

ASSESSMENT REPORT

ON

Barriers to Information, Participation, and Inclusion

In Sri Lanka's Reconciliation and Development Processes experienced by

Women with and without Disabilities

In the Districts of Kandy and Kilinochchi

2016



Abbreviations and Acronyms

DPO	Disabled People's Organization
DS	Divisional Secretary
GA	Government Agent
GN	Grama Niladhari.
HI	Handicap International
HI	Hearing Impaired
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
VI	Visually Impaired
WDC	Women's Development Centre
WC	Women's Charter
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society
WWD	Women with Disabilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background:

In November of 2014, Handicap International in Sri Lanka commenced a project to facilitate the participation of women with and without disabilities from the grassroots, in Sri Lanka's governance processes, post-war development, and peace building efforts. The project was implemented in partnership with the Women's Development Centre (WDC) and the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES). The primary goal of the intervention was to empower women with and without disabilities to participate in shaping Sri Lanka's post-war development and reconciliation process. The implementing districts were Kilinochchi in the Northern Province and Kandy in the Central Province. As a first step in the project, Handicap International together with WDC and the ICES carried out an assessment to understand the prevailing challenges and barriers to participation experienced by women in the two districts.

This report presents learning from a "barrier assessment" conducted in the districts of Kilinochchi and Kandy. The purpose of the exercise was to understand the challenges and opportunities experienced by women, with and without disabilities, in accessing government services and social protection schemes, and being included in community organizations, as well as their perceptions of safety and post-war reconciliation processes at local and macro contexts. The assessment also attempted to understand the levels of awareness among women with and without disabilities about policies and legislation pertaining to women's rights, disability rights, and government mechanisms on reconciliation. The learning and information from this exercise was useful to understand the extent of awareness among women with and without disabilities about their rights and entitlements as equally participating citizens in the country, and where barriers are experienced, to attempt remedial action through the project's activities on awareness raising, capacity building, promoting linkages with government, and carrying out strategic lobbying with district and national level stakeholders during the project cycle.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities observed that, "traditionally, policies addressed to women have made disability invisible and policies on disability have forgotten gender, perpetuating the situation of multiple discrimination of women and girls with disabilities" (2015)¹ in their General Comment on Article 6 on women with disabilities. This observation reflects Sri Lanka's own portfolio of policies and legislation pertaining to women and to disability, where women with disability are neither given special focus nor reference in women's rights policies and laws, and where disability legislation and policies tend to skim the surface of the multi-dimensional challenges experienced by women with disabilities. However, in line with the objective of this report, an elaboration of this circumstance is not included herein. Disability is not a priority concern in Sri Lanka and this is made evident by the absence of up-to-date statistics and disaggregated data on the numbers, types and degrees of disability prevalent in the country. Therefore, advocates on disability rights are assigned to

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GCWomen.aspx>

reference the 2006 UNESCAP report estimating 7% of Sri Lanka's population to comprise of persons with disabilities. Women make up 52% of Sri Lanka's total population but within this category the percentage of women with disabilities is not known. However, in 2014, the Ministry of Health conducted a National Blindness, Visual Impairment, Ocular Morbidity, and Disability Survey where it was stated that the prevalence of disability is "significantly higher in females than in males" (especially among lower socio-economic strata and in rural districts), while there were no reported differences by ethnicity.

Methodology:

The barrier assessment exercise was conducted in the two districts of Kandy and Kilinochchi. The enumeration process was assigned to WDC's field staff in Kandy, while in Kilinochchi, enumeration was carried out by members of two women's organizations. In both districts, the enumerators were given training on the use and application of the survey instrument by staff of Handicap International and WDC. The design of the survey instrument was led by Handicap International for disability rights; WDC for women's rights; and ICES for reconciliation development. The collated questionnaire was vetted and approved by HI country office. Ten enumerators were recruited, trained, and deployed for each district. The two districts applied a purposive sampling method to identify respondents and to ensure that the desired categories of women with and without disabilities were included in the survey. The sample size differed: in Kandy the sample included 250 respondents and in Kilinochchi 150 respondents. Forty-five respondents of the 250 sample in Kandy were women with disabilities, while in Kilinochchi the proportion of respondents with disability was higher, at 52 of the total 150 respondents. The primary reason for the increase in total sample size in Kandy was because WDC wanted representation from all 20 divisional secretariat divisions and because the population in Kandy is proportionately higher than in Kilinochchi. In Kilinochchi the sample was derived from the four divisional secretariat divisions that were the focus of the project: Kandavalai, Karachchi, Pachilapalli and Punakari. The assessment was conducted in July 2016.

Learning from the assessment:

Women's role in decision making and in development processes

Despite the difference in sample size, the learning from the assessment is insightful and presents an overview of the similarities and differences in the lived experiences of women with and without disabilities in the two districts. A common observation for both districts is that women in decision-making positions within community-based organizations is low, with only 13% reported to be office bearers in both districts. Also, common to both districts is that women were consulted on development initiatives that were carried out at village level and their primary consultant on development activities and administrative necessities is the Grama Niladhari. With regard to accessing government services, a disturbing observation is that a significant number of respondents claimed that they experienced lack of respect by government officers. This claim was reported by 47% respondents in Kilinochchi and by 18% of the respondents in Kandy.

Situation of women with disabilities

It was observed that membership in disabled people's organizations (DPO) was low among women with disabilities in Kandy, at only 37%, while in Kilinochchi, it was notably higher at 73% holding membership. Furthermore, respondents in Kandy identified that the purpose of DPOs to be mere representation for persons with disabilities, whereas the women with disabilities in Kilinochchi responded that the DPOs implemented savings and credit programmes. In both districts there was a low number of respondents who identified "advocacy" as being a role of the DPO. A grave observation in both districts is that respondents were not aware of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) or that Sri Lanka acceded to the convention in early 2016. In both districts a general observation was that despite Sri Lanka's accessibility regulations there has been no visible improvements to physical accessibility in public buildings and spaces. And a unique observation in Kilinochchi is that 40 respondents of the 52 women with disabilities in the sample, stated that they did not have access to vocational skills training opportunities.

Women's experiences of harassment and violence

Thirty-one per cent of respondents in Kandy, and 72% respondents in Kilinochchi, stated that they have experienced harassment, and of them 4% in Kandy and 8% in Kilinochchi identified the type of harassment as sexual abuse. Sixteen per cent of the respondents in Kandy stated that the harassment was perpetrated by an unknown person, while 33% in Kilinochchi stated they experienced harassment by a "close relative/known person to me." A possible limitation in the assessment is that harassment types were categorized broadly into "verbal," "sexual," and "physical" in the questionnaire instrument. In Kandy, only 7% of respondents had reported the incident to the police while 10% had confided in a family member. In Kilinochchi, 16% reported the incident to the police, while 41% had preferred to inform a family member.

A significant concern is that in both districts women respondents reported that the incidence of domestic violence is high, and in Kandy 81% and in Kilinochchi 82% stated that legislation pertaining to prevention of violence against women and domestic violence laws must be improved and enforced in the country.

Women's perceptions on reconciliation

In Kandy, the women respondents' level of awareness on post-war reconciliation and engagement in any reconciliation processes was low. Only 24 of the total 250 respondents claimed knowledge of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Report (LLRC); only 23 said they were aware of some type of reconciliation events at their respective community levels; 108 respondents said that it was the responsibility of the government to facilitate a successful reconciliation process; and 198 women stated that "yes, women with disabilities should be included in the reconciliation process." In Kilinochchi, 46 respondents were aware of the LLRC report; 84 stated that the government held the responsibility to promote reconciliation; and 124 stated that women with disabilities should be included in post-war reconciliation processes. Of the 150 respondents in Kilinochchi, 22 identified reconciliation as "restoring friendly relations between individuals or communities."

Concluding observations:

While the barrier assessment has been an internal, project related exercise to derive an overview of the circumstances of women with and without disabilities in the project's geographical districts, the information and learning could be insightful for governmental and non-governmental actors to understand the realities on the ground. Although the learning cannot be a reflection of the geographical districts and demographic characteristics of the other 23 districts in Sri Lanka, the two districts in which the assessment was conducted represent a context of rural poverty and gendered experiences of women's participation in the context of Kandy, and an added layer of a war-affected context in Kilinochchi. The barrier assessment was useful for the project implementing partners and the women's organizations involved in the exercise to understand the gap between policy, laws and practice (realities on the ground). It was especially useful to determine that women with disabilities experienced aggregated barriers to participation and inclusion compared to non-disabled women, and that specific measures must be taken by government and non-governmental stakeholders to create opportunities for participation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION	6
METHODOLOGY	6
KANDY	7
Demography	7
Barrier Assessment Findings	
Disability	7
Participation	9
Services	12
Safety	13
Reconciliation	15
KILINCHCHI	16
Demography	16
Barrier Assessment Findings	
Disability	16
Participation	18
Services	19
Safety	21
Reconciliation	23
CONCLUSION	25

INTRODUCTION:

The Barrier Assessments in the respective districts were conducted by the Women's Development Centres's village-based volunteers, community-based rehabilitation officers in Kandy, and enumerators recruited by Handicap International's field office in Kilinochchi. The enumerators in each district were given a preliminary training on the Barrier Assessment questionnaire by the project staff of WDC and HI in the respective districts. The questionnaire was developed by the three implementing partners for three thematic areas – women's rights and barriers by WDC, disability rights and barriers by HI, and knowledge about and access to reconciliation processes by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies. The questionnaire is presented in Annex I. Enumeration was carried out from June to July 2016 and the final analysis conducted by the HI Colombo office.

The assessment looked at the experiences and perceptions of women with and without disabilities on (i) Disability (ii) Participation (iii) Services (iv) Safety, and (v) Reconciliation. Questions pertaining to Disability were applicable if the respondent was with a disability or associated to someone with a disability. Participation-related questions were applicable to all respondents (with and without disability) because the inquiry was to understand if respondents participated in any type of community-based organizations, their mandate and outreach, and if mainstream community-based organizations were disability inclusive. Questions associated to Services attempted to draw out information about respondents' knowledge on government's responsibilities, women-focused policies and practices, and whether they accessed services and were able to enjoy due rights/entitlements. The assessment included questions on Safety to determine the types of and extent of harassment and/or threats to personal safety experienced by women with and without disabilities and to determine if the respondents were aware of and accessed police protection and legal processes where applicable. The thematic focus on Reconciliation attempted to understand whether the respondent was directly or indirectly impacted by the war, and respondent perspectives of reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology applied two different sample sizes in the two districts, which is a limitation in the study. WDC enumerated information from 250 women with and without disabilities in Kandy and HI enumerated responses from 150 women with and without disabilities in Kilinochchi. The sampling method in both districts were carried out through purposive sampling and ensured to include 20% of women with disabilities in both districts and 10% of women-headed households in Kilinochchi. The assessment covered women from all ethnic groups; Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. Furthermore, members, as well as non-members, of women's groups were included in the sample.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. This questionnaire was developed with the support of ICES and WDC. Experts from the Handicap International Federation Office in France also contributed to developing the questionnaire.

The learning from the Barrier Assessment is presented first for Kandy district and then Kilinochchi district, and not as a comparative analysis due to the difference in sampling in the two districts.

KANDY

Demography

The district of Kandy is located in Central Province of Sri Lanka and is demarcated into 20 administrative divisions and 1,188 smaller administrative Grama Niladhari² divisions. The ethnic composition of the district reports at 73% Sinhalese, 13.5% Sri Lankan Moor, 8% Indian Tamil, 4% Sri Lankan Tamil and others.³ The total population in the year 2013 was reported as 1,391,000, of which 663,000 were male and 728,000, female.⁴

Barrier Assessment – Findings

Disability

Of the sample of 250 respondents in Kandy, 45 respondents were women with disabilities. Of them only 17 respondents claimed to be members in a Disabled People's Organization. Of the 17 respondents, six stated that the main function of the DPO was to represent persons with disabilities, five said their DPO engaged in community development, while only one stated that the DPO carried out advocacy, and another that the DPO facilitated savings groups. A significant number of 15, responded as "other." The assessment queried about the prevailing knowledge of national level and international level policies, legal frameworks and action plans for disability and it should be gravely noted that the majority of respondents were not aware of the UNCRPD, nor about the Sri Lankan government's accession to the convention (Figure I). In terms of local policy frameworks and action plans, knowledge about the National Action Plan on Disability (NAPD) and the draft Bill on Disability were weak, whereas 22 of the 42 respondents to the question about Sri Lanka's Accessibility Regulations were aware of the regulations (Figure II).

² Village based government administrations officer

³ Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics, 2011.

⁴ <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/VitalStatistics/MidYearPopulation/Mid-year%20population%20by%20district.pdf>.

Figure I

Awareness about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

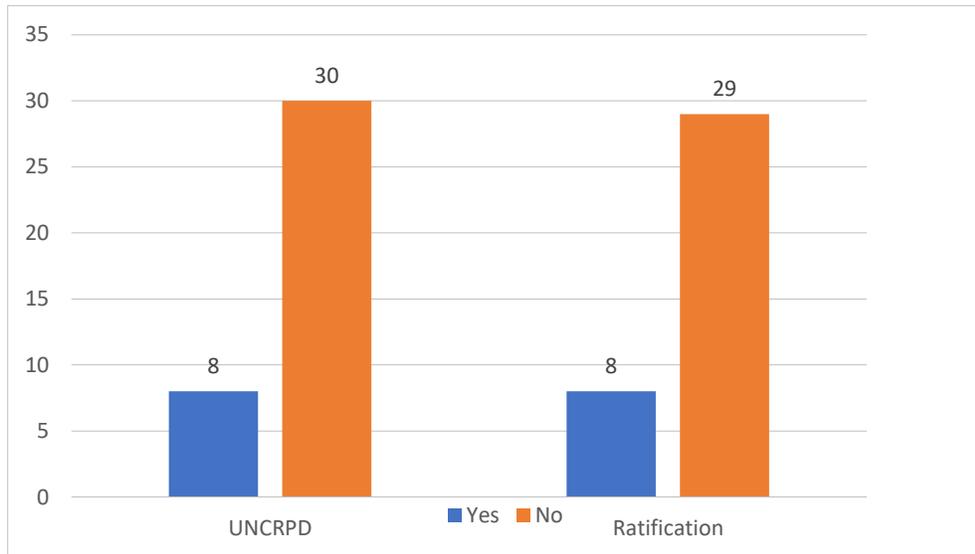
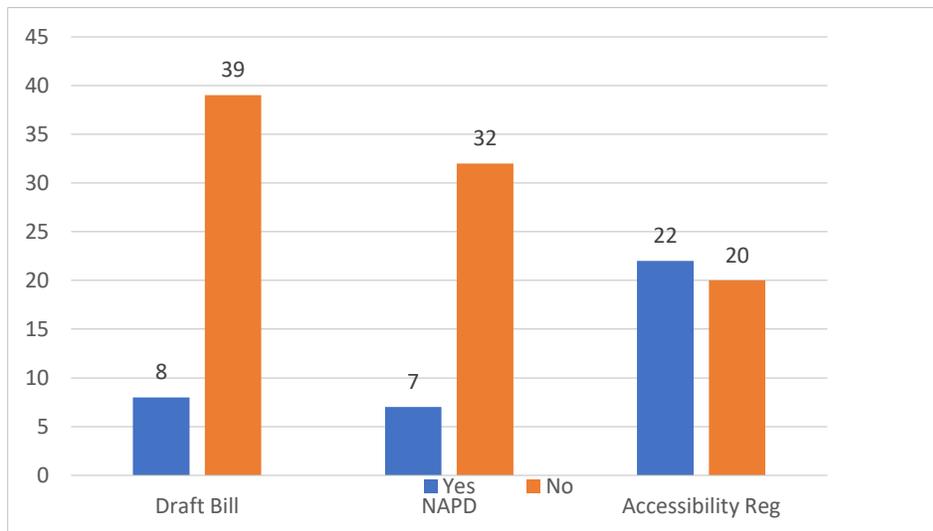


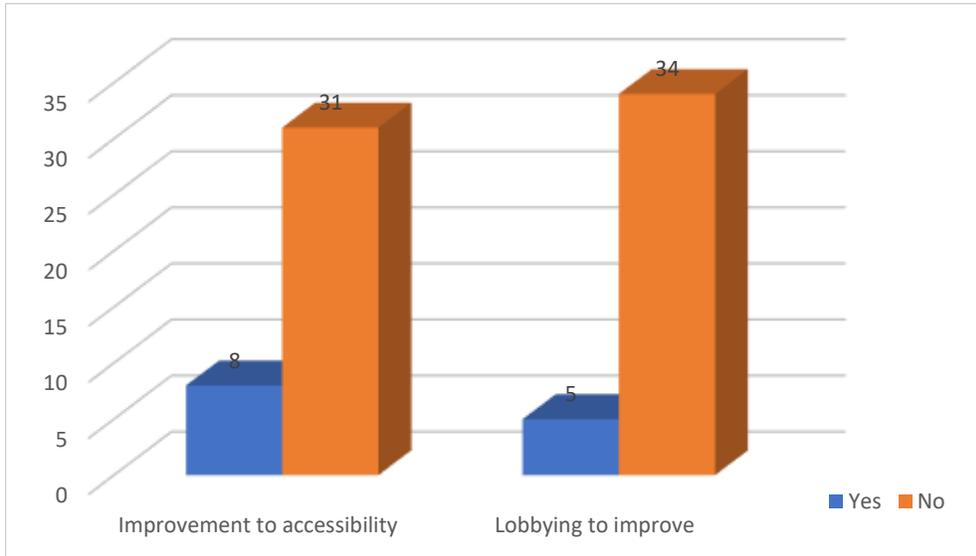
Figure II

Knowledge about local disability policies and regulations



However, despite the Accessibility Regulation No. 1 of 2006, the improvements to accessibility were not visible according to 31 respondents (Figure III) and despite this observation, only five stated that they engaged in lobbying for improvements to accessibility through their DPOs.

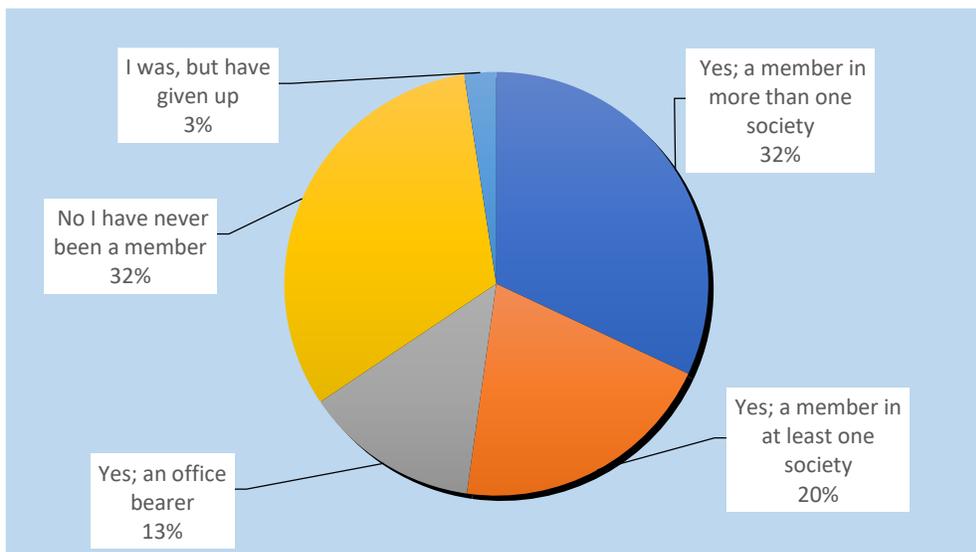
Figure III
 Perspectives about the status of Physical Accessibility



Participation

Questions on participation were directed to the total sample of 250 respondents. Answers were tabulated for 247, of which 32% recorded as being members in more than one organization, and 13% held office in the organization/society they belonged to (Chart I).

Chart I
 Membership in Community Organization



Women were asked if they faced challenges in interacting with community members, neighbours (Chart II) and if yes, what types of challenges were experienced (Chart III) to which a significant per cent of 35% had chosen the answer “ other.”

Chart II

Experienced challenges in interacting with community members and public

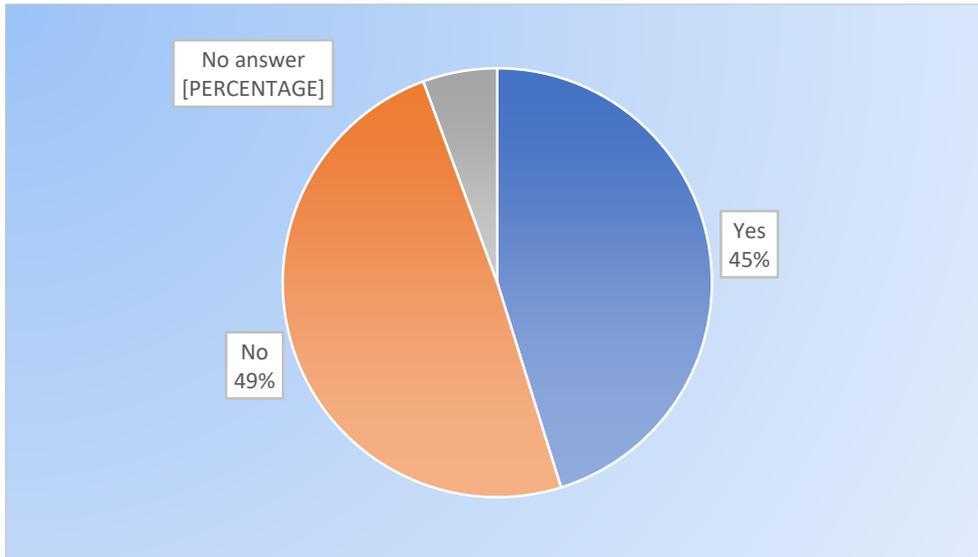
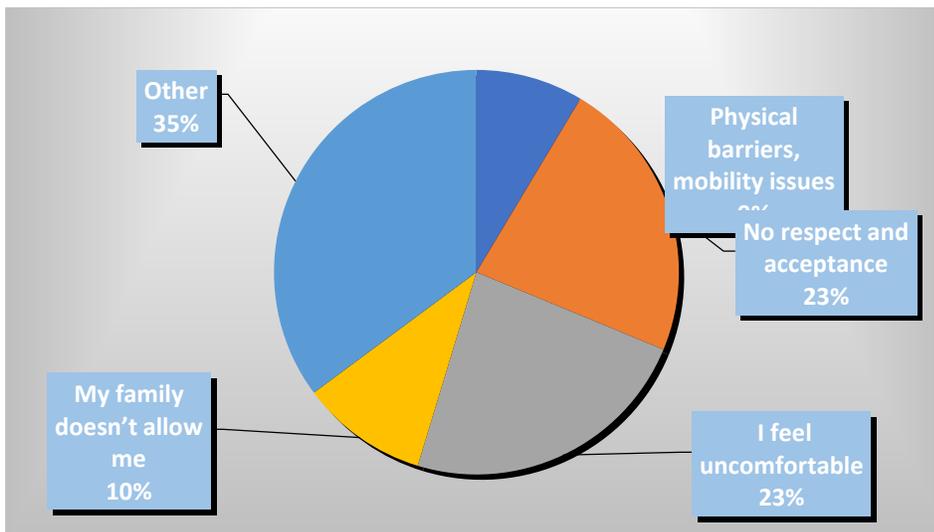


Chart III

Types of Challenges



Women were asked if they had the opportunity to be consulted on local development initiatives (Figure IV) to which 52 responded “yes, always” and 95 said “yes, sometimes.” And the women’s responses to were who/which government or non-governmental entity consulted them is presented in Chart IV. It

can be observed that the women’s engagement with development interventions were largely at the village level as majority of their consultations were with the Grama Niladhari, local organizations and local council members.

Figure IV
Consulted on Local Development Initiatives

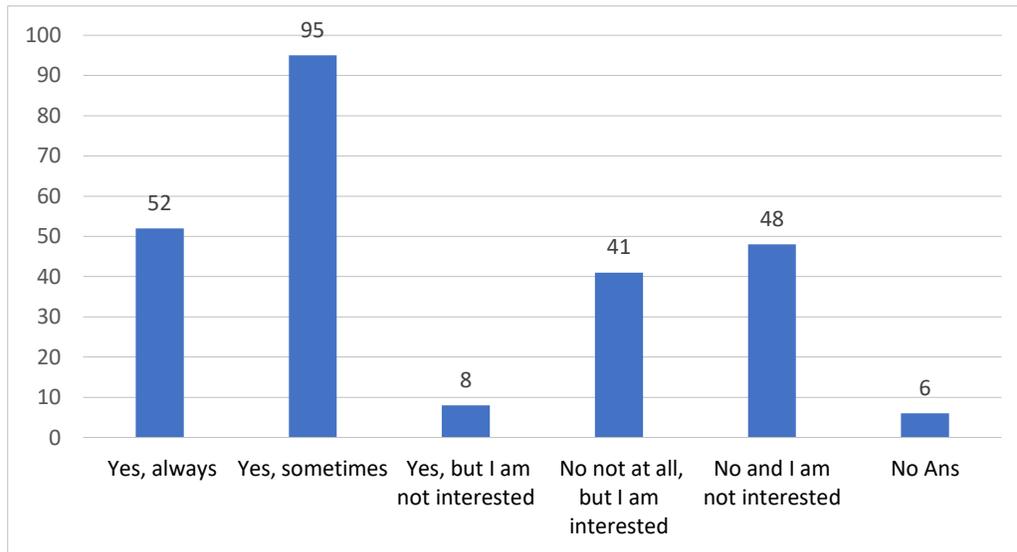
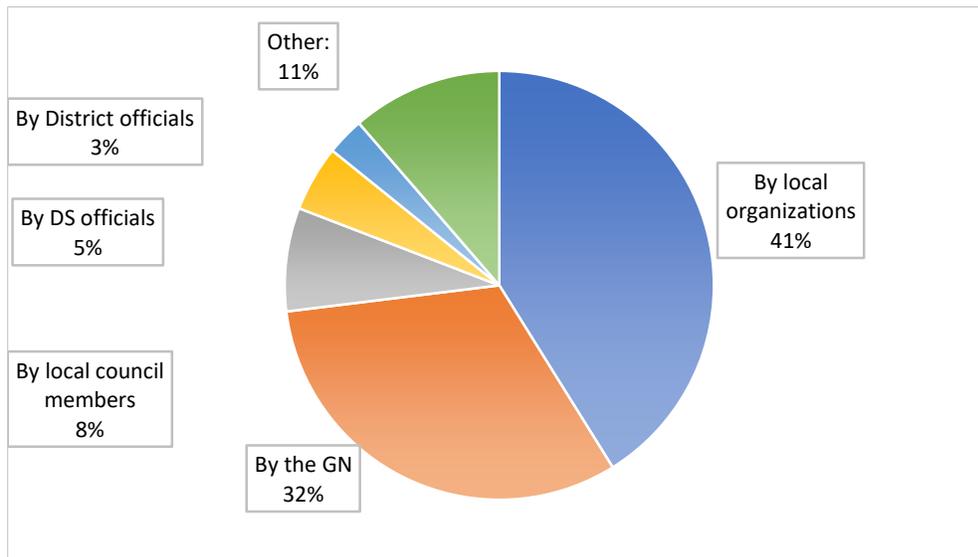


Chart IV
Consulted by which Authority/Officials?



The responses to being registered in the electoral list and having voted at the “last election” co-related (Charts V & VI)

Chart V
Registered in the Last Election

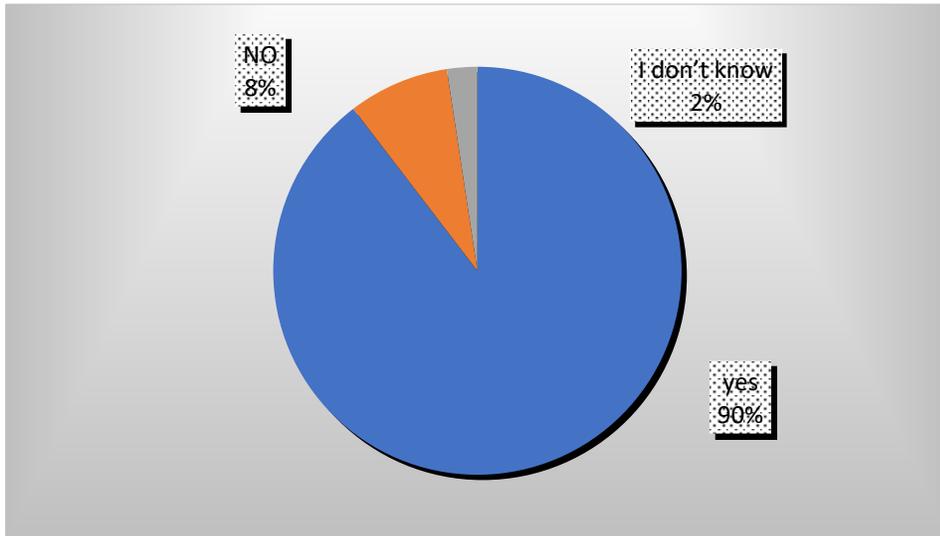
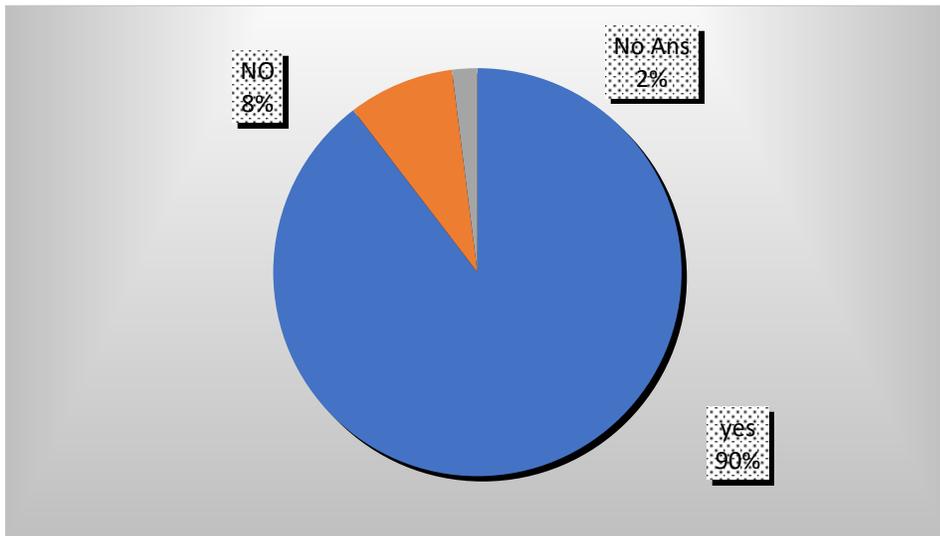


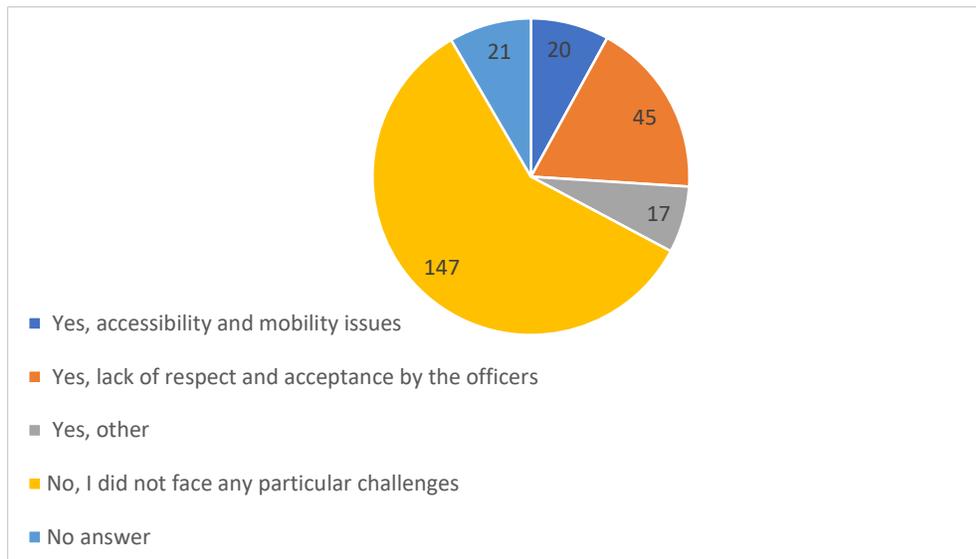
Chart VI
Voted in the Last Election?



Services

Two hundred and forty-six respondents replied to the question, “how often do you access government offices/ service ?” to which 121 – a significant majority – had opted the answer, “now and then,” while 59 had responded with “frequently.” Chart VII represents the women’s responses to if they experienced challenges to accessing government services to which 20 respondents highlighted accessibility issues and 45 identified “lack of respect and acceptance” by government officers.

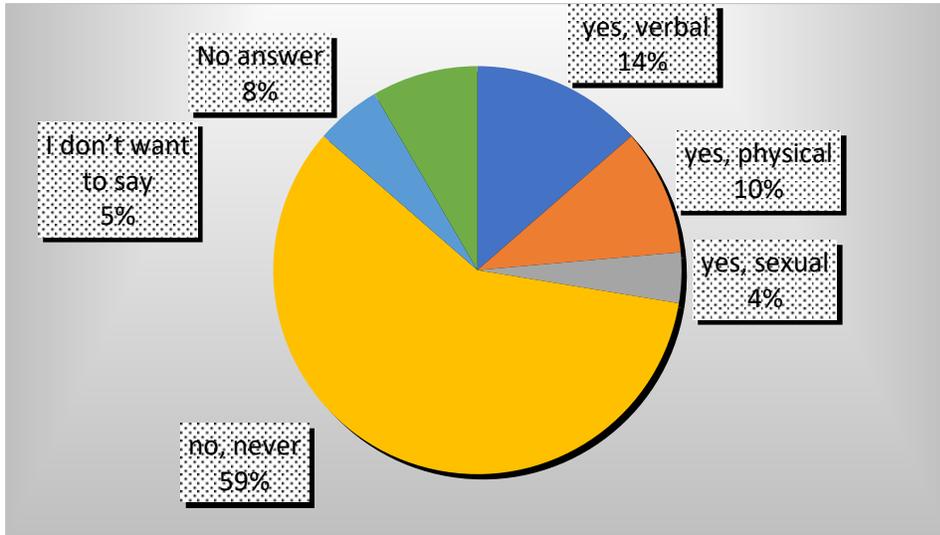
Chart VII
Challenges to Accessing Government Services



Safety

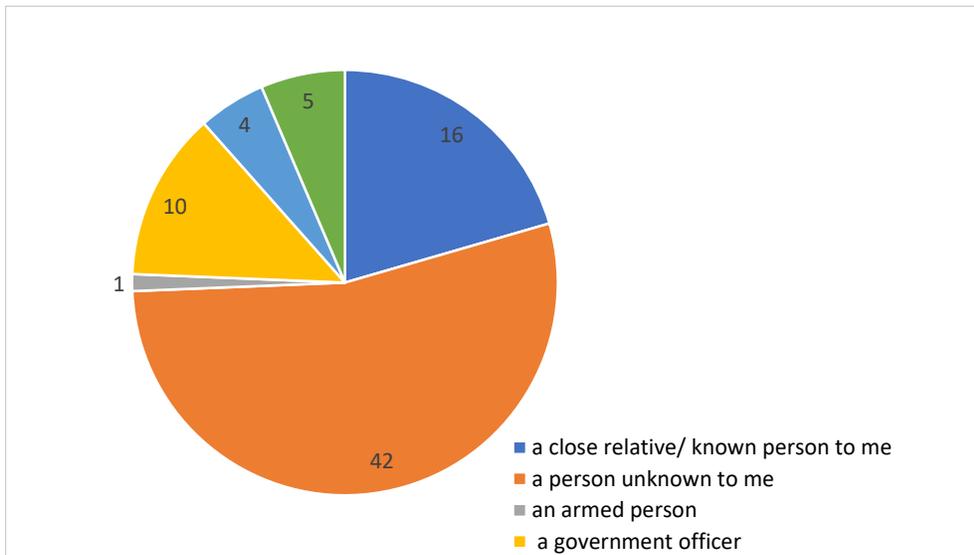
One hundred and seventy-two women stated that they felt “extremely safe” at home, 57 said “very safe” and three women stated “not at all.” Only 49 of the women said they felt “extremely safe” in their work space; 31 and 24 said they felt “very safe” and “moderately safe” respectively. All 250 women respondents were asked if they had experienced harassment in their lives and asked to define if the type of harassment was “verbal,” “physical,” or “sexual.” One hundred and forty-seven respondents said they had never experienced harassment, while 34 said they experienced verbal harassment, 25 stated physical harassment, and 10 said sexual harassment. A limitation in the survey is that there is the possibility that some women would have categorized sexual harassment as “physical” and that the space in which they were interviewed may not have been conducive to the open expression of views. However, the enumerators were all women to ensure gender sensitivity.

Chart VIII
Experienced Harassment?



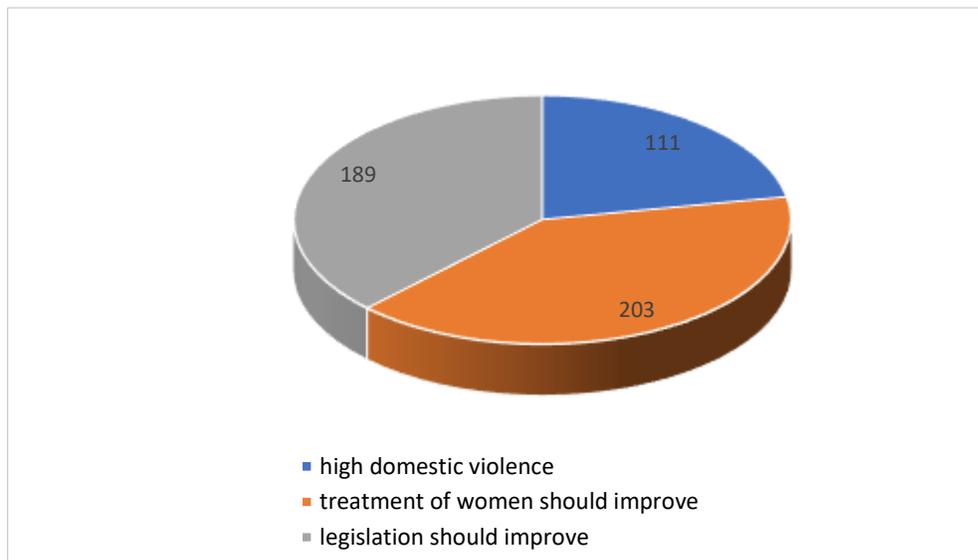
Of the 78 women who acknowledged having experienced harassment 42 claimed having been harassed by an unknown person, 16 by a close relative, and 10 by a government officer (Chart IX). Only 19 stated that they reported the harassment to the police, while 27 stated they told a family member.

Chart IX
Harassed by?



One hundred and eleven respondents stated that domestic violence was high in their respective communities, while 203 affirmed that the safety for and treatment of women in Sri Lanka must improve. One hundred and eighty-nine respondents opined that there should be improved legislation in Sri Lanka to prevent domestic violence, while only 91 respondents had heard of or was familiar with the Domestic Violence Act in Sri Lanka.

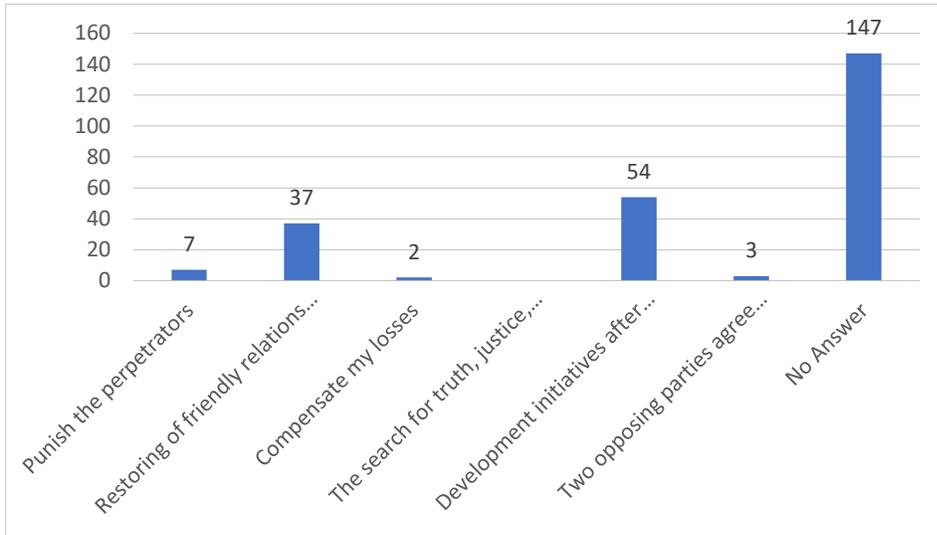
Chart X
Opinions about Domestic Violence and Women's Safety



Reconciliation

The survey attempted to understand the extent of awareness the women had about post-war reconciliation and gave them a few choice answers to select from. However, it is disturbing/interesting to note that 147 respondents chose not to answer the question (Figure V). Only 24 respondents were aware of the LLRC and only 23 said they were aware of reconciliation efforts at community level.

Figure V
 What is Reconciliation?



However, 166 respondents said that reconciliation is important, while 198 women stated that “yes, women with disabilities should be included in the reconciliation process.” One hundred and eight respondents said that it was the responsibility of the government to facilitate a successful reconciliation process, while 53 said that the community has a responsibility.

One hundred and seven respondents said that Sri Lanka has been able to achieve peace “partly,” while 68 said “yes, Sri Lanka has achieved peace.”

KILINCHCHI

Demography

Kilinochchi is one of the five districts which make up the geography of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The 2012 census recorded the population at 113,510, of which 50.9% are female. The district is divided into four administrative divisions – Karachchi, Kandavalai, Pachchillapalli and Poonakary. HI has been working with and liaising with DPO and Women’s Groups in Kilinochchi as part of the Handicap International led project’s interventions on community awareness raising on disability and women’s rights. Kilinochchi used to be the stronghold of the LTTE and had experienced the brunt of military offensives in 2009. Therefore, Kilinochchi was also the focus and recipient of development efforts and restorations to infrastructure and livelihood carried out by government and non-governmental international and national stakeholders. It is also observed that in Kilinochchi the primary reason for disability is the direct impact of war experienced by people during the course of the protracted conflict – injury and trauma experienced at the last stages of the war in 2009 in particular.

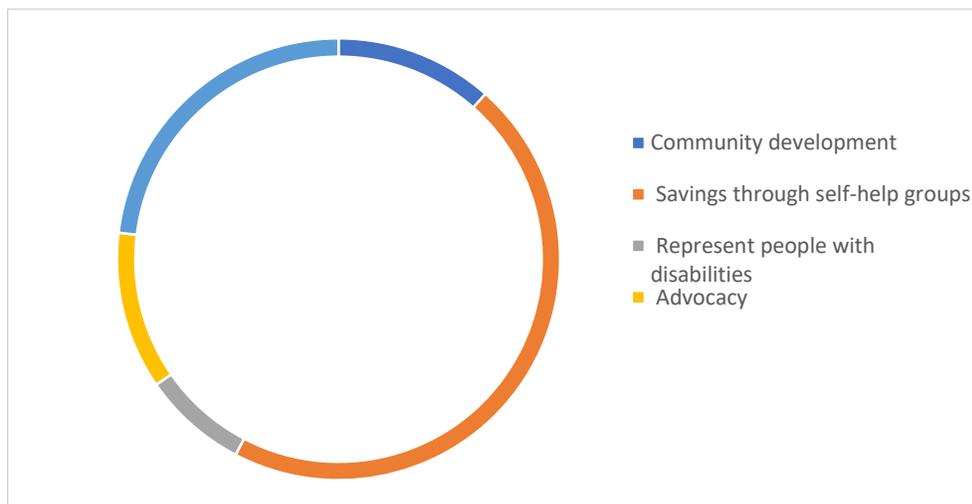
Barrier Assessment – Findings

Disability

Of the 150 women interviewed for the assessment in Kilinochchi, 52 respondents were with a disability. Of them, 38 held membership in a DPO, while 14 said they were not members. Of those holding membership in a DPO, the majority stated that a primary function of their respective DPO was to implement savings and credit programmes, while a smaller number of respondents identified “advocacy” and “community development” as the focus area of their respective DPOs (Chart XI).

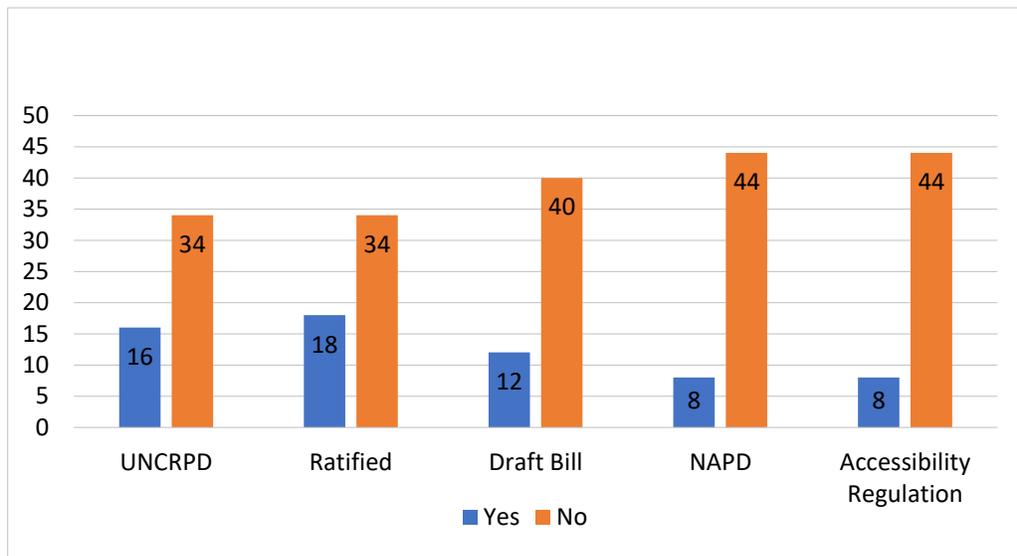
Chart XI

DPO Functions



Of the 52 respondents, only 16 affirmed that they knew of and were familiar with the UNCRPD, while 34 said they did not know about the convention, and two did not respond (Figure VI). Therefore, 34 respondents claimed that they did not know that the government of Sri Lanka had ratified the UNCRPD. Only eight were aware of Sri Lanka’s Accessibility Regulations⁵ that have been in effect since 2006.

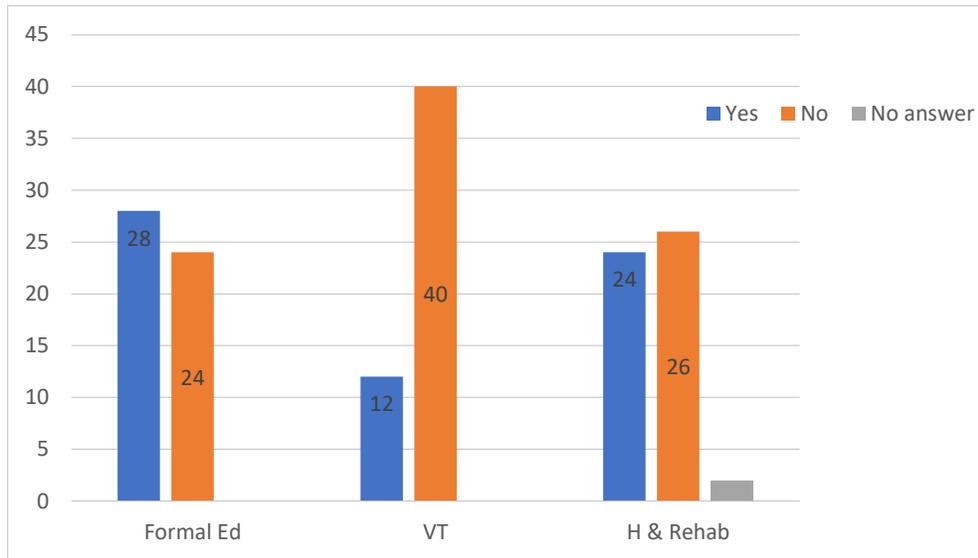
Figure VI
Awareness of Disability Policy



There was no significant gap reported by respondents who have/had access to formal education and health and rehabilitation services. However, a majority of 40 women with disabilities stated that they did not have access to vocational training opportunities (Figure VII)

⁵ http://www.hrcsl.lk/PFF/Library_Domestic_Laws/regulations/1467_15%20Disability%20Rights.%20E.pdf

Figure VII
Access to Services



Participation:

Of the 150 women with and without disabilities who were interviewed for the assessment, 12 said that they held membership in more than one community organization, and while 20 respondents claimed they held a decision making position (office bearer) of an organization they belonged to. Forty respondents said they had never been a member of a community organization while 34 stated they had been a member in the past but had given up. When asked if the respective community organization they belong to was disability sensitive and included opportunities for women with disabilities to hold membership, 34 responded “yes, to a great extent,” while 16 said that the community organization they belonged to was not disability inclusive.

Sixty-four per cent of women said that they are consulted on development initiatives, and that the majority of the consultations have been at the local level by the Grama Niladhari or by local non-governmental and community based organizations. Only 3% claimed that they were consulted by local authorities and 2% said they has been consulted on development initiatives by Divisional Secretariats (Chart XII) and (Chart XIII).

One hundred and thirty-eight women said that they had enrolled in the electoral register for the 2015 elections and 10 said they had not. Of those registered, 128 said they had voted while 18 said they had not and four refrained from giving an answer to that question. Of the 18 who did not vote, reasons for not participating is illustrated in Figure VIII.

Chart XII
 Consulted on Local Development Initiatives

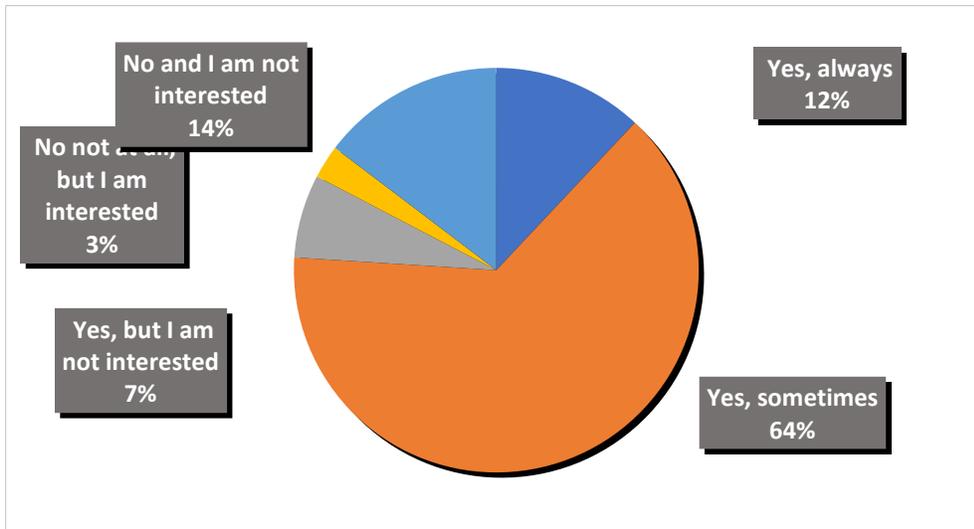


Chart XIII
 Consulted by which Authority / Officials?

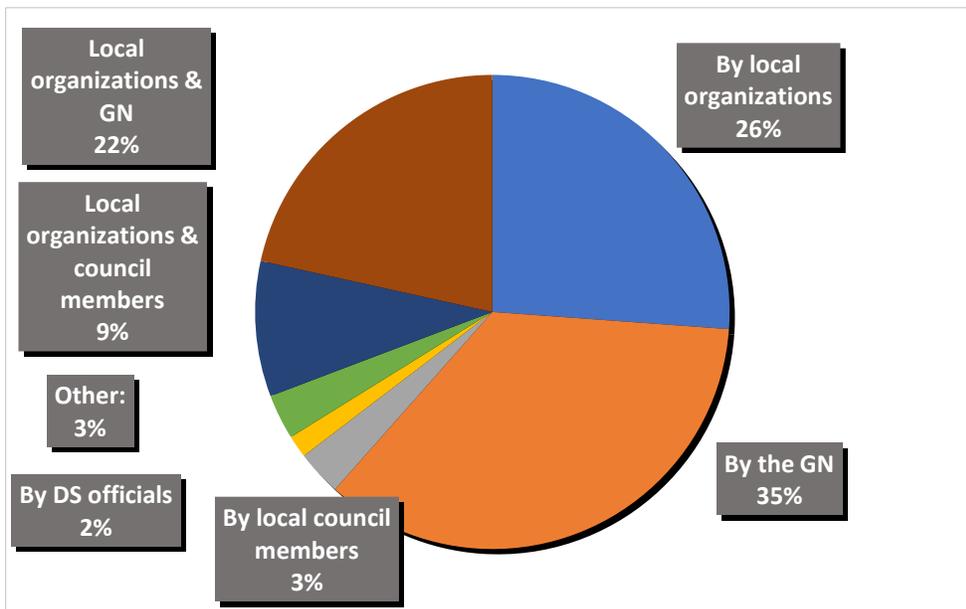
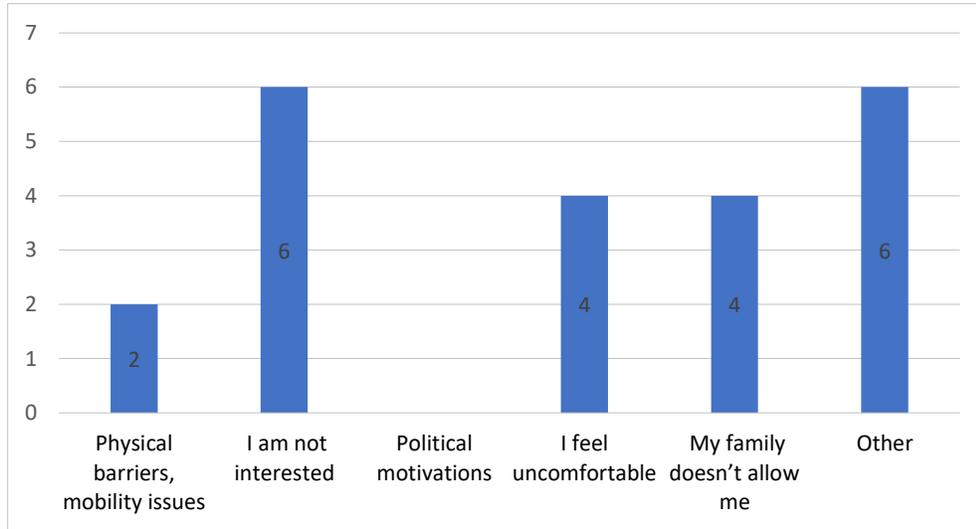


Figure VIII
Reasons for not Voting at the Last Election



Services:

Women with and without disability were asked if they considered themselves to be equal citizens in the country and 83% of stated in the affirmative, while 12% said they did not consider themselves as equal citizens. Seventy-six women said yes they did reach government for services “now and then” (Chart XIV). The women were asked if they faced challenges in receiving/ accessing services from the government, and what type of challenges they were – 47% of the women said “lack of respect and acceptance by officers” (Chart XV). In Kilinochchi, it is known that the majority of civilians lost their personal documents including birth certificates, national identity cards, marriage certificates, and property deeds because of displacement, and emergency evacuation situations. Therefore, since the end of the war, responsible government departments, with the support of non-governmental agencies, have been instrumental in restoring and re-issuing important personal documentations. The respondents were queried if they were in possession of official documentation; 64% confirmed they did, while 32% stated that they had “some.”

Chart XIV

Access Government Services?

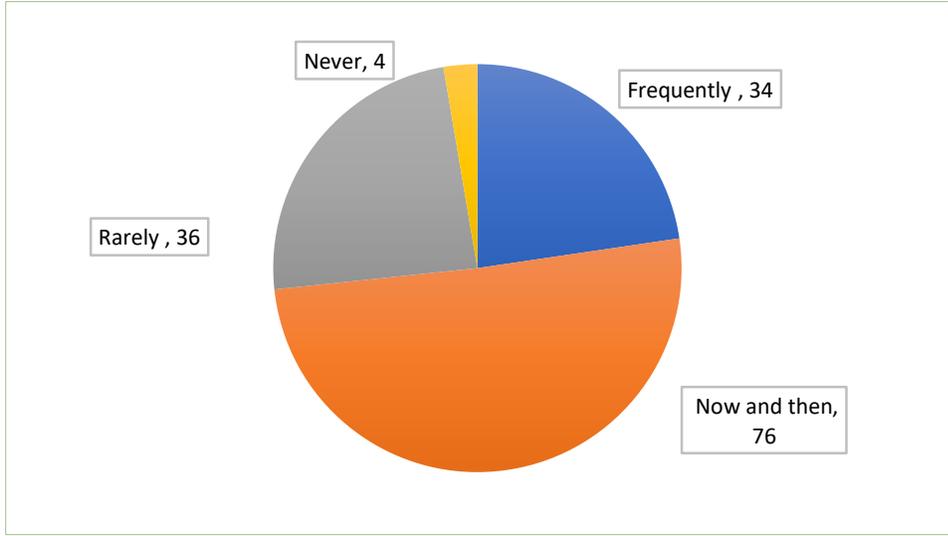
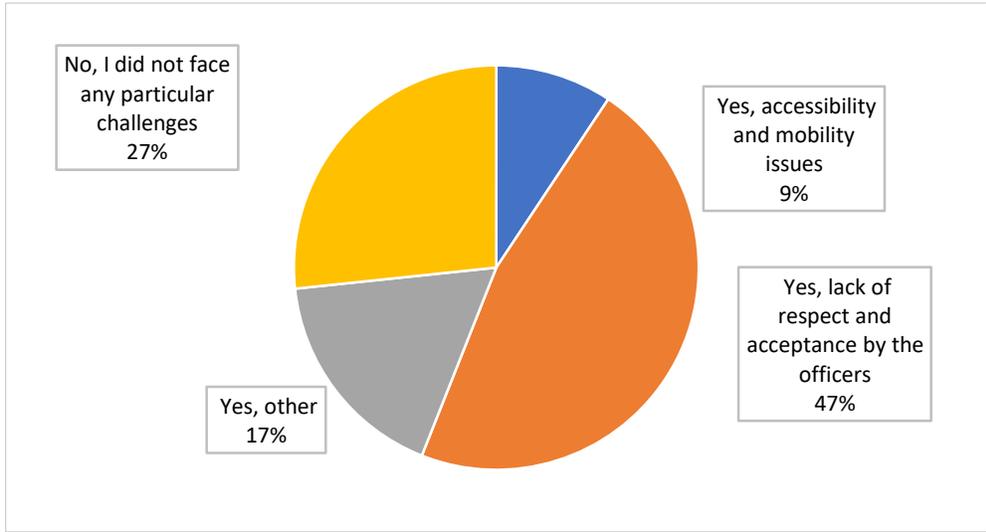


Chart XV

Experience Challenges to Access Government Services?

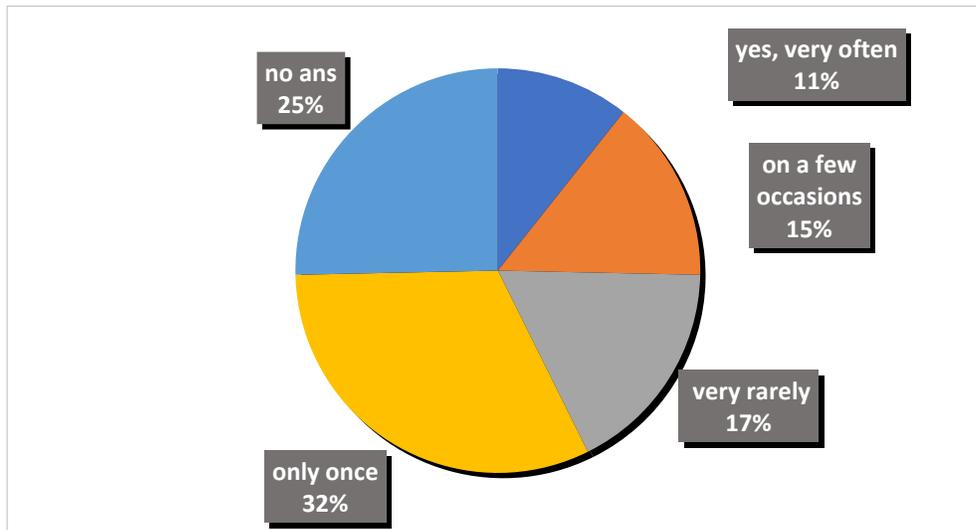


Safety

The women were asked if they faced any harassment and if yes, what type of harassment. Fifty per cent confirmed having experienced verbal harassment, 14% physical harassment and 8% stated sexual

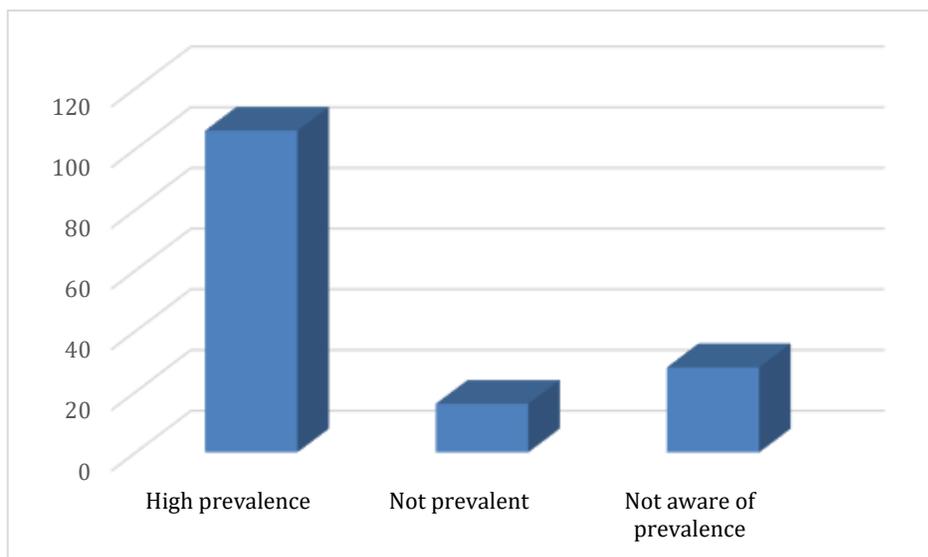
harassment. The women were also asked to report on the frequency of harassment (Chart XVI) to which, 11% stated “very often” and 15% of the women said “on a few occasions.”

Chart XVI
Frequency of Harassment



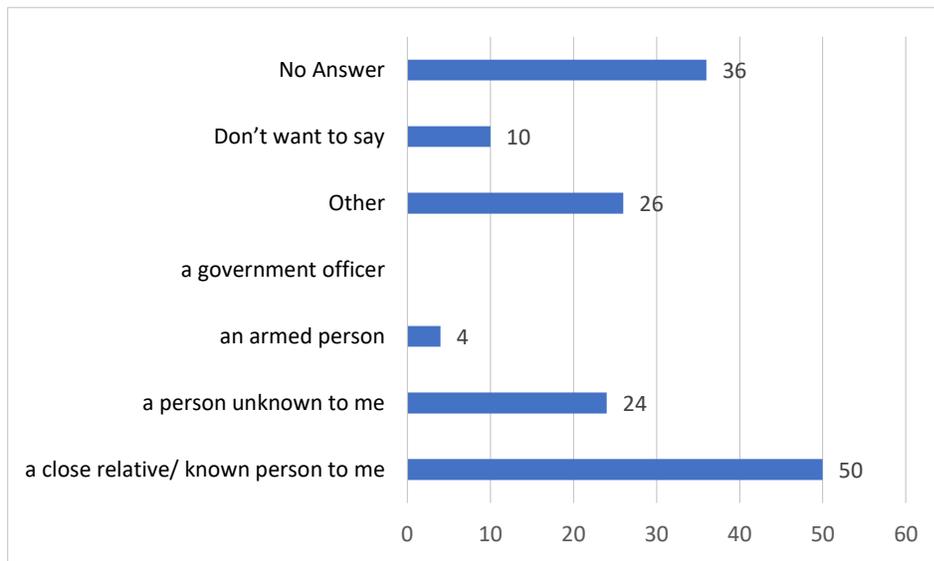
Domestic violence scored high at 106 respondents confirming that domestic violence was prevalent in their communities (Figure IX). And 124 of the 150 respondents stated that domestic violence preventive legislation should be improved in Sri Lanka.

Figure IX
Perspectives of Domestic Violence and Women’s Safety



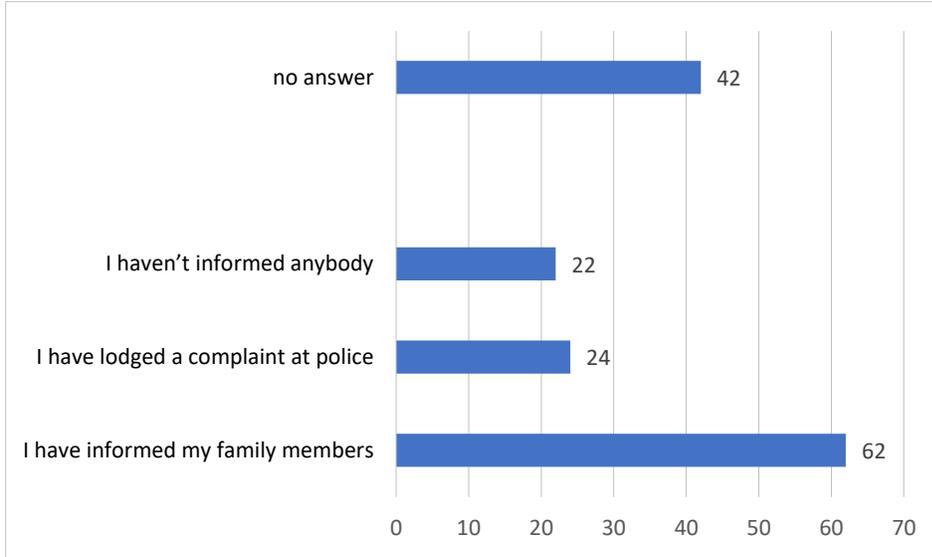
As a follow up to the questions on harassment the women were given the choice to identify “which category” the harasser/s belonged to. It is significant to note that 50 respondents claimed harassment by a “close relative/person known to me.” While 36 respondents did not want to answer this question, 26 respondents stated that the perpetrator was outside of the categories provided in the answers. Therefore, a weakness in the instrument is not requesting respondents to name the perpetrator who may be from a different category to the answers given in the questionnaire.

Figure X
Harassed by?



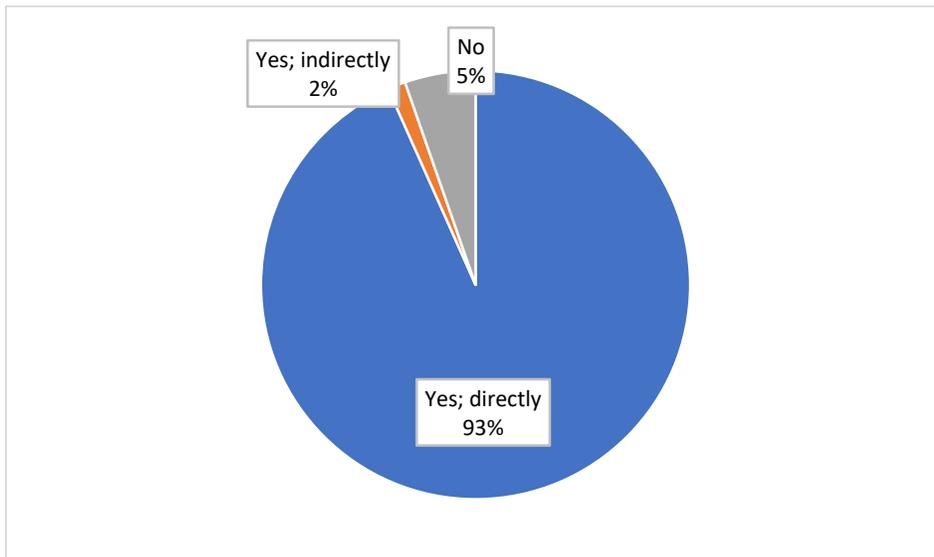
The women who said they experienced harassment were asked to say if they reported the incident; 62 women said they had informed a family member and 24 said they lodged a complaint with the police. Forty-two respondents chose not to answer the question (Figure XI).

Figure XI
Reported the Harassment?



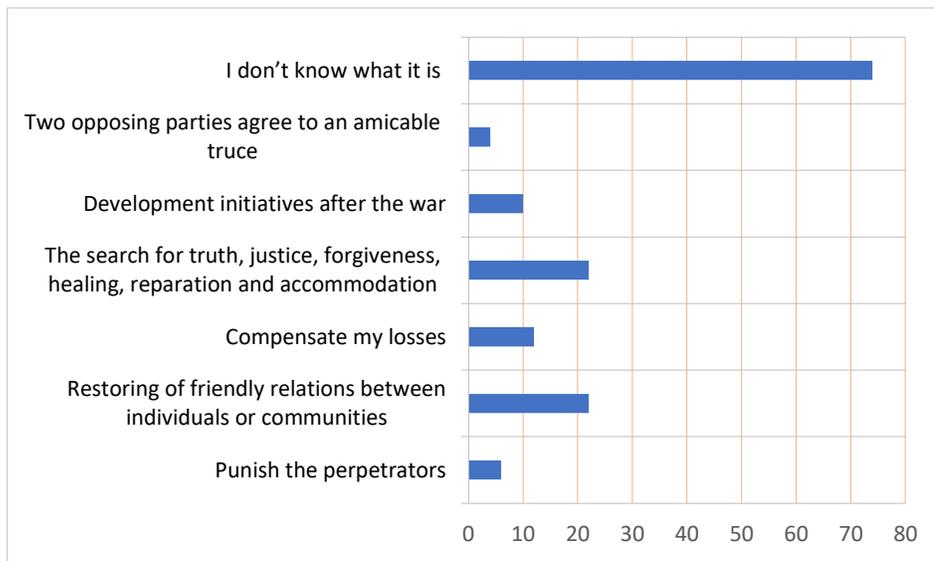
Of the 22 respondents who stated that they “have not informed anybody” about the harassment, 20 said “I was not comfortable” to inform about it, while two stated “I was threatened” and therefore did not inform anyone about the harassment.

Reconciliation
(Chart XVII) Impacted by War?

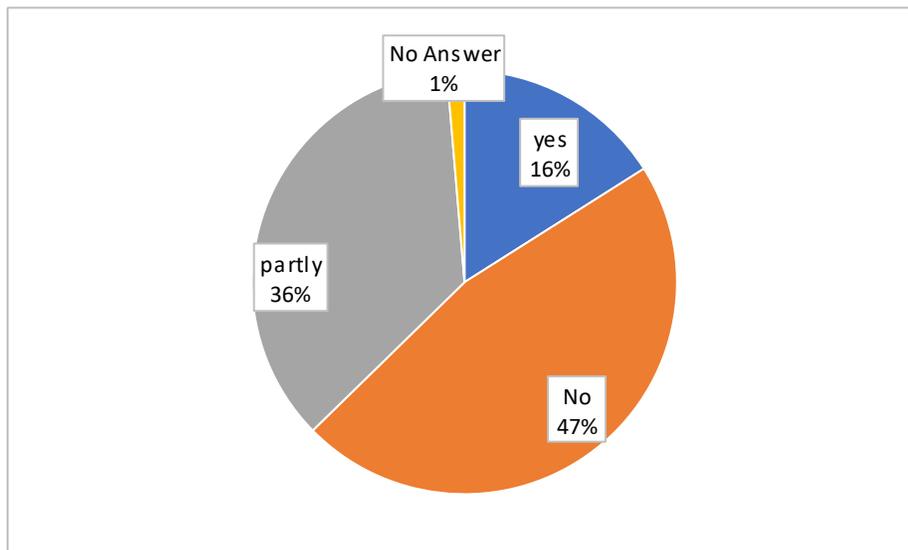


Ninety-three per cent of the respondents confirmed that they have been directly impacted by the war. And 110 respondents affirmed that “it is important to initiate reconciliation processes in Sri Lanka.” Seventy-four of the respondents did not understand what reconciliation means, while 22 stated it is “restoring friendly relations between individuals or communities,” and another 22 stated it is the “search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, reparation” (Figure XII). Forty-seven per cent stated that Sri Lanka has not achieved peace, while 36% opted to answer “partly” (Chart VIII).

Figure XII
What is Reconciliation?



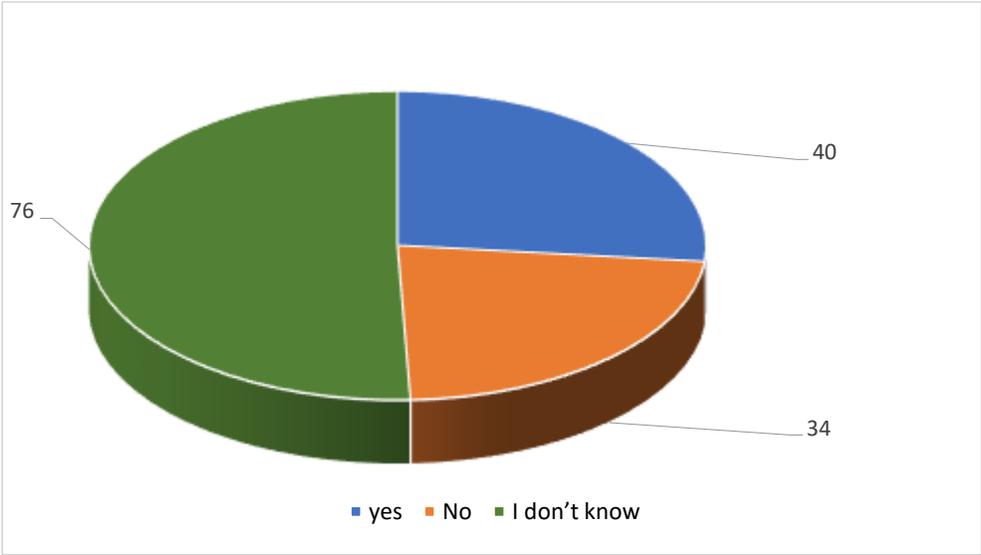
(Chart XVIII) Has Sri Lanka achieved Peace?



Only 46 respondents affirmed that they knew about the LLRC, 84 of the respondents said that it was the responsibility of the government to facilitate a successful reconciliation process, and 24 stated that it was the responsibility of the community. One hundred and twenty-four respondents opined that it was important to include women with disabilities in the reconciliation process. A significant number of 76 respondents stated that they “did not know” if their needs/concern on reconciliation have been taken into consideration by the government. But the survey does not have data to clarify if the 76 respondents were clear about what is meant by reconciliation.

Chart XIX

Has your expectations of Reconciliation and Justice been consulted by Government?



CONCLUSION

The Barrier Assessment presented a useful exercise to understand the lived experiences of women with and without disabilities, from low-income social and economic strata of the two districts of Kilinochchi and Kandy. The data from the exercise has given important insights into the realities of prevailing policies, laws and government-led services for women with and without disabilities and what is experienced in practice on the ground. Despite the limitations in the survey design and reach, the study has also presented an overview on the status of inclusion (or the lack) of women with and without disabilities in post-war Sri Lanka’s reconciliation discourses. The learning from the assessment has been instrumental in defining the project’s intervention strategy and capacity building processes to enable women with and without disabilities at the grassroots to participate in local and regional development efforts and be included in and lead dialogue on reconciliation. Furthermore, the learning from the assessment has also promoted an impetus for project stakeholder civil society organizations to lobby

with district level and national level government stakeholders and policy shapers to revamp and reform prevailing policies, legislation, and practice on women's rights to be inclusive of women with disabilities. In conclusion, it is reiterated that the barrier assessment exercise was an important precursor to determining where the gaps are between policy and practice concerning women and to direct project interventions to remove the identified barriers.