

Post tsunami benefit assessment in fisheries sector: A case study in Matara District

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Abstract

Tsunami disaster affected to Sri Lanka on 26th of December, 2004, making thousands of people refugees. Both Southern and Eastern parts of the country were heavily damaged. As a result, post tsunami rehabilitation projects were launched rapidly by the government, non government organizations (NGOs) and several foreign parties. Therefore, this study was focused to evaluate the benefits obtained by the fisheries community in Matara district. A field survey was conducted using a pre-tested questionnaire over 90 households in Matara district. Informal discussions and formal discussions were also carried out. Secondary data were obtained from Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and ministry of fisheries.

The results revealed that the damage has been assessed either by a university student, officer from ministry of fisheries, or an officer from Cey-Nor. But, 72 percent reported that they had underestimated and can not be satisfied with that inspection. There were many agencies which came front to provide grants for tsunami victims in Matara district as; Cey-Nor (the representative of ministry of fisheries and FAO), groups of foreigners (Belgium), individual foreign donors, and NGOs (world vision, Caritas...etc). Among those, Cey-nor has provided subsidies for all most all the tsunami affected fishermen in the area. Albeit, the estimations carried out in January and February, the fishermen received materials at the end of May. Engine parts has provided during September and October. But they had not received any fishing gears even at the end of November, 2005. They have given gum, acetone, pigments, fiber mats, net voucher, fuel voucher, timber and necessary engine parts. But, 83 percent impeached that the distribution was not fairly done by the Cey-nor and not accordance to the level of damage estimated. The quality of the goods was a questionable issue for the fishermen, because 57 percent reported that the gum is very liquid with low viscosity, mat is brittle and not in the required thickness and engine parts are local. Hence, the reliability on goods was very poor. On the other hand, NGOs, foreign groups and individuals have been provided boats, nets without any estimation or limitation. As a result, non boat owners have become as boat owners after the tsunami. More over, the donations were completely based on favourations and personal contacts.

All these details reflect that the tsunami rehabilitation benefits did not reach the fisheries sector at correct time in a proper manner. There were many weaknesses and malpractices that have to be corrected. Therefore, a well planned method of estimation, distribution should be formulated to meet such harsh accidents. Though the fishing community has an overall negative satisfaction, some are satisfied for what they received at such a hardest time after the tsunami.

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