair or reconstruction provided by the government for their lost, damaged or destroyed properties. The assistance provided to them was given in a step-by-step process and couldn't be received as a lump sum. Therefore, repair or reconstruction was delayed until the entire amount was received. In addition to this, some of them only received an initial compensation sum of Rs. 25,000 which was not enough even for a partial repair or reconstruction. At the same time, a few re-settlers applied for compensation; but there was no improvement in the actions taken by the government regarding their requests. Even though many re-settlers received some amount, they did not feel that the amount received was enough for them to recover from the losses.

However, people were not satisfied with their housing facilities and environment and these factors pushed them to resettle in their original villages. A majority of self-settled people in the area had constructed

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[5] See Situation report September 2010, (2010) Vavuniya: District Secretariat, p.29

their own houses in the host area and also collected other necessities. When they use the term *"my house," or "our house,"* (Int.12), it often refers to his/her house in the host area, and it supports their feelings about the permanent place and future decisions as to where they are going to stay further and permanently. This event shows that the settlement processes were being used and practised by some people as part of their lifestyle. They were trying to prove their residence at two places. It can be called a "dual residence." They used to travel to the resettled area (original villages) and stay for a few days and then return occasionally to the host area. The IDPs who settled in the original villages, in particular, would be beneficiaries of aid, relief, and assistance provided by the government, INGOs, and NGOs. The consequence of all these issues was that those IDPs tended to live in both places of "present house" and the "resettled house."

Insecurity

The absence of violence and threats still needs strong emphasis. Before they were displaced from their places of origin, the armed conflict was highly prevalent and their lives were insecure. Therefore, people did not have freedom of movement. Moreover, forced recruitment to the armed groups, abductions of people, and robbery were also common issues faced by the people.[6]

Another important problem was identified regarding the present landmine removal activities. However, even though persons have been resettled, these areas are still scattered with landmines. Safe land is urgently needed for them not only for their secure residence but also for their use for cultivation since it is their means of income generation.[7] In terms of the presence of rule of law and law enforcement, the majority of those re-settled were satisfied with the current effectiveness of the law and legal actions. Only a limited number of abductions were reported while there were no tax restrictions, a reduction of killings and robbery, and death

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[6] See the district study on children – with special attention to Vavuniya District (demography profile), Norway, Vavuniya: Save the children, p.1-5
[7] Situation report September 2010, (2010) Vavuniya: District Secretariat, p.29

threats were rare. This was because after the LTTE was defeated, all the areas came under the control of the Sri Lanka government. The reason for dissatisfaction if any was due to the presence and interventions of para-military groups in some regular activities of those re-settled.

Poverty and Unemployment

The conflict has affected all facets of Sri Lankan life, but the worst cases of poverty and unemployment exist in the north and the east and the adjoining conflict-affected districts. Frequent dry spells and drought exacerbate the situation in many areas within the northern and eastern parts of the country. In addition to lost revenue due to displacement, farmers had lost their livestock and agricultural implements, etc.

Apart from these issues, a high level of unemployment, lack of job opportunities or means of income generation and low wages, made them more vulnerable even though they were resettled in their places of origin. Although they received assistance from the government, the economic problems faced by the families were highly observable during the field study. People expected the government to provide self-employment opportunities to overcome these struggles of day-to-day life. The Samurdhi Poverty Alleviation Programme (the main poverty alleviation programme of the government) was not operational in Killinochchi, Mannar, and Mullativu districts before the liberation of those areas due to the collapse of the administrative structure. Population displacement together with asset depletion leads to a new form of social inequality. These deteriorating conditions limited the capacity of the vulnerable households to maintain adequate food security and caused unprecedented poverty, and it had badly affected the return and resettlement process, particularly in the northern districts.

Nevertheless, agricultural supplies from the North and the East to the rest of the country were blocked off during the conflict, due to factors such as government-imposed trade embargoes, taxes imposed by the militant groups and the breakdown of the North-South road and railway connectivity. The end of the conflict is thus expected to generate

increases in both the demand for and supply of agricultural products from the North and the East. Given the high incidence of poverty among agricultural workers, developments in agriculture are very important to the goal of poverty alleviation – over 75% of the rural labour force works in agriculture, and agricultural households represent almost 50% of the poorest households in the country (Kelegama, 2011). In the beginning, all these factors had badly affected the resettlement process.

Subsequently, considerable numbers of people were resettled in their original residential places, although they may or may not take up permanent residence in their original village due to several factors. They expected both further assistance in the future for house construction and also some degree of security. Some people said that their children attend school in the host area and that some of them have property within the settled places such as lands, vehicles, and others. Some families had constructed middle-class-level houses in the host community. Hence, it seems that there are other expectations. The effort to build houses in the original villages, though not for their resettlement for other purposes, maybe to keep the land for themselves or to give it to their children. However, these events prove that many factors push people from the original village.

Poor Access to Educational and Health Facilities

Problems identified about education throughout the field study were the lack of educational facilities such as the shortage of educational, physical and human resources, over-crowded schools and in some cases, inadequate buildings. Due to the conflict, the education of most students in the conflict-affected areas was disrupted due to displacement, loss of family members, psychological impacts, loss of school materials, and the destruction of school buildings and infrastructure. However, for some families, while the educational facilities in the new location were relatively inferior when compared with those in their original villages, for some others, these facilities for children were far better than those available in their original village. Under such conditions, when families

think of resettlement, the educational facilities were a major consideration and concern for the parents.

> *We should give priority to our children's education. Their future depends on education. We had a school in our village before displacement, but now it is in ruins. The government has now given many building facilities, playgrounds, etc. But we don't have good teachers here. No one is willing to bring their children here* [...] (Int. 4).

In Sri Lanka, "educational facility or opportunity" is a concept that is highly complicated. When considered on a regional basis, the differences are complex. In terms of facilities, there are differences between the rural and urban schools. There are also differences among rural schools, urban schools, and national schools. Moreover, the general public classifies schools as big schools and small schools (Lindberg 2005). There are differences in terms of the facilities available in all these categorizations. Therefore, it can be seen that in terms of educational facilities in the different areas, there are disparities, gaps, and differences. Further, it was observed that the differences in the availability of facilities were quite varied. However, the people had access to small rural schools where facilities were available at a minimum. Additionally, the number of schools with adequate facilities was few. Accordingly, it can be seen that in the case of the IDPs, the educational facilities for their children, whether in the original villages of the present host areas, were likely to be at a relatively low level, compared to the other urban areas in the country. However, several issues need to be considered in providing basic education services for conflict-affected groups. These include reintegrating into the school curriculum, dealing with child ex-combatants, providing educational infrastructure (essential materials such as furniture, teaching and learning aids), ensuring adequate human resources, and psycho-social support.

In the areas where clashes occur as well as in the border villages, public-sector health services play a very important role. Sri Lanka has been able to maintain overall health indicators at satisfactory levels despite its

economic downturns over time. But there are regional disparities in health indicators and they are compounded in the conflict-affected districts. The maternal mortality rate is five times higher than that at the national level. Returned IDPs are making a greater demand for health services, can create new epidemiological challenges, including a higher probability of epidemics (Kelegama, 2011)[8]. However, it remains unclear as to what benefit the poorest people in conflict-affected areas would derive from private healthcare. Significant changes need to be made to the country's health systems to successfully manage new epidemiological challenges resulting from the return of IDPs, etc.

Issues Related to Infrastructural Facilities

As stated previously, the *Uthuru Wasanthaya* is the government's large-scale, public sector-led development programme for the North including the Vavuniya district. The development programme includes several macro-level infrastructure projects on irrigation systems, power grids, telecommunications, waste-water management and town centres development, but is largely focused on the construction of highways and roads (Central Bank, 2012). The GoSL's rationale for prioritizing infrastructure development in the North is driven by a goal of maintaining and strengthening national security (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Construction of highways and roads to and in the North seems to be a fundamental aspect of strengthening the state's national security apparatus. An improved and expanded road network is said to 'enhance national security and solidarity (IMF, 2010). However, the problem was development priorities for the area not including the need for micro-level infrastructure such as community buildings, transport facilities for people, trade and human rights, etc. Much of the support has been carried out by a few INGOs or multi-lateral agencies. (Herath, 2012)

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[8] The government has allocated special funds (US$ 4.4 million) under the "*Uthuru Wasanthaya"* programme to improve health facilities in the Jaffna peninsula. (Kelegama, 2011).

Moreover, infrastructure facilities in the rural areas were not properly developed under these macro-level projects. Hence, the majority of the poor rural people suffer from the scarcity of basic infrastructure services and micro-level facilities in the newly resettled areas.

> *"We had a public bus service from our village before we were displaced from the area. Now, there are no public transport facilities in the village yet. We have to use our vehicles or others to go to the town. If there is an emergency, no transport facility is there in our village"* (Int.7).

This is influenced by the fact that public transport services provided by the government had ceased in remote areas, and the government could not have properly maintained the roads and other services due to the conflict. Hence, poor transport services are likely to be another powerful disincentive for resettlement. However, some people remarked that transport facilities were available during the daytime to some areas, but in an emergency and particularly at night, transport facilities were non-existent, which was a problem not only within the village but also in the area.

The development of infrastructure facilities is an indication of the quality of living standards in a community. The availability or lack of pipe-borne water, electricity, a network of good roads, and communication facilities, significantly affects the value of the land. Deficiencies in the infrastructural facilities tend to reduce the attention of people wanting to return to that area. Lack of attention by the public sector and inadequacy of services are likely to retard development activities and also deprive other services to that area. The majority of the border areas in Vavuniya South, and the Vavuniya North area also suffered from this issue. Low availability of roads and transport facilities from the urban areas to the villages can adversely affect services supplied to a village.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study examined the resettlement issues and challenges for the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building processes in Sri Lanka. The

process of reconstruction and peace-building has been envisaged under several programs and projects following the end of the 26-year old civil conflict. Resettling IDPs in their original places of residence became a prime task under the reconstruction programs to rebuild the peaceful life of the people. Hence, the study is focused on understanding the role of the various factors that negatively affected the resettlement process in the original areas of residence in the district of Vavuniya.

The key finding was that the resettlement approach adopted by the government was ad-hoc and ineffective resulting in a lack of positive impacts on the quality of life of the resettled IDPs. However, it is still not too late to revisit the resettlement process and provide solutions to the unmet needs of the IDPs which are presented and analyzed in this research.

The study showed the challenges from the government as the responsible authority to fulfil all needs of the resettlers before and after they were resettled. To conclude this analysis, although the rapid resettlement started following the end of the conflict, due to many causes, a gap remains between the measures undertaken by the government about resettlement and the reality on the ground. The gap between these two sides can be overcome by meeting the challenges in the implementation process. Results of this research clearly show that people would not be satisfied with physical resettlement even if they have their own homes unless there is a properly provided material system. In the absence of durable solutions for this serious issue of resettlers, the reconstruction and peace building-process would be a huge challenge to the government and peace-makers.

All these factors are very complex and influence one another. Consequently, one of the main arguments is that multiple factors need to be understood about the situation of the return and resettlement process of the IDPs. The study has revealed that various combinations of factors have negatively influenced the whole process of return, resettlement, reconstruction and peace-building process while the major resettlement project was implemented.

To overcome these issues, the study proposes areas that need to be developed and improved such as investments in education and skill development. These must be made in a manner that generates skills that are in demand in these areas. Such investments must be made equitably and speedily, as uneven treatment and delays could give rise to new conflicts within these communities. Measures must be taken to re-develop the business environment to create long-term employment opportunities, this involves attracting private sector investments which thus far, has proved difficult. In addition to replacing infrastructure, there is a need for investment in new technologies (and training communities to use them) to ensure competitiveness in the marketplace. A lack of employment and education data makes assessing progress difficult. There is thus a significant need for monitoring and evaluation processes.

Therefore, when offering solutions for these problems, concepts can be extracted by studying the specific events during a given period, adequately and carefully. Reconciliation and reconstruction projects should also draw long-term plans based on those considerations. Accordingly, such an effort must be approached based on the basic problems and efforts, to analyze the problems. It can also be stated that this is a common challenge to be faced by researchers in future research.

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Elephants beyond the Boundaries: A Geographical Assessment of Elephants' Movements outside the Udawalawe National Park

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Abstract:

Udawalawe National Park (UNP) in the Southern Wildlife Region (SWR) is not only very famous for its biodiversity and its elephants (*Elephas maximus maximus*) but also for the unfavourable Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) prevalent around the park. Entry of elephants into the farming fields, damaging the crops and property, occasional injuries and death to both humans and elephants are common features beyond the UNP. The objective of this research is to identify how the push and pull factors contribute to elephants' invasion of villages, farmlands and HEC beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP. UNP and the Eastern Udawalawe National Park (EUNP) have been selected as the study site for this research. Purposive sampling has been employed as one of the main techniques to collect data from targeted respondents. Particularly, a questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews with farmers using semi-structured questions, key informant interviews with park officers and with Safari Jeep drivers were conducted. Collected data were analyzed using Content Analyzing Methods, Microsoft MS Excel and GIS. High concentrated human activities (17%) play a major role as major push factors for elephants' entry into the farming fields. Besides, lack of carrying capacity inside the park (05%), the attraction of crops beyond the EUNP (28%), restriction of elephants' home range (30%), dangerous chasing techniques followed by the people beyond the EUNP (11%) and management related issues of the UNP (09%) acts as significant roles in pushing the elephants from the park beyond the EUNP and for HEC.

Keywords: Human activities, Elephants' invasion, Udawalawe National Park, Human-Elephant Conflict

Introduction

One of the most important purposes of declaring an area as a National Park is the conservation and management of biodiversity, especially wildlife, their habitats and the entire ecosystem from the unauthorized human activities and disturbances from immoral human behaviour inside the Parks (IUCN, 2015; IUCN, 2016). Sri Lankan Wild Elephants[1] are one of the most significant animals in the National parks in Sri Lanka (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 1998; De Silva and De Silva, 2007; Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2013). Sri Lanka without the elephants is difficult to be imagined as they are so much a part of our history, culture, religion, mythology, and lately, even politics (Santiapillai *et al.*, 2010). It is considered as "*KeyStone Species*"[2], and "*Umbrella Species*"[3] in the context of biodiversity of the country. At present Sri Lankan elephants are considered as "*Flagship Species*"[4] for wildlife conservation and management in the country (Jayewardene, 1994; Fernando, 2015). However, the consequences of elephants" entry into the farmlands and villages as well as HEC beyond the boundaries of the parks are the most challengeable issues in the wildlife conservation and management of Sri Lanka (Bandara, 2005; Santiapillai *et al.*, 2010; Fernando, 2015). UNP and Yala National Parks are not only very famous for elephants but also famous for HEC in and around the parks in the SWR (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2011).

As a result of intensified, unfavourable human practices against the elephants in the UNP and due to the attraction of food and water beyond the Eastern border of the UNP, elephants enter the villages, raid crops and damage property. These have become very common beyond the Eastern border of the UNP. One of the most important livelihoods of the

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[1] Sri Lankan Wild Elephants *Elephas maximus maximus* is the subtype species of the Asian elephant, first described by Carl Linnaeus under the binominal system.

[2] *Keystone species'*, emphasize the vital role it plays in the structuring of natural communities.

[3] *Umbrella species* emphasize that its conservation will benefit all other sympatric species.

[4] *Flagship species',* which can capture the imagination of the public and induce people to support conservation measures.
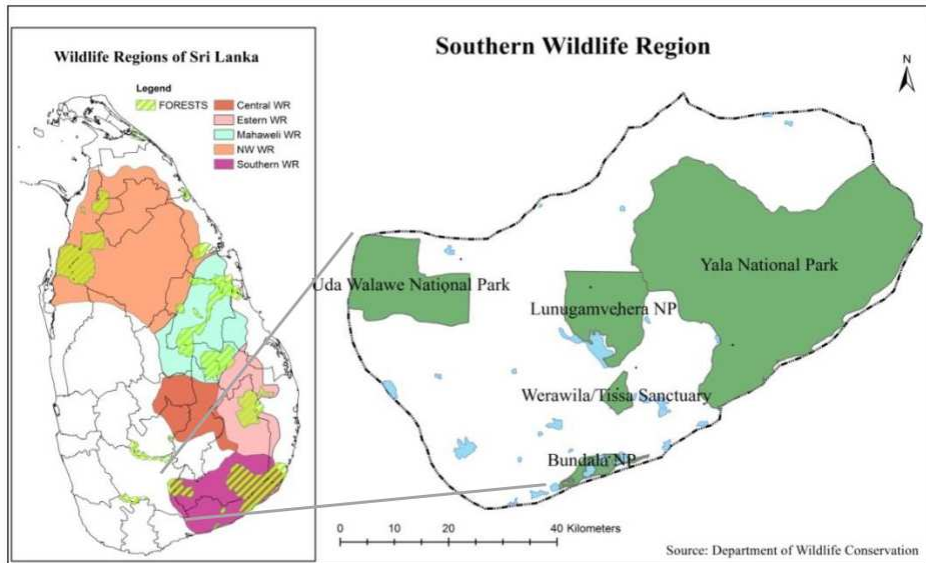
villagers beyond the UNP is agriculture. Seasonal high-risk crops[5] play a prominent role in agriculture as high profitable crops for farmers. Farmers are very much concerned about protecting farming fields and warehouses with the use of various crop protection as well as elephant chasing techniques. Erecting different types of fences including self-financed solar power fences in an irregular manner is very common as protection measures around the agricultural areas, settlements, hotels and restaurants outside the park. However, crop riding by the elephants is very frequent beyond the Eastern border of UNP. According to Santiapillai *et al.* (2010), farmers are in the practice of using hazardous chasing techniques. Killing and wounding elephants are also on the increase in attempts to protect crops, warehouses, properties and lives. Villagers' collective voice and expectation are that elephants should sustain in the park with effective measures or hard physical boundaries must be erected by the Department of Wildlife Conservation. However, according to Fernando (2015) driving or translocating elephants from village areas and restricting them in the park has almost become a failure. It is a challengeable assignment to recognize the root causes for elephants' invasion of the villages and HEC beyond the UNP and to find practical solutions.

Materials and Methods

The methodology has been applied for this research under the following subdivisions; justification of study site, data collection methods and analysis methods. According to the Department of Wildlife Conservation (2011), among six Wildlife Regions of the country, SWR is identified as one of the regions where elephants' invasions beyond the parks and HEC have become a serious problem. The Impacts of wild elephants on human environs are one of the most considerable factors around UNP, Yala National Park, Lunugamvehera National Park, and Bundala National Park in the SWR. Figure1 shows wildlife regions in Sri Lanka and the SWR.

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[5] Highly attract to the elephants: paddy, banana, sugar cane, manioc, vegetables, corn and coconut.

Figure 1: Wildlife Regions in Sri Lanka and the Southern Wildlife Region.
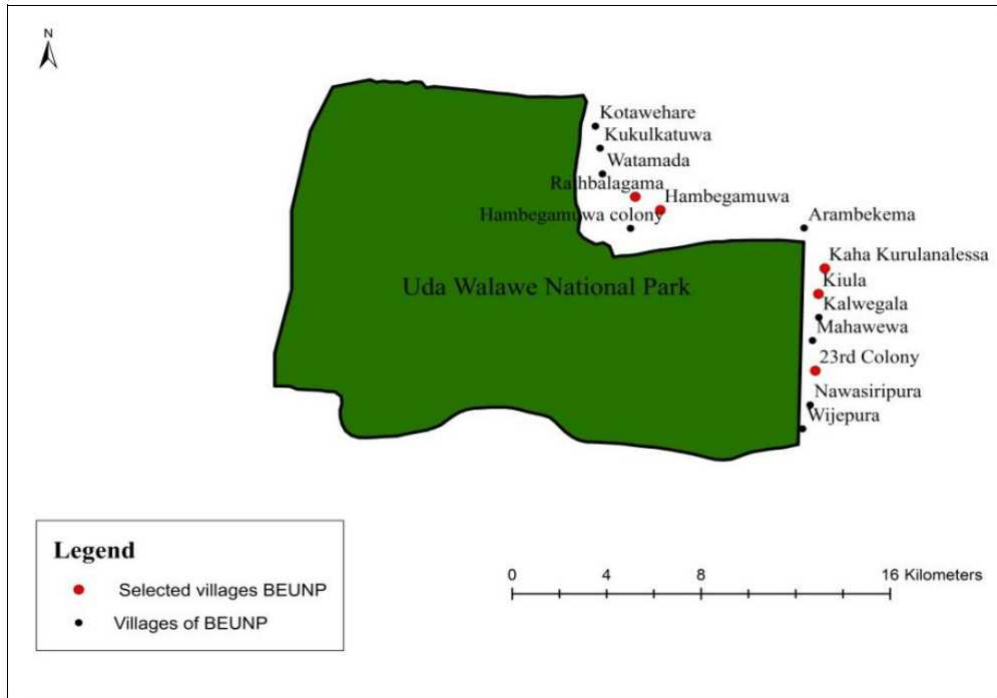

Source: The researcher, based on the Department of Wildlife Conservation (2016).

Study Site: Out of the15 villages beyond the Eastern border of UNP, five villages have been selected for this research. The elephants' invasion and events of conflict are very frequent in these selected 5 villages. The selected villages are Rathbalagama, Hambegamuwa, Kaha Kurulanpalasa, Kiula and the 23rd colony. These villages can be easily reached from Thanamanvila Junction. Figure 2 shows the existing and the selected villages beyond the Eastern border of UNP.

Existing and selected villages beyond the Eastern border of UNP

Figure 2: Existing and selected villages beyond the Eastern border of UNP

Source: The researcher based on GIS (2016).

Data Collection: Purposive sampling has been employed as one of the main techniques to collect data from targeted respondents in five villages above forty years of age who are involved in farming for more than twenty years. Among the selected farmers based on purposive sampling, 75 questionnaires were used for the questionnaire survey. Another set (06 officers) of the questionnaire was used to collect data from park officers. Besides, five (05) in-depth interviews with farmers using semi-structured questions, three (03) discussions with focus groups consisting of 4 to 6 farmers who were victims of elephants' invasions were conducted. Moreover, two (02) key informant interviews with park officers and three (3) interviews with Jeep drivers were conducted. A field survey has been conducted during August and December 2016 and April 2017. Particularly, the reasons for selecting the above-mentioned months were

that April is an inter-monsoonal season while August is dry and the rate of rainfall is high during December.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as key data collection tools to extract information from farmers who were victimized by elephants' invasion beyond the Eastern border of UNP. Principally, through questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions and the key informant interview the respondents provided in-depth information regarding experiences with elephants, their livelihood, mental agony, response, decisions, actions, behaviour and lifestyles of elephants and most importantly the main causes, the way and the views on elephants' invasions to the farmlands and villages including its' contribution to HEC. Further, the researcher was able to find detailed information regarding farming areas, seasonal crops, human practices in the park, grazing areas, elephant's entry to farmlands, crops raiding, elephant's attack, damages followed by elephant's attack and recommendations to stop the elephants' entry and to mitigate the conflict. Secondary data were also collected from related institutes as well as articles.

Analysis: Collected data were analyzed using Content Analyzing Methods, Microsoft MS Excel and GIS. Qualitative information such as opinions, views, narrations and experiences (psychological and emotional feelings of the villagers) on elephants' invasion and HEC were mainly analyzed using "Content Analysis Methods". The analysed qualitative findings were presented according to the main and sub contents with respondents' direct citations/quotes.

Results and Discussion

Identified factors for elephants' moments beyond the EUNP and HEC

In general, as well as in the SWR, elephants roam for many reasons; except for their genetic reasons[6], they roam about for their annual routine,

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[6] Genetically, elephants need to roam about in large areas to find different food sources in different seasons as megaherbivores.

to feed on minerals from particular sources in the identified areas[7], to find their seasonal ecological niche and due to seasonal climatic variation. However, elephants are driven to roam about from one National Park /habitat to another National Park/habitat and enter into the farmlands and villages beyond the parks for some other reasons.

According to the results of the analysis in the UNP and beyond the EUNP, restriction of elephants' home range, human activities inside the park, changes in resource availability in the park and attraction of farming fields, crops and ready-made foods[8] beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP and lack of seasonal carrying capacity in the park are recognized as main factors for the raid of elephants in farmlands and villages beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP from the park.

As a result of human practices in and outside the park, the elephants keep moving from the park to other habitats to find their ecological niche including food, water and other basic requirements. On their way, they happen to cross over the lands having paddy fields, other farming fields including Chena cultivation and tanks, waterways, settlements and roads. Therefore, they tend to trample on obstacles on their way and attack people who chase and meet.

According to the data analysis, the following factors have been recognized as collective factors that push the elephants from the park and pull them into the farming fields beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP and regulate the HEC.

The human pressure inside the park resulting from human activities and visits of tourists was recognized as one of the main factors that force the elephants to come out of the park. High concentrated and continuous tourist visits and human activities to the UNP where elephants have been pocketed[9] as the last option by the administrators. Conversion of elephants' habitats into agriculture and choosing of crops termed as high-

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[7] Elephants use to eat red soil available in the South-Eastern part of the Udawalawe National Park.
[8] Ripen/Matured vegetables, fruits and grains
[9] The National Parks are considered as habitat patches compared to elephants' size, their niche, other genetic needs as well as the size of their previous home ranges.

risk crops for cultivation in the neighbouring areas of the park are pretty much attractive to the elephants. These include paddy, banana, corn, vegetables and fruits, sugar cane, manioc and coconuts which are suitable for cultivation in the area spatially and seasonally[10]. This directs elephants to enter farmlands and villages. Therefore, the elephants become tempted to feed on crops in the field, ready-made food especially grains in houses and warehouses and also food remains from garbage disposing areas. Restriction of elephants' home range and their ecological niche[11] within the park and restriction for their seasonal movements by erecting numbers of administrative physical barriers highly disturb the elephants' natural way of life. In particular, electric fences have been erected surrounding the park. Besides, several varied community fences have been erected by farmers surrounding their farmlands and villages. Therefore, elephants meet physical barriers preventing them from crossing their traditional home range/habitats. Also, they are pushed to invade the farming fields and to behave rudely.

Moreover, the lack of seasonal carrying capacity in the park drives certain numbers of elephants to farmlands and villages beyond the EUNP. The dangerous techniques adopted by the villagers beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP to chase elephants from crop fields, storehouses/warehouses and dwelling areas irritate the elephants who are tempted to attack villagers. Further, the limited capacity of human resources in the park for controlling conflicts, entry of the elephants outside the park, and temporary control management[12] practices provoke the intensity of the HEC.

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[10] Farmers are also familiar with those so-called high-risk crops in the study site.

[11] Ecological Niches are either the role played by a species in a biological community or the total set of environmental factors that determine species dispersion, distribution and other biological needs.

[12] Formerly, the main strategy for elephant management and conservation was the limiting of elephants to Protected Areas (Fernando et al., 2008).

Analysis revealed that, restriction of elephants' home range[13], their ecological niche and movements within the park[14] by erecting electric fences as physical barriers, human activities in the park, over visits of tourists and the attraction of high-risk crops and ready-made food near the bordering areas of the park, play major roles in pushing the elephants from the park and pulling them into the farming fields beyond the Eastern boundary of the UNP and in regulating HEC. The following table shows the recognized factors for elephants' invasion beyond the EUNP and HEC.

Table 1: Recognized Factors for elephants' invasion beyond the EUNP and HEC

Recognized Factors for HEC	BEYOND EP	
	Numbers	Percentage
Human activities	13	17
Shortage of food in the park[15]	4	5
The attraction of crops outside the park	21	28
Restriction of home range	22	30
Dangerous chasing techniques	8	11
Management-related issues	7	9
Total	**75**	**100**

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017

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[13] In the SWR, elephants' common as well as large home range has been fragmented into forest patches and numbers of parks, among those patches and parks farmlands and villages, are occupied conjunctionally.

[14] Under the 'National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants' which was developed in 2007, an effort has been made to integrate land-use planning with elephant conservation.

[15] Considered as lack of Carrying Capacity

According to the 75 questionnaires employed in the survey, 22 respondents beyond the EUNP were of the view that restriction of the home range is the major factor for regulating HEC in the study site. Next to the restrictions of the home range, 21 respondents beyond the EUNP thought that the attraction of the crops outside the park is the second influential factor for HEC. Next to the above, dangerous chasing techniques also play a major role in regulating HEC. But in comparison with the earlier influential factors, the chasing techniques are less influential. In regulating HEC, the management related issues and shortages of food and water in the park are prevalent at 5%. Thus, restriction of home range, human activities - over visits of tourists, habitat conversion and attraction of crops are the foremost factors prevalent in the site. Further, it is important to focus on the factors that regulate the HEC separately and in detail.

Human activities in the park

Human activities, continuous tourists' visits, a high concentration of Safari jeeps and unauthorized human activities inside the park have become challenges for the survival of species, their natural way of life and the management of the park as well. Over visits of tourists to the park are recognized as one of the main factors among human activities in the park which give high pressure on the elephants in the park. Besides, certain groups of villagers who live neighbouring the park enter the park both day and night daily without considering the rules and regulations of the park. This type of human practice directly disturbs the natural way of elephants' behaviour and pushes them out of the park. A respondent beyond the EUNP, expressed her views as follows:

> *"This is our land for generations, this land is our life, our parents and grandparents lived with wildlife but after the erection of the park boundary only we had to face so many problems. Despite erecting electric fences we can enter the park. Anyhow some of our people are still entering the park as usual"* (Sumanawathi, R, aged 55, Beyond the EUNP).

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It was recognized that poaching inside the park is one of the main unauthorized human activities done by different categories of people, including the local villagers, and the outsiders from nearby and sometimes even from distant places. According to the narrations of the respondents, animal poaching[16] from the park provides them with food and income. Besides, people from distant places are used to hunt animals for selling, food and also for fun. According to the field survey, respondents narrated that; human activities are one of the most important factors in driving elephants beyond the EUNP. Following table 2 shows human activities that have been recognized as major factors of pushing elephants outside the UNP as well as for HEC:

Table 2: Human activities (pressures) on the elephants in the park

Human pressure on the elephants in the parks	BEYOND EUNP	
	Numbers	Percentage
Over visits of tourists	18	24
High concentration of Safari Jeeps	20	27
Visitors" immoral behaviour	6	8
Human encroachments	31	41
Total	**75**	**100**

Source: Researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017.

It was recognized that over visits of tourists play a major role in pushing the elephants out of the park which is 24% in UNP. The high concentration of Safari jeeps plays the second major part in pushing the elephants out of the park which is 27% in UNP. As far as the UNP is concerned, in the case of human activities that push the elephants outside the park, a high concentration of Safari jeeps stands out 03% more than over visits of tourists. Human encroachments inside the park play the

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[16] Animal poaching including rabbits, deer, elks, iguanas, some certain birds and reptiles take place in the park.

most important role in pushing the elephants out of the park. 41% of human pressure on the elephants is due to human encroachments in UNP. Considering comparatively, various human practices/human encroachments inside the park play a major influential factor in pushing elephants out of the park in UNP. Thus, it is necessary to consider and separately analyze the human pressure on elephants in the park.

Over visits of tourists

In recent years especially from 2010 onwards, the number of foreigners visiting the National Parks is dramatically on the increase. According to the officers and the jeep drivers, comparatively, a higher number of foreigners visit the UNP from early November to late January. Visiting natural areas and National Parks has become a trend among the locals. In the SWR, pilgrims on their way to Thissamaharama, Kataragama and Sithulpawa visit the Yala National Park and UNP especially, during the school holidays in April, August and December and also during the Katharagama *Perahera* season which falls in July.

It was found out that the rate of visits to Yala National Park and UNP[17] is very high during December. This is a serious problem particularly in three parks, Yala Block-1, Minneriya and Horton Plains and also there are signs of it becoming a problem in parks such as Wilpattu, Udawalawe and Kawdulla also. It is worth mentioning that the elephants cannot sustain themselves in the parks with the over and continuous visits of tourists.

It has been confirmed that the years 2015 and 2016 have recorded the highest number of foreigners visiting UNP during all field visits. During the field survey, a jeep driver shared his views on the visits of tourists as follows:

> *"Nowadays visitors come here even on Poya days and weekends from early morning and we earn much money than earlier. We take safari jeeps even closer to the herds of elephants with full of*

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[17] Among tourists, Yala B-1 is famous for leopards and elephants and UNP is famous for elephants.

people as we know some elephants would not do any harm to the people" (Afras, aged, 24, nearby Kirinda)

The high possibility of viewing herds of elephants in UNP attract a large number of visitors to the park day in and day out (Senevirathna, and Perera, 2013). During the field survey it has been observed that it is possible to view elephants nearby the reservoir and in the flat grassland close to the reservoir in the UNP. A jeep driver in UNP shared his views on visits of tourists as follows;

> *If the visitors come to Udawalawe National Park, we take them very close to the elephants. These days, apart from the local and foreign tourists, lots of school children also come to the park. Visitors are higher in number than 3 – 4 years back.* (Anonymous, aged 26, UNP).

Due to easy access and the possibility to travel inside the park within 3 to 5 hours by safari jeeps, the UNP has a high potential for day visitors. According to the park officers and jeep drivers, almost all the visitors' target is to have a closer look at elephants and leopards. Therefore, most of the tourists visit the most popular National Parks like Yala B-1and UNP in the SWR.

It is obvious that during the twilight of the day, UNP is mobbed by visitors daily and is on the rise on holidays. Therefore, the haven has turned into a living hell that is unable to meet even the basic needs such as food for these elephants (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2011). The main reason for over-visits to the UNP is the narrow wildlife viewing preference[18] especially targeted at the elephants. The previous studies pointed out that narrow wildlife viewing preferences of visitors are the main cause for higher visitor pressure in certain Protected Areas (Kerley et al., 2003; Prideaux, 2006; Duffiled et al., 2006 as cited in Senevirathna and Perera, 2013).

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[18] Most of the visitors come to the park targeting to view closely at selected animals; therefore, those visitors concentrate on selected identified spots of the park.

According to the narrations of the respondents, elephants find food outside the limits of the parks but are victimized by villagers. As a result, elephants become vulnerable and motivated to be rude. According to the analysis, 24% of the respondents claimed that the over and continuous visit is one of the reasons for elephants to enter beyond the EUNP which leads to HEC beyond the UNP.

High concentration of safari jeeps

According to the field observation and findings, from dawn to dusk, more than 25 Jeeps full of local and foreign visitors, continuously circulate the hotspots of the elephants. At a stretch, around 05 to 08 jeeps enter the UNP. According to the entrance office of UNP, (2016 and 2017) 152 safari jeeps are registered in UNP at present.

As a result, elephants get annoyed and push themselves out of the park. The reckless behaviour of some jeep drivers and their desire for money cause threats to the wildlife in the park.

According to the analysis, 27% of the respondents claimed in the UNP that a high concentration of Safari jeeps in the park disturbs the elephants. This drives elephants out of the UNP beyond the EUNP and contributes to pushing out the elephants from the park hence become one of the main reasons for the HEC.

A front officer[19] of the UNP shared his views on visitors‟ behaviour as follows;

> *"Most of the visitors do not follow the rules and regulations of the park, and disturb the wildlife in several ways, there is a mobile service around the park and it displays several instructions on boards. But some try to feed though, while some others go against the regulation" (*Anonymous., aged --, UNP).

Elephants have been continuously disturbed by the camera flashes. However, repeating such behaviour drive elephants outside the park and

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[19]The officer requested not to mention his name.

this directly paves the way for them to enter the crop fields and result in HEC.
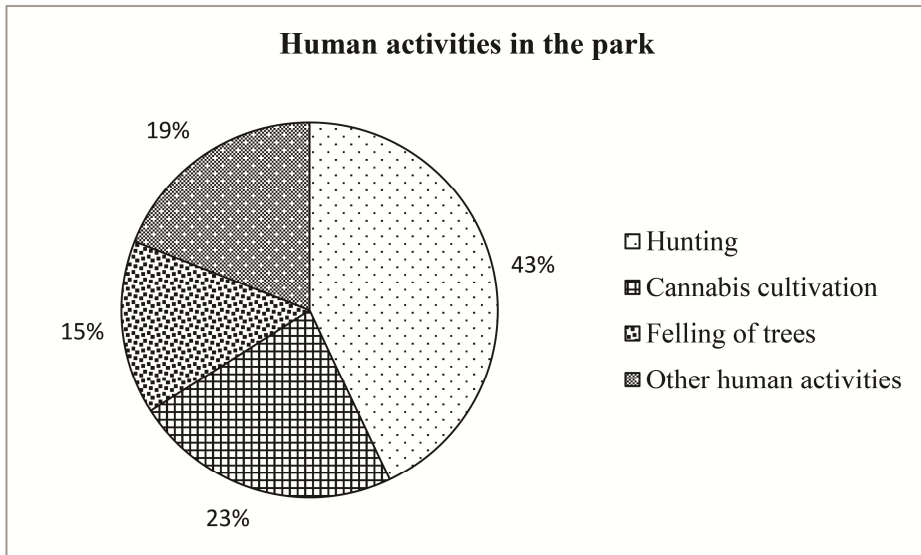
Human encroachments into the Park:

35 out of 81 respondents in the UNP and beyond the EUNP, (both locals and officials) were of the view that human activities in the park, especially, poaching is the most influential factor for the conflict 19 respondents out 81 in UNP and beyond the EUNP were of the view that cannabis cultivation is the second influential factor. The following table and the figure show the respondents" views on human practices in the park.

Table 3: Human activities in the park

Human activities in the park	UNP Numbers
Poaching	35
Cannabis cultivation	19
Illegal Logging	12
Other human activities	15
Total	**81**

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017.

From the views of the respondents, poaching is the most influential factor out of human activities. Cannabis cultivation and other human activities stand as the second and third influential factors and the falling/cutting down of trees are at the last in the list.

Figure 3: Human activities in the park, UNP

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and

2017 **Poaching**

Out of the respondents in the UNP and beyond the EUNP, 52% answered that hunting takes place inside the park while 20% is of the view that hunting does not take place in the park, and 28% denied answering. It was identified that; chronic hunting practices are one of the main reasons to direct elephants to enter the farmlands and villages beyond the EUNP. Some instances that the elephants were hurt by the poachers in the park were recorded during the data collection. As a result, the elephants have developed a tendency to attack human beings upon seeing.

Cannabis cultivation
Regarding cannabis cultivation, 19% of the respondents from UNP and beyond the EUNP were of the view that cannabis cultivation takes place. But 81% of the respondents denied cannabis cultivation in UNP and beyond the EUNP. However, cannabis cultivation within the limits of the parks is confirmed during interviews with the officers.

It has been revealed that, in comparison with hunting, cannabis cultivation influences on HEC are lesser. When discussed, with one of the park officers at the front office of the UNP, he said that he did not know much about cannabis cultivation in the park. But, one of the guards revealed as follows:

> *"some people from the 23rd Colony, Hambegamuwa Colony, Mahawewa, Kahadurallan Palassa bordering the Eastern boundary of the park engage in cannabis cultivation in the park"* (Anonymous, aged 26, UNP).

According to the interviews and discussions, most of the cannabis cultivation in the parks is done nearby the water sources, the farmers reject elephant's access to the selected water sources. If wild animals enter the cultivation area, they are shot. However, encroaching to the park, setting the fire, clearing the forest cover and cultivating cannabis is liable to punishment, but it has been continued in the study site for years and has been playing a crucial role to drive elephants out of the parks.

Illegal Logging

Planting Teak under the reforestation and habitat enrichment programme is common in the National Parks. In UNP, teaks are an obvious feature. In the Southern part of the UNP, teaks stand tall in a regular pattern. Unfortunately, it can be noticed that some of the teak trees are missing. There are signs that some of these trees are being cut down. It was identified that the illegal cutting of trees is a usual practice of encroachers. In general, teak and other dry zone trees are in high demand in Sri Lanka[20]. As a result, the businessmen with the support of encroachers and other influential parties cut down such trees for money.

In particular, the riparian strip of Kuda Oya consists of dense forest cover. As a result, illegal cutting down of trees is frequent in this area. According to the discussions with the officers of the UNP, the local villagers of the area cut the timber and is transported using the lorries of the businessmen. It was revealed through analysis that quite a several

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[20]As it is very well known, teak furniture is high priced and is being used by the elite.

families in the Kalwelgala village beyond the EUNP are regularly involved in the illegal cutting of trees. However, officers stressed that they do not have sufficient numbers of officers to prevent all the illegal activities underway in the park. Besides, those who engage in these illegal activities are ruthless ruffians.

According to the respondents in UNP and beyond the EUNP 42% were of the view that logging takes place in the park. According to the interviews with the officials, this was confirmed. This drives elephants out of the park and contributes to HEC in the area.

Other human activities:
In addition to the activities discussed earlier, some villagers were involved in firewood collection and gem mining in the park.

Lack of carrying capacity in the park

Elephants' carrying capacity inside the parks means replicating its complete ecological niche in the parks including water, food, space, shadow areas, security, necessary minerals which are available in barks of some trees, leaves, underground water and selected types of soils. According to the field survey, one of the reasons for elephants' raiding outside the park is the lack of food and water inside the park, especially during the drought seasons.

However, according to the analysis compared with the factors such as restriction of elephants' home range, over visits of tourists, human activities in the park and attraction of high-risk crops outside the park, the role of carrying capacity impact less on regulating HEC.

The study reveals that the villagers around the park now and then break into the park and set fire[21] to the grass and other plants for different purposes including illegal farming. The fire, during the dry seasons, may

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[21] Under the concept of "disturbances regime" in ecology, natural fires/bush fires are considered natural events for the initial stage of the succession process.

make a successional process[22] the very slow and also sometimes successional process makes the change of grassland to shrubs which can be a great threat to the carrying capacity of wild elephants in the park. Furthermore, any species, besides the fire and its flames, would not tolerate it, nonetheless naturally they will try to be away from the fire. And they would try to shelter themselves in selected areas of the park. So, these practices reduce the carrying capacity in the park and drive the elephants out of the park.

In general, depletion of elephant's carrying capacity not only result in the depletion of food and water but also all other needs including space for roaming, security, and also safer places for their entire reproduction process. Therefore, the lack of carrying capacity in the park makes elephants nervous and stressed and drive them out of the parks. According to space and time variations, elephants often move out of the parks in search of food and fulfil their mineral requirements and all other needs in their previous habitats. But their previous habitats are now being highly occupied by humans.

Besides this, the rapid spread of exotic invasive species such as "Katukamaiya" or "Unni" and a large grove of *Sonneratia caseolaris* is replaced with forest in the Menik Ganga's estuary also makes lack of food in the UNP. The growth of invasive alien species such as *Lantana Camara*, *Opuntiadillenii*, *Chromolaena odorata* is posing a threat to the native plants. Elephants or other living creatures do not eat these plants or their fruits. According to the narrations of the officers, the exotic invasive species such as Lantana (Gandapana) and Eupatorium (Japan lantana or Podisingho-maran) take control of the grasslands[23]. These types of invasive plants are a serious problem for it poses a challenge to the trees and grass.

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[22] According to Clement (1916), an ecological process in which communities of plant and animal species in a particular area are replaced over time by a series of a different and often more complex communities.

[23] Pulling shrubs out is the best solution. It has to be done regularly and systematically, which would be costly (Fernando, 2015)

Besides, it was found that there is a special kind of soil in various parts of the UNP, which attracts the elephants. They habitually eat it and even dust over their bodies as a natural skincare technique and maintain the body temperature but due to high concentrated human activities in the park, elephants get annoyed and avoid making use of that special soil. Moreover, illegal logging causes the lack of particular minerals for elephants and directs them outside the park.

Through interviews with the officials, it was identified that the lack of grass and grass buds for elephants during the dry seasons in the park due to livestock grazing in UNP drive away elephants from the parks. Elephants and other livestock have to compete for grazing which makes carrying capacity deplete. Annual drought, human pressures in the parks, spreads of invasive species allowing livestock for grazing is one of the major threats to the UNP. Based on the factors affecting the carrying capacity such as annual drought, human pressures in the parks, spreads of invasive species, make elephants enter the bordering villages and it acts as a factor to regulate HEC.

Converting forests into farming and dwelling areas

Most of the present SWR was covered with thick forests and natural corridors before the declaration of National Parks[24] including Yala, Udawalawe, Lunugamvehera and Bundala. During that period, the elephants did not face any obstacles when they roamed within their home ranges and they did not migrate out of the home ranges. However, after the declaration of National Parks and various development projects around the parks, hundreds of acres of elephants' traditional habitats were transformed into human utility areas in the bordering areas of the present National Parks, particularly around Yala and UNP.

In the bordering areas of the UNP, the forest is deforested for farming and human purposes making it difficult for the elephants to live in the traditional forests. It was discovered that poverty, lack of permanent livelihood, lack of water for agriculture and shortage of land have forced adjacent villagers to clear forests in the bordering areas of the park and
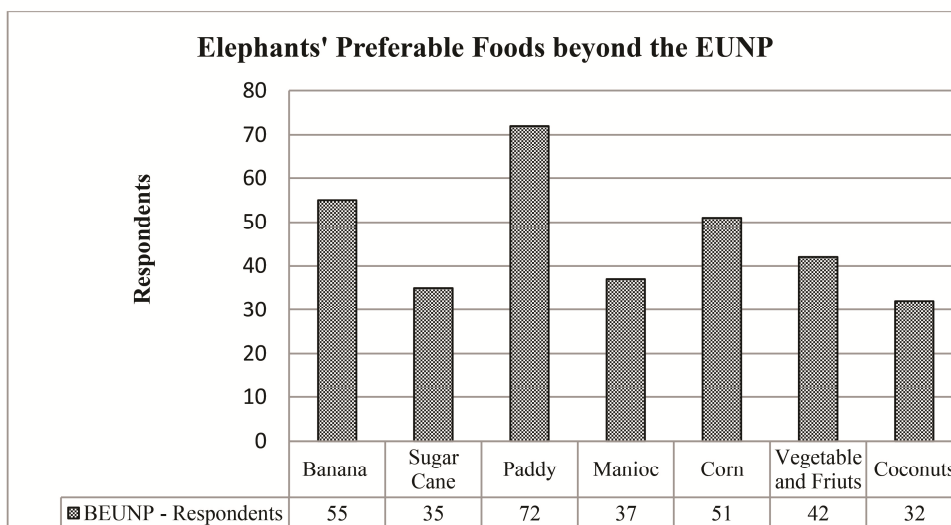
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[24]Yala was declared as a National Park in 1938, UNP in 1972

engage in farming. Most of the crops cultivated by the farmers are attractive to the elephants. Elephants tend to cross over to the lands with paddy and crop fields, roads and tanks. During the discussion, it was stressed by the villagers that they had to struggle with the officers on and off because of the conversion of forest into farmlands.

The attraction of high-risk crops outside the park

According to the observation and data analysis, within 50 to 300 meters from the park's boundary[25] elephants can find food such as paddy *(Oryzasativa),* wood apple *(Limoniaacidissima),* maize *(Zea mays),* banana *(Musa paradisiacal),* sugar cane *(Saccharumofficinarum)*, manioc (*Manihotesculenta*) among other fruits and vegetables. According to the respondents, paddy is preferred by elephants more than the other fruits and vegetables. Figure 4 shows elephants' preferable food in numbers beyond the EUNP based on respondents' answers.

Figure 4: Elephants' Preferable Foods, beyond the EUNP

Elephants' Preferable Foods beyond the EUNP

	Banana	Sugar Cane	Paddy	Manioc	Corn	Vegetable and Fruits	Coconuts
BEUNP - Respondents	55	35	72	37	51	42	32

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017

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[25] Several fruits and vegetable stalls are also located within 30 meters distance from the park boundary

According to the analysis, 72 of the respondents thought that paddy is preferred by elephants while 55 of the respondents thought that bananas are preferred by the elephants beyond the EUNP. According to the respondents, they prefer the following food in order beyond the EUNP; corn (51), vegetables and fruits (42), manioc (37), sugar cane (35) and coconut (32) next to paddy and banana. A woman shared her opinion on the food consumed by the elephants as follows:

> *"We involve in crop cultivation such as kurakkan, cowpea, maize, tomatoes, peanuts, ladies' fingers, capsicum, green beans and manioc, elephants come and taste crops, they prefer, cowpea, kurakkan and manioc"* (Sumanawathi, R., aged 55, beyond the EUNP).

A respondent beyond the EUNP shared her views as follows;

> *"Elephants enter the villages and raid crops during the dry season which falls from July-August to September due to lack of water. In both maha and Yala seasons, elephants usually raid the crops. The season is not a matter for them, they even come daily"* (Nelka, aged 36, beyond the EUNP).

The attraction of crops, harvested sugar cane and other grains in the warehouses as well as fruits and vegetables in the stalls outside the park contribute to the invasion of elephants.

When the area is dry from May to September, elephants drink water from the reservoir in UNP. Quite a several elephants enter the UNP from neighbouring National Parks and forests especially via Lunugamvehera National Park targeting water in the reservoir. On their way and back, farmlands and properties beyond the EUNP are raided annually.

The attraction of high-risk crops such as paddy, banana, sugar cane, manioc and corn are playing a dominant role in the raid of elephants in the farmlands. During the rainy season from late October to February, paddy is the dominant crop beyond the EUNP. Even during the rainy

season, elephants raid the fields in December, January and February[26] before harvesting the crops.

Beyond the EUNP, elephants' raid is high, especially from the beginning to the end of the rainy season in October and February. Further, during the harvesting seasons and school holidays in April, August and December, elephants ' raids are comparatively a little high. It is very clear that elephants raid the farmlands and villages outside the park mainly because of human pressure, lack of carrying capacity within the park, the aroma of crops and readymade foods outside the park but it varies according to the seasons.

According to the results of the analysis, between 15 to 20 elephants come from 19.00 to 03.00, to the surrounding area of the park to feed and most of them are adult males. Once they come to the farming area, chasing them into the park is very difficult and it ends up with clashes between humans and elephants. This situation is obvious during the dry season from March to early September and rises in May, June and July. In the same way, between 08 to 15 elephants feed on fruits and foods from visitors, restaurants and fruit and vegetable stalls outside the UNP. Further, according to the observation during the field survey, 2 to 3 elephants are very frequently seen inside the park close to the electric fence in the Southern boundary expecting fruits especially bananas, sugarcane and pineapple from the visitors. In the vicinity of the Eastern boundary of UNP, 5 to 6 elephants feed on prepared rice and curry and they stay near the dwelling areas. These types of feeding behaviour make elephants come out of the park to sustain outside the park. It is stated that, if they did not get any food at night they enter the kitchens of the houses and small hotels to find food. The addiction of elephants to food is also identified as one of the reasons for the HEC.
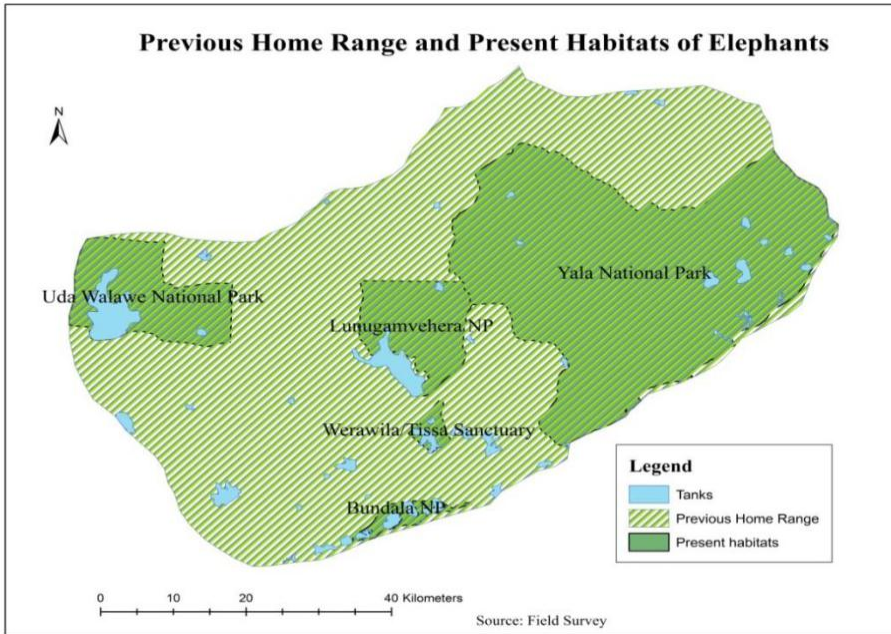
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[26] It is common in the HEC areas of the country too; paddy is preferentially eaten by wild elephants when the plants are ripe and ready for harvesting (Santiapillai, 2010)

Restriction of elephants' movements in their previous home range

According to the results of the analysis, up to 1970^{27}, the elephants travelled between Yala via Lunugamvehera National Park to UNP and Yala to Bundala National Park and Weeravila Sanctuary and through some other forest areas. Their home range was broad and they found their ecological niche in their home range. However, from the 1970s, the elephants were directed and restricted in the parks under elephant management programs. According to the Department of Wildlife Conservation (2011), in particular, around 150 elephants were electric fenced in the Yala National Park in 2005 and it prevented them from accessing their dry season home range. In 2006, 250 - 300 elephants were driven into the Lunugamvehera National Park from the adjacent Mattala area and were electric fenced and an additional 100 elephants were driven into Lunugamvehera National Park from the Pellawatte area in 2007 and were electric fenced (Fernando, 2015). These elephants completely lost their home ranges. Accordingly, parks have become small patches of forestry for elephants compared to their previous broad home range and they are being pocketed continuously. The following figure 5 (Map) shows the previous home range and the present habitats in the SWR.

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[27]At this time, the only National Park was Yala National Park in the SWR and the rest were covered under the forest.

Figure 5: Previous Home Range and Present Habitats of Elephants

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017.

According to the officials of the park, elephants are forced to be re-pocketed in these parks with the increased human activities against them and the elephants are now vulnerable and their natural routine has been disturbed, dispersed and blocked. However, elephants have found alternative ways to fulfil their needs. Further, the elephants use the corridors and move freely among National Parks and other forest areas in the SWR. During the dry season, quite a several elephant herds come from other parks and forests through the corridors to the Eastern and Northern of UNP. On the Eastern side, there is a narrow link between the Lunugamvehera National Park and, and the Yala National Park. Besides, there are also links with the elephant habitats in the Kalhota, Koslanda and Haldumulla areas in the Northern part of the UNP. To the North-East lies a large habitat, in the Kuda Oya basin (Krindi Oya system).

However, at present, most of the corridors have disappeared[28] with human practices along with high concentrated fences as physical barriers within elephants' homes range in administrative boundaries. Electric fences play a dominant role as physical barriers in administrative boundaries. There are no biological corridors as conceptualized by the 'Concept of Biological Corridors' among National Parks in the SWR.

It was recognized that one of the most unfortunate but significant facts is that, except for two corridors in the Eastern UNP, there are no wild strips with particular width and length due to human encroachments. As a result, elephants are forced to adapt themselves to move in a twist and turn pattern. However, they tend to move regardless of any obstacles. When elephants roam in their previous home ranges and move through corridors, they raid crops and violently destroy them by trampling. In return, these circumstances directly regulate HEC. Moreover, it was identified that it is one of the main factors to regulate HEC, beyond the EUNP.

Villagers' dangerous chasing techniques

It has been found that the villagers beyond the EUNP chase the elephants by shouting, lighting elephant thunder crackers ('Ali rathinjya' / 'Alidoam'), throwing stones and other objects, flashing lights, waving objects, raising canes. Besides, farmers sometimes show artificial guns at them and also make noise using sound instruments to keep the elephants away and protect their crops, residences and their lives. The farm-based methods include making noise, throwing firecrackers and guarding fields from tree huts, however, these proved to be insufficient and it aggravates the problem. Table 4 shows the methods used by the villagers to chase the elephants in the site.

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[28] People around the parks are not that much happy to maintain corridors as some of the previous corridors are through their present farmlands and villages but cannot find any signs of them.

Table 4: The methods used by the villagers to chase the elephants in the site

Methods used by villagers to chase elephants	Beyond EUNP	
	Numbers	Percentage %
Setting firecrackers	74	98
Shouting	72	96
Making noise	67	90
Flashing lights	66	88
Waving objects	56	74
Shooting	6	8

Source: The researcher, Field Survey, 2016 and 2017

Beyond the EUNP, 98% of the villagers use firecrackers while 96% of the villagers shout and 90 % makes noise to chase the elephants. Beyond the EUNP 80% of the villagers use the mixed bag of shouting, firing crackers, making noise as well as waving objects as a team or family to chase the elephants. It was recognized that almost all the respondents on the site, are of the view that chasing elephants is not a simple, easy and quick task but it sometimes takes more than 3 to 5 hours even as a team. When an adult elephant starts to run away, then the herd follows the adult. According to the respondents, chasing a single male adult is more difficult than chasing a herd and expressed that elephants get more aggressive against people's chasing attitude in turn they react to chase the people. It is a baffling task to control the elephants and make them come back to normalcy when they are irritated and aggravated by the chasing methods. A respondent expressed her experiences on elephant chasing as follows;

"If they get annoyed they won't go but they trumpet out loudly rotating for some time and trample the ground which makes the dust rise above and then chase the people by running after them with their tails straight up and their ears steady by the sides" (Amitha Kumari, R., aged 26, beyond the EUNP).

In the study site, most of the villagers chase the elephants by making a kind of noise with coconut shells and by Elephant Thunder Crackers (ETC) which are provided free of charge by the Department of Wildlife Conservation. According to a farmer beyond the EUNP, some elephants react when the people shout: 'go away' (*heiyanava*) and so on. It was observed and queried in the field survey that in some areas, the farmers put up barbed-wire fences without electrification around their lands. Since the elephants have had bitter experiences with the electric fences on the boundary of the UNP, mistaking this fence for an electrified barbed wire fence, they dare not get closer to it.

It was revealed by the respondents that, every dry season, some selected 5 to 6 rude elephants beyond the EUNP destroy large areas of farmlands and tend to damage houses, warehouses, walls, fences, gates and even large trees. In such unpleasant situations, villagers shoot at them without the intention of killing them and inform the officers of the park. In such circumstances, officers come and shoot the elephants with anaesthetic bullets and take them to the park before they regain consciousness.

According to the results of the analysis, It was known, when the villagers flop in their effort to chase the elephants away, they shoot at the back of the elephants and it is indirectly agreed that when the elephants cause great damages or when they are uncontrollable and determined to kill people, the villagers shoot at them wherever they want; when the elephant dies, the officers of the UNP recognize this and remove the body within a few days. According to the respondents, nobody in the village

will give any evidence on the person that shot the elephant, no matter how much they are cross-examined by the officers[29] of the park.

During the field survey, some respondents said (8%) of villagers beyond the EUNP shoot the elephants especially because of fear of their attacks and to save their lives. Giving poisoned fruit or vegetables as well as using "*Hakkapatas*" to kill elephants is common in Sri Lanka. But beyond the EUNP, none of the respondents was of the view that they use such mechanisms. The above-mentioned chasing techniques, directly and indirectly, provoke HEC. However, it is very unfortunate that those dangerous techniques are still in progress. However, most of the chasing techniques influence regulating factors for HEC.

Management Related Issues

According to the key informant interviews, the following facts were identified as major management related issues which also play as regulating factors of HEC in and around UNP: lack of officials, top-level influences, pocketing elephants in the parks and other management related issues.

Conclusion

The major factors for elephants' invasions beyond the EUNP and HEC are recognized as continuous high concentrated human activities in the park, over visits of tourists to the park and high concentration of safari jeeps in the park and lack of carrying capacity inside the park. In addition, attractions of seasonal crops outside the park, restriction of elephants' home range, dangerous elephant chasing techniques practised by people, and management related issues of the park were also identified as major factors for elephant invasions and HEC beyond the UNP. In particular, the seasonal attraction of crops outside the Eastern boundary of the park, feeding habits in the crop field, grains in warehouses and their usual seasonal routine are identified as main factors for elephants'

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[29]During the field survey, none of the respondents said that people purposely kill elephants, but during the long discussions, they indirectly said that some shoot. They do not have any intention to kill elephants.

seasonal invasion beyond the Eastern boundary of UNP. In particular, human activities inside the park and the attraction of seasonal crops outside the park contribute as major push and pull factors for the elephants' invasion of the villages and HEC. The invasion is very obvious during the dry season from March to early September. Besides, it has been identified that invasion is high in May, June and July. It is important to find a solution for the foregone continued invasion and conflict through practically implementable, long term, multi-dimensional and sustainable measures.

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