Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict

The role of social protection in state legitimacy in the former conflict areas of Sri Lanka

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About us

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 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 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

CEPA	Centre for Poverty Analysis
DFID	Department of International Development
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EPA	Eastern Provincial Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GN	Grama Niladhari
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
HH	Households
KPI	Key Person Interview
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPC	Northern Provincial Council
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PAMA	Public Assistance Monthly Allowance
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
SSO	Social Services Officer
WDO	Women's Development Officer

Executive summary

Social protection has been linked theoretically with state legitimacy, with much of the literature stating that social welfare programmes can help to strengthen the state's relationship with the polity, promoting long-term state legitimacy (Babajanian 2012). This relationship is particularly significant in post-war contexts, where social protection can contribute to peacebuilding and stability by increasing social cohesion, reducing the need for grievances and preventing social unrest and violence (Babajanian 2012; Carpenter et al. 2012; Wild, Menocal and Mallet 2013).

However, there is little empirical evidence that social protection per se impacts processes of statebuilding and legitimisation. This is because state-society relationships are highly context-specific and determined by broader forces of state building/legitimacy, which may or may not relate to social protection per se.

The potential link between social protection and statebuilding is particularly significant in the Sri Lankan context. Sri Lanka has a long history of social welfare, particularly in health and education, contributing to the country's relatively high ranking in the human development index. However, there is no published evidence linking social welfare programmes to state legitimacy. Consequently the purpose of this study was to explore the state-society nexus through a more grounded account of the relationship between the delivery of social welfare and state building. Taking a bottom-up approach, the study examined men and women's everyday encounters with the state bureaucracy and how these encounters affected their perceptions of the state.

The study focuses on the areas affected by the war where, even during the height of the fighting, the state continued to provide basic services, including health care, education and access to public sector pensions for retired government officials (Ofstad 2002; CEPA 2013). A Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) report shows that people's perceptions of the state varied by ethnicity, geographical location and displacement history (CEPA 2013). Thus, the rationale for the present study emerged from the need to inquire deeper into people's perceptions of the state and how their experiences of accessing and using social protection programmes shaped these perceptions.

This paper is a preliminary discussion of how the transfer of values in delivering/accessing social welfare contributes to men and women's perceptions of the state.

The paper argues that while social protection plays an important role in building state-society relations through the engagement of citizens with state officials, state legitimacy is the effect of a highly complex process. Many factors influence public perception of the state; singling out social protection as a primary means to state legitimacy is problematic, especially as social protection is regarded as a right of citizenship. Thus, perceptions are largely influenced by men and women's expectations and experiences about what the state should deliver and how it delivers.

The first chapter conceptualises statebuilding, state legitimacy, service provision and social protection via global literature on these subjects. This chapter also briefly relates the Sri Lankan history of social welfare. This background context is important to situate Sri Lankan men and women's expectations from the state with regard to the provision of social protection. The chapter then proceeds to an overview of the analytical framework used to investigate the links between the delivery of social protection programmes and state legitimacy. The framework's macro, meso and micro levels of analysis allow for an investigation of the complex, dynamic nature of the concepts and processes, with insight into local programme delivery and how a relationship with the state begins to emerge.

The second chapter briefly lays out the methodology. The study uses qualitative methodologies to draw out the relational aspects of how the state delivers particular social protection programmes and how citizens access those programmes. It focuses on the process and its transfer of values by looking at symbolic indications of men and women's perceptions.

Chapter three reviews the evidence, taking into account geographic, gender, displacement and ethnic variations in people's perceptions of the state as constructed through their access and experiences of social welfare, as well as state officials' accounts of how programmes are delivered.

Chapter four provides a discussion of the key findings and potential contributions to the debate on the link between social protection and statebuilding and legitimisation. It also provides insights on the rights-based approach to social protection provision, articulated clearly by citizens and officials alike, which influences perceptions about the role of and expectations from the state.

The final section concludes that, while social protection programmes are useful to build state-society relations by engagement between citizens and state officials, it is difficult to locate how social protection contributes to greater state legitimacy. Many factors influence public perceptions and notions of 'satisfaction' or 'dissatisfaction' with the state come from a variety of factors, not all related to social protection. However, it is hoped that the insights highlighted in this paper inform policy on social protection programming in Sri Lanka and contribute to the global debate on the connections between social welfare and statebuilding.

1 Discourses on state legitimacy, service delivery and social protection

1.1 Understanding the links: State legitimacy, statebuilding and service delivery

In its broadest form, 'state legitimacy' describes the situation where a state is regarded by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power (Gilley 2006). A state enjoys political legitimacy when the people over whom it exercises authority accept that it has a right to rule. As such, for a state to be considered 'legitimate', there ought to be tacit majority acceptance of its right to rule (Barbara 2008). However, Gilley argues that legitimacy is not static; the more a state's right to political power is acknowledged/affirmed by the polity, the greater the legitimacy enjoyed by the state (Gilley 2006). Legitimacy is therefore seen as an empirical phenomenon dependent on people's perceptions, beliefs and expectations, implying that a state can be considered 'legitimate' if those subject to its authority still consider it so, even when that state falls short of certain normative standards (Norad 2011). Thus, the concept of state legitimacy is inherently complex. It is the link between state and society, the justification of state authority. It is also subject to citizens' expectations and perceptions, which can differ across time and context.

Closely linked to state legitimacy is the concept of statebuilding, the consolidation of relationships between a state and its polity. Positive state-society relations are negotiated through inclusive political processes, constructively engaging citizens with a state that delivers basic goods and services to its people (OECD 2010).[1] This view reflects a broader theme that delivering services is an important expression of state-society relations and plays a major role in enhancing state legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2013). Service delivery as a state function bears a particular value in that it is clearly evident to citizens. There is a visible link between what the state delivers and what citizens receive in terms of increased well-being. Service delivery, therefore, turns a political and sociological lens on state-society relations.

A major proposition in the discussion of how service provision builds state legitimacy is the idea that welfare provision is an important aspect of the social contract (Mcloughlin 2013). The relational aspects of provision and the discursive aspects of how delivery engages citizens and officials significantly influence the relationship between delivery and perceptions of the state(ibid.). Thus performance and legitimacy can be linked by understanding how people's perceptions are shaped by accessing and using state programmes.

'Performance legitimacy', where citizens 'assess' the state's perceived effectiveness in delivering key services, has wide currency in conflict-affected contexts (especially when the state deliberately seeks to build legitimacy

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1   In this regard, output- and performance-based legitimacy refers to the effective and equitable delivery of services (Wild, Menacol and Mallet 2012).

through performance). Once again, a connection can be made between people's beliefs and expectations of the state and its ability to provide goods and services and implement policy (VomHau 2012). So states that can marshal the organisational competence and territorial reach to provide a wide variety of public services may enjoy significant legitimacy among their citizens (Wild, Menocal and Mallet 2013).Thus, programme delivery becomes a source of state legitimacy in demonstrating that the state operates in a fair and accountable manner (Mcloughlin 2013).

Existing evidence about the role of service provision in state formation/legitimisation is delineated in three main categories: (1) programme effects, (2) design and implementation factors, and (3) issues related to political economy and public sector capacity (Babajanian 2012). However, the role service delivery plays in a range of conflict-affected situations has not been systematically put to the test, and there is little empirical evidence on the impact of social protection programmes on state building (Wild, Menocal and Mallet 2013). Consequently Carpenter et al. (2012) emphasise the need to test assumptions that service delivery per se will affect processes of state building and legitimation. Further elaborating this point, Batley and Mcloughlin (2009) highlight the failure of existing studies on social protection and service provision in conflict situations to take into account contextual complexities. This is particularly relevant given that state-society relations are highly variable over time and place (Eldon and Gunby 2007). It is therefore imperative to consider historical relations within the state and its interactions with citizens, in addition to the particular conditions behind coping strategies and governance regimes providing services (Carpenter et al. 2012).

1.2   Service delivery and social protection

Essential to people's wellbeing is the effective delivery of services, such as health, education, water and sanitation, as well as programmes to address the poverty and vulnerability of specific groups: elderly people, disabled people and children. One school of thought is that a state can forge state-society relations, strengthen legitimacy or mend damaged relations by developing its capacity to fulfil 'expected functions', such as the provision of basic services and conditions for economic growth (Teskey et al. 2012: 4).

Although multiple factors can affect state legitimacy, service delivery is perceived to be a central mechanism by which a state and its citizens can interact, giving content to the social contract between them (Rotberg 2004). As the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development states, strengthening the provision of essential services can contribute to long-term statebuilding and restore legitimacy (OECD 2008: 7). From this perspective, delivery of services is more

than meeting basic needs. It is believed to have a transformative capacity on governance outcomes through feedback on legitimacy, accountability, compliance and capacity (Carpenter et al. 2012).

Social protection is one component of the services expected to be delivered by the state.

> # Box 1: Social protection defined:
>
> "Social protection describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups."
>
> (Devereux and colleagues , 2004: 3)

Thus, broadly defined, social protection consists of policies and programmes aimed to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of the poorest by reducing people's exposure to risks and strengthening their ability to withstand shocks, such as the interruption or loss of income (Asian Development Bank 2009).Policies can be either public or private actions aimed to help people deal with risks and vulnerability in the event of crises and changes in circumstances, such as old age, disability and unemployment, which could result in extreme and chronic poverty (Haider 2011). However, such policies, while helping the poorest and most vulnerable to reach an assured basic level of consumption, are not intended to replace family, community- and market-based mechanisms for investing in human capital.

1.3   Types of social protection

Social protection can take many forms, including:

- **Social Assistance:** a cash or in-kind benefit usually financed by the state, provided on the basis of a means or income test (Moser 2001)

- **Social Insurance:** financed by workers' and employers' contributions and based on the insurance principle, aiming to provide protection against life contingencies, such as sickness and old age (Moser 2001)

- **Social Security:** protection established by legislation that ensures the access of individuals and households to health care and guaranteed income security, particularly in old age, sickness and unemployment (ILO 2001)

- **Social Safety Nets:** targeted social assistance conceived as short term, compensatory measures to reduce poverty and protect against income shocks to ensure a minimum level of wellbeing or help households manage risk (Moser 2001)

Safety nets are targeted transfers of cash, vouchers, food or other goods to poor and vulnerable households. They are popular form of social protection used in developing countries to prevent and reduce poverty. A key difference from other forms of social protection is that safety nets are non-contributory and usually part of a broader social protection agenda aimed at addressing risks, vulnerability and social exclusion (Carter 2011). The main objective of safety nets is to help vulnerable households protect themselves against livelihood risks, maintain an adequate level of food consumption and improve food security (Food and Agriculture Organisation 2011). Safety nets do not only protect individuals from transient periods of poverty, such as loss of employment, sudden illness or natural disasters, but from lifetime poverty due to lack of education and poor health, particularly in childhood (World Bank 2003).

Social protection can be delivered through a variety of mechanisms, including pensions, child support, disability and old age allowances, and poverty reduction payments, enabling the poor to access social insurance and assistance (EU 2010).

1.4   State legitimacy, social welfare and social protection in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a long history of providing a wide range of social welfare programmes with the aim of uplifting and improving its citizens' well-being. At the centre of its social welfare programme are the health and education programmes, ensuring universal health and educational opportunities. Sri Lanka is ranked relatively high in the Human Development Index, particularly in respect to health and educational indicators, which are the highest in South Asia. This can be attributed to the country's history of early and high levels of coverage on health and education and for poverty transfers. Poverty transfers began as early as the 1930s, driven by early experiences of democratic politics and the global recession in the mid-1930s. Social assistance for the poor, in the form of cash transfers, was first introduced in 1939, under the Poor Law Relief. In 1940, a food ration system was adopted by the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure a minimum quantity of food to households (ILO 2008). Since independence in 1948, Sri Lanka has pursued policies and programmes to ensure equity over the longer term. According to Gunetilleke (2005), the social welfare programmes pursued by successive governments were the axis of the development process. Thus, universal access to healthcare and free education from primary school through university is available to all Sri Lankans. Despite changes in government, the state commitment to social welfare became an implicit contract between the state and its citizens. This commitment to equity and social welfare continued during two violent insurrections in the south in 1971 and 1987/1988. During the war in the north and east, the government continued to finance and maintain social infrastructure, such as the provision of health and education, as well as 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 family, the extended family and the community played key roles in providing for social protection needs. These traditions have continued in an informal manner, though with changes in form and coverage over the years. These informal mechanisms were 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, were modelled 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.

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, such as the poorest, the elderly and the disabled, and a social insurance pension scheme for the retired. Similarly successive governments 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.

1.5   Social protection programmes in Sri Lanka

The largest social protection programmes, in terms of public spending and geographical coverage, are poverty reduction programmes, such as Samurdhi and Divi Neguma, pension schemes and provisions for categories of vulnerable people such as the elderly, the disabled, women and children. In line with the definition of social protection provided above, Sri Lanka's social protection landscape falls broadly into three categories: social insurance, social assistance and social safety net

1.6   State legitimacy, social welfare and social protection in Sri Lanka

The main state-sponsored programme under this category is the Public Servants Pension Scheme (PSPS).Introduced in 1901, the PSPS is the oldest scheme in Sri Lanka. It functions as a mandatory pension scheme financed by the government and covers permanent public sector employees, including civil servants, the armed forces, provincial and local government employees, government teachers and judicial officers. Entitlement to an old age pension arises after 10 years of service in a permanent post. The pension is payable from age 55 (men) or age 50 (women). The PSPS is a defined benefit scheme, where the monthly benefit is determined as a percentage of the salary in proportion to the number of years of membership. The formula itself has been adjusted in the past on a somewhat ad hoc basis. In addition to the monthly pension, a lump sum corresponding to two years of the last drawn salary is paid at the time of retirement. Beneficiaries are also entitled to cost-of-living adjustments and special allowances, which are also calculated on an ad hoc basis (Cheolsu and Gautam2011).

In 1987, the Farmers' Pension and Social Security Benefit Scheme was introduced. This scheme provides a monthly pension from age 60 until the time of death. The Fishermen's Pension and Social Security Benefit Scheme, similarly to the farmers' scheme, was introduced in 1990.

1.7   Social assistance

A number of programmes for vulnerable groups fall under this category, including old age assistance, disability assistance, child support and assistance for women and the very poor.

1.7.1   Policies and programmes for the elderly

Welfare programmes for the elderly are geared towards protecting the rights of elderly people. To address the challenges posed by a rapidly ageing population, the Ministry of Social Services has introduced several measures, including enacting legislation to protect the rights of elders, establishing a separate secretariat for elders and implementing a range of programmes to improve the living conditions of elders. The Protection of the Rights of Elders Act provides for the general, social and financial security of older people of both genders, covering a cash allowance of Rs.1,000 per month, access to social assistance through established day centres, grants for income-generating activities and a legal mechanism for neglected parents to receive maintenance from their children. Additionally, glasses and hearing aids are provided, and medical clinics targeting elders are made available by the National Secretariat for Elders.

1.7.2   Policies and programmes for people with disabilities

The National Policy on Disability provides a comprehensive framework encompassing education, employment, health, housing, social security, transport and sport for people living with disabilities, including children, youth, women, elderly persons, persons affected by armed conflict and individuals who have a severe disability. Under this policy, social protection mechanisms, including pensions and insurance schemes available to citizens of Sri Lanka, are available to individuals who have a disability on an equitable basis. In instances where the disability is too severe for individuals to be economically

1.7.3   Social assistance programmes for the very poor and households headed by women

The Public Assistance Monthly Allowance e (PAMA) is the oldest financial assistance scheme managed by provincial social service departments in Sri Lanka catering to those living in extreme poverty. The majority of recipients are older persons or single-headed households without an income; many are women. The monthly payments range from Rs.250 to Rs.500, depending on the number of people in the family (Ministries of Social Services 2013).

1.7.4   Social assistance programmes for children

Welfare services provided to children include measures to improve school attendance, school retention and the nutritional status of children. Provision of free school textbooks, uniforms, meals and subsidised transport facilities, as well as programmes to ensure equal opportunities, such as scholarships, student assistance and special assistance, are implemented for poor children. The Ministry of Education, in addition to providing educational facilities, also provides several welfare services, including the Grade 5 Scholarship programme, the school textbooks programme and the school uniform material programme. The school meal programme provides students with a mid-day meal to improve the nutritional levels of poor children in selected rural schools, many of which are in Northern Province. A specially fortified corn-soya blend is distributed to pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five years to decrease nutrition deficiencies. These Thriposha packs are distributed once a month to the most vulnerable segments of the population

The Department of Probation and Child Care Services provides educational aid to children not attending school due to economic difficulties and to children attending school irregularly. Children who have lost both parents and those from poor families who are beneficiaries of the Samurdhi programme are entitled to a one time grant of Rs.1,500 worth of school materials under this programme.

1.8   Social safety nets

The Samurdhi programme, implemented since 1994, is the main safety net programme in Sri Lanka. The programme has under gone considerable change during the past few years and is now mainly structured as two components: the relief programme and the empowerment programme. The relief component encompasses the cash-transfer programme, social security fund and nutrition programme. The empowerment component consists of five initiatives: rural infrastructure, livelihood, social development, the Samurdhi housing programme and microfinance through Samurdhi Bank societies. The relief component provides consumption support and social insurance for households below a certain level of income. While the welfare grant provides immediate relief, the insurance scheme has a longer term objective of poverty alleviation as it aims at reducing the vulnerability of the poor in the face of life contingencies such as death, birth, marriage or sickness in the family. Beneficiaries are entitled to a lump sum upon the occurrence of one of the contingencies, varying according to the contingency. Some of these payments indirectly target women

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through lump sum payments for the marriage of a child (Rs.1,000) and for the birth of the first or second child (Rs.2, 000) (ILO 2008).

Founded on participatory development principles, the programme aims to increase opportunities for income enhancement and employment, provide vulnerable and disadvantaged groups access to participate in development processes, assist the poor to develop skills and asset bases through productive employment, and create and maintain rural infrastructure for developing additional wage employment opportunities (World Food Program 2009).

The Samurdhi programme reaches approximately 1.2 million households and is intended to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households (Food and Agriculture Organisation 2011). Benefits of the programme depend on the size of the household, and it is estimated the programme guarantees those in extreme poverty at least 10 percent of their food requirements (Food and Agriculture Organisation 2011). However, the programme does not have consistent entry or exit mechanisms. The entitlement to various other benefits associated with being a Samurdhi member has made it difficult to improve targeting effectiveness. There are programme criteria for benefits entitlement (consisting mainly of a means test conducted by officers at the local level), but clear methods and guidelines on how to assess whether these criteria are fulfilled in practice are lacking. Political and ethnic considerations have also played roles in

the identification of beneficiaries. These contribute to the often-discretionary character of the process. Mistakes in targeting are therefore frequent, with the consequence that some people who do not need the benefit receive it, while a high proportion of the poorest people remain under covered (ILO 2008). The programme has been criticised for deficient targeting, but the recent adoption of a participatory approach in the selection process and mechanisms to ensure transparency are steps in the right direction. In this approach, indicators and selection criteria are provided to the households. The households then rank themselves as destitute, chronically poor, poor, medium in come or non-poor at a public meeting where the households are familiar with the asset ownership of their neighbours. The Samurdhi programme is provided to those self-identified as poor or chronically poor.

Divi Neguma is the newest poverty reduction programme, coming into effect in January 2013.The programme is based on the principles of social equity and national development, targeting positive changes in the living conditions of people, especially low-income groups, to enable the fair distribution of the benefits of development and ensure the participation of low-income groups in the development process (Divi Neguma Act 2013). The programme has a strong focus on livelihood development supported by micro finance and identifies livelihood development initiatives at the individual, family and community levels as the route to poverty alleviation. Access to finance, skills training, marketing networks, infrastructure and social security are some key elements identified to support livelihood development activities.

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 is that they are attentive to people's needs, responding to calls for improvement in well-being. Stemming from this social contract, a relationship structure of rights and responsibilities emerges with well-defined state obligations and responsibilities to improve the well-being of its people. People's expectations of the state were framed by this relationship, with the state cast as 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).

2 Analytical framework

The framework used in the study derives from the 2012 ODI paper State legitimacy through service delivery? Towards an analytical framework.' It acknowledges complex, non-linear and multidimensional processes of state building, which revolve around three key elements: capacity, authority and legitimacy (Carpenter et al 2012). Moreover, the framework recognises that investigating the links between programme delivery and state legitimacy is methodologically difficult when dealing with complex concepts and processes that are intrinsically dynamic (Carpenter et al 2012). A causal relationship begins from the point at which a relationship starts to emerge – a particularly useful approach in the context of post conflict state-society relations. Programme delivery is situated within a multi-layered framework, taking into account variations in contextual factors. This framework is useful for looking at variations across and within programmes, groups and geographies.

■ **Macro-level analysis** is the starting point of the framework, examining the broader socio-political landscape of programme delivery, focusing on the historical state-society relationships, contextual factors, processes and phenomena that can influence state legitimacy. This level of analysis helps situate the legitimating role that programme delivery might play in relation to other drivers of statebuilding and legitimacy. The analysis is useful for examining state-society relations in the north and east through the lens of historical contexts, systemic features and issues of dominance and exclusion in how programmes have been delivered, how they have changed over time and the implications of these changes in the current context. In particular, the analysis looks at the three core elements of authority, capacity and legitimacy, which help to contextualise the legitimating role that programme delivery plays in relation to other important drivers of statebuilding and legitimacy.

■ **Meso-level analysis** takes into account contextual factors, specifically the political function of programme delivery, recognising that this is a process bound by ideological beliefs, norms and values structuring socio-political processes. As Pouligny states, these processes are a vehicle for the emergence of the 'intangible dimensions' of state formation (Pouligny 2010: 15). Drawing on the work of Van de Walle and Scott, this level of analysis is framed around three interlinked elements: penetration, standardisation and accommodation, allowing for analysis of the different programmes delivered and the socio-political and ideological underpinnings of delivery (Van de Walle and Scott2011):

- **Penetration** refers to the process of establishing the presence and visibility y of the state in delivering programmes. The central message is that the state becomes visible to citizens by providing services; a direct line to the government is built through tangible, regular daily interaction.

- **Standardisation** refers to a process of homogenisation and the existence of standard administrative procedures for all citizens.

- **Accommodation** looks at the provision of services as an instrument for settling disputes and for creating political loyalty. As such, accommodation is a process that contributes towards the formation and shaping of a political settlement.

- **Micro-level analysis** investigates local experiences of programme delivery and how it shapes people's perceptions of the state. Drawing from the work of Kooy and Wild (Kooy and Wild 2012; Wild and Mason 2012), four key dimensions capture how access and delivery occur: visibility, politicisation, accountability and participation.

- **The visibility** of the state in providing programmes is likely to affect how citizens perceive and attribute benefits of programmes. It is influenced by how programmes are delivered and to whom, as well by the provision of programmes by non-state actors.

- **Politicisation:** When the state provides services that are not accountable and fair, perceptions of trust and legitimacy are likely to be affected. Therefore, possible exclusions and discrimination that affect state capacity to deliver programmes must be examined.

- **Accountability:** An analysis is necessary of accountability relationships: who is seen to be accountable and does 'who is seen to be accountable' change?

- **Participation:** Capacities for local-level collective action and collaboration between and within different groups and communities, as well as links with issues of inclusion and accountability, must be explored.

The analysis framework is used to examine different dimensions in the process, the how of provision, and some of the mechanisms through which the experience of programme delivery affects perceptions about the state.

2.1   Rationale for the study

The rationale for conducting this study was largely influenced by a 2012 quantitative study by CEPA that provided preliminary insights on peoples' perception of the state. This study was undertaken as part of the SLRC, to collect the first round of a panel survey to generate data on livelihoods; access to and experience of basic services (including social protection); exposure to shocks and coping strategies; and people's perceptions of governance. Among other strands, this survey explored state legitimacy by analysing people's perceptions of governance in the former conflict areas. The survey assessed household characteristics, context and shocks, by focusing on access to services (including social protection), experience of using services and perceptions about implementation and performance in delivering these services. The aim of the quantitative analysis of the survey data was to make a preliminary assessment of whether and how these factors affect perceptions of governance.

Survey findings indicated that a majority of the Samurdhi recipients (81.6 per cent) were from the Trincomalee District, making up 48 per cent of the total sampled households in the district. Sinhala households made up the largest percentage of Samurdhi recipients, with 55.7 per cent of the Sinhala community, 33 per cent of Tamils and 22 per cent of Moors (Muslims) receiving Samurdhi. With regard to pensions, the majority (66.1 per cent) of households where at least one member received the old age pension were in Jaffna District. However, unlike for Samurdhi, a large majority (91.5 per cent) were Tamil. The majority of recipients of the disability allowance were Tamil in Jaffna District. The survey also indicated that positive perceptions of governance issues were linked with satisfaction with services provided (CEPA 2012).

The previous study thus provided preliminary insights on how perceptions of the state are framed through access to and experiences of service delivery. The country context in Sri Lanka and these preliminary insights provided a space to explore the link between social protection programme delivery and state legitimacy in a post-war context and, therefore, an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base on this link.

As highlighted by the previous study, ethnicity and geographical locations are the two most important variables from a Sri Lankan country context for exploring the social protection–state legitimacy nexus. As such, much of the data analysis focused on these two variables.

2.2   Research hypothesis and questions

As indicated previously, the link between social protection and state legitimacy is particularly significant in the Sri Lankan context. The study aimed to explore this link by looking more deeply into variation according to characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location and displacement history, and how these shape peoples' perceptions of the state.

The study hypothesises that state delivery of social protection programmes contributes to state legitimacy in the aftermath of protracted conflict. It engages with this hypothesis by exploring the link through the following research questions.

■   How are programmes delivered and accessed?

■   How do every day experiences of using services/programmes shape people's perceptions of the state?

2.3   Research objectives and methodology

The objective of this study was to explore how particular social protection programmes are delivered and how lived experiences of accessing and using or benefitting from these programmes shape public perceptions of the state. It is hoped that understanding the processes of how the state delivers and people access/use those programmes and services will provide a more grounded understanding of state-society relations in the formerly war-affected areas.

The study was conceptualised as a preliminary exploratory study and is by no means a comprehensive evidence base for establishing the causal links between social protection programme delivery and state legitimacy.

2.4   Sample, tools and data collection

As was introduced above, this study builds on a quantitative study done in 2012, selecting issues of particular interest for further in-depth analysis. Existing research on the role of service provision in (re)building state legitimacy is limited in many ways. The literature indicates that correlational analysis in quantitative research has not been able to identify the causal processes through which service delivery affects citizens' perceptions of the state (Mcloughlin 2013). For this reason, qualitative research tools were employed in the present study, using methods such as open-ended questionnaires to ascertain peoples' expectations and perceptions of the state through the lens of social protection programme experience. Key person interviews (KPI) were also conducted with officials implementing programmes at the provincial, divisional and village levels to crosscheck the data obtained from households.

The line of inquiry in this study engages with the concept of state building from the perspective of performance legitimacy, as described in the previous chapter. It will therefore investigate how the state delivers social protection programmes and how citizens' perceptions of the state are shaped through the access, use and effects of these programmes.

For consistency in geographical area and populations surveyed, the fishing communities from the village-level administrative units in the 2012 pilot survey were also selected for this study. The study population for primary data collection was from 12 village-level administrative units in the three districts of Trincomalee, Jaffna and Mannar. The districts comprise two from Northern Province (Jaffna and Mannar) and one from Eastern Province (Trincomalee), all of which were affected by the war. However, the three districts provide considerable variation in terms of ethnic composition, history of using social protection programmes and duration under rebel control. All of these provide a rich source of data to better understand the nuances in the links between programme delivery and state legitimacy.

The sample was chosen from two Divisional Secretariats(DS) in each district, further broken down to village-level administrative units of two Grama Niladhari Divisions (GND) within each Divisional Secretariat. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of sampling units per district area.

Table 1: Geographic/demographic selection for this study

District	DS	GN
Trincomalee	Trinco Town and Gravets	Abeypura
	Kuchchaveli	Murugapuri
		Pulmudai
		Veloor
Jaffna	Telipallai	Illawalai North West
		Mallakam Central
	Vadamarachchi East	Champiyanpattu North
		Maruthenkerny
Mannar	Musali	Aripu West
		Karandikuli
		Paliyarru
	Manthai West	Vidalathivu West

As the study was conceptualised as an exploratory study, qualitative tools were used to obtain a rich source of data to gain preliminary understanding of how programmes are delivered, accessed and used, and how these everyday encounters with the state machinery shape public perceptions of the state. The first stage of the project included a literature review to understand the current state of knowledge on the concepts of state-society relations, state building and legitimacy, as well as social welfare provision and social protection programmes and delivery in the Sri Lankan context. The literature review was followed by primary data collection using two tools: interviews at household level with recipients and non-recipients of programmes and key person interviews with officials at the provincial, divisional and GN levels to get a more grounded account of delivery, access and experience of programmes.

From each GN division, approximately five households were selected, and one person was interviewed in each selected household. Approximately twenty individuals from each district, 62 people in total from the three districts, were interviewed. Individuals were purposively selected, taking into account gender and ethnicity. While three-fourths of the sample was selected on the basis of being beneficiaries of one or more state programmes, one-fourth was purposely selected for being 'eligible' for but currently not receiving any state benefits. A slightly higher number of women than men were in the sample reflecting the demographic structure of the districts of the study.

Table 2: Sample by district/ethnicity/gender

District	Ethnicity			Gender	
	Sinhala	Tamil	Muslim	Male	Female
Trincomalee	5	10	5	10	10
Jaffna	-	20	-	10	10
Mannar	-	15	7	10	12

The interview tool was a primarily an open ended interview designed to obtain micro-level data as defined in the analytical framework. The tool comprised closed-ended(quantitative) questions to collect generic individual and household data and open-ended questions to probe people's expectations of the state, access and experiences in using programmes and perceptions shaped by these experiences. The open-ended questions focused on probing symbolic values such visibility, politicisation, accountability and participation conveyed through experiences of accessing and using programmes. Questions were also asked about access to non-state programmes and informal network contributions such as family and community.

To validate and triangulate the data obtained at the household level, key person interviews were conducted with DS-level subject officers implementing programmes in pensions, Samurdhi, child assistance and social services. Covered programmes included those for the elderly and the disabled. A few KPIs were also conducted with officers in charge of women's development. The tool used for the KPI was an open-ended interview guide to probe the meso level of the analytical framework. Questions were framed around how programmes are delivered, specifically to understand processes associated with penetration, standardisation and accommodation in the delivery of programmes.

KPIs were also conducted with officials of the Eastern and Northern Provincial Councils working in the subject areas of social services, pensions and child assistance, to gain understanding of how the state machinery worked when key functions overlapped at the provincial (decentralised) and divisional (central) levels. In total, 27 KPIs were conducted as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of Key Person Interviews

District	Provincial Council	DS Office	GNs	TOTAL
Trincomalee	3	7	1	11
Jaffna	2	6	-	8
Mannar	-	7	1	8

2.5   Rationale of programme selection

Given that Sri Lanka has a wide range of social protection programmes, this study investigated a selection of these to provide deeper insights on specific programmes. Programmes were selected on the basis of size(largest) in terms of public spending and coverage (e.g. Samurdhi, Divi Neguma and pensions) and focus on vulnerable groups that are significant and relevant in the post-war context(the aged, women headed households, the disabled and children).

2.6   Operationalising the analytical framework

Given the complexities of making a causal link between the provision of social protection programmes and state building, the analytical framework provided by ODI was used to explore whether and under what conditions state-society relationships were emerging and to highlight any patterns in the links between service delivery and state building, taking into account variables such as gender, ethnicity and geographic location.

The analysis provided in this paper focuses primarily on the meso and micro levels. The scope of the study did not allow sufficient time to undertake a macro-level analysis of the wider drivers of state legitimacy in the Sri Lankan context. If feasible, a macro-level analysis could be done at a later stage of the larger project.

Analysis of the primary data collected from the meso and micro levels was undertaken using the software package NVivo. First, the data were coded into categories as set out in the three layers of the analytical framework. The household-level data were further classified as 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' based on a specific question asked of respondents in relation to how they perceived the state. Through this analysis, it was possible to determine that the satisfaction with the state expressed by some respondents was due to 'other' factors that may not be related to the programme experience itself. Likewise, those respondents who said they were 'dissatisfied' with the state indicated that their dissatisfaction was due to 'other' factors ostensibly unrelated to programme experience. This line of inquiry enabled the researcher to identify some factors that influenced peoples' perceptions of the state, which may not be related to programme experiences alone.

However, the drawback of using the framework was that the analysis was in some ways circular. While analysing data in line with values such as 'penetration' or 'visibility', it was clearly possible to conclude that the state was visible as a provider of programmes and that the state was seen and therefore 'legitimate'. However, it was not always possible to make such assumptions in relation to other values. This was particularly evident in the analysis of 'politicisation', where the responses varied considerably when programme variation was taken into account.

2.7   Limitations and delimitations

Historical 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. However, 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 expectations can vary between and within regions and groups depending on the starting points and trajectories of state building in a particular conflict-affected context. Further, the relationship between expectation and delivery is dynamic and fluid, indicating that it can change over time (Mcloughlin 2013).Thus, the connection between social protection programming and state legitimacy is inherently complex; multiple factors can influence the potential linkages between the two concepts. The selected line of inquiry focused not so much on what the state delivers (outcomes) but how it delivers, thereby affording the opportunity to inquire into symbolic representations of the state conveyed to citizens through programme delivery.

3   The Findings

As indicated previously, data collection primarily focused on a few programmes selected due to their size in terms of government spending and national coverage. As such, the study focused primarily on Samurdhi and the state pension scheme, but others covered were disability and old age allowance, PAMA (which targeted very poor individuals who were mostly women) and benefits for other vulnerable groups, such as widows and children.

To gauge perceptions of the programmes, the study used the analytical framework described above under the criteria of visibility and penetration, politicisation, standardisation and accountability.

3.1   People's perceptions of state social protection programmes

This section will discuss people's experiences of state social protection programmes to understand the nuances that shape people's perceptions of the state through programme experiences.

3.1.1   Visibility and penetration of state programmes

State visibility in providing social protection programmes, such as Samurdhi, PAMA, pensions and allowances for the disabled and elderly, was very high in all three districts. However, visibility of the newest programme, Divi Neguma, was low in Mannar District. In Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts, the Samurdhi officers and Grama Niladhari officers were active in visiting households to inform and select beneficiaries for Divi Neguma.

In all three locations and across all ethnicities, the GN was seen as the primary provider of information about state programmes. Respondents in all of the surveyed locations indicated that the local GN visited and inquired about household needs regularly and informed householders about the programme options that they were eligible for, after which the GN would help with filling the required documentation and submitting it to the relevant local authority for approval. Single women, particularly from Tamil and Muslim households in Jaffna and Mannar relied on the GN as a source of information on available programmes. It was also the GN they looked to for assistance when they had a problem with the programme.

In instances where the state was not providing the required benefits, the GN directed the householder to relevant non-state programmes. This was indicated particularly in relation to child support in the form of stationery and cash handouts linked to school attendance provided by a few nongovernmental authorities in Jaffna and Mannar Districts. However, it is important to note that the visibility of non-state actors as providers of social protection programmes was lower than that of the state.

Reliance on the GN as the provider of awareness of state programmes was highest in Mannar District as indicated by an elderly Tamil male from Arippu:

> *"I was selected by our GN, and he informed me about that. I got to know about this through our GN. Before we got to know about this we had not heard of this kind of social protection activity".*

In Mannar District, the mosque also played a role in creating awareness of state-provided programmes. However, there was no evidence to suggest that women benefitted equally with men from the role the mosque played in being a provider of information.

In Trincomalee District, other government officials, such as the Samurdhi officer, were also active in visiting households and selecting beneficiaries. This view was expressed by all three communities interviewed in Trincomalee. Trincomalee District also showed a greater level of awareness of the different programmes implemented by the government than the other two districts.

Due to the longer period of being within a 'government controlled' area, communities in Trincomalee and Jaffna Districts have enjoyed benefits from Samurdhi longer than those in Mannar. Beneficiaries in all three locations indicated that they were able to access pension payments even during the war. As such, penetration of pensions was high in all locations and among all ethnic and gender groups.

As Mannar District was the last to come out of the war, of the districts studied, Samurdhi benefits are still being rolled out there. At the time of fieldwork in November 2013, benefits were largely in the form of cash payments with a few Samurdhi loan disbursements visible. With reference to other programmes, penetration varied depending on the programme. At the village level, social services, child rights and women's development officers from the Divisional Secretariat[2] were working closely with village-level GNs to create awareness of the rights and entitlements for single-headed households, women, the elderly, the disabled and vulnerable children. An interview with a provincial-level official responsible for child protection issues stated that the number of recorded cases of child abuse had increased significantly over the last few years with a sharp increase in the number of affected male children. [3]

To triangulate respondents' views on the visibility of the state as a provider of programmes, interviews were conducted with state officials at provincial, divisional and GN levels. These officials believed that in issues of child welfare and protection, penetration was still limited to urban areas, with reduced penetration in rural areas where the real issues existed due to human and financial resource constraints. Officials across the three levels of the administrative service strongly believed that they were duty-bound to improve the welfare of the people. Values underpinning the delivery of programmes centred on the belief that people need help and support and that it is the duty of government officials to provide information and the services required, as expressed by this Samurdhi officer from Vadamarachchi East:

> *"I have been doing some useful activities for my villagers. Our people are so innocent. They are not aware about their rights and all, so I am doing some activities beyond my responsibility, such as educating and advising the people about Samurdhi".*

Thus, penetration of programmes where the state was visible as a provider of programmes, such as pensions and Samurdhi, was high. This aligns with people's perceptions on the visibility of the state as provider of programmes.

3.1.2 Politicisation

The literature indicates that the Samurdhi programme is politically contentious with allegations of corruption, selection biases, politicisation and inefficiency (ILO 2008). Data from the present study supports these allegations. While the programme is highly visible and has penetrated to all of the surveyed villages, as indicated by the fact that all of the respondents had heard of the programme either through their GN or through the local Samurdhi officer based in the DS office, many implementational issues were noted. One frequently highlighted issue was that of favouritism and bias in beneficiary selection.

Issues of discrimination and favouritism in selection of beneficiaries for Samurdhi were cited by respondents in all three locations. In Jaffna District, people were of the view that the issue affected the selection of beneficiaries for the Samurdhi loan programme: personal preferences and who is known to whom skewed who received benefits, particularly at the village level. Thus perceptions were that if you knew the GN or you were 'posh', you were more likely

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2 District sub-administrative unit
3 KPI Child Welfare Division, Northern Provincial Council (NPC)

to get benefits. These views were expressed by male and female respondents alike as illustrated by a Tamil female respondent from Champiyan Pattu:

Those who receive this Samurdhi can get loans. Some needy people are facing inequality in getting loans. Loans are given to those who don't need this. Even though those who are needy ask for the Samurdhi, they are not given. Samurdhi is given to particular people. Those who don't need Samurdhi also receive it.

Further, female-headed households stated that they faced discrimination when they applied for Samurdhi loans to buy fishing equipment:

> *"There was equipment provided for fishermen but it was not provided for us, because we are women. And some assistance is rejected to us because we are woman-headed families." (Tamil, female, Illawalai)*

The issues that women face in accessing livelihood support, as the example above indicates, suggest that in Jaffna some livelihoods, such as fisheries, are still considered a man's domain. The fact that household demographic structures have changed as a consequence of the war, and that women enjoyed greater freedom in the exercise of choice during the time of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), has still not penetrated sufficiently into the way public programmes were being delivered in Jaffna.

The greatest variation in receiving Samurdhi benefits were observed in Trincomalee District. Sinhala people had mixed reactions about the way the programme was delivered. While some stated that beneficiary selection, registration and services were provided without bias or favouritism, others stated the opposite. However, many who said bias existed in the selection process were peoplewho had applied but had not received benefits. Issues of favouritism were also stated by some Tamil respondents in Trincomalee District. A close look at the data set revealed that many of these claims were from the predominantly Muslim Grama GN which had a Muslim GN. It is thus not clear whether the perceptions of discrimination and favouritism levelled against this government official were real or perceived and whether they were ethnic or gender based as suggested in the quote below.

> *"They treat unequally. It happens always. For example, my daughter is a widow and has a child. So she applied for the Samurdhi. She did not get it but 2, 3 other people who applied with my daughter got Samurdhi. So they favour their people, and their relatives".(Tamil, Female, Murugapuri)*

This was substantiated in an interview with a state official:

> *"Yes, political intervention and other interventions are high when we carry out our work. . . . I want to say this: in my 20 years of GS service all are upside-down. Administration and political interventions are mixed, and until they are separate we can't seek efficient service delivery and real improvement". (GN Velur, Trincomalee District)*

Across all locations and within Muslim and Tamil ethnic groups in particular, perceptions of discrimination and favouritism were cited by households that had applied but had not received Samurdhi benefits. These households had not formally been told if their applications were turned down or not, and most, if not all, still lived in hope that they would receive benefits. A higher number of women stated they had applied but not received benefits. Whether this was due to demographic changes where disproportionately more women had applied for benefits or if it was due to gender-based discrimination is not clear. Thus procedural transparency in both beneficiary selection and exit criteria for Samurdhi applicants and recipients including those who had applied for and not obtained or had their benefits stopped was lacking.

Of all the state-sponsored programmes, pensions attracted the fewest perceptions of politicisation. Evidence of gender bias was not found in the pension programme either. Just as women were receiving the pension of their dead husband, the study also noted instances where husbands were receiving the pension of their dead wife. The lack of evidence on the politicisation in the pension programme could be attributed to the fact that it is clearly structured and transparent and all households receiving pensions were aware of the procedures for obtaining and collecting receipts as well as beneficiary entitlements with little if any space for issues of favouritism and discrimination to arise.

With regard to 'other' programmes, the issue of politicisation is articulated in these respondents' words:

> *"We could not say our services are 100per cent successful in delivery; there are interferences by some political heads and officers". (Social Services Officer, Trincomalee Town DS Office)*

Sometimes the GN certifies the beneficiary's monthly income as Rs.3,000, when it is Rs.10,000. So in these cases, I am unable to take actions due to political influences. (Social Services Officer, Musali)

3.1.3   Standardisation

To understand whether standard administrative procedures existed for all citizens, the study inquired if standardised sets of practices and images were applied throughout all territories and if there was homogeneity in terms of location, ethnicity and gender.

In the Samurdhi programme, the Samurdhi officer operating out of the DS office is the main state official responsible for coordinating activities under the programme. This official works in close coordination with the village GNs, local Samurdhi groups and the Samurdhi bank managers to ensure the implementation of the programme. On a weekly basis she/he conducts field visits to the GNs and works closely with the GNs in rolling out the programme, as an respondent in the DS office, Trincomalee Town, explained:

> *"A Samurdhi development officer is in charge of each division. Every Monday he comes to DS office and every Thursday he goes to Samurdhi bank. He maintains a good relationship with Samurdhi groups; to find the suitable people, there is an interview board. It consists of field officers and Samurdhi development officers and administrative teams".*

However, the data does not reveal that a standardised process was being implemented in any of the districts in the selection of beneficiaries. In some locations (for example, Musali) the Samurdhi officer stated that beneficiary selection was done by the GN, while in the same district (Mannar) in Manthai West, selection was claimed to be handled by both the GN and DS. This quote illustrates the view of a local official:

> *"We don't know much about Samurdhi. Samurdhi officers come and discuss with us but we don't know much. It gives stamps of different values, Rs.100 compulsory saving and other subscriptions. Ultimately they get very little. I heard some receive more than Rs.1,000 stamps, whether it is true or not, I don't know". (GN Velur, Trincomalee District)*

Decisions about who is entitled to Samurdhi loans are taken by the Samurdhi bank manager who also has the power to stop credit lines if she/he is of the opinion that the funds are 'misused'. As indicated previously, a female-headed householder stated that her request for a Samurdhi loan to purchase fishing equipment was not approved. It was not evident that this decision was the result of the programme design. It is however, more likely an indication that gender discriminatory practices may still exist in officials.

The number of beneficiaries per DS division also varies depending on the poverty level and on resources allocated by the government. Consequently, GN divisions with a substantially high number of households that might be eligible were not getting benefits due to resource constraints.

To overcome the issue of resource constraints, in Jaffna (Vadamarachchi East) the Samurdhi officer was linking poor households with Non Governmental Organisations . In another DS division, Tellipalai, the officer was prioritising individuals for benefits taking into account factors such as a household being headed by a single woman. However, this process was ad hoc and was not driven by clearly laid out procedures. To illustrate this point, in Mannar, if the Samurdhi allocation was full in the GN division, recipient names were included on lists of other GN divisions which still had unallocated slots. This resulted in beneficiaries travelling long distances, at their cost, to collect their benefits, thereby eating into the benefit received. Traveling to collect benefits was not particularly friendly towards women who often relied on male family members to collect the benefits on their behalf.

In contrast, the state pension had a clearly laid down, standardised procedure for implementing the programme. Disbursement of state pensions was done to communities even when they were displaced during the war. While a few beneficiaries of state pensions complained the pension amount was not sufficient to meet their expenses, generally pension recipients of both sexes and all ethnicities were very happy with the implementation of the programme and with the state that recognised their contribution to the nation during their work life and rewarded them when they were no longer able to be economically engaged.

In terms of other programmes, such as elder's allowance, disability allowance, PAMA and child support, in many instances, households had applied but had not received benefits. This could be due to the fact that in most cases households were already in receipt of a state benefit and therefore did not qualify for further state benefits. However, households did not appear to be aware of the fact that they might not be eligible for further state benefits. This was particularly noted in Trincomalee District. However, some procedural variations were identified in households in Jaffna

and Mannar where more than one state benefit was received by the same household. This was particularly noted in single-headed female households, some of whom received PAMA and other benefits, such as Samurdhi.

In triangulating the data about how other programmes, such as the elders' and disability allowances, were allocated, local officials at the DS level indicated that benefits were distributed according to a pre-allocated number of beneficiaries per DS level and not related to the number of needy in the DS. As a result, in some villages the demand far exceeded supply and thus the DS were unable to meet the demands of a larger constituency of needy people. However it was not evident that when the number of people applying for benefits exceeds available government allocations for the DS division, there is a standardised procedure to prioritise who would receive benefits as articulated by some Social Services Officers (SSOs):

> *"The disabled allowance is provided for 50 disabled persons in each DS division". (SSO, Manthai West)*

In one GN division, a person with two broken fingers will be considered as a disabled person; in another GN division a person with two broken legs will be considered as disabled. (SSO, Manthai West)

3.1.4   Accountability and participation

In assessing the level of citizens' participation, official responses and level of accountability, the study focused on grievance mechanisms, complaint and response procedures and turn-around times.

For all locations, the default grievance mechanism is the local GN. This was noted particularly for women beneficiaries of all ethnicities. In Jaffna District, perceptions were mixed about how well grievance mechanisms function. While Samurdhi meetings are regularly held, the general perception was that not much notice is taken of people's concerns expressed at these meetings. In a few instances, respondents indicated that they were penalised for bringing up issues they were having with the programme:

> *"There was a programme in our GN division and most of the area GNs participated on that meeting. I was standing and explaining about our difficulties and barriers. Now GN has a bad opinion of me". (Tamil, male, Malakam)*

In Mannar District, regular meetings are held by the GN in which people are able to air their grievances and perceptions are high that concerns expressed are taken up by the GN:

> *"We have a complaints box here for the public to write their problems and they can also complain through the G.S. The relationship with the public is very normal and general here." (SSO, Musali).*

Mosque meetings and elders' committee meetings are other forums for expressing grievances where mosque officials and committee members take up issues with government officials. Samurdhi meetings are also held, but there is less faith in the functioning of this mechanism, as expressed by a Tamil male respondent from Paliyaru:

> *"Samurdhi organises meetings once a month. We are continuously expressing our problems but there have not been responses yet".*

Functioning of grievance mechanisms in Trincomalee District indicate the greatest variation by group. While Sinhala people benefitting from Samurdhi turn to the Samurdhi officer, Tamils state that no Samurdhi meetings are held and they have no recourse to grievance mechanisms except through the GN who does not cooperate:

If we say something to the GN, he does not care about it. We are expressing our needs to GN office but they are not considering these things. We cannot fight with them and we cannot raise questions against them. If we do so, they will not include us in the upcoming programmes. (Tamil, male, Pulmudai)

Issues with the GN are also articulated in the following quote by a Tamil male respondent from Velur):

> *"The GN is a rough person. Due to some conflict, he struck off 10out of 13 people's names from the Samurdhi list. Then we complained to the DS officer, and he told the GN to give the Samurdhi stamps again to all the people again".*

Thus grievance mechanisms were weakest in Samurdhi across all locations, with Tamil people in Trincomalee District having the least faith in the functioning of all grievance mechanisms.

In most locations, Jaffna and Mannar in particular, women were reluctant to participate at meetings. They either sent a male family member or did not participate at all. In a few women- headed households in Trincomalee District, women were not inclined to attend meetings, as they felt it was a waste of time as their grievances were rarely addressed.

Recipients of other programmes, such as old age allowances and Divi Neguma, stated that they don't complain to the GN for fear of reprisals:

"I am not getting any assistance from the government other than this Divi Neguma. I do not complain about anything to the GN or other officers, because they do not consider complains and there is no setting in government which welcomes our grievances". (Tamil, female, Murugapuri)

Recipients of pensions across locations and groups were the most satisfied, as they had very few, if any, grievances. If they did have complaints, they resorted to the subject officer in charge of pensions in the DS Office:

"I do not have any problems with my pension. I am receiving my pension smoothly so far. If we need to complain about our officers, we can move through the DS office with a particular person's letter and we can go directly to the pension department too". (Elderly Tamil, male, Maruthenkerny)
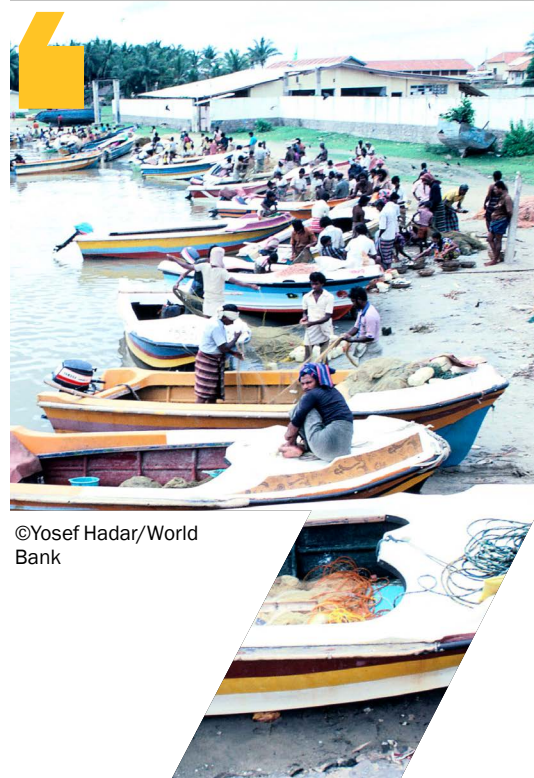
3.2   Disaggregated data

3.2.1   What men said, what women said

Given the post-war context in which many men's lives were lost, the sample population surveyed consisted of as lightly higher percentage of women. One of the key factors that came out of the household survey with regard to Samurdhi or PAMA benefits is that women were recipients of these programme benefits only in the absence of an adult male, usually the husband, in the house. In all the surveyed houses, this happened when the husband of the woman was dead or missing. Women who were beneficiaries of Samurdhi or PAMA were in households categorised as women-headed, indicating that programmes were designed to deliver benefits to the head of household, culturally accepted as the oldest adult male in the household.

However, women in Jaffna District in particular articulated that they did not like the fact that their husbands were considered for benefits and not them. In a few instances, as discussed previously, women-headed householders stated that they faced discrimination when they applied for Samurdhi loans to buy fishing equipment. This gender-based discrimination in access to livelihood-related benefits, such as monetary support for fishing livelihoods, was noted in Jaffna District in particular. Interestingly, in

Mannar District, a few male respondents indicated that more benefits should be delivered to women-headed households, indicating that they were either not getting benefits or that they should get more than they were.

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3.2.2   Perceptions by ethnicity: Muslim, Sinhala and Tamil

Perceptions about programmes and the state varied considerably when disaggregated by ethnicity. For Sinhala people in Trincomalee District, positive perceptions of the state came mainly from factors not directly connected with programme delivery but with facts such as the war had ended and people now felt safe and had the freedom to travel within and outside of the district.

For Tamil people in Trincomalee District, the pressing issue was the non-implementation of the trilingual policy. State communications were still in Sinhala, a language they did not read or understand clearly. This language issue was articulated clearly among both Tamil speaking Muslims and Tamils in Trincomalee District, indicating that language rights are an important issue in building state legitimacy in areas affected by the conflict.

In both Jaffna and Mannar Districts, Tamil people felt that state provision of social protection programmes is an opportunity to engage with local people through which state-society interactions had improved considerably since the end of the war. Further, both of these

communities felt that securing state benefits was a right, as citizens that the state was duty bound to provide, particularly since they were communities which had undergone prolonged hardship during a protracted conflict.

3.2.3   North and East: District-wise data

When the data was disaggregated by province and district, it provided insights on how different war-affected communities perceive the state through the way in which the state delivers programmes. In Trincomalee District, one of the earliest to come under government control, people raised concerns about how state programmes were delivered. People of all three ethnicities cited instances where local officials were rude and disrespectful. One Tamil respondent stated that after five years she was able to get Samurdhi benefits only after taking her case to the human rights office in Trincomalee. A Muslim man cited several instances of nepotism and favouritism in the selection of beneficiaries for Samurdhi. They were also more likely to state that there were few or no spaces to meet public officials and air their grievances. Where such grievance mechanisms existed, complainants were not likely to be heard or have their grievances addressed. State-society interactions were less positive in Trincomalee than in Mannar or Jaffna Districts and people's views of the state were often framed by these everyday interactions with local officials.

In contrast in Mannar District, while people cited instances of politicisation and favouritism in beneficiary selection, these were often overlooked, as recipients were grateful to a central government that provided programme benefits. They compared the present to the past, stating that during the war they did not receive benefits, such as Samurdhi, the disability and elders' allowances. They were grateful for the benefits now provided and to the state that provided them.

In Jaffna District too people stated that the provision of social protection programmes was an opportunity for the state to engage with local communities. However, perceptions about the programmes were more mixed than in Mannar District. Women, in particular, articulated that they faced gender-based discrimination in access to livelihood support, such as Samurdhi loans for fishing-based livelihoods. One respondent cited instances of caste-based discrimination in access to programme benefits, such as disability allowance and Samurdhi. Both men and women indicated that what the state provided was not in keeping with community needs. For example, they stated a preference for financial support (seed money or loans) for self-employment and non-cash benefits, such as dry rations.

In all of the districts, respondents defined the state as a two-tiered structure: the central state in Colombo that formulated policy and allocated funds and the local state that implemented programmes. In general the central state was considered good, but the local state was considered inefficient, corrupt and disrespectful, reiterating that people's perceptions of the state are shaped by the everyday encounters with local officials.

3.2.4   Perspectives from state officials

In triangulating the data with state officials at the provincial and DS levels, three broad issues were identified with regard to implementing social protection programmes: lack of adequate resources in terms of labour and funds to administer programmes; lack of sufficient financial allocations to meet the number of eligible beneficiaries; and functional overlap between the centralised (DS office) and decentralised (provincial council) units of the state administrative system.

Regarding resources to administer programmes, the lack of adequate labour and skills to meet the demands of the community were cited in all locations. This was mainly attributed to the fact that many people were needy– the poor, elderly, disabled, women and children– as a consequence of protracted conflict, and there was a mismatch between supply and demand for services. Benefits to people in these categories, in terms of monetary allowances, such as Samurdhi, and non-monetary support, such as wheelchairs for the elderly, were only provided after the districts came under government control. In some districts, the number of needy people far outweighed available resources. In: Mannar District, for example the number of people facing deprivation, both in income and non-income terms, was large. The DS officers surveyed in Mannar did not have adequate staff to meet the workload and were also, often, not adequately trained to carry out activities such as monitoring of social service programmes as illustrated in this quote:

> *"The importance of our services is felt now more than during the war time. Earlier we had barriers against reaching the public; now we are unable to reach the public because of lack of resources. People demand more from us . . . but there is little we can do. Now there are lots of people in each division of our office and monitoring the beneficiaries is another heavy task. . . . The public seek a lot from us but we have limited opportunities to help them. So we need to increase our capacity but it is impossible for the government fund allocation and procedures." (Social Services Officer, Musali DS office)*

In some DS divisions, a Women's Development Officer (WDO) acted as a focal point for initiatives targeting women. Where the post of WDO existed, activities such as skills training and agricultural development were directed at women. The WDO also had gender disaggregated data. However the availability of this officer depended on resources. Only two of the sample DS divisions had a WDO at the time of the study.

The inadequacy of financial allocations by the state to meet the full demand for benefits was an important factor hindering implementation of social protection programmes. In Mannar District, the total Samurdhi allocation for each DS division is much less than the number of eligible persons. This results in eligible people not being accommodated for Samurdhi benefits:

> *"There are people who do not receive benefits from the Samurdhi. These people who are under the poverty line but may have been rejected in selection, because there is a shortage of resources. We are unable to help the remaining people who are in need. We have to select the beneficiaries based on the amount which is provided by the government". (Samurdhi Bank Manager, Manthai West)*

To overcome this problem, eligible people were sometimes enrolled in another DS division if it had not allocated its full quota, as explained by a Samurdhi officer from Vadamarachchi East DS Division:

> *"We have a higher number of eligible people here than in other places. Around 3,480 people were selected from our village, but we got only 1,380 stamps from the government; but in Point Pedro they have got 3,000 stamps for 5,348 families living there. So we put some of our people on the Point Pedro list".*

As illustrated above, where the Samurdhi quota for a particular village was full, allocations were made from another village. Hence benefits had to be collected from that village which involved recipients travelling long distances to collect benefits. Further, delays in disbursing monies at the DS level to beneficiaries were due to delays in receiving monies from the treasury through the Samurdhi Authority.

A similar issue was faced in the allocation of elders' and disability allowances, where each DS Division is allocated a quota of 50 beneficiaries for each allowance. However, in many instances the number of eligible people far exceeded the quota allocated to the DS, as described by the SSO from Tellipalai DS Division:

> *"They approved 50 persons per DS division for the elders' allowance. Our department receives many applications but we can accommodate only 50 persons".*

The third issue, of functional overlap, was highlighted in the provision of social services in particular, where some overlap between the functions of provincial and central government were noted. This was particularly evident in the function of officers in charge of child protection and social services in the provincial (decentralised) and the DS office (centralised) units of the state administrative structure. The provincial council and the DS office have separate budgets allocated for child protection and social services programmes. However, there was no evidence to suggest that the two structures complemented each other or worked in coordination. Rather, the data suggests functional overlap in the way the two structures worked. Further, the provincial council did not always have the capacity to carry out its activities and often relied on working through the Social Services Officer (SSO) at the DS office to carry out some of its functions. In some instances, this resulted in conflicts between the two structures of the state administrative system:

> *"When we talk about problems in our work; there aren't many but sometimes we have to work with some central government people like the DS. They refuse to cooperate with us and sometimes allowances take a long time to reach the people". (Director, Social Services, Northern Provincial Council)*

"We are facing many challenges in this position because sometimes elders' disability allowances take some time to reach the people from the Provincial Council. Then we may face some trouble and sometimes we cannot provide allowances on time".
(Social Services Officer, Telipalai)

There is therefore no evidence to suggest that the way in which the two structures of the state administrative system function is effective or efficient in delivering social protection programmes in the surveyed districts.

The analysis of data from the field provided a rich data set to explore how perceptions of the state are shaped through the socio-political lens of social protection programme delivery and citizens' perceptions of the state based on lived experiences of accessing and using the programmes. While penetration and visibility of the state as a provider of programmes was high, issues of politicisation and lack of standardisation of procedures across locations and within programmes was noted. A range of mechanisms exist to deal with grievances and spaces for participation and interactions, but the functioning of these mechanisms varied across locations. Trincomalee District provided the greatest variation, which could be due to the diversity of its ethnic composition and the fact that expectations of the state were generally higher than the other two districts.

When the data was disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, some valuable insights were provided. Women in Jaffna District felt that they were not treated as equals with men when they sought state livelihood support. In the selection of beneficiaries, women in Mannar and Jaffna Districts expressed that they should also be considered eligible for Samurdhi benefits, not merely their male counterparts. Interestingly, men in Mannar District expressed that more benefits should be provided for women.

When ethnicity was taken into account, it provided the greatest variation in terms of people's perceptions of the state. This aspect will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4, Discussion.

3.3   Perceptions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the state

In exploring the processes that contribute towards the formation and shaping of a binding relationship or a political settlement between the state and society, the study explored factors behind citizens' indications that they were 'happy' with or 'unhappy' with state performance. Insights are discussed below.

3.3.1   Happy with the state– why?

Factors which contribute to people's satisfaction with the state were explored to identify potential drivers of state legitimacy and to locate the role of social protection programming in creating political trust.

Sinhala people indicated that they were happy with the way in which the state delivered social protection programmes. However, what they were mostly happy about was the end of the war; they now felt safe from the terror and uncertainty they had endured for many decades. They were also happy that the security conditions were more relaxed which enabled them to move freely within and outside of the district.

Both Tamil and Muslim people in Mannar District stated that they had suffered many deprivations during the war. While some respondents had accessed pensions during the war, programmes such as Samurdhi, elders', disability and PAMA allowances were only made available after the end of the war. Thus respondents were happy that they were now able to access state programmes. They were happy with the benefits provided by these programmes and the state that recognised the deprivations they faced and provided for them.

Across all locations, women were generally happy to receive any benefits offered to them. Women in Trincomalee were more vocal in expressing issues and dissatisfaction with particular aspects of the delivery system, while women in Mannar were the least likely to bring up issues of dissatisfaction.

The categories of people most satisfied with the state across all ethnicities and gender were recipients of PAMA and the elders' allowance. Both categories of recipients were appreciative thatthe state recognised their vulnerabilities as being either very poor or elderly and took care of them. While the monetary value of both programmes is relatively low (Rs.250-300 for PAMA and Rs.1,000 for elders) as a monthly allowance, both men and women recipients were deeply appreciative that the state gave them financial independence through the benefits provided by these programmes.

Recipients of pensions, across locations, ethnicities and gender were also happy that the state provided a safety net when they were no longer able to productively engage in income generating activities. The pension programme is highly

visible with all of the surveyed beneficiaries being aware of the procedure for obtaining and collecting benefits as well as the procedure to complain or request changes in the collection of their monthly entitlements.

Across all locations, Tamil and Muslim communities of both genders expressed that the social protection programmes

provided a space for greater interaction between state officials and citizens. This was particularly noted in Mannar District: State-society relations were strained for many years due to the war and the space for interaction was greatly diminished but had greatly improved since the end of the war. Thus social protection programme delivery played an important role in improving state-society relations as it provided a space for interaction between citizens and state officials.

3.3.2   Dissatisfied with the state– Why?

When people said they were dissatisfied with the state, factors were often linked to their experiences with state officials. Factors which contribute to dissatisfaction with state officials include bias and discriminatory practices, disrespect and inefficacy.

Bias, discrimination and politicisation

Perceptions of bias, discrimination and pol0itical interference in the delivery of programmes emerged as a principle cause of dissatisfaction with the delivery of state social protection programmes. Both recipients and applicants of the Samurdhi programme voiced their dissatisfaction in the way beneficiaries were selected. A few respondents referred to specific cases where Samurdhi recipients owned consumer durables and trishaws and questioned how these people were selected when others in the same GN division were noticeably poorer but were not receiving benefits. These perceptions of bias and discrimination were particularly evident in Trincomalee District among all ethnicities.

Incidences of political interference were noted in both Trincomalee and Mannar Districts, where respondents indicated that some Samurdhi beneficiaries were selected because they 'knew someone'. In Jaffna District, as indicated previously, issues of gender-based discrimination were more evident. In Mannar District, while the incidents were indicated, people were more prepared to overlook them, as they were getting some benefits now, compared to during the war when no benefits were available. Respondents in Mannar District were therefore more accepting of politicisation in the delivery of benefits.

Across locations and groups, perceptions of discrimination and favouritism were held by individuals who had applied for but not received benefits. This was particularly noted in programmes such as the elders' allowance, disability allowance, PAMA and child support where, in many instances, particularly in Trincomalee District, across ethnic groups, individuals applied for but did not receive benefits. In Jaffna District, a few instances of caste-based discrimination were voiced in the delivery of the disability allowance.

Box 3: Examples of dissatisfaction

Interestingly, across locations and groups, the widely held perception was that the central government had good intentions towards people's welfare but issues of politicisation arose at the local level with state officials at the divisional and district level with a few instances where it was indicated to exist at the GN level, particularly among Tamils in Trincomalee District, as these respondents explained:

- *"Central government does not make a mistake but the officers who are in between central government and people make mistakes". (Elderly, Muslim, male, Murugapuri)*

- *"Government provides assistance to all equally but the officers who are working with the people treat people unfairly. They do not work according to the procedure. They discriminate. There is bias and discrimination everywhere. All are the same. Where can we complaint about it"? (Tamil, male, Paliyaaru)*

- *"They do what they think. The government officials do not serve the people according to the state's agenda. Sometimes they show inequality". (Tamil, male, Mallakam)*

Thus respondents viewed the state as a two-tier structure of local level implementers and national level policy makers, and an important cause of dissatisfaction with programme delivery was in the way state officials functioned at the GN or DS level.

Of all of the programmes, pensions had the least perceptions of politicisation. This could be attributed to the fact that the pension programme is clearly structured and transparent and that all respondents were aware of the procedures for obtaining and collecting pension receipts, which left little if any space for issues of favouritism and discrimination to arise.

3.3.3   Disrespectful and inefficient officials

Issues of disrespect from state officials were cited as causes of dissatisfaction with state delivery mechanisms. This was particularly evident with Samurdhi Bank officials, who were described as 'behaving rudely' and that they 'forget the humanity thing' when recipients went to the bank to receive their monies:

> *"Sometimes when we get the Samurdhi money, the Samurdhi officers behave rudely. They act like the boss. This should change and government people must behave with mercy but they forget the humanity thing so they need to change". (Muslim, female, Karadikulli)*

> *"The reasons behind these things are the officers who do not respect the public. When they are in a powerful position, they think they are the top people and see others like a slaves. And also they respect people who are posh, but they ignore people who are poor like us". (Muslim, male, Murugapuri)*

A further cause of dissatisfaction was the inefficiency in delivering programme benefits. Firstly, beneficiaries did not always receive their benefits on time. For Samurdhi benefits, while the stipend is intended to be a monthly cash handout, recipients often experienced delays in receiving payments, which were 2–3 months on average. Lump sum payments were paid including arrears for the previous months. These delays in receiving payments were noted in all three districts. Secondly, in Jaffna and Mannar Districts in particular, recipients often travelled long distances (over one hour by road) to collect their benefits. Many recipients complained that the travel costs (averaging Rs.200–300 per trip) cut into the cash payment received, thus depriving them of the full benefit of the cash stipend

The indication is that dissatisfaction arises from the way power relations played out between citizens and the state and the attitudes and values conveyed through the way state officials deliver programmes. However, issues of dissatisfaction with the state were not always connected with programme delivery but with a variety of other factors. In Trincomalee District for example, Sinhala communities complained about receiving official letters in Tamil, which they could not understand[4], whereas Tamil and Muslim communities indicated that a better state service could be provided by having officials conversant in both Sinhala and Tamil :[5]

> *"Sometimes we get official letters in Tamil but we can't understand them. They should send Sinhala people letters in Sinhala". (Sinhala, man, Abeypura)*

> *"If government recruits Tamil and Sinhala people into government offices it effective communication between officers and public". (Tamil, female, Murugapuri)*

Thus language is still an important factor in building state legitimacy among the surveyed communities

3.4   Role of social protection in building state legitimacy

3.4.1   Engaging citizens and state officials

Across all locations and groups was acknowledgement that the provision of services by the state had improved state-society relations through creating space for greater interaction between state officials and citizens at the local level. This was particularly evident in social services and pension provisions. Given the wide range of services covered under social services, officials were able to reach a wider group of individuals – the elderly, the disabled, women-headed households and children. Many of the officials at the provincial and DS level, in both Mannar and Jaffna Districts, conveyed that it was their duty to provide services for needy people and they felt good when their services were appreciated and acknowledged. However they indicated that more resources, in both financial and human capital, would allow for more and better services to be provided:

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4   Sinhala, woman, Samurdhi recipient, Abeypura
5   Tamil, woman, Disability recipient, Murugapuri

"After the war there is better relationship between people and our officer. We never ever seek any privileges from anyone. We are giving the services in an appropriate way. These kinds of social protection programmes are much needed for our people because it reduces people's complications and many problems of the people." (Social Services Officer, Telipallai DS Office)

"The public approach me to get services; I try my level best to gain public satisfaction on public services. And I try to deliver services to the public as soon as possible. I think that the public approaches us to receive this service. So through this we can build a good relationship between the state and the public. It is possible to direct public attention on the state, through delivering these services" (Pension Officer, Musali DS Office)

"The relationship between people and officers is clearly better than during the war situation. This pension is very helpful to the people. It helps to reduce the people's problems". (Pension Officer, Tellipalai DS Office)

The role of the GN as the principal ace of the state was evident across locations and groups. The GN, as the local state official, was the first point of contact with the state, providing a wide range of services from information on the available state (and non-state) programmes to helping eligible villagers with the paperwork necessary to enrol in a programme. The GN was usually also the first point of contact to make complaints and address grievances on programme related issues.

Subject officers at the DS level also interacted regularly with citizens. In Mannar District, many of the households in the surveyed GN divisions were recipients of social protection benefits. This afforded an opportunity for subject officers at the DS level, such as social services and pensions officers as well as Samurdhi officers, to interact with programme recipients on a regular basis, providing a space for greater state-society interaction than was previously possible.

In both Mannar and Jaffna District, people were of the view that relationships between state officials delivering programmes and citizens were greatly improved since the end of the war. This was particularly evident in Mannar District, where Samurdhi benefits are still being rolled out. Both men and women in Mannar were greatly appreciative of the Samurdhi officials and complained of very few incidents of favouritism and bias in the delivery of Samurdhi benefits:

"Our government staff are behaving with good manner and a sense of humanity too. There is no problem in Samurdhi so far". (Tamil, female, Vidalthivu)

In Trincomalee District however, space for state-society relations varied by group. For Sinhala people, new spaces were emerging with the end of the war and greater physical and emotional security was contributing to improved perceptions of the state. However, Tamil and Muslim respondents in the households surveyed in Trincomalee claimed little if any space existed for interactions between state and society through Samurdhi.

For women, particularly in Jaffna and Mannar, interactions with state officials were mainly through the GN and sometimes the Samurdhi bank manager, as they rarely attended meetings or went to the local DS office. Thus perceptions of the 'state' were largely framed by their day-to-day interactions with these officials.

When triangulating the data with state officials delivering programmes, officials in Trincomalee saw improvement in state-society relations, particularly in relation to the provision of social services at the DS level, which created positive space for interaction between state officials and people. This was partly due to the relatively streamlined process of applying, and receiving benefits. Respondents elaborated, indicating that officials and villagers met regularly, creating space for engaging in building and consolidating this relationship:

"We don't see any divisions among people now. If the public have any issues, they meet me. With the GN's recommendation, I visit and make queries". (Social Services Officer, Trincomalee Town)

"The public approach us for their needs everyday now, more than before. Through delivering these services, there are many possibilities to maintain their regular participation with the government services." (Social Services Officer, Musali)

Thus, while provision of some programmes, such as pensions and social services, create space for interaction and relationship building, some discrepancies were noted in Trincomalee District between what officials stated about the existence of these spaces and what Tamil and Muslim respondents said in the household survey.

However, capacities for provincial-level officials to interact with local communities were much lower than for officials

working through the DS offices. This limited the interface of the provincial level officials with people in certain categories, such as the elderly and disabled, but was not so in the case of child welfare and probation, where provincial probation officers were working at the local level in urban and peri-urban areas. This was evident in the discussions with both the Eastern and Northern Provincial Councils:

> *".. . in this place, if people want to complain against anyone in our department, they can come through the DS office. Many people have called me and shared their problems with me. Similarly they can complain against us. Our people are very aware on that". (Director, NPC, Child Probation Services).*

Thus the data indicates that the provision of social protection programmes plays an important role in building state-society relations through the way programme delivery engages citizens and state officials at the local level. This is a particularly important aspect, given that state-society relations had deteriorated or broken down considerably due to a prolonged conflict.

3.4.2   Social protection as a 'right' of citizenship

A thread that ran through the analysis was that, overwhelmingly, both men and women expected the state to provide programmes and services. Some respondents went a step further to claim state provision of programmes and services as a right. Thus in each of the three districts and across groups and programmes, the overwhelming expectation was that the provision of social protection programmes was a right of citizens and that the state was duty-bound to provide it:

> *"The state should provide for its citizens, because, in developing countries, people need help, unlike in developed countries. People in developing countries are poor and need to be helped to live" (Elderly, Sinhala, male, Abeypura).*

Recipients of pensions regarded the pension entitlement as a right earned through a lifelong commitment of working for the state, whereas other groups, such as the elderly and the disabled, considered it the state's obligation to take care of them. Two respondents, one male and one female, asserted that the duty of the state was to help them so they would be able to consume three meals a day without relying on their families to provide for them. Expectations from the state included a wide range of services, from housing to livelihood support to food. As one respondent stated:

> "Welfare means providing assistance for life. We want the government to offer this kind of assistance to poor people and to affected people continuously" (Tamil, male, Mallakam)

The notion that the state should provide for its citizens was corroborated by state officials at the provincial, divisional and village levels, further highlighting the high expectations from the state as a provider of programmes and services. At the same time, issues of dependency on government services were often cited by officers delivering programmes, but officials believed that the state had a duty to provide for communities, given the traumatic experiences they had undergone during the war. The role of the state in rebuilding the lives and livelihoods of communities was thus strongly underpinned by values of the services provided:

> *"I am proud to be an officer who works for the people who are in poverty. Samurdhi services are need by the poor people in our community". (Samurdhi Bank Manager, Manthai West)*

Thus the idea that delivery of social protection programmes was a duty the state was bound to provide was clearly articulated by state officials and citizens of both genders. This rights-based approach to social protection provision raises some important questions about how and what role social protection provision can play in building state legitimacy in Sri Lanka.

4 Discussion

Much of the international policy discourse on state building, led by organisations such as OECD and Department for International Development (DFID), have made assumptions that the provision of basic services can enhance state legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2013). Service delivery is often assumed an important visual reminder of the reciprocal nature of the state-society relationship in that services are received in return for taxes paid. However, Mcloughlin has noted that 'the notion that basic service delivery can instrumentally enhance state legitimacy appears something of a leap of faith' (McLoughlin 2013: 2).

The study set out to explore this link by looking more deeply into people's everyday encounters with the state machinery and how those encounters shape people's perceptions to provide a more grounded account of state-society relations. The findings provide a number of strands to better understand the dynamics that shape state-society relations in a Sri Lankan context, particularly in Northern and Eastern Provinces, which bore the brunt of the war.

4.1   What we found

Across locations and groups, respondents valued the programmes and benefits they received. This was particularly evident in programmes such as PAMA and the elders' allowance in which, although the amount of money received was small, recipients deeply valued that the state had singled them out as members of a vulnerable group and cared enough to provide for them. Recipients of the pension programme were happy that the state recognised their contribution to the nation and provided for them when they were no longer able to be productively engaged.

With regard to Samurdhi, people believed in the principles that lay behind the programme. However, their dissatisfaction with the programme was largely related to its flawed implementation. Contrastingly, recipients of the pension programme were satisfied with the implementation of the programme. Thus it could be argued that this was because programme implementation was transparent and standardised across locations and groups and all recipients benefited from its smooth functioning, something that was lacking in the Samurdhi programme. This analysis suggests that people's levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the programmes are not merely framed by the financial value of the benefit, but by the implementation process and the moral values that are translated in the delivery of the programme.

When levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the programmes and how they translate to perceptions of the state were disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and location, insights worthy of mention were highlighted. Tamils' and Muslim people's perceptions varied

depending on location. While the Tamils and Muslims in Trincomalee spoke out strongly on issues in the state delivery mechanism they were not echoed by the same ethnicities in Mannar. This could be the result of trajectories of life experiences, history of displacement and access to programmes and services during the war. Communities in Trincomalee did not experience as lengthy or as many instances of displacement as the Mannar communities. Perhaps the Mannar communities developed stronger resilience capacities and internalised coping strategies due to their exposure to a prolonged conflict during which they experienced displacement multiple times. Consequently, the Mannar communities were more likely to be content with whatever assistance they received. The Trincomalee communities in contrast, were exposed to a shorter period of war and therefore had a longer history of accessing state programmes, which perhaps framed higher levels of expectations from the state. They were thus less likely to be happy with whatever they received, and more likely to articulate the mismatch between their expectations and needs and state programme delivery.

When taking gender into account, the largest programmes– pensions and Samurdhi– do not have gender sensitivity built into their design per se, as no evidence was found of gender-specific budget allocations or gender-focal points for example, in them. The understanding is that anybody fitting the targeting criteria was eligible to receive benefits. However, in Samurdhi, although men and women had equal access, on paper, disproportionately more women stated they did not receive benefits, particularly for livelihood-related issues. This was particularly evident in Jaffna. An explanation could be the existence of patriarchal values of public officials who make beneficiary selection decisions at the local level. Jaffna is still a deeply conservative district where gender roles are clearly defined. Possibly, some livelihoods are still considered a man's domain and these values are reflected in the decisions of public officials. Thus patriarchal considerations could be contributing to the discretionary character of the Samurdhi beneficiary selection process in Jaffna. However, more women were accessing PAMA, perhaps because the programme targeted the poorest and, given the post-war context, many women in the north and east are categorised as 'poor' and were thus able to access a programme such as PAMA.

In assessing people's perceptions about the state more generally, two broad themes were identified which cut across location, ethnicity and gender. Firstly, the idea that provision of social protection was a right of citizenship and was therefore a key component of the social contract between the state and its citizens. Secondly, that delivering social protection programmes engaged the state, through local officials, with citizens. It therefore affords the opportunity to build state-society relations and longer-term state building in a post-war context.

The nuances in this relationship are worthy of mention, particularly when assessing how programme experience translates into perceptions about the state. Perceptions of 'gratitude' to the state for providing programme benefits were evident in Mannar district from both ethnic communities. There were no obvious variations by gender. In Jaffna however, issues of bias and discrimination were articulated clearly and contributed to perceptions of dissatisfaction, particularly by women. Trincomalee provided the strongest variation by ethnicity. Tamil and Muslim communities articulated that they were most dissatisfied with the non-implementation of the trilingual policy. The Sinhala people in contrast, were most satisfied that the war had ended and with the freedom of movement and security that resulted. Social protection provision by the state did not figure high in forming positive perceptions of the state in Trincomalee for any of the communities. In Mannar and Trincomalee, women were more likely to be 'satisfied' with what the state provided and did not articulate specific issues of dissatisfaction. Women in Jaffna in contrast, articulated issues of bias and discrimination in obtaining programme benefits which contributed to 'dissatisfaction' with the state.

The study also provides insights on how people's perceptions of the state are formed. The first is that many people viewed the state as a two-tier structure: the local and the national. However, when they talk about the state, they often refer to the local-level official and the way she/he performs her/his functions locally. Thus perceptions of the state collapse into a singular state, framed by everyday encounters with local officials.

As the literature indicates, state legitimacy can come in many forms. For the purpose of this study we chose to inquire about state legitimacy from the perspective of performance legitimacy, that is, legitimacy obtained through the way the state performs key functions– in this instance, how it delivers social protection programmes. The analysis of the data provides some insights on how perceptions of the state are informed through the way social protection programmes are delivered. It identifies factors which contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the state broadly and then attempts to locate the role social protection programme delivery might play in perceptions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the state.

However, while it was possible to identify factors that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the programmes, it was not always possible to attribute those factors as contributing to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the state per se, which came from different sources, not all related to social protection delivery.

Related to this, the study found social protection sits among a range of services and functions that citizens expect the state to deliver. For example, citizens and officials alike expect the state to provide services and programmes that would better their lives, such as livelihood support, food and money. The non-implementation of the trilingual policy was an important factor of 'dissatisfaction' with the state for Tamil speaking communities. Similarly, the end of the war and the ushering in of peace and security was an important satisfaction factor for Sinhala communities.

Further, assessing the role of social protection as a driver of state legitimacy is particularly problematic in a context such as Sri Lanka, where the notions exist that the state's duty is to provide for its citizens, and provision of programmes and services is a citizenship right. These views, as articulated both by respondents and officials, may be linked to Sri Lanka's long history of social welfare provision. Thus isolating social protection as a driver of state legitimacy is difficult and complex in Sri Lanka.

However, what we did find is that people's perceptions of the state are framed by interactions and experiences with local-level state officials. Thus state officials play an important role in building state-society relations. In this sense, it is not so much what the state delivers but how it delivers programmes and services that is important when using the concept of performance legitimacy as an indicator of state legitimacy. This is evident in levels of satisfaction with the state expressed by recipients of PAMA and the elders' allowance. Correspondingly, levels of dissatisfaction with Samurdhi largely stemmed from dissatisfaction with programme implementation rather than the values that underpin the programme. The existence of standardised procedures which are clearly laid down and adhered to are likely to contribute to increased satisfaction levels as evident with recipients of the pension programme. Correspondingly, the level of dissatisfaction with Samurdhi can be largely attributed to the lack of a standardised and transparent process being implemented across locations and groups.

4.2   Policy implications of findings

Within the scope of this study, the analysis of the data aimed to explore specifically what role social protection plays in achieving state legitimacy by using performance legitimacy as an indicator. Towards that aim, it explored how programmes were being delivered, what people's expectations and perceptions were about the programmes and finally how people described satisfaction with the programme and with the state.

A theme that ran through the data is that state provision of social protection programmes is important to the extent that it is considered a right by both the providers (state officials) and the recipients (citizens). Perceptions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the state are linked to the level of expectation and the degree to which these expectations are met. As such, perceptions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction are framed not only by what is delivered by the state but how it is delivered: the process, the values and attitudes translated in the delivery process.

In attempting to explore the role of the state vis-à-vis other actors, we also explored the role of non-state actors and informal networks (family, community and faith-based groups) in the provision of programmes and services. Provision by non-state actors was specific and limited to areas such as housing, livelihoods and child support (school kits, money). This type of support was not sufficient in value or coverage to undermine or influence the value of state provisions. Informal networks played an important supplementary role to the state. For instance, provision of food supplies and payment of utility bills were often cited as types of support provided by family members or faith-based organisations. People also perceived the activities of non-state actors, specifically Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as project-based and time-bound.

People therefore expected the state to provide a wide range of functions and services, and the analysis suggests that social protection programmes are positioned within a range of services expected to be performed by the state. It is also important to note that it was the state, rather than any other entity, that people foresee as having the capacity to fulfil their long-term needs, and as being best placed to improve their overall wellbeing, further reinforcing expectations from the state.

5 Conclusion

This study set out to explore the links between the provision of social protection programmes and state legitimacy in the context of the aftermath of a protracted ethnic-based conflict in Sri Lanka. From the onset the study recognised the difficulties of making the link given that the processes of legitimising and state building are context specific and determined by the wider drivers of state building.

Given these complexities, the objective of this study was to explore the relationship between the state and society through the lived experiences of communities' everyday interactions with the state. This work was conceptualised to explore the nature of the relationship and how it begins to emerge, using the socio-political lens of social protection programming. The rich data collected provides evidence of many interesting and varied perspectives on the programmes, their implementation, people's expectations and perceptions, and the values and beliefs that underpin programme delivery. The analytical framework was useful primarily for structuring the analysis using the four pillars of penetration and visibility, fairness in process, accountability and accommodation in implementation. The framework provided the basis for exploring the state-society relationship based on the symbolic values and beliefs that underpin delivery as well as access.

The study engaged with the different perspectives associated with making the link implied by the theoretical association that suggests that social protection can help in building state-society relations and strengthen state legitimacy and state building in the longer term, particularly in post-war contexts.

The study also acknowledged the lack of empirical evidence to conclusively make this link and sought to address this gap. Given Sri Lanka's history of providing social welfare, this study was an opportunity to provide some insights on the link.

The data and analysis thus far are not conclusive regarding the relationship between social protection and state legitimacy, but the study provides insights into the nuances of the relationship, through both direct and indirect factors that can influence perceptions about the relationship. While everyday encounters with state machinery influence perceptions of the state, these perceptions vary considerably by location, ethnicity and programme. Perceptions are also framed by expectations, which vary given the different trajectories of people's experiences (beyond programme experiences). Issues of personal security, language rights, discriminatory practices, employment livelihood opportunities, food security, personal dignity and respect influence people's perceptions of the state. The study also highlights what people expect from the state and the different lenses they use to view the state which are based on a variety of

factors including (but not limited to) ethnicity, geographic location and programme experience. Thus the study provides initial insights to begin a longer and deeper study of how people's perceptions of the state are formed and changed and what role the state can perform in shaping those perceptions through social protection provision.

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