

# Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Coastal resources and Coastal Ecosystems after 2004 Tsunami Disaster in Sri Lanka

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# **Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Coastal resources and Coastal Ecosystems after 2004 Tsunami Disaster in Sri Lanka**

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The Sri Lanka's Coastal areas have 67 Assistant Government Agents areas and these areas contain;

- 24 percent of the land area and 32 percent of the population;
- About 65 percent of the urbanized land area;
- Approximately 80 percent of the Sri Lanka's hotel rooms;
- 80 percent of the annual fish production;
- About 67 percent of the nation's industrial facilities;
- Habitats critical to the sustained production of fisheries, the maintenance of good water quality, and scenic values important to both residents and tourists; and
- Rich biodiversity reserves including coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves

Most of these resources have been destroyed by the Tsunami in 2004 and killed 35,322 people, displaced 100,000 persons and affected over two thirds of the island's coastline and outlying 13 districts. Besides the tremendous loss of life and injuries, the tsunami caused extensive damage to property and disruptions of fisheries and other livelihood activities and business assets. Social networks also were severely disrupted. In many cases lives became complicated due to the loss of legal documents. The socio-economic impacts were of greater consequence as the tsunami compounded previously existing vulnerabilities. Assets were destroyed and water and electricity supplies were severely affected. Remote coastal areas were not accessible for several days. The risk of a sizable death toll from possible deterioration of sanitary conditions, lack of clean drinking water and shelter, and delayed access to medical aid was strong, but did not occur.

In this background, it was an enormous challenge for Sri Lanka's authorities to address the multifaceted problem of providing immediate relief and facilitating recovery and reconstruction. The demonstration of human solidarity and kindness in the immediate aftermath in this endeavor in Sri Lanka was exemplary.

This paper will discuss and critically evaluate the experiences received by the Sri Lankan authorities through the implementation of the recovery and reconstructions process of the coastal resources and ecosystems under the following categories;

- Emergency response and relief
- Funding for recovery and reconstruction process
- Getting people back to their homes

- Restoring livelihoods (specially fisheries)
- Health education and social protection
- Upgrading national infrastructure
- Cross cutting issues
- Guiding principles
- Micro economy
- Environmental and habitat rehabilitation and restoration
- Institutional arrangements

Experiences gained through the implementation of the activities under each of the above sub hedging will be explained in the paper and lesson learning from the Sri Lanka may be replicated in other countries as well.



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