

Post-disaster Reconstruction and Change Communities' Perspectives



A book edited by
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Background

- 4 research projects funded by SNSF and SDC
- 6 years research (2004-2010)
- 16 researchers
- Case studies based on in-depth anthropological research in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Argentina



Research questions

- How do communities themselves perceive and manage disasters, and how do they respond to post-disaster external reconstruction aid?
- How is the equity and effectiveness of external aid affected by communities social organisation, power structure, and leadership capacity?
- How does external aid affect communities' livelihoods, culture, and social organisation?



Structure of the book

- **Part 1:** Communities' role in post-disaster recovery processes between theory and practice
- **Part 2:** Socio-cultural impacts of housing reconstruction
- **Part 3:** Post-disaster resettlement and restoration of livelihoods



Communities' role in post-disaster recovery processes between theory and practice

- Communal leadership in post-Mitch housing reconstruction in Nicaragua
- Aid distribution after hurricane Mitch and changes in social capital in two Nicaraguan rural communities
- Ownership, Control, and Accountability in post-tsunami housing reconstruction processes in Aceh, Indonesia
- Communities' perspectives on housing reconstruction in Gujarat following the earthquake of 2001
- Soil conservation practices after hurricane Mitch: significance, implementation difficulties, and changes of the field of application

Communal leadership in post-Mitch housing reconstruction in Nicaragua

- Comparative study between reconstruction outcomes in municipalities of San Dionisio and Ocotal
- Decentralizing reconstruction from central government to local government may lead to contextually appropriate responses, but also entails the risk of clientelism, elite capture resulting in needs of most vulnerable not being met



Ownership, Control, and Accountability in post-tsunami housing reconstruction processes in Aceh, Indonesia

- Comparative analysis of reconstruction outcome in 2 villages in Aceh
- Where formal mechanisms to make contractors accountable to local community were created quality of construction was better and people's satisfaction higher
- Community driven approaches tend to be controlled by local elites, but they are more likely to be accountable to local people



Communities' perspectives on housing reconstruction in Gujarat

- Analyzes the viability and effectiveness of different reconstruction approaches from the perspective of communities based on research in 16 villages
- Found that level of satisfaction was highest with owner-driven reconstruction (ODR)
- ODR was the fastest, most cost-effective and cultural appropriate approach and provided less opportunities for elites to capture external aid



Socio-cultural impacts of housing reconstruction

- A social and environmental assessment of the pre- and post-tsunami housing and building practices in Tamil Nadu
- The remembered trees: contractor-driven reconstruction and its consequences on communities well-being in coastal Tamil Nadu
- The role of informal governance in post-disaster reconstruction and its impact on elderly people's social security in coastal Tamil Nadu
- Links between building technologies, post-disaster reconstruction and gender roles in Gujarat
- Unaffordable housing and its consequences: a comparative analysis of two post-Mitch reconstruction projects in Nicaragua

A social and environmental assessment of the pre- and post-tsunami housing and building practices in Tamil Nadu

- Sustainability and comfort analysis of different housing typologies found in TN before and after the tsunami
- Traditional houses are culturally and climatically more appropriate, provide a higher level of comfort, are economically viable, and have a lower environmental impact than houses provided by external agencies but have been systematically demolished



The remembered trees: contractor-driven reconstruction and its consequences on communities well-being Tamil Nadu

- Ethnographic documentation of the vital importance of trees for coastal communities livelihoods and wellbeing
- Analysis of the impact of the loss of trees that were cut to make space for new houses on people's wellbeing
- Absence of trees led to social isolation, psychosomatic disorders, and depression, in particular among women



Links between building technologies, post-disaster reconstruction and gender roles in Gujarat

- Description of traditional building processes as a means for women to express their individual and caste identity;
- Abandonment of traditional building materials led to construction becoming a male-dominated domain and to a marginalization of women from the building process;



Post-disaster resettlement and restoration of livelihoods

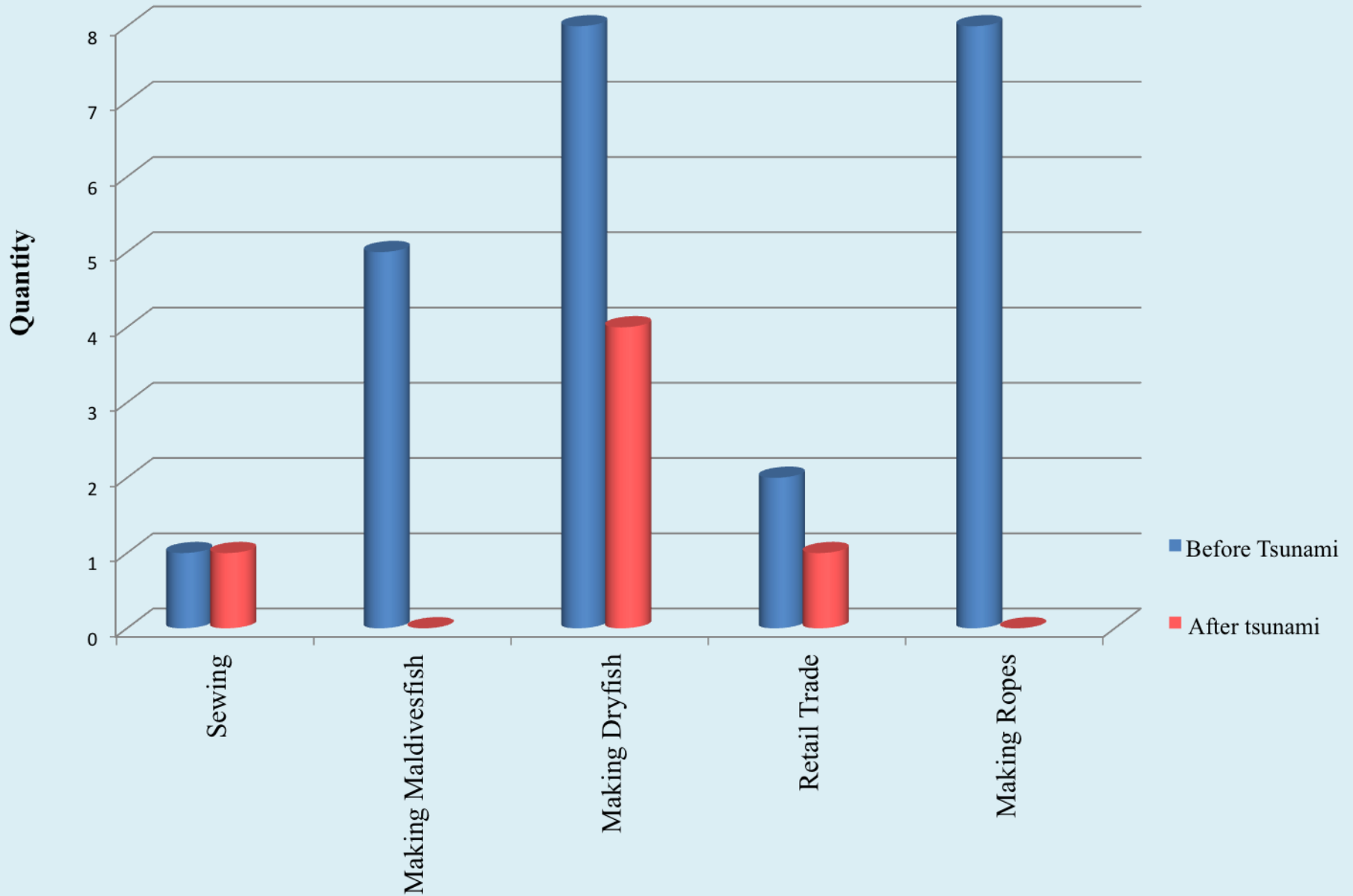
- Post-tsunami relocation outcomes in Sri Lanka: communities' perspectives in Ampara and Hambantota
- Links between post-tsunami relocation and changes in fishing practices in Tamil Nadu
- Impacts of landlessness on rural livelihoods after post-Mitch resettlement in Nicaragua
- Voluntary relocation after disaster: a hope for many a chance for few?
- Is resettlement a viable strategy to mitigate the risks of natural disasters? Views and voices from the citizens of Santa Fe, Argentina.

Post-tsunami relocation outcomes in Sri Lanka: Communities' perspectives in Ampara and Hambantota

- Qualitative and quantitative research in 30 relocation sites
- Good quality houses and large plots provided incentives to relocate
- Nuclearization of extended families
- Poorer households most severely affected by disruption of livelihoods
- Over 1/3 of the houses given to people not affected by the tsunami
- Post-tsunami aid exacerbated inequalities between people and between regions



Women's income generating activities before and after Tsunami



Impacts of landlessness on rural livelihoods after post-Mitch resettlement in Nicaragua

- Analysis of the consequences of relocating rural communities in urban middle class type of houses without paying attention to spatial requirements and affordability of maintenance
- Maintenance costs forced poor people to sell their houses and move back to vulnerable sites





The two identical post-Mitch resettlement projects developed strikingly different, Posoltega, Nicaragua

Links between post-tsunami relocation and changes in fishing practices in Tamil Nadu

- Analysis of the social and environmental consequences of changes in fishing practice (from predominantly marine fishery to estuarine fishery) following relocation
- Elderly people and women who used to fish in estuarine waters now have to compete with young men who no longer go to sea
- Depletion of fish resources in estuarine waters



The role of informal governance in post-disaster reconstruction and its impact on elderly people's social security in coastal Tamil Nadu

- Focuses on links between ownership of a house and a plot of land and informal social security system and the consequences of disrupting the system through which houses are acquired in normal times
- Supply-driven housing assistance led to marginalization of elderly people and women



Summary of main findings (1)

- Lack of understanding of
 - communities' livelihoods, social organization, and power structure
 - how these relate to communities' vulnerability to so-called 'natural' disasters
- Reconstruction policies
 - are often socio-culturally insensitive
 - May reinforce pre-disaster vulnerabilities and exclusion



Summary of main findings (2)

- communities are neither passive nor homogeneous recipients of external aid.
- External agencies tend to overlook local initiatives and capacities and the unequal distribution of power and resources
- reinforcement of pre-disaster vulnerabilities
- Myths of 'community' and 'community participation' continue to prevail, often leading to elite capture
- illusion: 'participatory approaches' may lead to more equitable outcomes



THANK YOU!

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