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# CONSEQUENCES OF INVOLUNTARY RELOCATIONS THAT AFFECT THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

Lately, the growing number of refugees has captured the world's attention enormously. However, the even greater number of Internally displaced persons (IDPs), who have been forced to flee their homes but, remain within the boundaries of their own country, did not attract much attention of the world. The results of internal displacement not only affect the IDPs themselves. It also has an impact on the government, local authorities, and the host community in whose neighbourhood the displaced people are relocated.

Most of the times, the government or relevant local authorities relocate IDPs in a different location to safeguard them against the negative effects of disruptive events. Generally, involuntary relocations aim at improving the lives of IDPs. However, it often acts only as a temporary relief and fails to ensure their long-term modes of livelihood. Accordingly, this paper aims to analyse different dimensions of factors that slow the process of recovery.

This study was conducted through a comprehensive literature review to investigate the research question: 'What are the challenges and obstacles faced by the communities during involuntary relocations?' Number of studies provide evidences to the effect that the incompatible integration of communities that have been built upon different economic status, social settings and physical aspects could act as stressors in the recovery process. For example, social disintegration and severe impoverishment are some of the immediate consequences of involuntary displacements, which affect the economy of the region. Therefore, the importance of collaboration between the host and displaced communities needs to be drawn upon in addressing the economic, social, cultural and physical consequences of involuntary relocation projects.

**Key words:** Host community, Integration, Internally displaced persons, Involuntary relocation, Recovery

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Occasionally, disasters alter lands unsuitable for human habitation. Consequently, the communities who have been living in those lands need to be relocated in favour of or against their will by the government or relevant authorities in order to safeguard them against future disruptive events. Involuntary relocations, despite the triggers, do have negative impacts on the people even though their physical assets have been completely recompensed (Cernea, 1995; Maldonado, 2012). The results of internal displacement not only affect the people who are displaced. It also has an impact on the government, local authorities, and the host community, in whose neighbourhood the displaced people are relocated (Badri, Asgary, Eftekhari, & Levy, 2006; Barenstein, 2015). Studies (Aldunce, Beilin, Handmer, & Howden, 2014; Manyena, O'Brien, O'Keefe, & Rose, 2011) prove that, restoring the same state of a community at which it has already been before the disaster is almost impossible. Because, disasters alter some of the characteristics which determine the construction of a community. This raises the interest in how people would adjust to an entirely new environment and what are the obstacles and challenges faced by the host and displaced communities during and after involuntary relocation.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper aims at exploring the challenges and obstacles faced by the communities during and after involuntary relocations. Accordingly, this paper has been written based on a literature review, from the data gathered across different sources such as; peer reviewed journals, conference proceedings, books, official reports and official websites. Among these 26 articles are selected to identify the obstacles and challenges faced by the communities. Table 1 shows the journal types from which the articles are selected. Collected information were organised and synthesised to draw conclusions.

Table 1: Journals publishing selected articles

<b>Journals</b>	<b>No</b>
Journal of Refugee Studies	2
International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment	2
Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences	1
International Journal of Project Management	1
Disasters	2
Journal of Development Studies	1
International Journal of Water Resources Development	1

Social science & medicine	1
Society and Natural Resources	1
Social Psychiatry	1

### 3. CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES FACED BY THE COMMUNITIES

Contemporary literatures related to displacements are different from the traditional theories. Traditional migration theories largely discuss the economic, geographic, and demographic issues of migrants. Migration theory of Lee (1966) is one of the traditional theories that describes four factors that affect the process of displacement, despite the distance and nature of act (voluntary/involuntary). They are; attracting and repelling factors associated with the place of origin, attracting and repelling factors associated with the place of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. However, emergency displacements are more complex than the voluntary displacements. Therefore, it requires multi-disciplinary approach to address the issues associated with them (Beggan, 2011). Scholars approached this issues from different angles, including economic, social, physical, cultural, psychological, natural, and political aspects. However, they are all intertwined and act as a barrier for the recovery of the community.

Among different types of relocations, some involves two communities. They are; displaced community, and host community, in whose neighbourhood the displaced community has been relocated. These two communities and their functionality cannot be always homogenous (Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009). This is even critical in multicultural and multilingual countries. As an effect, soon after the relocation, the level of functionality of communities drops from the point it was used to be. Ideally, it is expected to restore following an exponential recovery curve (Refer Figure 1), as the communities get assistance from government and other humanitarian organisations at the beginning of the relocation.

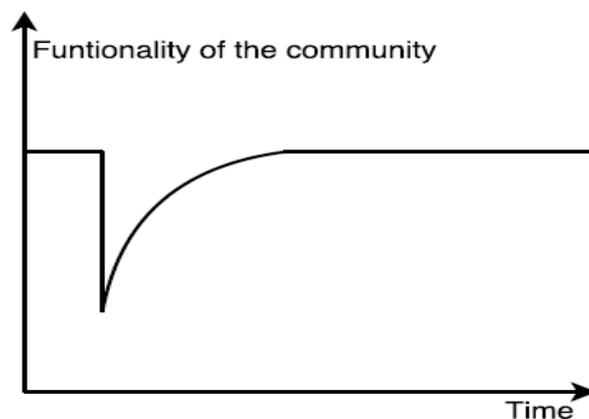


Figure 1: Exponential recovery curve

However, it is not always true as it is influenced by intervening obstacles. Figure 2 illustrates the network of intervening obstacles.

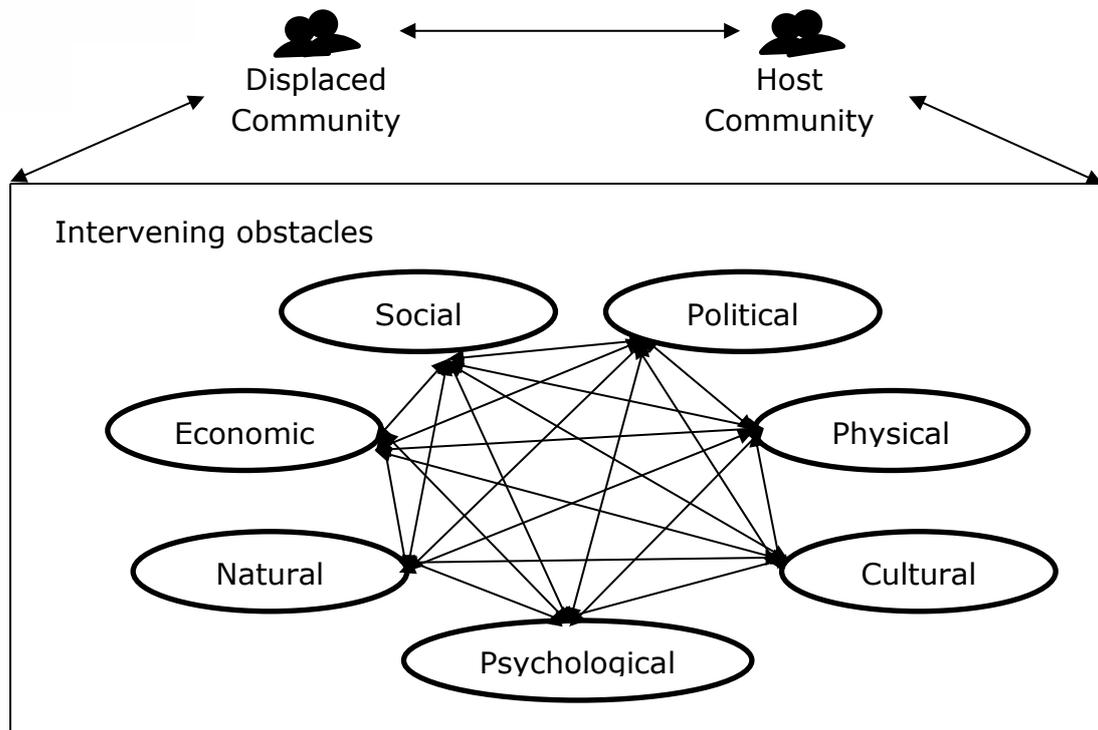


Figure 2: Network of intervening obstacles

According to Lee's (1966) traditional migration theory, every place has its own characters that act to hold and repel people. For example, good weather holds people and bad weather repels them. A successful migration needs a push from the place of origin and a pull from the destination, which motivate the people to migrate despite of all the obstacles. The problem with the involuntary relocations is, even though the place of origin pushes the people to move, the place of destination does not often pull them. Finally, the community ends up in a clump of obstacles because of the push from both the sides.

Table 2 shows the list of intervening obstacles that have been identified under each of the main category based on different studies. However, the likely occurrence of these problems is subjective to specific cases.

Table 2: Intervening obstacles that affects the recovery

Main factors	No	Sub factors	Authors
Economic	1	Landlessness	(Cernea, 1995; Kumarasiri, 2009; Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009; Robinson, 2003)
	2	Land right/ ownership issues	(Barenstein, 2015; Godamunne, 2012; Gunawardena &

<b>Main factors</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sub factors</b>	<b>Authors</b>
			Wickramasinghe, 2009; Koria, 2009)
	3	Decline in the employment opportunity	(Badri et al., 2006; Cernea, 1995; Robinson, 2003)
	4	Debt-bondage	(Robinson, 2003)
	5	Decline in the income	(Kumarasiri, 2009; Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009; Maldonado, 2012; Robinson, 2003; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2013)
	6	Leads to price increases	(Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2013)
Social	7	Loss of social rights/ social protection	(Foresight, 2011; Manatunge, Herath, Takesada, & Miyata, 2009; Robinson, 2003)
	8	Decline in social status/ Drop in living standard	(Brun, 2009; Cao, Hwang, & Xi, 2012; Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009)
	9	Decline in the quality of education	(Badri et al., 2006)
	10	Disruption in social support networks	(Badri et al., 2006)
	11	Loss of networks	(Cao et al., 2012; Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009)
	12	Issues in local community relationships	(Gunawardena & Wickramasinghe, 2009; Thalayasingam, 2009)
	13	Marginalisation/ weakening of social integration	(Cao et al., 2012; Cernea, 1995; Manatunge et al., 2009; Thalayasingam, 2009)
	14	Food insecurity/ poor nourishment	(Cao et al., 2012; Cernea, 1995; Godamunne, 2012)
Physical	15	Resettlement in unfamiliar and inhospitable locations	(Robinson, 2003)
	16	Inadequate sanitation	(Badri et al., 2006)
	17	Local climate adoptable houses	(Barenstein, 2015)
	18	Incompatible house design	(Barenstein, 2015; Gunawardena & Wickramasinghe, 2009)

<b>Main factors</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sub factors</b>	<b>Authors</b>
	19	Access to physical infrastructure (Drinking water, electricity, roads, common buildings, schools, etc.)	(Gunawardena & Wickramasinghe, 2009; Laugé, Hernantes, & Sarriegi, 2015; Thalayasingam, 2009)
	20	Reduction of community resources (Medical, educational, etc.)	(Cao et al., 2012; Cernea, 1995; Foresight, 2011; Magis, 2010; Manatunge et al., 2009; Muggah, 2000)
	21	Distance from the previous location	(Gunawardena & Wickramasinghe, 2009; Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009; Manatunge et al., 2009)
Cultural	22	Cultural disintegration	(Robinson, 2003)
	23	Mismatch of culture	(Gunawardena & Wickramasinghe, 2009)
	24	Communication difficulties due to regional differences in dialect and culture	(Cao et al., 2012)
Psychological	25	Separation from family members	(Nicassio & Pate, 1984)
	26	Painful memories of war and departure	(Nicassio & Pate, 1984)
	27	Abuse of human rights	(Robinson, 2003)
	28	Distress	(Cao et al., 2012)
Natural	29	Vulnerability to environmental changes	(Foresight, 2011)
	30	Changes in land use patterns	(Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2013)
Political	31	Decline in political representation	(Muggah, 2000; Thalayasingam, 2009)
	32	Increased risk of political and criminal violence	(Muggah, 2000)
	33	Legal status	(Foresight, 2011)

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

Economic obstacles are one of the key issues that affect the process of recovery. Financial recovery pattern of the displaced community would be varied depends on the livelihood of the displaced community and that of

the host community. Lakshman and Amirthalingam (2009) found that, if the labours have demand in the host community for the works in which they are skilled at, financially they recover quickly. Whereas, farmers and fishermen take a long time to recover as their livelihoods are attached with their habitual residence. Further, household enterprises also take a considerable amount of time to regain new clients. This proves that, owing to the struggle in finding the income source, displaced people face a decline in income at the beginning of the displacement (Godamunne, 2012). Cernea (1995) states that, this decline leads to severe impoverishments and extends beyond the immediately affected population, if the displacement is inadequately handled. Consequently, it consumes a long time for the community to recover.

Further, physical relocation planning often does not include plans for new job creations (Cernea, 1995). Employment opportunity also depends on the type of livelihood that the displaced community was engaged in before disaster. Displaced community has some difficulties in continuing capital and entrepreneurship oriented livelihoods such as farming, fishing, livestock, and commercial enterprises, in the new environment as they already lost their assets completely or partially during the disaster (Lakshman & Amirthalingam, 2009). This makes the families to seek different employment opportunities among the host environment. The situation is similar for the skilled labours if there is no demand in the host community for the works that they are skilled at. Based on different case studies, it has been proved that, the displaced population cannot find opportunities for certain jobs in the host community, if they have neither the skill nor the qualification for those jobs (Cao et al., 2012). Decline in the employment opportunities is not only a problem of displaced community, but also it affects the host community. Because, displaced people become competitors for the available job opportunities in the host environment (Badri et al., 2006).

Relocation from one location to another changes the lifestyle of a community. Cao et al. (2012) state that, the lifestyle changes add new expenses to the budgets of households. Also, it alters the traditional economic system, replacing it with a new system based on the differences in the workforce. Consequently, it leads to price increases in the economy. As a result, studies show that, the number of working members in a family has risen not only among displaced community but also among host community in post disaster resettlements (Badri et al., 2006).

Economy of a community is interrelated with its social status. Social status of a community will be degraded, if the power of economy of a community declined. Soon after the relocation, displaced community loss its social organisation structures, informal and formal networks, associations, and local societies (Cernea, 1995). This leads to social marginalisation, if the displaced community could not establish a healthy relationship with the host community (Cao et al., 2012). However, the

free houses and other assistance given to a selected community, ignoring others would create a social imbalance among the community and prevent healthy relationship among communities (Belgian Red Cross, 2009). Consequently, issues similar to loss of social life, decline in living standard, weakening of social integration, and disruptions in social support networks can be experienced by both displaced and host communities (Brun, 2009; Foresight, 2011; Manatunge et al., 2009).

Further, studies show that the resettled communities often found the new houses unsuitable, as it is built culturally and socially inappropriate and different from what they have used to be (Badri et al., 2006). As a consequence, Barakat, (2003); Oliver-Smith, (1991); and Jha et al., (2010) supported the outcome that, the people refuse to live in new settlements and return to their previous places (as cited in Barenstein, 2015). Moreover, the available infrastructure and common resources will become overwhelmed unless it is adequately planned to serve an additional community (Cao et al., 2012). This is again interrelated with socioeconomic trust among communities. A study conducted by Brun (2009) gives example for the consequence that, the displaced and host communities develop some clashes among themselves and displaced community could be marginalised by the host community out of fear of losing resources, government job allocation, and education quota.

Cultural values of a community including indigenous practices, rituals, shifting cultivation, crafts, construction, and identity is another factor that acts as a barrier for the process of recovery (Singer, Hoang, & Ochiai, 2015). Displacement from the habitual residence often become a trigger for the 'longing for belonging' state of the re-settlers as they cannot practice all of those cultural values in the new environment. Cultural, regional, and ethnic differences between host and displaced communities can act as triggers for discrimination and racism (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2011). Furthermore, social settings and psychological aspects could also lead to slow recovery of the community.

Additionally, natural, psychological, and political barriers (Refer Table 1) also strengthen the dominoes effect and slow the process of recovery. Therefore, these factors should be considered during the planning phase of resettlements, if not, alternatively, government or relevant authorities need to intervene by taking necessary actions to reduce this effect.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Involuntary relocations are rather common after a disaster if the land become unsuitable for inhabitancy. Mostly, it often acts only as a temporary relief and fails to ensure the community's long-term modes of livelihood. Following the relocation, displaced and host communities face many problems related to economic, social, and cultural incompatibilities. Because, initial relocation plans often consider the host community and

the community compatibility. Therefore, integrating mechanisms to improve collaboration between host and displaced communities, including communities' concerns and requirements is necessary to reduce relocation failures and to enhance quick recovery.

This is a part of a PhD project and further field studies will be conducted in order to identify the needs and expectations of the communities, and the barriers to fulfil them to establish a durable solution.

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