

Education of IDP Children in Vanni

Report by

NESoHR

(North East Secretariat on Human Rights)

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1. Introduction

Displacement is harsh on the community and it is made far worse when subjected to imposed shortages of all kinds and blocked out from the view of the outside world. Each sector of the displaced community faces problems that vary from those faced by other sectors. Children suffer malnutrition, health issues specific to displacement, psychological issues and loss of education. This report attempts to bring out the effect of displacement on the IDP children in Vanni following large scale displacement caused by military attacks by the Sri Lankan Government. To this end, the report collates some data that in turn is based on data that have been collated by three sectors working with children. These are the Kilinochchi zonal education section, the preschool board in Vanni and the coordinating office of the children's homes in Vanni.

2. Health

In a report released in October NESoHR reported on the situation of the health of IDPs based on interviews given by health authorities in Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu districts. In that report it was noted that the overwhelming concern was the potential for a malaria epidemic due to inadequate IDP shelters and imposed ban on anti-malarial spray. Malnutrition was also noted among the very young due to displacement induced poverty and restrictions imposed by Sri Lankan Government on nutritional supplements such as Thiriposa. A third serious concern was the increasing number of snake bites among IDPs some of which had caused deaths. Again concern was raised about the inadequate anti-venom stock caused by restrictions. Shortages of medicines of all kinds were also reported due to weeks and sometimes months of delay in bringing the medicine quota for each quarter of the year.

3. Schools

The Table-1 shows the number schools and the number of students that have displaced recently from the different education zones. Majority of the displaced schools are functioning in the property of other schools due to lack of any other option. This creates enormous problems of shortages of all kinds such as class room space, furniture and toilets. Some schools that are functioning in temporary shelters in other property face problems of poor drainage causing flooding during rainy season.

Zone	No of Students	No of schools
Thunukkai	10750	31
Mannar	1177	8
Madu	6374	38
Mullaithivu	909	5
Vavuniya North	2565	22
Kilinochchi	28630	68
Total	50405	172

Principal of Mulankavil MV School, S Kanapathipillai commenting on the situation of the displaced schools said, “The decision was made to combine the displaced schools with non-displaced schools. Majority of the displaced schools are presently functioning like this. We combined with three more schools from Poonahari, and we pulled the temporary shelters put up for us by the INGO, Save The Children, in Mukompan and set it up in the Cannon Complex in Tharmapuram. We expected about 200 children to attend this setup but presently 827 children are learning in this setup. Our biggest problem is the lack of toilet facility. Our students are traveling long distance to attend the school. Children are therefore suffering due to lack of toilet facility. We are trying hard to fix this problem. We have no resources to quickly fix the problem. We have no help from INGOs either. The problem is made worse because of the rainy season. We hope someone will come forward to assist us.”

Table-2 shows some of the highly congested school complexes that are housing several schools.

Table-2 Some Displaced Schools Functioning Together	
The displaced schools in this property	Property housing the displaced schools
1. KN/Puthumurippu Vignesvara Vid. In Konavil 2. KN/St.Theras'a Girls College in Kilinochchi 3. KN/Mulankavil M.V in Mulankavil 4. KN/SamipulamGTMS in Samipulam 5. KN/Mukkomban GTMS in Mukkomban 6. KN/ Chelliyativu GTMS in Chelliyativu	Canaan Tharmapuram Total number of students = 2487
1. KN/Thiruvaiyaru M.V in Thiruvaiyaru 2. KN/Elephantpass GTMS in Kilinochchi 3. KN/Paranthan GTMS in Paranthan 4. KN/Tamilcholai in Krishapuram	KN/Kumarasamipuram GTMS Total number of students = 1305
1. KN/Sivapathakalayakam in Ponnagar 2. KN/Kariyalai Naka.No.2 GTMS in Kariyalai Naka 3. KN/Akkrayan GTMS in Konavil	KN/Periyakulam Iyanar Vid Total number of students = 1711
1. KN/Palalvarayankaddu HTMS in Palalvarayankaddu 2. KN/Veravil Hindu M.V in Veravil 3. KN/KumulamunaiGTMS in Kumulamunai 4. KN/Iranaitivu R.C.T.M.S in Iranaitivu	KN/Piramanthararu MV Total number of students = 1361
1. KN/Pannkandy HTMS in Pannkandy 2. KN/Gnanimadam GTMS in Gnanimadam 3. KN/Vinasiodai GTMS in Vinasiodai	KN/Puliampokkanai Nagendra Vid Total number of students = 382
1. KN/Uruthirapuram M.V in Uruthirapuram 2. KN/Skanthapuram No.01 GTMS in Skanthapuram 3. KN/Kunchukulam Ganesha Vid in Kunchukulam 4. KN/Kilaly RCTMS in Krishapuram 5. KN/Santhapuram Kalaimagal in Santhapuram 6. KN/Nachchikuda GTMS in Nachchikuda 7. KN/Poonakary M.V in Poonakary 8. KN/Poonakern Sri Vig.Vid 9. KN/Jeyapuram M.V	KN/Ramanathapuram East GTMS Total number of students = 3897
1. KN/ Kilinochchi Hindu Primary 2. KN/Thambirai GTMS 3. KN/Vannerikulam M.V 4. KN/Unionkulam GTMS 5. KN/Kilinochchi Central College 6. KN/St.Fatima GTMS	KN/Tharmapuram No-1 GTMS Total number of students = 4072



School chaos in Kilinochchi – classes under trees and in puddles

4. Preschools

Through the efforts of local educationalist in Vanni preschools have grown in numbers and a large number of preschoolers were benefiting from this. The displacement has severely disrupted these privately run preschools. Table-3 shows the number that have displaced and the number of preschoolers affected as a result. Of the 307 preschools 67 were functioning in their own buildings with preschool educational material. The preschool board in Vanni estimates the loss of these facilities to total LKR 54 million. A further 86 preschools were functioning in semi permanent buildings with educational material. The loss of these facilities is estimated at LKR 35 million. The remaining 154 preschools were functioning in temporary shelters with equipment and the loss of these is estimated at LKR 31 million.

Table-3 Displaced Preschools		
Zone	No of Students	No of preschools
Thunukkai	3059	98
Madu	738	41
Mullaithivu	292	9
Vavuniya	390	29
North		
Kilinochchi	5221	130
Total	9700	307

The preschoolers attending the preschools were also given nutritional food at mid-morning and were regularly checked by community nurses. Displacement has disrupted this and the preschool board is reporting a noticeable increase of malnutrition among this group.

5. Children's Homes



Kanthinilayam Boys Home in displaced location



Children's Homes have increased in numbers in the Tamil homeland as the war has continued over the decades. Children's Homes cares for children who have lost one or both parents as well as children whose families face extreme poverty. The Table-4 above shows the 15 Children's Homes that were caring for more than 1600 children that have displaced recently and the facilities they have lost as a result. The Table was based on a survey among the 15 displaced Children's Homes. Most Children's Homes reported that they have sent the majority of the children to relatives due to lack of facilities following displacement. Most of these children who were sent to relatives are not attending school and are keen to rejoin their Children's Home to continue their education. In order care for the children who could not be sent to relatives and to take back the children sent to the relatives most Children's Homes are appealing for assistance to build living spaces, toilets, and drinking water.

Table-4 Displaced Children's Homes						
No	Name of Children's Home	Size	Displaced from	Displaced to	Area of facility left behind in Sq.M	Cost of facility left behind in LKR million
1	Kurukulam (Girls)	334	Kilinochchi	PTK	3000	50
2	Kanthinilayam (Boys)	160	Kilinochchi	Visuvamadu	1300	40
3	Ruth Girls Home	40	Kilinochchi	Udayarkaddu	200	10
4	Holy Family Girls' Home	40	Akkarayan	Visuvamadu	1000	15
5	Uthayatheepam Holy Family Children's Home	90	Kilinochchi	Udayarkaddu	1500	10
6	Senchchulai Girls' Home	260	Kilinochchi	Vallipunam	1000	30
7	Arivuchcholi Boys' Home	262	Kilinochchi	Udayarkaddu	2500	80
8	Mahatheva Hindu Boys Home	86	Kilinochchi	Tharmapuram	1500	70
9	Paramananthavalli Hindu Women's Home	42	Kilinochchi	Visuvamadu	700	25
10	St Andrews Boys' Home	40	Mankulam	Visuvamadu	150	4
11	Murikandi Women's Home	60	Murukandy	Visuvamadu	300	5
12	Salom Nagar Boys' Home	60	Kilinochchi	Visuvamadu	500	6
13	Arobanam Boys' Home	100	Kilinochchi	Tharmapuram	1800	100
14	Karuna Center (Girls)	60	Kilinochchi	Tharmapuram	2800	80
15	Elim Men's Home	20	Palai	Tharmapuram		5
Total number of children		1654	Total cost of facility left behind			530

Dropping out of school



Many students report a lack of interest in continuing education after multiple displacement, strangeness and extreme congestion at the new displaced school. A further number is forced to drop out of school in order to earn a little bit of money to feed their siblings and parents who have lost their livelihood. In the market in Tharmapuram which has a large concentration of IDPs many children can be seen vending fruits and vegetables at school time.

One Year-10 student, Guneswaranathan, studying at the combined school for Poonahari zone expressed the common feeling of the students, *“I am originally from Mannar. We are a farming family and in Mannar we were farming 22 acres rice fields and a further 5 acres of vegetable plots. We would all help at the farms after school. This is the fourth school I am attending in one year each time changing school as we displace. At this school I do not know any of the teachers and they also do not know my name. This makes me very sad. I have no interest in schooling anymore. My parents wish us to continue with education and that is why I am coming to school.”*

Year-11 student, Thiruchelvi, studying at the same school expressed similar sentiments, *“I am from Velanai, an islet off Jaffna. We displaced to Mukompan in Poonahari in August 2006 after a large scale massacre in the islets off Jaffna. I lost my father when I was very young and our mother is caring for us. I must sit the GCE-OL test this year but I am uninterested in studying. We are staying with relatives in Thevipuram. I did not want to go to the school nearby because everything is new there. We have to travel 15 kilometers to this school just so that we can continue to learn from the same teachers. Though there are very few facilities in this school we come here because we know the students and the teachers here.”*

6. Psychological issues

During October a workshop was held in Kilinochchi to work out a scheme for helping the children as well as school teachers who are suffering from psychological pressures caused by displacement and the ensuing loss. The stated aim of the workshop was to uplift the psychological well being of the teachers so that they in turn can help the students who are also facing psychological pressures of IDP life exhibited as disruptive behaviours and inability to care for their own well being through proper eating, cleanliness and concentration. Fears were expressed that these tendencies if ignored will lead to serious mental illness. There was concern at the workshop that the parents who themselves are under pressure of displacement are unable to observe the changes in the behaviour of their children and even if they do are in no position to take the right action.

The workshop was attended by educational and health professionals. When the attendees were asked if they are happy there was pin drop silence which spoke a lot about the state of mind of

the Vanni population in general. People said that they are anxious to go back to their own place; that they are worried that they may have to displace yet again; that they are unable to get ready to go to work because of inadequacy of bathing and toilet facility; that they are worried about leaving the children alone in the new environment; and that they are constantly worried about the next aerial attack. The workshop listed several issues that lead to the psychological stresses and separated them into those faced at the IDP camps and those faced at the schools.

Stresses identified at IDP camps are: unfamiliar location; congestion in the IDP camps restricting free movement; lack of washing and toilet facilities; inadequate food; problems in caring for those who fall ill; restrictions of free movement; lack of livelihood; inadequate protection in rain; fear of bites by poisonous insects and snakes; fear of aerial attacks and having to live without bunkers; and no security for own property in IDP camps.

A similar list was drawn for issues faced at schools: displacement prevented the completion of syllabus; no classrooms; no furniture; large classes leading to problems in learning; changes in school times to accommodate two sessions; feeling lonely; transport problems; no library or playground; no drinking water; no space to do homework; and classes are not held regularly. Students of all ages say that they long for what they have left behind such as relatives, friends, pets, plants and even small objects.

7. Monetary cost

The monetary cost of displacement to preschools and Children's Homes were already noted above as LKR 156 million and LKR 530 million respectively. NESoHR sent a survey form to all the schools in Vanni requesting data on the effect of the war and displacement on the school. Thirty schools all from the Kilinochchi Education zone responded and that is presented in Table-5 below.

According to this survey these 30 schools have faced a monetary loss of LKR 300 million. As already noted 172 schools displaced recently. Based on the survey returns of 30 schools, the monetary cost of displacement for all the 172 schools can be estimated to be at least six times that of the 30 schools. This figure is LKR 1800 million.

Monetary cost of displacement to Preschools =	LKR 156 million
Monetary cost of displacement to 15 Children's Homes =	LKR 530 million
Monetary cost of displacement to 172 schools =	LKR 1800 million

Thus the loss to just these three sectors that deal with child welfare exceeds LKR 2.5 billion.

The table in addition to the monetary loss shows the number of times a particular school had displaced and the instances when shrapnel from either aerial bombing or artillery shelling fell inside the school complex disrupting the school day. Of the 30 schools that responded to the survey 19 schools have faced either shelling or bombing attacks which is almost 2/3 of the schools surveyed.

Table-5 Cost of Military Offensives and Displacement to 30 Schools

	Name of School	No	Dates of Displmnt	Displaced from	Displaced to	Current status	Dates of attacks on school	Type of attack	Building damage	Furniture loss	Loss of books	Total loss																																																																																																																																																	
1	Vinasiyodai GTMS - Poonahari	44	11-Aug-06	Own place	Sekkalai – Poonahari	Attached to Puliyampokkanai Nagendra Vidhyalama	11-Aug-06	Shelling	1.00	0.500	0.002	1.502																																																																																																																																																	
			30-Aug-08	Sekkalai - Poonahari	Kilinochchi		30-Aug-08	Shelling					2	Gnanimadam GTMS - Poonahari	156	11-Aug-06	Own place	Sekkalai – Poonahari	Attached to Puliyampokkanai Nagendra Vidhyalama	11-Aug-06	Shelling	1.00	0.800	0.005	1.805	30-Aug-08	Sekkalai - Poonahari	Sivanagar - Kilinochchi	30-Aug-08	Shelling	3	Nallur MV Poonahari	253	13-Sep-06	Own place	Mukkomban	Attached to St Anthony RCTMS	None		21.700	2.500	0.500	24.700	14-Aug-08	Mukkomban	Thiruvaiyaru	4	KN/Jeyapuram MV Poonahari	648	2-Aug-08	Own place	Akkarayan	Functioning separately in Ramanathapuram West GTMS	2-Aug-08		11.000	0.500		11.500	15-Aug-08	Akkarayan	Uruthurapuram	15-Aug-08		25-Aug-08	Uruthurapuram	Ramanathapuram	25-Aug-08		5	KN/Gowtharimuni GTMS Poonahari	47	2-Aug-08	Own place	Akkarayan		2-Aug-08	Shelling	2.500	0.100		2.600	18.Agu.08	Akkarayan	Tharnapuram	18.Agu.08	Shelling	6	KN/Kumulamuni GTMS Poonakary	238	26-Jul-08	Own place	Jeyapuram	Afternoon classes at Piramanthanaru MV combined with three other displaced schools	26-Jul-08	Shelling	20.000	1.000	1.000	21.000	31-Jul-08	Jeyapuram	Anaivilunthan			30-Aug-08	Anaivilunthan	Piramanthanaru			7	KN/ Poonakary Sri Viknes Vidyalayam	512	14-Oct-06	Own place	Poonakary Semmankunru	Attached to Ramanathapuram West GTMS	14-Oct-06	Shelling	4.000	0.100	0.150	4.250	24-Sep-08	Poonakary Semmankunru	Vaddakachchi			8	KN/ Valaippdu RCTMS Poonakary	253	27-Jul-08	Own place	Mukompan	Functioning in Mayivaganapuram GTMS together with Kiranch GTMS	None		5.600	0.500	0.150	6.250	5-Aug-08	Mukompan	Hwrid Primany	4-Sep-08	Hwrid Primany	Mayilvakanapura	9	KN/ Iyanarpuram G.T.M.S Poonahari	396	9-Aug-08	Own place	Sivanakar	Attached to KN/ Thambirasapuram GTMS	24-Oct-08	Shelling	25.000
2	Gnanimadam GTMS - Poonahari	156	11-Aug-06	Own place	Sekkalai – Poonahari	Attached to Puliyampokkanai Nagendra Vidhyalama	11-Aug-06	Shelling	1.00	0.800	0.005	1.805																																																																																																																																																	
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10	KN/ Kilinochchi Central College Karachchi	1678	30-Oct-08	Own place	Tharmapuram	Functioning separately at Tharmapuram No-1 GTMS	None		40.000	5.000	2.000	47.000
11	KN/ Pannakkandy HTMS Karachchi	194	13-Oct-08	Own place	Nakendra GTMS	Attached to Puliampokkanai Nagendra Vidhyalama	None					
12	KN/Pallai Cenral College Pallai	950	11-Jul-08	Own place	Kilinochchi		10-Oct-08	Shelling				
			1-Oct-08	Kilinochchi	Murasumoddai		10-Oct-08	Shelling				
13	KN/Thiruvaiaru MV Karachchi	797	26-Sep-08	Own place		Functioning separately at KN/ Kumarasapuram GTMS	26-Sep-08	Shelling	17.000	3.000	0.200	20.200
14	KN/Anaivilunthan kulam GTMS Karachchi	120	18-Aug-08	Own place	Karavaddithidal	Attached to Kalawadithedal Nageswaran Vid	18-Aug-08	Shelling	0.375	0.100	0.075	0.550
15	KN/Oottupulam GTMS Karachchi	370	15-Sep-08	Own place	Uruththirapuram	Attached to Umayalpuram GTMS	None		1.500	0.400	0.150	2.050
			6-Oct-08	Uruththirapuram	Kanagainagar Visvamadu							
16	KN/Skanthapuram NO-1 GTMS Karachchi	320	10-Oct-08	Own place	KN/Central college	Attached to Ramanathapuram GTMS	None		9.000	0.300	0.100	9.400
			23-Nov-01	KN/Cenral college	Ramanathapuram							
17	KN/Thambirai GTMS School Poonahari	115	14-Aug-06	Own place	Ambalkulam	Attached to Tharmapuram No-1 GTMS	25-Sep-08	Shelling	9.000	2.000	1.000	12.000
			25-Sep-08	Ambalakamam	Tharmapuram							
18	KN/Pallavarayank adu Poonahari	92	7-Aug-08	Own place	KN/Centrel College	Functioning at Piramanthanaru GTMS combined with three more schools	None					
			19-Sep-08	KN/Centrel College	Piramanthanaru							
19	KN/Barathy Vid	1200	15-Sep-08	Own place	Punnaineeravi	Functioning separately at Punnaineeraviya di GTMS	None					
20	KN/Vannerikulam	353	8-Aug-08	Own place	Kanakapuram	Attached to	8-Aug-08	Shelling	2.900	0.500		3.400

Table-5 Cost of Military Offensives and Displacement to 30 Schools

	Name of School	No	Dates of Displmnt	Displaced from	Displaced to	Current status	Dates of attacks on school	Type of attack	Building damage	Furniture loss	Loss of books	Total loss
	MV Karaichchi		22-Sep-08	Kanakapuram	Tharmapuram	KN/Tharmapuram No-1 GTMS						
21	KN/Akkrayan GTMS Karachchi	925	10-Sep-08	Own place	Uruththirapuram			None				
22	KN/Nachchikuda GTMS Poonakary	679	30-Jul-08	Own place	Skanthapuram			None	5.000	0.025	0.050	5.075
			5-Aug-08	Skanthapuram	Konavil							
			14-Aug-08	Konavil	Sivanagar							
			28-Aug-08	Sivanagar	Vaddachachchi							
				Vaddachachchi	Ramanathapuram							
23	KN/Poonakary MV Poonakary	423	11-Aug-06	Own place	Jeyapuram		11-Aug-06	Shelling	20.000	10.000	2.500	32.500
			4-Aug-08	Jeyapuram	Akkrayan MV							
			16-Aug-08	Akkrayan MV	Uotupulam							
			26-Aug-08	Uotupulam	Ramanathapuram							
24	KN/Mukkompan GTMS Poonakary	372	10-Aug-08	Own place	Kilinochchi		10-Aug-08	Shelling	26.000	1.500	0.500	28.000
25	KN/Kiranchi GTMS Poonakary	315	2-Aug-08	Own place	KN/Murasumoddi		22-Feb-08	Bombing				
			16-Aug-08	Murasumoddi	Murukanantha MV							
26	KN/Karukkaithivu MV Poonagary	330	13-Sep-06	Own place	Arasapuram		13-Sep-06	Shelling	0.670	0.100		0.770
			20-Aug-08	Arasapuram	Murasumoddai							
27	KN/Iranithivu RCTMS Poonagary	527	26-Jul-08	Own place	Jeyapuram		26-Jul-08	Shelling	8.550	1.000	0.500	10.050
			31-Jul-08	Jeyapuram	Anaivilunthan							
			10-Oct-08	Anaivilunthan	Piramanathanaru							
28	KN/Paramankirai G.T.M Poonagary	35	11-Oct-08	Thikkuvil	Mudkkompan		11-Oct-08	Shelling	1.500	0.025		1.525
			21-Oct-08	Mudkkompan	Tharmapuram							
29	KN/Samipulam G.T.M.S Poonakary	38	13-Sep-06	Own place	Mukkompan		13-Sep-06	Shelling	0.200	0.050		0.250
			20-Aug-08	Mukkompan	Urutthirapuram							
30	KN/Veravil H. MV Poonakary	534	1-Aug-08	Own place	Vanneri		22-Feb-08	Shelling				
			8-Aug-08	Vanneri	Piramanthanaru		22-Feb-08	Shelling				
Total loss = LKR 300 million												

