

TSUNAMI ENGULFS SRI LANKAN GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

In this article, we investigate the important features of governance model during the provision of relief immediately following the 2004 Tsunami, in the subsequent steps to restore the operation of services and facilities, and in the longer term rebuilding of damaged/destroyed infrastructure, using the severely affected district of Galle in Southern Sri Lanka as a case study. We argue that despite the growing recognition of the significance of the integration of the actions of the various state and non-state actors in such governance, government, the main player, appears to be reluctant to move away from the existing 'command and control mode' of governance. The case study found that the Tsunami recovery attempts have been significantly weakened by lack of collaboration among key players at the central and the district level. In particular, at the district level, interactions among key stakeholders have lacked focus and have been ad hoc. As a result, transaction costs of governance increased, and the resources allocated for reconstruction have proved to be either misused or left underutilised.

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TSUNAMI ENGULFS SRI LANKAN GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

Governance is an essential component of disaster management and includes the roles of different sectors and organisations. As it embraces different sectors and organisations, good governance largely depends on effective links between them (Haque 2004; Kernaghan 2005; Krahmman 2003; Corkery 1999). It follows that the nature of these links and the extent of their integration affect the outcomes both within each sector and, significantly, on the entire society. As nurturing and facilitating these links have attracted much attention, new forms of network organisational structures have become significant, encouraging 'synergic relationships, with private and public activities partially reinforcing each other' (Krahmann 2003; Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002, p.42). High levels of cooperation and collaboration between different actors would not only reduce governance transaction costs (for details see Birner and Wittmer 2006), but would also ensure better outcomes of governance (Kemp 2006). A recent World Bank report (2007) points out that creating a right governance environment is one of the key conditions to poverty reduction in South Asia. Disaster management is not an exception.

Growing attention to a collaborative approach which highlights the importance of integrated governance questions the significance of the command and control mode of governance in the present context. Good governance suggests that all members of society must feel that they have a stake in governance and do not feel excluded from the mainstream (Bloom, Steven and Weston 2004; Vigoda 2002) which has been the focal point in the present poverty reduction strategy advocated by international development agencies such as the World Bank (World Bank 2007). This requires that all groups and especially the most vulnerable have the opportunity to maintain or improve their well being and enjoy the feeling of social inclusion (Samaratunge 2007). It means that processes and institutions must generate outcomes that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. UNPAN (2002) suggests that the motives for integrated governance are diverse, but rising expectations of quality and tailored responsiveness of services, government services in particular, appeared to have generated significant pressure for change. Government institutions as well as private and civil society organisations must be accountable to the public and to their respective stakeholders who will be affected by decisions or actions. The current article seeks to contribute to research on the role of integrated governance in regards to the relief, recovery and rebuilding process following the Tsunami in Sri Lanka in December 2004.

Sri Lanka provides an interesting case study as it was among the countries hardest hit by the 2004 Tsunami. Sri Lanka experienced a historically unparalleled devastation as Indian Ocean Tsunami struck coastal areas on 26 December 2004. This destruction of catastrophic proportions generated immediate need for relief of the direct effects, followed by recovery and later by re-building activities. Each stage required coordination of the efforts of individuals and of a wide range of organisations in mobilisation, deployment and management of human, physical and fiscal resources. How effectively the tsunami victims can be assisted to cope with the devastating effects has been the main concern of all players involved with governance. In this article, we examine distinctive features of different actors in governance and how, when and why they interacted with each other to provide different services to the tsunami victims. In particular the focus in this article is on the integration of governance actions at the district level involving public, business and civil society organisations, in the extreme conditions of catastrophe. This research was conducted in one of the severely affected regions in the country, Galle District in southern Sri Lanka.

We begin by sketching the literature that links different sectors of governance and highlight the new appreciation of integrated governance and its impact on the outcome of any given situation. We then develop a conceptual framework using a range of the major actors of governance and indicate how these actors would interact with each other in different circumstances. Our key

arguments are further supported by drawing upon interviews conducted in Sri Lanka during the period of July-January 2005/06.

THE GOVERNANCE MODEL: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Governance 'comprises the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences' (UNDP 1997, p. 2). Thus, although pivotal, the state is not the only actor exercising power and authority in the various levels of socio-political systems (Edwards, 2002). It is argued that 'governance involves the process of decision making by allowing various segments in society to voice their issues, implementing those decisions for the benefit of society at large, means of conflict resolution amongst different factors and accountability for ones actions to various stakeholders' (UNESCAP, 2006, p. 4). Healthy discussions and debate amongst various groupings eventually lead to effective coordination and collaboration amongst them which has become a growing phenomenon in the 21st century (Rosenbaum 2006). The role of integrated governance involves formal and informal relations between government agencies or across levels of government and the non-government sector (UNPAN 2002). These sectors (see Figure 1) intersect, overlap and intermingle; the relative power and influence of each changes dynamically.

A channel of open communication and equal treatment of all persons involved are necessary ingredients for integrated governance to succeed. The emphasis is both on the attainment of a particular goal and on its attainment by the 'right' means. It means that realised outcomes should be shared fairly by all persons concerned irrespective of diverse affiliations. It is argued that this collaborative model is realistic and that its effectiveness relies predominantly on the 'intensive participation and involvement of various social players and on their collaboration with governance and public administration agencies' (Vigoda-Gadot, 2004: 701). Organisational values, norms and attitudes are collectively spelled out by the quality of interpersonal relationships and individual behaviour and this can be a critical factor for integrated governance aspirations and outcomes.

Improving public sector governance is a significant challenge for developing countries. Effective governance needs to develop appropriate mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which concerned parties voice their interests, defend their rights, meet their obligations and reconcile their differences (Podger 2002). As Bourgon (2007: 15) nicely points out, the complex public policy issues of the twenty-first century require even more interaction among public servants in local, national and international organizations, elected officials at all levels and citizens 'who are claiming a larger voice in the policy decisions that will most affect them in the future'. Accordingly, networks development together with healthy and continuous negotiation has become prominent (World Bank 2003). As Borzel and Risse (2000, p. 26) point out, "governing functions have been increasingly taken over by negotiating networks" including state, business and NGO actors. State actors have key roles in creating and shaping the enabling environment. Whilst the enabling environment in advanced states is more dependent on voluntary compliance rather than direction by the public sector, a lack of awareness of the importance of developing positive interactions between different levels of government has significantly undermined the effectiveness of governing functions in developing countries (Werlin 2003). This also contributes to weak interaction between key players. Moreover, the relative importance of individual actors varies significantly among developing countries. For instance, when the public sector plays a dominant role controlling the key sectors in the economy, as in Sri Lanka during the 1960s and 1970s, the business sector tends to contract and civil society often finds it difficult to be heard because of the dominant influence of the public sector (Samaratunge 2000). Hence, building and upholding an enabling environment is a daunting task for many developing countries. Figure 1 shows a model which illustrates interaction between the three sectors of governance.

Insert Figure 1 about here

In practice, the relative size and power of each sector can vary over time and between activities in response to a range of factors. Such changes significantly influence the relationship between the key actors and hence integration with each other. If the state sector expands due to increasing government intervention in economic activities, it may change the relationship between the other two sectors. In a situation where rule-based governance is given less prominence, as in many developing countries, inter-relationships between key actors often become weak and less effective. The nature and changes of these inter-relationships affect how each sector acts and reacts, including in relationships with third parties. Interrelationships can be subdivided and classified as interconnections, interdependence and interactions (Coghill 2003), discussed further below.

The nature and type of relationship of governance sectors are shaped by the degree of intensity of different contextual factors. Figure 2 shows that contextual factors, both domestic and international, influence the nature and outcomes of interactions between different actors in the governance process and hence the net outcome of the governance. The model assumes that interactions and inter-relationships between these actors are focused on the achievement of common tasks which are relevant to all of them. Domestic and international contextual factors, which include different attributes, capacities and priorities, interactions and inter-relationships between the various actors, often lead to disagreements. The process of reaching consensus involves discussions and negotiations at different levels.

However, there are additional features of the inter-relationships which, we argue, have profound effects on how they operate. Interconnectedness refers to shared factors. Culture is one fundamental factor in interconnectedness, capable of both uniting and being the basis of division between actors. Significant points to be considered are that 'inherited social thoughts, traditions and ideas may have influenced the formation of different administrative cultures; (and), different social cultures form various administrative systems, which produce, to some extent, divergent processes in attaining the development of the administrative system' (Yun, 2006: 495-496).

With interdependence, most actors are dependent on one or more other actors. For example the Executive Government, is dependent on the appropriation of funds by the Parliament to carry out the functions of the various agencies. Interaction refers to the effects of one actor's actions on the actions of one or more other actors. Interactions are facilitated by interconnectedness. If values are not shared or cultural practices are inconsistent with each other, then interaction may be difficult, almost impossible or executed through means other than deliberation e.g. violence. It is characteristic of interaction that the actions of an actor affecting another actor may cause the second actor's behaviour to change. The change in behaviour may in the second actor's internal behaviour or in its behaviour toward the first actor or other actors (Coghill 2003). The potential of inter-relationships to modify the behaviour of actors is qualitatively different from the synergy that may arise from collaboration between actors.

Theoretically it is argued that individual actors are aware of their commitment and responsibilities towards the given tasks, which significantly enhance effective relationships between them. Trusting relationships reduce transaction costs as they facilitate timely decision-making, thereby enhancing effective implementation of the common task at hand. For instance, where political motives are shared in the pursuit of desired results, positive coincidences of interests may be found between different actors including international institutions. In the presence of rule-based government, synergetic relationships develop through high levels of cooperation, collaboration and coordination between the actors.

'*Coordination* refers to the sharing of *work* for mutual benefit with a view to avoiding duplication, eliminating gaps and reducing fragmentation. *Collaboration* involves the sharing of *power* for the same purposes. Coordination and collaboration are closely related to the concept of *partnership*.

Coordination through *sharing work* is often described as an operational partnership whereas collaboration through *sharing power* is commonly described as a collaborative or 'real' partnership' (Kernaghan 2005:121). Synergetic relationships produce enhanced effects, in which the performance of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. They may arise from and/or lead to shared values (interconnections) and effective partnerships amongst the actors, and are desirable for the final outcome as they may lead to better management and ultimately more effective delivery of services to society. Alternatively, political motives aimed at furthering actors' own goals, negative conflicts of interests between actors, an absence of rule-based government and limited availability of resources along with unpalatable policies pressed by international sources would lead to conflicted relationships. Conflicted relationships in turn lead to individualistic values and ineffective partnerships, resulting in poor management and ineffective delivery of services. The model highlights how the external factors can influence the relationships amongst the actors and ultimately affect the final outcome. Table 1 compares inter-relationships and synergistic relationships.

This study investigates the effect of synergetic relationships between the actors and the analysis and management of the contextual factors in particular given situations on outcomes. It is important to note that '(w)hile the relationship between the private sector and civil society and local government is very clearly a reinforcing and mutually beneficial one to all parties, there are also some complexities and ambiguities, indeed even paradoxes, in such relationships' (Rosenbaum 2006:53). Rosenbaum further explains that 'significant rivalry for international donor resources has developed between emerging local institutions of government and established non-governmental organizations. In more than a few cases, this has caused resentment on the part of government officials who frequently see themselves as being more knowledgeable, and having more legitimate authority, than the NGOs who have been commissioned to provide them with technical assistance improved through increasing that compensation available to those in the public sector. Increasingly, there has also been the emergence of some very significant rivalries between and among private sector organizations and NGOs for the various contracts that government and International donors issue' (Rosenbaum 2006:53).

Insert Table 1 & Figure 2 about here

THIS STUDY: SRI LANKA

Many concerns about the quality on governance in Sri Lanka have been expressed in recent years (ADB 2000 & 2004, World Bank 2000), including the effectiveness of service delivery, political influence over the public service, corruption, the lack of transparency and limited participation of the civil society (ADB 2004 & 2007). Democratic process, including elections, were suspended and the media was restricted in the 1970s and harassed since the late 1980s (Samaratunge et al. 2008a & 2008b; Hulme and Sandaratne 1997). Independent analytical think-tanks or pressure groups focused on public finance have been virtually non-existent (Kelegama 2006).

The administrative system in Sri Lanka has encouraged centre-driven policy formulation and direct Central Government control of local level implementation. Generic policies are imposed on all areas of the country without regard to regional diversity, conditions or circumstances (Samaratunge 2000 & 2003; Kelegama 2006). Politicians and bureaucrats dominate society, undermining the role of the civil society in the development process. As a result, two youth upheavals occurred, the first in 1971 and the second in 1989, both led by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a mainly rural-based political movement and there has been an ethnic crisis with on-going civil war between two major ethnic groups since 1983. With the increasing intensity of ethnic conflict, defence expenditure increased rapidly and significantly eroded the country's financial discipline in a number of respects. Expenditure on defence was deliberately underestimated as a government strategy to maintain the budget estimates within prescribed

IMF/World Bank limits (Hulme & Sanderatne 1997) and 'there is no proper accounting nor auditing of the monies spent in the purchase of armaments' (Gunaratne 1990: 8).

The centre-driven policy formulation and direct control of its implementation at the local level have provided an environment for both national politicians and bureaucrats to play a dominant role in society, undermining the role of the civil society in the development process. The partnership between the state and the civil society has become a patron-client relationship. During the last three decades the country has witnessed weakening quality of governance, increasing corruption, lack of civil society participation in development processes, together with deterioration of socio-economic conditions. Overall, the outcome of these developments is extremely severe (Samaratunge 2007).

TSUNAMI DEVASTATION IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka worst known natural disaster came when the tsunami struck in 2004. There was no early warning system (EWS) in place and it killed more than 30,000 people, approximately 6,000 of whom remain unaccounted for. Nearly 100,000 homes were destroyed in the coastal area (Oloruntoba, 2005; ADB, 2005). Almost half a million people were displaced and at least one-tenth of the nation's population were affected in some way. Overall damage was estimated at around US\$ 1billion (approx. 4.5 percent of GDP) (ADB 2005).

Fourteen administrative districts out of 25 were deeply affected by the tsunami (see Map 1). Galle district, in the southern province, was the second hardest hit, within which the worst affected administrative divisions were Hikkaduwa, Four Gravates, Habaraduwa, Ambalangoda, Balapitiya and Bentota.

Insert the Map about here

Most affected people were comparatively poor. The tsunami 'compounded previously existing vulnerabilities' (ADB 2005, p.2). Fisheries, tourism and coastal agricultural industries were especially badly damaged, leaving the victims in absolute poverty (District Secretariat Galle, 2005).

We now examine the hypothesis that the outcomes of governance are better explained by taking into account the inter-relationships between the three sectors (public, market and civil society). Our aim is to develop a better understanding of governance involved in relief, recovery and re-building following catastrophes which could assist relevant agencies (e.g. the UN, the World Bank, DFID, USAID, DFAT, AusAid and NGOs such as World Vision) and serve the general public interest, particularly affected communities, through improved responses to catastrophes.

RESEARCH METHOD

In-depth face-to-face interviews based on open-ended questionnaires were selected to clarify the different perceptions of key stakeholders involved. These interviews enabled interpretation of the diverse, if not contradictory, views presented and evaluation of the effectiveness of relationships between key players

Four groups of informants were interviewed: *senior bureaucrats* from the different levels of the Central Government and the Provincial Councils (PCs) with significant responsibilities for the implementation of policies affecting relief, recovery and re-building, representative members of the *business community*, *civil society* personnel, including Buddhist temples, Churches, and other civil organisations at the village level and local and international non-government organisations (NGOs) and tsunami affected people. The interviews conducted in June-December 2005 included: 14

senior bureaucrats, some from Colombo; 6 members of the business community in Galle; 9 personnel from local and international NGOs; 5 members of the local community and 10 victims of the tsunami, from the Galle district. It was important to include all sectors to examine the different views of the operation of governance. The selected bureaucrats had more than 10 years of experience in the public sector and held senior government positions in various ministries.

A structured questionnaire was used and data were gathered from face-to-face interviews which allowed the establishment of trust and rapport and facilitated the provision of more in-depth understanding which would not be possible with a survey questionnaire (Zikmund 2003). The average interview was 30-90 minutes and was conducted both in the native language (Sinhala) and English, according to convenience.

Informal discussions were also conducted with senior bureaucrats in the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Services to clarify the complex relationships between different actors involved in the process.

REGAINING THE NATION AFTER THE TSUNAMI 2004: AN INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

The response to the Tsunami 2004 consisted of three stages, namely relief, recovery and rebuilding activities. The relief stage was in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, when victims needed such necessities as food, drinking water, medicine, temporary shelters. Recovery was the medium term period in which victims were looking beyond immediate survival needs to resume normal life by relocating to new places and trying to find employment. Rebuilding is the continuing long-term process of reconstruction of personal and societal social, physical and economic infrastructure. Under each stage a wide range of goods and services (Table 2) were provided to the tsunami victims by different actors (Table 3).

Insert Table 2 & 3 about here

Immediately after the disaster, different community groups and individuals acted instantly to help the victims regardless of their race, nationality or religion. Even the army forces worked together with the LTTE (the rival Tamil separatist group in Sri Lanka) to help people affected in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country. The country, if not the world, witnessed human solidarity on large scale during the early stage of relief activities.

The theoretical framework (Figure 2) proposes that the development of synergetic relationship requires a high level of collaboration, cooperation and coordination between different actors in order to achieve constructive and effective partnerships in service delivery. The specific nature of these relationships is contingent on the wide and varied domestic and international contextual factors that influence the overall process of governance. Any changes, positive or negative in these factors, will result in the variations in the underlying relationships between the different sectors. In the case of Sri Lanka, the evidence shows that the highest level of cooperation and collaboration between different actors at the initial stage made the daunting task of providing relief manageable (Table 3). Yet through the latter stages, the scenario changed dramatically.

As shown in Table 4, even though the collaboration, cooperation and coordination between the sectors were high during the relief stage, thereby leading to a situation of low conflict, the qualities of relationships dropped to moderate and then low during the recovery and rebuilding stages, giving rise to an increase in conflicts amongst the sectors. Thus synergetic relationships between the sectors that started out remarkably well early in the response to the tsunami later deteriorated. The reasons for this trend can be explained by exploring the many external factors (see Table 3) and events that had a direct impact on the governance process in this particular situation.

The majority of bureaucrats interviewed agreed that, during the relief stage, the level of cooperation extended to them by the other sectors had been very high and commendable. Interviewees praised the work of church leaders, temple priests, community leaders, local people, business community and NGOs whose prompt reactions in the aftermath of the tsunami ensured that the people in affected areas received much-needed necessities when the bureaucrats were unable to send relief to the areas due to infrastructure barriers, especially disrupted road and rail routes, during the first few days. With the collaboration of the other sectors, the government was able to render relief services such as arranging temporary shelter to the surviving persons, burying the dead, reuniting displaced persons and distributing food packets, medicine and drinking water to the survivors. However, towards the recovery and rebuilding stages, this cooperation and collaboration declined significantly. Possible reasons cited as causing such a decline were conflicts between the different sectors, coordination difficulties amongst the sectors and political conflicts amongst the government authorities themselves, particularly between the Provincial Council and the national government. One senior bureaucrat explained that their relationship with local and international NGOs in particular had become dysfunctional with confusion and conflict over a number of issues

Respondents from the other sectors also agreed that a high level of cooperation amongst the sectors was present at the initial stage of providing relief to victims. As expected, a high level of cooperation had led to the emergence of shared goals amongst the different sectors viz., the provision of relief to the victims without personal or political interests. As one government official put it, "At the relief stage, we all here are committed to help needy people and supplied essential goods."

However it dissipated during the latter stages. Respondents complained that it was due to the difficulty in working with the government machinery that caused this problem; it was slow, subject to many rules and regulations and lacking in strong leadership.

Insert Table 4 about here

Tension, domination by state actors, especially central government, and dysfunction rose, Respondents were asked a number of questions including a number of collaborative activities done, the level of interaction, a number of meetings they held, the level of communication (including whether it is formal or informal) and a number of conflicts with other actors they had during the period. Respondents were asked to rate each on a Lickert scale (1= very weak; 5= very strong). The responses were aggregated into a single "intensity" measure, shown in Figure 3. It shows that as the decline in the intensity of collaboration, cooperation and coordination was mirrored by rises in the levels of tension, domination and dysfunction ("conflicts").

Insert Figure 3 about here

The tsunami victims saw their relationships as more constructive at the relief stage. Thus the synergetic relationships resulted in positive partnerships and common goals between the sectors which produced sound management of the activities at the relief stage. Most respondents were satisfied with the way everyone handled the initial stage of the tsunami aftermath. The reasons for such outcomes point to the contextual factors that were conducive to building and maintaining synergetic relationships at this stage. However, an examination of the latter two stages gives us an indication as to how changes in these important factors caused the nature of relationships to change, thereby affecting the final outcome.

However, domination by Central Government over the Provincial Councils (PCs) resulted in the PCs not being effectively used. Respondents complained that even though the “district, divisional and village level government authorities cooperated well, they were consciously ignored the Provincial Councils”. In particular, “school rebuilding has been done by the National Education Ministry of the central government” whereas district schools should have been rebuilt under the jurisdiction of the PCs which had been established to decentralize power and give more authority to the provinces to handle their own problems. The Southern PC, within which Galle lies, was excluded from active involvement in the relief and reconstruction activities in the aftermath of the tsunami. The Central Government over-rode the SPC’s decision-making and executive authority, using central government district and divisional level bodies. A power struggle ensued between the PC and the government’s line ministries. As one respondent noted:

Their [Provincial Councils] interaction was limited to cleaning up the dead bodies at the relief stage. PC’s role was almost none-existent in recovery and rebuilding activities later on.

Also the dislike and fear by Central Government main party’s Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of the popularity of its coalition partner, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) led to competition between these two groups rather than cooperation, collaboration or coordination within government. The SLFP was not impressed when the Central Government members of JVP delighted local people by effectively coordinating and using available resources to help the victims. The Fisheries Minister of the Central Government was a JVP MP and played an important role as most livelihoods lost in the area were fisheries based. As large amounts of financial assistance from foreign donors for immediate relief and reconstruction activities flowed in to the country, the SLFP was stopped the JVP handling any major projects. Many interviewees believed this to be a key reason for the Central Government centralising authority and resources within a new national institution, the Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN), established to control the funds and decision making on relief, recovery and rebuilding activities.

Other examples of political interference and manipulation included: a local MP unwilling to relocate people in his electorate to other parts of the country for fear of losing votes; ghost victims turning up in politicians’ lists; politicians intervening in the distribution of donations; etc.

Weaknesses in the administrative capacity of the government were a major problem during the latter response stages. The primary complaint was that the government was too slow and too centralized. There was a lack of proper communication between TAFREN and the district and divisional levels and it did not understand the needs of the local people and how best to respond to local problems. One government officer at the district level expressed his frustration with this body as:

TAFREN is the centre of authority where we can find more theorists rather than practitioners. They are very close to the President but often indifferent in understanding diversity of the regional problems. They seemed to have assumed that Tsunami reconstruction should be coordinated by a central command and hence failed to understand the problems which local people face in the district. As local organizations understand better the problems of the victims and the nature of relief and recovery arrangements they should have been given more authority to implement recovery/rebuilding activities.

But when they moved into rebuilding activities, one Tsunami victim complained that:

(t)he lack of political leadership in the district was a major problem. The Provincial councils were not effectively used due to the political conflicts between the provincial council and the central government. The political party in power tries to capitalise their individual political interests. It seems that Ministers of the Central Government in the district have some conflicts between them.

At the district level, functional departments remained highly centralized. The coordination between the local institutions and the functional departments at the district level was minimal and many conflicts occurred between politicians and bureaucrats. District administration seems to safeguard the interests of the Central Government by strengthening the power base at the district level. Other central bodies engaged in responding to the disaster such as the Tsunami Housing Rebuilding Unit (THRU) and Urban Development Authority (UDA) also were involved in further reinforcing the power base of the central government.

Another participant at the district level reported that ‘government circulars were changed constantly without any notice, which became problematic at some stage in the service delivery.’ For example, the newly introduced 300 metre buffer zone in the coastal area was subject to numerous changes due to government policy changes. There was no firm decision on whether to introduce a 100 metre or 300 metre buffer zone and whether different zone limits should apply in according to local conditions. Much earlier studies by research institutions in the country and government departments such as fisheries and environmental protection had stressed the importance of a buffer zone and other measures including preserving coastal vegetation to reduce sea erosion. After the tsunami had emphasized the need of a coordinated coastal conservation policy, the government still failed to provide political leadership on this policy.

Many domestic and international NGOs, such as Seva Lanka, UN-Habitat, Red Cross and World Vision were involved in the provision of relief items to victims, clearing roads, providing generators etc as well as rebuilding permanent shelters for the homeless. The victims themselves were quite satisfied with the services provided by these NGOs. However government officials found that there were coordinating and monitoring difficulties in working with them. It was argued that ‘confidence building measures must be put in place to elicit trust in the motives of international aid agencies. The Sri Lanka Government asked the US Government to scale down the size of its military deployment in aid of the relief effort on its territory’ (Oloruntoba 2005: 511).

Small NGOs in particular were difficult to coordinate due to a lack of understanding of standards, criteria and codes of conduct. One government official stated:

In my view, large international NGOs (World Vision, Red Cross) work well effectively and cooperatively at the district level. However, local NGOs and some small international NGOs work with limited transparency. The main reason might be the language problem at the divisional level. Many Divisional Secretaries cannot invite International NGOs at the divisional level due to this problem and are unable to develop a close relationship with them.

Respondents were asked to rate the levels of involvement in terms of their financial contribution, decision-making process, the number of activates completed by actors on a Lickert scale (1= very limited; 5= very high). The responses are summarised in Table 5 and Figure 4.

Insert Table 5 & Figure 4 about here

Many small NGOs did not work in collaboration with the government bureaucracy; instead, they made their own rules when it came to providing services to victims. One example is where small NGOs, after acquiring a plot of land, built permanent houses on it and donated them according to their own list of beneficiaries, usually drawn up from informal contacts, and not according to the list of homeless people identified by the government. Most of the small NGOs working in the area are not on government records. Thus it is not surprising that problems of coordinating them have arisen. Those NGOs that worked through the government bureaucracy incessantly complained that the government systems are too slow and subject to much red tape. They claimed, rebuilding houses was a slow process due to many impediments such as the uncertainty regarding the exact distance of the “Buffer zone”, difficulties in maintaining relationships with government agencies due

to frequent internal rotation of bureaucratic appointments, difficulties of finding land, delays in acquiring land (typically taking 72 weeks even after it is found), difficulty in obtaining the list of beneficiaries from the government, etc. Large NGOs with foreign funds were keen to complete the rebuilding process quickly, as they wanted to report their progress to their donors. However, due to the delays many NGOs withdrew housing funds.

Business community contributions were at their peak during the relief phase but afterwards reduced dramatically. The business community distributed food, medicine, clothes etc amongst the victims and provided temporary shelter for the displaced even before government services were able to arrive on the scene. Many businessmen in the area used informal means to request aid from their acquaintances in the capital, Colombo. Informal relationships with government bureaucrats were important in the initial stages. One businessman interviewed claimed that, "At the initial level most of the activities were done informally. Even government officials were contacted through personal contacts/relationships."

Towards the latter stages business community's involvement greatly reduced, possibly due to the inability of the government to provide proper guidance and leadership to the other sectors. The business community's main complaint was that the government machinery was too slow and lacked coordination which led to ineffective provision of services at the recovery and rebuilding stages. Lack of strong political leadership at the district level led to much confusion and conflict. The business community's views on recovery and rebuilding were not seriously heeded by the bureaucrats, thereby alienating the community from participating in rebuilding activities. "Government involvement was marginal. District level political leadership was weak," said one businessman when asked to evaluate the overall outcome of the relief/recovery/rebuilding process. Another exclaimed that, "[Even though] response [to the disaster] was very good, the government did not act with a keen interest/commitment. Political leaders in Galle did not do their job". Almost everyone agreed that the "relief/recovery/rebuilding process itself" was "very slow" and phrases such as "ineffective" "lacking contacts and coordination" and "government involvement was minimal" were used repeatedly to describe the overall process. The breakdown of effective relationships between the government sector and the business sector, due to problems in the state bureaucracy, may have caused the business community to play a reduced role in the recovery and rebuilding activities.

In most areas devastated by the tsunami, the provision of transitional shelter for displaced families was ad hoc at best and often determined according to political and personal interests. Overlaps in the distribution processes were common. According to one interviewee, some victims received up to seven bicycles and eight sewing machines from different donors while other victims were left out. In some instances, where two or more families had been sharing one house as an extended family, each family separately requested a house for themselves from the government when their original house was damaged. Thus the government ended up building more houses than were damaged. Difficulties in obtaining information on the victims also arose, as a database had not been maintained on the inhabitants of the area, as one government official noted:

(i)n urban areas people movement due to different reasons is common. Therefore it is difficult to maintain a family database for them. Then after the Tsunami it was difficult to get information about these people.

Many victims complained that they did not receive any assistance from any party, as there was no fairness in distributing the donations. Those who were physically fit and good at voicing their needs and persuading the donors received more than their fair share of assistance while those lacking in these qualities often received nothing. Some areas that had not been damaged also received donations thanks to the influence of politicians. Such unfair treatment caused some frustrated victims to be very abusive and even violent towards bureaucrats, and in some instances the police had to be called in. Most victims themselves displayed a "dependent mentality" from the relief stage through to the rebuilding stages. Their attitudes towards rebuilding their lives and their villages have been quite lethargic and lacking in commitment. They seem to enjoy their status as

“victims” as they can get a continuous supply of donations. This is evident in instances where some victims refused to settle down in the houses built for them as they wanted to stay on subsidies and some did not start employment with the money given to them for that purpose. The victims themselves did not participate in rebuilding their own areas but waited for someone else to do it for them. It has been difficult for those involved in reconstructing these areas to motivate the people to return to their normal lives.

Political leadership at the central, provincial and district level has been marred by short-sighted attempts to take political advantage from the re-building programs, undermining genuine efforts to help the victims. Various discussions and policy decisions at the central level have painted an attractive picture to convince victims, and donor countries and organisations that the victims would be provided assistance without delay, but misappropriation of funds, favouritism in distribution of assistance, long delays in starting the reconstruction have been common problems that greatly undermine the efforts towards tsunami recovery attempts.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the post-tsunami environment in Sri Lanka showed that more than two years on, the rebuilding work carried out had been very slow despite large amounts of aid being promised and actually flowing in to the country.

The relief, recovery and re-building process exhibited severe market failure beyond the localised self-organising which occurred in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. The delivery of goods and services necessary to meet the social needs of the victims in the recovery and re-building phases became progressively less adequate. The data suggests that this was a product of the qualities of the Interconnectedness, Interdependence and Interactivity observed in the interrelationships, which derogated from the achievement and maintenance of satisfactory levels of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Much, if not all, of the slowness can be explained by the myriad of factors that have hampered the smooth process of governance needed to bring about the effective and efficient delivery of goods and services to the affected people. The synergetic relationships present during the relief stage that helped to deliver immediate relief to the victims came about as a result of the different sectors extending a high level of cooperation, coordination and collaboration towards each other. The reason for this could most likely be explained in the light of people’s compassion being awakened to the suffering of their fellow beings and accordingly lending a sympathetic hand towards alleviating their misery. Also, the scale of the disaster and the shock it caused to many who had never before witnessed anything its of proportion in their very backyard provided a strong impetus for them to help others. Thus human solidarity was witnessed at its highest level during the initial stages resulting in goal congruity amongst the different sectors. Governance transaction costs were low at this stage.

During the latter stages, as the novelty of the disaster wore off, the enormous task of coordinating the activities involved in responding to such a disaster began to sink in and most of the sectors were not ready to face the challenge. Everyone agreed that most of the people involved, especially the government officials, lacked training in disaster management and could not respond effectively. Somewhat counter-intuitively, even the command and control mode of governance operated poorly in these extreme circumstances. With the arrival of foreign aid, political motives also intruded. Politicians intervened to assert control over these new resources, further inhibiting effective relationships and jeopardizing the outcomes of governance. Party politics at the expense of victims’ needs and administrative red tape blocked the smooth functioning of the governance process creating tensions and dysfunctional relationships amongst the different sectors involved in the post-tsunami reconstruction efforts.

The evidence shows that much more than the extent of synergy affected outcomes. In the relief phase, a common humane concern for the victims emerged as an inter-connection between disparate people and institutions, overwhelming other interests. However, that concern had little penetration in the political realm, where the competition for electoral support produced unseemly use of power to intervene in highly counter-productive ways. Later, language inhibited inter-connection with some NGOs. Interconnection was clearly a desirable contribution to synergistic relationships; they were undermined when it was weak or absent.

Inter-dependence was extremely weak, so that much of its potential to foster synergistic effects was lost. Business and civil society both found themselves stymied by the failure of government to facilitate recovery and relief. Had the government, business and civil society sectors enjoyed closer, more cooperative relations in which each could rely for its effectiveness on the complementary role played by each other sector, then it is clear that, business and civil society in particular, would not have held back from making greater contributions to assisting victims.

Interaction similarly appeared to be weak. Whilst actors in each sector did deal with each other, there was immense dissatisfaction with the capacity of government to learn from the contact and review processes to the benefit of victims continuing needs for recovery and especially rebuilding actions.

Effective integrated governance requires monitoring and strengthening of the factors that lead to synergetic relationships between different parties. Where inappropriate factors operate, the governance process is weaker and less efficient. Thus it is worthwhile for parties engaged in providing humanitarian and re-building services to victims in disaster areas to foster and build on inter-connectedness, inter-dependence and interaction amongst themselves and to act to counter the negative impacts of individual motives and conflicts.

Whilst only central government has the legitimate authority to provide overall coordination in Sri Lanka, the outcomes are likely to be superior where coordination facilitates integrated governance and is actually undermined by a command and control approach. In the final analysis, we can conclude that the nature and extent of integration of the roles and actions of actors in the state, civil society and business sectors were key factors affecting the relief, recovery and rebuilding outcomes of a major disaster. Failures to achieve integrated governance undermine the flow of relief, recovery and rebuilding support to the victims.

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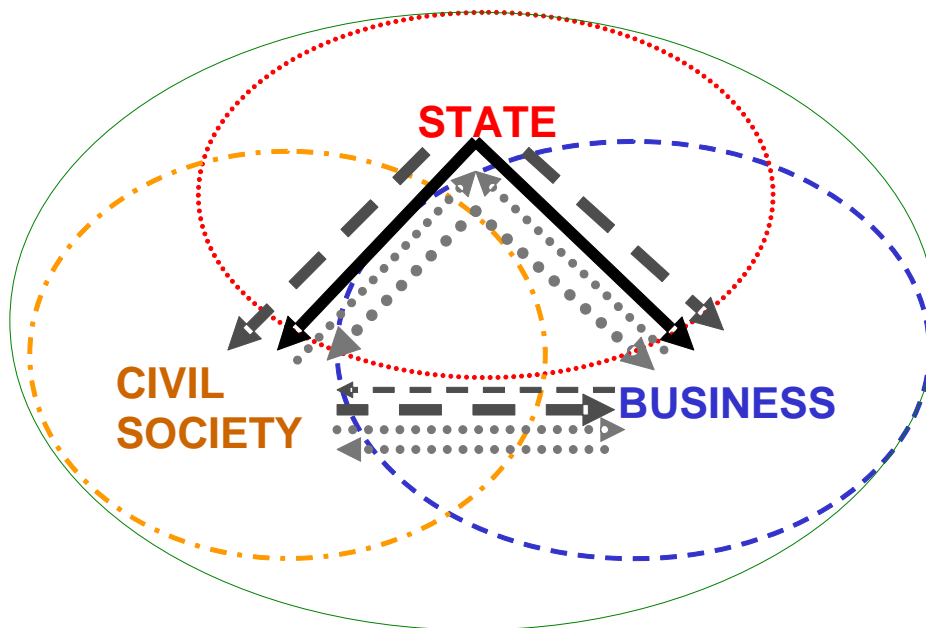
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Figure 1: Integrated governance: the three inter-related sectors of society



State, Business and Civil Society interconnected, interdependent & interacting as a complex evolving system



Rule setting



Coercive power



Persuasive power

Figure 2: Theoretical Model of Integrated Governance

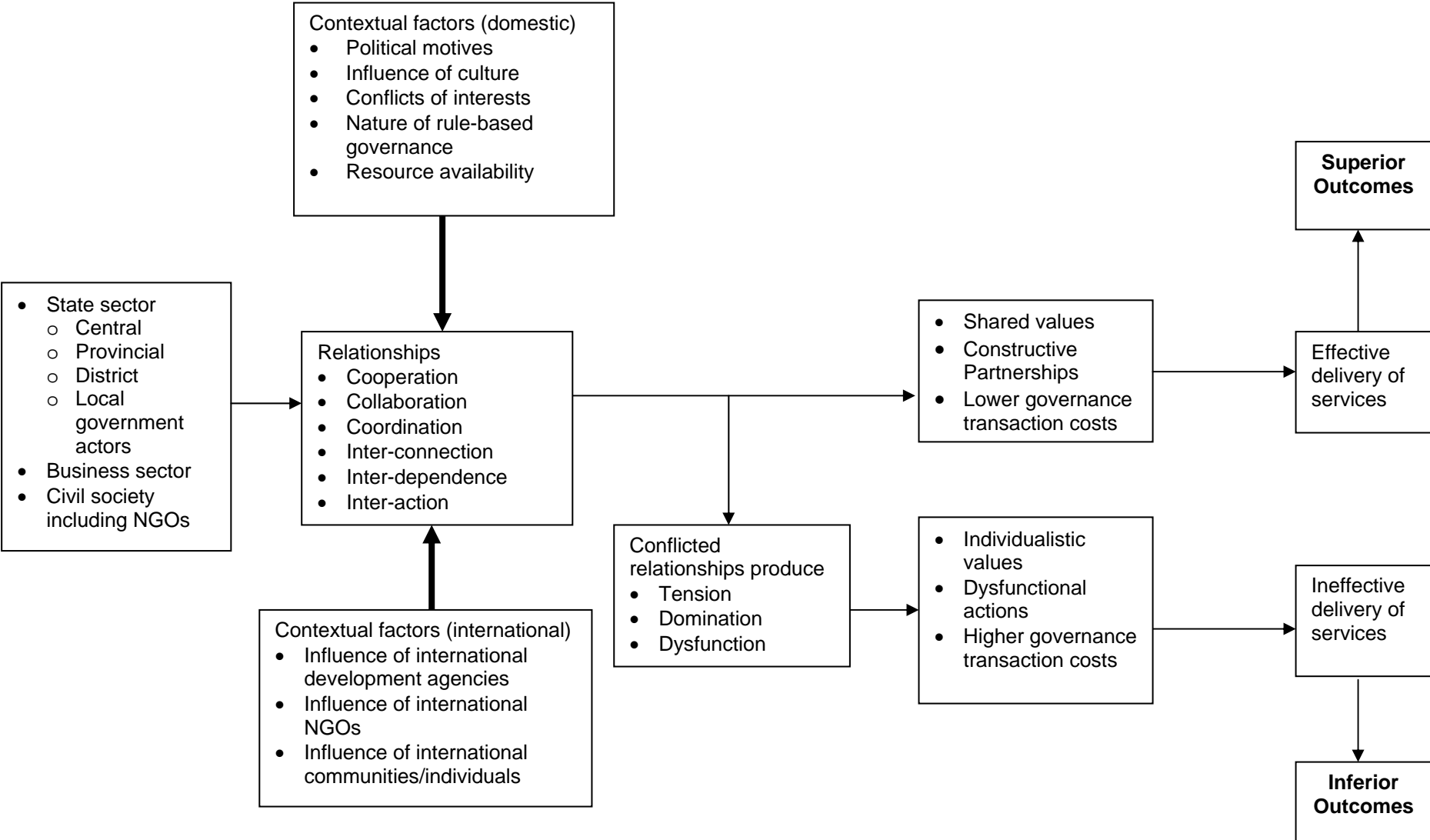


Figure 3: The intensity of relationships between different actors in a given context

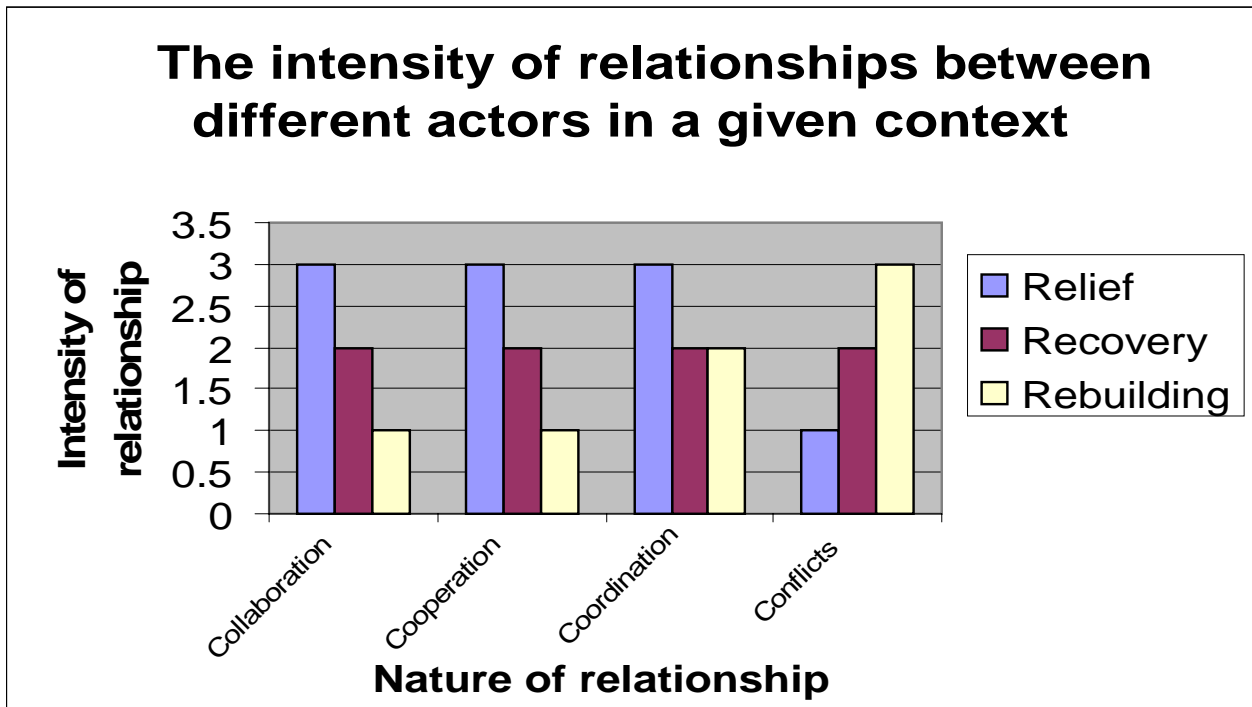


Figure 4: Different actors and their level of involvement

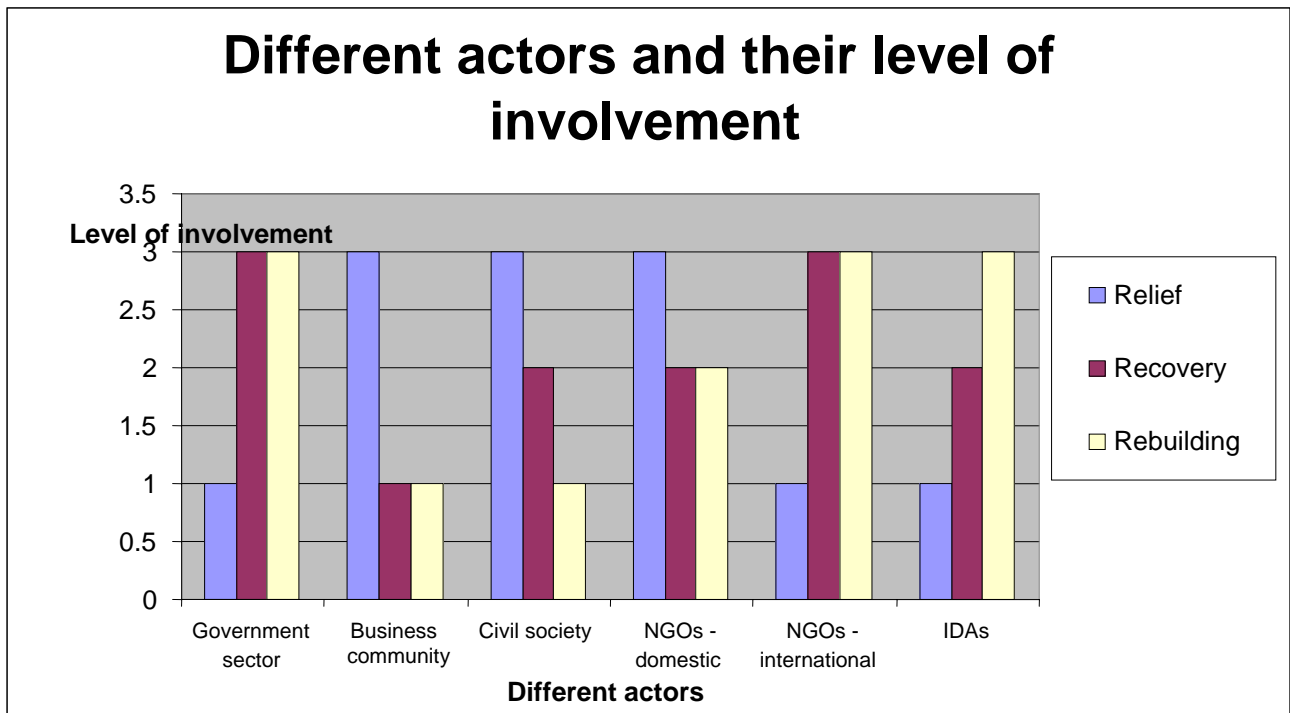


Table 1: Inter-relationships and synergistic relationships compared

		INTER-RELATIONSHIPS		
		Interconnection	Interdependence	Interaction
Synergy	cooperation	Cooperation is ‘the practice of individuals or larger societal entities working in common with mutually agreed-upon goals and possibly methods, instead of working separately in competition, and in which the success of one is dependent and contingent upon the success of another. However, cooperation may be coerced (forced) or voluntary (freely chosen), and consequently individuals/groups might cooperate even without common interests of goals. Inter-connection concerns cooperation with shared values and goals.	Cooperation is concerned with complementary nature of actions by actors whereas inter-dependence concerns the power relationships between them and hence the potential for bargaining or the exercise of coercion.	Cooperation is concerned with complementary nature of actions by actors whereas interaction refers to the effects of one actor’s actions on the actions of one or more actors. When cooperation is absent, these effects may lead to tension, domination or dysfunction, causing inferior outcomes.
	collaboration	Collaboration is a structured, recursive process where two or more people work together toward a common goal which is creative in nature, by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus whereas inter-connection concerns shared values, objectives etc, which may facilitate or, if absent conflicting relationships	Collaboration is concerned with the nature of joint actions by participating actors whereas inter-dependence concerns the power relationships between them and hence the potential for bargaining or the exercise of coercion.	Collaboration is concerned with the nature of joint actions by participating actors whereas interaction refers to the effects of one actor’s actions on the actions of one or more other actors. When collaboration is absent, these effects may lead to tension, domination or dysfunction, causing inferior outcomes.
	coordination	Coordination is concerned with informal or formal regulation of the actions of diverse participating actors into an integrated and harmonious operation whereas inter-connection concerns shared values, objectives etc, which may facilitate or inhibit coordination	Coordination is concerned with informal or formal regulation of the actions of diverse participating actors whereas inter-dependence concerns the power relationships between them and hence the potential for bargaining or the exercise of coercion.	Coordination is concerned with informal or formal regulation of the actions of diverse participating actors whereas interaction refers to the effects of one actor’s actions on the actions of one or more other actors. These may in turn affect the effectiveness of coordination and hence of outcomes.

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia, 2007

Table 2: Relief, Recovering and Rebuilding following the Tsunami 2004

	Relief	Recovery	Rebuilding
Life saving activities	✓		
food	✓		
Drinking water	✓		
Medical facilities	✓		
Shelter	✓		
Re-uniting missing people	✓		
Cloths	✓		
Relocation facilities	✓	✓	
Roads & transportation facilities		✓	
Electricity		✓	
Educational facilities		✓	
Health facilities		✓	
Irrigation facilities			
Agriculture facilities			
Government services		✓	
New houses			✓
Public buildings			
Other (please specify) – livelihood			✓

Table 3: Different Actors involved in Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding following the Tsunami 2004

	Government – individual government officials	NGOs (domestic)	NGOs (international)	International Development Organisations (IDAs)	Business community	Local community	Person-to-person
Relief							
Life saving activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drinking water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medical facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shelter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Re-uniting missing people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cloths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recovery							
Relocation facilities		✓	✓				
Roads & transportation facilities		✓	✓				
Electricity		✓	✓				
Educational facilities		✓	✓				
Health facilities		✓	✓				
Irrigation facilities		✓	✓				
Agriculture facilities		✓	✓				
Government services – <i>welfare payments</i>	✓						
Rebuilding	✓		✓				
New houses	✓		✓				
Public buildings	✓		✓				
Other (please specify) – <i>livelihood</i>	✓		✓				

Note: Civil society is here subdivided as shown.

Table 4: The nature of relationships between different actors in a given context

Nature of relationship	Relief	Recovery	Rebuilding
collaboration	high	moderate	low
cooperation	high	moderate	low
coordination	high	moderate	moderate

Table 5: Different actors and their level of involvement

Name of the actor	Level of involvement		
	Relief	Recovery	Rebuilding
Government	low	high	high
Business community	high	low	low
Civil society	high	moderate	low
NGOs (local)	high	moderate	moderate
NGOs (international)	moderate	high	high
International development agencies	low	moderate	high

Map of Sri Lanka

