

A life in the shadows: emerging trafficking vulnerabilities in post-conflict areas of Sri Lanka¹

By

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The study was carried out to assess the trafficking vulnerabilities of individuals residing in post-war areas in Sri Lanka. The east of the country has undergone dramatic social, political, and economic advancement since the separatist conflict ceased in 2009. Nonetheless, with the new freedom and development, the population is now exposed to a new kind of risk. Insidious forms of human trafficking have emerged in the areas targeting hapless women, men, and children. These groups, both sheltered and brutalized by a protracted war for decades, remained particularly susceptible to the environmental changes and parties bent on exploiting them. The research identified nine categories of interconnected vulnerabilities individuals underwent in their distinctive setting and the coping strategies they utilized in day-to-day survival, which often made them vulnerable to trafficking hazards in the process. Due to this reason the study called for rigorous analysis of these causal factors in the trafficking spectrum in multiple levels and mirroring counter action strategies to protect and promote the welfare of the victims.

Key words: human trafficking, vulnerability, poverty, exploitation, migration, conflict, Sri Lanka

¹ This paper was produced from a study done for the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Sri Lanka. The research looked at the specific categories of vulnerability among women, men and children in employment, migration, and sexual exploitation in the post-war areas of the country.

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The Economy of Post-conflict Eastern Sri Lanka: An Introduction

The Eastern Province has been subjected to violence and political instability associated with the civil war for almost three decades, until the province was militarily cleared in 2007 by the armed forces and a major resettlement programme was conducted by the state in collaboration with donors. Although the province had a lot of potential to develop fisheries, agro-based industries and tourism in addition to agriculture, there were little or no investments made due to the unstable conditions that prevailed in the province at the time. The lack of industrial activity within the province in 2008, born out in Table 1 is evidence of this. The province most recently is undergoing major infrastructure rehabilitation and development through a government sponsored program called “Negenahira Navodaya”.

Table 1: Principal Indicators of Industrial Activity Classified by Province, 2008 (Establishment with 5 or more persons engaged)

Province	No. of Establishments	Persons Engaged
Western	8,091	500,076
Central	2,314	79,015
Southern	1,615	67,430
Northern	376	4,541
Eastern	665	11,153
North-West	3,851	105,106
North-Central	733	23,287
Uva	498	14,342
Sabaragamuwa	1,148	47,772
Total	19,291	852,700

Source: DSC (2010c)

Even with the above disadvantages experienced by the provincial economy, it did register an improved contribution to total GDP of 5.8 percent in 2009 compared to 5.6 percent in 2008 (LBO 2010). The distribution of labour in the three districts of the Eastern Province by major sectors is given in Table 2. As indicated by the table, a higher share of the labour force in the province is employed in the services sector with the agriculture sector coming in second. Employment in the industrial sector is highest in Batticaloa and then follows Ampara. These two districts also have the largest number of small and medium enterprises within the province. In the Trincomalee District the share of industrial labour is relatively low.

Table 2: Labour force distribution by district and economic sector in the Eastern province

District	Agriculture %	Industry %	Services %
Batticaloa	23.2	30.7	46.2
Ampara	33.1	23.8	43.1
Trincomalee	35.4	18.5	46.1

Source: Department of Census & Statistics

The general picture with regard to agriculture in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka is examined by Korf (2004) and also by Abeyratne and Lakshman (2005). Particularly the latter discuss the capacity for the agricultural sector, including fisheries, to progress rapidly during peace times, which is relevant for the present study. Fishing, which is a major livelihood in Northern and Eastern regions, has also been severely affected by the conflict. Siluvaithasan and Stokke (2006) discuss in detail how deep-sea fishing bans, other restrictions and life threats to fishermen (all by-products of the conflict) have curtailed the output of this industry. Korf (2006) and Korf and Fünfgeld (2006) refer to livelihood difficulties encountered by fisher folk in the East. The latest information suggests that the gradual lifting of various restrictions on fishing has revived the industry. According to DCS (2010a), marine fish production in Northern and Eastern provinces increased by 134 percent and by 46 percent respectively, in the Q2 of 2010.

Table 3 illustrates that unemployment rate in the Eastern Province is below the island unemployment rate of 5 percent. This rate for the East is calculated based on two rates for the island—one excluding and the other including the East—published by DCS (2010b). However, it is clear that this low reported unemployment rate is a reflection of the very low labour force participation rate in the province—which is an issue worth further examining.

Table 3: Unemployment *etc.* in the Island and in the East (Q1, 2010)

	Pop (>10 years)	Labour force	Labour force Participation	Employed		Unemployed	
				Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Inc. East	16,850,938	8,129,954	48.2%	7,725,753	95.0%	404,201	5.0%
Exc. East	15,639,788	7,677,804	49.1%	7,287,198	94.9%	390,606	5.1%
East	1,211,150	452,150	37.3%	438,555	97.0%	13,595	3.0%

Source: DCS (2010b)

Even if overall unemployment in the province is low, the present study warrants we look more closely at specific pockets of unemployment. This is because vulnerability towards trafficking is more pronounced in certain subgroups. It is not possible to disaggregate provincial level unemployment figures on the basis of available data. However, country level unemployment data for various subgroups is publicly available. We use these in Table 4 to show how the country unemployment figure of 5 percent diverges a lot from unemployment in various subgroups: males (3.4%), females (7.9%), those with A/level and above (12%), those in the ages 15-24 (19.8%), *etc.* The point is that even if the Eastern Province overall unemployment is 3 percent, the various subgroups thereof could have figures worth worrying about. The reader would shortly see that in fact the subgroups identified in Table 4 are those that are most vulnerable towards trafficking.

Table 4: Sri Lankan unemployment rate for specific groups (Q1, 2010)

	Unemployment Rate (percent)		
	Male	Female	Total
Total	3.4	7.9	5.0
A/Level and above	8.0	16.7	12.0
Age 15-24	15.1	27.2	19.8

Source: DCS (2010b)

According to the population census of 2001, nearly 74 percent of the population in the Trincomalee district was in the rural sector, while the urban population constituted 26 percent. About 35 percent of the population was engaged in agriculture, covering a land area of 45,615 hectares under paddy cultivation, 18,830 hectares under mixed crops and 6,270 hectares under sugarcane cultivation. Since the conclusion of the war, several leading private banks and leasing and insurance companies have set up branches in different cities within the Trincomalee District. There has also been growth in wholesale and retail trading that has given a boost to the transport industry. The 2001 census places the rural population at 75.2 percent and 80.6 percent, respectively, in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts, while the rest are in rural areas. In addition to the civil war, the Batticaloa and Ampara districts have also been affected adversely due to the 2004 tsunami. Agriculture (including livestock farming and fisheries) is a primary livelihood in the two districts. The land area under paddy cultivation was 58,378 hectares in Batticaloa and 58,984 hectares in Ampara. There has been significant growth in paddy production (estimated to be over 50 percent) in the Ampara District, which has resulted in the need for mechanization of harvesting

Methodology

The methodology of this study includes a comprehensive literature review, a set of key informant interviews at field level and a survey of affected communities using face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. A semi-structured questionnaire, similar to the type used in Colombo, was used for interviewing key informants directly involved in, or indirectly connected to human trafficking in the three study districts: Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The group included government officials, NGO workers, international agency staff and law enforcement personnel. Specific attention was paid during the interviews to assess the services available to victims and complainants.

The objective of the study requests an assessment of the movement of persons from rural to urban areas/cities. Further, the question of whether the cities are a stage post for them to internationally migrate is also an important research question. In view of these questions, it was important that the field research be equally spread out in urban and rural areas in the East. Further, for efficiency and for effectiveness of data collection, we decided to focus on four categories of primary information sources: (1) trafficked victims, (2) aspirant migrant workers, (3) local migrants and (4) those with secondary information about migrants who are currently not in Sri Lanka.

Agencies in the study districts that work with the target groups, helped with the logistics and selection of participants for the focused groups. Table 5 provides some

details about the focus groups and locates them within the study districts. Seven focus groups were conducted during the study with at least one urban and one rural group from each district. This achieved the urban/rural stratification intended in the study with ease. The focus groups consisted of 113 persons: 74 were male and 39 were female.

Table 5: Some details of the focus groups

District	DSD	Urban/ Rural	Details	Male	Female
Ampara	Kalmunai	Urban	SLFBE training centre ³	35	0
	Kalmunai	Urban	SLFBE training centre	0	15
	Kalmunai	Rural	Trafficked victims	2	4
Batticaloa	Chenkaladi	Urban	Trafficked victims	11	4
	Vaharai	Rural	Kandaladi Maha Vid.	11	9
Trincomalee	Town & Gravets	Urban	AHAM office	7	3
	Town & Gravets	Rural	VOVCO, Puliyankulam	8	4
Total				74	39

However, as with most rapid surveys, making sure that all relevant subgroups were represented in the sample was a challenge to say the least. As organizing an appropriately stratified sample was not possible within the short span of time, we went on to organize focus groups within the rough contours of trafficked victims and potential migrants. The four categories were identified from within the focus groups during the group discussions. This permitted us to quickly build up the sample for in-depth interviews. This research strategy had the negative impact of not adequately representing the above groups 3 and 4. However, we tried to compensate for this by emphasising more on the information expected from these two groups during our key informant interviews. In other words, we used key informant discussions to particularly strengthen the information about persons already abroad and about persons who had migrated locally, say from rural to urban areas.

The sample filtered out of the focus groups to conduct in-depth interviews is described in Table 6. The sample as described in the table has both urban (19) and rural (17) participants. As the female vulnerability profile and the male profile are known to be distinct (key informants) we ensured that both genders are represented in the sample. There were 14 female participants and 22 male participants. In addition, the geographic dispersion of the sample can be summarised as: Batticaloa 12, Trincomalee 14 and Ampara 10.

³ Though interviewed in an urban area many of these youths are from rural areas.

Table 6: Distribution of the sample of in-depth interviews

District	Urban/ Rural	Aspiring Migrants	Second Hand Info	Trafficked victims	Recent local migrants
Trincomalee	Urban	1	-	4	1
	Rural	1	-	7	-
Batticaloa	Urban	1	1	4	-
	Rural	1	1	4	-
Ampara	Urban	7	-	-	-
	Rural	-	-	3	-
Urban Total		9	1	8	1
Rural Total		2	1	14	-
Total		11	2	22	1

The focus groups were useful to discuss sensitive issues and victim identification. As discussed earlier, victim identification was an important aspect of the methodology. Identification of the category of the individuals was critical because the tools used to obtain information from them on one-on-one basis varied according to their category. These various tools, consisting primarily of structured questionnaires are available for reference and future use. The tools were developed by the researchers to gather information on victim profile, their mindset, motivation, case process details and behavioural data that was useful in identifying various layers of vulnerability to trafficking.

Although all the attached tools are in English, the focus groups and sample interviews were all conducted in Tamil. This and the fact that researchers with lived experiences in the East were engaged on the field helped us connect with the interviewees at a level which helped much in extracting reliable information about very sensitive issues related to human trafficking.

Categorising the vulnerable: the critical variables

Previous studies have contributed to the appreciation and understanding of human trafficking realities and challenges in Sri Lanka (Coomaraswamy and Satkunanathan 2006; Frederick 2010; Samaranayake 2010; Squire and Wijeratne 2008; Transparency International Sri Lanka 2009). These studies had revealed that certain vulnerable groups of people are in situations of being trafficked in Sri Lanka. The trafficked persons included migrant workers, sex workers and children. Various causes of trafficking, categorised as push and pull factors, are examined in these studies. This section will build upon these previous works to provide a categorisation of vulnerability of persons in the Eastern Province toward trafficking, particularly within the post war developments of the area.

The key informant interviews, focus groups and in-depth interviews all identified that most of the victim categories discussed in the above literature was visibly or invisibly present in the Eastern Province. This study, however, goes beyond victim identification and purports to examine the causes that make a person in the Eastern

Province vulnerable towards trafficking. These, it is hoped, would help to categorize the vulnerability of persons in the province in a way useful for the policy makers.

Poverty: The livelihood challenges outlined above indicate that poverty is a push factor that makes persons desperately seek livelihood options abroad. Table 9 in the appendix summarizes the responses received from trafficked victims. The responses are organised according to whether they represent urban victims or rural victims. The first question, regarding why the victims had looked for overseas work, illustrates poverty or related issues are the primary reasons. Issues not directly about household poverty such as personal safety, failure of exams, alcoholic husbands, *etc.* are also among these reasons. Even these, at a secondary level, relate to poverty: they either lead to or are led by poverty. Case 1 illustrates how poverty drives persons to seek work abroad.

In addition, the aspirant migrants that we had in-depth interviews with, indicated that they too are looking for foreign jobs primarily because of poverty or related reasons (see Table 10). An important related reason is the need to build a house. The resettlement of the war displaced communities in the East is now complete and the state and donor partnered NEHRP project has been able to return and resettle the internally displaced persons (Jayatilaka 2009). Though, housing needs arising under such dire circumstances are a thing of the past, lack of housing among the poor is very much a problem. In addition to its use as shelter, a house improves the chances of marriage. A related indicator is the amounts spent by returning migrants on gold jewellery and household electrical/electronic goods which is also important to promote one's marriage prospects.

Another category of poverty driven trafficking involves children and young girls. Child labour is common in towns in the Eastern Province. School dropouts working for a small salary are very visible. Also at occasions where these children stay overnight in the shop, they are sexually abused by older boys or the shop keeper (NCPA, Trincomalee).

Case 1: Poverty and migration

X is a 48 year old married woman from a family of 8 in Kalmunai, Ampara. She has an education up to grade 2 and currently makes her living selling string hoppers. She left the country for work on 2 occasions due to her husband's drinking and income hardship. On the first occasion, she went to Saudi as a housemaid on a Rs. 12,000 monthly salary. She did not face problems but came back due to her mother's sickness. In 2002 she left to Dubai as a housemaid, on a salary of Rs. 10,000, due to her sister introducing her to an agent. She did not pay the individual any money but gave him her passport, whereas he supplied her with the visa and ticket. X was not provided any contract documents on the job. At her work she experienced numerous problems related to late or lack of meals, too much work, and excessive salary deductions. She was paid only Rs. 8500 and returned after 6 months. She did not report the matter to anyone. X does not want to leave the country again due to her bad experience and age.

Lack of knowledge/information: Labyrinths of networks operate to get the victims lured into seeking jobs abroad. The process mostly begins with the victims being informed by various people about a job opportunity. For instance, 8 persons out of the 20 in the focus group from rural Vakaraï had family or friend abroad. In urban areas the overseas links of migrants is perhaps more than in rural areas. In contrast to rural Vakaraï, urban Chenkaladi had 12/15 foreign links. The initial information was mostly from these acquaintances but agents and subagents were also involved. This is brought out in Q3 of Table 10.

It is interesting that even though many types of people were involved in this initialisation stage, later on the victims predominantly relied on agents/subagents for help (Table 9: Q3). Getting visas, tickets, are important areas where the agents helped them with, regardless of whether they were from urban areas or rural areas. This is interesting because the migrants did not seem to use their personal networks as sources of support and help. The 11/12 rural victims, in addition, sought help with regard to lodging facilities in Colombo. The way in which lodging in Colombo can render migrants, particularly the females, vulnerable is strongly emphasised during the interviews. Another important indicator is that the victims had not sought help to register with SLBFE; in many cases only 3+1=4 individuals did so. We can assume that this low number indicates that those who did seek SLBFE registration did not get trafficked and hence not featured in our sample of trafficked victims.

Vulnerability to trafficking has much to do with lack of timely and accurate information. Q4 in Table 9 attempts to elicit the trafficked victim's perspective on this regard. It seems that quite a few of these victims either had no way to check or did not bother to check the validity of the job offer. Therefore, that they got trafficked holds little surprise. The remainder, who claim that they had information claim that they used unreliable or questionable sources of information such as letters from subagents and verbal agreements, but also supposedly more reliable ones such as formal contracts; two had even signed these with SLBFE. It seems that the rural sample in Table 9 did have some information.

In addition to the networks mentioned above, the migrants also use mobiles, TV, newspapers, *etc.* to access information. It seems that these services are not much better than earlier (focus group in rural Vakaraï). During the war rural communities were provided with help and advice by local NGOs to help find work. This helped them to make informed decisions. However, at least in Vakaraï the NGOs are not involved in such activities.

Case 2: Lack of information

X is a 36 year old married man with a family of 5 residing in Batticaloa. He has education up to year 7 and earns a living by way of fishing, earning around Rs. 5000 every month. Due to low income he decided to take up a job offer in 2009 by a relative visiting from Kuwait, to work as hotel staff for Rs. 75,000 monthly. In return for him giving her his passport and Rs. 340,000, he was provided with the visa and ticket. He also paid and registered with the bureau and received the stamp in his passport. X stayed at a lodge in Colombo for 3 days before flying out but received no contract documents. Upon arrival at the hotel in Kuwait he was informed he had the

wrong visa and will not be able to work. Further, he was charged Rs. 80,000 by the hotel for expenses and was assaulted by the woman when he reported the matter to the police. A friend in Kuwait helped him come back to Sri Lanka. He reported the incident both to the bureau and the police. The bureau promised to follow up the matter and the police said they would arrest the woman if she comes to Sri Lanka. He would like to leave again but is unable to do so due to debt and advises others to be more careful.

Case 3: Information is key

X is a 30 year old married man with a 3 member family living in Batticaloa. He has an education of grade 5 and works as a mason labourer earning about Rs. 5,500 every month. Some years ago, due to low income, he approached a known agent in his village, who was involved with an agency in Colombo. He was offered a job in Dubai as an electrician helper for a monthly salary of Rs. 36,000 in return for a Rs. 160,000 fee (140 initially and 20 later). He was not provided any documents during the process. X had to stay in Colombo for 3 months with 8 others, waiting for the visa and ticket. When he arrived in Dubai and there was no one to meet him, he called the telephone number he was provided with, but there was no answer. He returned to Sri Lanka after waiting in the airport for 2 days. He reported the matter to the local police. While the main agent disappeared the local agent was arrested and is currently in prison. X is not sure if he would leave again if the opportunity comes.

Lack of Employment: Our interviews revealed a mixed assessment regarding the post war conditions in the East. On the one hand many looked upon the end of war in a positive way (focus groups with 12 persons in Trincomalee (VOVCOD) and 50 in Kalmunai). According to them the conditions were good and gave them hope. They are now able to engage in whatever they wanted without fear/restrictions. Businesses were opening up in the area. It was also possible to market their produce without hindrances. They also vouched that facilities are improving now, such as in the case of transport and road access. Lots of housing reconstruction schemes provided jobs in the construction sector. This is a view which is consistent with the low unemployment rates reported in Table 3.

The other view, also held by the same group, is that even though jobs were available, the resulting incomes were low and not sufficient to meet expenditure of large families. This may be consistent with the high level of unemployment among specific groups implied to in Table 4. For instance, the conditions in the East suggest that there are only a few livelihood options for young men and women, in particularly the rural areas. Rural areas youth do not have much skill or training opportunities (UNDP, Trincomalee as well as Kalmunain focus group). The traditional agriculture based livelihoods of the youth seem also to have undergone certain changes in the post-war back drop. For example, the use of heavy duty harvesting machines, commonly known as 'tsunami' machines are alleged to have reduced the demand for unskilled agricultural labour; even causing unemployment among young agricultural workers.

Focus group discussions in rural Vakarai offered the following picture. They claimed that the situation had deteriorated since resettlement because employment options

available earlier had disappeared. Earlier, they engaged in agriculture, small cultivation and fishing, whereas now they only have work in road construction. They argued that fish yield had dropped drastically since the tsunami. We could not find any scientific basis for this but it is a common story from many a fisher folk we spoke with. The group also claimed that it is not profitable to engage in agriculture now due to high cost and low prices. They pointed out that there are no factories or industries in the area and assured that they would not have wanted to leave the country had there been local jobs. They believe that Batticaloa city does not have enough jobs and its labour market is saturated. They also do not have faith in jobs in Colombo, which is why they prefer foreign jobs.

A few areas still have issue with regard to free access to agricultural land which raises livelihood problems for the youth. There have been instances of genuine owners of land losing their property due to lack of land, birth, marriage documents. Others are known to exploit these situations in various ways. Post war relaxations of security is gradually paving the way for security forces to handover the restricted residential as well as agricultural areas back to the civilian populations. This process, however, is happening slowly and still some good agricultural areas are restricted to civilian access. For instance IDPs in Sampur, Trincomalee are not allowed access to their land (Amirthalingam and Lakshman 2009a; 2010b). These land access issues also contribute to lack of employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Persons interviewed here migrate for stability of income, as much as for higher incomes, than at home. In fact, a few aspirant migrants in the sample are contemplating migration for a few thousand rupees more than they could earn on average in Sri Lanka. The reason cited was that the foreign income is more stable than the Sri Lankan income. In addition to stability, they are able and in a position to save more from a foreign income. For instance, interviews in Kalmunai revealed that while they cannot find a local job which is paying more than Rs.6,000 they had foreign options which earn between Rs.20,000-Rs.30,000. They emphasised that with a job abroad, they stand to save about 2/3 of their salary which they cannot do with a local job.

An important note to this is that the Eastern Province is poised for a construction boom. It is a sector where potentially a lot of youth can find work. It is also known that masons and carpenters can in fact earn amounts that are comparable to what they could earn in the Middle East.

Case 4: Better than fishing

X is an unmarried 25 year old male residing in Vaharai, Batticaloa, who has studied up to grade six. He belongs to a family of fisher folk consisting of seven members and they earn approximately Rs. 12,000 a month. Due to the lack of employment, he hopes to migrate to Kuwait as a labourer where he will be earning Rs. 25,000 a month, for two years. He was informed of this opportunity by a relative who is also a sub-agent and he has already paid him a sum of Rs. 20,000 with his passport for visa and ticket purposes. X has yet to pay an additional amount of 130,000 for the sub-agent's services, but has not yet been given any documentation or a work contract.

According to X, there are many job recruiters/agencies in his area and many cannot be trusted, unless you closely examine their behaviour.

Lack of education and training: The lack of skills and training among the youth at present is a reflection of the impact of the civil war. Particularly, a note should be made of youth who were conscripted by the LTTE, which disrupted or even halted their education. Even if not conscripted, the general environment in the East was not conducive to education and many of the youth did poorly in studies during the war, particularly in the LTTE held areas. For instance, even though Vakarai is close to the Eastern University, nobody had entered the university from there in recent years (Amirthalingam and Lakshman 2010a).

Current UNICEF (Trincomalee) initiated accelerated education programs are designed in such a way that children who had lost 1-3 years could catch-up, but if they had lost more than 5 years then they would be given vocational training. These are done by the by the government, supported by UNICEF. In this sense vocational training has to be done at community level.

On top of the lack of education among the youth, there is very little on the ground to make sure that these conditions would improve in the near future. While the lack of facilities, finances and hope, act as ‘push’ factors for children and youth to quit schooling and other training; the post war situation has brought in labour and other work opportunities that act as ‘pull’ factors. For instance, there are reports that contractors and representatives of contractors have increased recruitment of youth from villages. In addition, youth also come in search of work and try to make contact with these recruiters or contractors. These forces had made the choice between educating children and using them to strengthen household income, even more difficult (UNDP, Trincomalee).

According to AHAM, Trincomalee, the groups that left the area during the war were more educated and they left in search of a brighter future with better security. The groups that leave the area now, according to them, are mostly very poor and uneducated and leave primarily to earn money. They further reiterated that the educated are staying behind and starting local businesses and other interests. This noticeable reduction of the level of education among the current cohort of migrants is in fact an indication that they are more vulnerable towards trafficking.

People in rural areas lack both knowledge/opportunities on ‘what to do’ after A/levels. Lack of information and poor career guidance are prevalent in these areas (UNDP, Trincomalee). This lack of proper guidance and direction also makes this group more vulnerable.

Case 5: Lack of educations and training

X is a 27 year old married man with a family of 3 from Batticaloa. He had studied up to grade 5 and currently works as a labourer, earning around Rs. 4000 a month. In 2009 while struggling to find employment, he was informed by a friend of a carpenter job in Qatar paying Rs. 39,000 a month for 2 years. When he pursued the matter, he

was introduced to a subagent to whom he paid Rs. 75,000 (first 30,000 and then 45,000) to obtain the visa and the ticket, upon submission of the passport. He was given a contract in English with a bureau stamp that however said ‘salesman’. He did not receive any training prior to departure. Upon arrival in Qatar X was put into a labourer’s job that paid only Rs. 30,000 on erratic occasions. He left after 10 months and filed a case at the embassy and labour courts. He got back payments and received a ticket to go home. He did not report the matter to anyone in Sri Lanka and plans to leave again if the occasion comes. X advises others to check their documents when they leave.

Gender: It is a known that women are more vulnerable towards trafficking than men. The study captures this in various ways including the gender differences observed within the profile of trafficked victims interviewed. The backgrounds of male (13) and female (9) trafficked are summarised in Table 7 in a way that highlights these distinctions from four angles: education, dependency, single parenthood and ability to bounce back after being trafficked.

Table 7 looks at the number of victims who have not passed O/Level examination. This figure stands at 64% for the complete sample. However, the figure for trafficked males and females diverges at 46% and 89% respectively. Then the table presents the proportion of trafficked victims who have children. The experience of being trafficked is more difficult to absorb if you have dependents such as children. Here too we see some gender asymmetry: only 4/13 (31%) male victims in the sample have children whereas 8/9 (89%) of the female victims have children. Single parenthood is also more prevalent among women (13%) than among men (0%). This, coupled with the fact they often have dependents, emphasize that they are extremely vulnerable. Next, as a measure of the ability to recover from the experience, we count the number of victims who after the incident, currently earn less than Rs.10,000. Here too the female plight is clear: all of them (100%) earn less than Rs.10,000 whereas with males this number is at 31%. This capacity to earn after the trafficking experience is interpreted here as an indicator of the resilience of the victims which reveals that females struggle more than males to recover from the experience of being trafficked.

Table 7: Vulnerability of 22 trafficked victims (by sex of the migrant)

	Male Count/ Total Trafficked Males	Female Count/ Total Trafficked Females	Total Count/ Total trafficked
Do not have O/Level	6 ÷ 13 = 46%	8 ÷ 9 = 89%	14 ÷ 22 = 64%
Have Children	4 ÷ 13 = 31%	8 ÷ 9 = 89%	12 ÷ 22 = 55%
No spouse	0 ÷ 13 = 0%	2 ÷ 9 = 22%	2 ÷ 22 = 9%
Now income < Rs.10,000	4 ÷ 13 = 31%	9 ÷ 9 = 100%	13 ÷ 22 = 59%

The reader can see a similar situation from the gendered analysis of the profile of aspirant migrants interviewed here (see

Table 8).

Table 8: Profile of aspirant migrants

	Male Count/ Total Aspirant Males	Female Count/ Total Aspirant Females	Total Count/ Total aspirant migrants
Do not have O/Level	2 ÷ 8 = 25%	2 ÷ 3 = 66%	4 ÷ 11 = 36%
Have Children	4 ÷ 8 = 50%	3 ÷ 3 = 100%	7 ÷ 11 = 63%
No spouse	0 ÷ 8 = 0%	1 ÷ 3 = 33%	1 ÷ 11 = 9%
Now income < Rs.10,000	4 ÷ 8 = 50%	1 ÷ 3 = 33%	5 ÷ 11 = 45%

The following two cases contrast the gender implications of human trafficking.

Case 6: Married female

X is a 37 year old married woman from Kalmunai, Ampara, who has no education. Her family consists of 6 members and her husband operates a small business where they earn Rs. 10,000 monthly. X has left to Saudi Arabia on 2 occasions due to low income and children's expenses and been trafficked on both occasions. The first time she left in 2003, was for a housemaid job that was meant to pay Rs. 15,000 monthly. She did not get paid for a year and was only given a ticket to return. On the second occasion, she left in 2006 for the same salary, was not paid for 4 months and made to work in a large house. Subsequently she was given an air ticket deducted from her pay and made to return with no savings. On both occasions she was introduced to agents, who had offices in Colombo, by former migrants. She paid Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 15,000 while handing over her passport. The agents provided her the visa and the ticket. She was not given any documentation and there were no contracts. She did not lodge any complaints with the bureau or the police upon return and has no desire to travel abroad again.

Case 7: Unmarried male

X is a 25 year old unmarried man from Kalmunai, Ampara who comes from a family of 7. He has O/L education and currently trains as a student. His father owns a small hotel where they earn around Rs. 15,000 every month. In 2009 while helping his father with the business, X decided to go abroad due low income and economic hardship. He left for Dubai as a labourer for a juice company, on a promised salary of Rs. 45,000. The arrangements were done by an agent known to his uncle. He gave the individual Rs. 180,000 (80 and 100 on two occasions) and his passport, whereas he was given the ticket and visa at the BIA and was told the agent's sister would meet him at the Dubai airport. All of the agreements were verbal and X was not provided any documentation. However upon arrival, another individual met him and said the job was not available and asked him to go back. After coming back X lodged an entry at the local police station. However, the agent escaped to Saudi and news spread that 4 other people had been similarly cheated. He would like to leave again if the opportunity comes but will ask for more information next time.

Residual impacts of war: Jayatilaka and Muggah (2003) identified emergency and humanitarian vulnerabilities of these populations. That study highlighted war related vulnerability of persons surrounding issues such as housing, protection, water,

sanitation, health *etc.* The current study in many ways looks at some of the residual war related vulnerabilities in these communities and their extensions in the recovery and development realm.

We noted above that widowhood is a noticeable vulnerability in the East. Many women had lost their spouses mostly due to the conflict, but also to tsunami. Widowers on the other hand tend to remarry quickly (Amirthalingam and Lakshman 2009b). In addition to lost husbands, the lost breadwinners in the form of sons also make households vulnerable. Women and children are particularly vulnerable in these circumstances and most cases of child trafficking, including prostitution, take place under such pressures.

AHAM reported that extortion and sex abuse is happening by people claiming to have information on lost sons or husbands who disappeared during war. Groups extorting those with LTTE links in the past also threaten to reveal information. Most of these individuals claim they are from the CID. So victims dare not go to the police and succumb to traffickers who use past information for money and other forms of exploitations. Also war widows are vulnerable to sexual and other forms of exploitation by family members, neighbours, *etc.*

Having said the above, it must be made clear that there are no reports of labour exploitation in the East by the military (UNDP, Trincomalee).

Increased Mobility: The end of war and the improved security in the area had meant that many of the security related mobility restrictions in the East are now lifted. These developments, along with improved transport facilities including roads and public transportation, had increased the mobility of people and goods to, from and within the province. These flows had set in motion new trafficking related dynamics in the area. For instance, an NGO in Trincomalee told us that a visible number of 300 people leave for factories/shops in Colombo, to the Middle East, or to Europe, Australia or Canada each month. This number is very likely to be more as Vakarai in Batticaloa singly accounts for 50 departures in September 2010 (focus group in Vakarai).

Having said that, the study reveals that rural-urban migration and rural-rural migration is limited. What mostly happens is the use of urban areas as transit locations to move further afield. We observed a large proportion of migrants from rural areas moving to regional centres in Trincomalee and Batticaloa and then to Colombo in order to leave the country. There is very limited movement in order to find work in Colombo. There is information that this is perhaps to do with most of businesses in the Main Street, Colombo being owned by those of Indian origin that mostly prefer to recruit hill Tamil youth. Gold smiths from Koonitheevu, Trincomalee are an exception. This group had been migrating to Colombo and Negombo for work in jewellery industry. Because they had this option it is said that only a few youth from Koonitheevu had migrated to the Middle East.

There is some evidence of rural youth migrating to urban areas to access technical training facilities available only in urban areas (AHAM, Trincomalee). When such movement takes place, these youth usually stay with family members who had been displaced or are living in towns. It is common for family members to encourage

others in the family to join them in the cities. This rural to urban migration, particularly of youth, had been observed to increase after the war because of the improved security situation and greater opportunities in urban areas. While there is no systematic data on violations taking place or a focus to exploit, there are rumours of girls being taken to houses as housemaids with bogus terms. Garment companies from the South are known to be advancing into the area for jobs and distributing leaflets about jobs that offer Rs.10,000 to Rs.15,000.

Migration of mothers raises issues that have particularly harmful impacts on children. School drop-out, early marriage, psychological impacts, sex with boy friend, or being cheated by boyfriend, child molestation by family or neighbours, *etc.* are some of these issues (NCPA, Trincomalee). New trend of joining with husband is also alarming in this regard. Though the women are less likely to get trafficked as they will be joining the husband, the children will in these instances be left with grandparents. The women in these circumstances migrate as separate labour migrants and not in the capacity of spouses. There were two such women in the focus group in Kalmunai.

Case 8: On the move

X is a 29 year old married male from Muthur who is now residing in Trincomalee. He comes from a family of three and has studied up to the Advanced Level. Prior to his move to Trincomalee in 1994, he was a student and migrated mainly due to the conflict as he felt he had no future in Muthur. He was informed by his aunt of an opportunity to work in an NGO, which he joined when he moved to the locality, with the help of his friend. He believes there are better job opportunities in the current locality and has stated that he is happy with his move. Thus, he does not plan to move any further. His advice to those in Muthur is to not migrate, because the situation in Muthur is far better (in the post-conflict period) than it used to be when he migrated.

Tourism and hotels development: Post war conditions offer a huge positive impetus to tourism in the Eastern Province. This too is linked to the earlier point about improved mobility, but has other angles that warrant it to be treated separately. Tourism has opened new businesses and employment opportunities in the area and self employment related to this line of work is mushrooming which sometimes involves low intensity trafficking. For example, interviews at AHAM office revealed that in Kuchchuweli tourist area in Trincomalee, small children engage in *Kadala* business. They also spoke of rumours of foreigners or locals abusing children for small amounts of money. The police is said to be deployed in the area to stop these incidents. There are rumours of limited prostitution in the beach areas in Trincomalee (NCPA, Trincomalee). Three wheeler drivers are known to bring girls to clients and some tourism related prostitution have started in Nilawali and Kuchchiwali (UNICEF, Trincomalee).

While not clear whether it is related to end of war and influx of tourists, there is a distinct shifting of culture taking place in the area. Open intimacy amongst youngsters is starting now and sex between young lovers is also starting (UNICEF). Case 1: Father sexually abusing 15 year old daughter while the mother is away at work for two years. Was showing pornographic movies to the girl and girl is in child care home

while father is in jail. Case 2: Lady Teacher having sexual relations with class boys using hand phone to show boys video clips of sex acts.

Urban/Rural dichotomy: Urban areas in the East are the first to be touched by the inflow of companies and factories. These businesses are locating themselves along main highways which are why their positive impacts are not yet felt by rural communities. These new companies include banks, supermarkets and garment factories (UNICEF, Trincomalee).

Table 9 (Q5) lists the amounts paid by the victims. Overall, the urban victims seem to be willing to pay a lot more than the rural victims. However from Q1 we know that they are not able to pay these amounts with their economic backgrounds. Some of them seem to have paid several times the anticipated monthly income, which reveals extreme risk taking behaviour. It is needless to stress the strain these payments will have on household finances and possibly debt levels. In terms of financial vulnerability of the victims, it is clear that when the SLBFE is involved, the payments are lower. As in the cases captured in the study, even if the migrants do get trafficked, the losses are likely to be less if they had gone through the SLBFE.

Table 13 in the appendix illustrates the pull factors that lured the urban trafficked victims—the expected high levels of income and the possibility of illegal entry to a developed country such as Canada or Australia—as well as the details of their trafficking experience. In the sample examined, the urban victims had mostly been males (6/8) who had wanted to migrate to the Middle East. The sample also includes two women who had been trafficked while attempting to secure work as housemaids in the Middle East. Table 13 shows that victims have been attracted by contracts of between 2 to 3 years, with promised monthly payments ranging from Rs. 27,000 to Rs. 60,000 in the case of males and from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 in the case of females. Two of the victims (Nos. 1 and 2) never left Sri Lanka but others had left the country by the time they realised that they had been cheated.

Case 9: Urban persistence

X was a student in Trincomalee who wanted to leave the country on three occasions. The first time was in 2001 when he was offered a job as a supermarket sales boy with a monthly salary of Rs. 60,000 in Cyprus by a relative and an agent in Colombo. He was made to pay Rs. 180,000 as an advance for the visa and ticket with an equal balance to be paid at point of arrival. No documentation was provided. The trip got delayed by nine months and the agent disappeared with the advance money. X did not lodge an entry as his relative was involved. On the second occasion, in 2006, a relative offered to take him to Canada for a fee of Rs. 4,000,000. The agent in Colombo who managed the operation initially said there were no advance payments, then later onwards asked for Rs. 1,500,000 as front money. He gave him Rs. 600,000. The trip got delayed by a year. The agent returned Rs. 200,000 and disappeared with the rest of his money. On the third occasion, in January 2010, an agent in Trincomalee said he would smuggle X to Australia by sea for Rs. 1,000,000. He was made to pay Rs. 250,000 as an advance. Him and another 50 people were put on a small boat and taken to the deep sea. The group came back after two days as the big ship that was to take them to Australia did not arrive. His brother reported the matter to the police and

the agent was arrested. He is currently in jail and facing court proceedings. X has no further plans to leave the country.

Perpetrators

In his paper Jayathilaka (2010) examines the operational details of trafficking of Sri Lankans in and outside Sri Lanka. That report makes it clear that the practice in Sri Lanka does not involve large networks and powerful criminal syndicates. Instead it is carried out by individuals and small groups not necessarily within a coordinated operation. The present study does not indicate much deviation from this pattern in the East; trafficking in these parts of the country also involve small scale, less organized perpetrators. UNDP, Trincomalee, for instance is of the opinion that bulk recruitment is not visible in the area. However, end of war and the resulting impetus to mobility of goods and services do seem to have had a limited bearing on the operations of the perpetrators which one might not see in other parts of the country.

The most talked about amongst the perpetrators are the foreign employment subagents. The evidence emerging in this research shows that the subagents have sought to give commissions to others to introduce clients. This effectively extends the reach of the subagents and also puts more distance between authorities who are there to safeguard the migrants and migrants. Needless to say that makes the latter more vulnerable to trafficking incidents including problems with job agents, non-payment/payment of low salary, difficult employers, *etc.* (focus groups, VOVCOD)

The wife of a former subagent who is currently in jail, provided insight into the practices of commission recruiters by subagents. Her husband was previously a firewood collector. A subagent approached him and asked to find some girls for work. He was paid Rs. 5,000 per girl. Initially the girls were afraid to go to Colombo so this person had accompanied them to Colombo and an agent there recruited these girls. The agent was happy and wanted to do more work with him. This led to recruitment of some youth and the events led to him getting involved as a subagent himself. Many youth had benefited from his services, including former LTTE personnel. He also helped youth leave the country during war time. However, he along with his clients, were later cheated by the agent in Colombo who disappeared with the moneys paid. He is in now convicted of fraud and is currently in jail.

With the lack of jobs with decent payment, the area is experiencing a kind of rationing of this limited number of good jobs in companies/businesses/projects. Interviews at AHAM illustrates that the rationing mechanism is either monetary/economic or political. That is, jobs are sometimes allocated for a charge of Rs. 20,000 to Rs.100,000 or through political coordination. Some people do get cheated in the process. Some do this for benefits and is a form of regaining political assets. There is some evidence of involvement of law enforcement officers in trafficking. For instance, the interviews informed us of three girls in Enchilapattu, Trincomalee, who engage in prostitution. However, since they have relationships with clients from forces and the CID, it is difficult to investigate these cases. So law enforcement cannot investigate these cases (AHAM). Another instance where the law enforcement may be involved is where they try to exploit persons who had links with the LTTE.

These of course could be instances where the perpetrators masquerade as law enforcement officers.

The garment industry in the country is under extra pressure after the phasing out of the MFA and more recently the GSP+. The end of war had offered an escape route to some in this industry because it opened up a hitherto blocked away source of cheap labour. The focus group in rural Kalmunai revealed that Muslim subagents visit their villages 2-3 times a month and give visiting cards to prospective garment workers. They claimed that 5-6 subagents are in the habit of doing these visits. The recruits from Vakaraï are taken sometimes to factories in Pollonnaruwa, but mostly to Colombo. The promised salary is Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 but the actual is often lower. The group claimed that 50 people left the village in September 2010 in this manner. This started in July 2010 which interestingly coincides with the time the GSP+ decision by the EU started to affect the industry. As most girls are taken for sewing training, they do not have job agreements or contracts by the time they leave the village.

In Trincomalee, many girls are recruited by the garment industry (AHAM). Some return due to difficult conditions or low salary. There is no fee charged at these occasions for the garment jobs, most likely due to commissions being paid by the employers to the agents. It was stated that a third of the girls that leave Trincomalee for jobs abroad will end up doing domestic work in Colombo.

Following case studies examine the work of various perpetrators discussed above.

Case 10: The agent

X is a 34 year old married man with a family of 3 from Trincomalee. He has an A/L education and him and his wife both work as private computer instructors earning a household income of around Rs. 25,000 every month. In 2006 while working for a private company, he was transferred to Batticaloa where he did not want to go due to the dangerous security situation. His relative put him in touch with an agent who was involved with an agency in Colombo, who offered him a job in Dubai as a packing worker for Rs. 60,000 monthly. He provided the agent his passport and Rs. 110,000 as the fee and was given only a letter of intent from the sub agent. X waited in Colombo with 15 others in his group for his ticket and visa and final instructions to leave. Two of the people in the group were sent and got stranded due to their visas being only for 3 days. X decided to come back home when he heard about this. He reported the matter to the police but both the subagent and the Colombo agent had disappeared. X has four points of advice for others. They include: check the agent's registration, make inquiries, don't pay money upfront and check the visa situation.

Case 11: Foreign perpetrator

X was a carpenter in Trincomalee who earned around Rs. 30,000 a month. He wanted to leave the country for safety and a better income. In early 2010, a sub agent offered him a two-year job in Saudi as an electrician that would pay Rs. 45,000. In return for paying Rs. 95,000, he would get a contract, visa and ticket. In Saudi, he was put to hard labour work on the road. When he complained to his employer after 35 days, he

was taken to the desert, assaulted and tied up for three days. He managed to send a message back to his family about his predicament. The Colombo agents offered to bring back X once the family paid Rs. 60,000 plus another Rs. 35,000 for the ticket. He did not lodge an entry with the police or bureau when he returned. He did not receive any salary or compensation for his ordeal from the agent. He encourages others to earn a living in Sri Lanka and if they do choose to leave, to minimize the risk by following the procedures laid down by the SLBFE.

Case 12: Subagent

X is a 43 year old married woman with a family of 6 in Trincomalee. She had studied up to grade 4 and currently earns about Rs. 1000 each month as a housemaid. Her husband earns around Rs. 3000 from labour. Due to a number of reasons which included income difficulties, dowry for daughter and husband being unwell, she decided to leave for Saudi Arabia as a housemaid in 2009 through a subagent. The individual promised to give her Rs. 30,000 prior to departure and said the job was at a good house, paying Rs. 19,500 plus free travel. She was given an agreement in Arabic and English. However she was only given Rs. 15,000 prior to flying and faced difficulties at the house which ranged from lack of meals, no soap, frequent insults, and no salary. She left after 2 months and came back by way of help from the embassy. She did not report the matter to anyone in Sri Lanka as the embassy knew of her case. She feels many people like her get victimized in Saudi Arabia and it is not a good place to send people.

Capacity on the ground complaints investigation

The legal challenges related to charging perpetrators under trafficking are difficult. The difficulty of obtaining information, the complicated network involved, the numerous crimes that gets enmeshed in trafficking, as well as the difficulties in interpreting the law are among these challenges. These are examined at length in Jayathilaka (2010). In the East also similar challenges can be encountered.

The personnel at various law enforcement agencies sometimes complained of lapses in the physical capacity in their respective agencies. For example, the Women's and Children' Desks (WCD) at Ampara police station, which was in fact one of the better equipped units, had 6-7 staff, a Bajaj three-wheel vehicle, a cab, a fax machine and a computer. However, the officers were complaining of the fact that they did not have a separate building. This is a hindrance as it makes it difficult for them to discuss sensitive cases with victims who do not want to talk in the presence of others. Also as with many other stations, the unit in Ampara pointed out that they are over burdened with duties. For instance, they have 300-400 family fights cases in the district per month and they have to often attend to special duties even in other districts. In addition, most officers in the unit have received little training. So they mostly try to do their work using their own experience. This form of accumulation of human capital is depleted when the officers are transferred regularly.

The WCD at Ampara also noted that a lot was needed to be done at raising awareness of potential victims at the grass root level. However, there are no professional trainers

on the field to make such inroads into the issue. For instance, NGOs activity and also UNICEF involvement in these issues, according to the WDC, seem to be moving away from this line of work. The victims demonstrate a very high incidence of non-reporting (Table 9: Q6). Even when they report or make complaints to the police, only in a small number of cases would they receive justice, which perhaps explains why they do not report in the first place. The victims get assistance only rarely (Q7) and they have to fend for themselves after the trafficking experience. The respondents also highlighted that assistance is attached to whether or not the victim has registered with the SLBFE.

NCPA, Trincomalee is confident that in spite of the lack of staff, law enforcement is working. All DS divisions do not have probation desks and even though every police has a WCD, they are made ineffective due to lack knowledge and training and by regular transfers (NCPA, Trinco). Furthermore, there are no child rights promotion officers or childhood development officers to raise awareness. To add to this, UNICEF in Trincomalee, warned us that they are not sure how long the donor funding will last. In their opinion, the government still does not have capacity to handle the issue.

The following is a description made by the Police SCIB (Special Crime Investigation Bureau), in Ampara. There is an increasing trend of fraud in the district. This year alone 137 complaints were made which are above Rs. 300,000. It would seem the unit lacks facilities but it is common for everyone in most of the state departments. If rape or serious crimes are involved in the investigation, it is done through the crime branch. If it is to do with women and children they would share the responsibility with the WCD. Raising awareness through simple methods like handbills and mobile services are possible, but none of these are sufficiently done at the moment. Blockages and delays are common in the courts because there is only one court for the entire district. A given case will be heard only two times a year as such a case could take two to five years.

Gaps on the ground in relations to protection and prevention

The researchers visited the SLBFE training centre in Kalmunai. The program implemented by them from August 2010, to us, delineates the future of migrant protection in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the participants or the beneficiaries of the training were remarkably happy about the program. Therefore it is important to examine how things are done in this centre as a learning exercise.

The centre provides a well-thought training program of 15 days to the housemaids to the Middle East and 5 days for the men. The program includes modules on culture, language, STD/HIV, money management/transfer, rights/obligations, work and problem resolutions. The centre has fully equipped models of a Middle Eastern house, with kitchen, living room, children's room, dining room, *etc.* It is compulsory that all migrants, except those who had gone before, get this training. Those who try to leave without training can be detected at the BIA as the certificate with the passport number, is updated to a computerized network. Furthermore, a sticker is provided in

the passport. When the full network is set up, the job will be registered in the Middle East and SLBFE can check it through the network.

In Kalmunai, which this particular training centre caters to, there are 7 registered migration agencies. Requirement to be a registered agent stipulated by the SLBFE includes having a permanent building, provision of a Rs.700,000 bank guarantee, ten years of experience, a land telephone line/fax and employment of staff. Only the agencies which satisfy these conditions and hence registered are allowed to come into the above contract process. Moreover, within a particular agency, only three persons are allowed to sign contracts which make it more manageable for the SLBFE. For instance, in Kalmunai, only $7 \times 3 = 21$ agency officials are authorised to sign contracts with migrants.

Case 13: Knowledgeable moves

X is a 24 year old divorcee female who has studied up to Ordinary Level and is residing in Tirukkivil, Ampara. Being the mother of one small daughter, X believes that her current employment as an NGO worker with an income of Rs. 15,000 is not sufficient to fulfil her child's needs as well as to complete their house which is still under-construction. Thus, she hopes to migrate to Kuwait as a housemaid, an opportunity she found out via a newspaper advertisement. When contacted, the sub-agent arranged for her to go to Colombo, where she handed in her passport and now receives training from the SLBFE. Although she has no specific information regarding the position, she has demanded for a monthly salary of Rs. 20-22,000 and is expecting the agent to provide her with the air ticket, visa, medical clearance and a contract. Further, X is not willing to make payments for the services rendered. She feels that although there are a few agents in her area, they will only approach you if requested, and that they are trustworthy if they are from her village.

Case 14: Tripling the income

X is a 35 year old married male who, having passed his Advanced Level examination in the Commerce stream, currently works as a paddy mill technician. Coming from a family of four and residing in Samanthurai, Ampara, X feels that his current income of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 is barely sufficient. He has no savings, thus hopes to migrate to Qatar as a Safety Officer at Petroleum Corporation with a monthly salary of Rs. 100,000 for a period of two years. Although he found the opportunity on the internet and completed a course by himself, his friend in Qatar is helping him with the documentation work. X has a contract in English and Arabic which has been certified by the embassy. He has spent Rs. 112,510 for his ticket, bureau charges, training and medical and has not been charged by his friend for his help. According to X, there are many job recruiters/agencies around, and when he was approached by one, he dispelled the agent as he does not trust them.

Case 15: Second time lucky

X is a 45 year old mother of a 26 year old man who went to Qatar in 2005 to work as a labourer in a silver company with a monthly salary of Rs. 20,000 for a period of 2 years. X wanted assurance for her son's safety during the conflict period and thus sent

him to Colombo and later to Qatar. However, X's son came back after one year of work as he received no salary during that year. In 2008, her son migrated to Saudi Arabia as a manual worker for a monthly salary of Rs. 15,000 for a period of two years. An agent had assisted to set up the latter, and X had paid 140,000 for the ticket and visa. Further, the agent had assisted X's son to get registered at the SLBFE and provided him with the appropriate training. According to X, her son is happy with his current employment and has received one year's extension. She states that there are many job recruiters/agencies around and that only some can be trusted. She further advises not to trust agents who request you to come to them for services.

Case 16: Safe but expensive

X is a 35 year old whose husband has migrated to Saudi Arabia in June 2010 as a labourer for a monthly salary of Rs. 18,000, out of which he sends back home Rs. 15,000. According to X who is a housewife and does not have any income, her husband left due to economic difficulties as he only received Rs. 5-6,000 a month when he was working as a labourer in Sri Lanka. X's husband was approached by a subagent of an agent in Colombo and for a sum of Rs. 110,000 they registered him with the SLBFE and arranged for other necessities. X's husband was also provided with a contract in Arabic, which was signed in front of the Bureau officials. To make the necessary payments, X and her husband had to borrow Rs. 100,000 from a relative, at an interest of 100%, and thus have to pay back Rs. 200,000. However, according to X, her husband is happy with his employment in Saudi Arabia. Finally, she feels that while there are many job recruiters/agencies in the area, she is not able to believe any of them.

Recommendations

When reflecting on the findings of the study, 9 areas were identified as causes for vulnerability among youth, women, and children. The researchers were able to disaggregate these into 3 levels of macro, meso, and micro. With the causation features they also identified the specific categories of vulnerable populations within these levels and suggestions for actions to protect and promote the victims welfare.

In the macro level the main causes were poverty, urban/rural differences, and differences in gender. The groups at risk included the extremely poor, rural populations who have limited resources and exposure to the 'outside world', and females who stand the risk of being trapped into prostitution. These significantly large areas, in both volume and scope should include a range of meso and micro level interventions, which will have significant impacts once they converge. Further, programmes must ensure that all anti-trafficking projects are gender sensitive and all gender projects have a trafficking component.

With reference to the meso level, the causes were identified as increased mobility, lack of knowledge or awareness, lack of employment, lack of education and training. Potential victims here included the young and the middle aged who is of recent highly mobile due to lifted restrictions on travel and access, those with limited or no access to information/networks or lack the capacity to process the information, those who are in agriculture (including fisheries) who are directly or indirectly affected by the changes in the labour/ industrial landscape, and children and youth who leave school and see no foreseeable future due to limited options or guidance.

The recommended interventions to address these problematic areas included strengthening the activities of the Police, SLBFE, BIA, and the embassies to enforce and regulate their areas of responsibility, in both geographic and subject terms, in the 'travel' process, intense grassroots level outreach and awareness programs using micro teams of trainers (TOT method) in both rural and urban areas in collaboration with LNGOs and CBO, including rapid and broad based media, public, and electronic campaigns providing information on choice/options, decision, risks, process, safeguards, resources and case story experiences, policy makers made aware of the anomalies (low wages, job rationing) in the labour market in the east, companies educated on labour laws and steps taken to impose these laws on new companies in the east, educate people seeking jobs by way of training about the same labour standards and that they should get better conditions than during war, and support back to school programmes, putting in place measures to sustain the activities in their long term, and launch vocational training programmes in skills relevant to the current backdrop and building on indigenous occupations and human capacities.

At the micro level the causal factors included single headed households, the proliferations of agents, subagents and their representatives, the misuse of security related information by those who have access to it, and false accusations, prostitution, tourism and the development of hotels. Groups who are vulnerable to these elements included war widows and other individuals who lost their main breadwinner, individuals who are induced into being representatives for agents/subagents for lucrative commissions, those with an LTTE past (contacts/family member) being threatened and/or extorted and other exploitative types of abuse (including request for sexual and other favours), those who face the threat of being falsely accused (threat of giving tip) to security agencies, by anonymous and known persons, women who have had affairs with security personnel continuing the practice, and children practicing sex and young girls drawn into prostitution due to emerging drugs and pornographic material.

The actions necessary to counter these threats cover identifying single headed households and providing them focused micro level income generating activities that are sustainable, authorizing (and empowered) SLBFE district officers to regulate incidents and support arrests by law enforcement authorities, conduct discussions with military, intelligence, police and other relevant agencies to release directives to

control the misuse of information and punish perpetrators, inform public to immediately contact the police if such threats are received and instruct the police to be receptive to such complaints, dialogue with commanders of respective camps with the intention of bringing to an end the practice of soldiers-local women having sexual relations while conducting parallel discussions with these women (through local CBO) to refrain from this habit, and lastly Women and Children's Desk and NCPA to be strengthened with increased monitoring at tourism and hotel development locations and take into custody perpetrators.

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Appendix: Statistical Tables

Table 9: Trafficked victims—urban and rural

	Urban (sample size 8)	Rural (sample size 14)
1. Why did you leave?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/No income 3 • No regular income 2 • Personal safety 2 • Children’s Education 1 • Failure in University 1 • Problems in area of residence 1 • No future 1 • Transferred to Conflict Area 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low/No income 3 • Child expenses 2 • No land/home 2 • Debt 2 • No husband 2 • Alcoholic Husband 1 • Dowry for daughter 1 • Husband sick 1 • Post conflict situation 1 • Family difficulties 1
2. Who informed of job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative 4 • Agent 5 • Subagent 3 • Friend 4 • Approached agent alone 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative/friend 5 • Known Person 1 • Former Migrant 1 • Agent 4 • Sub agent 6 • Self 3
3. Who helped you? (with what?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agent 7 (Passport 2, Visa 7, Ticket 7, Registration with SLBFE 3, Training 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agent 12 (Visa 11, Ticket 11, PP 1, Info about job 1, Pre-departure Cash 3, Helped registration with SLBFE 1, Training in Govt Insti. 1, Lodging in Colombo 11) • Friend 1 - Visa 1
4. Info available? Any measures taken to check?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 5 • Yes 3 (Letter by subagent 1, Contract in English - signed with SLBFE 1, Contract in Arabic with details 1, Contract with salary details 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 5 • Yes 10 (Verbal Agreement/Explanation 4; Contract available with details 7 (English 4, Arabic 3))
5. Any payments made? To whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 7 180,000 600,000 250,000 advances paid in 3 occasions 110,000 fully paid – Agent 190,000 – Agent 300,000 – Agent 12,500 – Agent 10,200 - Bureau at Airport 160,000 – Agent 30,000 - Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 9 180,000 – Agent 10,000 - Agent, 15,000 - Bureau at Airport 50,000 - Agent, 50,000 Later 75,000 - Friend (Visa) 100,000 - Agent 80,000 - Agent 10,000 - PP Cost - Agent 5,000 – Agent 340,000 - Agent 75,000 - Agent • No 4

<p>6. Police entry? Result?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 3 (Brother 1, Agent in Jail 1, Agents disappeared 1, Police asked to go to Bureau with Agents – disappeared but later arrested) • No 5 (Relative involved 1, Friend said I will face problems 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 2 (Filed Case 1, Agent Escaped to foreign country 1, Lady would be arrested if she returned to SL 1) • No 12 (Informed only agency 11, Embassy knows 1, No evidence 1, Told Bureau 1)
<p>7. Assistance received after experience ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 4 (Case going on 1, Rs.1000 received at airport 1, SLBFE follow-up 1, Embassy help 1) • No 10 (Not reg at SLBFE 2)
<p>8. Will you try again - knowing the risks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 7 • Yes 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 7 (No job opportunities here 1, Difficult Situation 1, If good company 1, Already trying 1, No money 1, Debt 1) • No 7 (Children 1, Age 1, No facilities 1, Don't like to go 1)
<p>9. Advice to others?</p>	<p>Complete education 1 Don't pay before leaving 2 Don't pay before going to Bureau 1 Check Agent's Registration details 1 Check visa status 1 Make inquiries 1 Don't leave earn here 2 Believe the Bureau 1 None – people pl think I'm jealous and get angry when advice is given 1 Don't join company X (name not given)</p>	<p>Get info before leaving 3 Get advice from experienced ppl 1 If a bad place go to police 1 Can be good or bad 1 Stop sending people to SA 1 Embassy was good to me 1 Too many problems/risks 1 Don't go abroad, earn here 4 Get an agreement 2 Check documents 1 Won't say don't go 1 Don't go through Agents 1 Tell friends to check it for you 1 Don't give money ahead 1 Experience yourself 1</p>

Table 10: Aspirant migrants—urban and rural

	Urban	Rural
Why do you want to leave?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income 4 • No savings 1 • Family needs 3 • Debt 1 • Needs of Children 1 • Build/Complete house 1 • To join husband 1 • No fixed salary 1 • Work conditions 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (regular) employment 2 • Marriage needs 1
Who informed of job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By myself 1 • Through the internet 1 • Sub Agent 3 • Newspaper Ad 1 • Relative abroad 3 • Husband Abroad 1 • Friend of Husband 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A friend's friend abroad 1 • Subagent (relative) 1
Who helped you and with what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friend Abroad 2 (Documentation 1, Visa 2) • Re1ative 2 (Visa 2, Work permit 1, Agreement, Ticket, Medical, Bureau Charge) • Agent 3 (Visa 3, Ticket 3, Contract 2, Training with SLBFE 1, Bureau fee 1, Pre-dept cash 1) • Husband 1 (All payments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friend 1 (Inform when vacancy available 1, Ticket 1, Work Permit 1) • Subagent 1 (Visa 1, Ticket 1)
Information available any measures taken to check?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract 2 (English 2, Arabic 2, Certified by Embassy 2) • Contract Pending 6 • Fax Number of Agent 1 • Sample contract 1 • Work Visa Permit 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will ask for contract 1
Any payments made? How much? What for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 4 (112,510 60,000 160,000 51,000) (Medical 2, Bureau Charge 2, Training 1, Ticket 2 Free Visa 2, Work Visa 1) • No 3 Will not pay 1 Not paid yet 1 (130,000 advance to be paid) 	<p>Not yet paid 11 - 110,000, 130,000 Paid 1 - 20,000</p>

<p>Many agencies around? Your view?</p>	<p>Many Agents 1111 - Was approached by them and chased them 1, Mostly Cheats 11, Good and Bad 1, Sub agents not dealing with visa 1, Increased after war 1 Many Sub agents 1 - trust them as uncle is happy abroad 1 Not many 1 - The come if we call 1 If they are villagers, can trust 1 Don't know 11 - Many people want to leave, mostly illegally 1 No 1</p>	<p>Many 11 - Cannot trust 11, False information 1, Some are good 1</p>
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Table 11: Where and what of aspirant migrants (Urban)

Country	Job Title	Company	Salary	When/Duration
Qatar	Safety Officer	Petroleum Corp	100,000	2yr contract
Qatar	Plumber	-	30,000	Contract Pending
Qatar	Petrol shed worker	-	36,000	2yr contract
Qatar	Labourer	-	33,000	2yr contract
Kuwait	House maid	-	No info	No info yet
Saudi	House maid	-	No info	No info yet
Saudi	House maid	-	20,000	2yr contract
Cypress	Labourer	In Farm	120,000	2 yr contract
Qatar	Electrician	-	36,000	2 yr contract

Table 12: Where and what of aspirant migrants (Rural)

Country	Job Title	Company	Salary	When/Duration
Dubai	Cleaner	Hospital	No info	No info
Kuwait	Labourer		25,000	2 yr contract

Table 13: Pull factors and other details of being trafficked - Urban

No	Sex/Age	Country	Job Title	Salary/ Month	When/ Duration	When	Where	How?	Outcome
1.	33/M	Cyprus	Super-market Sales boy	60,000	2001 - 3 yr contract	Delayed 9 months	Colombo	-	Agent Disappeared
		Canada	For Migration Only	-	2006	2006 - Delayed 1yr	Colombo	400,000 to be paid when landed in Canada. Later asked for 1,500,000 - Pd 600,000	Returned 200,000 and disappeared
		Australia	Illegal Migration via boat	-	2010	2010	Agent in Trinco	Smuggle by boat - 2 days travel (50 others in boat)	Came back after 2 days.
2.	34/M	Dubai	Packing Worker	60,000	2006 - 3 yr contract	10 days in Colombo	Colombo	Came back home because of delay	Agent disappeared
3.	22/M	Saudi	Electrician	45,000	2010 - 2 yr contract	35 days of work	Saudi	SLBFE warned but didn't listen. Less Pay. Put to hard labour work on road and Assaulted	Contacted family, paid extra and got back
4.	35/M	Malaysia	Hotel Staff	40,000	2008 - 2 yr contract		Malaysia	Small boutique Less Pay	Wanted to come back

No	Sex/Age	Country	Job Title	Salary/ Month	When/ Duration	When	Where	How?	Outcome
5.	28/F	Saudi	House maid	10,000	2007 - 3 yr contract	Worked for 1 1/2 years since 2007	Saudi	Moved from first home, No food or salary	Thrown out and First employer sent me back
6.	46/F	Saudi	House maid	20,000	2007 - 2 yr contract	Worked for 2 months	Saudi	Large house, 4 hours sleep, Less Pay	Kicked out with ticket
7.	30/M	Dubai	Electrician Helper	36,000			Dubai	Rec. Agent disappeared/ Stuck at Airport for 2 days	Arrested at BIA
8.	30/M	Qatar	Plumber	27,000	2009 - 2 yr contract	Worked for 1 1/2 yrs	Qatar	Less salary - 21000 when 27000 was promised, No food	Complained and came back after 1 1/2 yrs

Table 14: Where and when: details of being trafficked - Rural

No	Age/Sex	Country	Job Title	Salary	Duration	When	Where	How?	Outcome
1.	25/M	Dubai	Juice Company Labourer	45,000		2009	Dubai	No receiving agent No job available	Came back
2.	37/F	Saudi	House maid	12,000		2003	Saudi	No pay for 1 yr Only ticket to come back	Came back
		Saudi	House maid	15,000		2006	Saudi	No pay for 4 months Used that to buy me ticket	Came back
3.	48/F	Dubai	House maid	10,000	6 mths	2002	Dubai	No food, Late meals Salary deducted for repairs	Came back
4.	43/F	Saudi	House maid	19,500	3 mths	2009	Saudi	Agent paid half of promised cash pre-departure. No meals, No salary, Blamed age	Left job and stayed with embassy
5.	37/M	Saudi	Hospital Labourer	30,000		2009	Saudi	No salary, food or accommodation, 12hr work. Transferred to another comp after 3 months	Came back through embassy
6.	32/F	Saudi	House maid	19,500	8 mths	2009	Saudi	Less pay, No additional support, 20+ hours work, Assaulted, Disregarded contract	Came through embassy with 5 month salary

No	Age/Sex	Country	Job Title	Salary	Duration	When	Where	How?	Outcome
7.	38/F	Qatar	House maid	27,000	2 yr contract	2008	Qatar	Reduced Salary, 20 hrs of work, Only 4 months pay given	Sick and sent back by emplr
8.	35/M	Doha, Qatar	Technician	28,000	2 yr contract	2008	Doha, Qatar	Less pay, Delays in pay, TOR disregarded by company	Company gave ticket, left
9.	32/M	Saudi	Supermarket Sales boy	25,000	3yr contract	2000 for 6 yrs	Saudi	Less pay, No salary for 3 mths, no accommodation, Transferred to 8 places within 6 yrs	Came back
10.	34/M	Dubai	Room boy - Hotel	16,000	2yr contract	2006	Colombo	Held Interviews for Selection and was not selected. Lack of English Knowledge	Came back with loss of cash.
11.	35/F	Saudi	House maid	12,000	5yr contract	2000	Saudi	Looked after 3 families, Less pay, Assaulted	Came back by myself
12.	49/F	Saudi	House maid	18,000	2yr contract	2004 onwards	Saudi	Did not pay for a year, Assaulted	Came through Embassy
13.	36/F	Kuwait	Hotel cleaner	75,000	2yr contract	2009	Kuwait	No job, Wrong visa - can't work, Charged money in hotel	Returned with help from friend
14.	27/M	Qatar	Carpenter	39,000	2yr contract	2009	Qatar	Less pay - Not regular,	Left after 10 months

