

LAND NOT OF THEIR OWN ANYMORE: THE CHANGING SITUATION OF WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS AFTER TSUNAMI IN THE BATTICALOA DISTRICT

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The paper outlines and explores the contours of post-tsunami situation of women's land rights in Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka. The paper applies a gender rights perspective in examining whether the policies on resettlement and the reallocation of land affect the already existing women's right to land on the matrilineal line in the eastern Sri Lanka. This paper will look at the policies of TAFRAN and RADA and other legislations regard to state land. It will focus the situation in the resettlement sites in Batticaloa district. The analysis is multi-layered and draws from data gathered in the sites and from personal narratives/ case studies.

While both men and women suffer due to displacements as in many other areas of life, it bears a disproportionate impact on women. They experience displacements differently from men due to their gendered roles in society. There are gendered experiences of displacement and one of the issues that have surfaced repeatedly is the right issue. The loss of livelihoods of women and the deterioration of the right to land and property had adversely impacted their lives in the post tsunami context.

The paper finally discusses the implications of the post-tsunami experiences on the lives of women and on their rights regard to land and property in the Batticaloa district. It will also touch upon the interventions by women's groups on the advocacy level with the relevant state agencies. This paper will also recommend policy changes.

Key words: Gender, Land Rights, Matrilineal custom, Post-Tsunami, Sri Lanka

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