Study on Returning Refugees from South India

With the dawn of peace in the country many Sri Lankan citizens who lived for many years out of the country are returning. Most of them had been in refugee camps.

The purpose of the study was to assess whether their health status differed and how best the health services can be made accessible upon return.

Study sample
- All 700 families that had returned in the past 6 months and currently resident in Vavuniya at the time of study were included.
- The returnee families were compared to the host population in Vavuniya.
- Nutrition, psychological status and general health status were studied using standardized instruments

Study findings
- There were no significant difference in health status when compared to the host population in terms of nutrition, communicable diseases and psychological conditions.
- In terms of access to health 11.1% of the returning refugees sample had not yet been registered which was evident through non availability of the CHDR.

Livelihood
- It was revealed that more than 45% of these families, whilst in Sri Lanka, had been engaged in Agriculture or related industries.
- However in India 60% undertook work in sectors that were different to the ones engaged whilst living in Sri Lanka.
- Construction industry was the predominant employment industry whilst living in India (40%), followed by manufacturing (16%).
- Their preference is to be re-engage in agri based industry in Sri Lanka.

Comment: Economic development should focus on the desires and strengths of this population and preserve their good health status.

To deliver health messages to the returning refugees, a booklet was prepared and distributed among them. You can download the booklet through the Publications tab.