

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE ETHNIC CONFLICT
ON POVERTY: AN EXAMINATION OF THREE COMMUNITIES IN THE
SERUVILA SECRATERIATE DIVISION**

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At present a number of scholars consider the ethnic conflict and poverty assuming that the war might be a key issue for the problems related to poverty. Sri Lanka is a developing county with an annual per capita income of about 820 dollars (World Bank Report 2000) and one out of five Sri Lankan households subsists below the poverty line. After achieving a 6.0% growth of GDP in 2000, Sri Lanka faced a negative economic growth of 1.3% in 2001. The decline was largely due to the LTTE attack on Sri Lanka's international airport a fact that adversely affected tourism and shipping. The impact of ethnic conflict on poverty can be examined at micro and macro levels. But most scholars and institutes have studied this at a macro level. This paper attempts to understand the impact of the conflict on poverty in war-affected areas. By examining the ethnic conflict and poverty, we can build two hypotheses. Conflict causes poverty and poverty causes grievances. The present paper attempts to examine how conflict causes poverty.

The research was carried out among three communities in the Seruvila Divisional Secretariat Division in the Trincomalee District. The main objective of the study is to understand the impact of the war on the poor along with the poverty dynamics in the war-affected regions focusing on the three ethnic communities.

The data for the study were collected from three selected villages in the Seruvila Secretariat Division representing all three ethnic groups, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed to collect information. A survey of records and literature was done to gather secondary data and was followed by primary data collections in the field. For the collection of the primary data, case studies, interviews, group discussions and observation were employed.

The findings of the study reveal that the major factors that have contributed to poverty in the war affected areas are physical damages to life and property, frustrations and hopelessness created by the war, the decline of traditional livelihood activities, the decline of both public and private sector services, LTTE tax policies and the decline of support organization at community level.