

## Managing Housing and Infrastructure Needs for a Fully-Fledged Involuntary Resettlement: the Case of Central Expressway in Sri Lanka

### Abstract

Housing with infrastructure needs are basics in resettlement projects having a public stake. As part of a study exploring how these needs can be effectively addressed, this paper identifies the gaps in managing these infrastructure needs in one of the highway construction projects in Sri Lanka namely Central Expressway, phase 1. This case study provides a perspective in exploring the issues encountered by the affected people using grounded theory. The paper presents the recommendations to minimize such gaps. Data was collected through unstructured interviews comprising both the beneficiaries and the government officials, **reducing opinion bias**. Gaps identified were ad-hoc erection of houses, lack of infrastructure facilities, security, safety and health issues, delay and insufficiency of compensation and inefficiency in administrative functions and information asymmetry. Some kind of interventionist approach **is inevitable** to enhance beneficiary participation and knowledge sharing in order to minimise these gaps, the majority of which has been outweighed by the perceived land value. The findings of this research will help detect the existing gaps in involuntary resettlement including institutional inefficiencies that hamper the progress of resettlement.

Keywords: involuntary resettlement, housing and infrastructure needs; policy gaps; grounded theory

### Introduction

It is imperative to ensure faster resettlement of families displaced due to linear projects such as highways. However, a deep concern is that many of the housing policies **are weak in accommodating the local realities** and people's own preferences and contributions (Brun, Cathrine & Lund, Ragnhild, 2009). By taking into account the limitations and interests of all participants involved in the reconstruction process only a realistic progress could be expected in human resettlement (Barakat, S, 2004). Timely action, being one of the important facets of a housing policy, does contribute not only the social and economic well-being but the psychological steadiness of these people. Resumption of livelihood is imperative to gender equity and family empowerment (Barakath, Zyck 2011). While reaping the benefits of large-scale infrastructure projects, it is important to recognize, both monetarily and otherwise, the sacrifices that have been made by the people who were displaced "for the greater good". **The people displaced by a project should receive a replacement** which should be at least as well-off as they would have been without the project (João et al, 2011; Wang, 2012; Vanclay et al, 2015). However, many researches have revealed the governments use the power of domain to impose expropriation lavishly. Perera, T.G.U.P et al, (2012) argue that these resettlements are

sometimes turning into unproductive informal communities. As a result, the people are usually made worse off by being resettled (Frank Vanclay, 2017).

### **Aim and objectives**

This paper attempts to address a part of the foregoing lacuna using a case study. It tells us about the efforts that were made by the administrative entities to address disquiets of the displaced, as well as the success and failure of those efforts, related to a resettlement site located in Mirigama. This study reveals that the slowness in addressing the housing and infrastructure needs has given rise to a plethora of teething troubles such as irregular erections, security, safety and health issues, feeling of impoverishment risks to name a few. Hence, this study is aimed to investigate how the housing and infrastructure needs can be effectively managed in the overall resettlement process. The study's objectives are to identify the gaps in managing housing needs and derive recommendations to minimise such gaps.

### **Practical implications**

A number of studies have identified the gaps in different contexts such as post conflict reconstruction (Seneviratne K, 2017), Southern Expressway (H.M.T. Dharmawardhana, 2017) and (Akira Ozawa, So Morikawa, 2017), expansion of built up areas (Kathryn Gomersall, 2018), remote relocation mixed with another community (Vanclay, 2017), spatial effects (Rogers, S., & Wilmsen, B. (2020), landslide resettlement (PA Vijekumara, 2015) and Norris, L (2020). This study particularly identified the gaps in addressing housing and infrastructure needs in resettlement related to a major highway construction in Sri Lanka. Hence, this paper captures the different viewpoints on key issues, and the delays and difficulties faced in addressing these viewpoints, while presenting valuable lessons to be learnt. It will not only address the outcomes of land acquisition and resettlement, but also provided discernments on how the development process could better be improved to accommodate the needs and aspirations of the affected persons (APs). The knowledge emancipated in this study will provide valuable insights into resettlement planning.

### **Central Expressway project**

The Central Expressway, also known as the Colombo-Kandy Expressway project will connect the cities of Colombo and Kandy, duplicating the existing A1 road. A considerable reduction in traffic congestion is expected with the launch of this highway. The first stage from Kadawatha to Ambepussa (48.2 km) will be a four-lane, divided carriageway with provision for two more lanes in the future. There will be four interchanges at Kadawatha, Gampaha, Balabowa and Mirigama, with fifty overpasses and thirty underpasses along the route. The initial estimated cost of phase one was approximately Rs. 70 bn, with more recent costs estimated at Rs. 158 billion under a concessionary loan from the Exim Bank of China. The construction of the section from Kadawatha to Mirigama (Phase 1) is scheduled to be completed within the next two years. 6,432

people from 1,742 families have been affected due to loss of landholdings. To-date, the scheduled completion of the project has been delayed by four years.

## **Methodology**

As the management of housing and infrastructure needs in a context of delayed resettlement is absent in the literature, the grounded theory approach is deliberately chosen. It is hoped, the grounded theory is capable of providing more insights into the phenomenon (delayed resettlement) largely influenced by the impacts of Covid 19 and the subsequent economic recession in the country. Moreover, the grounded theory approach provides flexibility in collecting and analysing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). The primary method of data collection for this study is interviewing. Interviews are acknowledged to be the preferred method of data collection in grounded theory studies (Creswell, 2007). Accordingly, less structured interviews were conducted with the affected people (APs) and government officials on individual basis who have been directly experienced with the issues of resettlement. The subsequent participants were chosen to follow up the ideas prompted by data. Therefore, theoretical sampling technique is used, where the sampling is based on the concepts evolved from the study. Data collection and analysis were done concurrently until the data ceased to reveal any new concept. Interviews were conducted in the months of May and June 2023 and each interview lasted between 45–60 minutes. Attempts were made to do axial coding in the early stages of the analysis. Where practical, interview data were supplemented by creative visual images.

## **Results and discussion**

This section of the paper discusses the gaps in managing housing and infrastructure needs at the resettlement site

### **Lack of benevolence**

Involuntary resettlement can only be justified when: (1) the project is in the public interest (2) the principle of proportionality is satisfied; (3) due process has been observed; and (4) the affected people have been given full and fair compensation (that they are not worse off) (Hoops et al, 2015; United Nations 2014; BverfG, 2013). However the reality is far away from this conception mainly because of the bureaucratic approach taken by the authorities in dealing with the affected, according to the majority of interviewees. One interviewee whose background is a principal of a school told; *“People must be contacted humanely without any influence, position or otherwise. It is natural that people affected by resettlement will be apprehensive since they have lost their livelihoods and communities and more over they are ill-prepared for complex negotiations over entitlements”*. One interviewee expressed his utter discomfort on the title ‘ex-gratia’ or in Sinhala ‘*karunasahagathadeemanawa*, the title assigned to the compensation. *“Strictly speaking the term gives a wrong impression. We need no special sympathy, only the actual replacement cost as long as it covers a mental compensation for agony that the entire*

*process of resettlement creates. The term disrespects the humanity. We are proud citizens of this country, not kallathonni (illegal migrants)''.*

In all interactions, the first impression matters a lot. One interviewee showed a letter which instructed him to participate in a meeting has the last sentence, in case of absence; it will affect the timely payment of compensation". *"This is a passive threat"*, the interviewee told. Another interviewee said that *"the Administration is not responding to our letters"*. Yet, another interviewee said *"we had received letters asking at any time we should allow tree cutting, changing boundaries, excavation of soils, etc, while quoting some provisions in the Lands Acquisition Act" This is what authoritative means"*. The interviewees expressed their agony over a statement made by one official at the preliminary briefing held at the temple, *"Lands belong to the king and no one can challenge. Therefore we had to rally around ourselves to stop officers visiting our locations"*. All APs were unhappy about another statement made by an official at the initial meetings *"Those who are vacating houses faster will be rewarded with a rice cooker, fridge and an oven. "This statement clearly led down the proud citizens who have been living in this village for generations, one old interviewee said. All this has created a gap of understanding between the APs and the Administrators generating agony. "Initially, they said they will compensate us for everything including trees but in 2016, they prepared estimates at lower prices. I opposed the amount, and then the officials threatened us saying that the lands are owned by the Government and therefore, they could remove us at any time," he said. "After they threatened us, we became afraid and thought we would lose the lands and not be given a cent from the Government. Therefore, we signed the papers agreeing to the Government's estimates. But up until now, the Government has not given us a cent,"(AP).*

### **Lack of choice over land selection**

At the resettlement site, a lottery system was used to allocate land parcels to the resettlers with a view to avoid bias and favors. Land plots located close to access roads and the land plots suitable for special needs were not separately identified. This method of plot allocation was perceived as rational and fair by the majority of resettlers. The resettlement site that is located closer to the expressway entrance is considered to be of high economic value especially once the highway is completed and launched. One interviewee told that *"the officers have no other choice to distribute land plots"*. Another interviewee told that *"at least few plots at the entrance should have been allocated to those who were residing in houses facing the main bus routes"*. The officials said, *"We only know how difficult it was for us to find a land for resettlement"*. It is understood that the lands are in short supply.

### **Poor living conditions during the transition**

It was found that households spent long periods of time between official notice to evacuate the premises and the actual displacement. This protracted transitional phase was generated source of anxiety, anger, frustration, and hopelessness. Though this matter has been quite evident, only a

handful of research locally done such as (Dharmawardane HOMT, 2017). As a result, the households with persons needing care to look after babies, the aged, and the sick were particularly affected. Many APs preferred the option of receiving cash to build up their own house elsewhere, instead of having a plot of land at a resettlement site. However, until they get a sufficient amount to kick start erection, they had no choice but cheaply poor temporary structures. Some households spent more than two years in unhealthy dwellings. *“We are really despite about the living conditions. We have now fallen “kabalencilipata”- out of frying pan into fire’* (AP).

None of the resettlement sites had been developed with the basic facilities such as water and electricity when resettlers arrived to establish their dwellings. Those who first moved to these resettlement sites have suffered a lot than those who came to occupy late in the resettlement site.



Figure 1: Delayed electricity, tarred road and drainage

Figure 1 shows the current status several months after this survey.

*“At this resettlement site, relocation planning was poor and as a result, the infrastructure facilities were incomplete when resettlers moved into their new houses”* (AP). The agony and frustration that the APs experienced during the transition phase continued to the early relocation phase. Five households have been resettled, but only a well they dug provided water.

Figure 2: Half erected house with no finishes and protection from weathering effects



Inadequate water facilities appear to have resulted from the lack of finance that led to excluding the construction of domestic wells within housing reconstruction. “*Our well has water throughout the year, drinkable but edges tend to collapse.*”(AP). It seems some measures are required to stabilize soil for long run use. Poor access roads, flooding during the rainy season due to poor land leveling are some of the issues identified. There is a widespread dissatisfaction among the resettlers, however, with regard to the quality of access roads, drainage, and water supply. The administration attributed the high cost of developing resettlement sites. Some APs covered the doors and windows with temporary materials and they blamed this on the limited compensation granted (Figure 2).

### **Delay in the issuance of title deeds**

APs have no idea as to handing over the resettlement site to the local authorities but confirm that they have not received the land title deeds. This may be because the issuance of title deeds to the resettlers is never been a priority of the authorities. Delays in land ownership transfer to the

authority from the owners, and the delays in registration have also contributed to this delay. *“We are not in a position to do any permanent erection without deeds in hand”*, all the interviewees said. *“As a family, we tend to settle somewhere else and we have been waiting to sell this 12 perches to meet the cash requirement but delay in the issuance of deeds has halted everything”* (AP). APs who have secured a plot of land and who wish to erect their own house get no priority in the queue for planning approval at the local government authority. *“We have been in queue for three months to get the approval for the proposed house due to an issue with the master plan, which is beyond our control”*. *“It is surprising to see that the authorities push families for faster resettlement to vacate the right of way to the highway but exert no intervention to get the planning approvals done for the applicant”* (AP). As Brun, Cathrine & Lund, Ragnhild, (2009) mentioned, some kind of interventionist approach is indispensable where the officials have a pivotal role to act as an arm of liaison in order to ease out these legal barriers.

### **Insufficiency and delay in compensation**

It is natural that the APs are expecting compensation on par with payments made in previous projects. APs have been exposed to various stories surrounding the previous project of similar nature which is Southern Expressway. Many interviewees were of the strong opinion that they have not been reasonably compensated. *“We have been blessed with only the basics needed to shift the location. We received peanuts for crops and vegetation”*. For example a cost of a house ascertained merely on superficial floor area covered does not necessarily amount to a fair compensation. The cost of a house depends on a myriad of factors such as height and volume, finishes used, external amenities etc. On top of them, professional fees for design, supervision and a fee for government agencies including stamp duties apply. Land too has variables such as road frontage. *“None of these variables have been considered in the valuation, (AP). In a nutshell, the value should replace the loss due to displacement, not the purchasing value of the property decided by an individually visiting government valuer. “This is involuntary resettlement, not buying and selling”, (AP).*

Delay in the payment of compensation is a common experience to all the APs in the resettlement site. *“I have been looking bleak after I vacated my 100-perch ancestral land four years ago, and yet to receive compensation from the Government. The basis of compensation has been questioned by the APs quite often as it could even be dependent on a myriad of factors such as quality of the finishes, location of the house and its proximity to the township etc.*

*“At a meeting held in 2014, the Government promised fair compensation and said we would be compensated in line with the market value of the land, after the villagers’ signatures indicating their agreement to release the land to the Government were obtained, the villagers had to chase the officials, seeking compensation and other relevant details about the project. I was not the only one affected; hundreds of other families whose lands were taken over by the Government for this project”. While officials were preparing documents for compensation, I had noticed that my properties had been undervalued and estimated at a lower amount to what they*

were promised in 2014". (AP). This payment of compensation is a question in most of the time, and there are grievances by landowners saying mode of compensation is not satisfied due to reasons of the insufficient amount of compensation or not filling the requirement they used to enjoy before the acquisition.

### **Security, safety, health and physical issues on isolated lands**

Sejal Patel et al, (2015) argues that the displaced poor households have been further disadvantaged as a result of limited attention. The APs who are relocated in the first instance of opening the resettlement site are subject to security, safety, health and physical issues posed by the isolation itself (Figure 4). This is understood when there is a new human settlement that requires faster orientation, both physical and psychological. New comers are subject to vulnerabilities, both safety and health such as no sewerage facility. M. Sirajul Islam, (2016) showed that the safe distance from the tube well to the pit latrine depends on the horizontal and vertical distances of the tube well and hydrogeological conditions. Widespread use of pit latrines causes groundwater contamination. One interview told that *'We have no option. Do everything within the 12 perches given.'* There are 63 plots of land in an extent of 4 acres of site where in the worst case, the 63 toilets and 63 wells may cause health hazards unless a proper action plan is set out from the beginning.



Figure 3; Fire caught land (Source of fire unknown)

Dengue is one of the major public health problems in Sri Lanka driven by population densities, human mobility, vector proliferation, and climate variability. (Prasad L., 2021). The Environment section of the Sri Lanka Police, Grama Niladhari of the relevant division and the Public Health Inspectors are chasing behind uncleared areas including isolated plots of lands having a growth of shrubs. *"We have to look after a land having no legal stake. It is just assigned in a letter (AP).*



Figure 4: Protection of plants from wild boar and porcupine attack

It is witnessed that there are a couple of wells dug and unused for some time with no safety fence around. Shrubs surrounding these wells and pits restrict visibility in lightly thick jungle. Abandoned wells hidden beneath grass and brush receive no attention. (Figure 6). Worse yet, many hand-dug or bored wells are large enough to trap an unsuspecting child, wild animal, or pet.



Figure 5: Abandoned well

One interviewee stated, *“I had to call upon the authority to resurvey the plot of land and mark the pegs demarcating the boundaries again due to some workers who had come to install overhead electricity lines. We have no idea when they came”*. These labourers have dumped

excavated earth into plots belonging to APs damaging timber pegs. There is no way of contacting each other for any information. Lands unattended may be subject to various other problems such as dumping garbage, debris etc in the neighborhood. Wild boar and porcupine attack to newly rotted vegetation such as coconut etc was chiefly involved in crop raiding (Figure 5).

### **Difficulty in enabling works**

The majority settled in the same village for many obvious reasons such as the physical attachment like school, temple, etc and psychological attachment such as relatives, friends, familiarity and sense of security etc. Though these relocation efforts cannot be a 'boom' as such, in its strictest sense, this essentially entailed new constructions or at least renovations of the existing houses where skilled labour is found to be indispensable. Masons and carpenters had a big involvement in this initial change-over and the building materials are in a short supply. A couple of interviewees told that *'We have been chasing 'basunnahes' (skilled labourer) who grab every job they are invited. It is a windfall to them as they can demand high process. Even with high rates, they do not regularly come and work. Indeed they collect more money than they do'*. In the construction trade, this is termed as front end loading. In Sri Lanka, the construction labour is scarce, costly, informal organized and seasonal.

Enabling works are temporary works of preliminary nature such as site fencing, site accommodation, temporary electricity, water and sanitary requirements to enable the contractor to kick start the erections. At this juncture, the labourers who will come from other areas will have to stay full time at site. *"luckily we got electricity almost after six months and it is a big achievement"*(AP). Delay in facilitating the site with electricity and water has discouraged APs to relocate housing. Accordingly, resettlement programs should ensure the protection from disease. Nonetheless, APs in the resettlement site has left out sanitary facilities. Water facilities have not been provided through rebuilding some community wells. There is one big well unused for some time. One interviewee said, *"...Drinking water is supplied from a well in the distance. We fetch water from far away"*(AP). Inadequate water facilities appear to have resulted from the lack of finance that led to excluding the reconstruction of domestic wells within housing reconstruction.

### **Artificial Price hike up in the vicinity**

Open market vacillations are a day today phenomenon and resettlement projects have no exception unless some kind of 'interventionist' approach is taken to deal with price escalation. Individual APs have become necessary victims of price escalation when building materials are purchased. APs face a lesser chance to obtain a trade discount when bulk purchases are not possible. In fact, APs tend to purchase materials from time to time in small quantities. *"We have no option but to live with the conditions. However we are very upset with the notion of the general masses that we are economically better off with the project and it is no harm of sharing a piece of cake with us"*(AP). Essential building items such as Aluminum, tiles, water pumps,

and rain water gutters have been included under the temporarily banned imports, a move to stop foreign currency outflow. *“We have been seriously handicapped by the opportunistic hardware shops selling building materials relatively at a high price”*(AP).

### **Increase in land value with the economic expansion**

All expects a considerable demand for lands, thereby increase of land value once the highway is launched for the public. Since the resettlement site is located nearby one proposed interchange (Mirigama North), the APs are in high contemplation that the prices of their land will go up at a galloping rate. However, this ‘dream’ can come true only when an isolated site is converted to a developed urban housing scheme energized with water, electricity and other facilities with easy access to the highway. This is possible as long as the APs and Administrative arms work together. APs perceive that *“the land value is high as four to five times by now- something which we can be happy about”*. This is a common perception of those living inside and outside the resettlement site. However, as Perera, T.G.U.P et al, (2012) contended, a doubt is cast behind an unproductive site with informal, irregular and ad-hoc physical expansion.

### **Recommendations to minimize the gaps**

This section discusses the recommendations to minimize above gaps in managing housing and infrastructure needs in resettlement.

### **Treating with respect**

Morality and respect are immeasurable and priceless. Lack of sensitivity and respect for humane concerns has been evident throughout the entire process. With no reservation, the human rights must be fully respected and fulfilled by project proponents. One interviewee told that *“the style of writing letters in a government set up is such that they quote various rules to induce people”*. This kind of approach will definitely keep the people separate from the development initiatives instead of participation, sharing and contribution in planning and managing resettlement. Treating with respect helps reduce misunderstandings and gives opportunity to participate in key decisions that will affect their lives. Resettlement implemented without consultation may lead to inappropriate strategies and eventual impoverishment. Without consultation means more oppression, social disruption, time overrun, cost increases or even abandonment. With consultation, initial opposition to a project may be transformed into constructive participation fostered by holding public meetings and identifying focus groups.

### **Attention at Transition**

It is required to hand over resettlement sites to local government authorities such as Pradeshiya Sabha and urban councils to manage and maintain common services. Funds must be available to local authorities to complete outstanding infrastructure works at the resettlement sites, but the local authorities did not have the capacity or experience to attend to such works.

The key reason for this was the absence of linkages between the government bodies. *“the level of liaison with the local government authorities is not known to them”* (AP).

Uncertainties during the pre-relocation phase are significant causes of impoverishment risks among the households likely to be displaced. Accurate and detailed information of the resettlement projects need to be communicated in the early stage of the process to avoid the unnecessary impoverishment risks of affected households. Clear transparent guidelines on entitlements and compensation for each displacement type need to be disclosed and discussed with affected communities. Cash payment for rental allowance or cash value of remaining lease, assistance for finding alternate rental accommodation and support for income losses and during transition period will ease out the problems related to transition. Some beneficiaries had difficulties in accessing drinking water facilities due to the salinity of water and lack of availability of safe drinking water facilities close-by. By considering the limited finance, interviewees suggested constructing adequate community wells for beneficiaries who had experienced difficulties in accessing drinking water. *“As money is limited, they cannot assist beneficiaries to construct domestic wells. That is true. But at least they should construct common wells for these beneficiaries (PMN)”*.

### **Fair and reasonable recompense**

A matrix that sets standards for compensation is inevitable to avoid anomalies over compensation in at least, to maintain the level of living under 'without-project' situation, a strategy for maintaining their former standard of living must be of top priority. Interviewees suggested the need for diverse assistance approach in housing reconstruction.

*“While everybody is treated almost equally you can treat different households in different ways because their requirements and their issues are different such as widows, female heads, disabled and elderly (AC)”*.

Regarding compensation, the administration has a criterion of payment based upon the value of the assets taken over. *“We have no control over the method of valuation, one official said. “Those who are dissatisfied with the valuation can go upward in the ladder, that is Superlaarc and Courts. Until such time, money will be deposited in a bank and no interests will be paid. Due to special nature of this project, people must vacate their premises. The law is strong enough to push people on resettlement”*, the official confirmed.

### **Monitoring mechanism**

It seems that this particular settlement site has been given less attention and patronage by the government officials as they have some other priorities in clearing up the road trace for the highway development. Once the APs have vacated their houses and lands, and the lands are made physically available for the APs to kick start the erection of their new houses, the most wanted segment for the highway construction is considered done. Unlike many other

resettlement sites, the monitoring part has no significance. This inadequate monitoring has hindered the habitability of resettlement housing.:

*“The technical officer passed the relevant installment to our account, other than that they did not visit to supervise during construction. We withdrew money from our account and paid for the masons. Even after construction, so far no one came to see these constructed houses (AP)”.*

It also appears that post occupancy evaluations (such as this study at grass root level) have not been carried out any of the agencies having a public stake. This supports previous research, which suggests that the absence of post occupancy evaluation reflects the lack of interest in beneficiary satisfaction (Barakath et al. 2004). Since post occupancy observations and evaluations help identify the gaps in construction monitoring, administrative entities also have a role to play. *“Indeed, we must do post occupancy observations and evaluations to identify the issues in their habitation. Then they should avoid these issues subsequently (PMN)”.*

### **Beneficiary awareness**

Beneficiary awareness is of utmost significance in any kind of resettlement where the information asymmetry can in most cases act as a barrier for soft landing. In its technical sense, soft landing is the gradual handover of a site with a period of professional aftercare. Ideally, it boosts up awareness among the APs on the matters of common interests such as minimum housing requirements, design cost optimization, cost control and technical advice on maintenance of common facilities as appropriate. Nevertheless, awareness regarding APs contribution is appeared to be lacking. As opposed to expending all money in one-go that received from time to time, some beneficiaries haswisely acted as befits the circumstances when they got to know that money is a hard resource. These APs have used their second hand materials such as timber, roofing sheets, water gutters, and almost every material dismantled and reusable, to the extent where possible. *“Enabling individual households to customize their property by re-using existing building materials is a big thing (AP)”.* However, the transactional cost involved in the dismantling, transport, cutting wastage, and the obsolescence of materials has severely limited this approach. Hiring of skilled labour has also hindered the accomplishment of minimum housing requirements. *“Masons are constructing my house with unskilled labourers. Masons charge high rates (AP)”.*



**Figure 6: Half erected house with no funds in hand**

Furthermore, the beneficiaries demonstrated a lack of awareness regarding habitable finishes. As opposed to settle in habitable finishes, beneficiaries' desire was to fully complete the housing which was not possible with the limited financial grant. Inadequate consideration of low financial gain, a livelihood support package is

suggested to enhance the beneficiaries' capacity to generate their own income so that they could complete the remaining construction while occupying the house being rebuilt (Figure 6). Nevertheless, some beneficiaries experienced difficulties in completing the remaining construction due to the low financial income.

*“I am a fish monger. I earn Rs500 a day. This is even not enough for the food expenses of the day. The main problem we face is having not enough money to complete the house (AP)”.*

Therefore, interviewees suggested that reconstruction of habitable housing was not successful for low income beneficiaries. Lack of completion of the remaining work hindered the living of young women in particular due to the lack of security and privacy..

### **Architectural inputs**

The law is clear in that the minimum housing requirements have been established under several strata such as condominium, housing schemes, private houses etc in the capital, suburbs and townships. This has been observed in many other studies (Seneviratne, et al, 2017). One of the unique features in this resettlement site is that the government is offering the land only and the APs are given full liberty to have their own house erected according to their individual/family aspirations. Unlike the findings of the research done by Seneviratne, et al, 2017, the APs are free to make their own design according to their traditional customs and beliefs. However, the APs have no idea as to how they should manage the house erection in terms of a project that entails an architectural language. Some interviewees proposed the government intervention on educating them the housing standards while some of the interviewees opposed on their previous experience working with the government officials. It is seen however that a gap of knowledge on articulating the end user requirements within the cost, time and quality parametersexists. This gap of knowledge has led to a cost overrun, slowness in resettlement and lack of modern architectural inputs. These newly developed housing standards appeared to have considered a wide range of aspects relating to housing but a lack of consideration.

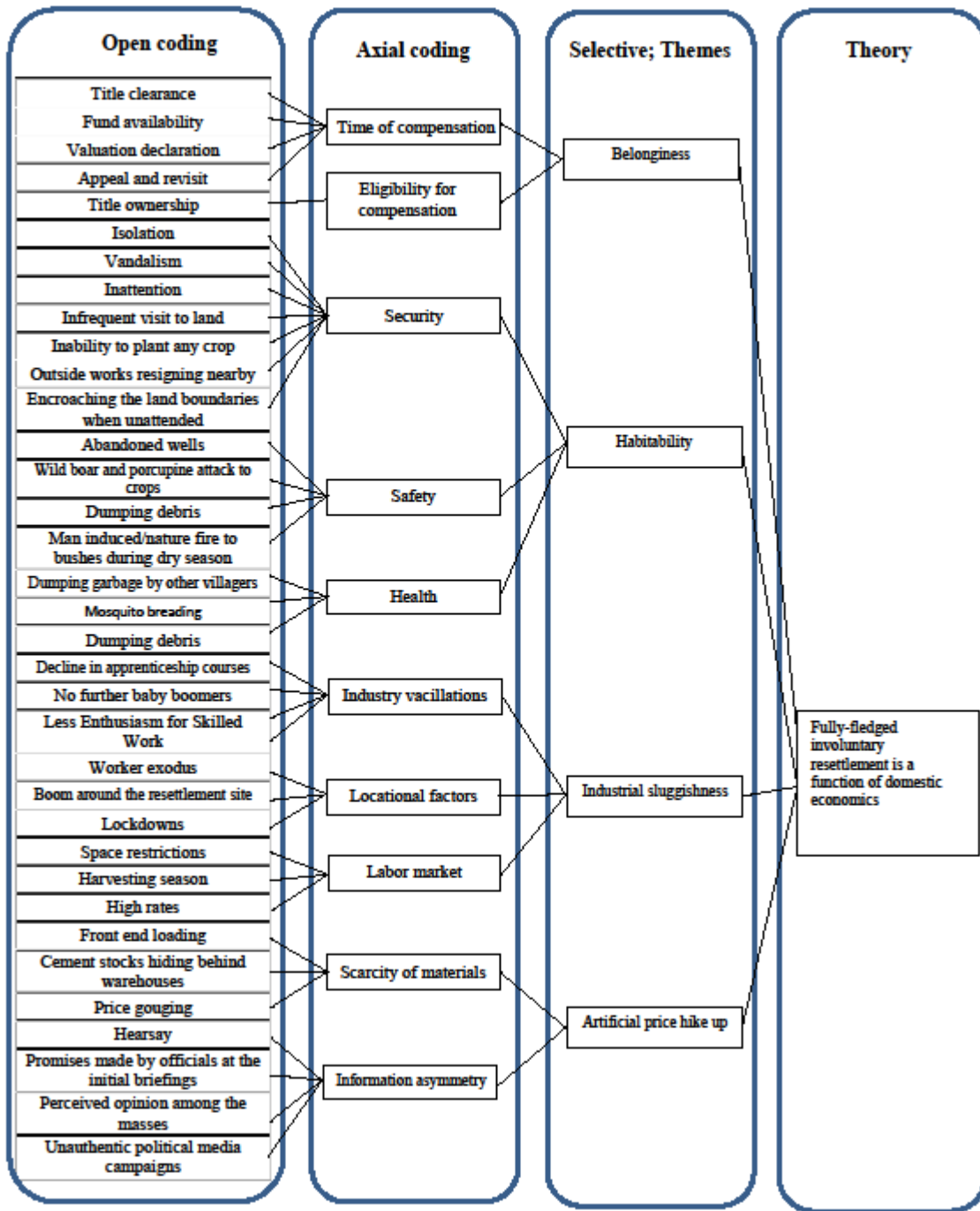
*“It is important to get the contribution of beneficiaries, while they also benefit. That is why capacity building programmes during the reconstruction is important. Thus people can be trained on the job. Meantime, the government must give patronage the resettlement from the project management perspective. There are many aspects of building that must work together to produce a buildable, aesthetically pleasing, useful, code compliant building which the owner will be able to use to his advantage for many years. (PM)”.*

Grounded Theory aims to develop a theoretical framework that is grounded in the data, which enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings. The iterative process of data collection and analysis also helps to ensure that the research findings are reliable and robust. Grounded Theory can generate new and original insights into social phenomena, as it is not

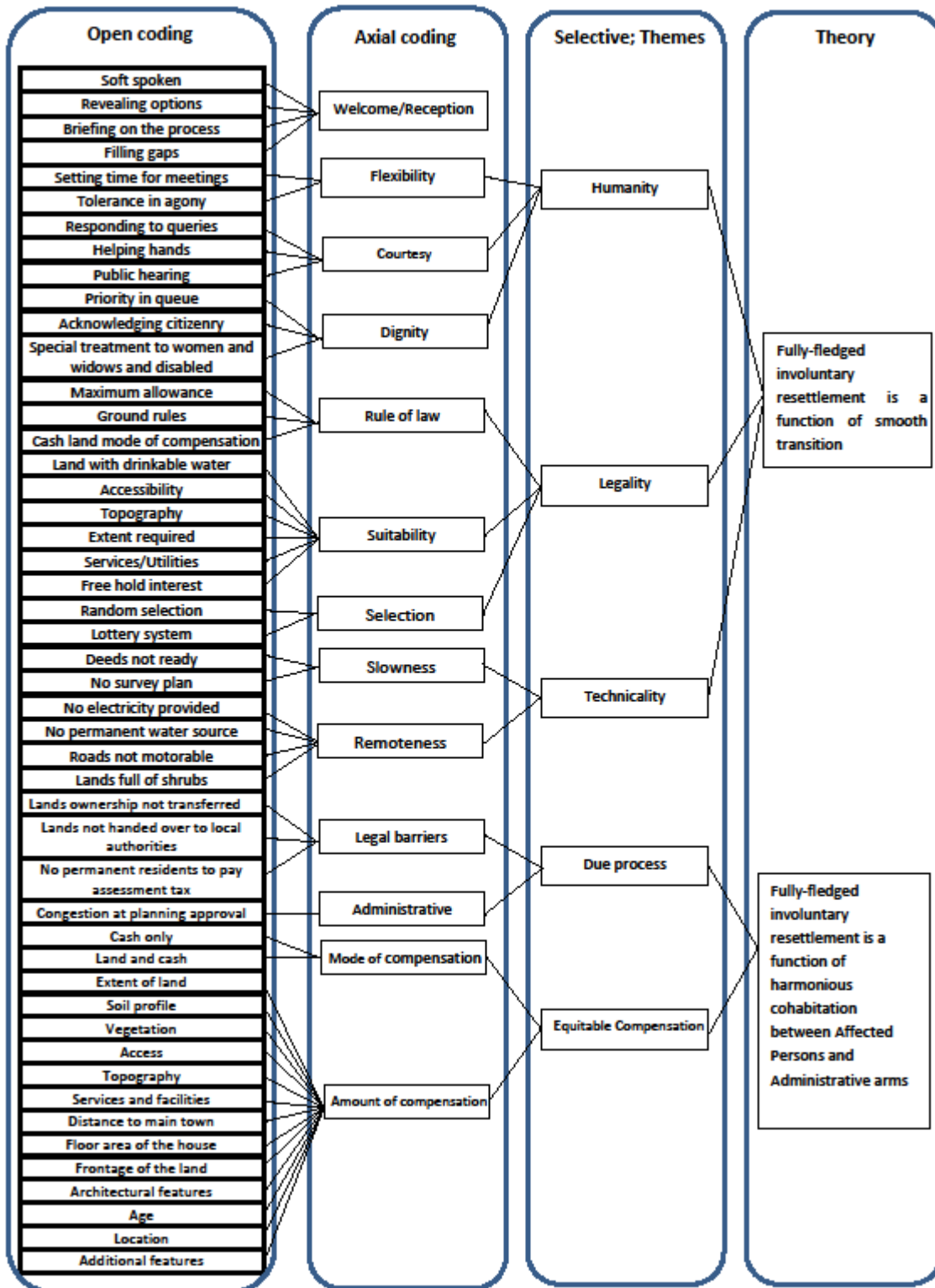
constrained by preconceived theoretical ideas or hypotheses. This allows researchers to explore new areas of research and generate new theoretical frameworks. Figure 7 offers this conceptual abstraction as follows.

Figure 7(a-b): Conceptual abstraction

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(a)



(b)

As such, managing housing and infrastructure needs in resettlement carefully requires working out strategies posed by the characteristics of the resettlement. It is unscrupulous to see that the aspect of human respect is missing in the overall resettlement process, mainly because of the bureaucratic working culture in the administrative entities where the decisions are taken with no public hearing. (Lin, A.T.; Yao, K, 2023) contended that the project proponents should participate in resettlement site selection. However, lack of choice over land selection is one such element where the administrators say they have no choice other than going for a lottery system. However it seems it does create some disparity in distributing lands. The issue of poor living conditions during the transition has been evident partly because of delay in issuing title deeds. While issue of title deeds has created delay in conferring legal ownership hampering any permanent touch upon the lands, the issue of delay in taking over the site by the local municipality has created a technical barrier to provide facilities to the site, posing further issues on security, health and so on. Ultimately the APs have become victims by the circumstances. The gravity of the issue of insufficient amount of compensation received has compounded by the delay in receipt of compensation and as a result, the APs are facing artificial price hike up in the vicinity. In addition, APs operate in isolation so that the issue of information asymmetry is visible.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The gaps that were identified in this study could be fallen into six key categories namely ad-hoc erection of houses, lack of infrastructure facilities, security, safety and health issues, delay and insufficiency of compensation and inefficiency in administrative functions and information asymmetry. A plethora of reasons are contributing these gaps which are inextricably intertwined. All these gaps are a source of eventual trauma, impoverishment, agony and anger among the affected people. Some kind of interventionist approach is therefore inevitable to enhance beneficiary participation and knowledge sharing in order to minimize these gaps. The recommendations inform the policy development in housing re-erection to enhance the sustainability in resettlement. However, it should be noted that the findings are contextualized to Sri Lanka. More importantly, the Grounded Theory is a context-specific method, which means that the theoretical frameworks developed through Grounded Theory may not be generalizable to other contexts or populations. This can limit the applicability of the research findings. Nevertheless, rich data enables to make judgments about how far the findings would apply to other comparable instances. Involuntary resettlement includes land acquisition, relocation, and rehabilitation of sources of income and livelihoods. Thus, the key message of the involuntary resettlement safeguard policies is that land acquisition and involuntary resettlement cause impoverishment, unless carefully planned mitigation measures are in place to combat them.

The case study raised a couple of concerns facing resettlement as a social phenomenon where the human interaction is complex. Among these concerns are: under what conditions should projects and associated resettlements proceed; how resettlement can be a catalyst for economic and social development, what constitutes fair and reasonable compensation; what is the exact role of benefit sharing; and in nutshell, how resettlement practices can be value-added.

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