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Tsunami Housing Villages: A post occupancy evaluation

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The world's fifth-largest quake in a century hit Southern Asia on 26th December 2004, unleashing tsunamis that swept across the Indian Ocean, spawned by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake off the coast of Sumatra. Aside from Indonesia, Sri Lanka likely suffered the most casualties. It has been over 10 years since this ravaging tsunami hit the southeast Asian region. A number of housing solutions have been provided for the victims affected by the tsunami during these 10 years. The purpose of the study is to document perspectives of the residents of these houses through post occupancy evaluations. Periodic evaluations of user expectations and user satisfaction are the basis for post occupancy evaluations and provide insight into how improvements can be made in such future development projects.

A village that was established to house people who were displaced due to the tsunami was selected as a preliminary location to conduct an initial survey on post occupancy evaluation of these residences. Thirty households in the village located on the southern coast of Sri Lanka were initially randomly recruited, and the survey was answered by the head of the household. The questionnaire contained questions under four main sections: User perception of the dwelling, User perception of the immediate neighborhood, Future expectations, and Demographic information.

Findings suggest that the overall satisfaction level with the housing and its surrounding has not changed significantly with time. One space that the residents had issues with was the kitchen. The majority of the houses (58.6%) have been modified by the inhabitants to suit their needs. Currently the majority of the inhabitants (70%) think of these houses as a permanent housing solution.

This study will provide a background and a base for a large scale national level study on similar developments. While this study provides user perception about the current situation in this tsunami village, the study will also provide insight into how improvements can be made in future developments of similar nature especially in terms of disaster mitigation efforts.

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