



RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LIVELIHOODS

Needs Assessment Survey for Income Recovery (NASIR) - III



**A survey carried out in Tsunami-affected areas
in Sri Lanka during October 2005**



International
Labour
Office

April
2006

RADA/ILO LIVELIHOODS INCOME RECOVERY PROGRAMME

***NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY INCOME RECOVERY 3
A Study conducted in October 2005***

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FOREWORD

The Reconstruction and Development Agency (RADA), formerly known as Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN), is the coordination and facilitation agency for tsunami recovery programmes, directly coming under His Excellency the President. RADA had been actively engaged in mobilizing the required resources to carry out necessary rehabilitation work in the affected areas and facilitating coordination between donor and implementing agencies in the areas of Livelihoods, Education, Health, Infrastructure and Housing.

It has been estimated that around 200,000 people have lost livelihoods as a result of tsunami devastation. The government, with the technical assistance of International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) formulated a Rapid Income Recovery Programme to respond to the devastation and assist the affected people and enterprises to get back to business / work in an expeditious manner.

This Income Recovery Programme (IRP) receives technical advisory support from the ILO through the Income Recovery Technical Assistance Program (IRTAP). Over the last six months the IRP has established district livelihood units in ten affected districts to strengthen District Secretaries in coordinating and managing livelihood activities. The Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment has provided Divisional Livelihood Officers to 43 affected divisions which strengthened the Divisional Secretaries capacity in handling livelihood activities at divisional and village level. The preparation of divisional livelihood development plans for the affected divisions with the active participation of the affected communities are under way. These development plans will identify priority investments for the division and will be a useful tool to guide the development activities of the division in years to come.

The Need Assessment survey (NASIR) is an important research work and is the third of a series that monitors livelihood recovery at district level. The report provides a snapshot of the livelihood restoration at the end of 2005. The report provides vital information and analysis of livelihood issues and I am confident that the findings of NASIR III will provide insight to policy makers to guide and direct livelihood activities in the affected areas.

Saliya Wickramasuriya
Chief Operational Officer
RADA

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CBO</i>	<i>Community Based Organisation</i>
<i>DS</i>	<i>Divisional Secretary</i>
<i>CFW</i>	<i>Cash For Work</i>
<i>GN</i>	<i>Grama Niladari Division</i>
<i>ILO</i>	<i>International Labour Organisation</i>
<i>IRP</i>	<i>Income Recovery Program</i>
<i>LTTE</i>	<i>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</i>
<i>MFI</i>	<i>Micro-finance Institutions</i>
<i>NASIR</i>	<i>Needs Assessment Survey for Income Recovery</i>
<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
<i>RADA</i>	<i>Reconstruction and Development Authority</i>
<i>TRO</i>	<i>Tamil Rehabilitation Organization</i>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the main findings from the Third Needs Assessment Survey for Income Recovery (NASIR 3) of tsunami-affected households in Sri Lanka funded by the International Labour Organization (ILO).¹ Conducted in October 2005 -- ten months after the tsunami of December 2004 -- it provides a "snapshot" into the progress made in tsunami-affected areas by highlighting the evolving financial and personal needs of different sub-groups, especially of working persons and persons living near the coast. The report has practical implications for a wide audience, including government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and international donors, and the general public.

Under NASIR 3, 1,801 households across nine tsunami-affected districts were surveyed.² The survey was designed to track similar indicators of socio-economic livelihood needs as were collected during two previous NASIR surveys.³

The survey results will assist the planning and delivery of government and non-government livelihood assistance coordinated by the Government's Income Recovery Program of the Reconstruction and Development Authority (RADA). Under a policy of "Building Back Better," RADA will facilitate reviving livelihoods and improving living conditions to a state superior to that before the tsunami, rather than simply returning some households or communities to their previous states. The information contained herein is relevant to the three program areas: social protection (cash transfer), temporary employment generation (cash for work), and income recovery (local economic development).

Given the breadth and depth of destruction and trauma experienced by roughly 516,000 people, full livelihood recovery will require years for many individuals and families to achieve. Emergency relief programs gradually are phasing out. Longer-term livelihood assistance and reconstruction programs are under development. Once broader more comprehensive forms of livelihood assistance are provided, progress should be strong and steady.

1 The survey was conducted by TNS Lanka and coordinated by an independent consultant who analysed the findings and wrote this report, which RADA is publishing and distributing.

2 The survey has a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/- 2.3%.

3 The ILO, together with the World Food Program, conducted the first NASIR survey in January 2005. ILO conducted the second NASIR survey in April 2005.

OVERVIEW OF MAIN FINDINGS

The findings herein indicate a slow to moderate pace of overall recovery – livelihoods are gradually improving to different extents for different sets of people.⁴ Progress since April 2005 seems generally positive, but instability in the housing and employment sectors must be rectified before expecting livelihoods to improve further without public and private assistance.

More specifically, it is impressive that only 15% of all households have men and 14% of all households have women, who lost their main income due to the tsunami and still are not working. Yet, this is only half the picture. Women are returning to some form of work – whether part-time, full-time, temporary, or permanent -- at a somewhat slower rate than men.

With respect to income earnings, **about 25% of households earned a monthly income of less than Rs. 2,000 during September/October, placing these households in dire poverty⁵. More female-headed than male-headed households find themselves in this situation.** Twice as many displaced households are in this poverty situation than households who reside in their own homes. People state that the cost of living is higher than before the tsunami whereas earnings are less despite people working the same number of hours or more hours than before. **People residing in the North and East are the most uncertain about their future work status. Persons in the East compared to persons in other tsunami-affected areas stated that they now earn less from their work than before the tsunami.**

Assistance programs should continue to provide housing, grants, equipment and materials, and temporary manual labour programs to meet the immediate needs of affected persons. Other livelihood programs should provide demand-oriented, comprehensive employment services and skills training as well as business assistance that helps people interested in joint-ownership arrangements. **Consultations with economic development experts and private business owners are crucial for effective, targeted job creation strategies.**

In order to truly Build Back Better, **all livelihood efforts should ensure that both the financial and personal well-being of beneficiary populations are being served, including safe, affordable and accessible transportation, quality housing and associated infrastructure, and appropriate family care.** Coordinators and decision-makers should ensure that on-going technical assistance is available for implementing partners and stakeholders, particularly for planning and monitoring of programs and measuring benefits/impacts on beneficiary welfare. Finally, coordination efforts should include not just an increase in public information sharing, but also coordination of strategic planning at the district and village levels prior to final decision-making in order to make sure that the most vulnerable do not fall between the cracks.

⁴ Recovery is contingent on a number of social, cultural and geographical factors that are discussed and analysed in detail.

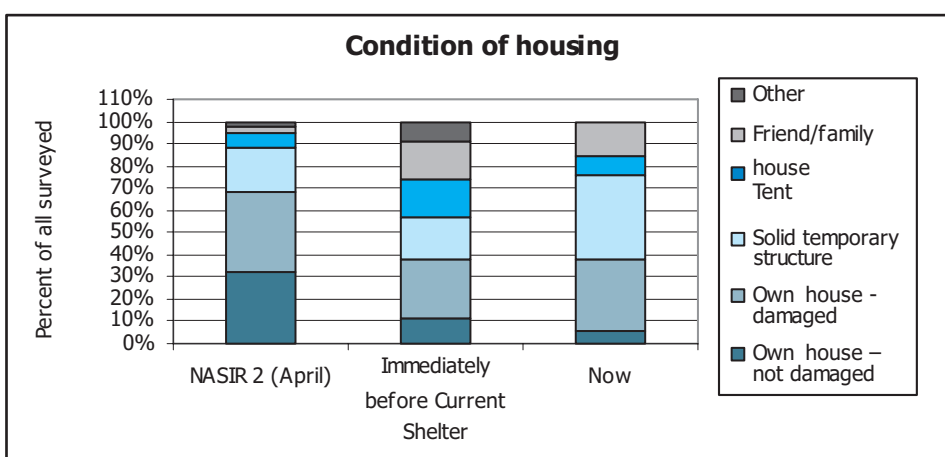
⁵ This amount equals roughly \$20 US dollars. \$1 USD is worth roughly 100 Sri Lankan Rupees. At the same time, the official poverty line for the month of October was Rs.1,829 per person.

Income Recovery of Households

Housing as pre-condition for livelihood recovery

Progress towards achieving sustainable housing appears slow, due to the numerous barriers that persons and institutions must overcome in order to help the tens of thousands of persons that need to be moved into permanent housing. The majority of affected households continue to be displaced from their homes.

Graph 1: Condition of Housing



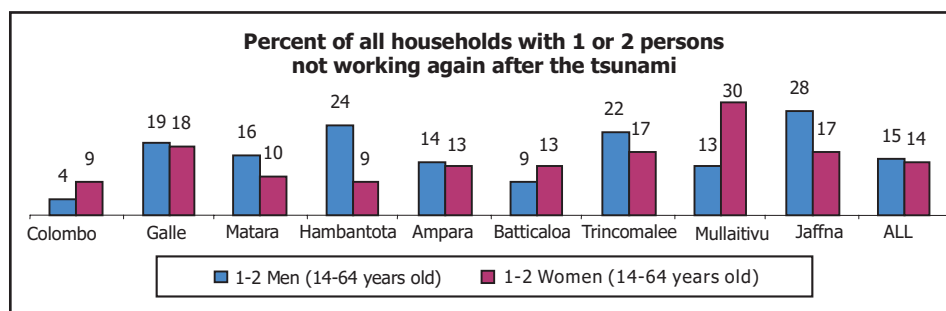
Most households in the North live in solid temporary structures, while in the South most households live in their own damaged houses. Those who are living with friends/family, most were found in Colombo, Trincomalee and the Northern Province. 21% of those living with friends/family are actually living in a temporary structure separate from the actual house of the friend or family. Sometimes families stay with friends/family only at night and regularly return to their damaged home or transitional shelter to qualify for benefits or assistance. The time, money and effort required to commute in this way would likely hinder their ability to recover a livelihood.

The increase in solid temporary structures reflects movement out of camps and welfare centres into transitional houses. While this is an improvement in the housing situation, transitional shelters are not conducive for households to recover their livelihood.

Income Recovery

Yet, work recovery rates show an impressive 85% recovery rate for households with men who lost their main source of income and a 65% recovery rate among households with women who lost their main source of income⁶.

Graph 2: Households with 1 or 2 persons not working (%)

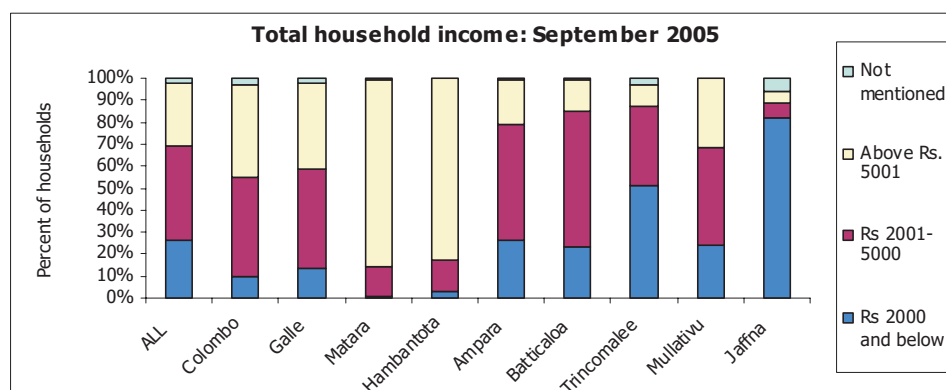


At the district level, recovery is slower in Mullaitivu and Jaffna. The different rates suggest that recovering some form of work is more difficult for women than men, although this is not the case in every district.

There are more women than men who are single parents or widows who are not working again; more of these single parents or widows continue to live as displaced persons rather than residing in their own homes.

About 25% of households earned a total of less than Rs. 2,000 a month during September/October, placing these households in dire poverty.

Graph 3: Household Income



⁶ These recovery rate indicate working again to some extent either part or full-time / temporary or permanent.

The number living in poverty is expected to increase following the end of the government's Rs. 5,000 relief grant program. There are more female-headed than male-headed households earning less than Rs. 2,000 a month. This finding may imply that women face greater difficulty or inability to work sufficient hours or find jobs that pay as much as men.

While the main employment sectors seem to be supporting numbers of workers similar to before the tsunami, this is less true in the fisheries sector where fewer households now depend on fisheries for their main income. Data also shows a notable increase in household dependency on income from non-work sources

Table 1: Source of Household Income by Sector⁷

Main Source of Household Income by Sector	Before Tsunami	Now
Agriculture and Livestock	5%	4%
Fisheries (collecting, processing but not selling)	43%	30%
Manual Labour & Manufacturing	20%	24%
Private Services & Small Business	23%	21%
Public Sector/Government Services	5%	6%
Temporary Relief Work with NGOs (may include manual labour work)	0%	2%
Income not from work (foreign remittances, government welfare, charity, loans, pension, selling personal belongings)	2%	12%
Other	0%	1%
Not mentioned	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%

This situation may reflect that business is bouncing back in other sectors than fisheries or that the business community is making special efforts to support families to some extent. Whatever the case may be, employment outside of fisheries is positive indication of potential local economic development for longer-term labour market assistance programs.

Recommendations:

Livelihood programs should coordinate with housing reconstruction efforts to ensure that permanent and temporary housing locations and job opportunities are compatible in terms of safe and healthy living conditions and convenient transportation. Housing and transportation

are inter-related and affect livelihood decisions and opportunities. Particular attention should be given to psycho-social needs such as child or elder care, and counselling for female-headed households, single parents, and widows to ensure that they do not fall between the cracks.

More thorough labour market assessments of workers, employers, and the economy must be conducted to provide insights into the reasons why men or women face difficulties in income/employment recovery in some districts more than others. Assistance programs then should target their outreach and programming accordingly. Attention should be given to equal pay for women and men for comparable work and that women have increased access to higher paying jobs or jobs that offer more work hours.

⁷ See Annex 1, survey question 3.1 for a list of occupations included in each sector.

Income Recovery of Individuals



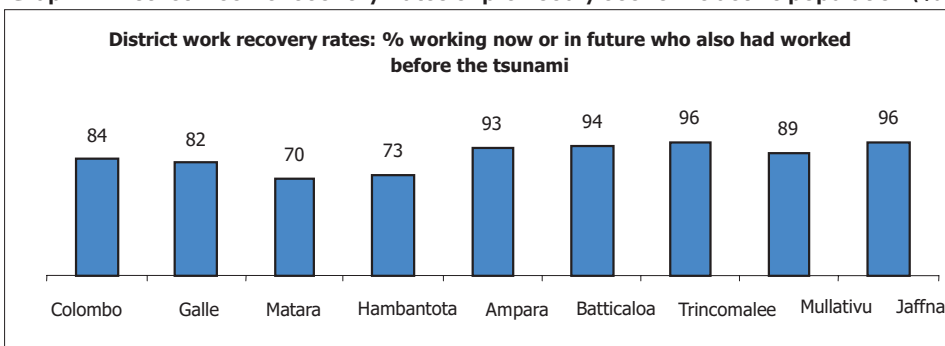
A neighbourhood store is rebuilt and returns to business with the support of a local private foundation.

Work Status

70% of survey respondents are now working part or full-time in temporary or permanent jobs – a 35% increase since April 2005. This response rate means that the NASIR 3 findings are more reflective of workers than non-workers. It is impressive that 88% of these workers had been employed prior to the tsunami and so are in the process of recovering their livelihood. A larger share of men than women are recovering or working again to some extent.

Although the survey did not assess the employment rate of all potential workers, findings do seem to suggest that there are relatively high levels of work activity. This is encouraging and bodes well for future livelihood development.

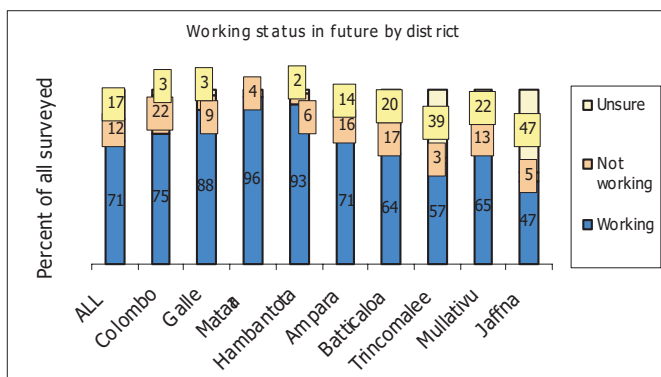
Graph 4: District Income recovery Rates of previously economic active population (%)



10% of the working population had not been working before the tsunami reflecting new entrants into the workforce. The percentage is markedly higher for youth who are now working: 25% had not been working before the tsunami and are new entrants to the workforce.

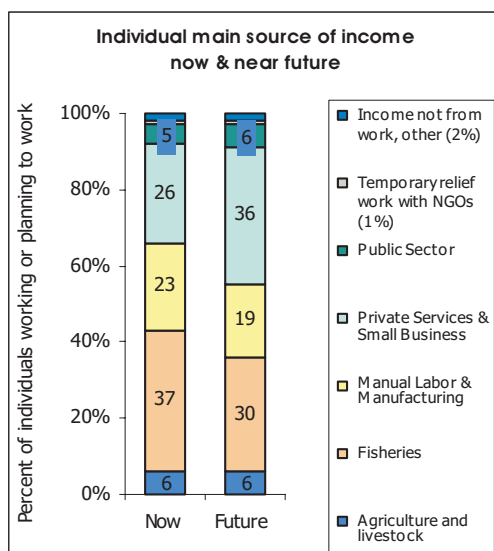
Graph 5: Future Working Status by District

More people would like to work in the future but persons in the North and East are especially unsure or believe they will not find work soon (see graph). The same is also true of men more so than women.



In the future, fewer men and women expect to be earning their main source of income from manual labour and manufacturing. The most notable decreases are 48% and 40% in Galle and Hambantota.

Graph 6: Currently and Future Main Source of Income



Anticipated job sector changes reflect noticeable instability in the market, especially for women, with decreases in fisheries and manual manufacturing/manufacturing accompanied by increases in private services/the small business sector. Monitoring of small businesses and self-employment is needed to determine if persons involved in such enterprises will be able to thrive during uncertain economic times, especially as some individuals may have turned to self-employment as a last resort rather than based on skills or capacity.

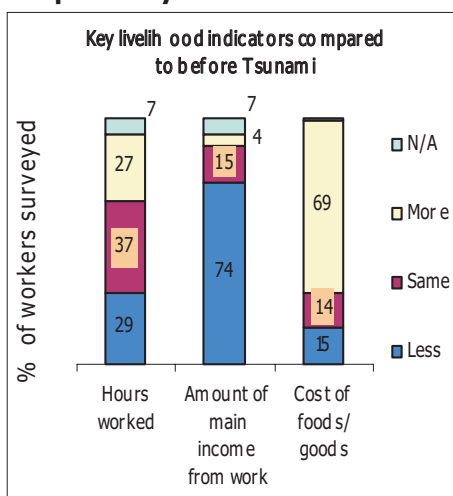
Income Recovery

Indicative of livelihood recovery is that:

- 1) the cost of living is higher now, but
- 2) earnings are less than before, despite
- 3) people working the same or more number of hours.

Although this is not surprising following a major disaster, these findings highlight the importance of looking beyond the employment rate as an indicator of livelihood recovery.

Graph 7: Key Livelihood Indicators



Recommendations

The NASIR 3 findings show that there are income and cost disparities across the tsunami-affected districts. Yet, there is neither a simple explanation for why this is the case, nor a simple solution to rectify these disparities. Various aspects of local and regional economies, including the infusion of grants and other assistance programs, all affect livelihood recovery. To that end:

- Demand-oriented labour market programs are needed for both the employed and unemployed in order to improve job stability, decrease poverty, increase employment where needed in order to truly “Build Back Better.” Private sector partnerships to devise targets, reliable job creation, skills training and placement strategies are crucial at this time. Strategic planning for such programs should be done at the district and local levels, and include economic development experts, employers and workers, and include village or town hall meetings or focus groups.
- Comprehensive, longer-term employment services should be developed to implement the above strategies and help people prepare for a job, find one, keep one, improve relations with or

negotiate employment terms with employers, or change jobs.

Medium and long-term capacity building and technical assistance for NGOs and the public sector should be provided to implement and monitor such programs since most have limited experience in this sector.

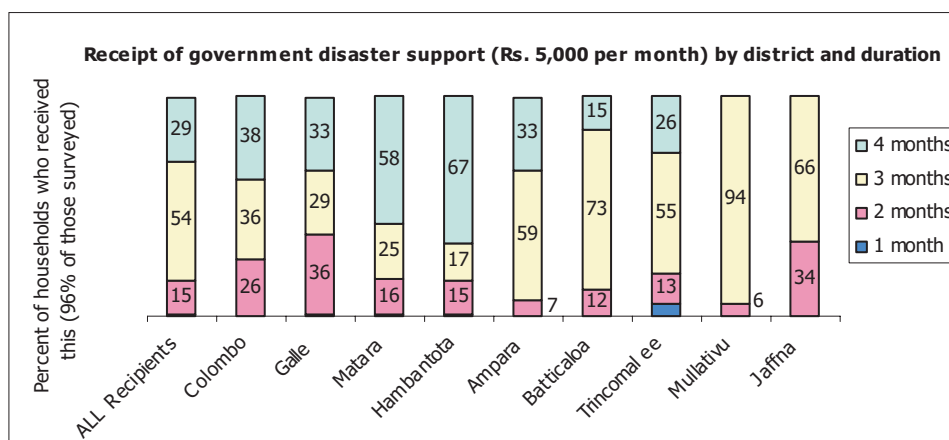
- New entrants in the workforce, especially women and youth, should have convenient access to employment counsellors that can help them with various aspects of employment that they have not had to face before, such as negotiating wages, benefits, and working hours, conditions and expectations. Otherwise, new entrants may face exploitation or job instability.
- Referrals or provision of other support services for single parents and widows should be available, affordable, and convenient. Services that indirectly may help them to improve their livelihood include transportation assistance, support groups, health and nutrition programs, and child or elderly care.
- Comprehensive labour market studies and more concrete monitoring of wages, costs and hours worked should be done by sector, gender and district to understand current trends. Such studies should include specific attention to youth, single parents, and widows. Additional studies should be conducted to understand more about the unemployed, again including single parents and widows, to ensure they do not fall between the cracks.

Income Recovery Instruments

Social protection grants

At the time of the survey, the government had just begun distributing the fourth instalment of Rs. 5,000 relief grants to tsunami-affected households. Survey results indicate that persons in the North and East encountered a delay in accessing this final instalment than persons in the South and West.

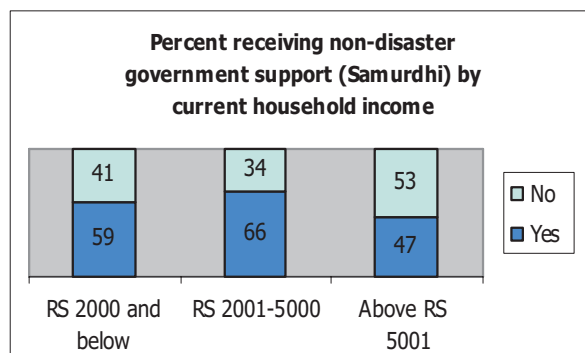
Graph 8: Receipt of Social Assistance by District and Duration



Slightly more households in transitional shelters have been able to benefit from the program's third and fourth instalment compared to persons in the other residence types.

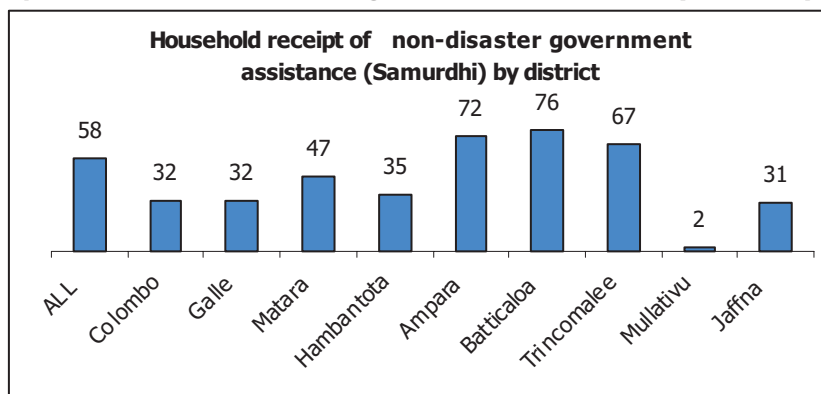
Distribution of Samurdhi assistance for the poor has increased over time, but many persons in need (i.e., earning below Rs. 5000 per month) are not receiving Samurdhi benefits, while 47% of households that earned above Rs. 5000 still received Samurdhi

Graph 9: Households receiving Samurdhi Support by Income Group (%)



Distribution throughout the districts varies and is particularly low in Mullaitivu where 98% of families do not receive social assistance through Samurdhi (Graph 22). This shortfall in social welfare may be off-set by support from other private, non-work sources.

Graph 10: Households receiving Samurdhi Assistance by District (%)



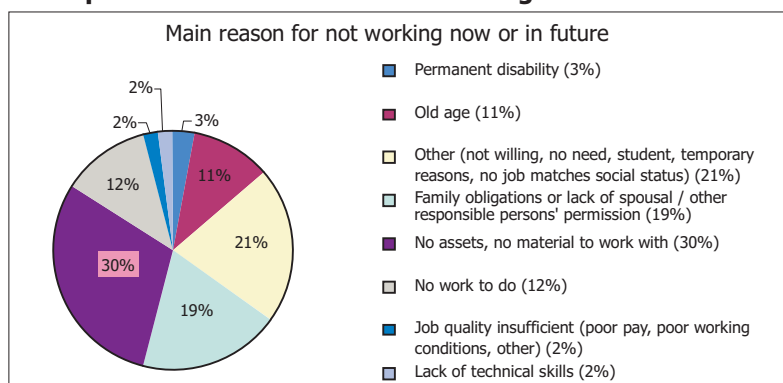
Recommendations

The continuing decline in the provision of social protection grants from the government, Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), and other NGOs makes it imperative to monitor the poverty rate by district, gender and residence. It also creates a clear, strong need for continuing existing social safety net programs while increasing controls and public outreach to ensure that those most in need receive priority.

Livelihood assistance needed

The single largest reason cited was lack of assets or material to work with.

Graph 11: Main reason for not working in the near future



Most of these job-related reasons are barriers that livelihood services could help the unemployed to overcome.

About 20% of respondents lacked a clear livelihood strategy. Such persons are unemployed due to job-related reasons or are unsure if they will work in the future. This figure indicates that livelihood uncertainty is similar to the level found in January 2005, perhaps owing to the unstable, temporary nature of current jobs, a shortage of available jobs and, as cited by many of the unemployed, a continued lack of equipment/materials.

Livelihood programs could help overcome such obstacles by focusing on those types of assistance that are most needed.

Table 2: Type of Assistance needed in the future to recover income

Type of assistance	Past assistance that was most helpful for earning an income (1st mention)	Future (within 6 months) assistance most needed to help earn enough income or to find work (1st mention)		
	All surveyed	All	Male	Female
Housing - owning again (also, repair of/ living in own)	6	28	26	31
Grants (in kind or cash)	71	25	23	26
Equipment	8	13	17	10
Loans	2	11	12	11
Counselling/Advice	1	8	8	9
Employment search	1	8	9	7
Training - vocational or new skills	0	1	1	1
Training - improve existing skills	0	1	0	1
Temporary work	2	1	2	1
Transports	0	2	1	2
Child care/elderly/sick care assistance or facilities	1	0	0	0
Family/friend support - housing, income, other household decisions	3	0	0	0
No support received/nothing helpful/will not need any support	4	0	0	0
Total (may not add to 100 due to rounding)	100	100	100	100

Assistance to help women care for children or the elderly would be helpful but it is unknown how many of these individuals would work if such help were available.

Recommendations

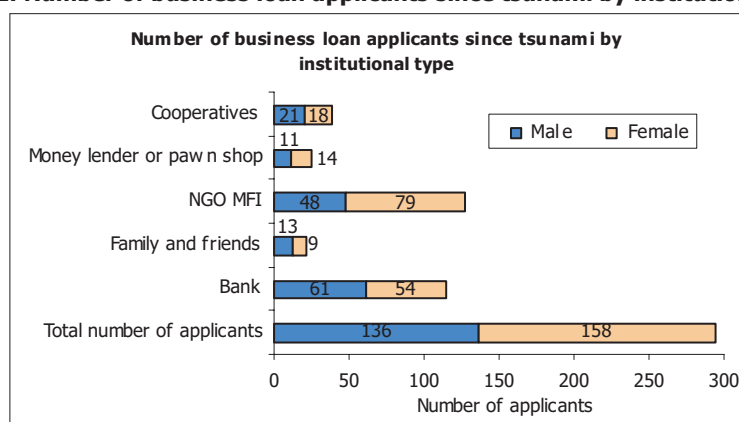
Continued assistance with equipment and materials for work, employment searches or job matching, or job-training programs are needed to overcome the job-related obstacles faced by the unemployed.

Working individuals report that housing, grants and equipment assistance are still needed and should continue to be provided, although grant dependency should be monitored.

Entrepreneurial support

The situation regarding assistance for entrepreneurs has improved since April such that more women than men are now applying and being accepted for loans.

Graph 12: Number of business loan applicants since tsunami by institutional type



The total application rate of men and women, however, has not increased since April. Personal preference (risk avoidance, cultural reasons or otherwise), lack of information and lack of procedure / know-how explain lower application rates. The total acceptance rate is less than in April. Lack of collateral continues to be a leading cause for applicants being denied a loan.

Sri Lankan culture is fairly risk-averse in general and there is a good history of savings, so friendlier schemes may not significantly affect loan application rates. An alternative form of entrepreneurial assistance that holds wide interest among persons surveyed is joint-ownership of a business.

Recommendations

Joint ownership of businesses could help address collateral barriers and should be explored by livelihood assistance programs using careful research (including community outreach or town hall meetings), planning, and selection criteria for participants.

NGOs/MFIs in general should not expect large changes in loan application rates unless alternative-lending schemes, such as community or village-based loans for jointly owned businesses, are offered.

Temporary employment generation

Half of all respondents are willing to participate in temporary, manual labour programs (cash for work), a sizeable increase since April. Persons who are the least well-off are more interested in temporary work as are persons living in transitional shelters, households earning the lowest incomes, persons earning less now than before the tsunami, and persons who are unsure about their future work situation. Most respondents indicated that rates would need to be between Rs. 360-500 per day for the work to be worthwhile. Persons living in the North and East were more interested in opportunities for temporary manual labour, perhaps reflecting the greater extent to which such opportunities have already been provided there.

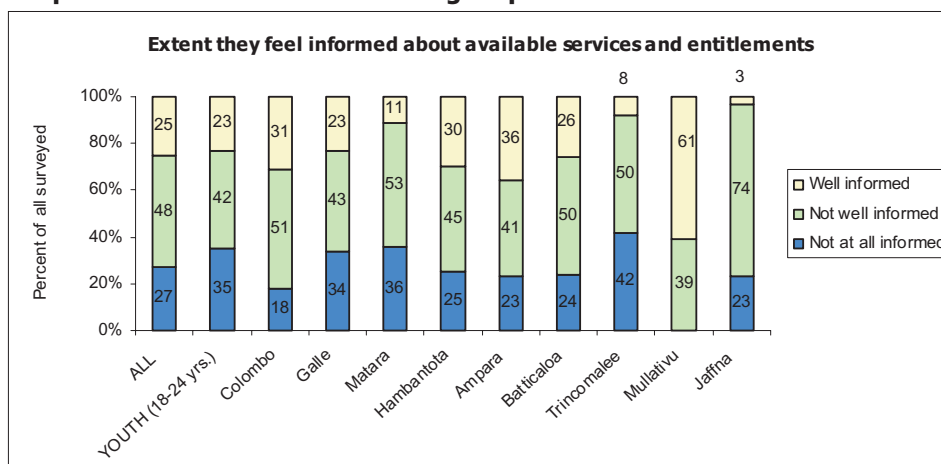
Recommendations

Cash for work programs should continue and should target those most eager to participate (the North and East) but not exclude other districts that perhaps have not had much exposure yet to this type of work.

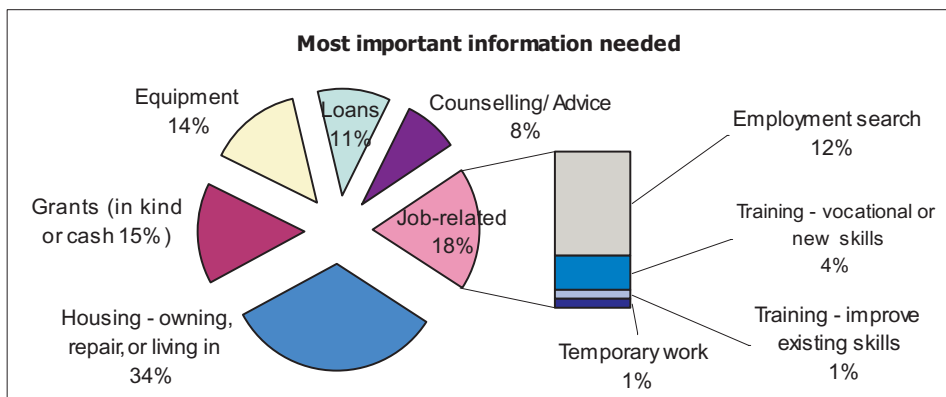
Information needs

Respondents in all districts believe that they lack information on services and entitlements currently available to them.

Graph 13: Information Need among respondents



More persons felt this way in September/October during NASIR 3 than they did in April 2005.

Graph 14: Most important information needed

The largest information need is on housing assistance of various kinds followed by job related information. Of the job related information 66% need information on job placement followed by vocational training and skills development. (Graph 14)

Recommendations

Assistance programs should improve their outreach and public awareness activities to tsunami-affected households and individuals while including local stakeholders in planning and delivery of programs and services.

In particular, housing assistance information and employment and training information should be advertised and discussed through town hall meetings or in conjunction with other popular, local venues that allow for two-way exchange of information (a format allowing for questions, answers and suggestions).



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