Meaningful Engagement and Gender Equality in Humanitarian Response
The Case of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

This thesis is submitted for obtaining the Joint Master’s Degree in International Humanitarian Action. By submitting the thesis, the author certifies that the text is from her own hand, does not include the work of someone else unless clearly indicated, and that the thesis has been produced in accordance with proper academic practices.

Céline Carmen Martens
February 2018

Supervisors:
dr. C.K. Lamont, University of Groningen
S. Maitra, PhD, University College Dublin
Abstract

On 26 December 2004, twelve countries around the Indian Ocean were hit by a tsunami. The three most affected countries were Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. This disaster triggered an unprecedented response which saw an abundance in resources, funding, aid and humanitarian organisations providing assistance to the victims of the tsunami. This study examines to what extent affected people were meaningfully engaged in emergency relief and to what extent this participation contributed to the improvement of gender equality in humanitarian response. This thesis employs a case study approach and documents the relief efforts undertaken in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia by focusing on the key concepts of participation and gender equality. The results of the research show that beneficiaries’ involvement during the relief phase was largely ignored by humanitarian organisations due to competition, donor demands and a preference for externally developed interventions as well as a lack of knowledge among relief workers concerning the local context. These practices proved detrimental to the effectivity and efficiency of the provided aid as well as to beneficiaries’ recovery. Additionally, little attention was paid to the distinctive impact a disaster can have on men and women. This gender-blind approach led to the marginalisation of women in the relief phase which resulted in limited access to resources, sexual abuse and an aggravation of their already subordinate position in these societies. These gender-blind approaches are not limited to women and also affect men. This dissertation argues that affected people should be meaningfully and actively engaged in humanitarian response for the purpose of enhancing cultural appropriate and effective aid as well as improving gender equality.
# Table of Contents

Figures ................................................................................................. 6  
Abbreviations ...................................................................................... 7  

## Chapter 1: Humanitarian Response and the 2004 Tsunami ........................................ 8

1.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 8  
1.2 Background ................................................................................. 9  
1.3 Gender Equality ........................................................................... 11  
1.4 Including men ............................................................................ 12  
1.5 Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, 2004 .............................................. 13  
1.6 Research Question & Objectives .................................................. 14  
1.7 Research Design ........................................................................ 15  
1.8 Structure ..................................................................................... 16  

## Chapter 2: Methodology .................................................................. 17

2.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 17  
2.2 Literature review and conceptual framework ................................ 17  
2.3 Inclusion of affected people .......................................................... 19  
2.4 Analytical framework ................................................................... 22  
2.5 Research Design: Qualitative research ......................................... 23  
2.6 Case study research ...................................................................... 24  
2.7 Comparative case study ............................................................... 26  
2.8 Limitations case study research ..................................................... 26  
2.9 Case study tsunami ....................................................................... 27  
2.10 Conclusion .................................................................................. 28  

## Chapter 3: Case study Sri Lanka ..................................................... 29

3.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 29  
3.2 Sri Lanka ..................................................................................... 30  
3.3 Inclusion of affected people .......................................................... 31  
3.4 Gender ......................................................................................... 37  
3.5 Analysis ....................................................................................... 40  
3.5.1 Disaster-affected people .......................................................... 41  
3.5.2 Humanitarian response ............................................................ 41
### 3.5.3 Gender equality ............................................................... 42
### 3.5.4 Participatory approach ..................................................... 43
### 3.6 Conclusion ........................................................................ 43

**Chapter 4: Case study: India** .................................................. 45

4.1 Introduction ......................................................................... 45
4.2 Inclusion of affected people ................................................... 46
4.3 Vulnerability ........................................................................ 50
4.4 Gender ................................................................................ 52
4.5 Analysis .............................................................................. 56
  4.5.1 Disaster-affected people ................................................... 57
  4.5.2 Humanitarian Response ................................................... 57
  4.5.3 Gender Equality ............................................................ 58
  4.5.4 Participatory Approach .................................................. 59
4.6 Conclusion .......................................................................... 59

**Chapter 5: Case study: Indonesia** .......................................... 61

5.1 Introduction ......................................................................... 61
5.2 Indonesia ............................................................................ 62
5.3 Conflict and non-conflict response ........................................ 62
5.4 Inclusion of affected people ................................................... 64
5.5 Gender ................................................................................ 68
5.6 Analysis .............................................................................. 70
  5.6.1 Disaster-affected people ................................................... 70
  5.6.2 Humanitarian Response ................................................... 71
  5.6.3 Gender Equality ............................................................ 71
  5.6.4 Participatory Approach .................................................. 72
5.7 Conclusion .......................................................................... 72

**Chapter 6: Discussion** ............................................................ 74

6.1 Disaster-affected people ....................................................... 74
6.2 Humanitarian Response ....................................................... 75
6.3 Gender Equality .................................................................. 76
  6.3.1 Men ............................................................................ 78
6.4 Participatory Approach ........................................................ 78
Chapter 7: Conclusion

References

6.5 Conclusion

References
Figures

Figure 1: Analytical Framework

22
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADD</td>
<td>Sex- and Age- Disaggregated Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHR</td>
<td>Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Tsunami Evaluation Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHS</td>
<td>World Humanitarian Summit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Humanitarian Response and the 2004 Tsunami

1.1 Introduction

“The aim of humanitarian response is to save and protect lives quickly and effectively in the event of an emergency, in order to ensure that fewer people die, fall sick or suffer deprivation” (Clifton and Gell, 2001, p.9). To achieve this aim, international and national relief organisations provide guidance, assistance and relief in the response process. Without these organisations and processes, disasters are difficult to overcome by disaster affected populations. However, relief organisations are not the only ones that can provide assistance: the local affected people themselves should not be overlooked as key agents to play a vital role in this process. This is evident from the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) 2015 in which the Summit’s outcome statement emphasised the importance of affected people being at the centre of humanitarian response. They should be recognized as the primary agents of their own preparedness, response and recovery to disaster (WHS, 2015). According to the general principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD, 2003), local communities should be engaged, involved, and empowered in their own capacity.

When empowering beneficiaries and building on individuals’ capacity in an effective manner, one should take into account the aspect of gender. Men and women cope with disasters in a different way, before, during, and in the aftermath, as a result of preconceived gender aspects in societies and communities (Ariyabandu, 2009). Gender-based prejudices in society are largely applicable to women in viewing them as weak, dependent, and inferior to men in general, but even more so in times of crisis where girls and women are seen as helpless and incapacitated victims (Ariyabandu, 2009). In order to provide effective assistance, a gender approach should be included in humanitarian response. As pointed out by Byrne and Baden (1995), “a gender approach is important to identify men’s and women’s differing vulnerabilities to crises as well as their different capacities and coping strategies, in order to build on these, in order to design effective relief programmes” (p. 3). When highlighting the relevance of affected people as key agents in emergency relief, could their inclusion also be meaningful as part of a gender approach in humanitarian response?
This thesis aims to critically explore humanitarian response through a study of how relief organisations responded to the 2004 tsunami in South and Southeast Asia. In order to delve deeper into these issues, this dissertation will research in more detail the cases of Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia during the event of the tsunami. The first chapter of this study will provide an outline on the background of including affected people in humanitarian response and the relevance of gender equality. Equipping the reader with significant background information is necessary in order to understand the context which shapes the incentives of this study. Following from this context, the various reasons for this investigation are combined into one main research question and several research objectives. Lastly, the research design used in this study will be discussed followed by a structure for the overview of this thesis.

1.2 Background

Including affected people in humanitarian response could signal a move away from a notion of charity, as was emphasised during the WHS (2015): “move away from notions of charity and towards a greater sense of investment in empowering people to live in dignity”. Empowerment is one way of including affected people. Zimmerman (1995) defines empowerment across multiple levels as the following: “Empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organisations, and communities gain mastery over their lives” (p 43-44). This mastery can be severely hampered through the occurrence of a disaster, therefore help is needed to regain power over one’s own life. However, this help should not exclusively be offered externally, but executed with the inclusion of the knowledge, needs, and voices of the affected people themselves. Hennink et al. (2012) describe empowerment on three different levels: individual empowerment, community empowerment and organisational empowerment. These levels are identified as follows: individual empowerment “is a process of transformation that enables individuals to make independent decisions and take action on these decisions to make change in their lives” (p. 206). Community empowerment on the other hand is described as “the process of communities to mobilise towards change” (Hennink et al., 2012, p. 206). Lastly, organisational empowerment is defined as follows: “where empowerment of a local partner organisation is
a focus of collaboration, or where it is a by-product of collaborative activities” (Hennink et al., p. 207).

Besides these different levels of empowerment, there are the concepts of agency and structure related to empowerment. Both Luttrell & Quiroz (2007) and Hennink et al. (2012) define agency as the capacity of individuals to act independently and make choices. Next to that, structure is defined as the “existence of an enabling environment, of social, political, institutional and community support to foster individual and community development” (Hennink et al., 2012, p. 206). Additionally, structure is defined by Luttrell & Quiroz (2007) as the rules and social forces that influence opportunities for the actions of individuals. Therefore, both agency and structure are crucial for one’s empowerment. People need to possess the capacity to make choices about their own life that could affect change. In order to give value and meaning to those choices, there needs to be an enabling environment or opportunity structure that allows for those choices to be able to affect change. This agency and structure can be interrupted and changed due to the occurrence of a disaster. Entire families will be harmed, infrastructure will be damaged, and as a result, total chaos and fear will develop. External relief agencies providing assistance will further disturb and interrupt the agency of affected people through making decisions for them and temporarily interrupting the environment in which those decisions are made. By ignoring local people as a valuable asset in providing relief, one does more harm than good by taking away their capacity and enabling environment to make their own decisions.

The WHS (2015) furthermore acknowledges that women should be empowered to be leaders in crisis response and recovery and fulfil their right to services and protection. Men and women are affected by disasters in different ways, and any humanitarian assistance that is gender-blind and ignores the aforementioned fact, can possibly harm the affected group even more (Hyndman & Alwis, 2003). Assistance should have a mitigating and relieving result, instead of a more damaging effect.
1.3 Gender Equality

Men and women have different skills, vulnerabilities and life experiences, as well as different roles and responsibilities in society because of gender identities. Taking these into account is essential when it comes to understanding gender-based differences in the impact, response, and discovery of a disaster (Ariyabandu, 2009). A difference in vulnerability concerns for instance the issue of mobility, caused by local culture and tradition. Limited mobility is a factor that strongly increases the vulnerability of women. In the event of a tsunami or flood, the mandatory dress code for women makes it more difficult to escape and survive (Eklund and Tellier, 2012). Another example stems from the fact that women are not permitted to leave their house unaccompanied by men because that is seen as inappropriate (Eklund and Tellier, 2012). These cultural features make women significantly more vulnerable.

Natural disasters have a higher negative impact on female than male life expectancy (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007). This is caused by the low status of women in a country, which for example does not allow them to learn how to swim, a skill that is crucial during a disaster like a flood or a tsunami (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007). If women were never allowed to learn how to swim, their vulnerability is increased, and their capacity and coping strategies are virtually non-existent during such natural disasters.

Usually, the acute response phase in a disaster does not allow time or priority for underlying issues and social constructs such as gender. The acute response phase focuses on a post-impact life-saving, alleviating suffering and life-sustaining response, including medical and rescue teams (Katoch, 2006). Nevertheless, even in this crucial and chaotic phase, the concept of gender needs to be addressed. Take for instance the distribution of food as part of a humanitarian response. Due to limited mobility or social constructions of that society, this form of relief may not reach every target group, especially women (Eklund and Tellier, 2012). If this cultural knowledge about a certain region is available before-hand or becomes clear when consulting local people, relief organisations can take it into account and take extra measures to make sure relief is gender-sensitive and reaches everyone, even in times of acute crisis.
1.4 Including men

Over time, gender has become synonymous with women, thereby neglecting the issues related to men. “Getting the relief response right for women as well as men from day one is of paramount importance” (Clifton and Gell, 2001, p.9). From the aforementioned examples, one can see that women are especially vulnerable in disasters due to culture, tradition, and harmful gender-stereotypes. Notwithstanding this fact being true, men are also victims of disaster. Men are severely impacted by a disaster through the loss of family, livelihoods, and social power. However, despite such issues, they ought to be responsible for the family income, taking care of family members, and participating in post-disaster community activities (Mishra, 2009). One cannot manage this process without any form of support or relief. As a result of the fact that women are viewed as weak and helpless victims, psychosocial support in the aftermath of a disaster focuses on women (Ariyabandu, 2009). Consequently, men are left without psychosocial support since they are expected to be strong and cope with crisis in a masculine manner (Ariyabandu, 2009). The failure of providing coping mechanisms for men in times of crisis can victimise them. Providing humanitarian assistance through a gender lens should therefore include both men and women. Relief interventions that are gender blind could reinforce traditional roles and relationships and jeopardise the position of women (Clifton and Gell, 2001).

Thus, it is vital to use a gender-lens in humanitarian response and focus on both women and men. This is called gender-mainstreaming. The definition used by ECOSOC describes this process in further detail:

“The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.” (Eklund & Tellier, 2012, p. 594; ECOSOC, 1997).
1.5 Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, 2004

The tsunami in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004, caused a large catastrophe in 12 countries. As previously mentioned, the occurrence of this natural hazard will form the case study for this research. The three most severely impacted countries were Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India (Hines, 2007). Because of this tsunami, over 300,000 people lost their lives. What is more, “Four times as many women than men were killed in the tsunami-affected areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India” (MacDonald, 2005, p.474). The imbalanced male-to-female survival rate has created gender specific problems in the survival camps, such as sexual abuse or physical harassment (MacDonald, 2005). While this thesis focuses on gender equality during the emergency phase of humanitarian response, it is necessary to take account of the situation of gender equality pre-tsunami in order to design and implement gender equal and effective relief programs.

Hines (2007) explains three broad reasons why more women than men died in the 2004 tsunami. The first one is the traditional division of labour. Many of the people that died were members of the fishing community who were working on the day the tsunami hit. Men were out fishing at sea while their wives were waiting for them on the shoreline and did not see the big waves coming. Furthermore, Hines mentions that women are care-takers and spend much time in the house, and were therefore not aware of the approaching disaster that was about to come, leaving them little to no time to escape (Oxfam International, 2005). A second reason stems from patriarchal traditions in which women are not allowed to participate in certain activities, such as learning how to swim. This inability leaves women no chance to escape when such a natural disaster hits. These patriarchal traditions also played a large role in the aftermath of the tsunami in which women were not allowed to visit a male doctor (Oxfam International, 2005), thereby neglecting their health and psychosocial needs. This is an example of how lack of gender-sensitivity planning in humanitarian response has a more damaging effect. A further example of patriarchal traditions was seen in fishing communities. These were largely male-dominated since men were seen as heads of their household. Relief funds and supplies were handed out to the heads of the households, thereby overlooking women who had a difficult time proving themselves to be heads of a household, in this male-dominant community (ActionAid International, 2006). A third reason Hines mentions is
related to gender socialisations. The process of gender socialisation leads to a certain division of labour and gender expectations in which certain activities are attributed to males, and others to females.

The gender dimensions of the 2004 tsunami have been little acknowledged or even understood (Pittaway et al., 2007). During the relief aid and reconstruction efforts, the needs of both women and girls have been significantly marginalised (Pittaway et al., 2007). After the horrendous waves of horror of the tsunami, the damage continued. Gender inequalities and social pressure resulted in an increase of domestic violence and rape against women (Pittaway et al., 2007). The poor living conditions of temporary camps after the tsunami left women exposed and vulnerable. Sexual gender based violence increased in the camps due to the absence of lights at night and no separate toilets for men and women (Pittaway et al., 2007). These conditions only aggravate the trauma and mental health issues associated with disasters. In these camps, there was only a small presence of sexual and reproductive health services available and victims and survivors were left with little support for medical care (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2005). Survival in the aftermath of a natural disaster is partly about forming livelihoods. These livelihoods are however not always negotiated sensitively by domestic or foreign NGO’s who offer these livelihoods (Ruwanpura, 2008). Women and their communities are sometimes neglected or disregarded by humanitarian intervention due to the failures and incompetence of the state or the NGO sector (Ruwanpura, 2008).

1.6 Research Question & Objectives

The preceding section has provided a brief overview and insight into several issues that need to be taken into consideration when conducting humanitarian response. Concerns vary from the inclusion or exclusion of disaster-affected people to issues of gender equality in humanitarian relief operations. To exemplify and compare between different responses, the study will focus on the three countries that were the most significantly damaged in the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean. In sum, these distinct study components have led to the following research question: To what extent can the inclusion of disaster-affected people, illustrated by the case of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, be used in humanitarian response to improve gender equality?
The main research question can be analysed into smaller research objectives with the aim of synthesising these smaller components into a larger whole again. The main objective that follows from the research question is the following: Establish a mechanism to include disaster-affected people to improve gender equality in humanitarian response. This main objective can then be divided into smaller specific objectives. Firstly, one needs to determine the usefulness of including disaster-affected people in humanitarian response. Secondly, one must analyse and assess the issue of gender equality in humanitarian response. Thirdly, one must establish altered ways for humanitarian responses to natural disasters.

1.7 Research Design

In order to provide a thorough answer to the research question, one must be careful when selecting and analysing data. Whereas the collection of primary data can provide researchers with a large amount of valuable information, secondary data also prove to be very valuable. Due to geographical reasons, it is beyond the scope of this study to collect primary data in any form, either qualitative or quantitative. Therefore, this thesis will rely on the collection of data from secondary sources.

This thesis will make use of a qualitative research method, namely a case study. The term ‘case’ connects the study with a location, organisation or community (Bryman, 2012). In this case, the location is the Indian Ocean and the communities are from the three states of Sri Lanka, India, and Indonesia. Gerring (2004) defines a case study as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger set of units” (p. 342). By studying this case, one tries to understand humanitarian response across a larger set of cases and countries. The case of the tsunami can be classified as a representative or typical case, also called an exemplifying case (Bryman, 2012). With this type of case, “the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation” (Yin, 2009, p. 48). Noticeably, a tsunami is not an everyday situation, but it is not an uncommon phenomenon for the countries which have been affected by it. These types of cases provide suitable contexts for certain research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012). The case of the tsunami is a single case-study. However, within this single case-study, the three cases of Sri Lanka, India, and Indonesia will be analysed and compared. This can then be called a comparative case study.
1.8 Structure

The overall structure of the study takes the form of seven chapters. The second chapter of this research will discuss methodology which consists of a literature review and a research design. The literature that will be examined will be based on secondary data such as scholarly journals, books, organisational policies, evaluation reports and peer reviewed articles. The literature review develops an analytical framework based on four key concepts of this study. This framework will be used in the subsequent three chapters which respectively discuss the case studies of Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. Within these case studies, it will be analysed to what extent beneficiaries were meaningfully engaged in the humanitarian response as well as to what extent gender equality was taken into account in these relief interventions. This is followed by the sixth chapter which discusses and analyses the comparison between the case studies with the aim of forming a basis to draw possible causal links between the cases and the key concepts for the purpose of answering the central research question. Summarising this thesis will be done in the seventh and final chapter which contains concluding remarks regarding the significant and distinct value of meaningful beneficiary participation in humanitarian response to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of relief interventions as well as the improvement of gender equality in emergency relief.
Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter of this study addresses methodology and aims to provide a coherent overview of the concepts that shape the research question and research design. In order to compare three different cases, one needs to have a thorough understanding of the key concepts to be able to make an informed analysis which will form the basis of this thesis’ analytical framework. Moreover, this thesis will rely on qualitative research methods, which will be explored in this chapter. The six-step methodological approach which shapes this research will be explained. Additionally, this methodological chapter will examine relevant components that constitute case study research with a focus on comparative case study analysis as well as limitations to case study research. Lastly and most importantly, emphasis will be put on case study research deployed for this thesis.

2.2 Literature review and conceptual framework

This study is based on secondary sources, which include both crisis literature and academic literature. Academic literature as a term is used to denote pieces of work that are published in peer-reviewed journals (Eklund & Tellier, 2012). With crisis literature, one refers to work produced by non-academic institutions, including international organisations (IOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and governmental organisations (Eklund & Tellier, 2012).

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the research question, it is necessary to first define key concepts. The first of these concepts is ‘disaster-affected people’. To understand the meaning of disaster, this study adopts the widely-accepted definition from the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC):

“Disasters combine two elements: events and vulnerable people. A disaster occurs when a disaster agent (the event) exposes the vulnerability of individuals and communities in such a way that their lives are directly threatened or sufficient harm has been done to their community’s economic and social structures to undermine their ability to survive. A disaster is fundamentally a socio-economic phenomenon. It is an
extreme but not necessarily abnormal state of everyday life in which the continuity of community structures and processes temporarily fails. Social disruption may typify a disaster but not social disintegration” (IFRC, 1993, p. 12-13).

From this definition, one can argue that people have certain vulnerabilities that can be mitigated in normal circumstances, but when hit by a catastrophic event, these vulnerable individuals struggle with their ability to survive. When their vulnerabilities are exposed and almost impossible to mitigate, one could call this group ‘disaster-affected people’.

The difficulty in mitigation leads to required external help, or what is also called ‘humanitarian response’. This concept also forms an important component of the research question. To understand this concept, the study employs the following definition: “The term humanitarian response is used to describe the national or international response that is generated by the crisis, recognising that, in the literature, it is sometimes referred to interchangeably as ‘humanitarian action’, ‘emergency response’, ‘disaster relief’, and ‘crisis management.’” (Eklund & Tellier, 2012, p. 593). Whereas the notions of ‘humanitarian action’, ‘emergency response’, and ‘crisis management’ are largely similar to ‘humanitarian response’, the concept of ‘disaster relief’ can be analysed further. The term ‘disaster relief’ is used in the event of sudden catastrophes such as natural disasters (Kovács and Spens, 2007). This concept can be analysed in more detail when defining ‘relief’, which is a: “foreign intervention into a society with the intention of helping local citizens” (Long and Wood, 1995, p. 213). Humanitarian response, as well as the interchangeable terminology, can thus be understood as the response to a sudden catastrophic event which requires (external) help, relief and assistance for affected people.

Next to disaster-affected people and humanitarian response, the third and last important concept is gender equality. Firstly, the term gender “refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships [between and among them]. (…) Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context” (Eklund & Tellier, 2012, p 593) (UNDESA). On the other hand, there is the term equality. This term can indicate two kinds of meaning: “first, a kind of justice or fairness in treatment and second a notion of sameness, conformity and homogeneity” (Tarp, 2000, p. 192). From this definition one can term gender equality as equal social
attributes and fairness in opportunities for both men and women as well as sameness and conformity in expectations.

2.3 Inclusion of affected people

Humanitarian action can be seen as an arena or space in which several involved actors such as donor representatives, field staff, aid recipients and other surrounding actors negotiate the outcomes of the given aid (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). It is not necessarily one actor who determines everything, rather it should be seen as an interface between aid providers and aid seekers in which aid recipients strategically make themselves visible and aware to relief agencies for the purpose of receiving aid and becoming eligible for their services (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). Their eligibility is legitimate because they are people in need. However, external actors view vulnerable people as helpless and thereby deprive aid recipients of their agency (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). To reiterate the first chapter, agency is defined by Hennink et al. (2012) as the capacity of individuals to act independently and make choices. Being vulnerable and in need of help does not automatically mean that these people are deprived of all their capacity. Nonetheless, this is how they are perceived by aid providers. This deprivation of agency is even more applicable for women since it is noted by Fordham (2004) that especially women are subjected to this labelling of vulnerability as they are often put in the same groups as children, a group that is most often referred to as the most vulnerable. The eligibility for aid recipients to make use of the services offered by aid providers has increased with the introduction of the Sphere standards in 2000 on the enhancement of agency accountability towards aid recipients, that brought about a new notion that beneficiaries are rights holders and are entitled to protection against violence and disaster risks as well as basic services (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010).

Even though humanitarian action is intended to be beneficial, it sometimes proves to have a detrimental effect, with the likelihood of repetition since aid programs are inadequately evaluated (Lee, 2008). An important component of this inadequacy is the lack of acceptable beneficiary feedback which is the result of operational restraints in emergency situations in which relief organisations favour top-down approaches (Lee, 2008). The latter approach increases dependency on aid and does little to encourage self-sufficiency of the affected community (Lee, 2008). Next to an inadequacy in evaluation, a difference in expectations
between aid providers and aid receivers can prove damaging and detrimental to beneficiaries. What external relief organizations deem essential in an emergency setting does not necessarily have to match the expectations of aid recipients. For instance, after the tsunami in Sri Lanka, NGOs prioritised the provision of sanitation and health promotion, whereas the local community had different priorities and therefore different expectations (Lee, 2008). These differences in priorities and expectations can lead to frustration on both sides. Even if humanitarian organisations have valuable reasons for their priorities which are based on experience and resources, transparency and accountability towards the beneficiaries is crucial to avoid a detrimental effect. Involving affected people in the relief and recovery process can change their position from passive observers to active participants who regain control of their own destiny (Lawther, 2009; Sullivan, 2003).

The debate on whether to include women as equal objects or subjects in humanitarian aid is also called the paradoxes of feminism in which women must emphasise their difference as a woman, but claim their sameness to men as equal human beings (Ticktin, 2011; Scott, 1996). “Being a woman does not in itself lead to greater vulnerability, but women may be more vulnerable to hazards than men, given the unequal gendered power relations that limit women’s access to and control over resources” (Bradshaw, 2014, p. S54). What is more, vulnerability to a disaster is not based on sex or biological differences between men and women, rather it is based on the way society constructs what it entails to be a man or a woman, what tasks they should be given, and how they should behave. (Gustafson 1998; Bradshaw, 2014). This in turn influences how risk is perceived and consequently responded to, with this notion being understood differently by women and men (Gustafson, 1998; Bradshaw, 2014).

These unequal gendered power relations are difficult to observe for outsiders. When relief agencies offer assistance in the event of a sudden disaster, little attention is paid to underlying gender power relations of the respective population. Rather, the entire focus is on the ultimate goal of alleviating suffering. In order to focus one’s effort on the latter goal in a more efficient way, humanitarian organisations should make use of evidence and corresponding data analyses. When responding to natural disasters, the humanitarian system lacks an evidence-driven approach (Mazuranza et al., 2013). One way to improve this is with the use of sex-
and age-disaggregated data (SADD), through which operational agencies can deliver aid more effectively and efficiently, because SADD provides agencies with information on how a disaster can affect a certain population (Mazuranza et al., 2013). Furthermore, SADD allows for an inquiry into power dynamics and their potential consequence for gender roles (Mazuranza et al., 2012). This data can be collected through means of both qualitative and quantitative methods which both involve the participation of the respective population (Mazuranza et al., 2013). Whereas surveys are examples of quantitative methods, focus-group discussions or in-depth interviews with key-informants serve the purpose of qualitative methods (Bryman, 2012). For both surveys and interviews with key informants, the participation of the population is required. During assessments in crisis situations, gender analyses reveal who is affected to what extent, moreover, these analyses can emphasise the immediate needs of affected people and determine to what resources they have access or not (IASC, 2009; Mazuranza et al., 2013). Conducting gender analyses is not only crucial when it comes to effectively distributing aid and addressing practical gender needs, it is also important for addressing more strategic gender interests (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; Bradshaw, 2014). Practical needs are those that arrive from an immediate perceived need, such as a disaster, whereas strategic gender needs are associated with the transformation needed to alter the unequal situation between men and women (Bradshaw, 2014). Aiding women’s practical needs without taking account of the strategic gender needs can sometimes reinforce the subordinate position of women, rather than improving it (Bradshaw, 2014). For instance, providing aid in the form of resources for women when they have limited ability to enjoy the advantages of these resources can cause friction in the household, due to underlying gender power balances (Bradshaw, 2014).
2.4 Analytical framework

In order to establish an analytical framework and identify and grasp the value of the relevant concepts, one must identify a research method which is appropriate and suitable to inform the creation of this framework. An accessible method would be concept analysis. Rodwell (1996) defines a concept as a label or term that is used to describe a phenomenon or a group of phenomena. As mentioned in the literature review, the definition of the relevant concepts has been discussed (see figure 1). The analysis of these concepts is imperative for their application in the subsequent case studies. When discussing the case studies, one can use these concepts to analyse the emergency response to the tsunami and determine the usefulness of meaningful participation and its value for improving gender equality.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework


2.5 Research Design: Qualitative research

The approach to empirical research adopted for this study is one of qualitative methods. These methods are essentially descriptive and inferential in character (Gillham, 2015). In qualitative approaches, one has to describe and interpret data which enables a researcher to understand the meaning of what is going on (Gillham, 2015). A qualitative research method is associated with an inductive approach to data. This approach involves drawing generalisable inferences out of observations with the aim of establishing a theory (Bryman, 2012). This approach is opposite to quantitative research methods which employ a deductive approach. The latter approach involves deducting a hypothesis from a theory, followed by subjecting this hypothesis to empirical scrutiny with the aim of confirming or rejecting the hypothesis with consequence of possible revision for the used theory (Bryman, 2012). Using an inductive approach, allows a researcher to develop grounded theory, theory that is grounded in the evidence that comes from the research (Gillham, 2015). Grounded theory stresses the importance of allowing theoretical ideas to appear from one’s data (Bryman, 2012). Due to practical constraints, it is beyond the scope of this study to gather resources and capacity to collect primary data. A different approach to research is to conduct a secondary analysis to archived data. However, this type of research is not without complications. Re-analysing data requires data sources that can be openly consulted (Seale et al., 2013). There are two obstacles with that type of inquiry. “The first is the absence in most countries of any national effort to either gather together or draw attention to existing resources. The second is the lack of infrastructures and also of agreed practical procedures for preparing, storing and disseminating qualitative data” (Seale et al., 2013, p. 298). Furthermore, there are ethical and consent issues to be considered, issues with coverage and context of the research and fieldwork as well as unfamiliarity with the method used to collect the data (Seale et al., 2013). Due to these issues, it is beyond the scope of this study to (re)analyse raw data. This limitation in analysing raw data has consequences for the usability of the outcome of this research. In other words, this dissertation will not have the ability to develop grounded theory.

Bryman (2012) uses a six-step process to the qualitative research process. The methodological approach taken in this study is based on this six-step process. The first step
is the formulation of a general research question. To reiterate the first chapter, the purpose of this investigation is to research the extent to which the inclusion of affected people can be used in humanitarian response to improve gender equality, illustrated by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004. The second step is the selection of relevant sites and subjects. As the research question already mentions, the relevant site and subject for this study is the case of the tsunami, specified to the three most affected countries of Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. The third step is the collection of relevant data. The objective of this dissertation is not to collect primary data, but to rely on secondary sources that have collected data, in the form of academic literature that is peer reviewed, such as books, journal articles, and other relevant sources as well as crisis literature. The collection of data is followed by the fourth step, the interpretation of this data which will be done through the conceptual and analytical framework developed in this chapter. The fifth step is conceptual and theoretical work which is followed by the sixth and final step of writing up findings and conclusions.

2.6 Case study research

Case study research can incorporate quantitative data, nevertheless it is commonly associated with qualitative research (Guthrie, 2010). This type of research is engaged with description, exploration and understanding (Cousin, 2005). A case study method involves the in-depth and holistic examination of one or more relevant cases (Guthrie, 2010). The goal of case study researchers is to examine a case, expecting to uncover unusual interactions, explanations, cause-and effect connections and new interpretations (deMarrais and Lapan, 2004). Uncovering meaning through means of a case study is done by depicting and exploring a setting with a view to advancing the understanding of that setting (Cousin, 2005). As opposed to experimental and quantitative research which is concerned with measuring what happens, case studies are engaged with how and why certain things happen (Brown, 2010). Case study research leaves the meaning and interpretation up to the researcher who can compare it to other relevant cases (deMarrais and Lapan, 2004). A case study could be used to determine whether a particular intervention is successful, moreover, it tries to identify why and how this intervention works on the respective target population or entity (Brown, 2010). Qualitative case studies facilitate the exploration of a phenomenon within a certain context by using several data sources through a variety of lenses which allows for multiple traits of
the phenomenon to be understood (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Uncovering meaning of a case is done through analysis. According to Stake (1995), analysis “is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71). Since this study is not able to encompass raw data, the emphasis of the analysis will be on the final compilations that are written down in academic literature.

Furthermore, Stake (1995) identifies three categories of case study research. First of all, there is the intrinsic case study in which the researcher’s goal is simply to understand the case at hand, which is often used for the purpose of evaluation research and aims to generalise within the case rather than from the case (Stake, 1995). Secondly, there is the instrumental case study in which the researcher explores the case as an instance of a larger group and in contrast to an intrinsic case study, an instrumental case aims to generalise from a study, rather than within a case (Stake, 1995). Lastly, there is the collective case study in which researchers select more than one case of a larger group to realise some sort of representation and similar to the instrumental case, collective cases also aim to generalise from a case (Stake, 1995). A collective case study collects cases with a common thread (Brown, 2010).

As opposed to Stake, Yin (2003) defines case studies in a different way. The first of these is an explanatory case, which one could use to explain presumed causal links in real-life interventions (Yin, 2003). Secondly, there is an exploratory case which is used to explore situations in which the intervention under evaluation has no clear set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). Thirdly, there is the descriptive case to describe a phenomenon and the context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). Lastly, there are multiple case studies of which the aim is to explore differences both within and between cases with the goal of replicating findings across cases (Yin, 2003). This dissertation follows a case-study design, with an in-depth analysis of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004. The latter case is divided into three smaller cases, which are the tsunami in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. These cases can be classified as collective case studies to achieve representation in humanitarian response and gender equality. Furthermore, the study classifies as both an explanatory and descriptive multiple case study in which it describes the aftermath of the tsunami in the three different contexts it occurred, as well as explaining the presumed causal link between the inclusion of affected people and the improvement of gender equality in humanitarian response.
2.7 Comparative case study

A single case study can provide evidence that a particular intervention proved successful in a singular instance, whereas multiple studies employing the same strategy can provide a deeper insight into the process and stronger generalisable evidence of the outcome (Brown, 2010). Considering that a single case allows for a more detailed analysis, a multiple case study permits a wider range of settings, occurrences and results to be considered (Brown, 2010). A comparative case study relies on a practice which is known as selecting on the dependent variable in which a phenomenon of political interest is selected, data is gathered on the occurrence of that phenomenon, and then followed by a determination of what characteristics these occurrences have in common (Dion, 2002). The dependent variable or phenomenon in this comparative case study is the occurrence of the tsunami.

A multiple case study can be used for two things according to Yin (2003), it either “(a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)” (p. 47). The in-depth analysis of the tsunami in this study focuses on multiple cases. Whereas this study cannot generalise on the basis of grounded theory due to the absence of the collection of raw data, this dissertation can draw broad yet strong conclusions and thus make recommendations for the future, based on the multiple case study research method.

2.8 Limitations case study research

Every research method contains limitations. Case study research is no exception to this. The first limitation comes from the difficulty in replication with a case since the study is embedded into a particular context (Brown, 2010). The second limitation stems from ‘ex post facto fallacy’ which refers to the tendency to observe co-related events to a certain case or event and assume a causal connection between the two, even though there is a lack of the actual demonstration of that causality (Brown, 2010). These limitations are not unique to case study research, likewise in narrative interpretation, it is tempting to develop a story that moves beyond the conclusions that the observations allow (Brown, 2010). Yin (1984) describes three more limitations to case study research. The first limitation mentioned by Yin is the lack of rigor in case study research in which carelessness on the part of the researcher leads to biased outcomes and conclusions (1984). Secondly, case study research proves
unsuitable for scientific generalization (Yin, 1984). The third and last limitation stems from an abundance in data that is not managed systematically or structurally (Yin, 1984).

2.9 Case study tsunami

Previous sections have discussed and outlined the several components that constitute qualitative research with a focus on case study research and an emphasis on comparative case study research as well as limitations to this type of research design. Emphasis will now be put on how the case study design is deployed in this thesis.

The case study for this dissertation follows the event of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004. The earthquake on the coast of Sumatra brought catastrophe and significant loss of life to many countries in the Indian Ocean. Out of all these countries, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia were the most severe states affected in terms of loss of life. Next to this commonality, there is another striking feature that these countries share. In communities in all these countries, Nadu (India), Aceh (Indonesia) and in Sri Lanka, more women than men died as a result of the waves (Rigg et al., 2008). Furthermore, the tsunami triggered a worldwide response, heavily influenced by the media, which resulted in an affluence of funding and aid for the affected countries (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). This abundance in funding caused an increase in the number of humanitarian organisations that mobilised to the damaged areas and offered assistance to the tsunami victims. Some call the affluence in funding and aid the third wave of the tsunami (Thurnheer, 2009). The increase in agencies offering assistance resulted in a strong competition between these organizations, whereby participation of local organisations and beneficiaries was largely overlooked and ignored (Stirrat, 2006). Reasons for the higher number of female casualties and the cause and effect of the competition between agencies on aid will be discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters.

The commonalities of the highest number of victims, the inequality in casualty figures according to gender and the exclusion of meaningful participation of affected people, are shared among the countries of Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. These shared features form the basis for the selection of exactly these cases for this study. All cases are affected by the same natural hazard and share similarities in the aftermath of this event. By applying the analytical framework in these three cases, the research can determine whether one can speak
of disaster-affected people when looking at the victims. Next to that, through analysing these cases, the study can assess whether the response from the aid agencies can be classified as a humanitarian response. Additionally, the higher number of female casualties forms the basis for an analysis of gender equality in these cases. Furthermore, neglecting the participation of beneficiaries in the response forms the starting point for analysing the effects of excluding local participation on the provision of aid and its results, and thereby examine the potential importance of inclusion.

Once the concepts of the analytical framework have been established in each case, one can analyse the influence of one concept on another and establish if there are causal links. These potential causal links shape the basis to answering the research question by answering smaller questions. For instance, is there a link between including disaster-affected people and a more tailored response to their needs? Or is there a connection between higher numbers of female victims and the existence of gender inequality in the targeted society? Can there be an association between (external) humanitarian response and detrimental aid? The answers to these questions formulate answers to the previously mentioned research objectives and thereby form the basis for answering the main research question. By employing the same strategy for all three cases, the study can make a comparison and consequently draw broader causal links and conclusions.

2.10 Conclusion

This methodological chapter has established a conceptual and analytical framework. Furthermore, this section has highlighted key components that constitute qualitative research whereby the six step process of Bryman is employed for this study. Additionally, since this study makes use of case study research, emphasis was put on the latter with a focus on comparative case study research. Lastly, the approach taken in this thesis has been outlined by explaining the choice for the specific case study and the structure in answering the central research question. In the chapter that follows, the first of three cases will be discussed, namely the study of Sri Lanka.
Chapter 3: Case study Sri Lanka

3.1 Introduction

“In rural coastal areas, many men who were fishing far out at sea survived, as the giant waves passed harmlessly under their small boats. When the waves hit the shore, they flattened coastal communities and killed many of the women and children, most of who were at home on that Sunday morning. In agricultural areas men were often working out in the fields or doing errands away from the house, or taking produce to markets . . . The sheer strength needed to stay alive in the torrent was also often decisive in determining who survived. Many women and young children, unable to stay on their feet, or afloat, in the powerful waves simply tired and drowned. Women clinging to one or more children would have tired even more quickly” (Oxfam, 2005, p. 3).

On the morning of December 26, 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean near the coast of Sumatra, sent tsunami waves hitting the eastern, southern and south-western coasts of Sri Lanka causing catastrophic destruction (Yamada et al., 2006). More than 35,000 people in Sri Lanka fell victim to the waves, whereas 20,000 were injured and several hundred thousand people became displaced (Gunawardena and Baland, 2016). The tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 brought about a worldwide response with funding coming from corners from all over the world, making this the most generous humanitarian response ever (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). One reason for these unusually large donations is the media coverage of the disaster and the victims (Stirrat, 2006). This media coverage resulted in a quick response and delivery of aid, whereby international relief such as medical personnel started arriving within a day (Athukorala, 2012).

The third chapter of this study encompasses the first of three case studies. The chapter analyses the response in Sri Lanka that was triggered by the tsunami and looks at the various concepts of the research question in detail. The analytical framework in this chapter is then applied by establishing the presence of the various components of the framework in the case of Sri Lanka. These are disaster-affected people, humanitarian response, gender equality and
the inclusion of local people. Any potential causal links between these components will be discussed and analysed to a greater extent in a subsequent chapter.

3.2 Sri Lanka

Pre-tsunami Sri Lanka has endured a long-running conflict which has been complex and multi-dimensional, fuelled by intertwining ethnic, religious and ideological differences (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). Since the seventies, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have sought to deliver self-government for the Tamil nation through armed struggle for more than two decades (Stokke, 2007). After a military deadlock, combined with an economic crisis, a ceasefire agreement was signed in February 2002 with subsequent peace negotiations in the same year and in 2003 (Stokke, 2007). The LTTE controls large parts of Northern and Eastern Sir Lanka (Stokke, 2007), both regions that were severely affected by the tsunami. The conflict has caused large-scale displacement of people, both within Sri Lanka and outside its borders (Hyndman, 2008). This conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and LTTE has worsened because of the tsunami due to the struggle concerning the distribution of aid (Kleinfeld, 2007). Allegations claim that both political factions of the government and LTTE hijacked relief items to distribute to their own population (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). Nevertheless, by late January 2005, due to pressure of the international community, the government of Sri Lanka developed a joint mechanism to deliver aid to the tsunami-affected areas together with the LTTE (Kleinfeld, 2007). Nonetheless, the ceasefire agreement was abrogated in 2008 after which fighting was renewed (Hyndman, 2011). A more detailed discussion concerning the influence of conflict on the provision of assistance will be given in the case study of Indonesia.
3.3 Inclusion of affected people

From all over the world, people and humanitarian organisations responded to the tsunami in the Indian Ocean (Lee, 2008). The natural disaster triggered an overwhelming international response as is clear from the observation of a Sri Lankan NGO director: “there has never been so much money available, which is creating unique opportunities” (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). The abundance in funding led to an increase in agencies responding, whereby a low entry barrier to the system allowed the admission of inexperienced and at times incompetent actors, especially in Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). Subsequently, the abundance in funding led to fierce competition among relief agencies whereby every organisation needed to rapidly spend their resources to meet donor demands (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). Disaster relief can be characterised as high levels of competition between humanitarian organisations and a lack of co-ordination (Stirrat, 2006). The post-tsunami efforts in Sri Lanka proved to be no exception to this characterisation (Stirrat, 2006). The increased competition between relief agencies combined with a lack of coordination and cooperation, resulted in chaos and left beneficiaries with no moral reservations for equal distribution of resources (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). People in crisis are in shock and do not think rationally when it comes to resource distribution in times of disaster. This is exacerbated when relief agencies do little to provide structure in the aftermath of a disaster by focusing more on their own organisation in relation to other agencies at the expense of beneficiaries’ needs. Furthermore, the affluence in funding did not only lead to increased competition, but also to biased relief interventions since funding agencies and donors felt some sort of ownership in the relief effort whereby they preferred visible interventions that focused on particular target groups, such as women and children (Stirrat, 2006). Focusing on particular target groups leads to the exclusion of other beneficiaries in need. The drive of international NGOs to build their (international) image and please their donors, often turned out to have a detrimental effect since it undermined the quality of aid delivery (Athukorala, 2012). Humanitarian assistance aims to alleviate suffering in an equal and impartial manner which is complicated by demands from external donors to focus only on certain groups of beneficiaries.
The stark competition between agencies and the biased interventions works counter-productive when it comes to humanitarian objectives of relief effort which aim to be neutral, independent and impartial (Stirrat, 2006). Organisations are more occupied with providing the most resources coming from their organisation than alleviating suffering in a neutral, independent and impartial manner. Consequently, this strong competition led to a loss of coordination, and combined with a lack of knowledge on the local context agencies were operating in, it resulted in flawed processes to involve beneficiaries in the projects (Thurnheer, 2009). What is more, due to the pressure of competition, humanitarian organisations needed to spend their enormous amount of resources quickly to satisfy donor requirements (Korf et al., 2010). Therefore, they felt the need to offer attractive packages of aid to beneficiaries, a practice that increased social tension, jealousy and discontent among the recipients of aid (Korf et al., 2010). The abundance in funding caused short-term aid agencies to become overloaded with resources (Zhang, 2016). However, these tampered with the ecological and social resources upon which beneficiaries rely, which in turn weakened their local capacities and self-recovery, making them very dependent on remote and unpredictable bureaucratic solutions (Zhang, 2016).

Even though many of the relief organisations signed the humanitarian Code of Conduct and were committed to establishing functioning partnerships with local organisations, the latter found it difficult to participate in the implementation of disaster relief activities (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). According to principle six of the Red Cross Code of Conduct, it states that: “We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities … Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme” (SCHR and ICRC, 1994, p. 4). Furthermore, the Good Humanitarian Donorship emphasises the involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response as well as strengthening the capacity of affected countries and local communities to respond to humanitarian crises (GHD, 2003; Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). Competition between the humanitarian agencies made it difficult to implement these rules of the Code of Conduct. Involving beneficiaries in the design and implementation of humanitarian response provides them with insight into the means and resources that are necessary for an effective delivery of aid whereby the knowledge and insights on the part of the beneficiaries can help
improve more tailored assistance to affected people. Furthermore, by allowing affected people to actively participate in humanitarian response, aid agencies develop and build the capacity of beneficiaries which is necessary to empower them in potential future hazards. What is more, effective relief and lasting rehabilitation are long-term impacts which are difficult to achieve with the often excessive, short-lived and culturally insensitive offer of national and international assistance (Zhang, 2016). The culturally insensitive offer of aid stems from a lack of local knowledge on the part of aid providers which can only be enhanced by involving local people and beneficiaries in the provision of aid. Once the humanitarian organisations leave on short term, the affected people need to take care of themselves to continue rehabilitation in the long run. In order to do so, beneficiaries need to be given the right tools to develop and build their capacity.

In the event of providing aid, identifying beneficiaries can be a challenging activity whereby there are two types of mistargeting beneficiaries (Gunawardena and Baland, 2016). The first type is an error of exclusion in which beneficiaries are missed and left out, and secondly there is an error of inclusion, whereby aid is provided to non-needy individuals (Gunawardena and Baland, 2016). Unfair distribution of aid can increase (pre)existing tensions in the community. This was the case in Sri Lanka where a division was made between tsunami-affected people which proved eligible for aid and those who were outside of the affected areas and therefore not appropriate to receive help (Lee, 2008). Many people in the tsunami-affected region in Sri Lanka who were not affected by the hazard were nevertheless affected by the long running conflict pre-tsunami and therefore also required assistance (Zeccola, 2011). The division between conflict and non-conflict beneficiaries was not well-received by the community and the result of the unequal aid distribution may have worsened local income inequalities (Lee, 2008). People affected by conflict as opposed to the tsunami can be seen as non-needy individuals by aid organisations, because these agencies are there to provide assistance solely to the tsunami affected people. Furthermore, people who lived on a safe distance from the coast and whose property was not damaged could also be seen as non-needy individuals. Providing aid to them at the expense of direct beneficiaries can be seen as an error of inclusion. In Sri Lanka, the absence of formal communication and consultation mechanisms contributed to a lack of transparency on the part of the aid providers and led to limited input in reconstruction planning and implementation by the affected communities.
(Mulligan and Shaw, 2007). In the absence of suitable communication mechanisms, poor and socially isolated families were excluded from aid beneficiary lists, while at the same time, families with social and political resources possessed multiple strategies for accessing aid (Mulligan and Shaw, 2007). Lacking communication channels or social networks while living in a remote area leads to the error of exclusion whereby some beneficiaries are missed and not reached by aid agencies.

In Sri Lanka, relief agencies neglected community based organisations as active participators which is inefficient as humanitarian organisations need vulnerable people to assist in order to fulfil the function of providing aid (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). Humanitarian aid agencies operating in emergency response need to engage with local staff who possess context-specific knowledge, skills and experience, which are all needed for an effective delivery of aid (Harris, 2006). Strong competition, a lack of coordination and a focus on donor demands left beneficiaries on the outside when it came to participation and involvement. Aid recipients were partly deprived as agents by the respective aid givers, nevertheless they turned out to occupy a significant role in setting the terms of aid allocation (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). These terms of aid allocation were concerned with issues of legitimisation for the allocation of money and resources which had to be negotiated due to an abundance of relief agencies that came to Sri Lanka (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). All these humanitarian organisations needed to allocate their funds rapidly which led to beneficiaries having a say in the allocation of these funds since there were too many agencies and too many resources. Negotiations took place between the government of Sri Lanka and relief agencies as well as within the humanitarian community (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010).

Knowledge of the local context such as local geography, norms and taboos, and languages are essential for humanitarian organisations to even begin addressing the needs of disaster affected people (Harris, 2006). As local organisations possess knowledge on the local culture and practices, they are better equipped to build community resilience and challenge prevailing cultural practices that for instance limit women’s roles in the public sphere, without undermining overall gender relations (Dominelli, 2013). When assistance workers lack knowledge of the local context and neglect beneficiaries’ input and expertise, aid can sometimes have a more detrimental than relieving effect. An example of detrimental relief
stems from the building of houses in Colombo, Sri Lanka post-tsunami. A lack of consultation with the affected communities in planning and design resulted in little regard for local family arrangements and consequently led to inappropriate design features due to the absence of expertise among international aid agency staff (Mulligan and Shaw, 2007). These houses were built rapidly in the aftermath of the tsunami, but due to inappropriate constructions, they will not last in the long-term. By then, the relief agencies will have left the area already, leaving beneficiaries on their own with poorly constructed housing. This will leave affected people at a greater risk when another natural hazard strikes in the future.

A second example of detrimental relief stems from the lack of knowledge of the local culture. This is especially important when it comes to dealing with loss and grieving. In Sri Lanka, foreign aid workers were trained and possessed the skills to provide counselling and psychosocial interventions (Dominelli, 2013). However, local affected people preferred more culturally appropriate traditional ways to mourn, that are based on local knowledge and traditions (Dominelli, 2013). For instance, in a community in Sri Lanka, survivors reduced the trauma and pain caused by the tsunami, through praying and lighting candles in temples which were used to deal with the trauma but also to celebrate survival (Dominelli, 2013). The preferred local customs by beneficiaries to deal with trauma, emphasises the importance of including local customs and cultures into disaster responses instead of imposing external models based on Western knowledge on beneficiaries’ activities which could have a disempowering effect (Dominelli, 2013).

Local NGOs in Sri Lanka complained that humanitarians who came to offer aid for the tsunami were totally unaware of the situation they were operating in, acting as if they were working in a dysfunctional society such as Darfur or Somalia (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). Making false assumptions about an area one goes to provide assistance to, causes misunderstanding and mistargeted relief. Even though some of the volunteers that offered help were organised and professional people, most of the volunteers did not speak any of the local languages and turned out to cause more trouble than they were worth (Mulligan and Shaw, 2007). Labelling people vulnerable allows aid providers to authorise their own interventions and make a legitimate claim for their need for expertise (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). For instance, efforts by women’s organisations were seen as vulnerable and therefore not even considered by the international aid providers (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010; Fulu,
Top-down approaches in the delivery of aid are justified by organisations which claim that affected people suffer from emotional and psychological consequences as a result of the disaster and do not prioritize involvement in relief implementation (Lee, 2008). This proved to be a false assumption in the area of Ampara in Sri Lanka, where civic and local community structures were to a large extent intact after the tsunami, and their involvement could have enabled projects that were more culturally sensitive and appropriate to the needs of the community (Lee, 2008; Shaw and Goda, 2004; Jalali, 2002). Expertise of aid providers has little meaning when it is culturally insensitive and does not involve some sense of local knowledge, since every disaster is different and unique and poses different challenges that cannot all be mitigated by externally invented models. Post-disaster situations occur in a variety of circumstances and environments, therefore, designed interventions require a necessary flexibility component that promotes self-help and provides a sense of power, worth and ownership to those in need (Kennedy et al., 2008).

In Sri Lanka, despite the strong competition between agencies, the lack of coordination and the neglect of local organisations and participation of beneficiaries, there was some sort of engagement with beneficiaries, nevertheless, this was often not of the right kind (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). Multiple agencies carried out participatory needs assessments among the beneficiaries, thereby raising expectations that were most often not followed up (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010). Most of the agencies carrying out these assessments did not cooperate with each other, resulting in an overwhelming request for participation of the beneficiaries which created overlap and gross inefficiency (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010).
3.4 Gender

In Sri Lanka, the tsunami killed three times more women than men as reported by Oxfam International (2005) who conducted a multi-country study in the aftermath of the tsunami (Hyndman, 2008). These shocking statistics are caused by several factors, more than just the biological difference between men and women. “Certainly women were killed in greater numbers than men, an observation that is as much socially produced through caregiver roles, socialisation as children and gendered clothing norms than any physical differences in strength (Hyndman, 2008, p. 109). As is evident from respondents of a research conducted in the southern province of Sri Lanka, the tsunami waves killed a higher number of women than men, however despite those figures, their passing away depended on more than just the waves itself, namely also on their reproductive role, economic status and structures of dominations in the affected community (Parida, 2015). Differences in the impact of a disaster on men and women can be seen as a reflection of their capacities and vulnerabilities as part of different gender groups and gender relations in a certain society (Birkmann and Fernando, 2007). In the sudden event of the tsunami, men were more capable to run away or climb in trees to escape the water, moreover, men were less involved than women in trying to save and secure their children (Stirrat, 2006). Another reason why more women fell victim to the gigantic waves than men, stems from their geographic labour positions. In Sri Lanka, women faced a greater risk of vulnerability due to their working activities being located on coastal roads, close to the seaside (Hyndman, 2008). Next to the fact that the geographical location of their labour tasks put them at risk, being so close to the sea, this vulnerability was exacerbated by the fact that women were not allowed to learn how to swim due to gendered roles in society (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007). So even though women were tasked with duties that put them in a dangerous location, they were not allowed to learn skills that potentially could have saved their lives in the event of a natural hazard. Many men also occupied labour positions that put them near the coast or at sea, however the society did allow them to learn skills to defend themselves.

Women in Sri Lanka are politically underrepresented and are not allowed to adequately participate in decision making (Yamada et al., 2006). After the tsunami, many women had lost their husbands and were forced to take on the role of the head of the household,
consequently encountering problems gaining access to land that had hitherto been in their husbands’ names (Yamada et al., 2006). Next to these issues, there were problems of safety and security for both women and children, evidenced reports of sexual abuse and rape in the refugee camps (Yamada et al., 2006). Especially poorly lit toilets were a frequent encounter for sexual abuse (Oxfam International, 2005). This was exacerbated by a lack of screens providing security (Oxfam International, 2005). The lack of privacy and adequate lighting leaves women with no sense of security and men with little fear of being caught. The occurrence of sexual violence and consequently impunity for the perpetrators was also a result of the low participation of women in planning and decision making concerning refugee camps, a practice that posed a significant barrier to a gender-sensitive disaster response (Fisher, 2010). The involvement of women in the design and planning process of refugee camps could have led to a larger emphasis being put on privacy and security. The barrier was reinforced by gender-blind programs and policies of governmental and non-governmental agencies which increased women’s vulnerability towards violence (Fisher, 2010). These policies do not recognise any distinction between gender and incorporates biases that are in favour of existing gender relations and thereby tend to exclude women (Akerkar, 2007). An example of a gender-blind program concerns the paid cash relief which was distributed to the male head of the household which in turn increased economic dependence for women (Fisher, 2010). This increased dependency heightened women’s vulnerability and posed a greater risk for sexual abuse (Fisher, 2010). Next to sexual abuse, economic dependency also caused domestic abuse (Oxfam International, 2005). For instance in Sri Lanka, a wife was hit by her husband when asked where the relief money had gone (Oxfam International, 2005). Not only cash is handed out to the male head of the household, also female relief items such as sanitary napkins or contraceptives are handed out to men, who are then responsible for distributing it to their wives, a practice which can be humiliating and problematic as the female cycle is regarded a taboo in most tsunami-affected societies (Felten-Biermann, 2006). Another example from a gender-blind policy practiced by relief agencies stems from the fact that no relief agency had established a registration system for reports of sexual violence, nor did any medical staff have knowledge on how to take care of sexual violence victims (Felten-Biermann, 2006). Reporting sexual violence in a well-functioning society with good registration systems can already be challenging due to shame and taboos, this becomes almost
impossible when these registration systems do not exist or when workers who are supposed to provide relief do not know how assist such a victim. Additionally, in eastern Sri Lanka, houses and their compounds were a woman’s property which she inherited from her maternal family (Thurnheer, 2009). However, due to the gender-blind practices, new houses were issued to a man rather than a woman, a practice that increased dependency and affected gender relationships (Thurnheer, 2009). Women losing ownership of their houses in the aftermath of the tsunami reveals the disempowering effects that external interventions can have on beneficiaries when they are inconsiderate of local contexts and corresponding internal dynamics (Thurnheer, 2009).

In certain parts of the Southern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka which were most affected by the tsunami, Muslims are the dominant population (Akerkar, 2007). In these regions, the practice of ‘itta’ is part of Muslim customary law which dictates that women who have become widows must be secluded for 130 days after the passing away of their husbands or for pregnant women until the baby is born (Akerkar, 2007). In the aftermath of the tsunami, this meant that widows had to stay with relatives, outside of the relief camps, consequently having no access to relief materials, whereas pregnant women who had to live in seclusion did not receive health check-ups or the required medical care (Akerkar, 2007). If assistance workers would have been aware of these culturally sensitive practices, they might have been able to provide relief outside of refugee camps or could have set up separate locations to reach this group of vulnerable women. The before-mentioned issues show that gender plays a significant role in a disaster. Neglecting gender as an important aspect of disaster vulnerability can therefore have significant implications for humanitarian assistance (Fisher, 2010). For instance, neglecting gender implications can lead to increasing gender inequalities (Fisher, 2010). What is more, interventions that fail to involve the participation of women or unequally distribute relief favouring men, can aggravate women’s lack of voice and access to resources (Byrne and Baden, 1995). As has been described previously, economic marginalisation and dependence on men for access to resources left women vulnerable to sexual exploitation (Fisher, 2010).
The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) reported that many relief agencies which were involved in the early response to the tsunami lacked qualities that are crucial to contribute to recovery, consequently international organisations have been identified as hampering affected people’s recovery efforts due to little comprehension of local contexts and dynamics (Telford and Cosgrave, 2007). Disregarding a local context due to a lack of knowledge, resulted in stereotyping options for, women, small farmers and small entrepreneurs to participate in recovery whereby a one-size-fits-all option frequently turned out to be the preferred solution (Telford and Cosgrave, 2007).

There can be a difference in priorities and expectations between relief organisations providing aid and beneficiaries benefitting from it. Humanitarian organizations can prioritize certain needs based on previous experiences in disaster relief, whereas beneficiaries prioritize other needs that are more relevant to the local context. These differences can lead to frustration, moreover, it can lead to neglecting certain vulnerable groups among the affected people. For instance, widows and female-headed households. In the case of Sri Lanka it was difficult for women to earn a living in a male-dominated society in which jobs were scarce (Lee, 2008). This societal factor was overlooked by humanitarian organisations in the provision of aid, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of widows and female-headed households (Lee, 2008). Especially in the aftermath of the tsunami, widows and female-headed households would face even more difficult times in providing for their family in a male-dominated society.

### 3.5 Analysis

In the analysis section, the study will discuss each component that constitutes the analytical framework and establish to which extent these concepts are applicable to the case of Sri Lanka. This section serves as a basis for a subsequent analytical chapter that compares the three cases. The several sub-headings in this section will reiterate the conceptual framework followed by the analysis of the respective concept in the context of Sri Lanka.
3.5.1 Disaster-affected people

The first component of the analysis concerns disaster-affected people. Recalling from the second chapter, disaster-affected people are vulnerable people whose ability to survive has been undermined by an event, in this case a natural hazard which caused a tsunami. The disaster can be classified as a socio-economic phenomenon which leads to social disruption. The tsunami in Sri Lanka has killed over 35,000 people and injured 20,000 as well as displaced several thousand of Sri Lankan inhabitants (Gunawardena and Baland, 2016). The injury and displacement on such a large scale undermines the peoples’ ability to survive. In the aftermath of the tsunami, many people had lost relatives and friends in the waves, while they also lost their source of income, due to the destruction of fishing boats and other labour activities situated near the coast. These issues classify the tsunami as a socio-economic phenomenon whereby both social and economic factors are disrupted. Social disruption has resulted from the separation of families in the aftermath of the hazard which has made many men and women widows and children orphans.

3.5.2 Humanitarian response

The response to the tsunami can classified as a humanitarian response. To recapitulate from the second chapter, humanitarian response is an international or national response which is generated by crisis (Eklund and Tellier, 2012). Moreover, the response to the tsunami can be classified as disaster relief, meaning the foreign intervention into a society with the aim of helping affected local citizens (Kovács and Spens, 2007). This is evident from the large amounts of funding donated to offer assistance to the survivors of the tsunami. One factor that contributed to the enormous amount of funding offered is the portrayal of the disaster by the media. When the tsunami struck, many Western tourists were holidaying in the affected areas which lead to a heightened interest from the West of the world in the matter. Even though the humanitarian response to the tsunami can be classified as an emergency response according to the definitions that define the concept, the intention of assisting beneficiaries was not the sole aim of the relief. Many of the interventions conducted by the humanitarian organizations were influenced to a certain extent by donors who requested the provision of aid to look favourable to the media by focusing on vulnerable groups such as women and
children. The focus on particular vulnerable groups to emphasize visible interventions excludes other people in need of assistance. Therefore, the response to the tsunami can be called emergency response or humanitarian action, however the intention of this assistance was not always executed in a neutral, independent and impartial manner.

3.5.3 Gender equality

Gender (in)equality played a large role in the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Three times more women than men died in the waves. Recalling from the second chapter, gender is concerned with social attributes and opportunities that are associated with being a man or a woman (Eklund and Tellier, 2012), whereas equality is regarded as a fairness in treatment and a notion of sameness (Tarp, 2000). Gender equality in opportunities in Sri Lankan society was not present. Women were stereotypically tasked with caregiver roles and a position of subordination, leading to a situation in which women were not allowed to learn skills to defend and save themselves, whereas men dominated society in labour positions and were taught the skills to swim and climb trees, skills which proved crucial in the event of the tsunami. Similar to a disaster, gender equality can also be termed a socio-economic phenomenon whereby social factors task women with the duty to look after their children, even in the sudden event of a natural hazard, whereas economic factors put men in geographical safer labour positions, such as fishing on the sea while women occupied themselves in labour tasks that were situated near the coast. Gender inequality did not only exist in Sri Lankan society pre-tsunami, it was also strongly present in the aftermath of the tsunami. Women were not only victims of sexual and domestic abuse in relief camps, they were also ignored in the design and implementation plans of these camps. Furthermore, gender-blind and culturally insensitive policies, both on the part of the government and on the part of relief agencies exacerbated the vulnerability of women. Examples of these concern the distribution of houses post-tsunami and the handing out of relief items, both actions favouring men and neglecting women.
3.5.4 Participatory approach

Lastly, there is the inclusion of local, affected people. The abundance in funding led to an affluence in organisations offering assistance in Sri Lanka. The increase in organisations resulted in a competition between agencies which all needed to allocate money and resources rapidly. This competition prompted a lack of coordination and together with the influence of donors, this undermined the qualitative effective delivery of assistance. Many of the relief workers had no knowledge of the local context, nor eye for the valuable insights and participation of beneficiaries. Affected people were labelled as vulnerable and therefore unequipped to actively participate, allowing relief agencies to justify their own interventions and need for expertise. Priorities of needs between aid providers and aid recipients also deemed to be different. Neglecting beneficiaries’ involvement in humanitarian response led to wrongly constructed houses in Colombo. Additionally, externally designed interventions to deal with trauma turned out to be not suitable to the local context in which affected people had their own cultural ways of addressing trauma. Providing excessive short-term relief while not including beneficiaries results in frustration, misunderstanding, a lack of capacity building of the affected people and most of all, a lack of resilience for potential future hazards.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the case of Sri Lanka in the event of the tsunami. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this chapter is the unprecedented humanitarian response that was triggered by the disaster. The extraordinary amounts of funding significantly influenced the provision of assistance whereby strict donor mandates directed the activities of aid agencies. The high amount of female victims can be attributed to gendered constructions inherent in Sri Lankan society which are determinant for women’s ability to survive. The weaker position of women was exacerbated since their participation in assistance was ignored and neglected which proved detrimental to their recovery. Next to that, the overwhelming presence of organisations had adverse effects for beneficiaries’ rehabilitation as pre-designed interventions took precedence over their engagement in emergency response. The case of Sri Lanka was the first in a line of three case studies for
this dissertation. In the section that follows, the case of India in the event of the tsunami will be discussed. This will be done in a similar structure to this chapter.
Chapter 4: Case study: India

4.1 Introduction

India is among the countries that were most affected by the tsunami and suffered the third highest death toll in the region with 16,000 people killed, 150,000 families left without a home and 645,000 households deprived of their income and assets (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Within India, the state of Tamil Nadu was affected the most severe (Kruks-Wisner, 2011), whereby the district of Nagapattinam was hit the worst, accounting for a death toll of more than six thousand (Rajkumar et al., 2008). Although India is no stranger to natural disasters, the magnitude of this hazard was unlike any other disaster that the inhabitants of the Tamil Nadu region had experienced before (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008).

“Depending on how you look at it, you can say this has been the best-funded emergency in the world - or the most expensive humanitarian response in history” (IFRC, 2005, p. 92). The disastrous catastrophe brought the world together in a way that no one had ever experienced before (Bhugra, 2006). The tsunami triggered an unprecedented response which some call the second wave of the tsunami as it pumped unprecedented amounts of aid, materials, money and personnel into the affected regions (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Among all the tsunami affected states, India used the most state-centred response and even though funding was also received from international donors and NGOs, these funds were directed by the Indian central and state governments (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Although the Indian government did not appeal for international external aid, existing programs in India were expanded and additional funds were allocated for tsunami aid (Kruks-Wisner, 2011).

The fourth chapter of this study is concerned with the case study of India in the tsunami. Together with Sri Lanka and Indonesia, India was affected to the most severe extent. To analyse this case, the chapter is organised in a similar manner to the previous chapter and begins by laying out the context of the case of India through looking at the several concepts of the analytical framework. Additionally, the concept of vulnerability is thoroughly assessed, after which the remaining part of the chapter proceeds to the analysis of the case of India.
4.2 Inclusion of affected people

India is a country which is known for its diversity, with people differing in culture, ethnicity, religion and language (Viswanath et al., 2011). Since every disaster is unique and the state is diverse, people from the same country but a different community can respond differently to the impact of a disaster (Viswanath et al., 2011). Awareness of this local context and diversity is essential in the provision of effective assistance. Especially, since a majority of coping research has been based on a Western conceptualisation of adaptation and capacities with little consideration of the local context (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Therefore, any (foreign) planned intervention should be suitable and appropriate to the local context to tailor the needs of beneficiaries (Viswanath et al., 2011). The early recovery phase after the tsunami is characterised by poor transparency on the part of aid providers towards the affected population, together with unrealistic promises and an undervaluing and underestimation of both national and local capacities (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). Many recipients of the well-intended relief were not content with the process and outcomes of the given aid in which they felt humiliated and reduced to passive victims (Korf et al., 2010). Humanitarian assistance aims to alleviate suffering and allow beneficiaries to live with dignity again. NGOs coming to the affected may alleviate suffering, nonetheless, when agencies are lacking knowledge of the local context and ignoring local capacities, people feel left out and it becomes even more difficult to retain their dignity.

The high-profile coverage of the tsunami by the media pressured donor agencies to spend their resources rapidly and visibly, whereby the search for pre-tsunami data and post-tsunami precise needs assessment were neglected (Régnier et al., 2008). This media coverage did not only result in a lack of needs assessments, it furthermore led to some villages not immediately receiving assistance since NGOs first deployed to areas that had received the most media coverage (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Similar to Sri Lanka, also in India the abundance in funding and aid led to a lack of information and coordination among the NGOs providing assistance (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). What is more, due to the lack of coordination among relief agencies, these highly media covered villages received duplications of assistance while some villages had not even received the provision for basic needs (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Furthermore, due to the abundance in funding, there was an affluence in aid. Nevertheless,
this abundance was not distributed equally since in particularly remote communities, the distribution of resources turned out to be rather slow and limited (Rodriguez et al., 2006). NGOs tend to be poor at networking and coordination, both at the local level as well as at the international level, as a result of competition among agencies concerning values and resources (Kilby, 2007). This lack of coordination is detrimental in the provision of assistance since coordination is the key to dealing with the consequences of disasters (Bhugra, 2006). A crucial factor for well-functioning disaster coordination is someone, who is cognisant of local customs and traditions, who takes control and directs coordination at multiple levels through NGOs (Bhugra, 2006). Next to remote geographical locations causing inequality in the distribution of resources, difference in castes in India also played a large role in the distribution of aid. One of the main communities that was hit by the tsunami in India is the Dalits, a lower caste whose people live in conditions of poverty (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Given their low social status and illiteracy among its people, Dalits found it challenging to register their losses and access aid and relief (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009).

One way of coping with a disaster is to quickly return to a routine or sense of normalcy (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). In India, routine and normalcy meant for women that they could prepare meals for their families and wear the traditional Indian Sari dress (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Nevertheless, Western relief aid packages sent prepared food and Western clothes for the beneficiaries to wear, while cooking utensils and other types of clothing would have been more efficient and effective for the beneficiaries to rehabilitate (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). The fact that the Western aid packages included relief that was not of much use to the beneficiaries, refers back to this Western conceptualization of adaptation in which the local context is ignored and neglected. Returning to a state of normalcy cannot be externally conceptualised given the fact that the concept of ‘normal’ is culturally defined and unique to any certain context (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Another example of cultural insensitivity concerns the food that was sent to India. Tsunami affected people in India predominantly eat rice, while the relief packages included wheat bread (Rao, 2006). Sending aid without recognition of the local context or coordination with the NGOs on the ground and the affected people, is detrimental to both the donors and the beneficiaries as funds are wasted and people left unfed and without appropriate clothing.
“Relief and recovery systems and institutional structures discriminate against the more vulnerable and already disaster affected people by design or by ignorance” (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009, p.1220). During the response to the tsunami, international relief agencies had the tendency to ignore and not recognise local capacities in the early stages of the disaster and only asked for the help of local organisations at a later stage in which many existing local capacities had been marginalised, weakened or even alienated (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). Interventions for emergency response are usually externally designed, which does not mean they are always appropriate for the unique local context in which they are conducted. The inclusion of local people in the provision of assistance is often not included in this externally developed design which essentially discriminates against the participation of beneficiaries. Additional to ignoring local capacities, NGOs duplicated efforts or provided relief which was not suitable to the local context or to the varying population sizes (Rodriguez et al., 2006). For instance, an aid group in India carrying enough household supplies to assist two hundred people was sent to a village which housed five hundred people, something that was discovered only upon arrival (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Continuing with this example, some of these household packages carried not enough supplies for the amount of people in the household (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). This issue was resolved through the participation of beneficiaries who started tailoring the packages to specific households (Wachtendorf et al., 2006).

Information is crucial in times of crises. Information can be seen as power, through which affected people design their own coping strategies by making informed decisions and choices (Telfort and Cosgrave, 2007). The TEC reported that during the aftermath of the tsunami, relief organisations failed to adequately inform affected people which was the result of arrogance and ignorance on the part of the aid community (Christopolos, 2006). Lack of information undermines an aid intervention by limiting the capacity of affected people to progress with their own recovery, consequently, this absence of information leads to dissatisfaction and anger among beneficiaries (Christopolos, 2006). The large neglect and ignorance of beneficiaries as active participants of humanitarian assistance does not mean affected people remain silent and passive. Especially since affected people are the first responders to a disaster. It takes time for humanitarian organisations to respond and travel to the certain location. Even though people are damaged, hurt and overcome by a catastrophic
In many communities in both India and Sri Lanka, there was an emergence of self-help groups, mostly consisting of women which actively participated in the clean-up and recovery process, some with support of local NGOs (Rodriguez et al., 2006).

In the Nagapattinam district in India, both local and international NGOs played a significant role in the local recovery process during which they provided immediate relief in the form of food aid, household supplies and temporary shelters (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). When not taking into account the local context, culture and needs of beneficiaries in the provision of aid, recovery efforts can be complicated. An example stems from an Indian village (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). In this village, two types of tents were set up to provide housing and shelter. The first type were well-equipped expensive tents, donated by international funders, whereas the second type were ad hoc tents which were made out of blankets and poles (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). The expensive tents were barely used by the beneficiaries as they were very hot during the day and could not accommodate varying household sizes and proved to be of little assistance as the community needs were not taken into account (Wachtendorf et al., 2006).

Many of the needs of affected people in communities may be universal, however, being aware of the cultural relevance of a (foreign) intervention is essential in providing beneficiaries with the right resources and relief that will benefit their positive adaptation (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Needs among survivors in natural hazards share many commonalities, however, addressing these needs can differ from one context to another due to cultural differences and practices, as well as climate and geographical factors. Therefore, the “Provision of specific types of assistance must be offered in a manner consistent with the cultural context in order to support survivors’ coping efforts rather than undermine them” (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008, p. 96)
4.3 Vulnerability

A tsunami can be classified as a natural hazard or natural phenomenon. This hazard only turns into a disaster when people are involved (Rigg et al., 2008). “The crucial point about understanding why disasters happen is that it is not only natural events that cause them. They are also the product of social, political and economic environments (as distinct from the natural environment), because of the way these structure the lives of different groups of people” (Wisner et al., 2004, p.4 and Bankoff, 2001, p. 24-25). Natural events should therefore not be treated as separate from the structures of everyday life and the social and economic contexts in which people live (Rigg et al., 2008). Natural disasters can be seen as profoundly discriminatory since pre-existing structures and social conditions determine that some people are severely more affected than others no matter the geographical location or nature of the disaster (Oxfam International, 2005). Therefore, it is not hazards themselves that discriminate between the various segments of society, it is the severity of the impact that differs between groups of a society (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Natural hazards both expose and exacerbate vulnerabilities whereby political and institutional structures increase the impact of the disaster on the most vulnerable groups and individuals (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). The effect of a natural disaster upon the respective society is grounded in the social system in which it takes place (Fisher, 2010). Natural disasters and their impact can be seen as discriminatory but patterns of recovery are no different. Recovery and rehabilitation are influenced by wealth, class, power, ethnicity and influence (Rigg et al., 2008). In India, survivors with wealth were better positioned to contact NGOs and relief agencies due to their financial resources and recognized authority (Aldrich, 2010).

“Vulnerability is not an intrinsic human quality as it is a consequence of disparate structures and systems which convert differences to inequalities (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008, p. 7). To understand disasters and their impact on a population, one must acquire knowledge of the different levels of vulnerability (Wisner et al., 2004). Wisner et al., (2004) define vulnerability as the “characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard (an extreme natural event or process)” (p. 11). An individual’s vulnerability is rooted in social relationships of which gender is a significant determinant of women’s vulnerability which is
grounded in unequal power relationships between men and women as part of these social relationships (Fisher, 2010). Similar to an individual’s vulnerability, disaster vulnerability is socially constructed as a consequence of social and economic circumstances of everyday living (Khasalamwa, 2008). These social and economic circumstances position people in certain disaster prone areas as a result of labour locations, or their social status puts them in a position in which it is difficult to receive aid. These issues significantly influence disaster vulnerability. Also, the nature and the severity of a disaster influence vulnerability (Khasalamwa, 2008). Next to an individual’s vulnerability and disaster vulnerability, there is something called social vulnerability. This type of vulnerability is defined as follows: “Social vulnerability is the creation of social inequalities, specifically those social factors that persuade the susceptibility of various groups to harm and manage their ability to respond (Parida, 2015, p. 201). Relief agencies should be aware of vulnerability and the different types. Nonetheless, putting too much emphasis on women’s vulnerability can also have a negative effect since it may undermine women’s capacities and skills by focusing too much on their needs without also taking into account their strengths (Clifton and Gell, 2001).

Vulnerability is compounded through discrimination, political powerlessness, poverty and other circumstances that disadvantage certain segments of a community and society (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). An important social factor that increases risk for women is determined by their care-giving responsibilities (Parida, 2015). This leaves women with a disproportionate responsibility in times of disaster given the fact that children depend on them (Akerkar, 2007). These responsibilities task women with the duty to save their children in times of need. This limits their mobility and increases or even doubles their workload (Parida, 2015). This care-giving responsibility proved to be one of the decisive factors in the high number of female casualties. When the waves of the tsunami hit, men climbed in trees, whereas women first responded to save their children, often resulting in their own dead. Both men and women try to manage themselves during a disaster in the best possible way, nonetheless, gender relations significantly hamper the capability and cooping capacity of women to respond to disastrous conditions (Sultana, 2010).

The fact that an individual’s vulnerability is rooted in society and constructed through certain societal norms, leads to differences in perception between affected people and relief agencies
when it comes to needs prioritisation. The difference in perception is heightened when most of the assistance provided comes from organisations outside of the country or outside the affected areas (Minamoto, 2010). Not only is there a physical and social distance when relief is provided externally, there is also little knowledge and understanding on the part of the aid providers concerning internal factors of the affected society, such as power structures or interpersonal relationships, both factors that determine perceptions of livelihood recovery (Minamoto, 2010). Consequently, a lack of knowledge about the society and area that humanitarian organisations are operating in, can result in a detrimental effect of relief since disparities could be further widened, due to for instance an unequal distribution of resources (Minamoto, 2010).

Disaster mitigation is too often focused on the hazard, rather than being people-centred (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Given the fact that vulnerability and disasters are connected to social processes, assistance that aims to reduce vulnerability, must pay attention to vulnerabilities that are inherent in the built and social environment (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Since each disaster is unique in its circumstances and affected people, carefully analysing the situation on the ground to assess vulnerabilities is crucial and takes precedence over entering into a post-disaster area with an externally developed and pre-determined list (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Such a list might be culturally insensitive to the local context and circumstances and prove useless to the needs of the beneficiaries.

### 4.4 Gender

In India, one of the causes for higher female casualties were gendered clothing rules. In India, women traditionally wear the sari, which may have hampered women in their escape from the waves (Rigg et al., 2008). The attire and long hair of women became impediments to rapid moves to safety (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). What is more, during the first wave, women were trying to save the elderly and children and as a result, were washed away through the second wave of the water (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). The striking imbalance in casualty numbers and limited ability of women to mobilise themselves reflects the presence of gender-inequality in India pre-tsunami. Knowledge of this context should be taken into account during the relief implementation phase in order to prevent worsening of this inequality.
Gender-blind approaches in disaster relief often contribute to or even worsen women’s vulnerability and their socio-economic situations (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). “Disaster impacts differ by gender. If these differences are not recognised and acted upon, then the strategies for response and relief provisions are not likely to be equitable or effective” (Wachtendorf et al., 2006, p. S706). Disaster management capacities of both men and women are different as a result of a gendered social construction (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). The roles and functions assigned to men and women in this gendered social construction extend to emergencies and recovery situations (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Gender-based inequalities that are inherent in communities make it more difficult for women to recover from disaster (Rodriguez et al., 2006). An example of this difficulty is limited access to disaster relief aid for women (Wisner et al., 2004). This is especially the case when relief items are distributed by male aid workers. If these differences are not taken into account in humanitarian interventions, rehabilitation becomes very complicated. In many disaster responses, relief agencies employ a gender-neutral approach which does not consider the differential impacts a disaster can have on both men and women or whereby the impact and experience of men are seen as representative of the entire community (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). This emphasised focus on men was also reflected in relief camps in India post-tsunami. In these relief camps, women were struggling to compete for resources since the majority of post-disaster relief work was male-centred whereby men were given money and provided with livelihood resources (Viswanath et al., 2011). This male-centred assistance is detrimental to women. In many societies women have fewer opportunities than men and these gender-blind humanitarian interventions only reinforce these traditional roles and structures, consequently disadvantaging women (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008).

In India, there was a lack of involvement of women in the early-decision making process in humanitarian response (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). This was confirmed by a field team employed to do research in India one month after the tsunami, which had no difficulty reaching men but had to take extraordinary strategic steps to seek out the perspectives of women (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Nevertheless, there were some external organisations in India who did encourage female participation. For instance, one relief organisation allowed women to conduct a community survey which provided the relief agency with crucial information while the funds were directed at affected individuals rather than to external relief
workers (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Women possess the capacity and skills that could prove useful in emergencies, however these are most often not recognised or given space in formal relief and recovery operations and therefore, their contributions remain largely invisible (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Women could contribute in several ways in relief camps as, according to Clifton and Gell (2001), “good practice on gender in emergencies has come to mean paying attention to the role of women in food distribution, providing sanitary towels, and ensuring adequate lighting and health services for women” (p. 8). In many relief camps in India, there was no availability of female doctors and only a scarce availability of female relief workers which left female survivors reluctant to seek for aid and relief, whereby the lack of provision of sanitary towels and childcare materials aggravated their struggle for rehabilitation (Viswanath et al., 2011). Hence, it is crucial and necessary to involve women in the decision-making process and in participation in relief work to reduce gender biases and increase the effectiveness of assistance and disaster management efforts (Viswanath et al., 2011).

“Within the prevailing gender relations in South Asian societies, disaster recovery dynamics work simultaneously to highlight and exacerbate women’s vulnerabilities, and to ignore and downplay their skills, potential and capacities” (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009, p. 1223). In a fishing community in Nagapattinam, the local governance called ‘panchayats’ excluded women from post-tsunami aid (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Nevertheless, an NGO director in that region observed that even though the panchayats did not provide money to widows, they said they were taking care of women and that NGO interventions should not disturb the social balance (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Urban or western notions of women’s empowerment may very well have a detrimental effect and make women more vulnerable in the long-term, when they are culturally insensitive to the local context (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). However, the panchayats did not take care of women as is described below.

In contrast to Sri Lanka, where women inherited property from her maternal family, in India, women were never property owners. NGOs and state actors providing aid in the aftermath of the tsunami brought along ideas and norms with the intention to shape both the discourse and practice of aid delivery (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Titles of new homes post-tsunami were given to husbands and wives jointly instead of only to the husband (Kruks-Wisner, 2011).
Furthermore, NGOs pushed for the provision of fishing boats to women, a practice that was unheard of pre-tsunami (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Nonetheless, these practices were only symbolic as fathers and husbands turned out to be the legitimate owners since the panchayat criticised this practice of NGOs (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). The local council or panchayat tended to exclude women from relief aid, operating under the assumption that widows and single women were looked after by their family members and hence therefore required no relief in their own right (Aldrich, 2011). When these single women or widows lost all their relatives in the tsunami, their vulnerability was exacerbated by this false assumption. Neither the government of India, nor the NGOs had the time to interview or survey every beneficiary concerning their needs, hence they relied on lists prepared by the panchayat (Aldrich, 2011). These lists cannot be regarded as representative when particular women are excluded from the need for assistance by the panchayat.

From the onset of the tsunami, girls and women in affected areas were subjected to sexual violence and abuse (Fisher, 2010). Violence against women increases in the wake of a disaster and this heightened risk is connected to gender inequality and a lack of representation of women in emergency response (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Gender-insensitive post-disaster interventions create circumstances that exacerbate pre-disaster tendencies of gender based violence against women (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Similar to Sri Lanka, rehabilitation relief workers were insensitive towards women’s needs in the relief camps whereby many female survivors in these camps raised concerns regarding the inadequate privacy provided for changing rooms and toilet use (Viswanath et al., 2011). Following the tsunami in India, many women faced difficulties with access to maternal and reproductive health care, sexual abuse in refugee settings and adjustment to their new role as primary economic providers (Rodriguez et al., 2006). Currently, a gender perspective focusing on sexualised violence in disaster relief has not yet been established (Felten-Biermann, 2006). In the acute situation of a disaster, sexualised violence is put down as a women’s issue and it is denied that men and women cope differently with emotional stress caused by a life-threatening situation (Felten-Biermann, 2006).
The high female casualty numbers after the tsunami also had an impact on men. After the tsunami, they were left responsible for domestic and child caring roles, task and duties they hitherto had never been involved in (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Most often, gender relations have a more detrimental effect on women than on men. This does not mean that men do not need time or space to grief and deal with the aftermath of a disaster. Gender-based social expectations that are inherent in a society isolate men in the aftermath of disasters (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Gender-blind disaster recovery interventions overlook the fact that men are not given the space to develop the skills of care giving or domestic chores in the household (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). The gaps in these coping capacities can victimise men in the recovery process and as a result, alcohol consumption and depression are heightened among this group, consequently leading to more sexual and domestic violence (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009).

A gender approach is crucial and necessary in identifying the diverse vulnerabilities of both men and women in disasters as well as their difference in capacities and coping strategies (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Consequently, failure on the part of relief agencies to recognise these differences limits beneficiaries in gaining access to resources and effective relief and can contribute to further marginalisation of vulnerable target groups, most often women (Nowak and Caulfield, 2009). Gender roles should be matched with emergency interventions that build on the strengths of the individual and the community whereby men and women are complementary to each other (Bhadra, 2017).

**4.5 Analysis**

Similar to the previous case study chapter, the analysis section in this chapter establishes the presence of the concepts on the basis of the analytical framework in the case of India. This section will also serve as a basis for a subsequent analysis chapter. Since the definition of the concepts of the analytical framework have been reiterated in the previous chapter, this section will directly discuss the applicability of the concept in the case of India.
4.5.1 Disaster-affected people

The significant loss of life and high numbers of displaced and injured people in India are the result of an event that exposed their vulnerability and undermined individuals’ ability to survive. The region of Tamil Nadu was hit hardest, with many fishing communities being deprived of their economic resources. The large loss of life left many families incomplete with significant social disruption as a result, especially since family is highly important in India. The social and economic disruption impacted people in different ways. A reason for this is the difference in vulnerability, especially between men and women. The impact of a disaster depends on the severity of the hazard, moreover it is significantly influenced by social constructions that are inherent in a society. The power relationships between men and women in societies often cause inequalities which can hamper someone’s ability to respond in the event of a hazard. These social constructions determine someone’s capacity and coping mechanism, in other words it expresses and exacerbates their vulnerability (Fisher, 2010). So, whereas the tsunami undermines peoples’ ability to survive, this process is aggravated by someone’s vulnerability which is inherent in the respective society. The level of vulnerability then significantly influences who will be affected by the disaster.

4.5.2 Humanitarian Response

Similar to Sri Lanka, the response to the tsunami was overwhelming. Frequent media coverage and the presence of Western tourists during the tsunami triggered an unprecedented response which resulted in the overflow of funding, resources and aid. In contrast to Sri Lanka, India used a more state-centred response to coordinate relief (Kruks-Wisner, 2011). Even though India did not appeal for international funds, funding was received from international donors, current projects in the country were expanded and international NGOs came to provide assistance. The government of India was however in charge of directing these international funds. So whereas much of the aid and resources was provided from abroad, the intervention was mainly coordinated by India. Nonetheless, this intervention qualifies as humanitarian response with the aim of alleviating suffering and allowing people to live with dignity again.
4.5.3 Gender Equality

In India, the numbers of female loss were three times higher than the numbers of male casualties. The difference in numbers can largely be attributed to social gendered constructions, inherent in Indian society. In India, women are expected to wear traditional clothing, such as the Sari dress (Rigg et al., 2008). This type of clothing severely hampered women’s ability to mobilise and escape from the water. Their mobility was further limited due to their traditional duty to look after the children as well as the lack of skills such as swimming or climbing. Besides the higher number of female victims, gender inequality was present to a large extent during the relief phase of the emergency response. Gender-blind or gender-neutral approaches ignored the different impact disasters can have on men and women which resulted in male-centred relief, leaving women with limited access to resources (Viswanath et al., 2011). These gender-blind approaches were also reflected in the design of the intervention, which lacked a significant presence of women in the decision-making process, resulting in a low number of female relief workers and no availability of female doctors in the relief camps. These issues prevent women from seeking medical care and accepting relief handed out by male staff. Furthermore, women, often widows and single women, were excluded from aid by the local governance bodies, or panchayats, from their village. Similar to Sri Lanka, facilities in relief camps did not take into account women’s needs as there was little privacy and poor lighting which heightened the risk of sexual abuse.

Gender inequality is often associated with women, whereas men’s vulnerability should not be overlooked. Social constructions inherent in Indian society position men largely outside of care-giving responsibilities. When their wives are lost in the tsunami, men suddenly need to occupy this role of care-taker, something they have not been involved in before. What is more, not recognising the lack of coping capacities among men when it comes to grieving, victimises them in their recovery process, ultimately resulting in alcohol and sexual abuse (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). Associations with being male or female that are deep-rooted in a society give rise to certain opportunities and expectations for either gender, therefore relief agencies should adopt a holistic approach in humanitarian emergencies to effectively tailor the needs of beneficiaries.
4.5.4 Participatory Approach

The tsunami triggered an unprecedented response in terms of overwhelming amounts of funding and relief. This was aggravated by the media who focused on some affected villages more than others. This led to the isolation of uncovered and remote villages as NGOs as relief organisations felt compelled to first provide assistance to the villages that were portrayed in the media (Wachtendorf et al, 2006). What is more, due to the lack of coordination between the several relief agencies, some of these villages received a duplication of aid while the remote villages still had not been provided for. Remote villages were not the only victims of unequal distribution of resources. The caste system in India also lead to the exclusion of some vulnerable groups of lower castes in the provision of assistance. Furthermore, relief was largely provided by the Western part of the world. Relief packages therefore included Western food and clothing which was not appropriate to the local context and therefore largely deemed ineffective (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Local capacities were ignored to a significant extent in the response in India which turned out to be detrimental for beneficiaries since aid was provided in too small amounts for large communities. Humanitarian organisations also failed to adequately inform beneficiaries which proved harmful to their recovery. Next to local capacities being ignored, beneficiaries were also not consulted on their knowledge which would have proven extremely useful in the provision of shelter and temporary housing since the provided tents were deemed inappropriate and ineffective.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the case of India in the tsunami. The results of the research in this chapter show that India has been significantly affected by the tsunami in terms of victims and loss of livelihood and sources of income, especially the fishing communities. Even though India preferred a more state-centred response, international NGOs were involved in emergency aid. This involvement significantly lacked local engagement which proved detrimental to the effectiveness of the assistance itself as well as to the position of women in humanitarian response. What is more, gender-blind approaches used by aid agencies, aggravated women’s vulnerability and underestimated men’s ability to cope in times of
disaster. The case of India was the second in line of three cases in this study. The following part of this dissertation moves on to describe in greater detail the context of Indonesia in the tsunami.
Chapter 5: Case study: Indonesia

5.1 Introduction

The Aceh province in Indonesia suffered tremendous damage as a result of the earthquake that erupted near the coast of Sumatra (Daly, 2014). Only fifteen minutes after the eruption, the tsunami waves hit the coast of Aceh (Athukorala, 2012). This province accounted for over seventy percent of the total death toll of the tsunami which reached over 226 thousand victims (Athukorala, 2012). Whereas aid was arriving within a day after the tsunami hit in India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, it took about three days before aid reached the province of Aceh, due to its remote location and poor visibility among international tourists (Athukorala, 2012). What is more, the government of Indonesia was reluctant during the first three days to call for aid as a consequence of the strong military presence in Aceh, which is described below (Gaillard, Clavé and Kelman, 2007). After this call, more than five hundred aid organisations established missions in Aceh (Gaillard, Clavé and Kelman, 2007). These several hundreds of organisations provided assistance in the form of medical services, basic supplies and the re-construction of houses (Daly, 2014). The largely unregulated influx of external relief actors made it rather complicated to efficiently coordinate assistance and resources (Daly, 2014). The problems that tsunami-affected people in Indonesia faced included a variety of issues such as the loss of livelihoods, assets, family members, homes and community infrastructure (Roofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006). The loss of homes, assets and anxiety concerning another tsunami caused enormous internal displacement in Aceh and the Nagan Raya districts which resulted in more than thirty thousand internally displaced people (IDPs) (Roofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006).

The following part of this study moves on to describe in greater detail the case study of Indonesia in the tsunami. Comparable to the preceding two case studies of Sri Lanka and India, this chapter investigates the humanitarian response to the tsunami in Indonesia, more specifically in the province of Aceh. The pre-tsunami context of this province will be discussed followed by an analysis of humanitarian response in conflict versus non-conflict situations. Identical to the prior chapters, the disaster response is analysed on the basis of the
analytical framework. This practice is then followed by the analysis of the established concepts in the respective case.

5.2 Indonesia

Similar to Sri Lanka, Indonesia endured a long-running conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the government of Indonesia which started in 1976 when the founder of GAM re-declared Acehnese independence (Zeccola, 2011). The government of Indonesia responded to this declaration by sending a significant presence of the Indonesian army to the province, consequently fuelling local resentment between 1989 and 1998 (Athukorala, 2012; Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). In 2003, the military presence was downgraded to a civil emergency and led to the ending of hostilities in 2004 (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). The tsunami set the stage in Indonesia for resolving the conflict since the Helsinki Peace Accord was signed in August 2005, which greatly increased a smooth implementation of the relief and reconstruction program (Athukorala, 2012).

5.3 Conflict and non-conflict response

Given the fact that in both Sri Lanka and Indonesia conflict was ongoing during the event of the tsunami, it is necessary to inspect whether there is a difference between responding to a natural or to a man-made disaster within the scope of this study. According to the Code of Conduct of the IFRC, the provision of relief aid is neutral, impartial and independent and is based upon the needs of disaster victims which are established after a thorough needs assessment (1994). Furthermore, relief agencies act independently from governments and according to principle four of the Code of Conduct: “We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor” (1994, p. 4). So, in theory there should not be a difference in response to a certain type of disaster since it is based on needs alone. However, politics can influence the response to a disaster and sometimes takes precedence over the needs of beneficiaries whereby interpretations of disasters represent political choices with certain political impacts, especially from a gender perspective (Le Billon and Waizenegger, 2007). The influence of politics is more evident in conflict situations than in the event of natural disasters since “… natural disasters often are perceived to be ‘pure’ humanitarian problems, untainted by the political and human rights
violations associated with ‘man-made’ disasters and thus less likely to be understood as a political problem by key actors” (Zeccola, 2011, p. 323). Providing assistance to survivors of natural disasters is also less likely to be viewed as politically motivated, in contrast to providing relief in the aftermath of a man-made disaster. In the latter situation, aid could be allocated to insure beneficiaries’ allegiance or stimulate cooperation with the donor in international affairs (Balla and Reinhardt, 2008). In such a situation, strategic importance takes precedence over needs in aid allocation (Balla and Reinhardt, 2008). Another example of strategic interests related to relief, concerns locations of conflict that represent geopolitical threats, which can be offset by the provision of assistance since this aid is commonly compromised by political agendas (Hyndman, 2011). Even though assistance should be based on needs, also in a man-made disaster, aid could be provided with other interests at heart. Parties to a conflict are aware of these possible strategic intentions of donors and are therefore wary of the provision of aid by external actors.

The influence of politics and conflict on the provision of humanitarian assistance was significantly evident in both Aceh and Sri Lanka. When the tsunami struck, the Indonesian government, or more specifically the military, did not want any foreigners to get involved in the conflict (Zeccola, 2011). Therefore, they only welcomed aid in response to the tsunami, but not in response to the conflict (Zeccola, 2011). International NGOs adhered to the demands of the Indonesian government since they were anxious of being expelled from the country, thereby jeopardising aid to the tsunami affected areas since they would be forced to abandon their relief effort (Zeccola, 2011). Humanitarian assistance should be provided based on needs in a neutral, impartial and independent manner (Stirrat, 2006), however the practice in reality in Aceh and also Sri Lanka proved otherwise. Resource and funding constraints meant that certain categories were prioritised with the latter focused on beneficiaries who have experienced the most destructive or most recent event (Kennedy et al., 2008). In this case, that meant tsunami affected people over conflict affected people. Much of the relief effort in the response to the tsunami was therefore conducted as if there was no ongoing conflict in Aceh which contributed to feelings of acrimony among fighting forces (Gaillard, Clavé and Kelman, 2007). In Aceh, these feelings combined with the strict instructions from the Indonesian government contributed to security issues for NGOs that were only addressing the tsunami affected population (Kennedy et al., 2008). So whereas the
government of Indonesia set strict guidelines for international organisations to not provide aid in relation to the conflict, the lack of assistance to these victims was not well received among beneficiaries. Also in Sri Lanka, little effort was made to treat conflict affected people and tsunami affected people in an equal manner whereby the latter took precedence over the former (Kennedy et al., 2008). This division of beneficiaries also caused frustration among Sri Lankans which has been described in the respective case study. The large difference however, between beneficiaries in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, concerns the overlap between tsunami-affected people and conflict-affected people. Along the Eastern coast of Sri Lanka, most of the tsunami-affected people had also experienced the impact of the ongoing conflict, whereas tsunami-affected people in Aceh did not overlap with people devastated by the conflict (Hyndman, 2009). Nonetheless, in Sri Lanka, displaced people affected by the conflict but not by the tsunami, were excluded from receiving assistance (Hyndman, 2009). So whereas the division of beneficiaries was larger in Aceh, it also existed to some extent in Sri Lanka.

### 5.4 Inclusion of affected people

To provide assistance to the affected people in Indonesia, the government commissioned a detailed plan that should serve as guidelines for the relief and reconstruction efforts (Daly, 2014). Within this plan, emphasis was put on local ownership and a community driven processes whereby relief organisations agreed that aid needed to be culturally sensitive, empowering local populations and actively engaging beneficiaries and affected communities (Daly, 2014). This emphasis on meaningful and local participation is essential since social support and assistance will be less effective if only supplied temporary and by external organisations, than when it is provided through the existing social network (Omer and Alon, 1994). The existing social network can provide valuable knowledge and culturally appropriate insights which help to provide assistance in a more effective manner. Nevertheless, the guidelines drawn up by the Indonesian government were not executed in practice as is evident from the tsunami evaluation report in which emphasis on local participation had to be stressed again. One of the key findings of this report stated that “the international humanitarian community needs a fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities’ own relief and recovery priorities” (Telford,
Cosgrave and Houghton, 2006, p. 23). Even though the government of Indonesia laid out these initial plans that were focused on engagement, inclusion and empowerment, the assistance provided evidently lacked these guidelines. One of the central problems that define post-disaster situations is the profound lack of connections between humanitarian organisations and beneficiaries (Daly, 2014). This absence of connections prevents participation and empowerment. Neglecting the inclusion of beneficiaries does not only prevent empowerment and capacity building, it can also disrupt the recovery process. Daly argues that “strong arguments have been made that excessive or misdirected intervention has the potential to impede recovery processes, especially when affected persons are distanced from active and engaged roles in formulating their own responses” (2014, p. 234). When excluded from meaningful and active engagement, survivors must passively watch external actors providing aid, leaving them with no tools to continue their own recovery when these agencies will leave again after a short period.

During the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, there was criticism that focused on international NGOs’ neglect in consulting with their local and national counterparts (Hyndman, 2009). This neglect stemmed from the abundance in funding provided by so many donors. “The financial power of INGOs, combined with the freedom they enjoyed and low levels of accountability they were held to, frequently resulted in their arrogance toward local NGOs and disregard for government institutions, their inappropriate and ineffective use of resources and unhealthy levels of competition within and between them” (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012, p. 13). International NGOs that came to Aceh to offer assistance largely overlooked local NGOs in favour of direct implementation of externally developed interventions (Zeccola, 2011). According to the TEC report, international organisations had little to poor understanding of local contexts and in the case of Indonesia, this included ongoing recovery processes and dynamics of armed conflict (Zeccola, 2011). According to respondents of an investigation that was carried out in Aceh post-tsunami, many external aid agencies lacked knowledge concerning the structure and operations of Acehnese communities as well as relevant language abilities (Daly, 2014). Both are factors that could have made reconstruction more participatory, effective and culturally sensitive (Daly, 2014).
As previously mentioned, Aceh has been inundated with enormous amounts of funding (Régnier et al., 2008). This highly internationalised assistance provided much tension between external aid actors and beneficiaries (Daly, 2014). This tension was the result of inflexible donor mandates that created competition between relief agencies (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). These mandates demanded attention to regions that were easily accessible to the media and the favoured assistance to beneficiaries that received more sympathy such as women and children (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). This exclusive and targeted way of providing relief led to duplication in certain areas that were heavily covered by the media while others were completely neglected (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2011). Additionally, whereas the funding opportunities led to misuse on the part of the aid providers, it also resulted in temptation for corruption on the part of beneficiaries. For instance in Aceh, a participatory approach had been adopted by relief agencies to involve local village and district leaders in the identification and implementation of projects as well as cooperation with local NGOs to understand the local social context (Régnier et al., 2008). Local leaders were assigned to choose beneficiaries to avoid community clashes, however, due to the overflow in funding, this practice resulted in the abuse of foreign aid, with the occurrence of cases of bribery (Régnier et al., 2008). Furthermore, organisations tried to be inclusive during needs assessments through the use of consultation (Daly and Brassard, 2011). However, this inclusion was not meaningful and did not result into participation in decision-making by the beneficiaries since the mechanisms used for consultation by the agencies were unfamiliar to the affected people and beneficiaries were unsure what role they exactly occupied (Daly and Brassard, 2011). Furthermore, the province of Aceh is strongly Islamic and adheres to the sharia law. International organisations were aware of this and made sure their staff was appropriately dressed and behaved culturally sensitive (Daly, 2014). However, this knowledge of local cultural practices was not reflected in operational compatibility, since the awareness of cultural sensitivity was solely applied to avoid offending local people, rather than being used to engage with beneficiaries (Daly, 2014).

“The literature on post-disaster response strongly supports the idea that one of the key components of community recovery is the need for people to be fully, directly and meaningfully engaged in all facets of responding to a disaster” (Daly, 2014, p. 234). This is especially true as local knowledge is key to disaster response since it is culturally sensitive
and legitimate (Daly, 2014). It is the life and livelihood of local people that has been destroyed. Putting them on the side-line will undermine their recovery and rehabilitation from destruction even more by taking away the opportunity to use their remaining capacity. This exclusion from participation is created and maintained by international agencies who view beneficiaries as passive recipients of aid (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). This passive position disempowers affected people and increases dependency (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). This dependency is detrimental to the recovery and rehabilitation process since the provided aid is only temporarily. Therefore, actively and meaningfully engaging beneficiaries is essential to provide effective assistance.

A logical response in times of chaos and disorienting conditions would be a return to the familiar or normal routine (Daly, 2014). This refers back to the previous chapter on the case of India whereby returning to normalcy is classified as a way of coping with disasters. Crucial in this practice is the understanding of the sense of normalcy for the beneficiaries, rather than an external or Western understanding of the concept. Disaster and trauma cause a disruption of social life. Assistance should therefore be aimed at developing continuities to counter disruption (Omer and Alon, 1994). This is best done by providing assistance that matches beneficiaries’ usual and familiar activities (Omer and Alon, 1994). In order to serve the purpose of returning to routine and normalcy, aid agencies should communicate with affected people and involve beneficiaries to gain insight into their daily life and activities. An example of activities can be the building of houses. Similar to Sri Lanka, but in contrast to India, houses and land are owned by women in Aceh (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Many of these houses were destroyed by the tsunami. Research has shown that in rebuilding these houses, an owner-driven approach to reconstruction is culturally suitable, more cost-effective and enjoys higher rates of beneficiary satisfaction, than when houses are rebuilt by external relief agencies (Daly, 2014).

Actively engaging beneficiaries in humanitarian response will have a positive result on their recovery and rehabilitation post-disaster. However, this participation also knows its limitations and misuse. These limitations are especially applicable to the more marginalised groups within a community. These groups are more likely to receive inadequate support and relief since the elites have access to the best resources and are in a position to tap into the
flow of aid, allowing them to receive a disproportionate amount of relief at the expense of the more marginalised groups (Daly, 2014). In order to provide an equal distribution of resources, special attention should be paid to these marginalised groups, given their lower capacity to communicate with or reach relief agencies.

5.5 Gender

Gender can shape both capacity as well as vulnerability in times of disaster (Childs, 2006). It shapes vulnerability since women are often seen as helpless victims whereas it shapes capacity as they can be active and resourceful disaster responders (Childs, 2006). However, the emphasis on their vulnerability undermines their capacity. The opposite is true for men. This is evident from Enarson and Meyreles (2004) who argue that “women are all too often represented as the universal victim – tearful, beleaguered and overwhelmed – while men are denied emotion but depicted as sturdy and resourceful” (p. 50). The perspective of the capacity of men undermines their vulnerability since they do feel emotion and can be overwhelmed by the impact of a disaster but are not allowed to express this as a result of gender norms and constructions inherent in a society. By neglecting women’s capacities and ignoring men’s vulnerabilities, the provision of aid is ineffective since it is not tailored to beneficiaries’ needs.

In Indonesia, women occupy a subordinate role in society (Felten-Biermann, 2006). This position is exacerbated in the event of a disaster, as they are left with little access to water, sanitary facilities and protection (Felten-Biermann, 2006). The lack of protection and sanitary facilities failed to provide privacy for women in sensitive situations and resulted in sexual harassment in Acehnese relief camps (Felten-Biermann, 2006). The lack of safety in relief camps is also evident from the high amount of female-headed households which were displaced in communities rather than in relief camps (Rofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006). Women who had become widows after the tsunami preferred the safety of private homes over relief camps and avoided these where possible (Rofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006). The lack of sufficient sanitary facilities for women is an example of a gender-blind policy used by relief agencies. What is more, during the tsunami, women were rarely represented in reconstruction planning processes and action in Aceh (Felten-Biermann, 2006). It was very unlikely to find women in the affected villages who occupied important
public roles when it came to decision-making and engaging with NGOs and other relief agencies (Daly and Brassard, 2011). This reflected the traditional structure of male and female roles in Aceh where men were seen as heads of the household and therefore more likely to be involved in decision making and playing a central role in engaging with aid issues (Daly and Brassard, 2011). A larger emphasis and focus on women’s needs in such camps could be achieved through the involvement of women in the decision-making and planning process of disaster response and especially relief camps.

Identical to Sri Lanka and India, also in Indonesia three times more women than men perished in the tsunami waves (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Besides other factors that have been mentioned in the previous case studies that limited women’ mobility, such as the lack of live saving skills and care-giving responsibilities, an additional problem for women in Aceh that hampered their mobility was the clothing requirement prescribed by Sharia law. This law requires that women wear restrictive clothing, an issue that complicated their escape from the water (Frankenberg el al., 2011).

In Aceh, relief agencies were responsive to gender issues by recognising the vulnerability of women to sexual abuse and highlighting issues concerning the protection of women and girls (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Nevertheless, many of the NGOs operating in Aceh did not develop a sustainable strategy regarding sexual abuse nor did they conduct a needs assessment to determine the type of assistance that is required and would tailor the needs of beneficiaries (Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). Some organisations however wanted to normalise gender in the emergency response. This proved ineffective according to a respondent of a survey conducted post-disaster who claimed that putting emphasis on mainstreaming gender and pushing for social issues turned out to be counterproductive as external aid actors did not fully grasp gender structures in Aceh (Daly, 2014). Pushing for the mainstream of gender was a result of donor mandates. They insisted that relief agencies organised regular community meetings including a wide variety of members of the community to partake in the decision-making process (Daly and Feener, 2016). This also included women, a practice that was very uncommon in Aceh, pre-tsunami (Daly and Feener, 2016). Indonesia has a compact patriarchal culture and together with elements of the Sharia law, this society is not conducive to gender equality (Lee-koo, 2012). This leads to the
underrepresentation of women in key decision making functions (Lee-koo, 2012). These structures place women in a subordinate role, whereby men are the heads of the household and overrepresented in decision-making. Mainstreaming gender, without local consultation and taking account of these societal elements will undermine these inherent structures and result in adverse effects that can cause frustration among the beneficiaries, which can complicate relief efforts. In order to include women effectively, it is therefore essential to consult the affected people. Furthermore, the lack of local consultation does not only lead to adverse effects but also to culture and gender insensitivity (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012).

In relief camps in Aceh, underwear and sanitary napkins were not present on the list of basic needs provided in the shelters, nor was there sufficient supply of long-sleeved shirts and headscarves, clothing that is deemed essential to predominantly Muslim Acehnese women (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012).

5.6 Analysis

The following section provides an analysis on the establishment of the concepts of the analytical framework in the case of Indonesia. This will be done in a comparable manner to the previous two case studies whereby this section also serves as groundwork for the analysis and discussion chapter that will follow next.

5.6.1 Disaster-affected people

The province of Aceh in Indonesia has suffered a tremendous amount of damage and a significant high number of victims, due to its geographical location being so close to the eruption of the earthquake near the coast of Sumatra. The tsunami has severely affected family and community structures as is evident from the large amount of internally displaced people in the affected districts in Indonesia. Displacement on this large scale caused severe social disruption as families were destroyed and scattered over different areas (Roofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006). The most vulnerable people in the tsunami were those whose households were situated near the coast as their livelihoods were based on fisheries and as a result of the natural hazard, therefore experienced significantly higher casualty rates than other sectors (Roofi, Doocy and Robinson, 2006). Internal displacement combined with the
loss of livelihoods and sources of income classifies the results of this disaster as a socio-economic phenomenon which greatly undermined people’s ability to survive.

5.6.2 Humanitarian Response

Aceh was among the last places to receive assistance out of the most affected areas, due to its remote location and reluctance on the part of the government of Indonesia. After three days, an overwhelming amount of funding poured in. As this disaster was unprecedented, the relief continued to flow in, albeit not without conditions from donors. Even though the intention of the assistance provided was to help local citizens by alleviating their suffering, the conditions that were connected to the aid left remote communities and marginalised groups without relief or only at a much later stage. Furthermore, aid was only given to tsunami-affected people, whereas the ongoing conflict in Aceh also produced victims in need (Zeccola, 2011). Aid provision to a natural disaster can differ from giving assistance to a man-made disaster whereby the latter can be influenced by political motives (Balla and Reinhardt, 2008). The Indonesian government prohibited aid workers to provide assistance to the latter victims, a practice that was not well received among these beneficiaries. Similar issues occurred in Sri Lanka, albeit to a lesser extent. Providing aid to an exclusive group of beneficiaries in this way is contrary to the Code of Conduct of the IFRC which requires aid to be independent, neutral and impartial.

5.6.3 Gender Equality

Gender inequality already existed pre-tsunami in Indonesia. Women in the Indonesian society occupy a subordinate role and are absent in decision-making processes (Felten-Biermann, 2006). In times of disaster, this disadvantaged position since exacerbated as women are excluded from engaging with NGOs and other relief agencies and are not allowed to participate in decision-making processes since men are seen as head of the household and therefore better positioned to play a central role in communication and decision-making. The lack of women in decision-making post-disaster led to sexual abuse in relief camps as well as a shortage of culturally appropriate clothing and specific women’s needs relief items (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). The inferior position of women reflects the traditional roles of men and women in the Indonesian society. To effectively provide assistance, aid
workers should consult beneficiaries instead of pushing for gender mainstreaming without taking account of cultural appropriateness which could lead to adverse effects of the intervention.

5.6.4 Participatory Approach

The government of Indonesia had the intention to employ a participatory approach in the aftermath of the tsunami. Detailed guidelines were created to involve beneficiaries in the emergency response in order to provide culturally sensitive assistance and empower local affected people (Daly, 2014). Despite this good intention, beneficiaries were largely excluded from participating as NGOs and other relief agencies preferred the implementation of externally developed interventions, a practice that could be maintained through the abundance in funding and low accountability level. This exclusion combined with certain donor mandates resulted in tension between aid agencies and beneficiaries. This was aggravated by the fact that certain media prone villages received high amounts of aid whereas other remote communities were neglected. In some situations, aid agencies tried to employ a participatory approach, nevertheless this had detrimental effects. This approach on the one hand resulted in corruption by beneficiaries, created by the enormous amount of funding and on the other hand it created confusion and misunderstanding among beneficiaries as relief agencies employed consultation mechanisms that were unknown to the affected people and therefore ineffective (Daly and Brassard, 2011).

5.7 Conclusion

The investigation of Indonesia in the context of the tsunami has shown that this country has suffered the highest amount of victims and internally displaced people. Next to that, the emergency response was heavily influenced by donor mandates and the Indonesian government which restricted the direction of aid to solely tsunami-affected individuals while neglecting conflict affected people. Additionally, women suffered to a large extent from the effects of gender inequality whereby their pre-tsunami subordinate position was increasingly highlighted in the aftermath of the disaster with detrimental effects to their recovery. Lastly, despite intentions to include beneficiaries in emergency response, their engagement was greatly neglected. In the few situations in which involvement was encouraged, it resulted in
adverse effects. So far, this thesis has focused on the three case studies that are central in this study. The context of each case in the event of the tsunami has been discussed, after which the analytical framework was applied. The following section will discuss the analysis of the three cases together and draw possible links between the cases and therewith provide an answer to the central research question.
Chapter 6: Discussion

Using three different case studies of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004, this study has explored the impact of the inclusion of affected people on the improvement of gender equality in humanitarian response. The analysis in each case study has established the applicability of the concepts of the analytical framework to the respective cases. In the section that follows, the three case studies will be compared on the basis of each concept. These are: disaster-affected people, humanitarian response, gender equality and participatory approach. Each sub-section will outline shared commonalities between the cases, followed by the differences. Whereas each concept is important, emphasis is put on gender equality and the participatory approach since these notions prove to be essential components towards answering the main research question.

6.1 Disaster-affected people

The case of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 can be termed a disaster according to the IFRC definition. The tsunami significantly damaged economic and social structures which undermined peoples’ ability to survive. Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia were the most affected countries hit by this hazard.

The most striking feature that is identical in all three cases is the disproportionately gendered impact among the tsunami victims. Both in Sri Lanka and India as well as Indonesia, women were more prone to the effect of the waves. The reason for this will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph dealing with gender equality in this chapter. Furthermore, in all three countries the disruption of the economy was most significant in fishing communities since these were situated near the coast. Fishing on the day the tsunami hit also saved many men as they were on the water when the waves started reaching the coast (Oxfam, 2005). The destruction of sources of income together with the falling apart of family and community structures determines the impact of the tsunami as a socio-economic phenomenon.

The largest difference between the cases is the number of victims. Indonesia suffered the highest casualty numbers, due to its geographical location (Athukorala, 2012). Nevertheless, both Sri Lanka and India also experienced a significant amount of loss, not only in terms of people, but also in terms of livelihoods, sources of income and homes (Yamada et al., 2006;
Besides geography, the concept of vulnerability is determinant for disaster-affected people. Vulnerability influences an individuals’ capacity to respond to a natural hazard (Wisner et al., 2004). Furthermore, vulnerability is shaped by social constructions that are rooted in a society (Fisher, 2010). There are different levels of vulnerability which are all consequences of inequalities created by society (Fisher, 2010; Khasalamwa, 2008). Within these levels, gender plays an important role. Social constructions can be significantly influenced by religion as was the case in Indonesia and more specifically Aceh where the majority of the population is Muslim and adheres to Sharia law (Lee-koo, 2012). Religion in India and Sri Lanka can also influence social and gender constructions, however this occurrence was less prevalent in the literature in contrast to the influence of the Islam in Aceh in connection to the humanitarian response to the tsunami.

6.2 Humanitarian Response

The size and impact of the tsunami has triggered worldwide shock, compassion and sympathy which led to an unprecedented response from humanitarian organisations, equipped with an overwhelming amount of funding, aid and resources. The presence of Western tourists in the affected regions, combined with excessive media coverage of the damaged areas and communities, increased the provision of relief and assistance. In all three countries, the response to the crisis was largely a foreign intervention seen the continuous amount of international funding with the aim of helping local citizens. The effectiveness of this aid will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph under participatory approach in this section.

The largest commonality between the cases concerns the abundance in funding. The powerful position of donors and the media required humanitarian organisations to adhere to certain demands of delivering aid (Stirrat, 2006) Although these demands did not undermine the alleviating of suffering of affected people, it did influence the direction of aid towards certain areas and certain beneficiaries (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). Tied by these strict donor mandates, relief agencies complied with these demands, thereby undermining the principles of humanitarian assistance which aim to provide relief in an independent, impartial and neutral manner. In all three cases, these donor mandates led to competition among humanitarian organisations which proved detrimental to the provision of aid (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006; Stirrat, 2006; Athukorala, 2012).
Areas where differences can be found include the context pre-tsunami, the timing of aid as well as the approach employed to provide assistance. Both Sri Lanka and Indonesia have endured long-term conflicts that were ongoing when the disaster occurred (Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006; Stokke, 2007; Zeccola, 2011). While the aftermath of the tsunami set the stage that allowed for the signing of a peace accord in Indonesia, hostilities in Sri Lanka continued (Hyndman, 2011; Nowak and Caulfield, 2008). These conflict contexts established different circumstances in the provision of aid in contrast to India. In Aceh, the Indonesian government restricted relief agencies to providing aid solely to tsunami-affected people, whereas strict donor requirements prevented agencies in Sri Lanka from also including conflict-affected people in the provision of assistance (Zeccola, 2011; Hyndman, 2009). Such strict guidelines are contrary to providing aid based on needs, according to the IFRC Code of Conduct. Reasoning behind these strict rules stems from the fact that the provision of aid to man-made disasters can sometimes be politically motivated, rather than needs based (Balla and Reinhardt, 2008). What is more, in Sri Lanka the distribution of resources was complicated by the two parties to the conflict who both claimed relief items for their regions (Kleinfeld, 2007; Hilhorst and Fernando, 2006). These matters combined with the donor mandates caused friction between aid providers and local NGOs and beneficiaries of both the tsunami and the conflict. Concerning the timing of aid, both India and Sri Lanka received aid immediately after the disaster hit, whereas Indonesia only received assistance after several days (Athukorala, 2012; Gaillard, Clavé and Kelman, 2007). With regards to the approach used to provide aid, India used a more state-centred response whereby the government did not demand international funding and preferred a more internal response (Kruks-Wisner, 2011).

6.3 Gender Equality

The notion of gender plays an important role in the tsunami. This is strikingly reflected in the high amount of female victims in the three most affected countries damaged by the disaster (MacDonald, 2005). This high amount can largely be attributed to women’s vulnerability which is shaped by social and gendered constructions present in society. Next to women’s heightened vulnerability during the disaster, women were also positioned to play a secondary and dependent role in the aftermath and during the humanitarian response to the
tsunami. Even though the tsunami took a higher casualty toll on women, men also suffered from the impact of the natural hazard, albeit to a different extent than women.

The most striking common cause across all three cases, when it comes to the high female victim rate, relates to the role of women as a mother and care-giver (Stirrat, 2006; Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). The responsibilities inherent in this role hampered women’s ability to escape from the water as they attempted to provide safety to their children first which often resulted in their own death. Additionally, in both Sri Lanka and India, society did not allow women to develop skills that could have saved them, such as swimming or climbing trees (Hines, 2007). Furthermore, both in India and Indonesia, women were limited in their mobility due to clothing restrictions (Rigg et al., 2008; Frankenberg et al., 2011). Next to these similarity in issues that were decisive during the disaster, the role of women in the aftermath also showed great commonalities between the cases. The most compelling similarity concerns the large absence of women in decision-making processes in the design and implementation phase of humanitarian response (Yamada et al., 2006; Wachtendorf et al., 2006). The lack of women in these processes stems from the gendered social constructions in all three societies in which women occupy a subordinate position and are excluded from participation in decision-making (Felten-Biermann, 2006). In all three cases, this resulted in a lack of special attention to women’s needs in relief camps which complicated access to resources for women and also led to sexual abuse (Oxfam International, 2005). The absence of women in these processes was aggravated by gender-blind policies in both Sri Lanka and India which exacerbated women’s vulnerable subordinate position even more (Fisher, 2010; Nowak and Caulfield, 2008).

In contrast to gender-blind policies in Sri Lanka and India, humanitarian organisations in Indonesia employed an approach of gender mainstreaming when it came to consultation with the beneficiaries (Daly, 2014; Daly and Feener, 2016). However, this approach was deemed culturally insensitive and inappropriate since the inclusion of women in decision-making in Aceh was unheard of and did not have the intended effects. So whereas gender-blind policies in two cases worsened women’s position, gender mainstreaming without taking into account local culture in the other case did not result in a better outcome.
6.3.1 Men

Gender equality concerns both men and women, though it is more often focused on the latter. As has been described before, women suffered to a greater extent as a consequence of the tsunami, however, the impact on men is largely overlooked which is evident from the large absence of data and literature on the vulnerability of men in times of disaster and humanitarian response. An example of men’s vulnerability concerns the new family situation. Men have not been involved as much as women in care-giving responsibilities and suddenly find themselves in an unprecedented situation post-disaster in which they carry the sole responsibility for their children (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Another example concerns their mental coping capacities. Sexual abuse in relief camps frequently occurred because of poor privacy facilities for women, nevertheless it was also increased due to men suffering from alcohol abuse and depression (Ariyabandu and Fonseka, 2009). These latter issues were a result of the overestimation of men’s ability to cope with the circumstances after a disaster which isolates their vulnerability and leads to victimisation.

6.4 Participatory Approach

As previously mentioned, the affluence in funding triggered by the catastrophe of the tsunami drew many humanitarian organisations to the affected areas. The enormous amount of aid agencies combined with donor mandates resulted in competition and a lack of coordination between these organisations. Furthermore, these relief agencies arrived with externally developed interventions that often neglected local participation and engagement.

The largest similarity in all three cases concerns the competition between humanitarian organisations that led to a lack of coordination, chaos and neglect of local engagement (Stirrat, 2006; Thurnheer, 2009; Régnier et al., 2008; Daly, 2014). Resources needed to be spent rapidly and in the case of both India and Indonesia this meant that affected villages that were easily accessible to the media, received aid immediately and often repeatedly while remote areas were neglected or only reached at a later stage (Wachtendorf et al., 2006). Additionally, in both Sri Lanka and India, local participation, knowledge and insight were completely ignored and neglected which proved detrimental and harmful to the effectivity of assistance seen the poor reconstruction of houses and inappropriate types of shelter (Mulligan
and Shaw, 2007; Wachtendorf et al., 2006). What is more, the provision of aid was considerably westernised. In the case of Sri Lanka and India this meant that donors sent Western types of food and clothing as part of relief packages, items that proved useless as they were deemed culturally inappropriate (Kayser, Wind and Shankar, 2008). Consulting beneficiaries on their knowledge and insight could have prevented or adjusted this waste of resources.

Compared to Sri Lanka and India, the government of Indonesia intended to employ a participatory approach by emphasising local and meaningful engagement whereby aid would be culturally appropriate and ultimately lead to empowerment of affected people (Daly, 2014). Nevertheless, the enormous amount of funding combined with low accountability mechanisms prevented this participatory approach from being used with the exception of some situations (Bauman, Ayalew and Paul, 2012). In the few instances that relief agencies allowed beneficiaries to participate, this engagement was far from meaningful and had the opposite effect of empowerment, seen the occurrence of corruption and unclear and culturally inappropriate consultation mechanisms (Régnier et al., 2008; Daly and Brassard, 2011). So whereas no participation in two cases resulted in detrimental effects, in the event that engagement was encouraged, it was not meaningful and led to negative outcomes. Nonetheless, in a few occasions engagement of affected people was encouraged, however without accountability mechanisms or contextual appropriate consultation mechanisms, this involvement did more harm than good.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn a comparison between the three different cases. The tsunami in the Indian Ocean severely undermined individuals’ ability to survive. The humanitarian response to this disaster is characterised by unprecedented support which was not always in the best interest of beneficiaries. Additionally, two of the more significant findings to emerge from this chapter are the considerable lack of meaningful engagement of beneficiaries in the implementation of the response as well as the absence of gender equality during the emergency phase of relief. Both these issues proved detrimental to the recovery of affected people. The significance of these findings will be discussed in the concluding and final chapter of this study that will follow next.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to determine the usefulness of including affected people in humanitarian response with the aim of improving gender equality. In order to provide an answer to the central question of this research, the study employed a qualitative research design with a focus on the case study of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004, more specifically on the cases of Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. Through the use of an analytical framework, the context of each case has been researched on the basis of core concepts such as disaster-affected people, humanitarian response, gender equality and participatory approach, that shape the central research question. The outcomes of this investigation have been compared and contrasted in the sixth chapter which allows for the drawing of causal links in answering the main research question.

This study has shown that the occurrence of a natural hazard, more specifically a tsunami, has significant impacts on the affected population. The severity of this impact is determined by the nature of a disaster, geographical location but equally or perhaps more importantly on an individual’s vulnerability which is dependent on social constructions inherent in a society. These societal structures influence someone’s ability and capacity to anticipate, cope with and recover from a disaster. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, geographical location caused fishing communities to be the most vulnerable areas whereas social constructions induced women to be the most vulnerable group of victims. The abnormal size of the disaster triggered an unprecedented humanitarian response. Funding and resources were provided on a remarkable scale. Nevertheless, intended positive outcomes of this overwhelming support were undermined by a lack of coordination, competition, the presence of ongoing-conflict situations and most of all, the absence of meaningful beneficiary engagement. The latter not only limited recovery and empowerment of affected people, it also proved detrimental for the presence of gender equality in humanitarian response.

Pre-disaster conflict contexts in both Sri Lanka and Indonesia significantly influenced the direction of the incoming aid solely towards tsunami-affected people, whereby needs of victims of the conflict had to be ignored out of fear of instigating further conflict. This was done despite agreement that aid should be based on needs and provided in a neutral,
independent and impartial manner. It was beyond the scope of this study to delve deeper into the influence of aid provision on conflict. The assistance that was provided in the wake of the tsunami reflected westernised notions of relief whereby the rapid spending of resources and quick implementation of externally designed aid interventions took precedence over effectiveness and efficiency as well as active engagement of affected people. The relevance of including beneficiaries is clearly supported by the numerous examples in all three cases. Providing aid without consulting and involving affected people results in culturally inappropriate and insensitive relief, whereby some of the relief items such as shelter tents and clothing proved useless whereas beneficiaries were not provided with the tools for capacity building and empowerment and were left vulnerable for the risk of a future disaster.

The lack of engagement of affected people is the most significant among women. Their subordinate position in society in all three cases caused a severe imbalance in the casualty rates separated by gender. The existence of gender inequality pre-tsunami was continued throughout the aftermath of the disaster and during the humanitarian response. Beyond the loss of family, houses, livelihoods, women also experienced sexual abuse, limited access to resources and the exacerbation of their already subordinate position. Their recovery was compromised due to the absence of women in decision-making processes concerning the design and implementation of relief interventions and the gender-blind approaches used by governments and relief agencies who fail to recognize the different impact of disasters on men and women. When it comes to gender equality, emphasis is put on women, though men’s needs are too often overlooked in this aspect. Relief interventions should pay more attention to the vulnerability of men in order to not isolate and victimise their needs, which could decrease substance abuse and potentially the occurrence of sexual abuse.

In sum, these findings suggest a significant role for affected people in humanitarian response to improve gender equality. By including affected people in the design and implementation of relief, aid can be provided in a more culturally appropriate, efficient and effective manner, whereby beneficiaries feel as if they can contribute to their own recovery, their capacity is built and they become empowered. This can be done through appropriate consultation mechanisms and recognising the value of local knowledge and insight of beneficiaries. Within this inclusion, emphasis should be put on the participation of women so that women’s
needs are taken into account and not ignored and neglected and ultimately contribute to the improvement of gender equality in humanitarian response.

This study was limited to the reliance on secondary sources in the absence of the collection of primary data. This means that it was beyond the scope of this study to develop grounded theory. Notwithstanding this limitation, the insights gained from this study may be of assistance to future research into gender equality in humanitarian response. If the debate is to be moved forward, a better understanding, of the importance of the inclusion of affected people in humanitarian response, should be developed among relief agencies.
References


[Accessed at January 25, 2018].

https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0305750X08001757/1-s2.0-S0305750X08001757-main.pdf?_tid=432bd6f8-17c5-11e8-b214-00000aab0f6b&acdnat=1519299844_0ac43e50097f6a5d8a9ced47db3659af. 
[Accessed at February 22, 2018].


https://dra.american.edu/islandora/object/jpdv3n3%3A10/datastream/PDF/view. 
[Accessed at February 13, 2018].

http://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1573&context=tqr. [Accessed at January 9, 2018].

[Accessed at February 6, 2018].


gendered tsunami disaster. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International
http://www.emeraldinsight.com.proxy-
ub.rug.nl/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/09653560610654347. [Accessed at February 12,
2018].

response*. Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, London [online]. Available at:
https://www.sida.se/contentassets/4d83961af7834c34843a5a8a1873514d/links-
[Accessed at January 17, 2018].

*Gender and Development*, [online] Volume 9(03), p. 8-18. Available at:

[online] Volume 29(03), p. 421-427. Available at:
http://web.a.ebscohost.com.proxy-
ub.rug.nl/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=8f9ddcab-ae5-4b0e-9eed-
a51773146ece%40sessionmgr4006. [Accessed at January 14, 2018].

Daly, P. (2014). Embedded wisdom or rooted problems? Aid workers' perspectives on local
social and political infrastructure in post-tsunami Aceh. *Disasters*, [online] Volume
39(02), p. 232-257. Available at:
8, 2018].

Daly, P. and Brassard, C. (2011). Aid Accountability and Participatory Approaches in Post-
39(04), p. 508-533. Available at:
http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/156853111x5973
05. [Accessed at February 12, 2018].


[Accessed at January 23, 2018].
