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Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict

Delivering services during crisis

Social protection provision and state legitimacy in post-war Sri Lanka

Working paper 58

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About us

The **Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC)** aims to generate a stronger evidence base on how people make a living, educate their children, deal with illness and access other basic services in conflict-affected situations (CAS). Providing better access to basic services, social protection and support to livelihoods matters for the human welfare of people affected by conflict, the achievement of development targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international efforts at peace- and state-building.

At the centre of SLRC's research are three core themes, developed over the course of an intensive one-year inception phase:

- State legitimacy: experiences, perceptions and expectations of the state and local governance in conflict-affected situations
- State capacity: building effective states that deliver services and social protection in conflict-affected situations;
- Livelihood trajectories and economic activity under conflict

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is the lead organisation. SLRC partners include the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Sri Lanka, Feinstein International Center (FIC, Tufts University), the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Pakistan, Disaster Studies of Wageningen University (WUR) in the Netherlands, the Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research (NCCR), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

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Acronyms and glossary

CEPA	Centre for Poverty Analysis
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
DDO	Divineguma Development Officer
DFID	Department for International Development
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EDO	Economic Development Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female Headed Household
GN	Grama Niladhari
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
KPI	Key Person Interview
LLRC	Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	Northern Provincial Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAMA	Public Assistance Monthly Allowance
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
RDO	Rural Development Officer
SSO	Social Services Officer
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
WRDS	Women's Development Societies

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Abstract

Social welfare provision is recognised as an important component of the state's social contract with society that can contribute to its legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2013). This reflects a broader view that legitimacy can grow through a government's fulfilment of its core state functions (François and Sud 2006). An earlier Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) study (2013/2014) has highlighted that perceptions of the state are shaped by interactions between state officials and citizens, along with service users' expectations and trajectories in accessing services.

This study explores the state-society relationship in relation to two systemic shocks in Sri Lanka: the drought of 2014 and flood of 2015. It looks at how the state responded, the ways citizens engaged with it to cope and recover, and if this engagement has changed their perceptions of it. Two Secretariat Divisions in the Mannar and Anuradhapura districts are our case studies, with a sample population from the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala communities. The study has taken a political approach, allowing for deeper analysis of the functional and symbolic elements of legitimacy by focusing on what the state did and what people expected of it.

The study has found that state delivery of services falling below expectations does not necessarily lead to perceptions of (de)legitimacy. This relationship is complex in Sri Lanka, as overall perceptions are influenced by the varied expectations and experiences of different identity groups, which are shaped by historical state-society relations, the provision of social welfare over time and whether there is war or peace.

Executive summary

One of the propositions in the literature discussing the role of service provision in building state legitimacy is that welfare provision is an important aspect of the formation of the social contract between the state and its citizens (Batley, McCourt and Mcloughlin, 2012). In this sense, the source of legitimacy is grounded in the belief that delivering services is an important expression of state-society relations shaped by citizen discourses on what the state *should* deliver and *how* (Batley et al, 2012). Similarly, state-building analysts argue that service provision is one of the key functions that citizens expect from the state: both in terms of the willingness and the capacity of the state to respond to citizens' needs (Whaites, 2008). These views reflect a broader principle that legitimacy can be built through a government effectively fulfilling core state functions (François and Sud, 2006). They are also theoretically premised on the idea that state performance in delivering welfare can play a major role in enhancing its legitimacy. However, there is no known empirical evidence to suggest this link in a post-war setting. Subsequently, this study has been conceptualised to engage with the theoretical proposition that delivering services can enhance legitimacy in a context where the relationship between the state and its citizens has been fractured due to a protracted conflict.

This study aims to build on the work of a previous one empirically exploring the link between service delivery and state legitimacy. The 2015 Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) study, titled ' The role of social protection in state legitimacy in the former conflict areas of Sri Lanka', conducted in selected villages in Trincomalee, Jaffna and Mannar districts, explored the state-society relationship through state delivery of social protection programmes, and how the associated process shaped citizen's perceptions of the state through the question: 'How do everyday experiences of using services and programmes shape people's perceptions of the state?' The study provided insights into the nuances of the relationships influenced by everyday interactions between the state at the local level and citizens, through their process of accessing and using social protection programmes. The study highlights that people's perceptions vary considerably by location, ethnicity and programme experience and are also influenced by the trajectories of their life experiences of war and displacement, along with the overall history of programme delivery.

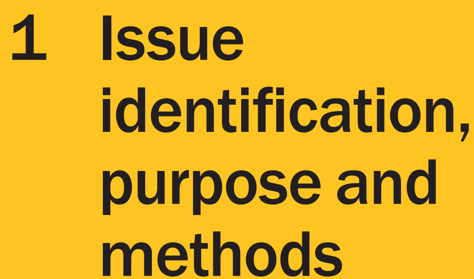
Drawing on the findings of the 2014 SLRC study, the present study seeks to explore, in greater depth, the proposition that people's perceptions of the state are framed by the way the state delivers programmes and how state officials interact with citizens in the delivery process. The study has attempted to explore this proposition in the context of two systemic shocks that occurred in the 2014/2015 period by looking at how the state responded, how citizens engaged with it (through state officials) to cope and recover and if this engagement led to a change in perceptions about its legitimacy. The study interrogates this proposition with two primary questions*:*

- How did the state perform in delivering social protection programme services to Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women in Mannar and Anuradhapura districts during the drought and flood of 2014/2015?
- How did the state's performance change perceptions of legitimacy?

The study took a political approach to assessing changes in respondents' opinions and attitudes towards the state by analysing their statements and assertions. This approach provided an opportunity to analyse legitimacy from the perspective that it may be derived from either its function or its symbolism, namely not only what it does, but the deeper meaning people give to what the state is thought to be, represent or signify (Gilley, 2009). From a functional perspective, this approach uses the principles, institutions and performance of national and local government to (re)establish formal and informal rules that govern how power and resources are distributed in society (Booth and Seligson 2009; Parks and Cole, 2010). From a symbolic perspective, it allows for studying the values, beliefs and principles the state is judged against and how far it fulfils that criteria, by focusing on

the underlying moral principles that make the norms legitimate and analysing the values and guiding limits of societies (Abulof, 2013). This provides an opportunity to focus on the deeper social values that it represents in the popular imagination, such as signs of loyalty towards the state's symbolic elements and an acceptance of its structures, institutions, values and practices (Migdal, 2001:33). Thus, the political approach offers an opportunity to identify indicators that reflect changes in legitimacy at critical moments – in this case, the drought of 2014 and the flood of 2014/2015 – to assess if these have contributed to changes in perceived legitimacy; was it built, reinforced or questioned?

This paper primarily discusses the findings in relation to the experiences of Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women in two villages in the Mannar and Anuradhapura Districts. It has found that, in the case of both the drought and flood, the state performance in delivering services was below community expectations in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Whilst the state was a visible actor during these events, its response was slow, uncoordinated and deeply politicised in both of the surveyed communities. More importantly, the study highlights the diverse expectations from the different groups (ethnically and locationally), which have been shaped by historical state-society relations, not all of which were related to service delivery. These different experiences shape respondents' perceptions of the state, providing a more nuanced understanding of how legitimacy can be built, consolidated or lessened. The findings therefore highlight that historical relations between the state and society, along with the history of social welfare provision and people's experiences of war and peace, influence people's perceptions of the state and can, in turn, contribute towards its (de)legitimacy.



1 Issue identification, purpose and methods

1.1 The issue

When a state is recognised by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power, it can broadly be described as legitimate (Gilley, 2006). However, legitimacy is a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions (Suchman, 1995: 574). In the broadest sense, legitimacy refers to the social rightfulness of the state from the perspective that citizens believe it has the right to rule and act accordingly, initiating behavioural compliance (Levi, Sacks and Tyler, 2009).

Theoretically, service delivery has been linked to state legitimacy, particularly the idea that it can help build state-society relations and be an instrument in strengthening state building and legitimacy in the longer-term (Babajanian, 2012). This idea is particularly relevant in a post-war context where service delivery can contribute to peace building and stability by strengthening social cohesion, reducing any perceived need for grievances and helping prevent social unrest and violence (Babajanian, 2012). Overall legitimacy built on the basis of 'performance legitimacy' is relevant in contexts where 'performance' is one of the ways in which the state seeks to build its reputation (Batley et al, 2012).

The concept of 'performance legitimacy' is used in conditions where citizens 'assess' the effectiveness of the state in delivering key services, providing goods and implementing policy. These perceptions are linked to those citizens' overall beliefs and expectations about the state (vom Hau, 2011). As such, states that can marshall organisational competence and territorial reach in order to provide a wide variety of public services may enjoy greater legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens based on their ability to deliver (Wild, Menocal and Mallett, 2013). As a clearly visible function of the state, service delivery has a particular value for citizens. This means there is a clear link between what the state delivers and what citizens get from it in the form of wellbeing. Service delivery, therefore, affords an opportunity to view state-society relations through a political lens.

The present study aims to engage more deeply with the state-society relationship by looking at how perceptions of the state are formed through interactions between citizens and state officials in the light of specific events, in this case the 2014/2015 drought and flood. The study aims to understand how people's perceptions of the state can be framed, through an analysis of their coping

strategies and, in turn, state responses in the event of the drought and flood. This will enable us to better understand the nuances of state-society relations and how these shape the ways in which legitimacy can be built, consolidated or weakened.

1.2 Research gap

Much research on the state has focused on large-scale structures, epochal events and major policies (Evans *et al.* 1985, in Gupta, 1995). These have failed to shed light on how state bureaucracy works at the local level, particularly in rural areas and small towns where people come into contact with the state through local officials' delivery of the programmes and services that help shape views of the state itself (Bourdieu, 1977). Using a political approach, this study will draw on the work of Gupta (1995) to understand the way in which the discourse of programme delivery becomes a key area through which legitimacy is formed, transformed or rejected, exploring 'why' and 'how' service delivery influenced perceptions of state legitimacy during the critical events examined. Specifically, the study uses a 'bottom up approach' to provide a deeper understanding of the state-society relationship and how perceptions of the state were formed or reconfigured during the drought and flood of 2014. To do this, it focuses on public discourse centred on the following:

- functioning of state institutions and their performance
- values transferred in the delivery process
- distribution of power and resources
- expectations of rights and entitlements, to better understand how beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards the state are shaped.

It is hoped this approach will provide a more nuanced understanding of the state-society relationship and this shapes perceptions of legitimacy.

1.3 Methods

Theoretical proposition

State delivery of services during systemic shocks can lead to performance-based legitimacy among war-affected women.

Rival explanation

In the event of a systemic shock, war-affected women look to non-state actors to cope and recover. State delivery of services during systemic shocks does not contribute to performance-based legitimacy amongst war-affected women.

Research questions

Based on the theoretical proposition and the rival explanation, the following research questions have been proposed.

1. How did the state perform in delivering services to Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women in Mannar and Anuradhapura districts during the drought and flood of 2014/2015?
   Sub questions:
   i. What did the state deliver?
   ii. How did the state deliver?
   iii. Who did the state deliver to?
2. How did the state's performance change perceptions of state legitimacy?
   Sub questions:
   i. How did perceptions change?
   ii. Why did perceptions change?

1.4 Research design

As indicated previously, the current study aims to explore and build on the knowledge obtained in the 2014 exploratory study, by using a case study approach built on a constructivist paradigm (Yin, 2014). The case study approach has been chosen as a methodology that enables a holistic, in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within that phenomenon's context, using a variety of data sources (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). The present study explores changes in Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women's perceptions of state legitimacy to through the 'cases' of Mannar and Anuradhapura. Women are the chosen focus due to being the care givers in most rural households and therefore responsible for acquiring and disbursing family resources, including rations distributed by the state at critical junctures such as the drought and flood of 2014/2015. During such times, it is the women who are primarily concerned with household needs such as food security and this is another point of interest for this study.

To maintain the chain of evidence needed to increase the reliability of the data, this study provides a multi-perspectival analysis, with the multiple sources of data triangulating the evidence. As such, data primary sources have included: a) in-depth interviews with

selected women and b) interviews with key government representatives at the local level, complemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These data sources have been supplemented by informal discussions with villagers. One of the most important uses of the documents has been to corroborate evidence gathered from other sources. Therefore, a limited analysis of newspaper articles, published articles and gray literature has been undertaken to clarify, supplement and triangulate the data gathered. As such, no single data source has a complete advantage over the others; rather, they are complementary, using as many sources that are relevant to the study (Yin, 2014). This design aims to allow for the multiple facets of the state-society relationship to be revealed and understood, by enabling the relationship to be explored through a variety of lenses (Baxter and Jack, 2008). This approach allows for an understanding of the nuances between state responses and any changes in people's perceptions of the state, framed by their programme experiences. Using the case study design enables a focus on '*how*' and '*why*' the women engaged with local bureaucrats (the state) during the drought and flood and how these interactions and experiences with the state during the 'shocks' led to changes in their perceptions of the state (Yin, 2014).

1.5 Data sources

In order to enhance data credibility, case study research uses multiple data sources (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2014). As such, the data sources include the following.

Primary data sources[1]: In-depth interviews were conducted with ten women, three of whom were of Tamil identity and from the Maradamadu Grama Niladhari (GN) Division in Musali Divisional Secretariat (DS) in the Mannar District, with another three who were of Muslim identity from that region and a total of four who were Sinhalese and residing in the Manankattiya GN division in the Galenbindunuwewa DS area of the Anuradhapura district.

Key Person Interviews (KPIs) took place with the Divisional Secretaries of the two District Secretariats, the two GNs of Musali and Galenbindunuwewa and, finally, with government officials at the divisional and GN levels. Three FGDs were held at the GN level with village leaders (mostly men) in each village and there were also informal discussions with villagers from both locations.

Secondary data sources: Documents to corroborate evidence have included newspaper articles, academic journal articles and gray literature.

The intention has been that the multiple data sources will converge in the analysis process to contribute to the researchers' understanding of both the 'case' and the whole phenomenon.

1.6 Sample and tools

Mannar and Anuradhapura form the geographic focus of this study. Mannar has been selected on the basis that it was one of the last districts to come out of the war .

Table 1: List of primary data sources

District	KPIs	FGD	Informal discussions
Mannar	• DS Musali • GN Maradamadu • Women's Rural Development Society (WRDS), Maradamadu • Divineguma Development Officer (DDO), Musali • Economic Development Officer (EDO), Musali	Villager leaders – the 4th Mile Post Village leaders: Pichchaivarippu	Four with villagers
Anuradhapura	• DS – Galenbindunuwewa • GN – Manankattiya • DDO Galenbindunuwewa • Social Services Officer (SSO) Galenbindunuwewa • President – Famers Association – Dakunu Ella	Village leaders in Manankaatiya	one with villagers

1 Data was collected between February and May 2015 by two groups of field staff who spoke the vernacular. The author, as lead researcher, was present during data collection at both locations.

The Mannar district has also been a study location for the SLRC programme since its inception. As a district on the borderlands of the war zone, Anuradhapura suffered from sporadic terror attacks from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Both districts were among the worst affected by the drought and flood of 2014/2015 and offer a good representation of all three of the communities looked at in this study, who had different trajectories in terms of their conflict experiences. The two locations have provided this study with different but comparative characteristics and trajectories of war, systemic shocks and state service delivery, thereby capturing the nuances on how and why changes in perceptions in legitimacy happened during the drought and flood of 2014/2015.

Each woman has been interviewed in depth for several hours, over several days. Direct observations of the interviewees and their households have been conducted, including informal discussions with other members of the household.

Tamil women have borne the full brunt of a 30-year war, experiencing displacement, resettlement or return and many losing their husbands and male family members. There are consequently many households in which women are the sole breadwinners making economic, social and political decisions that impact their families.

Wider discussions on state building and legitimacy in the aftermath of a protracted ethnic-based conflict in Sri Lanka disproportionately focus on Tamil people. It is, however, important to recognise that the Muslim people are a large minority who have also been affected by the conflict and whose voices are rarely heard in state building and legitimacy processes. In this study, Sinhala women's experiences of the war were largely indirect – living on the frontiers of the war zone exposed them to sporadic armed attacks and they also lost family members in service in the military. It is considered that their perceptions of the state delivery of services and factors that (de)legitimise the state might be different from Tamil and Muslim women, given that their experiences of war and peace building are different from those of war-affected Tamil and Muslim women. Perspectives from Sinhala women therefore afford us an opportunity to compare and contrast factors that shape perceptions from different positions (e.g. women from a different ethnic and linguistic group who did not suffer multiple displacements had less disruption to their livelihoods).

Interview guides have been used for in-depth interviews with the women throughout the primary data collection process. This approach has allowed for deeper probing into the issues studied, but also provided the flexibility to capture the diversities of the women's life experiences during war, displacement, return or resettlement and post-war. The strategy of returning to the same woman over a period of time has allowed for strands of data to be explored and examined further, helping to provide a rich narrative of the women's expectations, experiences and perceptions of the state.

The KPIs call for more structured open-ended questions to be asked to clarify, explain and triangulate the data gathered at the household level. The FGDs have these to understand the context, along with the village dynamics and common experiences of the villagers, while the informal discussions were used to supplement the data gathered.

1.7 Analytical framework

The study has coded the data on an excel sheet, broadly using the analytical framework below. This provides an opportunity to explore '*why*' and '*how*' service delivery influences perceptions of state legitimacy, using a political perspective.

i. Social contract and nature of political settlement	Men and women's expectations of rights and entitlement, historical significance of service delivery, history of state-society relations, issues of inclusion and exclusion.
ii. Characteristics of service delivery	Visibility and attributability of state, values and practices that underpin service delivery, relevance and timeliness of services.
iii. Process of (de) legitimisation	Public discourses on: functioning of state institutions and their performance, values transferred in the delivery process, distribution of power and resources.

The framework allows for the situating of particular issues in their contexts, such as the way in which historical political processes have played out in local communities, particularly with regard to women's perceptions of the state. Looking at issues such as local social norms, expectations of rights and entitlement enables a potential explanation for understanding legitimacy gains or losses within the social contract and locally embedded processes and experiences. It also draws attention to structural political conditions, such as issues related the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups, specifically

ethnic and gender groups, that can influence people's assessment of state performance. The dimensions described above therefore present a way in which locally embedded processes of programme delivery mediate people's perceptions of the state through their experiences of accessing state programmes, using the concept of performance legitimacy. The above dimensions also afford an opportunity to enquire into '*how*' and '*why*' people turn to the state, by focusing on a contextual analysis to identify factors that are relevant in the event of experiencing the 'shocks' and the links to wider drivers of state legitimacy. These include histories of past performance, leadership or administrative capacity that focus on how perceptions of inclusion/exclusion in programme delivery are shaped through views of past injustices and the credibility of the state. It thus enables an analysis of the dynamics that shape people's beliefs and opinions and considers how legitimacy comes to be socially constructed.

Given that women have been the primary focus of the study sample, the data and analysis focus on insights from the women, with views from the men included to capture gendered experiences and perceptions of state performance. Exploring such conditions through rich data analysis can help build a rich narrative that supports an analysis of a phenomenon which is essentially political. (Mcloughlin, 2014). This enables the researcher to obtain a more grounded understanding of how perceptions of the state are shaped and reshaped and how they contribute to changes in legitimacy (Crabtree and Miller, 1999; Lather, 1992; Robottom and Hart, 1993, in Baxter and Jack 2008).

1.8 Limitations and delimitations

Whilst case studies in qualitative research have indicated that citizens adjust their perceptions of the state in response to relative improvements or deterioration in service delivery over time, in practice, a number of factors influence the linear relationship between a state's performance and its degree of legitimacy. This is partly because perceptions are shaped by people's expectations, and these can vary between and within regions and groups depending on the starting points and trajectories of state building in a particular conflict-affected context. The relationship between expectations and delivery is also dynamic and fluid, indicating that it can change over time (Mcloughlin, 2014). Thus, the connection between service delivery and state legitimacy is inherently complex; multiple factors can influence the potential linkages between the two concepts.

2 Development of issues: a theoretical perspective

2.1 Understanding the links: State legitimacy–social contract–service delivery

As has been discussed previously, a state that is recognised by its citizens as holding and exercising political power rightly, can be described as a legitimate state (Gilley, 2006). Political legitimacy, in this sense, is when people acknowledge that the 'state' has the right to rule and this tacit acceptance is, in turn, enjoyed by the state (Barbara, 2008). However, legitimacy is not static but dependent on the affirmation of the state's right to political power (Gilley, 2006). The greater the acknowledgement, the greater the legitimacy afforded to the state. Legitimacy is therefore dependent on people's perceptions, beliefs and expectations, implying that a state can only be considered 'legitimate' if those subject to its authority consider it as such. It is important, however, to note that in some instances the state might be considered 'legitimate' even if it falls short of meeting certain normative standards (Norad, 2010). While the link between the state and society forms the basis of state authority, it is also determined by people's perceptions and expectations, which might differ across contexts and time. Thus, the concept of legitimacy is inherently complex.

A concept closely linked with state legitimacy is state building. State building is founded on political processes based on the idea that the minimum administrative capacity that takes place at all levels of state-society relations can consolidate the state's relationship with its citizens and contribute to legitimacy. For instance, positive state-society relations can be built through inclusive political processes that constructively engage citizens with the state through the delivery of goods and services (OECD, 2010). This view reflects a broader theme on delivering services as an important expression of state-society relations and plays a major role in enhancing legitimacy. It is based on the notion that there is a visible link between what the state delivers and what citizens receive in terms of wellbeing (Mcloughlin, 2014). In such circumstances, a particular value of service delivery is that it is clearly visible to citizens as a state function and affords an opportunity to view state-society relations through a political lens.

An important component in building legitimacy, particularly in post-war contexts, is the social contract between the state and its people. The social contract is made of multiple, interdependent factors that change over time and can be inherently complex (Rocha Menocal, 2009). This aims to work for the common good by bringing the state and society together through inclusive

processes, responsive institutions, and resilient state-society relations that recognise the multiple identities, needs and interests of its citizens (UNDP, 2012:18). In post-war situations, building trust between the state and its citizens is an important part of both state building and peace building and there are three components of the state contract that provide the means through which these could be achieved:

- the *capacity* of the state to allocate resources in a manner that is responsive to the needs of its people
- the political, economic and social *processes* that affirm inclusivity at all levels of society
- the meeting of *expectations* through interactions between the state and society (UNDP, 2012).

An institutionalised social contract between the state and society emerges when a state is able to provide services to its citizens by mobilising state resources and its *capacity* to fulfil the social *expectations*. These are subsequently mediated by the political *processes* through which the contract between the state and society is established or reinforced. In such situations, this process contributes to state legitimacy (GSDRC, 2011).

Relatedly, legitimacy can be understood as a generalised assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definition (Suchman, 1995: 574). Thus, the simplest explanation of the term 'state legitimacy' stems from an acceptance of 1) a state's basic right to rule and 2) a citizen's perceptions that the state is meeting their expectations. A particular value of service delivery is that is a clearly visible function of the state for citizens. There is, therefore, a visible link between what the state delivers and what citizens get in the form of wellbeing. Service delivery, therefore, affords an opportunity to view state-society relations through a political and sociological lens.

Social protection is a form of service delivery with the objective of providing income or consumption transfers to protect livelihoods as well enhancing the social status and rights of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised by reducing their economic and social vulnerability (Devereux and Sabates Wheeler 2004). In conflict-affected situations social protection can be used to protect basic needs and consumption and prevent households from spiraling into negative coping strategies. It can also be used to transform state-society relations by enhancing participation and giving voice to citizens (Carpenter, Slater and Mallet, 2012).

One of the propositions in the literature when discussing the role of service provision in building state legitimacy is the idea that welfare provision is an important aspect of the formation of the social contract between the state and its citizens (Mcloughlin, 2014). State-building analysts assert that service provision is one of a number of functions that citizens expect their state to deliver and requires both the willingness and capacity of the state to respond to citizens' needs (Whaites 2008, in Mcloughlin, 2014). This view reflects a broader theme that legitimacy can be built through a government's effectiveness in fulfilling core state functions (François and Sud, 2006 in Mcloughlin, 2014). In this sense, the source of the legitimacy is grounded in the belief that delivering services is an important expression of state-society relations reflecting citizens' expectations about what the state *should* deliver and the discursive and relational aspects of *how* it goes about doing so (Mcloughlin 2014). The literature alludes to the potential major role of state performance in delivering welfare to enhance its legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2014).

Thus, legitimacy built on the basis of how the state performs, or 'performance legitimacy' has been used in conflict-affected contexts, particularly where 'performance' is one of the ways in which the state seeks to build legitimacy (Mcloughlin, 2014). This proposition is theoretically premised on the basis that building state-society relations can strengthen state legitimacy and state building processes (Babajanian 2009). While the literature indicates that this relationship is noteworthy in a post-war context where service delivery can contribute to peace building and stability by strengthening social cohesion and preventing social unrest and violence, there is no known empirical evidence to support this view (Babajanian 2009).

2.2 State legitimacy in a Sri Lankan context

From a Structural Realist perspective, the state has three interrelated components:

- the idea of the state, which gives it a physical base comprising the population and territory
- the institutional expressions of the state such as the state machinery: the laws, procedures and norms by which the state is governed
- the idea that the state exists which rests in people's consciousness and gives it a socio-political dimension (Buzan 1991: 62–63).

The concept of state building has been at the centre of the political discourse in Sri Lanka since independence. The post-colonial Sri Lankan state, has been formed and transformed by the different historical experiences it has undergone. What this means is that within the abstract concept of the 'state', different communities, along with the diverse groups within these communities, have different experiences during the various historical phases in state formation and transformation processes (Keerawella, 2014). Hence, it is important to understand state formation processes in Sri Lanka by situating them within their particular historical context (Keerawella, 2014: 169–200). In this sense, the second and third components of the state, as identified by Buzan, are appropriate entry points to explore state building and legitimacy dynamics and processes in a Sri Lankan context.

Keerawella suggests that postcolonial state building processes must be understood in the context of the political, economic and cultural dynamics of decolonisation (Keerawella, 2014:169–233). In 1948, when an independent Sri Lanka was established, the first past-the-post electoral system ensured that power was centralised in a Sinhala dominated parliament (Bastian 2013). Minority rights were to be protected through clauses enshrined in a constitution that would ensure a balanced representation. However, a spate of post-independence violence, riots and consequent civil war indicated serious flaws in constitutional guarantees that failed to protect minorities (Bastian, 2013: 210–212). The enactment of the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948, which definedthe criteria for citizenship, is a case in point. The Act had far reaching consequences for all ethnic communities beyond the Indian Tamil population that it targeted, by excluding British and all other foreign residents from citizenship rights and privileges. It was a decisive moment in defining majority-minority group identities fueled largely by the insecurity of the majority Sinhala population (Wittachhi, 1958). For minority communities, this reflected a rupture in an essential component of the state-society relationship: that of upholding the rights and privileges of all of its citizens regardless of ethnicity.

In the years soon after independence, the focus on the development and welfare of the rural Sinhala peasantry constituted the basis of the relationship between the state and the rural Sinhala population (Bastian, 2013). This special relationship was characterised by diverting state resources to the rural sector with the intention of protecting and preserving the Sinhala smallholder peasantry, a link nurtured by the Sinhala ruling class to maintain their political base (Bastian, 2013: 194). This relationship between the Sinhala peasantry and the ruling class, dominated by the Sinhala majority, formed the basis of a centralised state building process in the years after independence (Bastian, 2013: 192–193). Whilst the minority communities benefited from some of these policies, the ruling Sinhala class identified the state with the interests of the majority Sinhala community and were unwilling to make structural changes that would numerically alter the majoritarian position they enjoyed through the electoral process (Bastian, 2013: 194). The 'state' that was subsequently formed was based on an ethno-social foundation, favouring the Sinhala peasantry at the cost of excluding minorities from state power (Bastian, 2013: 194).

Within this overall context, Keerewella identifies two parallel state building projects in the postcolonial period. Firstly, the constitutional making project based on a liberal nationalist model and, secondly, the social justice model, which provided a greater role for state institutions in service delivery through improving the health, education and wellbeing of its citizens (Keerawella, 2014). While these two state building projects reflected the political priorities of the time, they were also linked to rectifying past injustices that were inflicted upon the Sinhala Buddhists in the colonial period (Keerawella, 2014: 169–233). Education in particular was identified as a key instrument in constructing and legitimising the previously mentioned three elements of the state, with educational reform constituting a key element in rectifying the past injustices suffered by the Sinhala Buddhist population during the colonial period. Thus, state power in the hands of the Sinhalese would not only ensure sovereignty and autonomy but also be a lever of social justice for the Sinhala majority community (Keerawella, 2014).

State delivery of services was an important state building project in Sri Lanka (Keerawella, 2014). While it is true that services in the more classical sense refers to the provision of health, education water and sanitation, the distribution of social protection is also a form of service delivery. Social protection provision in Sri Lanka has included a wide range of state services: civil service pensions, Samurdhi income transfers to the poor (Sri Lanka's largest social safety net in terms of government spend and coverage) and assistance for the disabled and elderly, as well as emergency assistance to those affected by droughts and floods (Baulch, Weber & Wood, 2008). The idea behind broadening the range of

services provided by the state to consolidate the majority community's hold on state power began to be visible from the 1950s (Keerawella, 2014). This was due to the introduction of free education from 1945 resulting in a new class of educated elite emerging in the 1950s. The emergence of the new educated class did not directly challenge the existing political order but became a new ruling block of the Sinhala polity who had so far been outside of the political power base but were now able to access state power by forming a 'people's government' in 1956 under the leadership of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (Keerawella, 2014). The expansion of education services enabled the emergence of a new class who then contributed to a bigger block of the Sinhala ruling polity who came to dominate state power from the 1950s (Keerawella, 2014: 169–233).

Concurrently, the period between 1948 and 1969 witnessed the formation of a Tamil ethno-national consciousness. Whilst the Ceylon Tamil Congress accepted the unitary structure of the state and were ready to enter into a power sharing arrangement in 1948, the general election of 1956 and the victory of S.W.R.D Bandaranaike's broad political alliance in the form of a common front had serious implications for Tamil political representation. This was due to the 'people's government' of Bandaranaike benefiting from the new class of educated Sinhalese people, who formed the intermediary social layers based on caste, and regional representation entering and accessing state power. This resulted in the reconstitution of the ruling block by incorporating the Sinhala intermediate sections to the centre of state power (Keerawella, 2014: 169–233). However, this benefit did not translate to the Tamil intermediary layers in the North and East, who continued to stay outside of state power. There was hence a growing realisation amongst the Tamil political parties on the need for a power sharing model to potentially benefit the Tamils and other minorities, who were the majority in the North and East. From 1956, the federal political project led by the Federal party began articulating the need to move away from the unitary state structure to one that favoured a federal political agenda (Keerawlla 2014).

It is important to recognise that, today, the Muslim people are a considerable minority whose citizenship identity is different to the Tamils, despite sharing a common linguistic affinity. Muslim identity politics in Sri Lanka has been framed in the religious category of 'Muslim' being placed alongside 'Tamil' and 'Sinhala'. While the categories of 'Tamil' and 'Sinhala' are based on language, the label of 'Muslim' is primarily a religious one used by Tamil politicians to claim 'Muslims' as part of the Tamil linguistic category (Haniffa, 2008). However, it is important to note that the Muslim polity initially refused the Tamil ethnic label during colonial times over the issue of their communal representation (Mcgilvray, 1998; Zackariya and Shanmugaratnam, 1997). This was evidenced in the Muslim opposition to the Tamil political leadership position that the Muslims were ethnically Tamil when the British proposed appointing a Kandyan and a Muslim to the Legislative Council in 1889 (Azeez, 1957). The colonial rulers proceeded to create a seat for the Muslims and registered politically different representations for the Tamil and Muslim identities (Mcgilvray, 1998). However, with the advent of the piety movement, religion became the dominant characteristic of a collective identity for the Muslims and the idea of calling a person a Tamil-Muslim became politically contested.

As tensions between the Tamils and Sinhala state began to gather momentum, the Muslims were eager to underscore their allegiance to the state, recognising their place as a minority (Ismail, 1995). Haniffa articulates the position of the Muslims in the context of the war as one of feeling 'beleaguered', as a socially, politically and economically weak minority in a context of inter-ethnic violence (Haniffa, 2007). She stresses that religious self-assertion has given the geographically dispersed second minority a sense of self confidence (Haniffa, 2007). This minority consciousness coexists with notions of 'Muslimness' and religious revival has given the community a greater appreciation of their identify, while also transforming their relations with other ethnic groups, which has been mirrored by the way in which ethnic consciousness among the Sinhala and Tamils has been framed due to the war (Haniffa, 2007).

As discussed, state–society relations in the post-colonial period were founded on a combination of electoral politics and a range of social policies to create and sustain a democratic and peaceful state. The idea of universal rights in health and education, with an emphasis on distributive justice in education and measures to protect the peasantry were the basis of the social policies that were pursued. However, these policies were influenced by the rise of a hegemonic Sinhala nationalist ideology, reflected in measures such as district quotas for entry into the state university system (Bastian, 2013).

As the competition to access state power and control the distribution of state resources intensified and mirrored an ethnic orientation, the question of who the state

represents became the centre of the political discourse in Sri Lanka (Keerawella, 2014). Further, the Sinhala only Act of 1956 and the rise of communal violence in the ensuing years were symptomatic of the rupture of the contract between the people and the state. The consequent rise in violence was reflective of a group of people who sought protection through political remedies shrouded in this approach. By the 1970s, it became clear that there was a rupture in this original foundation on which state–society relations were based. This was reflected particularly in the relationship between the state and the Tamil population, sowing the seeds of three decades of instability and violence (Bastian, 2013). What was witnessed from here was a rise of an ethnically aligned Sinhala and Tamil political consciousness. For the Sinhalese, this manifested itself in a belief in a unified single state of citizens, territorially unified under a unitary centralised, sovereign state. For the Tamils, the model was one that favoured coexistence in the form of territorially distinct political units with shared sovereignty to be politically and constitutionally united in a federal union (Uyangoda et al. 2013: 31–33).

From this time, the notion of group rights through power sharing began to be articulated much more vociferously (Marcelline, 2014: 32). The concept of group rights was not a new one. During colonial times, groups' rights figured prominently in constitutional debates as a means of protecting caste, class and ethnic-based identities. However, a key difference from 1956 onwards was that the demand for group rights were viewed by some factions of the Sinhala polity as communalist, due to sensationalist claims that were considered an impediment for developing a 'nationalist identity' (Marcelline, 2014). This view gained political traction with the escalation of violence into a civil war in 1983, creating conditions for the Sinhala political elite to mobilise a constituency around framing the civil war as a Tamil nationalist project and terrorism problem (Marcelline, 2014). This change in the thinking of the ruling Sinhala elite regarding the Tamil nationalist project as one related to terrorism and secession was witnessed again in the 1990s, when the question of power sharing was on the agenda to end the war. It was in this context that devolution as part of the state reform process entered the political mainstream and remained a dominant part of the dialogue of a political settlement to the Tamil national project for the next two decades (Marcelline, 2014: 31).

Post-war ideological debates on managing state-society relations are dominated by two strands: development and reconciliation. The emphasis on these two elements, however, comes at the expense of what is really required to meet Tamil aspirations for self-governance – they acknowledge that the conflict was fundamentally about rebuilding state-society relations through a process of state reform and public policy to accommodate a plural society (Bastian, 2013). This view was reflected in the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) Report of 2011, which states that the root cause of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka lies in the failure of successive Governments to address the genuine grievances of the Tamil people. A political solution is imperative to address the causes of the conflict. Everybody speaks about it, though there is no agreement about the diagnosis and the prescription (LLRC, 2011: 369).

The way in which the war ended has changed the nature of both state and society in Sri Lanka. Rebuilding society is a central element of post-war reconstruction processes and these must be understood in the light of broader political perspectives, including the socio-political causes that contributed to the war itself (Uyangoda, 2012). This places consolidating peace and reconciling the Tamil minorities with the state at the forefront of state building. It is therefore important to recognise that building a good, equitable and just government that works towards the upliftment of the lives of all its citizens regardless of group identity is fundamental to building trust between the state and its citizens (Samarasinghe, 2009).

2.3 Social significance of service delivery in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a long history of providing social welfare benefits to uplift and improve citizens' wellbeing (Godamunne, 2015). In 1947, the Social Services Commission stated that it was both a family and humanitarian obligation 'to feed the poor and assist the needy'. This need, the Commission claimed, was derived from ancient tradition and religiously supported by all religions practiced in the country (Alailima, 1995). From the 19th century, a combination of private alms, public charity, government grants and free medical assistance was provided (Sessional Paper VII, 1947: 3). Catastrophes such as droughts, floods and epidemics were dealt with on an emergency basis by 'improvised machinery' (Sessional Paper VII, 1947: 3). The need to establish a coordinated mechanism equipped to deal with emergencies was not recognised until the 20th century, when the legislative framework governing state

and non-state welfare provisioning came into effect in the 1930s.

As discussed in the previous section, the objective of social protection is to provide income or consumption transfers to protect livelihoods and enhance the social status and rights of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised (Devereux and Sabates Wheeler, 2004). Poverty transfers that began in the 1930s were driven by early experiences of democratic politics and the global recession in the middle of that decade. By the 1940s, there was recognition that the state should compensate those who are the 'causalities of progress' and state interventions began to target groups or cases with special needs (Alailima, 1995). Social assistance for the poor, in the form of cash transfers, was introduced in 1940, under the Poor Law Ordinance. This was introduced in the metropolitan regions of Colombo, Galle and Kandy, and provided outdoor relief for mentally and physically disabled people and emergency situations. Emergency relief thereafter was delivered by Government Agents in times of need. However, state welfare provision was activated only when other social institutions, such as family and the community, failed to provide for these special groups (Alailima, 1995).

The Department of Social Services was set up in 1948 for the purpose of social welfare provision (Alailima, 1995). However, public assistance remained limited to servicing the 'poorest of the poor'. Additionally, grants were provided to voluntary organisations to offer residential care for the elderly, orphans and outdoor relief for those who needed it. Meanwhile, those who were considered 'destitute', affected by natural calamities, classed as disabled or living with certain diseases were supported directly by the Department of Social Services. Residential care was provided by voluntary organisations, with government provision limited to providing a minimum per capita subsidy, supplemented by ad hoc grants for those in care (Alailima, 1995).

In 1940, a food ration system was adopted by the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure a minimum quantity of food to households (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2008). Universal access to education was provided just before independence, followed by the universal provision of healthcare services. Since the middle of the 20th century, universal access to health and education has been at the centre of Sri Lanka's social welfare programming. The high levels of coverage in both of these sectors over the past half a century has contributed to relatively high human development, which is reflected in Sri Lanka's position in the Human Development Index. Consequently, Sri Lanka health and education indicators are the highest in South Asia.

From 1948, Sri Lanka has pursued social welfare politics and programmes to ensure equity with these serving as the axis of the development process (Gunetilleke, 2005). The state commitment to social welfare has been reflected in providing universal access to healthcare and free education from primary level school education to university (Godamunne, 2015). This commitment to social welfare became an implicit contract between the state and its citizens (Godamunne, 2015). Such provisions withstood violent insurrections in the south in 1971 and 1987 to 1988 and a protracted war in the north and east, where successive governments continued to finance and maintain healthcare and educational services, while also ensuring food security in the areas under rebel control (Gunetilleke, 2005).

Sri Lanka also has a well–established tradition of providing social protection measures. Historically, the immediate and extended family, along with the community, have played key roles in serving social protection needs. These traditions have continued in an informal manner, though with changes in form and coverage over the years. These casual mechanisms were initially bolstered by a formal system of social security with a strong social assistance component, which reflected the welfare state approach adopted in the West and, more particularly, was modeled on Britain's post–World War II universalistic approach to welfare. As early as 1901, a mandatory pension scheme for civil servants was established, followed in the post-independence years by several contributory provident funds (Godamunne, 2015).

Thus, Sri Lanka established a higher degree of social security coverage than most South Asian countries, targeting universal health and education, measures to address vulnerable groups and a social insurance pension scheme for retired people. Similarly, successive governments always provided some form of income support to the population and workforce. The post-independence years were marked by the adoption of social policies based on the notion that economic development should be underpinned by sound social welfare and social protection programmes and policies (Godamunne, 2015).

As Gunetilleke states, the policies and programmes pursued by successive governments became the basis of the implicit social contract between the state and

the people (2005). A critical aspect underpinning these policies and programmes was that they were attentive to people's needs, responding to calls for improvement in wellbeing. Stemming from this social contract, a relationship structure of rights and responsibilities emerged with well-defined state obligations and responsibilities to actually fulfil the above. People's expectations of the state were framed by this relationship, with the state cast as the principal provider of services and benefits to which the people were entitled, further strengthening the basis on which the state-society relationship was consolidated (Gunetilleke, 2005).

Can 'good, equitable and just government' be built through delivering services? This study aims to explore this question, using the concept of performance-based legitimacy to interrogate the delivery of services during two systemic shocks in Anuradhapura and Mannar in 2014.

3 Narrative descriptions: the context

3.1 The case study locations

As previously outlined, this study looks at changes in perceptions of state legitimacy from Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women in the Mannar and Anuradhapura districts, using the concept of performance-based legitimacy.

1. The Mannar district is situated in the northwestern region in the Northern Province. Lying in the dry zone, the weather is hot and dry for most of the year, with monsoon setting in from October.

Prior to the beginning of the war, the inhabitants of the district were predominantly Tamil or Muslim. However, the Muslim community were forced to flee the Northern Province in the early 1990s, due to ethnic cleansing programmes carried out by the LTTE, resulting in a prolonged period of displacement in Puttalam. As the three decades of war progressed, the Tamil community suffered displacement multiple times. The district thus bore the full brunt of the war until it ended in 2009. They The community returned to Mannar in 2010.

Before the war began, the majority of Mannar inhabitants engaged in agriculture – mostly paddy and fisheries (both inland and ocean) and related livelihoods. While state services such as health, education and state pensions could be accessed during the war, social protection programmes such as Samurdhi benefits, or allowances for the elderly, disabled and poorest people only became accessible when the war ended in 2010. To this day, post-war livelihoods continue to rely on agriculture and fisheries but are now more susceptible to changing climatic conditions. Situated in the dry zone, the district frequently experiences very hot climatic conditions with little rain. In 2014, the district was one of the worst affected during the drought. Later the same year, it suffered from flooding due to incessant rains and the overflowing of major rivers.

Musali is one of five Divisions within the Mannar District[2]. It comprises both Tamil and Muslim communities working mostly in fisheries and agricultural livelihoods. The communities in Musali are some of the poorest in the District. Within Musali, the poorest GN Division is in Maradamadu. This division constitutes one of few mixed GNs in the Mannar district, comprising both Tamil and Muslim people. Being on a highland, its inhabitants'

2 Sri Lanka is administratively divided into provinces and further subdivided into districts. Districts are divided into Divisions, which are then divided into the last unit of the GN divisions.

livelihoods are in agricultural and fisheries-related activities, with many inhabitants engaging in daily wage labour within these sectors. Agricultural livelihoods are mostly in paddy cultivations as share croppers or labourers on a daily wage. Smallholder plots of agricultural produce for consumption and resale are also common, as are inland fisheries based on the small tanks in the locality.

The Muslim community consists of those inhabitants who fled during the LTTE pogroms but recently returned and are now being helped by state and non-state actors to rebuild homes and restart livelihoods. The Tamil community had also been displaced several times within the Northern Province, having lived as far away as the Jaffna and Mullaitivu districts during the war. While the Muslims had returned from Puttalam, many of the Tamils had returned from either Jaffna or Mullaitivu districts after the end of the war in 2009. Many Tamil women in Mannar had lost their male family members in the war and were now female-headed households (FHHs), a fate that had not befallen the Muslim women.

Services such as health and education were limited, with the village lacking medical facilities and the nearest clinic being a 20-minute drive away. This lack of access to a doctor or any medical services was a major inconvenience to the villagers. The village school was limited to providing a primary education only. Both communities had been supported to return to their villages after the end of the war. The village suffered from a lack of drinking water due to the salinity of the ground water. The issue was particularly problematic during drought periods, when access was through bowsers distributing water from the Musali DS division. The river that ran across one part of the village would flood during the rainy season, particularly if the flood gates of the big tanks in Anuradhapura were opened.

The relationship between the state and citizens during the war was fractured. While provision of education, health and access to pensions were delivered by the state for the most part, the constant movement of people because of war conditions and subsequent regular displacement made access to state services difficult. This meant that opportunities to build or sustain relationships with state officials were limited, with questions of who the state represented. It was certainly the case for the LTTE, which acted as the de facto state locally, and the state in Colombo, with their positions not always clear in the minds of the women. Given the area's history of experiencing the full brunt of the war and the breakdown of the social contract between its people and the state, regaining mutual trust and the confidence to begin a process of state building was important for the women in a post-war context.

2. Anuradhapura is one of the largest districts in terms of land area in Sri Lanka. Situated in the north-central region, its climatic conditions are dry with little rainfall. During ancient times, a network of irrigation tanks was built by the kings to gather water and for rain-fed agriculture. The majority population in the district has always been Sinhala, with most people engaged in agriculturally based livelihoods. The district has deep historical and cultural significance to the Sinhala Buddhist population as it is the site of the first kingdom based in the city of Anuradhapura. Its rich historical and religious significance is still present in the temples, pleasure gardens and the architectural ruins that signify its past glory.

During the war, the district was a frontier region lying on the border of the war zone districts of Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. Being on the fringes in this way meant its inhabitants suffered sporadic terror attacks from the LTTE during the war and developed skills to protect themselves from these attacks. The growth of 'home guards' to defend the village was one such initiative and provided a regular stream of cadre to the Sri Lankan military to wage the war against the LTTE. Being in the dry zone, the district was prone to long droughts. The relatively large network of ancient irrigation tanks made it prone to flooding during times of incessant rain. The district is one of the worst affected by chronic kidney disease and has lost breadwinners, mostly farmers, due to the disease. It was also one of the worst affected districts in both the drought and flood of 2014/2015.

Galenbindunuwewa is one of 22 DSs within the Anuradhapura district. The division holds historical significance for having four large tanks built by ancient kings within its territory. These provide rain water for agriculture and households, as the dry weather that prevails for most of year rarely sees rain, with exceptions mostly occurring during the monsoon between October and December, aside from some inter-monsoonal rainfall between March and May. The Hurulu Wewa Farmer Colony set up in 1953 was one of the earliest farmer colonies established in the post-colonial period. The Manankattiya GN is one of the poorest in the division, experiencing long periods of drought and flooding during the monsoon. Manankattiya has two large tanks, and was one of the worst affected GNs by the flooding that took place in 2014/2015.

The main livelihood of the village is paddy cultivation watered by small and medium scale irrigation tanks filled by the North-Eastern monsoon rain. Additionally, black gram, green gram, maize, onions and vegetable cultivation is also undertaken on a small-scale basis. Due to the lack of rain, it is difficult for paddy to be cultivated during both seasons. Along with this, the income from a single cultivation is insufficient to sustain a full household year. This leads most households to supplement incomes with other sources such as daily wages and overseas or internal migration. Many villagers, being in the low-income group, are recipients of Samurdhi benefits. The village does not have medical facilities on-site, with the nearest amenities in this regard nearly a half hour drive away. The village school is restricted to providing secondary education up to the Ordinary level. Many of the women engage in agriculture work, either helping the men in paddy and other crop cultivation or small-scale home gardening. A few run small business establishments – shop, sewing or cooking.

Both of these cases illustrate similarities and differences. Both areas are physically located in the dry zone and subject to droughts. During monsoons, they frequently experience flooding due to incessant rains and overflowing of tanks. Livelihoods are essentially agriculturally based – predominantly paddy supplemented by chenna[3] cultivation and minor supplementary crops. However, while Mannar bore the full brunt of the war, Anuradhapura was on the border of the war zone and therefore experienced the war indirectly, as a 'frontier region'. The ethnic composition of the two districts is different; Mannar is composed of Muslim and Tamil communities, while Anuradhapura is predominantly Sinhala. Along with this, Anuradhapura has had access to all state services and programmes, but Mannar has only recently – since 2010 – been able to access the full range of government services. Similarly, the state bureaucratic service was functional in Anuradhapura throughout the war, yet state services in Mannar were fractured and still being rebuilt after the end of the war. These similarities and differences provide avenues to explore the different experiences of the women's access to state services and to situate perceptions of the state within the overall context of historical events that have shaped and, in turn, reshaped state legitimacy processes.

3.2 The systemic shocks of 2014/2015

Drought of 2014

2013 was characterised by a severe drought, followed by a weak monsoon season between October and February and the onset of another drought starting in November 2013, which continued for a further 11 months. In April 2014, the continuing drought prompted the irrigation Department to report that major reservoirs showed the lowest water levels in 14 years. The prolonged drought ended in December 2014 with the onset of the northeast monsoon.

i. Mannar: In August 2014, it was reported that more than a million people were affected by the prevailing drought (Press TV, 2014). The worst affected districts were Mannar, Anuradhapura and Poḷonnaruwa, with a total of 111,459 families affected (Press TV, 2014). The state responded by allocating 10 million dollars towards drought relief through assistance to drought-affected communities. In March 2014, funds were released to buy stocks of rice to control sudden price hikes. The situation was particularly dire in Mannar, which already had one of the highest poverty headcounts in the country, at over 20 percent (IPS News, 2014a). To help communities cope with the impact of the drought, the government asked farmers to switch to take the temporary relief measure of growing short-term variety crops that required less water as a (Muttulingam, 2014). As the water resources declined, that for drinking was distributed by the Navy, who also installed water storage tanks to drought-affected households. Cash-for-work programmes, such as renovating water and irrigation networks, developing roads and school safety in disaster prone areas, were initiated to help families earn an income (IPS News, 2014b).

However, there were adverse impacts on the community, with many villagers resorting to measures such as limiting their meal portions, restricting adult meal consumption and even reducing the number of meals consumed daily. Other coping mechanisms included switching to less preferred and less expensive food items, buying food on credit, pawning jewellery and outward migration from the district. (Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Disaster Management of the Government of Sri Lanka and the World Food Programme, 2014).

3 This is also known as 'shifting cultivation' and involves clearing of jungle land for cultivation of dry-land varieties of vegetables and subsidiary crops.

Despite the growing uncertainty of the drought and worsening of the economic situation for farmers in Mannar, there were no cases of open demonstrations against state responses by the affected communities reported in the popular media.

ii. Anuradhapura: The *Sunday Times* reports that 'Eleven major tanks in the Anuradhapura district are now four-fifths empty' (Fazlulhaq, 2014), while another indicates that over 87,000 families were affected by the drought in the Anuradhapura district alone (Wijesinghe, 2014).

The government allocated over LKR 100 m to assist drought-hit families in the Anuradhapura district. These funds were allocated for cash-for-work programmes to provide employment opportunities, such as removing silting from reservoirs and tanks, rehabilitating wells and providing drinking water (Thompson Reuters, 2014). A news article at the time stated that 'Relief measures will be available in every Divisional Secretariat division in the district. Under the first stage, relief money worth LKR 2 m was allocated to each of the 22 DS divisions in the district. Each affected family was provided LKR 500 in addition to other relief, to meet their day-to-day needs.' (Somarathna, 2014). Another news article reports that around 1,500 wells were sunk in Anuradhapura to provide water, which helped save water for less water dependent crops to be cultivated. Further, the Coconut Cultivation Board provided LKR 8000 for replanting an acre of coconut for crops lost because of the drought (Attygalle, 2014).

In the background of the worsening climate and economic conditions in the district, government officials made public statements on the relief measures being delivered. The Finance Secretary Punchi Banda Jayasundera said the USD 10 m programme aimed to repair and renovate irrigation reservoirs and canals by using labour from the more than 111,000 affected families, stating, 'One member from each family will be provided at least 12 days of work per month.' (IRIN, 2014). An article published during the year of the drought elaborates:

> ***It has been planned to use the manpower of these families to attend to minor repairs to tanks, irrigation canals, anicuts and agriculture roads in the rural areas. Each person is given 22 days of work on basis of four hours for a day being paid Rs.500 per working day as a livelihood support to face the challenge of the drought. The families will also receive dry rations. Farmers have also agreed to minimise paddy cultivation and cultivate crops such as green gram, cow pea, maize and a few others. However, these too will be limited due to the shortage of water.***
> News.lk 2014

To help the deteriorating availability of drinking water, the Water Supply and Drainage Board, Irrigation and Agriculture and Agrarian Services Departments, together with the Anuradhapura Government Agent's office, made arrangements to provide drinking water to drought-affected rural areas using bowsers and water tanks (Wijesinghe, 2014a). As a measure to ease pressure on reduced income, the government's cash for work programme was expanded to give relief to more farmer families. A well-digging programme was initiated to provide 1000 wells during the first phase, with the promise of a subsidy for all those who joined this programme (Wijesinghe, 2014b).

However, despite the government providing a range of relief activities to enable the affected to cope, limitations in the delivery process were highlighted in the media, with one report stating that the DS didn't have enough bowsers to regularly distribute drinking water to all those affected. Sometimes the bowsers had to travel between 30 and 40 km from the water storage facility to reach the affected villages. The villagers complained that drinking water was not provided frequently enough and that they didn't have containers to store it until the next delivery took place (IPS News, 2014). It was also highlighted that farmers were resisting switching to alternate crop varieties. Another 2014 IPS news report indicated that the Ministry of Agriculture urged farmers to use paddy lands to cultivate crops that require less water, but they were hesitant to change their farming practices (IPS News, 2014).

During the last quarter of 2014, popular media highlighted the need for the government to intervene and improve famers' knowledge on using fertilisers, switching to less water-dependent crop varieties and high yielding drought resistant crops as a way to help them earn an income during drought periods (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2014). The discontent of farmers in reaction to state responses is illustrated in a news article in January 2015, which reports that farmers from Hurulu Wewa, Galenbindunuwewa, staged a demonstration alleging that the compensation for crops destroyed during the drought had not been provided for yet. (Newscentral, 2014).

Flood of 2014/15

The northeast monsoon that occurs between October and February for the Northern, North Central and Eastern provinces was particularly powerful between December 2014 and January 2015, with the incessant rains causing flooding and the opening of the sluice gates of the major tanks.

The Northern and North Central Provinces experienced incessant rains for three days, causing flash floods (Davies, 2014). These increased water levels in the rivers and reservoirs, forcing the authorities to open flood gates, according to the Chinese Xinhua news agency, which reported that 29 of the big dams and 83 of the medium tanks had reached spill level, resulting in the sluice gates being opened and threatening the lives and livelihoods of people living downstream (Xinhua, 2014).

i. Mannar: In December 2014, the Jaffna based newspaper, Uthayan, reported that 8,979 people, including 2,434 families, had been displaced (Tamil Guardian, 2014). Meanwhile, another news report states that sufficient funds had been disbursed to the DS offices to enable officials to carry out relief efforts (Daily FT, 2014). Troops of the 54th Division of the Army, based in Mannar, were the first to arrive at the scene and distribute relief to the almost 400 victims who were evacuated to the five relief centres in the Mannar district (News.lk, 2014a). The affected were temporarily moved to shelters, with arrangements to distribute cooked food, dry rations and basic necessities to those affected. Dry ration provisions were also made for flood victims who were not in the shelters. These were issued by the Navy, in coordination with regional government authorities (Daily FT, 2014). After the flood water receded, the displaced were enabled to return to their homes through government authorities and military troops working together to set up temporary shelters, reconstruct houses and clean wells (Colombo Page, 2014).

The above gives an indication of the nature of the impact of the flood in Mannar and state responses to help the affected to cope and recover from the shock.

ii. Anuradhapura: Torrential rains battered the North Central Province in mid-December 2014. The water levels of the ten big tanks in Anuradhapura had risen and by midnight of 19th December the flood gates of the big tanks in Anuradhapura were opened to release the water. Some of the smaller tanks burst and the water gushed down the Malwathu Oya and other waterways, submerging villages and parts of the city (Rajabima Oblate Centre, 2015). The Galenbindunuwewa to Dutuwewa road was inundated due to the overflow of the Getalaawa Wewa. Meanwhile, the water levels of the Hurulu Wewa reservoir in Galenbindunuwewa had also increased rapidly (Newsfirst, 2014).

By daybreak, 20 December, many villages were flooded, making the worst flood since 1957. (Rajabima Oblate Centre, 2015). Paddy cultivated lands were submerged negatively impacting livelihoods of communities who had suffered by a prolonged drought in the preceding months (Red cross, 2014). Civilians in the Nachchaduwa wewa, Thirappane, Rambewa, Tambuttegama, Galenbindunuwewa, Nochchiyagama, Kahatagasdigiliya, Rajanganaya, Thalawa and Palugaswewa areas remained the worst affected in the Wanni and the Anuradhapura District, with housing, livelihoods and small-scale infrastructure all being impacted. The state responded to this by providing cooked meals to the victims. Along with this, the 21st Division of the Army stationed in Anuradhapura rescued 592 families and relocated them in temporary shelters. Army relief teams worked to evacuate prisoners in the Anuradhapura prison building, as they were at risk of being submerged due to rising flood waters. Simultaneously, 70 patients in the Anuradhapura Army Base Hospital were also evacuated (News.lk ,2014a).

The government directed the treasury to send funds to the DS in order to provide food and relief item to the victims. Simultaneously, the President also called the armed forces to help the Disaster Management Centre in rescue operations and evacuating the affected to shelters. Along with this, the Health Ministry sent out teams to the shelters to provide medicine stocks and meet the health needs of the affected communities (News Line, 2014) and cooked food and rations were distributed by government officials, via the assistance of the Navy (News.lk, 2014 a; Sri Lanka Mirror, 2014). In addition, 30 Army personnel were deployed to restore the bund of the Palispathana tank in Kahatagasdigiliya, which was in imminent danger of bursting (News.lk, 2014a).

The resulting impact of experiencing multiple shocks in the form of a prolonged drought followed by flash floods in both of the districts caused severe hardship to the lives and livelihoods of communities in Mannar and Anuradhapura throughout 2014/2015.

3.3 Profiles of the women in the communities

Anuradhapura

i. Malini[4] is a middle-aged widowed woman, whose farmer husband died on the way to hospital after suffering a heart attack; the village roads are in poor condition and she was unable to get him to hospital on time. She is of the view that if the roads were in better condition and she was able to get her husband to hospital in time, he would be alive today.

Malini has two adult children: her daughter is married and lives separately, while her 18-year-old son is a student in a monastic school and lives with her.

Prior to her husband's death, Malini was an active member of the community participating in village-level committees. She now runs a small business from which she earns a little – less than LKR 1000 a day. She is a Samurdhi beneficiary, previously receiving LKR 595.00 per month, which has recently been increased to LKR 800. She has, however, not received her monthly stipend since it was increased. In fact, her monthly allowance is now five months in arears.

Living in close proximity to the anicut, her house floods frequently during the monsoon. She has been displaced five times over the past seven years. During the flood of 2015, the walls of her house cracked and she is no longer able to live in it. She has been promised compensation to repair it, but is yet to receive this. She now lives in her mother-in-law's house, awaiting the promised compensation. She is critical of government officials, claiming they are inefficient and biased, attributing the delays in payment of her compensation and the issuing of Samurdhi receipts on their ineffectiveness. She has praise for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that helped her start a cultivation plot. This NGO, however, no longer works in the village. The people in the village are poor and village development interventions are few. Malini says the state has done little to uplift the living conditions of the villagers.

ii. Priyanthi is a young married woman with a toddler. She has lived in the village since birth and endured the harsh climatic conditions throughout her life. The intensity of the drought and frequency of the floods have, however, increased over the years. Her husband is a farmer, cultivating paddy and chenna lands. Priyanthi undertakes small-scale cultivation – pumpkin, sorghum and other small crops. She is a Samurdhi beneficiary and receives a small monthly stipend. Previously, she obtained vitamins and milk powder for her infant through the benefits she was entitled to under the programme.

In 2014, Priyanthi was unable to undertake seasonal cultivation, due to the drought. The water levels in the tank were so low that the villagers took a collective decision to save as much of it as possible for cultivation and use the village wells to meet their other water-based needs. The family paddy crops suffered as a result of the prolonged drought and the family was thus unable to stock up a rice buffer, which would have ensured they were food secure until the next harvesting season. Priyanthi was instead forced to buy rice to meet household consumption needs.

When the rains came, the household was unprepared. The water levels rose very quickly and the family had to be evacuated. They were determined to save what little paddy stocks they had, which they did, carrying them on their shoulders. The flood destroyed Priyanthi's sorghum cultivation and income from the chenna cultivation was also low due to the flood. She has received no assistance for her losses and is particularly critical of the function of government officials and the farmer's associations in the village, grumbling: 'They are all thieves, only helping the people they know well.'

iii. Sumanawathi is a middle-aged married woman with two adult children who are married. Her husband is employed in the civil defense force and earns about LKR 25,000 a month. The family income is supplemented by paddy cultivation, which earns about LKR 30,000 every six months. Sumanawathi receives a small monthly stipend as a Samurdhi beneficiary and helps in cultivating the family paddy and chenna lands.

Sumanawathi lives across from the anicut and when it overflows in the rainy season, her house is surrounded on three sides by the gushing waters. She has been displaced four times in the last four years due to flooding. During such times, she relocates to her daughter's house further up the road, safe from the gushing water of the overflowing anicut. She lives in a house gifted by her father. When Sumanawathi built and moved into the house, Sumanawathi and her husband were not affected by flooding. However, in 2010, villagers requested that a

4 Names of all of the women have been changed to protect their identity.

bridge be built over the stream that flowed across from Sumanawathi's house, insisting the bridge would facilitate an easier commute on the road. Since this was built, Sumanawathi's house has been flooded every monsoon. She has repeatedly complained to the GN about the flooding and requested an alternative piece of land and help to build a new house. This request has been turned down on the grounds that she has built on a 'reservation', something Sumanawathi claims she was not aware of when she built the house in 2009.

As Sumanawathi's husband is employed by the government, the family received no relief provisions during the flood. However, she claims there were discrepancies in the distribution of relief, as some families that had government employees received benefits.

iv. Kamalawathi is an elderly widowed woman living with her unmarried son, who is an alcoholic. Kamalawathi suffers from a deformity that prevents her from standing upright. Her husband was a farmer, so she has been receiving a farmers' pension of LKR 2000, on a monthly basis, since his death. She also receives a Samurdhi benefit of LKR 1000 each month. She weaves cadjan for a living and sells coconuts and small crops from her home garden for further income.

Kamalawathi lives in a small temporary shack on the site of a large permanent house, which she claims was her previous home where she used to live with her son and daughter-in-law. She built the temporary shack on the same plot of land and moved out of the main house, as her daughter-in-law was unkind to her and her other son. However, she continues to share the kitchen with the occupants of the main house.

Kamalawathi has been displaced five times over the past six years due to floods. During the flood of 2014, the kitchen (built from wattle and daub) was washed away, along with the pots and pans. She was displaced for 15 days, during which time she moved in with her daughter further up the village. During the drought, she experienced food insecurity issues, as she couldn't rely on the paddy crop or small cultivations to provide her with the staples required for consumption. She was thus forced to purchase food items such as rice and dhal at the market, dipping into her savings to make ends meet. In addition to this, the well on the premises dried up, providing brackish water that was unsafe for consumption. This led Kamalawathi to rely instead on drinking water provided by the DS office or by private individuals and institutions on an *ad hoc* basis.

Kamalawathi was unhappy with the functioning of the state apparatus, but the GN, who happens to be her nephew, had refused to enlist her on the Samurdhi programme. She, has, however, eventually managed to get on the programme by appealing to the DS office.

Mannar

i. Sarmila is a young Tamil Catholic woman from Pichchaiwarippu in Musali, Mannar. She lives with her husband and two young children in a permanent house built with assistance from the Indian Housing Scheme.

The family were displaced in 2007 and returned to Pichchaiwarippu in 2009. Due to the devastation to their house and property, they lived in a tent for two years until they were able to rebuild their house with the above assistance. Her husband engages in daily wage work during the week and earns LKR 1000 per day. Since 2009, Sarmila has been the President of a women's group in her village, engaging in social services to her community. She holds the position on a *pro bono* basis

Climatic changes, such as frequent droughts and floods, have made agriculture a difficult livelihood for Sarmila's family. During the drought, her husband was unable to engage in agriculture work and sought daily wage labour outside of the village. The family managed all of their expenses – children's tuition fees, medical and food expenses – from the LKR 1000 Sarmila's husband earned. The family's coping strategies in times of such financial hardship was to cut down on meal intake, which sometimes resulted in Sarmila only feeding her children porridge. In 2014, she did not have excess rice from her paddy fields, due to the drought. As a result, she did not have a buffer stock of rice in the house during the flood and could only give her children hot water to 'fill their stomachs'.

Sarmila's household received no relief during the drought, though they did obtain some during the flood. However, the impact of the flood on the household was much greater than the drought. During the drought, Sarmila's husband was still able to find work and they had an income, but during the flood they were hemmed in the house and therefore couldn't earn. Further, their agricultural land was under water, affecting future income from crops, as the family were unable to harvest their paddy fields. To restart agricultural activities, Sarmila's family obtained a loan and now have a lease payment of LKR 45,000 to pay on the paddy lands in addition to expenses for fertilisers and pesticides. However, her

fields have been affected by shocks over the past three years: twice by floods and once by drought and she is unable to pay the debt. 'We have three years' loans in a row to repay. What would we do?' she asks. 'Everything is ruined because of this flood,' she laments.

ii. Ketheeswary is a middle-aged single Tamil woman living in Pichchaiwarippu. At the age of 20, she met and fell in love with a man from Kandy who was visiting the village. Despite objections from her family, she married him. However, he left her 31 days after the birth of her son. She then earned a living working as a day labourer on plots of agricultural land.

During the war, Ketheeswary was displaced and returned to her native village in 2010. Upon her return, she was given a plot of land by the government for which she has a permit, not a deed. She obtained LKR 300,000 from an International NGO (INGO) to build her house. In addition, she took a loan of LKR 50,000 to meet the labour costs of construction. She is repaying the debt through work as an agricultural labourer. She also has an agricultural property, which she inherited from her parents and on which she works and hires wage labourers when required.

Ketheeswary is disabled and a recipient of a Samurdhi benefit, which pays her LKR 1000 monthly. She is also a beneficiary of LKR 250 from a Public Assistance Monthly Allowance (PAMA). She received seeds – cowpea and chick peas from the Divi Neguma programme – which she then sowed in her home garden. During the 2014 drought, conditions were particularly harsh and Ketheeswary began fetching water from the river or the nearest well. Along with this, the plants in her home garden wilted and died in the heat and the chick peas and cowpeas she sowed were destroyed by the flood. She did, however, receive some flood assistance, namely between 50 and 60 kg of rice and LKR 2000 as compensation.

Ketheeswary has experienced two floods since returning to the village. During both floods, she was evacuated by boat with the help of the military and provided with assistance in the form of rice, wheat flour and milk powder. She acknowledges: 'We should not say any assistance was bad. We should appreciate any assistance we get. What they (government) gave was good and it is a help that must be appreciated.'

iii. Raaliya is a young Muslim woman with four young children. Immediately after the end of the war in 2009, she returned to her birth place at the 4th Mile Post. Raaliya's family were displaced by the LTTE pogroms of the 1990s, after which she lived in Puttalam with her aunt before returning to Mannar in 2009. Other members of her family, including her mother-in-law (Seyyida), now live in the village.

Raaliya and her husband obtained LKR 550,000 from the Indian Housing Scheme towards the construction of their house. They borrowed a further LKR 125,000 from a relative to complete it. They were among the lucky few who were able to escape the debt trap by not having to pay interest on their housing loan. Consequently, they had had been able to pay off LKR 25,000 of the loan.

Since returning to the 4th Mile Post, Raaliya's husband was engaged in daily wage labour helping to make paratas in a shop which paid him LKR 700 per day. Raaliya received snake beans, ladies' fingers, collard green and chilli saplings from the Divi Neguma[5] programme which she tried cultivating in her home garden but failed due to insufficient water. The 2014 drought was particularly harsh making agricultural livelihoods nearly impossible. Her husband sought work in adjacent villages. The money he earned was the only income the family had during that time. The children suffered due to the lack of food, her daughter was like a skeleton. Other children frequently experienced dysentery, headaches and wounds on the head, she said.

During the flood too, the family had a difficult time – they had no food for two to three days. What little food was available was shared among the four young children. When the flood waters were rising, the military helped the family to evacuate to the village school where they were provided cooked food for the two days they spent there before moving to the premises of the mosque. On returning home, dry rations were provided for about a month at regular intervals. She was grateful for the provisions and care that were provided by the local government authorities and the military that helped the family during the flood period.

iv. Seyyida is an elderly widowed Muslim woman living a temporary shack in the 4th Mile Post village. She had given birth to eight children in total, of whom six have

5 This state-sponsored poverty alleviation programme was rebranded from Samurdhi.

survived. In 1989, the family were displaced by the war and moved to Puttalam, where the government provided a ten-perch plot of land and assistance to build a house which Seyyida later gave her elder daughter when she married. Whilst in Puttalam, her husband passed away, leaving her alone with the children, the youngest of whom was only nine days old. To help provide for her young family, Seyyida worked abroad for eight years. With the money she earned, she bought land and built a house with the assistance of a local politician. She gifted this house to her second daughter upon her marriage.

Seyyida returned to the 4th Mile Post in 2009. She says the village was a jungle at the time, but the government cleared it up. She says she came because a government official persuaded her – the same one who had helped build her house in Puttalam. She subsequently relocated to the village with her son and family, who live a few minutes up the road. Life was difficult back in the village – drinking water was in short supply until a well was built by an NGO.

Seyyida currently lives in a shack on the main road – a temporary hut with a tin roof that rattles with the wind and rain. The house was partly built by a Japanese organisation. Other villagers received houses through the DS office, but Seyyida was not one of them, though the government compensated for this, by building a toilet for her.

Seyyida receives assistance under government programmes – LKR 1000 per month from Samurdhi benefits and LKR 250 per month from the PAMA. She has invested part of the Samurdhi money in hens. During the rainy season, the eggs hatch and provide her with chicks, which she sells for LKR 1000 each. The eggs from the hens provide a regular income to her – about LKR 300 to 400 per month. Sometimes she curries the eggs and eats them herself.

Seyyida suffered hardship during the drought. Water was in short supply and she had to walk a long way to fetch it. Given her age, carrying heavy buckets was a difficult and time-consuming task. During the flood, the army took her to the village school by tractor, where she stayed for three days until the water receded. This was the third time she had experienced flooding since returning to the village. During previous floods, the Navy had taken her by boat to a temporary camp for the displaced that was set up in the village school. She says she was appreciative of the help: ‘The water level was up to our hips. Army people held our hand and helped us get into the tractor.’

v. Vasanthi is a middle-aged Tamil woman living in Pichchaivarippu with her two teenage daughters. She married and initially lived in Musali before moving to the Maradamadu GN division during the war, first to the 4th Mile Post, and then moving to Pichchaiwarrippu in 1995. However, Vasanthi’s husband was conscripted by the LTTE shortly after and she was forced to work as an agricultural labourer to provide for her family. From 2006, she was displaced and lived in a camp for the internally displaced in Naanaaddaan. In 2008, she heard there that her husband had died during the last phases of the war.

Vasanthi returned to Pichchaiwarippu in 2008 to find her house uninhabitable. With money provided by NGOs, she repaired it and moved in with her daughters. An international NGO providing livelihood support programmes for FHHs gave her funding to start a small shop. She says this business is okay and that she sometimes earns LKR 1000 in sales per day. Additionally, she grows vegetables in her garden – snake beans and cow pea – and sells them in her shop or sends them to the market.

Vasanthi’s biggest concern is a shortage of water. She has a tube well to supply her with some for drinking, but that too is saline. Drought conditions are particularly harsh, as she in unable to cultivate her home garden and has to walk a long way, carrying two or three pots of water for drinking.

During the flood, Vasanthi’s shop income suffered acutely. The goods were all sold and there was no new business. Further, customers had taken goods on credit and were finding it hard to repay her, creating a cash crunch for her. In turn she had to borrow on credit to secure goods to sell at the shop. Her debt reached LKR 10,000, which she has been slowly repaying. Many of the crops in her garden were also destroyed – peanuts and cowpea completely – but she was able to restore her snake beans, which provided her an income during the difficult time soon after the flood. ‘There was nothing to eat. If there is rice, nothing was there for curry and vice versa. There was no electricity also’, she says.

vi. Seinammbu is a middle-aged Muslim woman in Maradamadu with three grown up children. The family were displaced in 1999, eventually finding refuge between Puttalam and Anamaduwa. After ten years of living under a tarpaulin sheet, the government provided land to build a house. Life was hard during displacement. There were no employment opportunities in Puttalam and the family were uncomfortable living with the

Sinhala community: 'we could not go out without fear there', Seinammbu confesses. In 2010, they returned to Maradamadu, as their home. Seinammbu says life was initially difficult, as they had no facilities. 'We suffered a lot', she continues. The family were beneficiaries of the Indian Housing Scheme, receiving LKR 550,000 towards construction of their house. Additionally, the family contributed LKR 250,000 for this construction, which they borrowed in order to buy building materials.

Seinammbu's husband is a fisherman, mostly working in local small tanks. He also engages in daily wage labour, earning between LKR 500 and 1000, depending on the work. Seinammbu says work is scarce and that her husband has to take what is available during the season, sometimes earning and sometimes not. The wages go towards paying the loan on the house. There are no job opportunities for women in the village, so Seinammbu helps her husband in the paddy fields. However, she now finds this difficult, as she is unwell and unable to undertake hard work in the sun. She receives a Samurdhi benefit of LKR 1000 per month.

Seinammbu doesn't think the 2014 drought affected her family too severely. Villagers suffered as it was hot and they were in constant fear that the lack of rain would affect their crops but the water level in Seinammbu's well didn't reduce and, as a result, she was able to use water from the well to cultivate her home garden. The wells that had been constructed in the village during the post-war period provided adequate drinking water for the villagers.

The impact of the flood, however, was more severe. Seinammbu's paddy fields were inundated and the family incurred a loss of LKR 300,000. This affected the family's cash flow and they were forced to buy goods on credit. They stayed indoors during the flood and were only able to move around the village in a boat service provided by the navy.

Seinammbu is happy, nonetheless: 'We have places to go without fear and we have a good breeze here. Though we have debts to repay, we are happy here'. She is not concerned about meeting these financial obligations, as the money was borrowed from a relative and the family is paying it back slowly from the income from their paddy crop. Seinammbu is happy to be back in her village and confesses, 'we came back here because we want to be in our own land, our children can go out and play without fear. We were scared of the Sinhala area. We were afraid of having fights and quarrels with the local people in Puttalam'.

4 Findings: state delivery of services during the drought and flood of 2014/2015

4.1 How did the state perform in delivering services to Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala women in selected villages in Mannar and Anuradhapura districts during the drought and flood of 2014/2015?

1. Mannar

i. What did the state deliver?

Drought

The distribution of drinking water by the Musali DS was one of the prime services delivered by the state. During the early months of the drought, distribution occurred every two or three days and the delivery period lengthened to once a week, happening on a Friday as the drought progressed. This could be attributed to the strain the delivery mechanism experienced as the drought progressed, with more villages needing increasingly regular deliveries and not having enough bowsers to meet these bigger demands, thereby highlighting key issues in the distribution process that were hampering the state's ability to meet the community's needs.

Dry food rations were also distributed by the state, which recipients were happy with:

> ***During that time, Mr. Rishad [Bathiudeen, local politician] gave us dry rations like rice, dhal and sugar, according to the family size (12 kg [of] rice [and] 2 coconuts) which was enough for 20 days). They gave us Pachai arisi.[6] During that time, it was a big help. The quality of the rice given was good; there was no problem with the quality of things given. We got the ration five or six times.***
> Vasanthi

Additionally, a food-for-work programme was initiated, in which each person in the participant's household was given 3 kg of rice (enough for 20 days). Unlike the programmes conducted by INGOs, the state programme required one working only a half day. However, Raaliya indicates that the INGO programmes were more beneficial than the state-sponsored one, as rice was already being delivered by another INGO programme:

> ***If you ask me which one was good, I would say INGO. The government's programme would have been better if they gave coconut oil and some other food items. Rice was not useful for everyone.***

6 Rice used for making flour

Compensation at the rate of LKR 2800 per acre was given for loss of agricultural income and an allocation of LKR 50 to 60 per Kg of paddy was made by the DS office:

> ***...We had to take whatever they were giving and do the cultivation. Otherwise, we have to invest our own money, that also only if we have some money ... But seed paddy costs Rs.98 per kg. One bag of seed paddy costs Rs.6000. So the compensation given was not enough to buy the seed paddy.***
> FGD, Pichchaivarippu

However, participants of the above FGD also lament that the state could have done more: 'Out of 50 persons identified by the DS and GN to receive drought assistance, only 30 received Samurdhi allowance; it would have been very helpful if the remaining 20 also received the Samurdhi allowance.'

Relief assistance was also provided by non-state actors. For example, an INGO provided medicines and milk powder for children, while Muslim organisations, through the mosque, provided water. Pipe borne water through a network of taps were set up at intervals of 15 houses. These assistance programmes eased the burden of villagers having to walk long distances to fetch water. Raaliya points out that dry rations, including rice, tea, sugar, dhal and soap, were distributed by private sector organisations such as banks and micro finance institutions providing relief assistance to their customers.

As previously discussed, a cash-for-work programme funded by an INGO provided some relief to the villagers, enabling them to meet their cash outflows:

> ***[An] INGO gave us money for the work we did. That money was used for multiple purposes like paying for my children's tuition fees. They also gave us 20 kg of peanuts and seeds of tomato, eggplant and chili. So, with all these seeds, I did some home gardening. I got Rs.20000 income. I invested Rs.10000 on home gardening, so my net income was Rs.10000.***
> Vasanthi

Drinking water, dry food distribution and compensation for loss of crops were the main types of services delivered by the state. Meanwhile, cash-for-work and food-for-work programmes complemented by distribution of drinking water were the main services delivered by non-state actors.

Flood

A male villager reveals that cooked food was given to the people affected by the flood, while the disaster relief department also helped in providing this, along with 'other food materials'.

Additionally to the above, drinking water and milk powder were given to the children of displaced people, with NGOs and private individuals and organisations providing other necessities – sheets, pillows and personal items such as soap and toothpaste.

Those who remained in their homes received dry rations: rice, dhal, sugar, flour and coconuts, distributed by the military in boats including items contributed by private individuals and organisations: 'They came to our village entrance and gave the requested materials to the navy by saying our names, so the navy people would give to us' (Sarmila). Politicians sometimes visited to distribute relief. For example, a local Member of Parliament (MP) and a Minister were mentioned in particular:

> ***Once the minister, Rishad, gave us dry rations including rice, sugar, dhal and wheat flour. It was given according to the size of the family. So, we were given 10 kg rice, 1 kg wheat flour, 1 kg sugar and a tin of salmon.***
> Raaliya

Meanwhile, Vasanthi's female neighbour and a male villager confirm that Samurdhi recipients were given additional provisions – rice, dhal, tinned fish, onions and potatoes. Along with this, the Agricultural Development Department distributed cowpea, along with paddy and chickpea seeds, also providing monetary compensation of LKR 2800 per acre to help restart villagers' livelihoods in the aftermath of the flood (Sarmila, Ketheeswary and a male villager).

Overall, the state was a visible actor in delivering services, such as the provision of rations and transport services during the flood, and the community was particularly appreciative of the services provided by the military.

ii. How did the state deliver?

Drought

The relief was either directly delivered by or coordinated through the DS office in Musali. While some assistance was provided directly by the DS office (e.g. the delivery of drinking water), other assistance such as cash-for-

work – or food-for-work programmes funded by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – were coordinated by the local government machinery. The DS office distributed free drinking water from bowsers every two or three days to households, with each entitled to five or six pots worth. When villagers needed water, they informed the WRDS, which conveyed the requirement to the GN who, in turn, informed the DS to distribute the water (Vasanthi).

In addition, the DS office consulted with the Maradamadu GN to select participants for the cash-for-work programme funded by an INGO, along with the food-for-work programme funded by another. The cash-for-work programme selected families that were very poor, including FHHs, and provided a full day's work for a daily wage of LKR 800in Maradamadu. This village was the best fit for the criteria set by the INGO and the programme was therefore limited to providing the cash-for-work for women in that village only, while the food-for-work programme gave rice in lieu of payment under their food-for-work programme in all three villages, Maradamadu, the 4th Mile Post and Pichchaiwarippu, as illustrated in the following quote:

> ***The organisation that did the cash-for-work programme worked only in Maradamadu division. Projects done by the other INGO providing [the] food-for-work programme, included all three villages. Both of them did these projects through the DS office. Usually NGOs will approach our DS office to provide these kinds of services.***
> Male villager

Recipients of the cash-for-work programme were selected after generating household data to capture the poorest – families with young children, orphans and FHH. Work was allocated in phases to all of the selected households, with a total of 35 selected, 25 of whom were FHH. Beneficiaries were required to work six days a week at the rate of LKR 800.00 per day and required to undertake activities such removing weeds from the roadside, digging channels and cleaning small tanks and waterways (Vasanthi).

Flood

On the night of the flood, the military alerted the villagers to the impending threat. Those families who were most at risk were evacuated to the village school. A male villager recounts that 'during the flood, the army came and took us by boat. We did not have other means of transportation' (Ketheesway).

However, not everyone was evacuated on time, as the water was hip high before assistance arrived:

> ***Navy and police men came here only after water came inside the village. Army people held the elderly peoples' hands and took us very carefully. They took us through another road. We stayed at the Vepan Kulam School for three days, they gave us flood relief such as coconut oil and rice, to the people who got affected. During the flood, Navy men came and helped us. That was very thoughtful. Government only sent them to help us. They saved our lives. If they were not there, we would have been at risk.***
> Seyyida

At the temporary shelter, the displaced were given cooked meals: bread, a packet of dhal and tea, which was distributed to each family depending on the number of family members, though Seinammbu reflects that this was not enough. However, it is indicated by Raaliya that once she had moved from the school to the mosque for another three days, the cooked food given there by NGOS was given equally to everyone.

Dry rations were distributed to those who were hemmed into their houses, which was appreciated:

> ***During the flood the government gave dry ration food items, like rice, dhal, and sugar twice to us. That was enough for fifteen to twenty days ... During that time, it was a big help. The quality of the rice given was good; there was no problem with the quality of things given. We got the rations five to six times.***
> Vasanthi

However, Vasanthi's neighbour has a different view:

> ***The government helped with food rations, but that was not enough. I managed by taking a loan. I don't know whether I can say that I was satisfied with the government's help. The rice was enough for ten days. However, if they gave us more, it would have made me satisfied.***
> Male recipient of flood relief

At the shelter, the DS office registered the names of all those who were displaced, 'but they didn't give any assistance to us after that', says Raaliya. However, she clarifies that there was a willingness to overlook this as 'they helped us in a brotherly manner at our time of need'.

Some families received compensation for loss of crops, with a male villager, the husband of Seinammbu, stating that this came to LKR 2800 per acre, which was distributed by the MP Rishad Bathiudeen, under a programme coordinated by the DS office. A process for applying for the compensation was established, according to one male recipient of flood relief: 'The owner had to confirm that we were doing cultivation on their land. If we had the letter with all the required details and signatures, we got the money without any problem'. However, not everybody received this: 'They gave Rs.2800 per acre for the affected agricultural land owners, but people who leased the land did not get any money, it seems' (FGD, Pichchaivarippu).

Further, farmers at the FGC in Pichchaivarippu say that that the payment was inadequate: 'They gave the people who were cultivating paddy Rs.2800 per acre. That was not enough. The farmers buy the seed paddy for Rs.98 per kg of paddy. So, it was not enough.'

Villagers were able to use the Navy run boat services for essential services:

> ***Because the water level did not go down and it was increasing, the DS office had arranged for boat services during the flood. But people could use it only for important things, like going to buy things. They couldn't use it to go to work. Once, one of the boats turned over and the Navy helped the people to get back in the boat. After that, people could go by boat only for emergencies because it was difficult and dangerous.***
> Male villager

Villagers registered for different types of assistance but didn't receive responses for most of them (FGD, the 4th Mile Post), as one female villager confirms: 'Nobody from the government comes to see us and ask us about our needs. During difficult times, if the government people came, they would see the situation and provide us with some help based on our needs.' Participants of the FGD in the 4th Mile Post were of the view that special relief should have been delivered for people with disabilities and widows.

By far the most contentious issue for FGD participants is the payment of compensation for loss of agricultural income, with Sarmila asking: 'How could Rs.2800 enough for us?' This payment was insufficient to restart agricultural production, resulting in some farmers being compelled to take loans, as they feared that the land owners would cancel their leases if they felt the yield was low in the coming harvest (the 4th Mile Post). Further, few farmers eventually received the money, while those who did got less than the average affected (FGD, Pichchaiwarippu).

Inefficiencies in the modality of paying the compensation are also highlighted:

> ***'They gave us a cheque, but the name on the cheque was different to the bank account name, so we had to run here and there to change the name. Once we changed, it took almost three days to receive that Rs.2800. We spent the whole day to receive the cheque. By the time we got the money in our hands, we had spent more than that amount for travelling. For the 2013 flood, they gave the compensation in 2014. By that time, we had another flood. So we used that (2013) money for our house expenses during the flood. We received the compensation after a delay of one year.***
> Sarmila

While state and non-state actors provided relief assistance, much of the non-state provisions were distributed through the state machinery. Meanwhile, relatively smaller quantities of relief were distributed directly by individuals and groups through existing networks such as churches or mosques.

iii. Who did they deliver to?

Drought

In the distribution of drought relief, the general view of FGD participants is that, while the state was distributing fairly among the families impacted, INGOs had programmes that were specifically targeting FHH, such as the one that provided the cash-for-work programme. There is resentment over such programmes voiced by other women in the village who did not qualify and benefit from them at the time:

> ***Mostly widows and the poorest of the poor are getting help from these organisations. What I feel is since everyone is living with difficulty here, all of us should be given assistance. There should not be any discrimination in providing assistance. Also, some assistance should be given to school-going children.***
> Raaliya

While the state was not directly implicated in this act of privileging FHH, state officials such as the GN are frequently highlighted by FGD participants as part of the process, due to their implicit involvement in selecting women for programme benefits:

> ***Some institutions gave priority to me in livelihood assistance since I don't have a husband, but other people in the village don't like people like me getting assistance. When the DS calls for a meeting to talk about programmes, villagers say 'ask the people who are getting assistance again and again.***
> Seyyida

This view is reinforced by Sarmila:

> ***Whenever the NGOs come to our village, they would give first preference to woman headed households. Their projects and job opportunities also would be only for the widows. People in our village are not happy about this. They should share whatever they have among us ... with all the village people. We are very angry about it. Rural Development Officer (RDO), Samurdhi and NGOs, are all focusing on widows.***

Villagers go one step further in accusing the previous GN of being partisan to FHH because of his 'special' involvement with some single women in the village. This view is confirmed by Vasanthi who states that the last GN was transferred out of the village due to locals alleging that he was behaving improperly with a FHH and arguing that, through this liaison, women like her were obtaining unfair benefits from programmes. While the state was not directly implicated in what is seen by FGD participants as an unfair selection criterion, state officials like the GN are, nonetheless, viewed as discriminatory for choosing FHH over other categories of the vulnerable poor.

The preference given to FHH is therefore viewed as problematic:

> ***During the drought and flood, men-headed households suffered more than the women-headed households because they [were] engaged in agriculture work, which was badly affected. They were also unable to earn daily wages or any temporary income during that time, so their livelihoods suffered a lot. But, unlike FHH, they didn't get any other assistance, so a lot of men-headed households were in distress and could not support their families.***
> Sarmila

Unfairness in the selection of beneficiaries receiving compensation for loss of income from crops is also indicated, with a Pichaivarippu FGD participant suggesting: 'Selectively they have given it to their people'.

Some discrepancies in the way in which the fertiliser subsidy was distributed are also highlighted. As a result of this distribution approach, it is said that beneficiaries had to purchase the fertiliser in the open market at LKR 1800, as opposed to the LKR 500 it would have cost them with the subsidy (FGD, Pichchaiwarrippu). However, an incident where a husband and wife went separately to claim their subsidy and were both given one is cited as an example of unfair practices in fertiliser subsidy distribution.

Flood

Those who benefited from flood assistance fall into two categories: those who were directly impacted by water seeping into their homes and those who were unable to commute to other parts of the village due to flooding.

Those in the first category, temporarily housed in the village school, received cooked food and the displaced Muslims subsequently moved to the mosque premises and received cooked food there: as articulated by Raaliya, 'we were given food equally there, depending on the family size'. Those affected also received dry rations to help restart their lives once the flood had receded. However, issues were raised at the time by those who didn't receive this assistance:

> ***Only the people who got water inside their houses got relief, so I asked them [referring to the military]: "Everyone got affected, [so] why are you only giving relief to them?" "It is like that amma", they told me.***
> Seyyida

Those in the second category received dry rations and other assistance, such as complimentary boat services run by the Navy. Additionally, the mosque mobilised their trans-national networks and obtained additional assistance for the Muslim community: 'In the distribution of flood relief, if the Muslims got one percent, we only got point five percent, as Muslim organisations helped them a lot', articulates Vasanthi.

However, some of this assistance was distributed equally by the MP Rishad Bathiudeen, amongst the Muslim and Tamil communities:

> ***They can't leave the Tamil people in the other village without giving any rations to them, nah? So he gave them, also. They got the name list from the Mosque and delivered the rations according to that.***
> Seyyida

This indicates that the calamity brought a sense of unity in the village, transcending religious and ethnic differences. The community appreciated the manner in which the GN distributed aid: 'The work of our GN was good. He was here during the flood time and distributed relief items to us equally during that emergency situation' (male recipient of flood relief).

The villagers were also appreciative of the services provided by the DS office, GN ('Our GN helped use very much during those days' (male villager)) and military ('During the flood, the army came and took us by boat. We did not have other means of transportation. They also gave us rice, wheat flour and other things. (Ketheeswary)). There was also helpful assistance when an elderly woman suffered a heart attack: 'The army helped to get her to the Mannar hospital on time and saved her life', says Raaliya.

Villagers also valued the procedure for claiming compensation for lost crops, which involved submitting the receipt obtained for the fertiliser subsidy, in order to qualify for a compensation payment. FGD participants in the 4th Mile Post claim this was a 'good' thing, as it stopped people from cheating.

However, others were unhappy that the assistance was insufficient: 'We would say only one percent of the help we required was received from the government' (FGD, the 4th Mile Post). Despite this, villagers appreciated what little assistance was received: 'At the same time, it was a big comfort that they gave us food during the flood. We were in a situation where we couldn't move anywhere or go buy things from shops ... We were satisfied with the relief items given to us in that time during the emergency situation' (FGD, the 4th Mile Post).

> ***While the villagers were happy with the boat service provided by the Navy, they had several issues with the way in which the state delivery mechanism functioned during those difficult times: we didn't get any pre-announcements or alerts before the gate of those dams opened which caused the flooding. Sometimes they'll give announcements through the radio but many times [we] received it only after they opened the gates.***
> FGD, Pichcharvarippu

> ***They didn't tell us about the flood. We came to know while travelling in the boats. Navy and police came here only after the water came inside the village.***
> Seyyida

Discussion

It is evident in the data sources for this paper that the state was a visible actor in delivering services during both of the shocks, indicating that state services had penetrated to all the sub villages in the Maradamadu GN division. It is important to note that, while both state and non-state actors provided relief items, such as drinking water and cooked food, much of the non-state relief was distributed through the state delivery channels. Some respondents were not aware that non-state actors also provided provisions. The assumption was that because the state mechanism delivered, it would also be the provider of the items. It could be argued that non-state actors used the state system because they believed the state had the capacity to perform this function, which it did, for the most part. What was problematic, however, was the way in which the distribution process played out – the delivery process was not always fair and transparent. For example, there was a standard process for distributing water with each household being nominally entitled to the same quantity of water, but some discrepancies in the distribution of cooked food and dry rations have been highlighted. While the government circular stipulated that households with government employees were not entitled to these provisions, respondents highlighted instances where there were exceptions to the rules. Similarly, a case involving an irregular payment of compensation for loss of income from crops is also highlighted.

Much of the discontent with the distribution of relief, both in terms of provisions and compensation, lay in the view that the process was politicised. The notion that knowing the local officials in charge of the distribution of resources meant one was likely to benefit, even if not eligible, is widely held by FGD participants. Thus, many of the issues connected with the delivery process, along with those of inclusion/exclusion were attributable to the conduct of government officials in performing their functions. At the local level, the state is understood as the DS, subject officers of the DS office and the GN. The ways in which these officials performed at the local level were a reflection of how the 'state' performed in delivering services during these two critical events.

Programmes targeting FHHs are singled out for criticism by FGD participants. Tensions between FHHs who were beneficiaries of such NGO programmes and those who did not qualify have been high and the motives of the officials who selected these beneficiaries continue to be viewed with suspicion. These are relatively 'new' tensions created by the othering of villagers due to post-war programme interventions.

An aspect worthy of mention is the role played by the military – the Navy, in particular, provided a pivotal role during the flood, distributing rations, providing transportation and helping villagers with services that would help them return to their homes. These services were appreciated by the villagers, both Tamil and Muslim. However, for the Tamil women, the presence of the military provided a dual role – helpful during the shocks, as described here, but a threat to their personal and emotional security during all other times.

Though the state was helpful and provided assistance during the shocks, the services delivered lacked standardisation, giving rise to accusations of unfair practices and discrimination from some individuals. It is also thought that the services delivered should also be located within the realm of responsibilities expected as part of the social contract between the state and its citizens. security, protection and overall wellbeing.

2. Anuradhapura

i. What did the state deliver?

Drought

The village suffered, due to inadequate water supply for drinking and cultivation. While drinking water was distributed by the DS office, this was restricted to only part of the village: 'People in the upper area were provided water by bowsers. We had to go to the middle of the village and take water from springs' (Kamalawathi). A few wells were constructed to ease the shortage of water in the village, but the location did not facilitate easy access to many villagers (KPI 4). Further, some of the wells were not fully constructed and operational, creating inconvenience to the villagers:

> ***Before the presidential election, wells were dug up hurriedly by Bacco machines, using government money. Still, there is a hole which was dug to build a well and there are rats, chameleons and rubbish inside it. The village people don't know what to do with it. No matter whose money it is, it's a waste of government's money. But they take the money and telecast on the news [that] so much has been done for the village (FGD 1).***

Meanwhile, the government provided dry rations: 'We received two packets of rice weighing 2 kg. I and my son got 5 kg of potatoes. Rations were given little by little in quantity. GN and the MP came and distributed'' (Sumanawathi). The DS confirmed that flour, dhal, dried fish, rice and sugar would be provided by the social services department and distributed amongst villagers who were not government employees. Additionally, an INGO provided dry rations in the forms of rice, flour and coconut oil, which were distributed by the DS office: 'These rations were sufficient for about eight months. The balance [of] rice, we purchased from outside. We overcame the drought on our own', Nadawathi confirms.

The village was not eligible for financial assistance under the government sponsored cash-for-work programme, which was available to villages that came under the minor irrigation scheme. Yet Manankattiya was classified under major irrigation schemes by virtue of its large tank and failure to meet the qualifying criteria to obtain financial assistance. The village, however, qualified to receive the seed paddy loan given to five GNs in the Mihintale division. The funds were distributed by the DS office but the DS confirms that the villagers were unhappy: 'Not everybody got and those who got it said it wasn't sufficient.' Meanwhile, some participants say during a FGD they found it hard to repay the loan, as they had already lost two seasons of crops due to previous weather conditions. As an alternative, the villagers undertook cultivation through the two farmer's organisations in the village: 'We did our cultivation through our farmers' organisation. We got together and cultivated about five to six acres' (Kamalawathi).

Loans were also available for Samurdhi recipients. Under the *Sahana Arana* programme, beneficiaries were entitled to LKR 5000 of drought assistance according to one government official. Under the scheme, which had a low interest rate, beneficiaries were given a grace period of a year before repayment. But beneficiaries claim that, despite this undertaking, monthly deductions from their Samurdhi allowance were made:

> ***Money was given to purchase household goods during the drought. But they cut the amounts from our monthly allowance. When we inquired from the DS office, they said they never do like that. After we came to know about this from the DS office, we***

> ***protested in front of the Samurdhi Bank. We think the officers are taking the money. Because when we went to the Samurdhi Bank, they told us that the money hasn't come yet.***
> Malini

The beneficiaries feel cheated by the local officers but take what they are given and raise no objections: 'DS believes whatever the GN says. We don't expect anything from anyone. But will take anything if they give us' (Priyanthi).

Beneficiaries also experienced delays in receiving their monthly allowances. The new regime after the January 2015 Presidential election pledged to increase the Samurdhi allowance, with the minimum amount being doubled from LKR 1000 to LKR 2000 per month, but at the beginning of fieldwork in April, beneficiaries had not received their monthly stipend for the past three months. Some Samurdhi beneficiaries had also been given roof tiles under the '*Diriya Piyasa'* programme (Priyanthi). Further, under the new government's 100-day programme, Samurdhi recipients were selected to receive a house. In Manankattiya, one poor woman living in a temporary house with a disabled son had been selected to receive the free house, according to a Government official.

Government officials also acknowledge that the government didn't do enough for the affected communities: 'Although television programs telecasted the worsening conditions, the government didn't do enough for those affected. Private companies came and gave bottled water but some areas didn't get anything.' Malini confirmed this: 'Social Services Department also said that they will help us and the villagers waited, but nothing happened.'

Flood

The government provided essential services during the flood. The first was to evacuate people who were most in danger of the rising water – those living along or near the anicut and waterways: 'We didn't take any household goods because of the urgency. By morning, the water level reached up to our waist level', says Nadawathi, who lives closest to the anicut at Dakunu Ela. The Navy provided evacuation services to the most vulnerable, including Kamalawathi and Sumanawathi, and housed them in the village school: 'There was no distinction made by who is poor or not. Everybody was treated alike and evacuated' (male village leader).

By morning, 25 families were temporarily housed in the village school, with the toll eventually reaching 35. These families were provided cooked meals and essential needs, such as bed sheets, towels, soap and mosquito nets: 'Ministers and members of parliament also donated rice packets. But they didn't give them in earlier floods times' (Male village leader, FGD 1).

However, one male village leader laments that not all the provisions were distributed to those affected and that the GN didn't arrange a proper way of distributing those goods.

The displaced were housed in the temporary camp for more than a week until the water receded and they were able to go back to their homes. They were provided with dry rations to facilitate their return home:

> ***A minister came and distributed a bag containing 6 kg rice, 3 kg sugar, 3 kg dhal, potatoes, sardines, chili, salt, milk powder, Panadol, toothbrush[es] and balm after the water receded. That was given to everyone irrespective of employment. It was sufficient for four to five days).***
> Kamalawathi

These provisions were provided by the Disaster Management Centre and distributed in coordination with the DS office. Bottles of drinking water were also provided and the affected were happy about these provisions: 'Those reliefs were very useful. We got rice. There are more men in our house so we all ate rice every day. The rice and the bag of goods were very useful at the time', says (a male village leader. However, others complain about the adequacy of the relief items given:

> ***After the flood subsided, army people distributed two bottles of water, rice, dhal [and] sardines etc. to us. They were sufficient for one or two days only. People need assistance (food, money [and] clothes etc.). What was given was not adequate.***
> Sumanawathi

Private individuals and organisations also provided assistance – water bottles, books and pens for the children were distributed by the military and coordinated through the GN. Those who were marooned in their homes, unable to leave, were provided with relief items by boat through the army. Dry rations – tinned fish, rice and other items – were also distributed.

Notably absent from the provision of relief was the Samurdhi programme:

> ***During the floods, there wasn't anything done by Samurdhi for their beneficiaries. Everything was done by the Social Services Department. I also went to see the people who were in the camp and donated some stuff for children from my personal money. All those things cost Rs.4800***
> Government official

The villagers were particularly appreciative of the role played by the military:

> ***Army personnel came with boats to rescue the people who were trapped on the other side of the anicut. Afterwards, they cleaned out the wells which were filled with flood water and repaired houses and roads that were damaged.***
> Priyanthi

The role of the Public Health authorities in preventing the spread of disease was also appreciated, as articulated by Sumanawathi: ''A good service was done towards public health. They prevented the breeding of dengue mosquitoes by sprinkling insecticides.'

The community indicate that they were appreciative of the relief items distributed during the two shocks, but are also critical of the functioning of local-level representatives – Samurdhi officials in particular are singled out for 'not doing enough' and holding back distribution of entitlements.

ii. How did the state deliver?

Drought

> ***'The main problem faced by the residents of Manankattiya and other villages was the non-availability of drinking water during drought season. Our main task was to provide them water through the DS office. Water was distributed by bowsers during this time. There were no special favours or discrimination when distributing water' (SSO).***

The procedure adopted for distribution was for a public announcement to be made once the bowser arrived in the village. It would stop at a designated spot and villagers would arrive with various pots and pans to fill with water (Government official). However, the supply didn't always meet the demand: 'Water distributing started from the upper part of the village and when the bowsers arrived here, water was finished. So the bowsers returned to town from here' (male village leader). Issues with the distribution of water are also highlighted by villagers: 'Water was given to the upper area. No assistance was given to our area. I don't know why assistance was not given to us' (Nadawathi). The fact that not everybody was entitled to drinking water is also highlighted by the villagers to us: 'Some elders didn't receive water as they didn't have ID cards' (FGD 1).

In addition, issues in relation to the selection of locations for the new wells are brought up:

> ***The government dug wells during the drought season. That was a good idea. But they made them in unsuitable places. They dug two wells. Not for every house, but in the places where the GN suggested***
> *DS*

Regarding the distribution of dry rations, a government circular stipulated that households with members on a government salary were not entitled to provisions. The targeting criteria was intended to benefit those households with the lowest incomes (DS). However, villagers complain that, although there was a general scarcity of rice, only some were given relief, with the decision on who would receive assistance being at the discretion of the GN. Villagers also claim that some of them were overlooked and 'not assisted properly' in this non-transparent process (Nadawathi).

Some of the relief was distributed by 'high up' government officials and politicians. The DS issued bedding, while two Government ministers distributed cooked food. But villagers were skeptical about these personal visits: ''During the previous flood, no high up government officials or ministers came. This time only they came to help. On 25 December [a] few politicians came as the election was nearing, articulates Priyanthi, voicing dissatisfaction with the work that was done by those figures: 'They didn't do anything, only repaired the road by putting soil. But they didn't do it properly. Gravel was used. When it rains again, the road will get muddy'.

As discussed previously, Manankattiya was not eligible for financial assistance in the form of cash-for-work programmes, due to the village being classified as a major irrigation scheme. Additionally, decisions on the types of financial assistance, such as loans and grants, were taken at a meeting involving the DS, GNs and other officials on the recommendations of the villagers.

This involved considering which villages were the most affected and, depending on this list, the financial allocations to be made on a priority basis (Government official). Manankattiya did not meet the criteria on the basis that it had a village tank classified as a major irrigation system that could be used for cultivation.

Despite the above, Manankattiya was eligible to receive a fertiliser loan and obtain crop insurance. The latter was a new form of assistance introduced under the fertiliser element of the new '100-day programme' regime. Farmers were required to apply for the loan by submitting an application form, together with a receipt and photocopy of their bank account to the Agriculture Department, to be considered for the loan and the insurance (Government official).

As discussed previously, Samurdhi beneficiaries are critical of the role of the programme during the drought. Under the programme, a cultivation loan was available, but they were required to apply for this loan, which would be discussed by the Samurdhi Committee. Although this benefit had been available for the previous ten years, beneficiaries tell us they were unware of it (FGD 1): 'To be frank, there is no use of the Samurdhi officer. He doesn't do anything correctly. People who don't have anything get overlooked everywhere' (Priyanthi).

Villagers are also particularly critical of the role of the GN during the drought:

> ***The GN did not give everything he received; he gave only about one quarter of what came as aid for us. Only a towel and a bed sheet were given. Those who were staying in the school got bags of rations. For others like us who were home, we were asked to assemble in a common place but we don't have a common place as such to go. The GN is aware of this but he does not care about these things. Now there is a new GN. We hope she will provide good service.***
> Malini

Another villager complains about a reluctance to engage with the GN, on the basis of past experience:

> ***The DS madam asked me to prepare food for 20 Navy personnel. So I told that to the GN. But he didn't take any action. But these military people came to help us, no? … [The] DS madam came to see us but the GN never came. He speaks badly to us, so we didn't ask anything from him.***
> Sumanawathi

Flood

In emergency situations, the coordination of relief services is the responsibility of the GN, together with the relevant officers in the DS office – the Agriculture Officer, the Samurdhi Officer and the EDO, in coordination with the Disaster Management Centre. Preparation of the temporary shelters and lists of those displaced, along with the food parcels required and coordination of relief distributions is all led by the GN with the help of this group of officials.

However, the state at the local level was slow and poorly coordinated in responding to the impeding calamity in this case. A government official describes one such example:

> ***The people who were trapped in the centre of the village telephoned the GA [Government Agent, also referred to officially as District Secretary] and he called the DS. [The] DS called the GN and asked for details of the situation. The Navy got to the village in the evening, by that time the village was flooded and they could not reach the people on one side at all. So they went to the other people.***

It was the community that first informed the world, beyond the GN and DS level, of the impending emergency. They made telephone calls to television channels and the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) and alerted these agencies to the impending disaster: 'We found all the phone numbers of DMC's in Anuradhapura and Colombo and contacted them. That's how we got the Army to help rescue the people who were in danger. The school principal took a special interest in this.

> ***We all go together and got it done … The government was too late because they were not aware of the real situation, because the GN wasn't aware of the real situation.***
> FGD 1 participants

The villagers coped by helping each other – those most under threat of the rising water levels moved to safety, seeking refuge in the homes of relatives. A disabled child in the vicinity of the tank contacted a relative in the military, after which the Navy arrived with boats to evacuate the most vulnerable. But many of those affected in the Dakunu Ela area closest to the anicut found it difficult to get on the boats due to the rains persisting (FGD 1). The military informed the DS office that relief assistance for those affected was needed and helped move families to shelter in the village school. Three or four houses were completely submerged.

The DS relied on information from the GN to provide respite, but this information was not forthcoming, with FGD participants confirming this:

> ***At the beginning we didn't get any relief. There was nothing happening ... The DS wanted details – how many were affected, what did they require but the GN didn't have any details. He didn't even come to see us to check. He came only once the water subside.***

Villagers are also critical of the manner in which the government machinery functioned, stating that they 'didn't get enough' at the local level and that what they did receive came 'too late' (Sumanawathi).

> ***Just 5L of water, what can we do? People here in the middle of the village didn't get any relief. Here in Dakun Ela we were trapped, we couldn't move. Only fifteen families got relief, so we shared it with the 65 families here.***
> Priyanthi

The GN had special powers to purchase food items and prepare meals for people who were displaced due to calamities, but there is acknowledgement in the focus group that the GN had not acted responsibly during the flood:

> ***He could have purchased food stuff from the co-op societies or from private vendors. There is a government circular that says how much money he can spend per head at such times. Relief was not distributed equally because of the GN.***
> Government official

Another villager confirms that some people had insufficient food and drink during those difficult times: 'The government should have taken action. Those people were overlooked.' Subsequently, villagers complained to the DS to remove the GN, with petitions filed with the DS and the District Secretary: 'Recently we gave a letter of complaint to the Minister also. Now the GN has tendered his resignation.' However, Sumanawathi reiterates that the services provided by the military were appreciated, saying they helped villagers clean their houses, which were filled with mud.

Senior government officials and politicians– the Chief Minister of the North Central Provincial Council, Government Ministers and a local Member of Parliament – came to distribute relief. However, according to Karunwathi, the DS wasn't present on every occasion:

> ***Last time the DS madam didn't come. But this time she came. Camps were set up this time and we received meals. But when the food reached us it was late and it was spoilt. So we couldn't eat.***

Villagers are also skeptical about the motives of those who distributed relief:

> ***Provincial Councillors and Ministers gave relief. But those were not distributed properly. When there was a need for one, they gave five and when there was a need for five, they gave only two. Politicians show their faces in a situation like this, because there was an election nearing. But it is different in other times.***
> Sumanawathi

Reflecting on the provisions offered by politicians, Priyanthi elaborates:

> ***A Minister came and distributed a bag containing 6 kg [of] rice, 3 kg [of] sugar [and] 3 kg [of] dhal and potatoes. Sardines, chili, salt, milk powder, Panadol, [a] toothbrush and balm were given after the water receded. That was given irrespective of our employment. It was sufficient for four to five days. The people who gave this assistance had hopes about the election. Some people got sorghum seeds also. Politicians expected recipients to vote for them because they gave these things. But we didn't vote for them.***

Villagers tell us they were unhappy about government officials' attitudes towards the village: 'The GN and the DS office say that there are no poor people in our village. These government officers work only for their close ones' Malini remarks, skeptically.

The village was devastated by the flood. The waters didn't recede for 15 days. The paddy fields were submerged for a long time and were in poor condition. The villagers tell us that 'damage caused to cultivation has been estimated but we have not been informed whether money has been allocated for such payments'. Estimates for 148 damaged houses were received by the DS office. However only 41 families received compensation, with priority given to low-income households: those earning less than LKR 5000 per month. Samurdhi recipients were prioritised for compensation, with payments varying depending on the damage – LKR 100,000 being the highest amount according to one government official. This is confirmed by Nadawathi, who tells us: 'My neighbor, Lakshmi got Rs.7000- as compensation.

Although my wall was broken, I didn't get anything because my husband is in the civil defense force.'

The villagers are particularly worried about the risk of more floods:

> ***Although we get floods every year, this time it was severe. People have built their houses around the stream. So their houses got submerged very badly. We need to get the tank repaired so it doesn't spill during the raining season. If the bund breaches the whole of Anuradhapura town will get submerged. We were told the tank will be repaired. Some technical officers came to see it, but we don't know what happened after that.***
> FGD participants

The villagers explain that they have brought the issue to the attention of relevant officials, but heard nothing to relieve them of their worst fears.

iii. Who did they deliver to?

Drought

Water bottles were distributed to villagers. However, they had to show their identity cards to receive the bottles. This was problematic for some villagers who didn't have identity cards, with some elders specifically left out and unable to claim their allocation (FGD 1).

Households with the lowest incomes were entitled to receive five kilograms of potatoes worth LKR 400. Some groups such as those that were employed as government servants were not entitled to benefit from this distribution. However, in practice recipients included those who were not entitled: 'They were distributed on the basis of political patronage' FGD 2 participants tell us, viewing this process as biased and of benefit to those who were well connected to government officials. A similar sentiment is expressed with regard to the distribution of rice:

> ***'Rice was supposed to be distributed to families that did not have anybody working for the government. I didn't get [it] because of my husband's employment status but some others got [it].***
> Kamalawathie

However, Priyanthi takes a different view:

> ***During the drought, people were given potatoes through the GN but they were charged Rs.20 as a travelling fee to transport the goods from Galenbindunuwewa. We said we didn't want the goods if [they were] not given to all, so all the 62 families in Dambagolla got drought relief.***

Those who were in receipt of the fertiliser subsidy were entitled to apply for the seed paddy loan. However, as Priyanthi tells us, poor families like hers without the money to hand to purchase the fertiliser could not use the subsidy for it and were therefore not eligible for the seed paddy loan either. She also tells us that Samurdhi beneficiaries received drought assistance of LKR 5000 per household as a loan repayable in a year.

Flood

Families in the temporary shelter were provided cooked food and dry rations. However, participants of the FGD indicate that not everybody in the shelter was displaced. Because everybody in the shelter received relief benefits, some individuals had moved in specifically to receive them, which is seen as unfair: 'There were two groups in the camp. One group were those who were not affected, but they still got relief.' A male village leader who received relief elaborates: 'There was no choosing when they came to the camps. We didn't consider if the person was a low-income earner or not. All were provided with assistance.' Those in the shelter also received dry rations for a week to facilitate their return home. These were distributed by the Chairman of the Pradeshiya Sabha (a village level politician).

We are told that a Minister subsequently made a second visit to give rations and all villagers benefited from this distribution (FGD 1). However, it isn't made clear if *everybody* was included or not, as the DS tells us that households with government paid employees did not receive benefits. This was confirmed by Kamalawathi, whose husband's employment with the civil defense force had disentitled the family from relief: 'The GN distributed the goods to all except government servants.'

The DDO confirms that assistance was given regardless of whether people were receiving Samurdhi benefits. Kamalawathi is critical about the way in which Samurdhi responded:

> ***The public assistance given by the government and Samurdhi was not distributed fairly. The reason for this is weaknesses of officers. They don't think about others. They think only about themselves, about their personal angers. I asked directly why assistance was not given to us. That must be the reason they got angry with me.***

Samurdhi beneficiaries were prioritised for obtaining compensation for damaged houses. A government employee on the other hand, received no compensation on the basis that his/her monthly income exceeded LKR 5000. However, teachers who were affected were entitled to a loan through the cooperative society at a very low interest rate. A further benefit for Samurdhi beneficiaries was that those who had taken the cultivation loan that had to be repaid within 180 days, but were unable to do so due to loss of crops, were able to obtain a repayment deferment by writing to the DDO explaining their loss and inability to repay.

A sense of unity emerged within the community in their hour of distress, with Priyanthi elaborating, 'We shared relief with everybody and ate with about 65 families'. Such items included the sharing of Panadol, kerosene oil and salt for 15 days until the village shop reopened (FGD 2):

> ***When there is a disaster, the village unites. We help each other. We are all related to each other. This is a traditional village. All the other families are formed [on the basis of] on one family. We formed a voluntary organisation. A lot of work could be done through this organisation in a disastrous situation. But that was not successful this time.***
> Karunwathi

Discussion

The local state apparatus was ineffective in responding to the flood in particular. The danger of the tank imminently overflowing and flooding the village was first identified by community members. When it was brought to the attention of the local state officials, no action was taken to evacuate those under threat. In desperation, the community appealed to the next layer of the state machinery; the DMC and the regional irrigation officials. The state responded, but only after the ground situation was reported on national media. The national media was notified by a local youth who had connections with a state television station. After the first newscasts detailing the impending threat caused by the breach of the tank were aired, the state machinery shifted into gear. However, responses were slow, uncoordinated and lacked transparency: symptoms of a dysfunctional system that had failed its community. The villagers' approach to a different layer of the state machinery when the local layer failed to respond to their needs suggests they understood the state to consist of multiple layers at the village, division, district, provincial and national levels, each of which were accountable to citizens. However, both of these layers failed to meet their responsibilities and the expectations of the community.

At the time of data collection, the community reiterate their concerns on the conditions of the tank and the risk of a breach which would threaten their lives. Appeals to state officials such as the DMC and Irrigation Engineers have yielded no visible action and fear that flooding would be an annual event that the community would have to cope with themselves. Loss of faith in the state's commitment to protect them has also triggered other modes of community driven coping strategies.

When the calamity occurred, local politicians were quick to use the opportunity to campaign for electoral votes at the upcoming elections. The villagers are well aware that the lunch packets distributed were politically motivated and not in their interests. Nonetheless, they accepted the packets and cast their votes, not swayed by the free lunch or the false promises of a better future. They were promises they'd heard before: mere words, yet to be translated to action.

The women of Manankattiya are more forceful than the Maradamadu women in articulating their displeasure with the local state. The Samurdhi officials have been corrupt and inefficient, as has the GN. This means the Manankattiya women are more critical of government programmes, such as Samurdhi benefits, and the distribution of relief and compensation during the shocks. Unlike the Maradamadu communities, who have been deprived of access to state services due to a prolonged war, the people of Manankattiya have not experienced such disruptions. Their historical experience of state programmes has been different – longer and uninterrupted – and thus their expectations of accountability are placed at a different level. Meanwhile, the Sinhala women articulate access to state services from a rights-based approach, framing this as an entitlement of citizenship and integral component of the social contract. They feel strongly about upholding that right and making officials

accountable, with this evidenced in them petitioning and having the inefficient, ineffective, corrupt GN removed. The Sinhala women, like the Tamil women, feel empowered in voting out a regime that doesn't meet their expectations or uphold the rights and responsibilities that are a core component of the social contract.

The Sinhala women, however, are deeply appreciative of the role of the military in delivering services during the shocks and for fighting the war that has given them peace and security. These women do not speak about insecurities and threats to their personal lives like the Tamil women of Maradamadu, which are ethnicised and gendered in a different way to that of the Sinhala women, as their security comes from the very source that has made the Tamil women insecure.

4.2 Did the experience of service delivery during the drought and flood of 2014/2015 change citizens perceptions of the state?

1. Mannar

i. Who is the state?

Seinammbu conceptualises the 'state' as the DS represented at the local level by the GN. It was through the GN that the DS worked during the catastrophe; the GN supplied the information and the DS acted upon it by giving him the resources to meet the needs of the community. This included other officials at the DS level: DDO, EDO and RDO, all of whom worked to provide services and programmes that the state was responsible for delivering.

Sarmila echoes a similar view: 'Who's the state? For us, state means DS office', she says. The DS, represented by the GN, was the bottom up 'state' for everything. No outside help was sought or received without the intervention of the DS:'

> ***We will not approach NGOs and other organisations for help. If we have any dealings with NGOs without the consent of our GN, in case of any problem we can't ask help from the GN. So we only deal through our GN.***
> Sarmila

Both of the women use the vernacular terms for 'state' and 'government' interchangeably. For them the state was a two tier structure; the state in Colombo and the state in the village, with the latter represented by the DS and the GN.

The state, thus, consists of a two-tier structure: GN and officials in the DS office with whom villagers interacted with on a regular basis and at the macro level, with local and national level politicians and higher government officials, both of which constitute the state apparatus. The state at the local level is the one that the women interact with on a regular basis and the source of reference when discussing state services. This 'local' state is *the* 'state' for these women, and this is an important consideration when discussing (de)legitimacy of the state.

ii. How and why did the performance change perceptions of the state?

Raaliya has a positive view of the state, due to past experience, and independently of the services delivered during the shocks. These perceptions did not change, as her experiences of the services delivered during the drought and flood were also positive.

Raaliya was a beneficiary of the Indian Housing Scheme, which she tells us she believes was an initiative of the state. After long years of displacement, she was happy to have a roof over her head and electricity connection. Her home now provides her with the security that she lacked during years of war and displacement:

> ***The government provides us [with] a lot of help. The other organisations gave us food and appeased our hunger. But, it is the government, which gave us the house. This is a long-term help. .... We were satisfied with the government's housing assistance. Now, because of this house that we got through the scheme, we are in a safe living environment. Water does not leak into the house from the roof. Even though we might stay hungry during the rains, we are safe here in our home. Other organisations provided small assistance, but it is the government that gave us the house. This is good.***

Raaliya had a positive experience of service delivery during both the drought and flood:

> ***During the drought, the DS office brought us drinking water from Silavaththruai once in two or three days.***

> ***They would give us the amount of water we want[ed] for free. We were happy about the assistance from the government during the drought time. They gave us water and food rations – mainly rice – particularly during the time when we were in need.***

Raaliya says that, during the flood, she was also happy about the services provided by the state, namely the boat service to evacuate her family and the dry rations distributed by a local politician were valued:

> ***Sir Rishad helped from the government. He talked to the government and got us help. It was not from his own money; it was the government's money. The flood time was a difficult period for us. So, what the government did was something to be appreciated.***

While Raaliya's perceptions of the state were positive before and after the two events. Factors that have reinforced her positive views of the state are much more influenced by the long-term tangible benefits she has received – the benefit of a permanent home, as has been discussed previously – along with her hope for a local hospital and access to medical personnel in the future. The village lacked any medical facility during the calamities, which was problematic when the villagers fell sick. (As previously discussed in this paper, an old woman suffered a heart attack during the flood and had to be rushed to the hospital in Musali by the military, which Raaliya says took more than a half an hour.)

Raaliya would like a house for her family and the prospect of a new hospital in her village. She tells us she cast her vote in favour of Maithripala Sirisena in the January 2015 Presidential Election in the hope that he would provide these services to her village:

> ***The previous government was corrupt and I wanted to change it, so I voted for President Sirisena because he promised to help us. We voted for a government who will work for the people. The previous President, Mahinda, and his brothers robbed all the money. He could have given the money to the people. I voted for President Sirisena with the hope that he would provide us [with] a hospital or a doctor.***

Raaliya exercised her civic right to change a regime she claims was 'corrupt' and bring to power a new order that would serve her community's needs.

Vasanthi has different perceptions to Raaliya, as she has negative views of the state from before the shocks. These negative perceptions have not changed, although she was satisfied with state delivery of services during the shocks. Vasanthi's negative perceptions of the state arose separately from her service experience at this time, but have been strong enough to outweigh her positive views during and after the shocks. Vasanthi's negative perceptions arose from a set of factors: feelings of discrimination and insecurity, with a fear of state institutions and officials through interactions at the local level.

Vasanthi is of the opinion that the Muslims in the other two sub villages in Maradamadu have done better than the Tamil villagers due to discriminatory actions: 'They have got assistance and favours from the government, so they have improved,' she says. 'Some of those people have got good jobs, although they have only studied up to grade ten. But not in our village.'

NGOs have done more than the government in the light of disasters: Vasanthi feels that the government has not helped her family and that the assistance she has received from the NGO sector far outweighs that which she has received from the state:

> ***When we were displaced also, the government's assistance was less. We got help mostly from other organisations. Back then, I was also not satisfied with the government. Now, I am also not satisfied with the government's help. Many times, I have asked for help. The military came and filled some forms but I have not received anything.***

Vasanthi feels that the state would have a different attitude if she was a Sinhala or Muslim woman: 'The Sinhala and Muslim people are united among themselves; if they ask for help from the government, they get it, but not us.'

As a single woman with a young daughter, Vasanthi feels particularly vulnerable and is distrustful of the constant watch she is subject to by the military:

> ***Women have been abused by the military ....and I don't want people to know that I am a single woman. If they know, they [military] will come after me. People in the government do torturous things. The army and navy people have sexually abused women. They are from the government, no?***

It bothers Vasanthi that she has no recourse to the law in the face of 'torturous' acts: 'We can't go to anyone

and complain if the army or navy does something to us because they are also the government.'

The withdrawal of NGOs from the village has left Vasanthi in fear: 'Before, we could go to those organisations and tell them if something happened to us, but now we have nowhere to go. We are afraid of the government.'

Fueled by anxiety over disclosing her status, Vasanthi says she is reluctant to reveal that her husband is missing:

> ***I have to fill [in] a form and give [it to] the RDO, then I will be able to get benefits for FHH. But if I do that, the CID [Criminal Investigations Department] will come and question me about my husband, so I don't want to fill [in] the form.***

Vasanthi therefore feels that she isn't provided the security and protection the state is responsible for offering and that recourse to justice is not available either.

Government programmes are not needs-based – Vasanthi says these are provided without the community being consulted. While school attendance is encouraged, children don't have the essentials, such as stationery and shoes, to facilitate their learning. In her view, the government programmes in the area follow a tick box exercise for the sake of record-keeping. Meanwhile, it was an NGO that provided her the essentials to start the livelihood that now supports her family after taking care of her needs.

Vasanthi says that had the government taken steps to help the community and keep the women safe and secure, it would have been 'worshipped'. However, she believes the government has squandered that opportunity: 'The government had the opportunity to help the people, but they did not help us. Other organisations came and helped us, but the government did not.'

Vasanthi expresses muted satisfaction with the services delivered by the state during the drought and flood:

> ***I can't say I was not satisfied with the help that I got during that time because they helped all the people who were affected by the flood and they came to help us all without being concerned about their safety and how difficult it was for them. So, because of this I am satisfied.***

The GN distributed relief provisions impartially, based on the number of family members, which Vasanthi expresses appreciation for: 'The assistance that we got from both the government and the other organisations were of the same kind and equal. During that time, it was a big help. However, her overall dissatisfaction is apparent in the following quote:

> ***Households in this village did not get money to repair their houses. We did not get that due to the carelessness of the GN. Whilst the Muslim families got compensation to repair their houses, the Tamils did not because the GN at that time did not add the names of the Tamil households in the beneficiary list.***

Vasanthi's negative perceptions of the state seem to have arisen from feelings of discrimination, threat to her security and a fear of intimidation, with all of this outweighing her positive experiences with relief efforts during the flood.

Sarmila has negative perceptions of the state that go back to before the shocks, when the school meals provided to all school children up to Grade 10 were reduced to children in Grade 5 and below. Many poor children, she says, have been left hungry. Sarmila is also unhappy that she was not issued a land permit for the property on which her house was built. The lack of this has deprived her from being a beneficiary under the Indian Housing Scheme. She is particularly disturbed by this issue, which she bitterly attributes to the inefficiency of the GN:

> ***During the last election, we had problems regarding our land permits. [The] DS was helping us to get the permits. But due to some confusion between the Kachcheriya [principal government department that administrates a district], the DS and the GN, we did not get the land permits in time to apply for the housing scheme.***

Sarmila believes the lack of coordination between the different arms of the state machinery has deprived her of a house from the scheme. Like Vasanthi, she feels strongly about state programmes, telling us that government officials do not come and ask the community about their needs and simply do things for the village without knowing what they require. She is critical of the programmes that only target specific categories of people (e.g. FHH). This is viewed as unfair and robustly questioned by Sarmila:

> ***The government should not always give the benefits to a particular group of people, they should provide it to everyone in the village, we are also living under***

> ***poverty no?***

Sarmila also feels let down by the politicians that she has supported. The TNA [Tamil National Alliance] canvassed her support for the Northern Provincial Council (NPC) elections and she gave them her vote in the hope that the people she supported would hold good on their election promises. This angers her and she tells us that, 'after the election nobody came here from the TNA. They didn't do anything for our village. They didn't even come to see us during the flood'. She tells us that other politicians and officials now ridicule her, saying, 'you voted for them, but we are the ones helping you during emergencies", adding ' I feel very bad'. However, she also says she feels empowered in the knowledge that she could change the incumbent regime through the ballot if the TNA fail to make good on their promises: ('If we decide, we have the power to change the President, even.'), echoing a discussion between village women expressing their discontent with the current status quo.

Sarmila's service delivery experience during the two shocks were mixed. She was unhappy about the compensation of LKR 2800 per acre for loss of income from her paddy lands, which she received as drought relief. This money was received late because of inefficiencies in the collection process:

> ***They gave it as a cheque. The names were different from the bank account names. So we had to run here and there to change the names. Once we changed, it took almost three days to receive that Rs.2800. We spent the whole day to receive the cheque. By the time we got the money on our hands we spent more than that amount for traveling.***

However, during the flood, Sarmila was satisfied with the way in which relief provisions were distributed:

> ***We received relief materials on time. During this emergency situation, DS office gave equally to all the villages which come under DS office. They did not discriminate when it came to distribution of flood relief materials; they shared the relief materials and gave all three villages.***

Sarmila says she was particularly appreciative that a Muslim Minister had distributed relief items to all those affected, irrespective of ethnicity: 'This is a Tamil village. Still we received the support of the Muslim villagers. MP Rishad helped us a lot during that time.'

However, these positive experiences during the flood did not outweigh the bigger issues Sarmila had with the state. Thus, her service delivery experience did not change her negative perceptions of it.

Seinammbu, meanwhile, has neither positive nor negative views of the state. This view took hold before the shocks and has been sustained after experiencing state delivered services since then.

Seinnammbu tells us she is happy to be back in her home village after many years of displacement during the war. The government provided her family with household utensils – paddy seeds and fertiliser so that the family could restart their lives and livelihoods on their return to Maradamadu. While she says she was grateful for this assistance, she also believes that one should not expect or rely on help from outside, but learn to help oneself. Then, whatever assistance given acts as a bonus, which can be appreciated:

> ***It is good that the government helped us when we were suffering. But it is wrong if we always expect their help. After a point, we should help ourselves and start progressing in our lives. We can't expect the government to help us for long, we should earn for our living.***

Living within the boundaries of this philosophy, Seinnambu has been content with the state both before, during and after the shocks:

> ***During the flood, the government distributed relief items equally amongst every family'. The government helped us during the emergencies by providing our meals. We were worried about where we would get food; the government gave it to us. We are happy about that.***

Seinnambu had a low level of expectation of the state, and was thus happy with whatever she received. However, she also tells us that being back in her home village is what really makes her happy and that this has only been possible after the end of the war.

Discussion

The two Tamil women, Vasanthi and Sarmila, indicate that they had negative views of the state before the two shocks and that these did not change after their experiences of services during them. For these women, their negative perceptions have stemmed from issues

of discrimination, feelings of insecurity and a perceived lack of commitment from the state to meet the needs of the community. Being treated equally, with dignity and respect, forms an important component of the state-society relationship. Indeed, these were the issues that gave rise to conflict, eventually leading to a fully-fledged war. These fears and feelings of marginalisation and exclusion have persisted and short-term responses in the form of emergency humanitarian assistance, so questions about how well they have been delivered mean little in the context of the core tenets of the social contract for these women – political, economic and social *processes* that affirm the inclusivity of all communities and recognise the different identities and needs within it (UNDP, 2012).

The two Muslim women, Raaliya and Seinnambu, however, did not have negative perceptions of the state before the shocks, expecting little from it, due to their experiences of war and displacement, during which they learnt not to rely on state assistance during critical times. Any assistance provided, such as during the flood, were looked on as a bonus and appreciated. After several years of displacement, the end of the war has provided them with the opportunity to return to Mannar and they are now happy to be back in their homes. The delivery of services during the shocks have not positively or negatively influenced their perceptions of the state. Their expectations had been that the state would provide long-term tangible benefits that would improve their wellbeing – permanent houses for their families, educational facilities for the children, medical services and jobs for the community. The core tenets of the social contract for these women lies in the *capacity* of the state to allocate resources in a manner that was responsive to the needs of the community, thereby fulfilling the social *expectations* to help establish the institutional social contract between the state and its people (UNDP, 2009).

The Tamil women seem more politically aware and active than the Muslim women, strongly expressing the view that a state not rightfully performing its functions can be removed by the power of the ballot – something they achieved by casting their vote in three recent elections: the NPC election of 2013, Presidential election of 2015 and Parliamentary election of 2015.

These women's perceptions of the state have been framed by their experiences of war, displacement and post-war interactions with the state machinery. These must also be situated within the wider political, social and economic factors that underpin the relationship between the state and its citizens before, during and after a war.

2. Anuradhapura

i. Who is the state?

In Anuradhapura, as in Mannar, the terms 'state' and 'government' are used interchangeably in the vernacular: 'The state is the government and government means the President Sirisena. But I cannot say for certain', says Malini. Sumanawathi has a similar view: 'It is the government; that means the President and the politicians who contest elections. Governing is in their hands.'

While the state is viewed as national level politicians, it is represented at the local level in the DS, officers in the DS office and the GN. These officials are the face of the state at the local level, acting on behalf of the national level state locally. The 'state' thus operates at both the national local level and is represented by different individuals – elected representatives and bureaucratic officials.

ii. How and why did perceptions change?

Malini says she was dissatisfied with the programmes and services offered by the state before, during and after the two shocks. However, despite her complaints about the programmes, services and the officials who delivered them, she takes the view that 'the government is good', suggesting that the factors that influencing her positive view of the state have come from sources other than programme delivery.

Malini voices several grievances that she had with the state apparatus that were independent of the services she received during the drought and the flood. As a Samurdhi recipient, she says she felt cheated of the benefits that she was entitled to. She refers to a specific incident where she had submitted the required documentation to have her medical expenses reimbursed. However, she claims that government officials were corrupt and denied her the reimbursement of the LKR 25,000 due to her under a Samurdhi hospitalisation claim:

> ***Samurdhi officials cheat people. If you look at the Samurdhi Officer's house you will see what I am talking about. Since taking over this post, she has built a big two-storied house and bought vehicles also. Those things can't be done from her government salary no? What is happening there? The officer must***

> ***be changed.***

Malini says that the seed packets given under the Divi Neguma programme were of poor quality and didn't produce anything of value. The village was allocated LKR 1m under the new regime's 100-day programme, and her name was on the list for receiving assistance. However, she has received nothing. Constant reminders to the Samurdhi Bank officers, asking for information on the fate of her money, have yielded no results: 'Now the 100 days are over and they told me my name was not on the list. They are just fooling the people.'

Droughts or floods are yearly occurrences in the village now, but every year the officials are unprepared to deal with these events and help the community, leaving locals in fear of impending calamity. As Malini explains:

> ***During the rainy season, the roads, bridges, culverts all get submerged and the water level in the tank also rises. If the bund breaks, the whole Anuradhapura town will get submerged.***

Malini is particularly critical of local politicians and it is evident she feels let down by them:

> ***We get floods and droughts every year. Paddy fields get destroyed by wild elephants and insects. We don't receive any assistance from anybody. The former Minister, was from our area, but he didn't do anything for us. Now his son, Duminda, is our present minster, but he also hasn't done anything much. He comes here to get our votes. That is his main intention.***

Along with this, Malini's experience of services rendered during the two shocks was not positive. In December 2014, when it was raining incessantly, she was one of the villagers who called the Disaster Management Centre to inform them of the impending calamity if the tank overflowed. She was, however, reprimanded for making this call:

> ***One officer who came with the DS asked why we informed the higher authorities. We had to do that as the GN and other officers didn't do anything for us, so we made the call to the Disaster Management Unit, which highlighted our plight on national television.***

Malini is critical of the government officials, accusing them of favouring their own people:

> ***My house was damaged, as the walls were affected by the flooding, but I have not got any financial assistance. But the GN has helped to get compensation for those people who are close to him.***

Malini's paddy fields were submerged and the crops damaged but she received no compensation:

> ***Our area didn't get anything. We were told that 50 percent of the cultivation loan taken under Samurdhi will be written off, but we didn't get that benefit also. The GN and the Samurdhi Officer don't do a good service for our village. They only do for their own people.***

Politicians came and distributed relief – rice, milk powder and different kinds of dhal, including green gram. 'They came because of the election', Malini tells us. 'They gave relief to get our votes. We also did our duty. They helped us when we were in need. Therefore, we voted.'

Though critical of the manner in which the state machinery functioned, Malini views the government as 'good' and tells us '*My attitude towards President Mahinda has not changed because he won the war and gave us peace*.'

Priyanthi did not view the state positively before the two shocks. She also didn't have encouraging experiences with the delivery mechanism during the shocks and is critical of government officials who delivered services at the local level. However, she has faith in the central government and revels in the knowledge that she has the power to influence a change at the centre, should it not work for the greater good of the people. She was unhappy with the previous regime of President Rajapaksa and voted to change it, but has hope that the new one will work for the people in the future and that this will trickle down to her village. If this progress is not realised, she will vote for change again.

Priyanthi is critical of state officials who functioned at the village level. Her village suffered from droughts and floods, frequently causing untold hardship to villagers:

> ***During the drought, there is no water and it is hard for us to get water, even to drink. Our crops are affected and we have to buy everything, like rice and flour. Some people look for daily wage work outside of the village. We buy goods from the shop and try to survive, somehow.***

The flood brought a different type of misery – the tank overflows and some parts of the village are submerged; the other section is locked out. '*We get trapped in the village*', says Priyanthi. The incidents of these shocks are now more frequent, with changing weather patterns. However, the state apparatus does little to relieve the hardship the community faces. The roads were damaged by the flood waters during the last flood and the villagers participated and repaired the road with funds from an NGO. Sometimes funds received from outside are misappropriated by officials:

> ***Money is received to develop the village but they distribute the money amongst their own people. These are things that happen in our village and keep us poor.***

Priyanthi is particularly disappointed with the services of the Samurdhi programme. Since the regime change in 2015, the Samurdhi allowance has been increased but she has not received her allowance for the past four months. Beneficiaries have protested at the Samurdhi office, demanding the allowances be paid. Priyanthi elaborates that the problem lies at the local level: 'Although the government deposits money in our accounts, the officers' don't give it to us on time.' During the protest, officers shut the doors and stayed inside the office, an action Priyanthi claims is evidence of their implicit guilt in not distributing the funds.

Priyanthi says she blames the GN for not doing his job, and this resulting in the village being deprived of much-needed funds to undertake development work:

> ***We need his approval to get anything done here, but when we ask the DS, she tells us that unless the GN says, they can't have allocated any resources to our village'. 'Our village is now called Petition Village because, always, we are making petitions against the GN.***

Other officers in the DS office are also ineffective, with Priyanthi highlighting that the GN, agriculture research assistant and Samurdhi officer are all from the village but 'don't work much.'

Priyanthi's service delivery experiences during the drought and flood were not positive. During the flood, she received a grant of LKR 5000, which she was entitled to under Samurdhi. However, the amount was deducted from her monthly allowance on the basis that the funds were a loan and not a grant, as she was led to believe at the time she took it.

During the drought, the delivery of relief provisions such as drinking water and potatoes came late. Private sector organisations responded to television news highlights and started distributing water prior to state action. Then, when the water bowsers came from the DS office, there was insufficient water to distribute to everyone. This meant the bowser returned to base empty, with some villagers holding on to their empty pots in despair. Priyanthi attributes the inefficiency in the state machinery in responding to the drought to the unsuccessful GN:

> ***Everything has to happen through the GN but he doesn't do anything properly. Every village got water on time, but we didn't. We just think about droughts as a punishment of nature. We don't expect anything. We take what they give.***

According to Priyanthi, all the relief assistance allocated to the village wasn't distributed during the flood. She blames the GN for this:

> ***When we checked with the DS office, they said provisions were allocated to our village too. But we saw rice, milk powder, dhal [and] green gram still lying in the DS office.***

Priyanthi is particularly skeptical about government Ministers distributing relief items, saying that 'ministers said they would help by giving assistance: 'They came to collect our votes. But we didn't give them.' By not giving her vote, Priyanthi has contributed to changing a corrupt government that was no longer rightful. She is now optimistic for the future, articulating her trust in the power of the ballot:

> ***We hope that everything will happen properly after changing of the government. Now our GN has been changed. That is a good thing. We can change the government again, if they don't work for the people.***

Kamalawathi was deeply dissatisfied with the functioning of the state apparatus before, during and after the two shocks, but expresses some level of satisfaction with the state: 'We have peace. My husband is at home now, so I am happy'.

Kamalawathi's dissatisfaction with the state apparatus has come from her experiences with interacting with officials. Her Samurdhi benefit had been removed without warning and this happened, she says, because the GN had fed inaccurate information about her

husband's employment status. After extensive back-and-forth communications between the different branches of the state machinery, Kamalawathi was reinstated as a Samurdhi beneficiary, but she is visibly perturbed by the experience, explaining:

> ***Samurdhi officers are not useful at all. Although they say they work from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm, they work only for about half [an] hour. They get a salary because of us, no? Last time, I went six times to the Samurdhi Bank to collect my monthly allowance. But officers don't care one bit. Sick people and mothers who are breast feeding come to collect their monthly allowance and have to wait a long time at the Samurdhi Bank, but the officers are at lunch or combing their hair. Officers don't care. They just don't work. We didn't receive Samurdhi allowance for six months after the government changed, so we all went and protested at the Samurdhi office. People chased the police and Samurdhi officers, scolding them and demanding our money.***

Kamalawathi is also critical of other government officials. She lived near the anicut and her house flooded every time there were long periods of rain. She had been promised a deed for the land, but despite constant reminders to the GN did not receive one. She had a permit, but this was not deemed to be, enough. The GN responded, saying that he couldn't give her a deed, as she was occupying a 'reservation'. Kamalawathi claims her family had been enjoying the land for two generations and that they weren't aware it was a 'reservation' when she built on it: 'Nobody told us it was.'

Every monsoon, Kamalawathi lives in fear of flooding. This time, when the rains began, officials from the Irrigation Department came to inspect the tank, military aircrafts circled in the sky, keeping a close eye on the water levels in the tank, but it was unclear what they could do once the tank overflowed. It is broadly agreed that the village needs a more permanent solution to the issue of flooding. Officials oversee the issue – the DS, Chief Minister of the North Central Provincial Council and Irrigation Engineers talk to the village leaders about the possibility of reinstating the sluice gate, which will allow the water to flow out of the tank, but nothing has been done.

During the drought, drinking water distribution was erratic and inefficient. Often the bowser runs out of water and Kamalawathi's family, being on the wrong side of the village, were deprived of the benefit. The villagers sent petitions against the GN to the DS office, alleging that his inefficiency was depriving the village of much needed assistance.

During the flood, Kamalawathi was unhappy about the distribution of relief provisions. Households that had government employees were not entitled to rations, as was the procedure, but some households received them anyway. Kamalawathi tells us that villagers scrabbled to obtain the supplies and there was no order, as the GN was not present to ensure that the provisions were distributed fairly. She elaborates that, instead, he hid in his house. The DS did not turn up either. Kamalawathi says she felt helpless and abandoned and sought refuge at her daughter's house, safe from the gushing waters of the overflowing anicut: 'We have learnt not to expect anything now. We take what we get only', she laments.

Kamalawathi took part in the elections: 'We cast our votes. But there are no special hopes. She is unhappy with the services delivered by the government but glad the war has ended: 'Those days, our sons used to come home in caskets. Now we are happy. Although we are poor, we can live without fear and uncertainty.

Sumanawathi tells us she was unhappy with the services delivered by the state, before, during and after the two shocks. However, she says she is happy with the government, because she can now live in peace and security.

Like other women in her village, Sumanawathi's dissatisfaction with the state machinery has stemmed from her unhappiness with the functioning of state officials. The GN is her nephew, but has not been helpful to her. As a single, elderly woman with limited income, she asked to be considered for inclusion in the Samurdhi programme but he brushed her request aside and told her she has a coconut property and is therefore not entitled to become a beneficiary. She then directly approached the Samurdhi Officer and was placed on the list of beneficiaries without any difficulty. She angry about the GN's lack of help, saying he 'is good for nothing' and 'only looks after his close friends' while 'people who deserve [benefits] are overlooked'.

The DS rarely visited the village and, as a result, wasn't aware of the daily plights of the villagers – the constant threat of wild animals destroying their crops, the perilous condition of the tank bund and the state of the single road that ran through the village. Kamalawathi tells

us that, as a result of this, ‘the government has no preparedness for floods’ and ‘the only way we can get anything done in this village is by sending a petition’. Some work in the village ends up being completed: road rehabilitation, for instance, which is undertaken when there is an election approaching. But that too is a ‘slipshod job’ according to Kamalawathi: ‘One flood and the whole road is in disrepair again’, she tells us. However, she adds that the villagers were happy with President Rajapaksa’s government. She also claims she received no benefits for the drought, aside from compensation for fertiliser, which she received as part of her Samurdhi entitlements.

Along with the above, government MPs and Ministers came during the flood and distributed rations, something they hadn’t done in previous years: ‘We didn’t expect them, but they came this time, because of the election and distributed food.’ Sumanawathi has accepted her fate in terms of the adverse weather patterns that will continue to create havoc in her life:

> ***This is our journey through samsara. We have to accept the merits and de-merits of it. If there are floods again this year, we will not expect anything, but we will take what is given. We have learnt not to expect too much. Whatever they do, our attitudes towards the government won’t change.***

Discussion

As discussed in the section on the role of service delivery in Sri Lanka, social welfare provision has been an important component of the social contract and one that has been expected as a right of citizenship. State delivery of services is regarded by the women in Manankattiya as important, they look to the state to mitigate the impact and respond to the calamity when there is a humanitarian emergency. However, the experiences of the women in accessing and using state services during the drought and flood of 2014 were poor. The views expressed by the women allude to the idea that service delivery is an important expected function of the state.

But have negative experiences of service delivery changed perceptions of the state’s legitimacy? Three of the women, Malini, Sumanawathi and Kamalawathi, say they are happy with the state because of the benefits provided in a context outside of war, despite their service delivery experience. Whilst legitimacy looks thin amongst the community in Maankuttiyam if we apply the concept of performance as the criteria, the women also articulate that they value the freedom to live in the peace and security that was absent from their lives during the 30-year war. This indicates that, for these women, ‘legitimacy’ lies not in the performance of delivering services but in a state that gives them peace. It could be suggested that Malini, Sumanawathi and Kamalawathi believe that state has the right to rule, meaning a concept of legitimacy from the perspective of social rightfulness has been bestowed on the state. Priyanthi, on the other hand, cast her vote to demonstrate that the state was no longer acceptable and now votes for regime change in order to elect a state that would be rightful, indicating that the ballot can be used to bestow legitimacy.

5 Service delivery, the social contract and state legitimacy in Sri Lanka: a discussion

This study has set out to explore if there has been a change in people's perceptions of the state and legitimacy due to the way the state responded in delivering services during the drought and flood of 2014/2015. The study has taken a political approach to analyse state services, including emergency humanitarian aid and social safety net programmes such as Samurthi. This political approach has provided an opportunity to focus on the functional aspects of the delivery process – the institutions, procedures and outcomes at the local level – to understand how power and resources were distributed and how the formal and informal rules of governance were (re) established (Booth and Seligson 2009; Parks and Cole 2010) in the context of the drought and flood. Further, this approach has allowed the symbolic aspects of the delivery process to be analysed, namely the values, principles and expectations of rights and entitlements against which the state can be judged to be fulfilling the expected standard of performance (Abulof 2013).

We wanted to find out if the state's responses to key events have changed people's perceptions and also how it has contributed towards creating, consolidating or undermining legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. Was there a normative shift in people's opinions, attitude or behaviour towards the state? The two case studies of Mannar and Anuradhapura provided an opportunity to explore these questions, taking the following factors into account: historical experiences of state-society relations, lived experiences of war and peace and the nature of social welfare provision during the two events. The findings, discussed below, provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics that shape state-society relations in post-war Sri Lanka.

5.1 Experience of service delivery

As discussed previously, Sri Lanka has a long history of state commitment to service provision, underpinned by universal access to health and education services. State services have been expanded to include social safety programmes for poverty reduction and to target specific vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the disabled and the poorest of the poor. Emergency services during times of shocks such as droughts and floods are also part of the provisions from the state (Balauch 2005). These programmes and services have been pursued since independence to ensure equity in the development process (Gunetilleke 2005). Services such as health, education and state pensions continued to be accessed by war-affected communities in the North and East even during the war (Mayadunne, Mallet and Slater 2014).

These programmes and services pursued by successive post-independence governments have become part the of the implicit social contract between the state and its people (Gunetilleke 2005).

As indicated previously, the services focused on in this study are primarily emergency and humanitarian in nature, including those provided by social safety net programmes (such as from Samurdhi) during the drought and flood. Relief services in the form of distribution of drinking water, dry rations, cooked food, cash-for-work schemes and compensation for lost harvest were the key services delivered by the state during the shocks. Additionally, non-state actors used the state delivery mechanism to distribute relief provisions, and identify beneficiaries for cash-for-work and food-for-work programmes. Further, private individuals and institutions also distributed relief items (dry rations, cooked food and drinking water) both individually and collectively outside the state mechanism. However, in this study, displeasure in state performance is voiced in varying degrees, across geography, identity and gender groups. Issues raised connect to timeliness, responsiveness, corruption, coordination and efficiency.

Both the cases of Mannar and Anuradhapura provide evidence of shortfalls in the state's capacity to deliver services to the level expected by the communities. The Tamil community, having undergone long years of war and displacement, has looked to the state to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. They say they feel vulnerable to threats such as droughts and floods and, unlike the Muslim community, have little support outside of the village to help them cope in such times. They have, thus, relied more on state-sponsored programmes and services to help them cope and recover.

The Tamil women are appreciative of some services, such as the distribution of dry rations by the state during the flood. Unlike the Muslim community, their only source of food and relief during the shocks was through state channels and, despite shortfalls in the delivery mechanism, they still appreciated the provisions distributed, without which they would have been hungry. However, the Tamil men question the commitment and motives of state officials in delivering relief items:

> ***The DS office distributing water was a show-off. If someone else tells them they would give them money for water delivery, instead of delivering water to us, the DS office would go and give them water.***
> FGD, Pichchaivarippu

They are particularly skeptical about the motivations of politicians distributing water and cooked food in the run-up to an election: 'During the election time, the politicians came and brought us one or two pots of water and then went. We didn't see them afterwards.' This indicates that the community is fully aware that the distribution of relief items has been used by state officials as a lever for short-term political gain in the context of upcoming national elections.

The Muslim women, meanwhile, articulate shortfalls but are much less vocal in voicing their displeasure with the delivery process. While they express a sense of helplessness in the face of the natural calamities they have faced and expect some assistance from the government to help them overcome these circumstances, they also expect little from it:

> ***We don't expect anything from the government. If we have good job opportunities and means for income generation, that is enough for us. But the flood and drought have been affecting us continuously since we returned here. We are forced to accept the government's assistances during those times.***
> Seinammbu

The women acknowledge shortfalls but are also appreciative of the services provided during the shocks. Their views seem to be shaped by their past experiences of state services during and after the end of the war. As discussed previously, the state did not offer much help when, in the 1990s, villagers were forced to flee from LTTE pogroms to cleanse the Northern Province of non-Tamil communities. .Subsequently, the women didn't expect much from the state but 'took whatever was given' – roofing sheets, tarpaulin, basic tools, essential household items and dry rations – when they returned to Maradamadu at the end of the war. The services rendered during the shocks, such as distribution of relief items, were thus an unexpected bonus.

The Muslim men, however, are more critical of the functioning of the state machinery, particularly the role of state officials. During the flood, for instance, they relied on help from trans-national Muslim networks to provide relief assistance, as what was given by the state was inadequate. The men also articulate who they think represents the state at the local level: 'For us the government is the DS and the GN. We are not blaming the government, but the government staff.' This indicates that the functioning of local level officials can be an important factor in attributing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the state.

In Manankattiya, both Sinhala women and men are very critical of the state services provided during the two shocks, but the women are more vocal about their displeasure with state officials such as the GN. They also have high expectations of the state and strongly articulate a belief in programme and service delivery as an expected function and duty of the state, which they demand as a right.

It is important to note that, unlike in Maradamadu, villagers in Manankattiya are able to enjoy state programmes and services – particularly Samurdhi benefits, allowances for the elderly, and disabled, and state pensions – without disruption during the war. The Sinhala community are therefore better-placed to hold the government accountable on their commitment to welfare provision, which is an important component of the social contract between the state and its citizens and one which has been upheld by successive governments over several decades. This leads the community to view service provision from a strong rights-based perspective. They expect the state to provide services, as they did during the drought and flood. There were shortfalls in the delivery process, as previously discussed, but the community indicates to us that it is willing to overlook them, as the state has provided them with something greater – peace and security after war. This suggests that legitimacy is not performance-related for this community.

As discussed, dissatisfaction with state performance in delivering services has been highlighted in both the Mannar and Anuradhapura cases. These are largely attributed to: lack of coordination, unpreparedness, slow response rates and discriminatory practices in allocation and distribution of relief material. Much of the ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the delivery mechanism is linked to the way in which state officials functioned at the local level. Whilst the state was a visible actor in the provision of services during the two shocks, the conceptualisation of the 'state' as the visible local officials performing at the local level resonates across geographies and identity groups. The state's capacity to function is thus assessed by the performance of these individuals.

The notion that service provision is an expected function of the state and important component of the state-society contract is also reflected across ethnicities, gender and locations. The notion that it is the duty of the state to provide services is clearly articulated:

> ***If a government comes to power, they must help us, that is their job. The previous government had not done anything. Only a community hall was built. It was Mr. Premadasa who gave our village electricity.***
> FGD, Manankattiya

In a context where providing services is regarded as the duty of the state and a right of citizenship, can it serve as a lever for building legitimacy?

5.2 The social contract through an ethno-historical lens

As discussed earlier in this paper, an important component in building legitimacy in a post-war setting is the social contract between the state and its people. The social contract aims to bring the state and society together through inclusive processes and responsive institutions that recognise the multiple identities, needs and interests of its people (UNDP 2012). In a context where there is a rupture in the relationship between war-affected people and the state, due to a protracted ethnic-based conflict, building trust is an important aspect of peace and state building processes.

Theoretically, the three principle components of the social contract provide the means through which trust could be rebuilt:

1. Capacity of the state to allocate resources and be responsive to the needs of its people
2. Political, economic and social processes that encourage inclusivity
3. Interaction between the state and its people, which helps facilitate meeting expectations (UNDP 2012).

The literature suggests that these components can help establish or reinforce the social contract and contribute to state building and legitimacy processes (GSRDC 2011). These three components are discussed below in the light of the views expressed by the different groups of women.

Capacity of the state to allocate resources and be responsive to the needs of people

For the Tamil men and women respondents in Marada Madu, improvements in their long-term wellbeing is important in the aftermath of the war. While this resonates primarily in livelihood development initiatives for the men, it is mostly connected to ensuring physical and emotional security and wellbeing for the women. This can be seen in the women's expression of concerns about their personal security and the lack of trust between the military and the village. It is also evidenced in a number

of cases of physical and emotional abuse in the village, with many of these instances involving perpetrators in the military. The women recognise that the military should provide security and protection, yet those very officials have been the perpetrators of offences against them. In this context, the women feel they have no recourse to the law, as they see the military as the 'other' linked to the state and system of justice. With the retreat of the few remaining NGOs in the village since the end of the war, the women are evidently now particularly vulnerable to the physical and emotional threat of violence.

Meanwhile, the Tamil men complain that services intended to facilitate livelihood rebuilding have not been commanding the attention of local officials. The village roads are in disrepair, which made transporting a patient to hospital in Musali during the flood difficult. Along with this, the lack of adequate drinking water during the drought caused particular hardship, due to non-availability of adequate wells and facilities for storing drinking water.

The men are also critical of the lack of interest among state officials to provide assistance to rebuild livelihoods. Most men are involved in either agriculture work or fishing. However, there is little state support for either of these livelihoods. The Tamil men are particularly concerned that the NGO sector had specific programmes targeting FHH which has led them to feel that other categories of the vulnerable poor have been left out. Interestingly, the issue of programmes for FHH was one that women who were not FHH also feel strongly about, indicating that the targeting of FHH for programme benefits is thought to exclude other categories of the vulnerable poor and that this has a negative impact on FHH by isolating them.

The Tamil men are also concerned about incidents that have indicated state indifference to the needs of the community and ethnically motivated discrimination by certain segments of the state machinery. The indifference of officials and politicians is articulated strongly in the following quote:

> ***The GN told us that he took the name list of those entitled for compensation for loss of agricultural income to the DS office. But when we went to the DS office to ask for the compensation, they told us they hadn't received the name list for this village. If the GN takes the list and keeps it in his bag, how will it reach the DS office?***

The men also articulate that the GN is Muslim and his indifference to meeting the needs of the Tamil community has been affecting long-term development of the village, indicating the lack of interest to meet the needs of the Tamil community overall:

> ***When we were displaced, the army was here and they looted things from our village. When the Minister came to the school, we gave him a letter requesting equipment for the playground and a list of the other needs of the village. But, he has taken the letter from us, left it on the table and gone. When we go and ask for help from anyone, nobody is helping us.***
> FGD, Pichchaivarippu

The role of ensuring physical and emotional security and wellbeing as a central function of the state is not only articulated by Maradamadu Tamil village leaders at an individual level, but also at the community one. The flood, they say, could be avoided if the state takes precautions and actions to save the community from its harmful impacts. They see the frequency of flooding as an 'obstacle for us to go forward', adding that they 'think it would be good if the DS office helped us' (FGD, Pichchaiwarippu). Thus, for the Tamil community, rebuilding trust by ensuring their physical and emotional wellbeing forms an important component in building the state-society relationship and the functioning of local level officials – with the GN, DS and the military playing a crucial role in building this bridge in the aftermath of the war.

The Muslim community, while appreciating the short-term reactionary responses by the state during the shocks, articulate that they need a commitment from the state to improve the wellbeing of the community in the longer-term – access to a doctor and a medical facility, jobs, drinking water and a durable solution to the issue of the river flooding that disrupted their lives and livelihoods. All these requirements are achievable if the state recognises and commits to them. The Muslim women have fewer expectations from the state than the Tamil women, with this stemming from their previous experiences of state services during emergencies such as the previously discussed LTTE pogroms of the 1990s. While they are grateful for the houses that had been constructed with the facilitation of the state, they also look for more constructive engagement by the state to improve the conditions of the village and the villagers. This view is echoed by the Muslim men, who say they want more lasting solutions to their problems – including livelihood and village development, which would contribute to a

better quality of life for them. The Muslims have access to and also rely on transnational networks and assistance from faith based organisations outside of the village to meet their humanitarian needs. However, it has been the state that they look to for long-term, tangible improvements to their lives and livelihoods.

The Sinhala men and women have similar needs to the ones echoed by the Muslim community in terms of their desire for infrastructure-related improvements to the village that would translate into better quality lives for the villagers and that they expect to be provided by the state: roads, school buildings and drinking water. However, state support in meeting these needs has largely been ad hoc, temporary and politically motivated. A group of Sinhala men highlight an example illustrating this: after the flood of 2013, the Provincial Council repaired the main village road but this was done so poorly that the road fell into disrepair again after a few months, making it impossible to commute on.

The women are particularly vocal in their criticism of state officials – the GN, DS and the Samurdhi officer, who they accuse of nepotism and corruption. Meanwhile, the Sinhala women strongly assert that they view provision of services as a responsibility and duty of the state, highlighting it as an important component of the social contract.

This view reflects a critical aspect in the relationship between the state and its people, emerging from a specific set of rights and responsibilities geared towards improving wellbeing. This relationship is underpinned by the state's long commitment to social welfare provisioning in Sri Lanka. The delivery of health and education services and poverty reduction programmes in particular have been a response to calls for improvements in wellbeing, which have subsequently become an implicit aspect of the social contract (Gunetilleke 2005). Service provision in this sense has come to be the basis on which the state-society relationship has been consolidated in post-independent Sri Lanka.

Political, economic and social processes that encourage inclusivity

We have found a sense of despondency among the Tamil respondents in Maradamadu. Long years of war have embittered them – they feel left out of the development process that has taken place in the rest of the country and say they are damaged emotionally and physically, and need help to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. However, this has proved difficult, due to an absence of closure on important events in their lives. As Vasanthi articulates:

> ***I am tired of asking help from the government. It has been eight years, but I still don't know if my husband is dead or not. I have no death certificate, or anything as proof to say if he is dead. The government has not provided any help on this matter.***

Vasanthi's single status has exposed her to a particular type of physical and emotional vulnerability. She is distrustful of the military arm of the state under whose watchful surveillance she lives, threatened by its presence in her village. Women in the village have been abused, she says. She also fears her daughter or herself will become victims one day. Ironically, the state she fears is the very entity she believes has the power to mitigate her vulnerability: 'I want to live freely. Only the government can make me do that by taking away my fear.', she continues, articulating the central components of the social contract – protection and mutual trust between the state and its citizens – to be rebuilt.

The 'Northern Muslims' have been named, framed and formed according to their experiences of expulsion and protracted displacement during a 30-year war. This is the narrative that ideas around Muslim identity and victimhood have largely been framed in a post-war context (Thiranagama 2011). The findings in this study resonate with this narrative. The Muslim respondents have adopted a 'help thyself' philosophy, which they live by, stemming from their experiences of war and displacement. The Muslims of Mannar suffered deeply in the 1990s pogroms, which resulted in their expulsion from their homes as part of the LTTE campaign to ethnically cleanse the Northern Province of non-Tamils. Muslim men, women and children fled from these pogroms that targeted them due to their religious and cultural identity. The Maradamadu Muslims received little assistance from the government in their hour of need and relied instead on family, community and faith-based networks to help them.

This isn't something the community has forgotten. At the end of the war in 2009, they were urged by the government to return to Maradamadu. Many of the older people did so. Despite the memories of violence and expulsion, the harsh weather conditions and destruction due to war, they say they consider Maradamadu home. So they returned.

Some of the younger people moved back and forth between Puttalam and Mannar, as they still had social and economic ties in Puttalam, but many of their families were now permanently based in Maradamadu. The community had thus not fully reintegrated to their homes in Maradamadu. Not having enough livelihood opportunities meant they shuttled between Puttalam, where their economic lives were still active, and Maradamadu, where their social lives were being rebuilt and where they had a political champion in a local Minister. Much work still needs to be done to link all the components of their lives – political, economic and social.

The Sinhala community in Manankattiya, on the other hand, feel politically and economically isolated from other regions in Galenbindunuwewa. They were one of the poorest GNs in the DS division in economic terms during the shocks, yet were financially marginalised and not entitled to some of the drought relief available to other GNs, such as loss of agricultural income, as the village was classified as a large irrigation site.

The precarious geographical positioning of Manankattiya between two GN divisions has led the villagers to believe that the physical location of the village places them in a 'no man's land' in political terms. As a result, unlike the adjoining villages, Manankattiya had no prominent local politicians to champion its causes during the shocks, such as the threat posed by a breach in the tank.

The village is a small close knit community engaged in traditional livelihoods. More recently villagers have been forced to seek employment elsewhere due to changes in the weather patterns that have resulted in recurring droughts and floods. Thus, the village has been experiencing changes in its demography and social structures. The villagers are still coming to terms with these changes. During the war, sons of the village came in caskets, afterwards they sought employment outside of the village and returned only rarely. Despite the social, economic and political changes the village was undergoing, at the time data collection, the villagers were struggling alone to adjust to the changes in their lives. Help, when it came, arrived only when there was an election in sight.

State-society interactions that facilitate meeting expectations

Who is the state? The findings of this study resonate with those of the 2014 SLRC study, which indicated that local officials, namely the DS and the GN, were perceived to be the 'face' of the state at the local level. These are the people who respondents in this study have interacted with on a day-to-day basis on issues related to state service and programme delivery. In turn, it is these interactions that have framed perceptions of the state, through the values, beliefs and attitudes they see reflected in the delivery process.

Across geographies and identity groups there is a strong sense that state–society relations at the local level are played out through the day-to-day-interactions between citizens and local officials, indicating that it is a dynamic interface with the potential to act as an intermediary in rebuilding trust between the state and society. Service provision provides a platform for this interaction, as the delivery process engages state officials with citizens and focuses on processes connected to:

- Visibility of services
- Existence (or lack) of standard administrative processes
- Issues of discrimination and favouritism
- Accountability mechanisms (e.g. grievance mechanisms, complaint and response procedures and turnaround times).

Further, this allows for an understanding of the values and symbolic indicators that are transferred through the delivery process and how these shape people's perceptions of and attitudes towards the state.

We have found that all three communities in the study view the 'state' through the eyes of the officials that represent it. We've also found that their perceptions of the 'state' are largely shaped by these lived experiences of interacting with local officials and the functioning of the state apparatus at the local level. As already discussed, the Tamil women's negative interactions with the military have shaped their opinions and attitudes towards the state. The functioning of the GN and the way in which he controlled the communities access to relief items during the shocks has also influenced their view that the state engages in discriminatory practices against the community in Maradamadu. These negative interactions with a particularly powerful arm of the state apparatus has influenced perceptions of a key element in the social contract – trust between the state and its people.

The Sinhala community, on the other hand, articulate the value of service provision more powerfully, suggesting that it is an important aspect of the social contract. As discussed, the women acknowledge the role of state

officials in delivering services, but are deeply critical of their functioning. However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that these negative perceptions have affected views of legitimacy. This could be due to the fact that the Sinhala community in Manankattiya, unlike the communities in Maradamadu, have enjoyed uninterrupted access to services during the war and the idea that social welfare provision is an implicit element in the social contract seems to resonate more in this community. Their experiences with war have been different from the Tamil and Muslim people. The Manankattiya villagers reveal to us that they have not been directly affected by everyday threats of violence. Neither have they suffered from multiple displacement or destruction due to war. They live on the frontier between the 'North' and 'South', but the village is not close enough to be affected by sporadic attacks of violence that has been characteristic of other 'border' villages in the district. The villagers have experienced war indirectly – their sons fought in the military and often came home wounded or dead and they were occasionally called upon to be vigilant about impending attacks from the LTTE. Thus, they have experienced less violence, due to war, than the Mannar communities. They also haven't experienced the breakdown of trust or felt the subsequent need for security and protection as strongly as the communities in Mannar. While service provision is viewed as an important aspect of the social contract, and the delivery has engaged officials and citizens (whether positively or negatively), the values, beliefs, norms and attitudes transferred in the delivery process have had less impact on the Sinhala community than they have the Tamil community. What is important to the Sinhala women is that the war has ended and there is peace now. This indicates that different ethnic groups have prioritised different aspects of the social contract, with this influenced by their lived experiences of war, displacement and post-war conditions.

5.3 Understanding the links: service delivery, the social contract and state legitimacy in Sri Lanka

This study has set out to explore if and how state delivery of services during two critical events in 2014/2015 has resulted in altered views of the state that could contribute to changes in its perceived legitimacy. The data analysis has aimed to specifically explore what and how the state delivered and if the process in that delivery has resulted in changes in perceptions, using the concept of performance legitimacy as an indicator. As reflected in the previous study in 2014, this study indicates that the provision of services and programmes is an important component of the state-society contract and one that is considered a 'right' of citizenship. Perceptions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services delivered are linked closely to people's expectations and the degree to which these expectations are met. The study finds that perceptions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are shaped not only by *what* is delivered but by *how* it is delivered, as reflected in the values and attitudes that were translated in the delivery process during the shocks focused on in this study.

Across geographies and identity groups, the idea that state delivery of services during the two shocks fell short of what was expected by the community has been articulated strongly. The communities studied expected the state to take measures that would have mitigated the extent and impact of the shocks. We note that all communities interviewed are of the opinion that state responses were ineffective and did not meet the expected levels and that the impacts could have been mitigated, had the state acted effectively and efficiently. Thus, the study finds that overall legitimacy from the perspective of performance-based legitimacy in this particular context is poor in all territories. However, as has been theorised, legitimacy is not a linear process and, as this study indicates, variations in the degree of (dis)satisfaction with the state are not all related to service delivery. The findings suggest that different identity groups have prioritised different aspects of the social contract shaped by war and post-war experiences of the return, reintegration and duration of access to programmes and services. People's perceptions are also influenced by the historical relations of post-colonial state building and the legitimising processes between the state and the different people who constitute its citizenry. In the context of the events of 2014/2015, which included the two shocks and a regime change, it is pertinent to look deeper to find out if there was a normative shift in people's ideas, beliefs and attitudes derived from the way in which the state delivered services during the two shocks and if that shift was reflected in a change that raised questions about legitimacy.

As has been discussed previously, legitimacy, in the broadest sense, refers to social rightfulness, insomuch as a particular group of people in a particular territory believe the state has the right to rule and therefore behaviourally complies(Levi, Sacks & Tyler, 2009). Two aspects of Levi's definition that are relevant to this study are 'trustworthiness' and 'procedural justice' (Levi *et al.* 2009). Levi defines trustworthiness as the motivation of officials to 'deliver on their promises, and do what is

right for the people they serve' (ibid: 356). A key aspect in trustworthiness is performance related to building trust in the state's capacity to perform core functions such as delivering services. State performance in building trust and legitimacy in the context of the two shocks of 2014/2015 are reflected in respondent's opinions that the level of administrative competence shown by the state during the shocks was low. The regime changes in 2015, to which the Sinhala and Tamil women say they contributed, could be a reflection of a lack of leadership motivation: a lack of commitment from state officials to convince the people of their ability to keep their promises. It could thus be argued that the women exercised their agency and behaviourally acted to remove a regime that they, at the time, felt was not trustworthy or legitimate.

Procedural justice on the other hand emerges when 'governments exercise their authority through procedures that people perceive as fair' (ibid: 359). Evidence from this study suggests that the people didn't believe that the procedures engaged with during the two shocks were fair or transparent. This reflects a lack of the legitimating quality required for procedural justice to be achieved in both of the cases in Mannar and Anuradhapura.

6 Conclusion

International policy discourse on state building often holds that service delivery can enhance state legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2013). This idea is grounded in the belief that delivering services is an important expression of state-society relations that is shaped by citizen discourses on *what* the state should deliver and *how* it delivers (Mcloughlin, 2012). This view reflects a broader theme on legitimacy being built through a government's effectiveness in fulfilling core state functions and is theoretically premised on the idea that state performance in delivering welfare can play a major role in enhancing its legitimacy (François and Sud, 2006). International organisations, such as the OECD and the Department for International Development (DFID), use this assumption to frame their programme and policy interventions. However, there is no known empirical evidence to suggest this link in a post-war setting. This study has thus been conceptualised to engage with the theoretical proposition that delivering services can enhance legitimacy in a context where the relationship between the state and its citizens has been fractured due to a protracted conflict.

The study has undertaken an analysis of the humanitarian services delivered during the drought and flood of 2014/2015, focusing on the following:

- Norms (values and principles)
- Procedures (structures and practices)
- Outcomes (performance)
- The nature of the social contract (implicit agreement on the rights and duties between the state and society)
- Public discourse on expectations and experiences of state services.

The analysis has aimed to understand the changes that took place in the light of the expectations of citizens, informed by their beliefs and opinions on issues that form part of the social contract between citizens and the state (Mcloughlin 2014).

The study highlights that, despite perceptions of state performance being different for the different groups of women, the implications of the performance on perceptions about the state per se also differ between the two locations and also between the different ethnic groups.

It is evident that, for the Tamil women in Marada Madu GN division in the Musali DS division in Mannar, delivery of services is an important component of the state-society relationship. Despite shortcomings, they appreciate

the relief provisions and assistance provided during the shocks. However, what they consider most important is addressing threats to their physical and emotional security and the ability to have recourse to a system of justice that will uphold the values and laws that will help keep them safe and protected. This is a responsibility assigned to the state, but in many instances it was state institutions that were the perpetrators in acts of violence against the women. After many years of war and displacement, they now wish to live in a safe and secure environment supported by a state machinery that is committed to rebuilding trust and confidence between the state and a community that has been fractured by a protracted conflict. Thus, for these people, being Tamil and women (most often single women) provides a specific set of vulnerabilities: that is, being from a community that has been 'vanquished' by the war. This, in turn, has led to threats from the 'male victors' of war.

The Muslim women in Marada Madu GN in Musali DS in Mannar have different expectations from the state. While they say they appreciated the services that were delivered during the shocks, they relied primarily on family and faith-based networks to tend to their needs at that time. As discussed, their low levels of expectation of the state could be attributed to historical experiences of state support at critical points in time, such as the events that led to the Northern Muslims fleeing their homes in the early 1990s when the LTTE carried out pogroms to ethnically cleanse the Northern Province. The women are of the opinion that the state did not provide enough, in the aftermath of the war, to help them resettle and start new lives. What they needed were programmes and services that facilitated their resettlement and reintegration back to their homes – physical infrastructure, a medical facility, schools and jobs. While the notion that the state had a responsibility to provide for its citizens and that it was an integral component of the state-society contract is articulated, these women nonetheless expected programmes and services that would improve the overall wellbeing of the community. The state lacked commitment to this.

For the Sinhala women in Manankattiya village in Galenbindunuwewa DS, Anuradhapura, legitimacy from the perspective of 'rightfulness of the state's actions' resonates much more in terms of the state's response to the two shocks. Unlike the Tamil and Muslim women, the Sinhala women are vocal in their criticism of the state's inefficiency and ineffectiveness when it came to both preventing and responding to the shocks. However, as discussed, this weakness in state performance does not translate into changed perceptions of legitimacy. Provision of services is regarded as a fundamental component of the state-society relationship insomuch as it is an expected function of the state and a 'right' of citizenship.

Legitimacy, as articulated by these women, came from several sources during the shocks. These include one case in which the state was able to provide a safe and stable living environment, albeit where peace – as opposed to war – prevailed, while another was able to exercise her franchise and bring about change (as reflected in the regime change at the beginning of 2015). Another found the state was able, through both its capability and willingness, to provide services to its citizens. These included Samurdhi relief, elders allowance, disability allowance, PAMA and other respite services in times of need. Whilst the women say they were dissatisfied with the state's performance in delivering relief services during the shocks, 'legitimacy' was conferred nonetheless, indicating that although service delivery was an important component in the state-society contract, it did not negatively impact on conferring legitimacy.

Thus, while delivery of programmes and services is an important and expected function of the state and a critical component of the social contract, there are also other core elements of the social contract which are important to people– trust, confidence, security, and commitment to improving overall wellbeing. The study findings suggest that different identity groups prioritise different aspects of the social contract according to their lived experiences of war, displacement, return and history of service delivery. For the Tamil and Muslim communities state building and legitimising processes must be located within a deeper understanding of war and post-war experiences, including the factors that contributed to the war. State commitment to establishing trust and confidence with the communities and ensuring their protection and security needs are core elements for rebuilding state-society relations which have been fractured by many years of conflict and war. For the Sinhala community, it is more about consolidating or arresting decline in legitimacy, premised on upholding the state's commitment to social welfare provision and continuing to protect peace and security.

It is also important to situate people's perceptions within the prevailing political context. In this instance, state performance during the drought and flood was subject to reflection during the period that led up to the 2015 Presidential election. This study has found that, during

the elections, respondents demonstrated a strong sense of agency in the knowledge that they could change ineffective regimes through the ballot. This is articulated by the Tamil and Sinhala women in particular, who proudly proclaim their role in contributing to the regime change of 2015. It is therefore important to note that the process of legitimising or de–legitimising a 'state' by casting a vote in support of it or rejecting one that is no longer acceptable, along with the notion that the change will trickle down and result in changes at the local level, has been articulated in this study. Could the regime change in the Presidential election of 2015 be a reflection of a normative shift in people's beliefs in the commitment of the state to provide expected functions? While providing a conclusive answer is beyond the scope of this study, the outcome of the election is a relevant and interesting phenomenon that could help us obtain a more grounded understanding of the factors that contribute, consolidate or result in reducing the legitimacy of a state.

Recent academic literature on the link between service delivery and state legitimacy theorises that 'the notion that basic service delivery can instrumentally enhance state legitimacy appears something of a leap of faith' (Mcloughlin 2013: 2). This idea resonates in the findings of this study. However, factors such as the functioning of state institutions, along with the values transferred in the delivery process, the distribution of power and resources, and the expectations of rights and entitlements of the women are all important considerations. It is hoped that a 'bottom up' approach to understanding state-society relations focused on these issues will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the state-society relationship and how it shapes ideas of (de)legitimacy.

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