



RUHUNA CIDA RESTORE PROJECT



**University of Ruhuna
Wellamadama, Matara, Sri Lanka**

**Printed with financial assistance from
The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Under the CIDA Restore Project**

*Rebuilding of Tsunami Affected Areas in the Southern
and the Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka*

Workshop Proceedings

27th & 28th March 2009

Edited by

Ranjith Senaratne
Glen Charles Filson
Jana Janakiram

© 2012 Ranjith Senaratne, Glen Charles Filson and Jana Janakiram

All rights reserved. No parts of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the editors. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information contained in the text or illustrations.

Workshop proceedings on Rebuilding of Tsunami Affected Areas in the Southern and the Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka held on 27th & 28th March 2009 at Hotel Tourmaline, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

ISBN 978-955-97159-3-1

Organizing committee:

Ranjith Senaratne (Chairman)
Wasantha Wijesinghe
Pamoda Jayaratne
Malsha Seneviratne

Cover design and typesetting:

Shammika Wijewardane

Printed and bound by

Tharanjee Prints,
No. 506, Highlevel Road,
Navinna,
Maharagama,
Sri Lanka.

IMPACT ON SELECTED SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ON WOMEN'S INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN TSUNAMI AFFECTED AREA IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT

T.H. Seran, I. Brintha and H.S. Balasingham

Abstract

Over the past three decades women's issues and more recently gender issues have gained prominence of the development platform and women play a significant role in household and community services. Households are the first place of gender socialization. Skill is an important aspect in people's life and it should be considered as a part of their life. Today, it has been challenging for people in view of improving the people's living status, improving income level and employment opportunity, especially for those who are in the developing nations affected by the tsunami. The contribution of government and non government organizations is highly expected by the people to empower them to face this challenge. In this way, CIDA has joined with Eastern University, Sri Lanka to contribute a lot to improve their living status in the Batticaloa district. Under the CIDA Restore project, skill training was provided to women, who were affected by tsunami in 2004 to raise their income and reduce poverty. The objective of this study was to assess the impact of the training on these women's lives. Therefore, the conceptualization frame work for this study was developed based on the objectives of the CIDA Restore project.. It covered four areas such as living standard and income, service quality, self employment opportunity and human development activities. Personal and research information had been collected through structured questionnaires. The five point Likert Scale model of statements was used, which is ranking from one to five. The questionnaires were randomly issued to participants in Palameenmadu village. The present study revealed that women's participation in skill training was more (31.3%) in the age group of 21-30, followed by the age group of 31-40 (22.8%). Among the respondents, most of them were married (62.5%) while 27.1 % were school girls and 2.1% were women household heads. The main income of the family has declined. According to monthly income obtained before training, 54.2% of respondents had fallen into the family income category of below Rs. 3000 but after getting training, it had been reduced by 47.7%. Also it was found that 37.5% of the women surveyed were self employed and 2.1% were working in the NGO sector. It was further noted that, a large number of respondents participated in a combination of sewing techniques and fabric painting (22.9%). Income level has increased after getting skill trainings provided by CIDA at Palameenmadu village. All the variables derived from the data revealed that the women were highly satisfied by the skill training provided by CIDA. Living standard and income,

service quality, self employment opportunity and human development activities had mean scale value of 3.98, 4.17, 4.17 and 4.42 respectively. This present study concluded that skill development program under CIDA Restore project had a capacity to strengthen the living status of the rural community.

Introduction

The devastating tidal wave, the tsunami, that created havoc on the fateful morning of the 26th of December 2004, totally ravaged almost the whole coastal belt of Sri Lanka, victimizing both human lives and properties and livelihood. Batticaloa district is one of the worst tsunami affected districts in the East coast of Sri Lanka. Unprecedented damage was caused to the communities and sometimes re-victimizing those who have already suffered as a result of the civil war. However, the world has responded with it all its heart to rush relief to the Batticaloa district. Many people began to negotiate individual ways with which to endure the loss of family, livelihoods, shelter, and basic services such as water, healthcare and education. Even though much progress has been made in rebuilding houses and community buildings, both men and women continue to look for ways to earn a sufficient income with which to support their families' basic needs. Women are influenced differently than men by natural disasters. Thus, the nature of vulnerability of people to a natural disaster is a direct function of their gender and the ways in which humanitarian agencies respond to the diversity of women's and men's vulnerabilities, often reinforced by traditional socio-economic structures and arrangements, which contributes to the inequality between men and women in specific disaster contexts. By responding to disaster with a gendered approach, the differences in power relations and access to resources within the household and society will be emphasized, as well as the ways in which these disparities might be shaped.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) working with Eastern University of Sri Lanka in the affected Batticaloa district was implemented programmes, such as livelihoods, education, water and sanitation, gender and community rehabilitation in two affected villages aimed to restore and improve the previous living conditions of the communities. With regard to gender, the CIDA-Eastern Restore project Team acknowledged the necessity to empower women through their programmes and support women's personal skill development for the community's benefit. Women need to be empowered to make their own choices and to respond to increasing opportunities. Investment in women's human capital through education and training, more than any other form of investment, increases women's capabilities, expands opportunities available to them, empowers them to exercise their choices, removing barriers to the productive use of women's time, work and energy are key to sustainable and gender-sensitive food security. Goodale (1989) argued that the increasing interest in training for the informal sector during the 1980s failed to recognise the involvement of women, and therefore to develop

programmes and strategies which distinguish between women and men as economic producers. He further stated that the failure to recognise that women and men engage in different economic activities in different sets of circumstances and therefore have different training needs has resulted in a relatively male-biased delineation of both skill acquisition and work in the informal sector, in which women are largely invisible. Nevertheless, there is a large body of literature, relating to skills training, which argue that poor women in particular need awareness raising if they are to overcome the barriers that face them when they enter the public arena, which is dominated by men (Moser, 1991; Longwe, 1998; Williams, 1994 and Parker, 1993). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of skill training on women's economic and social status of the participant in the Palameenmadu village and also sought to find out what constitutes effective training for women's development.

Methodology

The structured questionnaire was designed to capture the impact of skill training on women's economic and social status in the Palameenmadu village. This included collecting information about how and whether the training created changes in the women's personal life, changes in activities carried out, amount of time spent on each, changes in household circumstances, resources required for her productive work, uses made of skills acquired during training, changes in income, changes in external circumstances which might influence her productive work and what she does with any additional income. Case studies were also conducted using structured interviews with participants at the start and the end of the project period at regular intervals. Thus, the sample of the study was limited to the women who were training participants.

Results and discussion

The age of the participants varied in the study area was from 18 to 51 years, with an average of 30.4. About 31.3 percent of the participants fall in the age group of 21 to 30 years and only 6.3 percent of them were over 50 years. According to the survey 62.5 percent of the participants were married while 35.4 percent of them were unmarried and 2.1 percent were widows and current heads of their households.

The education of participants was determined by the highest school grade they had completed. It was observed that educational levels of 58.3 percent of the participants had completed the ordinary secondary level while 18.8 had completed the advanced secondary level. Only two percent of the women had never been to school, the remainder had between one to six years of schooling. Most of the participants had completed their secondary education and unemployment was the reason for their high participation.

Self employment (37.5 percent) was the main occupation of the participants. They were very keen to learn new technologies to strengthen their capacity to engage in profitable businesses. This is one of the reasons for the high participation in the training programme. It was further found that 33.3 percent of participants were house wives who want to start self employment or to fulfill their family needs in order to reduce their economic burdens. Moreover, 27.1 percent of them were unemployed school leavers who had acquired necessary new skill and information to produce items for their own purpose and also for an alternative carrier in future. Women start their own businesses because they are unable to find formal employment. Women's inability to access formal institutions results in women's businesses most frequently being situated within the informal sector. Hart (1997) found that women who want to re-enter the work force, after their children are grown, sometimes find employment opportunities closed to them, so the alternative is to become a "domestic entrepreneur". Women's businesses are more than likely to be home-based and they can be started quickly (Van Der Wees and Romjin 1995). Domestic responsibilities might require women to remain near their home, hence establishing a business in proximity or in the home resolves potential conflicts. This often results in women's businesses being part-time.

Regarding preference of skill training 22.9 percent of the participants followed sewing techniques and fabric painting while 20.8 percent of the participant followed fabric painting alone. According to the study, the monthly income of their households before skill training was revealed to be below Rs. 3000, for 54.2 percent of the them. Most of them had had very hard lives and unhappy childhoods were currently engaged in some form of economic activity at the time of training while 10.4 percent in the range of Rs 3000 to 5000 rupees and only 2.1 percent earned above Rs 5000. Furthermore, 33.3 percent of the participants were school leavers not involved in any form of economic activity at the time of the training. The follow-up interview with the participants took place eight weeks after the training. At that time, all of the women had experienced some increase in income, although in some cases, they showed evidence of having used some of the skill acquired during the training. The data clearly documented the way in which these skills were used as well as the impact on their incomes and on their status in the home and the community. The data revealed that the percentage of women whose income was below Rs. 3000 was reduced from 54.2 percent to 47.7 percent while income of Rs. 3000 to 5000 increased by 4.2 percent. Further, the income of those earning above Rs. 5000 increased by 2.1 percent. Most of them made significant changes to their economic activity as a result of the training and saw a significant improvement in income. The impact of the training on woman was immediate. One of those participants reported that before the training she had no work but by the end of the training programme she had bought a sewing machine and started sewing dresses. Interestingly, however, she said that the training had made her more quality oriented and she had made changes to attract customers but lack of capital investment is the main constraint to expand her business.

Regarding the result of the study the average living standard and income had a value of 3.98. It falls in the range of $3.5 < X_i \leq 5$ clearly showed that skill training provided by CIDA enhanced the living standard and income of the participants in the Palameenmadu village. It is evidence that all the participants who followed the training programme had benefited. Moreover service quality had an average mean value 4.17. It falls in the range of $3.5 < X_i \leq 5$ clearly indicating that the purpose of training had changed their lives positively. The self employment had an average mean value of 4.17 and falls in the range of $3.5 < X_i \leq 5$ clearly showed that the training programme enhanced the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills of the participants and changed their attitude and approach towards running their own micro-enterprises, and in that respect it met its main objectives of the programme. The women's personal life had an average mean value of 4.42 with the range of $3.5 < X_i \leq 5$ revealed that their attitude towards their productive work and towards themselves; as a result, their management of their productive work improved due to sustained income increased.

Benefits and constraints

The benefits to these women from the training are clear. It provided them with some basic business skills, with all but one putting at least one skill into practice to earn income. It also provided them with the self-confidence to move into new areas and to take risks. As a consequence of using these new skills, most of the participants had been able to increase their income. Several women said they felt exhausted from the demands of their productive work combined with domestic duties. Working long hours deprived them of seeing their children and socializing with friends and relatives. This highlights the effects of training on women who must combine both reproductive and productive roles whereas other members of the household particularly men do not take on an equal share of the burden.

Conclusion

There was little doubt that the training enhanced the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills of the trainees and changed their attitude and approach towards running their own micro-enterprises, and in that respect it met its main objectives. Most of the women were seen to exercise one or more of the skills learnt on the course. They all changed their attitude towards their productive work and towards themselves; as a result, their management of their productive work improved due to sustained income increases. The attitude of their families and the community also showed a positive change. Although at the end of the project period, the financial gains for the women were not great and it is likely that the training had provided them with skills which would allow them to survive better in depressed markets than other women who had not had the training. The link between increased income and increased status was very strong, with the women feeling that they earned greater respect from both their families and the community when they began to look

like real business women. The link between increased income and access and control of resources also appeared to be quite strong, with the women controlling their own financial affairs. However, the link between increased income and increased household decision-making was much less clear; although the men were usually very appreciative of what the women were doing, and in some cases were actively involved in the business, there did not appear to be any great shift in power and authority within the household. The training provided under this programme was effective in providing a significant number of women with slightly improved livelihoods and an element of empowerment.

Bibliography

Goodale, G. (1989). Training for women in the informal sector. In: F Fluitman (ed) *training for Work in the Informal Sector*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

Hart, G. (1997). From Rotten Wives to Good Mothers: Household Models and the Limits of Economism. *IDS Bulletin* 28 (3):14-25.

Longwe, S. (1998). Education for women's empowerment or schooling for women's subordination. *Gender and Development* 6 (2):19-26

Moser, C. (1991). Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs. In: T Wallace and C March (eds) *Changing perceptions: writings on gender and development*. Oxford: Oxfam, pp 158-171.

Parker, R.A. (1993). **Another Point of View: A Manual on Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers**. UNIFEM.

Van Der Wees, C. and Romijn, H. (1995). Entrepreneurship and Small- and Microenterprise Development for Women: A Problematique in Search of Answers, a Policy in Search of Programs'. In: Dignard and Havet (eds.), *Women in Micro- and Small-scale Enterprise Development*. Boulder: Westview Press. Pp. 41 - 82.

Williams, S. (1994). **The Oxfam Gender Training Manual**. Oxford: Oxfam.