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*Evaluation Study of JRS Life Skills Education  
Centre in the context of Life Situation of Sri  
Lankan Refugee Women*

Diplomová práce

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**Declaration of authorship**

I hereby declare, that this masters thesis has been written by me in person. All information derived from other works has been acknowledged in the text and the list of references.

In Olomouc: 18. 4. 2017

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## **Introduction**

This Masters thesis deals with Evaluation study of JRS Life Skills Education Centre in a Context of Sri Lankan refugee women. At the beginning it is necessary to mention that this evaluation study is not an evaluation study in the strict sense, but only elements of evaluation are used in the research. The aim of this thesis is *to assess the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee Women with the past or actual experience of the JRS Life Skills Education centre and to provide perceived output of the project as well as recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' points of view.*

The first impulse for focusing on the topic was my six months internship in JRS South Asia in 2016 which provides assistance to refugees within the South Asia region including Sri Lankan refugees. Seeing the situation of Sri Lankan refugees, talking to them and spending time with them made me think about their lives. I started to have a feeling that the situation of Sri Lankan refugees is not well-known around the world and that their life situation and struggling deserves the same attention as the other groups of refugees around the world. The reason for choosing particularly focusing on JRS Life Skills Education Centre for drop-out Sri Lankan women was the potential and capacity I saw in these young women who did not know how great they are. After staying in the centre and getting know each other better I decided to try to help JRS to understand more the background of the participants, address the need of the participants and to enhance the project accordingly.

The life situation of the refugee population in India complicates the fact that India has not signed the 1951 Convention on Refugees nor the 1967 Convention. These two documents provide the basic legal framework for a protection of refugees worldwide. India approach towards refugees is based on the policy of Indian government towards countries of origin of refugees (Acharya, 2004, p. 2). Particularly Sri Lankan refugees have been living in India for more than three decades. Prolonged conflict affected the minds of the people negatively as well the life in refugee camps which are often in a pathetic state. The insufficient sanitation facilities, as well as the lack of privacy, affect the lives especially of Sri Lankan refugee women are vulnerable in refugee camps. The lack of confidence is present among the Sri Lankan women as well as young women drop-out from studies for on whom this study focuses (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 9). Social work provided by many institutions is seeking to preserve human dignity of refugees, their self-sufficiency and the improvement of their life conditions.

The first part of this thesis is dedicated to theoretical part. The theoretical part is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focused on refugees in India, where the status of refugees is defined, along with India International Obligations, UNHCR mandate in India, Categories of Refugees in India and Selected indicators of the quality of life of refugees. Second chapter focus particularly of Sri Lankan refugees. The basic information about the conflict in Sri Lanka are given, Influx and Admission of Sri Lankan refugees are presented as well as the division of Sri Lankan refugees, Selected Indicators of the quality of life of Sri Lankan refugees India. The last subchapter of the second chapter is dedicated to Sri Lankan refugee women of whom is the research in this thesis focused on. The third chapter presents Jesuit Refugee Service, the international catholic organisation where the research took place.

The second part of this thesis is dedicated to methodological part. The methodological part consist of following subchapters: defining the research question, qualitative approach in research, method, technique and instruments of obtaining qualitative data, study participants, data processing method, ethnical weaknesses of research and qualitative data analysis.

The third part of this thesis is focused on analytical part. The results of the research are presented followed by the seventh chapter where the discussion and suggestions are mentioned.

During the writing of the master's work was used mainly foreign literature dealing with the issue of refugees in India, especially after dealing with refugees from Sri Lanka.

This master may serve primarily the organisation Jesuit Refugee Service that can be used for better orientation in the situation of refugees from Sri Lanka and also improve the existing setup of the project that devoted to them. These thesis can also be used for those who are interested in this topic, especially for those who are interested in issues of Sri Lankan refugee women.

# THEORETICAL PART

## 1 Refugees in India

This master thesis deals with the topic related to Sri Lankan refugees living in India. It is necessary to determine the context of the refugees living in India to understand the policy and their living conditions. The following subchapters help to understand the environment refugees live in.

The term „refugee“ is going to be used for the purpose of this thesis even though India has not signed the 1951 Convention on refugees nor the 1967 Protocol where the term „refugee“ is defined. The 1951 Convention on refugees is related to the definition, status and minimal standards of the treatment of those who are considered as refugees (UNHCR, 2001, p. 8). It determines the legal obligations of nation states (Di Tomasso, 2010, p. 246). The 1951 Convention on refugees guarantees the non-refoulement principle. This principle ensures that refugees are not sent back to countries where they face the persecution (UNHCR, 2005, p. 5-13). The term refugee is defined below according to UNHCR (United High Commissioner for Refugees definition):

*The 1951 Convention relating to Status of Refugees defines a refugee as someone who: has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in particular social group or political opinion. A refugee is someone who is outside of his/her country of origin and is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2001, p. 9).*

When we are talking about the refugees in India, it is important to mention if the term refugee is used within the Indian law in general. India has not signed the 1951 Convention on refugees nor the 1967 Protocol as is mentioned above. Indian law does not know the term *refugee* which is the main lacuna (Nair, 2007, p. 1). Within the Indian law there is no difference between the term „refugee“ and „asylum-seeker.“ (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 8). All people who are not Indians including refugees are considered as „Foreigners“ (Ananthachari, 2001). According to Indian law, refugees belong to the same group as tourists and immigrants which deprives them from the privileges arising from the Geneva Conventions (Nair, 2007, p. 1).

Currently, there is more than 65,3 million people around the world who have been forced to leave their homes due to dangerous environments in their countries of origin based on

UNHCR statistics. Refugees are seeking the protection in various countries around the world (Figures at glance, 2017).

India has been always the home for refugees from foreign lands. People have been fleeing the violence from different countries worldwide and sought refuge in India (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 1). The bigger migration wave in India started in 16th and 17th century when the Parsis came. After Parsis many other groups came for example Tibetan refugees in 1959, the Bangladeshi refugees in 1971, the Chakma influx in 1963, the Tamil efflux from Sri Lanka in 1983, 1989, and 1995 (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 1). According to Raizada, during the post-independence period India started to face influx of Refugees from neighbouring countries. During the years 1947-1948 India has been offering a shelter for those who were coming from West and East Pakistan. (Raizada, 2013, p. 2). The big migration wave started in 1947 after the British left India. and established two independent Dominions – India and Pakistan. There was a natural migration flow of Muslims within East and West Pakistan and Hindus in India. Many people lived in fear of persecution and decided to leave (VijayaKumar, 2001, p. 8) Refugees from East and West Pakistan were followed by the refugees coming from Tibet, Bangladesh (Raizada, 2013, p. 2). A big influx of refugees from Tibet took place in 1959 and from Bangladesh in 1971. Influx of Sri Lankan refugees started in 1983 followed by years 1989 and 1995. Those groups were followed by the refugees fleeing the violence from Bangladesh and Myanmar (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 1).

According to UNHCR report there was 202, 185 refugees living in India in 2016. 28,164 of them were assisted by UNHCR and 8,916 can be considered as asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2017, p. 29). There are various groups of refugees living in India who left their country of origin to seek a protection. Those refugees who came to India are mostly from Tibet, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar or Somalia (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 1).

Although India has not signed the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees nor the 1967 Protocol, it is bound by other international obligations that are associated with the refugee issue.

## **1.1 India International Obligations**

South Asian countries have not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol for their own reasons. (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 5). The term South Asia is mostly used for a countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan (Vijayakumar, 2001, p. 6) There are various reasons for not ratifying the 1951

Convention and 1967 Protocol, the reasons are not clear (Vijayankumar, 2001, p. 6). Vijayakumar in this study mentioned probable reasons for not ratifying such as:

*„the lack of any regional approach or national legislation to address the problem, the contribution made by the international community to the crisis in this region, nature of protection, the extend of rights available to the refugees etc.“* (Vijayakumar, 2001, p. 6).

India does not have a separated refugee law. Due to this lack of specific refugee law, all Indian laws are applied for a refugees as well such as The Criminal Procedure Code, The Indian Penal Code, The Evidence Act etc. Depside India has not signed the Refugee Convection and Protocol, it signed a number of United Nations and World Conventions on Human Rights. For instance India is a member of the Executive Committee of the High Commisioner´s Programme in 1995. (Ananthachari, 2001). The Executive Committee is the main decision-making body of UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 5).

According to Xavier & Sharma: *„India is party to the 1996 International Coventant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), where is it has made a reservation on Article 13 regarding the expulsion a person lawfully present in the territory of the State.“* (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 5).

In a issue of refugees worldwide it is important to discuss the principle of non-refoulement. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESRC) and the Convention against Torture (CAT) which India signed are carrying the principle of non-refoulement with themselves. This is in addiction to the obligations of non-refoulement imposed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRS) (Sanderson, undated, p. 1).

Another important documents which are related to the issue of refugees and Human Rights and India signed are: Deceleration on Territorial Asylum (1967) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Nair, 2007, p. 2). There are also another important conventions which are important to mention for the purpose clear understands of India international obligations such as the 1963 Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial discrimination, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 5).

## **1.2 UNHCR mandate in India**

As I already mentioned before, India has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention nor the 1967 Protocol. Despite there is not a national refugee protection framework, India has been granting the asylum to refugees from neighbouring countries for a long time. The UNHCR's mandate for other nationals is respected within the India for example for refugees coming from Afghanistan and Myanmar as well as it respects principle of non-refoulement for holders of UNHCR documentation (UNHCR, 2011, p. 202). Although the UNHCR mandate is respected in India, there are no formal arrangements between Indian government and UNHCR (Acharya, 2004, p. 6).

India became a member of the UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom) in 1995. (Sanderson, undated, p. 3).

*„This creates a paradoxical and rather baffling situation regarding the UNHCR where India sits on its Executive Committee and allows the UNHCR to operate on its territory, but refuses to sign the legal instrument that brought the organisation into existence* „(Acharya, 2004, p. 6).

Regardless of this fact, the UNHCR missions in India are completely restricted. The main UNHCR office is based in New Delhi and smaller office is situated in Chennai. Those who would like to apply for a refugee status from UNHCR must travel to Delhi and contact UNHCR office directly (Sanderson, undated, p. 3). UNHCR intervenes mostly in New Delhi, providing assistance to Urban refugees. The operations out of New Delhi are limited. (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 9). UNHCR does not have an access to the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu where the Sri Lankan refugees are living as well as to register the refugees there. In the case of Burmese refugees of the Chin ethnicity, many of them are living in the Indian State called Mizoram which is located on the Indian – Burmese borders. The UNHCR is also not able to access them directly in Mizoram. The other Burmese group of refugees is Rohingyas which is important to distinguish from the refugees of the Chin ethnicity. After the registration with UNHCR Rohingyas can obtain the long-stay visas in India (Sanderson, undated, p. 11).

## **1.3 Status of Refugees in India**

As was already mentioned, India does not sign the 1951 Convention on Refugees as well as 1971 Protocol. According to this fact there are many restrictions for refugees' exist,

place and place of residence in India. All people who are coming to India without valid travel documents are considered as illegal migrants based on **the 1955 The Citizenship Act** (Sanderson, undated, p. 2-3). The legal status of refugees regulate two main acts – **the Foreigners Act of 1946** and **the Foreigners Order of 1948** (Artiles, 2011, p. 5). These two Act do not distinguish the foreigners from the refugees who are fleeing due to various persecutions in their countries of origin. The Acts mentioned above treat all the non-citizens in the same way (HRLN, 2007, p. 2). Even India has been always very generous towards the refugees fleeing the violence. Despite this fact, the policies towards refugees are obviously very unequal depending on the exact refugee groups the refugees belong to, ethnicity and date of arrival (Sanderson, undated, p. 1). There is lack of specific refugee legislation, the status of refugees is influenced by political and administrative decisions of the government which results to different ways of treating refugees based on their country of origin (HRLN, 2007, p. 2).

*„This inconsistency is the result of a domestic refugee policy that is based neither on equality of treatment nor leal priciple, ubt on the shifting exigencies of domestic political opinion and foregin policy.“* (Sanderson, undated, p. 18).

The only government body which deal with refugees as well with other foreigners in India is Foreigner Regional Registration Offices (FRRO). FRRO is under the Bureau of Immigration India. The officials working at FRRO deal with refugees on the basic of ad hoc policies. In a practice, FRRO does not distinguish between the refugees and asylum-seekers (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 8).

Accoriding to Xavier & Sharma India deals with the refugees and asylum-seekers in three different ways. Basically, there is difference for those **who are living in the camps** such as Sri Lankan and Tibetan refugees. In the case of those refugees India grant protection and assistance by the government (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 18). Government consider them as refugees (Sanderson, undated, p. 17).

Another group of refugees are for example refugees **who are not recognized by the government but the refugee status has been granted by UNHCR** under its mandate. To this group belong refugees from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Somalia and others. They are also protected by the principle of non-refoulement (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 18). The UNHCR operations are almost fully restricted. The main UNHCR office is based in Delhi and those refugees who are willing to apply for protection or material assistance granted by UNHCR must travel to New Delhi and contact UNHCR office in person (Sanderson,

undated, p. 3). Those refugees who have are the holders of UNHCR ID cards receive the residence permit from Indian authorities (UNHCR, 2011, p. 202).

**The last group of the refugees, they are not recognized neither the government nor UNHCR.** Those refugees are simply assimilated into local community such as the Chin refugees in Mizoram (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 18). As was already mentioned before, India due to lack of refugee policy, India treats the refugees based on their country of origin. For the purpose of the thesis, to understand the background of the refugees living in India it is important to specify the approach of the Indian authorities towards various groups of refugees. They are going to be characterized below in a following subchapter.

#### **1.4 Categories of Refugees in India based on their country of origin**

As was already mentioned in the chapters above, India does not have a specific refugee policy which result into various treatment of refugee groups based on their countries of origin and the international relations between the India and their countries of origin. Approach to the refugees can not be very generalized and for better understand the diversity of approaches towards refugees, few groups of refugees are going to be characterized below (Tibetan, Afghan and Burmese refugees). The aim of this chapter is not to present the list of all refugees groups living in India along with their characteristics but to point the different approach towards refugees. Another refugee groups present in India are Bhutanese refugees, Hindu Pakistani refugees and Palestinian refugees (HRLN, 2007, p. 1). Sri Lankan refugees will not be mentioned in the following subchapters because Chapter 2 is devoted fully to this group of refugees.

##### **1.4.1 Tibetan Refugees**

Tibetan refugee situation has been living in India since the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1949 (Tibet Justice Center, 2016, p. 5). Many refugees started fleeing the country after Dalai Lama fled to exile in 1959 (Artiles, 2011, p. 5). The granted asylum to Dalai Lama has increased tension between India and China in 1959. This fact contributed to the Sino-Indian war in 1962 (Sanderson, undated, p. 15).

Those who came to India were assigned land and housing along with a Registration Certificate (RC). Refugees with RC can enjoy all the privileges which Indian citizens have except the right to work in Indian government offices and voting right (Artiles, 2011, p. 5-6). Since 1994 these Certificates have not been longer issued. In a practice it means that those refugees who came from Tibet after 1979 are considered newcomers can not

obtain this Certificate anymore. The exception was given to the children of those Tibetans who entered India before 1979 (Sanderson, undated, p. 16). Those refugees who fled to India between 1959 and the 1970s can also benefit from the services resulting from UNHCR mandate (Artiles, 2011, p. 5-6).

Tibetans are mostly considered as refugees in many countries, although according to law and policies in India belong to the category of „foreigners“. Despite Tibetan refugees in India has been treated generously by the government of India for many years, they still have to face many restrictions in area of employment, the property ownership and freedom of the movement (Tibet Justice Center, 2016, p. 7). Those Tibetan refugees who were born between the years 1950 and 1987 can obtain Indian citizenship and have a voting rights as well (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 20).

#### **1.4.2 Afghan Refugees**

Afghanistan is the most insecure country in the world after Syrian and Iraq (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 4). For more than thirty years, the war is present in Afghanistan. The infrastructure and economy is damaged and the human violations make the life of Afghans harder. The Afghanistan is very insecure environment especially for women. (HRLN, 2007, p. 20). Along with the gender inequality which is present in Afghanistan, local people suffer from poverty, weak governance, unemployment and poor health services (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 4).

The influx of Afghan refugees to India started after the Soviets invaded Kabul in 1979. The plight of refugees continued after the fall of the Taliban regime. At the beginning, those refugees who were fleeing from Afghanistan were mostly Hindus and Sikhs (Venkatraman, 2016). Hindus and Sikhs belong to the minority in Afghanistan. For a fear of persecution based on their religion they decided to leave Afghanistan and sought refuge in India (HRLN, 2007, p. 20).

According to UNHCR, there were around 27,000 Afghan refugees living in India in 2015 who were registered with UNHCR. Refugees registered with UNHCR can get the residence permit easily and have access to government-based schools and health care (Venkatraman, 2016). Afghan community is not officially recognized as a refugees by the Indian government. The protection and recognition is granted for those who are registered with UNHCR. Afghan refugees must be registered and obtain residence permit at FRRO (Foreigner Regional Registration Offices). With the residence permit, they are allowed to work. Those who do not have a residence permit are struggling with

finding a job. UNHCR through the local partners organize various trainings and educational activities to help children at primary or secondary school (HRLN, 2007, p. 20–22). Thanks to UNHCR mandate Afghan children have access to education and obtain the birth certificates (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 22–23).

### **1.4.3 Burmese Refugees**

There are two groups of refugees who have been fleeing the violence from Myanmar (Burma). Ethnic minority Rohingyas who belong to Muslim minority and ethnic minority – Chins who belong to Christian minority in majority Buddhist Myanmar.

Burmese refugees began to flee Myanmar because of persecution by the military junta that came to power in 1962. The Chin Minority was not only persecuted due to different religion, but also because of the ethnicity. Most of them fled to Indian State called Mizoram or settled down in New Delhi. The exact number of Chin refugees is not well known. (JRS South Asia, 2013, p. 12-13). Chin refugees do not live in refugee camps, they are considered as urban refugees and are considered as vulnerable group (JRS South Asia, 2016). There is about 14,000 Rohingya living in India in various Indian States such as: Jammu, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Chennai. Rohingya refugees mostly live in slums in India. They have been persecuted in India as well as in Bangladesh for many years (Express News Service, 2017),

Burmese refugees are not recognized as refugees by the Indian government and the only assistance which they are able to obtain is provided by UNHCR. The access to basic resources is denied for them. There is quite significant unemployment among the Chin community and they suffer from financial difficulties as well (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 22-23).

## **1.5 Selected indicators of the quality of life of refugees in India**

The following subchapter presents the selected indicators of quality of life of refugees living in India. The selected factors are: access to education, access to healthcare, access to social benefits and welfare schemes, access to criminal justice system, safety and security, the visa regime for refugees. Due to lack of available literature related to this topic, the statements are based on Xavier & Sharma publication issued in 2015. This chapter helps to understand the daily life of the refugees and the factors which influence their life situations.

Refugee children have **access to education** because India has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That means that refugee children have the right to education. Although refugee children have a right to attend the school, many of them do not do so. The reasons for not attending schools are various. Language barrier is significant problem. The language taught at government schools is mostly Hindi which many of the children are not able to follow. English is spoken in private schools where the school fees are too expensive and families cannot offer to pay it. For attending school, concretely for administration, children have to have the birth certificate which many of refugee children do not hold. UNHCR with its partners provides various tuition or language classes to refugee children. Some of the communities have their own school such as Tibetans or Chin. Sri Lankan refugees have problem with accessing the higher education because of the restrictive quota and they are allowed to join only art and science colleges. There is no possibility to join medical colleges for example (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 26-29).

Refugees in India have **access to healthcare** in India. The public healthcare is accessible for them in government hospitals. The problem is the language barrier between the refugees and medical practitioner. Another issues important to mention is inability to access private hospitals due to high costs. Public health services such as health camps and campaigns are accessible for refugees (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 29-30).

There are special protection challenges for the vulnerable groups among refugees. There are no state-funded **welfare scheme** for refugees. People with disabilities and senior citizens cannot access the government schemes as well. Few welfare schemes are accessible to pregnant women and new mothers. Although some of the schemes were accessible for refugees. For example Sri Lankan refugees can access the government's comprehensive health insurance. Tibetan refugees can access the welfare services due to existence of the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy which was introduced in 2014. Tibetan refugees can even avail the loans (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 31-32).

## **2 Sri Lankan Refugees**

Sri Lankan refugees belong to the second biggest group among the refugees living in India. The biggest number of refugees are represented by Tibetians (Raizada, 2013, p. 2). Refugees from Sri Lanka do not seek the protection only in India, but many of them flew to Europe, Australia and North America (Raizada, 2013, p. 4). Based on UNODC study from 1980s and 1990s and early 2000s, as the main destinations for Sri Lankan could be considered countries such as Germany, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Canada (Hugo, 2014, p. 15).

Sri Lankan Tamils have been seeking refuge in Tamil Nadu since 1983. They came in multiply waves. According to Adra India, there was more 130,000 Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu, India. After finishing the conflict in 2009, there was an expectation that large number of refugees will return back to Sri Lanka. Many refugees decided not to leave India due to lasting instability in Sri Lanka. According to Adra India, there was around 65,674 Sri Lankan refugees living in more than 100 government-based refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and 34,600 Sri Lankan refugees living outside the refugee camps. The unknown number of refugees remain in special refugee camps. (Xavier&Sharma, 2015, p. 38).

*„The legal status of Sri Lankan refugees is officially governed by the Foreigner’s Act 1946 and India’s Citizenship Act 1955 which defines all non-citizens who enter without valid visa as illegal migrants. Nonetheless, in general the Government of India recognizes Sri Lankans fleeing violence to be refugees and accordingly grants them protection“* (HRLN, 2007, p. 7).

The UNHCR is not able to provide the assistance and access the Sri Lankan refugees living in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu as well, as UNHCR was not able to register them. Indian government is responsible for registration (Sanderson, undated, p. 10). After the arrival, refugees are registered by the Indian authorities and the access to health and public services is given to them (Sanderson, undated, p. 12).

### **2.1 Conflict in Sri Lanka**

The basic information about the conflict in Sri Lanka is presented below to understand the reason why Sri Lankan refugees decided to leave their country of origin and seek protection in India.

Sri Lanka is considered as a lower middle-income country. The population of Sri Lanka consist of twenty-one million inhabitants. The society in Sri Lanka has a multi-ethnic character. The majority are Sinhales (74%) followed by Tamil (18%) and Burgher, Malay and Veddas (1%) (Siriwardhana, Wickramage, 2014, p. 1).

Sri Lanka gained independence from the British rule on 4 February 1948. There was always ethnic tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils. Tamils were allegedly discriminated in many areas such as higher education, land colonisation, public sector employment and public investment. Some of the Tamils lost their confidence in a State and started believe that they cannot obtain a justice from the political establishments which was represented by Sinhalese leaders. Those thoughts led to emergence of violence movements. Particular, the LTTE movement wanted to create a separate State in north-eastern part of Sri Lanka (Vahatheeswaran, Rajan, 2011, p. 29-30).

The major armed conflict which had the most negative affect on Sri Lankan population was between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The conflict started in 1983 and ended in 2009. The military force was strengthened by the J.R. Jayewardane's government in north-eastern province as a reaction to Tamil militant violence. In July 1983, severe ethnic violence took place against Tamils as a result of killing 13 soldiers by the LTTE members. This violence was followed by the attacks on Tamils in Colombo and rest of the country. These incidents results into war in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lankan Army and LTTE. There were three phases of the conflict (1983-1988, 1990-1994, 2006-2009) (Vahatheeswaran, Rajan, 2011, p. 26-32). During the prolonged conflict, more than 100,000 people died and hundreds of thousands were injured. The conflict which took more than three-decades result in internal and external displacement in Sri Lanka. More than 800,000 people were displaced at the peak of the conflict in 2001 (Siriwardhana, Wickramage, 2014, p. 2).

## **2.2 Influx and Admission of Sri Lankan refugees**

Sri Lankan refugees have been coming to India to seek a protection since 1983, when the beginning of the Civil war in Sri Lanka took place. The refugees who came to India were registered by the Indian government as „refugees“ and the access to education and public health services was given to them equally as Indian citizens (Sanderson, undated, p. 12). The position of Tamil refugees changed after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 by a Tamil suicide bomber with strong links to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The assassination led to discrimination of Tamils in the country. The restrictions

towards Sri Lankan refugees have increased and some of them were deported back to Sri Lanka (Sanderson, undated, p. 12–14)

Sri Lankan refugees have been coming to India in four phases:

- Phase - I. (24. 7. 1983 to 31. 12. 1987)
- Phase - II. (25. 8. 1989 to 30. 4. 1991)
- Phase - III. (31. 7. 1996 to 31. 8. 2003)
- Phase - IV. (12. 1. 2006 to 4. 1. 2010).

The biggest number of refugees came during the first two phases (Repartment of rehabilitation, 2005, p. 4).

When refugees are fleeing to India they land most probably at Dhanushkodi Island which is located in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu. At the beginning, they are interviewed by local police to ensure if they are really refugees fleeing the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka. The interviews are followed by screening. The main aim of screening is to check the antecedent of refugees and for this process are responsible police authorities the „Q“ Branch (Valetheeswaran, Rajan, 2011). After ensuring that they do not belong to militant group, they receive a permission to stay. If they are associated to any of militant groups, they are sent to special camps (Repartment of rehabilitation, 2005, p. 3-4)

Refugees went through the registration process and receive the refugee ID certificates. After entering to Indian territory, refugees stay in transit camp called Mandapam where they receive the basic necessities such as cooking and other utensils, clothing, reed mats and bed sheets. All Sri Lankan refugees are transferred to refugee camps which assigned for them. In the refugee camp, all the refugees receive the dry ration every month and 100 rupees monthly per person (Vijayakumar, 2001, p. 11-12).

### **2.3 Divisions of Sri Lankan refugees**

What is important to mention when we are talking about the Sri Lankan refugees is that while some of them are living in refugee camps some of them are living outside the refugee camps. Based on this there are differences between the Sri Lankan refugees themselves. Refugees are not forced to live in refugee camps (Matas, 2015, p. 4). First group is called camp refugees, there are more than 65,000 Sri Lankans living in 129 refugee camps in Tamil Nadu. Other group is called non-camp refugees who are mostly having better connections within the Tamil Nadu with local Tamils. It is not easy to say the exact number of non-camp refugees because they were not registered (Raizada, 2013, p. 3). But according to ADRA India there are approximately 130,000 Sri Lankan refugees

living in Tamil Nadu (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 56). There is also third group which is mentioned in literature and it is called special camp refugees (Raizada, 2013, p. 3).

As Xavier & Sharma mentioned: „*Refugees in special camps* „, which are a euphemism for sub-jails which are maintained by the 'Q' branch, due to their alleged LTTE affiliation.“. (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 34).

There are of course also Sri Lankan citizens apart the refugees, who came to India as patients, students and tourists who do not seek the protection in India (Raizada, 2013, p. 3). Characteristics of non-camp and camp refugees are presented below in following subchapters.

### **2.3.1 Non-camp Sri Lankan refugees**

Sri Lankan Refugees living outside the camps belong mostly to middle/upper class (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 39). Those refugees are able to manage their lives and financial situation without government assistance. It is not possible to determine the exact number of non-camp refugees because many of them are not registered (Raizada, 2013, p. 14-15)

Those Sri Lankan refugees who decided not to live in refugee camps, live with their relatives, friends or are supported by remittances sent from abroad. It is important to mention that non-camp Sri Lankan refugees do not receive any support from Indian or Tamil Nadu government. Based on Indo-Sri Lanka agreement from 1987, refugees living outside the camps were asked to register themselves at the District Collector. Those refugees were given visa for three or six months. Then they could ask for the extension of their visas. For the purpose of extension they needed to have a clearance certificate from police. If they want to work, they need to have a work permit (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 5-7).

Some of them chosen not to live in refugee camps for the better educational opportunities for their children and also for being better integrated into Indian society (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 39). The war in Sri Lanka since 1983 affected the education of children. For some of the Sri Lankan refugees the education was the main reason for coming to Tamil Nadu because children can study in Tamil language. Some of the Sri Lankan children are sent to English medium schools because they are planning to go to West. Most of non-camp based refugees live in Chennai, Trichy or Madurai (Raizada, 2013, p. 14-15).

### **2.3.2 Camp based Sri Lankan refugees**

Those who are living in refugees have been provided a monthly package including a small stipend per adults, rice ration and basic services. Indian government also took care of the accommodation, electricity, sanitation facilities etc. The living conditions in refugee camps are insufficient. There are several restrictions faced by Sri Lankan refugees living in refugee camps. The freedom of movement is restricted. The curfew is at 7 p.m. This fact influence the employment of the refugees in negative way because they need to find the job where they would be able to come back till 7.pm. Sri Lankan refugees face several discrimination at labour market as well. The salaries are not equally set (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 38-39).

The construction of refugee camps is various and depends on the exact location. Each family has a room and little space outside used as kitched. Some of the refugee camps are old abandoned factories, cyclone shelters etc, former schools. Some of the refugee houses are huts. The living conditions and especially hygienic are very poor. There is a lack of privacy in refugee camps. Special camps refugees were sent to special camps because they were somehow associated to militant groups in Sri Lanka. There are three special camps: in Chennai, Vellore and Chengulpattu (Raizada, 2013, p. 15-16)

## **2.4 Selected indicators of the quality of life of Sri Lankan refugees in India**

The chapter is dedicated to quality of life of refugee living in refugee camps Tamil Nadu, India. First of all, it is important to discuss the **shelter** and the conditions in refugee camps. Shelter is the major problems for Sri Lankan refugees. It is very insufficient. Most of the shelter was built as a temporary housing. Huts mostly consist of one room with no windows inside. During the summer there are high temperatures which is extremely difficult environment for living as well as during the monsoon season. The shelter is some of the refugee camps is situated in open hall with a lack of privacy (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 7-8). There is also problem with the **sanitation facilities** in refugee camps which are very poor (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 9). Some toilets in refugee camps are constructed without water supply. People are forced to use open spaces for a toilet purpose. The diseases like tuberculosis, typhoid and diarrhoea are present in the refugee camps. Apart from medical issues. Around 20% of Sri Lankan refugees suffer from **mental health issues** such as anxiety, depression and obsessive compulsive thoughts, which have led to

suicides and attempted suicides. adolescent reaction and early marriages. The lack of finance affects the mental health as well (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 7-8). Prolonged stay in refugee camps for more than 25 years has negative affect on the minds of the people as well as alcoholism, school drop-outs etc (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 9).

Another problem faced by the Sri Lankan refugees is related to **employment**. The employment is significant problem for refugees. The factor influencing the employment of the refugees is the location of the camp. If the refugee camps is situated in village areas, it is almost impossible to find a job. It is easier to find a job for men than for women. Refugees cannot find a job where the leaving the refugee camps for more days is required. Sri Lankan refugees work mostly in shops, at the construction or factories. The salary is given to them daily (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 9). Women mostly stay at home, taking care of the household or some of them do knitting (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 9).

The **access to education** is accessible for Sri Lankan refugee children. They have a right to attend the government primary as well as secondary schools (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 9). The problems is with accessing with higher education. There is a restrictive quota which reserve the seats at colleges. Refugees are allowed to attend only art and science colleges. Studying medicine is not accessible for them (Xavier & Sharma, 2015, p. 26-29).

The **access to services and welfare schemes** is going to be described in this paragraph. The Tamil Nadu government provides assistance to the refugees. For receiving a government assistance, refugees must be holders of The Refugee Identity Card with photographs of all family members and further details. Government provides monthly cash doles for the refugees along with essential goods at a subsidized rice. Each family obtain two kg sugar per month. The clothes are also given to refugees without any charge (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 11-12). Pregnant women receive tetanus injections after appropriate medical check-up as well as medical counselling. For a purpose of delivery, the Sri Lankan women can be admitted at Primary Health Care centres for a free (Department of Rehabilitation, 2005, p. 5-6).

## **2.5 Sri Lankan refugee women**

The following subchapter is dedicated to Sri Lankan refugee women. The supchapter presents the characteristics of Sri Lankan refugee women who were the participants whose life situation is examined in research for that reason it is important to point basic information about this particular group. The traditional family in Sri Lanka is describe

below as well as the role of women in the society to understand the lives and background of Sri Lankan women better.

Tamil women are traditionally circumscribed by the social expectations and cultural conventions. Tamil women are traditionally very shy and they have lack of confidence. Their behavior is traditionally controlled by public as well as male population. The gender identity is very entrenched in Tamil society (Alexander, 2014). The society places Sri Lankan Tamil women in the bottom of the power structure. Sri Lankan Tamil women have been traditionally shackled by cultural, traditional and moral values. The traditional family within the Sri Lankan Tamils is the "extended" family. The traditional Tamil society is matriarchal for but with patriarchal characted. Sri Lankan refugee women coming to India have been always socially oppressed. The oppression in Sri Lanka towards women were also ethnical, class structured and caste based. Compared to Indian Tamil women, Sri Lankan women have more liberal rights. Some of the Tamil Refugee women coming from conflict areas were part of revolutionary movements (Hans,1997, p. 3-4).

Many schools in Sri Lanka are divided according to gender. But the education has always been important for boys and girls as well. Leaders are mostly men. Marriages are mostly arranged in Sri Lanka but the number of "love marriages" has increased. The society expects that bride and groom have the same socioeconomic status, ethnicity religion, caste. The groom should be more educated then the bride and be more professionally qualified. There is a quarter of women who are over twenty and are not married and the number is still increasing. The divorces are very rare in Sri Lanka. The married couple should ideally live with their unmarried children in one household. The biggest authority in the household is the oldest male in the family. Regarding the family and socialization in Sri Lanka all young children are adored, regardless the sex of the child. When children grow up the society expects them to develop a sense of "lajjawaa". The "lajjawa" combines shyness, shame, modesty and fear. For better understanding of the society they come from it is important to mention also something about religion. Most of the people in Sri Lanka adhere to Buddhism, although Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are also practised within the population. Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees are Hindus (Countries and their Cultures, undated)

During the war in Sri Lanka, some of the Sri Lankan women experience various violence. Such as harassment at checkpoints, rape, detainment, domestic violence (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 18). In many developing countries not only the personal trauma for

victims but it is also a stigma for women. Within the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, none of the discrimination in terms of sex was noticed (Hans,1997, p. 4-7).

There are male-dominated structures in refugee camps. Regarding the employment of Sri Lankan refugee women in Tamil Nadu, some women go for a work. Those women belong to the lower cast. The middle class women mostly stay in the households because their husbands do not let them have a job. Teenage pregnancy is a common problem in refugee camps. The lack of privacy is a contributing factor. This issue can be the reason for dividing families. Due to social instability the divorce rate has increased. Some of the Sri Lankan women suffer from the psychological stress which is a result of the lack of knowledge of the conditions. The significant problem in refugee camps is a lack of privacy for women due to insufficient bathroom facilities. Some of the marriages were delayed due to dowry, because they do not have the access to parent's property in Sri Lanka. The caste system does not play such an important role as in case of Indian Tamils (Hans,1997, p. 4-7).

### **3 Jesuit Refugee Service**

In this chapter I am going to present the international organization called Jesuit Refugee Service. The reason why I have decided to add the chapter to Jesuit Refugee Service is that my research took place in one of their projects. The aim of this thesis is to assess the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee Women with the past or actual experience of the JRS Life Skills Education centre and to provide perceived output of the project as well as recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' points of view. For a clear understanding of the context the Jesuit refugee Services activities as well as the exact project (Life Skills Education Centre) is described below.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization established in November 1980. JRS has been providing assistance to refugees in more than fifty countries worldwide. JRS provides assistance refugees living in refugee camps or urban areas, for those who are held in detention centres, asylum-seekers or those who are displaced within their own communities. The international office is based in Rome. JRS focuses their work especially on these areas: education, humanitarian assistance, livelihood activities, emergency assistance and social services. The main mission of JRS is to accompany, serve and advocate for refugees and asylum-seekers (JRS, undated a). JRS work is divided into ten different regions worldwide. JRS operates in following regions: USA, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, West Africa, Eastern Africa,

Great Lakes, Southern Africa, Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia Pacific and South Asia. Each region operates in certain countries where the exact programmes are implemented (JRS, undated b). The project where the research took place is situated in South Asia region. For that purpose the activities of JRS South Asia are going to be concretized below.

### **3.1 Jesuit Refugee Service South Asia**

JRS South Asia regional office is based in New Delhi, India. The main purpose of JRS South Asia regional office is to coordinate the programs, support the programs implemented in country offices and provide trainings in various areas such as communication, finance, capacity building etc. (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 2). JRS South Asia has been responding the crisis since 1980s. JRS South Asia has been providing assistance in Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. The most recent country where JRS South Asia started operating is Afghanistan and the most recent project was implemented in New Delhi to serve the need of Chin refugees (JRS, undated c). JRS South Asia programs are mostly focuses on following areas: Education, Community Development, Advocacy, Emergency Aid, Health Care, Livelihoods, Staff Capacity (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 4).

JRS South Asia has been serving in Nepal the Bhutanese refugees for more than twenty years. The educational programs were implemented there and JRS provided education for young people, people with disabilities, adults, the deaf and preschool children. Apart from these programs, JRS also provided training for teachers and assisting with resettlement (JRS, undated c). JRS decided to exist from Nepal in 2016 but JRS partner Caritas has been still operating there (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 3).

As was already mention before, the last country where JRS South Asia impemented projects was Afghanistan. There is six projects in Afghanistan focused on education in Herat, Sohadat, Shaydei, Kabul, Bamiyan and Daikundi. JRS projects in Afghanistan are focused on English and Computer classes, Konkur (pre-university exam) preparation, teacher trainings, winter programs and Jeusit Commons Higher Education which is online higher education project implemented in a colaboration with Jesuit universities in the US (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 5). The programs in Afghanistan are dedicated to war-affected Afghans who are returnees from Pakistan or Iran where they were seeking protection for various years (JRS, undated c).

JRS South Asia, concretely JRS Sri Lanka has been responding crisis in Sri Lanka since 1983. JRS has been serving war- and tsunami-affected population. Projects are related to education, community development and peace-building activities (JRS, undated d). JRS programs are implemented in the war most affected war in Eastern and Northern part of Sri Lanka (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 8).

JRS South Asia works with two refugees groups in India. With Chin refugees in New Delhi and with Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu State. Chin refugees community came to Delhi to seek a protection dues to various persecution in Myanmar. JRS provides various vocational trainings for Chin refugees such as English, Tailoring, Embroidering or Computer classes. Emergency assistance is provided to the vulnerable once among the Chin community as well (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 13).

Although JRS in India working with two groups of refugees, the main country office is situated in Tamil Nadu State. JRS Tamil Nadu activities are described below seperately because the Life Skills Education Centre where the research took place belongs to this particular country office.

### **3.2 Jesuit Refugee Service India (Tamil Nadu)**

Three decades of war and conflict in Sri Lanka have displaced Sri Lankan Tamils. The insecure environment forced them to leave their homelade and seek a protection abroad. Significant number of Sri Lankan refugees live in Tamil Nadu, India (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 3). JRS has been responding the needs of Sri Lankan refugee population living in Tamil Nadu since 1980s. At the beginning, the work was focused more on pastoral work which was followed by education and community development based activities. The actual work in refugee camps has started in 1996. The Tamil Nadu country office is present in Dindigul from were the assistance is coordinated. JRS Tamil Nadu Country directors along with staff is present there (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 7).

The mission of JRS TN is to accompany, serve and defend the rights of Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2010, p. 2). The strategy of JRS Tamil Nadu is to build the capacity of Sri Lankan refugees into a self-reliant community though formal as well as non-formal education. JRS staff were engaged in work in 108 refugee camps in Tamil Nadu where the JRS services where provided (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 10).

The activities of JRS Tamil Nadu are focused on following categories in 2016: Education in Emergencies (Formal Education and Technical Education), Social Services &

Community Development, Protection & Advocacy and Staff Capacity Building (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 4). The following categories are described below. The main aim of all the categories is to assist Sri Lankan refugees to grow self-reliance and live with Dignity (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 9).

Bigger part is dedicated to Technical and Non-formal education because the research which was conducted for the purpose of this these is a part of technical education category. The particular project is described there.

### **3.2.1 Formal Education**

The outcome-based objective of former education category is to educate the children through increasing their interest in studies and extra-curricular activities, improving their learning skills by introducing education tools and activities for motivation (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 10). JRS run the Complementary Education Centres in each of 108 camps where JRS is operating. The purpose of these centres is to provide a safe space and conducive environment for Sri Lankan students. The centre is open for children for three hours every day from Monday to Saturday. The calm and safe environment for studying let the students concentrate for studies which is not always possible at their homes due to circumstances in refugee camp (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 10). Apart running the tuition centres, JRS also provides scholarships, distributes uniforms and educational material as well as organizes various trainings for JRS teachers who are present in tuition centres. The awareness training for parents and others in refugee camp take a place as well. (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 19-21). The summer camps are organized by JRS staff in refugee camps to motivate children for studies and develop their skills and talents (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 11).

### **3.2.2 Technical and Non-formal education**

In following subchapter, **JRS Life Skills Education Centre** is described. In this centre the research took place. For a better understanding the context the details are mentioned below.

JRS Life Skills Education centre is a part of education in emergencies, concretely Technical and Non-Formal Education. JRS Life Skills Education training is dedicated to Sri Lankan refugee women who: are drop-out, from poor families willing to learn tailoring, from broken families or coming from unsafety situation. The missions of JRS Life Skills Education Centre is to to empower the Sri Lankan Refugee drop-out girls to rebuild their lives. The overall goal is to ensure decent employment for youth and women-

headed families through increasing their skills in various job-market trades by providing appropriate vocational training.

Firstly to train the drop-out girls to have self-reliance, self-confidence, self-image and to face challenges of life. Secondly to form them to be the constructors of destroyed nation with their skills when they go back to their country. Thirdly to make them plan out their own future for a meaningful life (JRS Tamil Nadu, Undated, p. 1).

JRS Life Skills education centre where the training is ensured for Sri Lankan refugee women takes six months. It is a residential type of service. As was mentioned before, the movement of Sri Lankan refugees is limited and the special permission was need from the Rehabilitation Department of Tamil Nadu. During the stay in JRS Life Skills Education centre the technical training is provided in handicrafts, tailoring cooking and beautician therapy. Besides skill training, the personal counselling is provided (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2015, p. 3-4). Sri Lankan women develop their skills and talents during the six months stay in following activities and areas: Activities such as Yoga, Reading Practice, Orientation, Group dynamics, Meditation, Sex education, Anger Theraphy, Personality Development, First aid, Beautician, Counseling, Life Skill education, Social and Media analysis, Women's law and handling critical situation, Health and Hygiene, Spoken English, Computer literacy, Time management and History of Sri Lanka (JRS Tamil Nadu, undated, p. 1).

### **3.2.3 Advocacy**

JRS Tami Nadu provides legal counselling and organizes human rights trainings in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu for Sri Lankan refugees. The representatives from each Camp Coordination Commitee participate at those trainings. As a part of the advocacy work, JRS provides students magazines where students have the opportunity to share their experinces and develop their talents. Students work is published which is a motivating factor (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 12). The main objective of JRS advocacy work is to promote the cause of Sri Lankan refugees through increasing human rights awareness by providing training and assisting with emergency (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 13).

### **3.2.4 Community Development**

Various trainings are provided to JRS staff. For example in financial management, documentation, project implementation etc (JRS South Asia, 2016, p. 12). The main objective of capacity building is to develop the efficiency and capacity of the staff through increasing their skills in project management by capacity building training, monthly

evaluation and workshops. The trainings provided to JRS staff were mostly related to evaluation and planning, leadership, implementing project (JRS Tamil Nadu, 2016, p. 25-26).

# METHODOLOGICAL PART

## 4 Methodology

In this following chapter, the methodology is presented. First, the subchapter is dedicated to a defining research question, followed by other subchapters such as Qualitative Approach in research, Method, Technique and Instruments of Obtaining Qualitative Data, Study Participants, Data Processing Method, Ethical Issues in Research, Possible Weakness of Research, Qualitative Data Analysis.

### 4.1 Defining Research Question

In this subchapter, I would like to specify the main research question of this research along with the subquestion. As I already mentioned, the main aim of this thesis is to **assess the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee Women with the past or actual experience of the JRS Life Skills Education centre and to provide the perceived output of the project as well as recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' points of view.**

The main research question is: **What is the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee women like and what is the perceived output of the project and the recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' point of view?**

To achieve the goal, the following **research subquestions** are explored:

- *What are the specifics of the participants' life situation? (Problems faced in the refugee camps and in their lives, the reasons for being drop-out)*
- *What are the jobs available for Sri Lankan refugee women? (Inside and outside the refugee camps)*
- *What was the motivation for joining JRS Life Skills Education Centre?*
- *What is the perceived output from the respondents' point of view? (what has changed in the respondents' life after joining JRS Life Skills Education centre)*
- *What are the recommendations for enhancement of JRS Life Skills Education centre from respondents' point of view (proposed changes in the project)*

## **4.2 Qualitative Approach in Research**

It is important to distinguish the qualitative research from quantitative. Some methodologists consider qualitative research as supplement quantitative studies. For some of them, it represents the antipole of quantitative research (Miovský, 2008, p. 47). Qualitative research is any research whose results are below using statistical procedures. The result of qualitative research findings is derived from data collected in many different ways. For example, by observing and interviewing, but also analysing documents, books, videos (Strauss, Corbinová, 1999, p. 10).

## **4.3 Method, Technique and Instruments of Obtaining Qualitative Data**

As already mentioned in the introduction, the main reason for choosing this topic was to help JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) to understand the life situation of drop-out women and to enhance the training according to their recommendations. My personal motive was to point out a sometimes very hopeless situation of Sri Lankan refugees which is not very well known.

In total, I spent six months in India, concretely, more than two and half months in Tamil Nadu state where the research took place. I visited JRS Life Skills education centre twice during my stay in Tamil Nadu. During my first stay in the centre, I met all current participants of the project (project took place from April – September 2016) and had sufficient time for talking to them and building trust between each other. When I came for a second time to collect my data, we were already familiar with each other and they were very open to sharing their personal thoughts and feelings. Data were collected at the end of July and during August 2016.

The title of this thesis is: Evaluation study of JRS Life Skills Education Centre in the context of Sri Lankan refugee women. Even though "evaluation study" was mentioned in the title, it is not an evaluation study in the strict sense but only the elements of the evaluation were used in the research. In general, evaluation means a process of assessing and attributing significance. Two main approaches exist within qualitative evaluation - formative and normative. The main aim of formative approach is to provide data through analysis which can provide the information needed for finding strengths and weaknesses. Normative approach in evaluation is where two or more programs are compared. There are three types of evaluation: evaluation of preparation (planning), evaluation of process (implementing and realisation) and evaluation of the results (output and impact). As

mentioned above, I did not do the exact evaluation study but I just used the elements of formative evaluation, namely evaluation of process and evaluation of results (Miovský, 2008, p. 116).

The data collection method was **field research** because the research took place in a foreign country which is different in many perspectives. According to Miovský, the aim of the field research is to research the object in the most natural environment. The field must be accessible for the researcher, and the researcher must consider all formal and informal barriers to entry into the field as well as the risks resulting from the existence of the research for himself/herself, colleagues as well for the participants (Miovský, 2006, p. 103-106). In the case of my research, I had to consider the topic of Sri Lankan refugees in general which is very sensitive in Tamil Nadu, as well as asking questions regarding the situation in refugee camps. The main concern for me was not to harm JRS in any way. Data collection technique was the **semi-structured interview**. The semi-structured interview is the most used technique of the interview method. The researcher creates a scheme that is mandatory for the interviewer. In practice the researcher sets the areas which are necessary to ask during the interviews (Miovský, 2006, p. 159–160). The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to use his or her time in the best way and not to forget all the important aspects (Hendl, 2008, p. 174). The areas which needed to be covered during the interviews were related to the life situation of the participants of JRS Life Skills Education centre along with the perceived output and recommendations for the enhancement of the JRS centre.

Data fixation was made by a **voice recorder**. The voice recorder is one of the most used methods of data fixation nowadays. This method is very advantageous for the researcher because he or she can fully concentrate on what the respondent is saying instead of focusing on making notes (Miovský, 2006, p. 197). The voice recorder was the best option for this research because I had to interview many people in one day and so it saved time.

#### **4.4 Study Participants**

respondents were selected by the purposive sampling methods. The purposive sampling method is one of the most widespread method in qualitative research approach. Participants are chosen deliberately according to certain criteria (Miovský, 2006, p. 125). According to the aim of the thesis, I chose to interview the current and former participants of the JRS Life Skills Education centre as well as JRS staff who are working with refugees

for many years and who are familiar with the project. All the participants were drop-out from their studies in the past.

A total number of respondents who were the current participants of the project at the time the research took place is nine. Seven of the respondents were the former participants who participated at JRS Life Skills Education Centre in previous years. The main criteria for choosing the respondents from the refugee community was actual or past experience with JRS Life Skills Education Centre. All the former participants had to complete the project fully in the past. Both, former and current participants of the projects belong to the Sri Lankan refugee community living in Tamil Nadu. All of them live in the refugee camps situated in Tamil Nadu state, India. All of them belong to a “camp refugee group” which was characterized in the theoretical section. They were women aged 18-35 years. Out of these respondents, five JRS staff members participated in the research as well. To preserve the anonymity of respondents, they will not be specified. The reason why I have decided to interview JRS staff as well was to understand the life situation of Sri Lankan refugee women from a different perspective. Out of two JRS staff members, three are refugees themselves as well.

At the beginning of each interview, I shared with respondents the reasons and purpose for conducting this research. Sharing the reasons was followed by the actual interview which was recorded on a voice recorder only after the approval of the respondents. As already mentioned, data for this research was collected for more than one month during the months July and August 2016 while I was staying in Tamil Nadu. Each interview took around one hour. Those respondents who participated in JRS Life Skills Education at the time of the project are marked in the chapter dedicated to results like “Respondent + number + Current Participant”, those who participated at JRS centre in the past are marked “Respondent + number + Former Participant”, JRS staff from the management side are marked “Respondent + number +JRS management”. The list of the participants with basic characteristics is located in the end of this thesis.

#### **4.5 Data Processing Method**

After the fixation of qualitative data, the preparation for the analysis follows. Converting data into text form is called transcription (Miovský, 2006, p. 205). Transcription is very demanding time-consuming activity but necessary for the analysis of the results (Hendl, 2008, p. 208).

## **4.6 Ethical Issues in Research**

As Babbie mentioned: *“By bringing researchers into direct and often intimate contact with their subjects, field research raises ethical concerns in a particularly dramatic way.”* (Babbie, 2007, p. 312)

There are several important ethical principles during the conducting research to follow. For example obtaining informed consent from respondents, ensuring the anonymity of respondents, and providing the option to terminate the interview. (Hendl, 2008, p. 153).

Before the research took place, there were many ethical issues to think about and to discuss with JRS staff. Sri Lankan refugee issues are the main political question in Tamil Nadu which is very sensitive to discuss. I did not want to harm services provided by JRS in any way. To prevent it, the thesis will not be available publicly on the internet.

All respondents were informed about the purpose and motives for collecting data as well as guaranteeing anonymity before the interviews took place. Respondents were informed about the option to terminate the interview or not to express the feelings and issues that make them feel uncomfortable. Real names are not mentioned in the research. They are marked as Respondents 1-21 in chapter related to results of the research.

## **4.7 Possible Weaknesses of Research**

I can identify many weaknesses in this research which are based mostly on the fact that the research was conducted during my practical training abroad. Only one of my respondents was speaking in English, the rest of them communicated in the Tamil language. Because I am not able to speak the Tamil language, I needed the help of someone who can speak both languages fluently which is not always easy to find to a small city in Tamil Nadu State. My primary intention was to find a female interpreter because, except for three respondents, all of them were women and I thought that young women would share their inner feelings and thoughts much easier with a lady. But because I needed someone whose English is fluent and also someone who is willing to help me with this research I asked one Jesuit Brother. So the weakness which I can identify is that respondents may share more personal or intimate issues to a woman rather than a man.

Another limitation of my research is the language. Only one respondent spoke English and the rest of the interviews were interpreted from Tamil to English. During the translation, many thoughts could have been forgotten. The clarifying was very significant

part of the cooperation. And another important fact which is important to realise is that I and the interpreter are from different cultural backgrounds and I needed to be sure that he really understood the questions I asked.

I am also aware that I spoke just with few respondents compared to whole refugee population in Tamil Nadu. Speaking with more people could have given me a clearer picture of the life situation of Sri Lankan refugee women in Tamil Nadu.

Another fact which could have influenced the quality of research is the taboo of the topic. Sri Lankan refugee issues are not discussed publicly very often due to political reasons. Some respondents could have been afraid of saying some sensitive information regarding the life in refugee camps in fear of persecution. Another important fact is the inability of foreigners to enter the refugee camps. I was not able to see the life conditions of refugees in person; seeing the environment in which they live would help me understand the context of their life situation.

#### **4.8 Qualitative Data Analysis**

An **open coding** method in the context of Grounded Theory was chosen for data analysis. The goal of the research within the Grounded Theory is to discover the major categories and relations between them (Strauss, Corbinová, 1999, p. 33). Grounded Theory is a proposal for finding a specific theory related to somehow defined population or time, environment or time (Hendl, 2008, p. 243).

Babbie defines open coding as: *“The initial classification and labelling of concepts. In open coding, the codes are suggested by the researcher's examination and questioning of the data.”* (Babbie, 2007, p. 385).

Open coding data estimates in certain topics. These topics are related to the research questions, literature and terms used by respondents. The researcher classifies, organises and combines them together into categories (Hendl, 2008, p. 247). The open coding is followed by axial coding which reanalyses the result of open coding. The main aim of axial coding is to identify the important, general concept (Babbie, 2007, p. 386). After axial coding, the selective coding takes place. During the selective coding, that data and codes are re-examined again (Henzl, 2008, p. 251).

*“ coding builds on the results of open coding and axial coding to identify the central concept that organises the other concepts that have been identified in a body of textual materials.”* (Babbie, 2007, p. 386).

# **ANALYTICAL PART**

## **5 Research Results – The Life Situation of Sri Lankan refugees women**

The results of the research related to the life situation of Sri Lankan refugee women with actual or past experience with JRS Life Skills Education centre are presented in following subchapters below. There is a subchapter related to the problems faced by the participants in the refugee camps and in their lives, the reasons for being drop-outs and job opportunities for Sri Lankan refugee women. For the purpose of better understanding the life situation of Sri Lankan refugee women, I tried to find out what the problems are which participants face in the refugee camps and in their lives. They have mentioned various issues which are described in details below.

### **5.1 Problems faced by the participants in refugee camps and in their lives**

During the research, I could identify various problems faced by the Sri Lankan refugee women in refugee camps. Some of them are shared by others in the camps and over those are specific only for women. To distinguish one from another I have decided to dedicate this subchapter only to those problems which are shared by the Sri Lankan refugee population in general.

#### **5.1.1 General problems faced by the participants in refugee camps and in their lives**

Although Sri Lankan Tamil refugees share the same language with the population in Tamil Nadu, they are still aliens in India. As aliens they are many restrictions which influence their daily lives. Sri Lankan refugees do not have the same rights as Indian citizens. Sometimes the rights are not defined clearly and people can take some advantages from the refugees for instance in a work place. For example, once the employers know that they are refugees they can cheat them in the workplace. They promise to give a salary, but it does not happen in reality. One of the former participants shared that she has a feeling that the rights and rules for Sri Lankan refugees are not clearly defined or well-known and in case of problems they cannot fight back.

*Most of them are going for stitching work close by but there are cheated a lot. The employers promise to give a salary to the women, but they are not doing that. If it happens to Indians, they can fight back, but Sri Lankans cannot fight. There are not proper rights*

*and rules for Sri Lankan Tamils. They cannot go and ask for money. There is no one who would support them, and also there are not proper rules so when they are going to the police, they will not help them. The Sri Lankans would be more affected. (Respondent 5 – Former participant).*

Respondents shared during the interviews that the camp situation itself is a problem. Some problems which the refugees face cannot be changed by their own accord but structural changes are needed. One of JRS staff members mentioned that the structural changes are needed to improve the life situation of Sri Lankan refugees. He/She mentioned the hopeless situation which is present in the refugee camps and NGOs are not able to do anything about that. The environment they are living in is very demanding. When women finish the training in the Life Skill Education Centre they are coming back to the environment which creates the problems so JRS has been trying to make them able to face problems.

*The camp life itself it is a big problem for them. As long as they are inside the camp, they are facing problems, they cannot come out. Even the NGOs and government are present here, they are not able to help them. The camp situation itself brings a lot of problems. Their life can be improved by coming to the life skill education centre, they can get confidence but we are not able to change the environment they are living in because the government has to do that. They may get some skills and confidence, with that they can face life with new spirit. So we can't change the situations, but we are preparing them to be able to face them. (Respondent 16 – JRS management).*

Respondent 21 shared during the interview that the camp life is very demanding and uncomfortable. The refugees feel like they are in jail. The living conditions are very inappropriate. Families live in very narrow houses next to each other. It is very hot inside and in some camps, instead of having a roof, they have just plastic sheets. For this reason it is very dusty inside and people are sweating a lot. Another problem are diseases which are spread very easily due to lack of space. Each family has one room which is used for all the activities starting from sleeping, watching TV and ending in cooking.

Insufficient shelters in refugee camps is the main problem for refugee population in Tamil Nadu. The houses built for refugees were supposed to be just a temporary solution. The space inside is very limited and in some huts, there are no windows inside. The conditions are very demanding especially during the summer and raining seasons. Some of the shelters for refugees are situated in big halls where the privacy is limited especially for women (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 8). The living conditions in refugee camps for Sri

Lankan refugees are very poor. The insufficient health and sanitation facilities are present in the camps (HRLN, 2007, p. 7).

*The camp life is very difficult. We feel very uncomfortable there. It is just like being in a jail. We cannot study. Because we are living in a small house, it is very hot inside and we are sweating a lot. Many people suffer from diseases. It is also very noisy around. We have only plastic sheets and the dust is going inside and people are suffering from cancer. If anyone gets some disease, that will be spread very easily. We cook in the same room where we sleep.* (Respondent 21 – Current participant)

The life in the camp is very hectic and there are many disturbances for a young generation. They cannot concentrate on studies because houses are very close to each other and they can hear the noise from every house.

*We cannot concentrate on our studies. Because neighbours are watching television and you can hear everything. You can even hear exactly what neighbours are saying to each other. Students go to JRS tuition centres to concentrate for studies. Many people are fighting together there is so much disturbance.* (Respondent 21 – Current Student)

The life of the refugees in the camp is also complicated by the lack of the privacy and gossiping among each other. As De Vries mentioned in his study, gossip, especially among women creates many issues in refugee camps (De Vries, 2001, p. 19).

As the houses are situated very close to each other in the refugee camps, people can hear what other people are discussing about in a house next to them. When it is so easy to hear what other people are saying, the gossip can be spread very quickly.

*Since the houses are small and crowded when the news is spread, gossiping is going on. You can hear which TV program neighbours are listening...There is no privacy.* (Respondent 8 – former participant)

Gossiping in camps affects the lives, especially of the young generation. Respondents mentioned that the outlook of the older generation can have a negative effect on the educational activities of the youth. If some people see young women talking to young men they start immediately telling their parents that they are just spending time with boys and that they will fall in love with each other which is a problem in this traditional society. Instead of giving young girls enough time for studying or their hobbies after school, parents send them for work to avoid them becoming affectionate and having contact with boys.

*The problem is with the old people because they are having a negative outlook especially about girls going to the school. If they speak with someone, they complain to the parents,*

*that they are talking to boys. They become a block for girl's education. Because these people are telling parents that they fell in love with each other. And then parents send the girls after the school to work as labour workers at firecracker company. (Respondent 1 – current participant)*

For example, in an example of tuition centres which are run by JRS in various camps, we can see very clearly how the gossiping can affect the educational activities. These tuition centres were established to help the youth with homework and to ensure the safe and calm environment where they can focus on studies without any disturbances arising from the lack of privacy in the houses. Young college boys help in tuition centres. Some of them, who do not like the teachers, give a wrong interpretation of the person to other girls. College students are mostly boys, some people in refugee camps coming to girl's families and saying that girls are not going to the centre for study purposes but to chat with boys. *And even in the tuition centre, the help is run by young college student's boys. Some of them. College students are the boys mostly, when they do not like the teachers or boys, other people are saying that these boys who are supposed help others with studying are coming for a chatting with the girls. (Respondent 3 – Current participant)*

The question of privacy is tricky also in the place where we would expect that the privacy is very basic matter. Houses in refugee camps do not consist of toilets and bathrooms. Bathrooms and toilets are shared by all the population. Bathroom and toilets are separated for men and women. Some conflicts among each other take place, especially in these public places.

The significant problem in refugee camps is the lack of social privacy. The number of bathrooms is not sufficient (Hans, 1997, p. 7).

The refugee camps where Sri Lankan refugees live are overcrowded. Each family has one room which is dedicated for sleeping and cooking too. Each family has four square metres of space to live. A piece of cloth separates one family from another (De Vries, 2001, p. 19-20).

*Houses are very close, husbands violence, no privacy in the house, the queues for toilets, toilets and everything is public, so they have to share that. Some fights can be in the bathroom. (Respondent 16 – JRS Management)*

### **5.1.2 Alcohol Addiction and Safety problems in the camp**

Almost all of my respondents conveyed that alcohol addiction is a significant problem in the refugee camps where the Sri Lankan refugees live. It has the negative impact on many

areas of their lives. This statement is supported by the research conducted among the Sri Lankan refugee population living in Tamil Nadu. Based on this study, there is a sizeable number of people addicted to alcohol which affect the lives of refugees in refugee camps (De Vries, 2001, p. 19).

There are some liqueur shops situated close to the refugee camps where men can get alcohol very easily. The fact that there is a significant number of men in the refugee camps who are addicted to alcohol affects the lives and especially the personal safety of women in the camps. Women are not allowed to drink alcohol based on cultural norms. All the alcohol addiction mentioned in this research is related to male alcoholism. Parents often instruct the young women not to open the doors and stay inside the house in a fear that some men could come and attack her. Drunk men are trying to get inside the house sometimes.

Cases of sexual – and gender-based violence occurred in refugee camps but unfortunately a big number of them are not reported. Women are afraid to speak out to prevent gossip and shame for their families (Mullen, 2012).

*There are liqueur places, the places where alcohol is sold and because of that girls are affected and can be in trouble. Since the liquor shop is close to the camp. It is run by the government. It is the local one, it is very dangerous because people consume it. Because of that, there is an addiction in the family and then also it creates the security problems. When parents are going for a work, a girl is alone in the house, and they just close her from inside. There are the instructions which are given to girls, that they cannot let go anyone inside. These are the problems they face. (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)*

Drunk men often commenting on the girls passing by and make women feel uncomfortable. Young men also banter girls after consuming alcohol.

*Near my camp, there is a liquor shop close to the government school. And some gangsters are there, they are whooping at girls and making fun of them. They are drunk. When the girls pass by, they make comments. I do not like it at all. (Respondent 3 – Current Participant)*

*Youth teasing problems, the young boys are teasing the girls, the problems which raising from alcoholism. Men are addicted to alcohol and the problems raise from alcoholism. It also affects the women in the camps. (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)*

One of the trainees mentioned that not only drunk young men are the problem, but she perceived that older men are even more dangerous for young women living in the camp.

Apart from alcohol there was also mentioning of drugs, but which exact type was not specified.

*Problems raise because of the alcoholism. Using and consuming alcohol. One of the biggest camps, the population is too high. The older population living in the camps is much more dangerous than young boys because they use drugs. We are talking about people who are around 60 years old. They look more dangerous. Girls are afraid of them. Just seeing young girls is lustful for them* (Respondent 12 – Current Participant).

The situation is much more difficult to handle for those families where only the women are present. For example, one of the trainees mentioned that her grandmother and mother do not sleep during the night to protect her.

*And since the liquor shop is close by, my house is not the good one and our doors are broken somehow. So even the drinkers, they come and bang the door and disturb us. And during the night, my mother or grandmother will be awake in other to save me. Such a situation is existing in the camps.* (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)

Due to alcohol, men are becoming more aggressive and violence sometimes takes place. Some respondents shared that domestic violence was present in their families. Some fathers of the trainees beat their mothers so we can talk also about the domestic violence which is present in the camps and makes children constantly feeling stressed and afraid. *Since my father is addicted to alcohol, and many times, he beats my mother, and I am also afraid. And when I see my father when he is drunk, I got scared automatically* (Respondent 3 – Current Participant).

Unfortunately, not only domestic violence arises from alcohol addiction, but sexual violence sometimes occurs in families as well. Some trainees mentioned that their father attacked them sexually while he was drunk. On the other hand, one former trainee shared during the interview that these cases used to be more common in the past.

*I do not want to go back home because my father attacks me sexually. I will go probably to grandma's house. My younger sister, she is still in the house and I am afraid that he is doing the same to her that he used to do to me* (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)

*Sexual abuse was there earlier within the family but now it is not there so often.* (Respondent 8 – Former Participant)

Based on the interviews, another very interesting fact turned up; Alcohol addiction influences the education of the children. When fathers are going for work they get mostly daily wages which they spend on buying alcohol. Only a small amount of money is given to the families which is not sufficient.

Most of the refugees work as labour workers and they are paid on a daily basis which is problematic for those who are addicted to alcohol. It makes family more vulnerable and depressed and results in a cycle of poverty. These difficult situations result in more demand for alcohol (Mullen, 2012).

Due to this fact, families do not have enough money for educational expenses. In the case that there is an alcohol addiction in the family, children have to start financially contributing as well. While they are going for work they do not have enough time to focus on their studies and sometimes they are forced by the circumstances to leave their studies and start working full time.

*So my father does not support any of us in our studies. Now I have some interest, I want to study psychology and also I could at least complete the nursing course, but there are no financial sources, so there is no hope. In the camp, if men are going for work they can get around 700 rupees, if they would not drink, they can save at least 500 rupees. But all gents drink in the camps, most of them.* (Respondent 3 – Current Participant)

*Most of the women find addiction to alcohol as the most problematic issue; when men are drinking and then coming to the family it creates the conflicts and it spoils the children's education.* (Respondent 6 – Former Participant)

*Now, my brother is the only person who is taking care of the family. He finished his 10th standard, and then he went for to a work to be able to manage the situation in the family. While he was studying he used to do a part time jobs. He wanted to go for further studies but could not because he had start working every day. He is taking care of the family, we are for sisters. Father is not contributing because he is addicted to alcohol.* (Respondent 11 – Current Participant)

Young women shared that they feel very insecure using the bathrooms and toilets in the camps because outsiders can see inside during the showers. They also do not want to use toilets during the night because they are afraid to go there alone and toilets are often situated far away from their houses.

*There are separate toilets for women and men. 10 families use one toilet. We are so afraid of going outside during the night for the toilet. There is no separate room for taking a bath. The backside is open so we are so afraid that someone is there. And they are also very far from the houses.* (Respondent 21 – Current Participant)

### 5.1.3 Infatuation and Marriages in early age

During the interviews, many respondents mentioned that infatuation is perceived as a relevant problem in the refugee camps. The interesting thing is the way the respondents perceive this issue. It is considered as a security problem. Sri Lankan society and also the society in Tamil Nadu is very traditional. Parents almost always decide who their children are going to marry. When young people are falling in love with each other and the parents do not understand, they sometimes run away from their families. Based on what I heard and how this issue was explained to me during my stay, these marriages do not last a long time and result in a breakup. When young women are divorced in this traditional society she remains mostly alone because it is not socially acceptable. For that reason, infatuation is perceived as a problem.

*Falling in love with someone is a problem. There was a girl who liked a boy and they run away together. After a few weeks they came back and broke up. The family was very angry. It is a real problem in the camps and many couples run away. (Respondent 9 – Current Participant)*

Some young girls are asked by their parents to stop studying and get married. Their education is not completed and they cannot continue with their studies. In this society, once a girl gets married she will not continue her education after the marriage. They stay mostly at home, taking care of the household and children. According to one respondent, many parents encourage young women to get married. In India, it is legal to enter into marriage when the engaged couple are at least 18 years old. So legally these women are old enough but they do not feel ready for the marriage and they are stressed about the fact that when they will come back home from the JRS Life Skill Education Centre their marriage will be already arranged.

*Many parents encourage the girl to have an early marriage. They compel them to get married so early. That is the most problematic. I am talking about girls who are 18 which is legal in India but according to me it is early. Between college studies, some of us will ask to stop and get married. According to my understanding to get married in 18 it is very early. I am afraid that if I will be sent back home I will be asked to get married. And that will maybe be an arranged wedding. (Respondent 19 – Current Participant)*

#### **5.1.4 Inferiority Complex and the Psychological Issues in the camps**

Almost in all interviews I could identify that trainees are suffering from an inferiority complex. There is a lack of self-confidence within the group of young women. They do not believe in their potential and they do not think about themselves in a positive way.

*They will be subjected, they feel like slaves. They are having inferiority complex. They are feeling like inferior human being.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

*I used to be afraid if I was asked to come forward and speak in public. Now I am able to speak without being shy. I built the self-confidence. I used to feel very useless and not have the ability to achieve anything.* (Respondent 4 – Current Participant)

According to respondent 13 there is not so much physical violence rather than psychological violence present in the refugee camps.

*There is not too much of physical violence for young women rather more psychological. Young women are psychologically very weak.* (Respondent 13 – JRS management).

#### **5.1.5 Insufficient Sanitation Facilities in the camps**

During the interviews, the problems with sanitation facilities have been discussed. Respondents mentioned that toilet and bathroom facilities are not sufficient and that they do not feel comfortable in using them.

The poor sanitation facilities are present in refugee camps. Toilets are not built properly and refugees sometimes have to use the open spaces instead of using toilets (Valetheeswaran, Rajan, 2011, p. 35).

All the bathrooms and toilets are shared by the all population in refugee camps. Sometimes there are just four walls where it is very easy to see from the outside. There is a lack of privacy for women using the toilets and bathrooms and as I mentioned before, it is not also very safe for them to use showers because men can watch them. There are no proper toilet facilities or proper bathrooms, it is not safe for them. Even when they are having a bath, it is visible outside and men can see them. They do not feel comfortable, it is not safe for them.

*There is a lack of sanitation properties – toilets are open, men can easily watch them, even the men who are coming around the camps, so they do not feel safe. Toilets and bathrooms, everything is public, so they have to share that. Sometimes fights can be in the bathroom. And the security, outsiders can come.* (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)

*There are the problems regarding the toilet and bathroom facilities in the camp. There are not proper. There are no proper walls, it is just fixed wood. Some walls can easily*

*fall down, so it is not proper. Only four sides are closed, but the walls are not proper so it can fall down. And opposite to the bathroom, there is a staircase, so when someone is standing on that staircase, everything will be seen. So there is no privacy. (Respondent 18 – Current Participant)*

## **5.2 The reasons for being drop-out from the studies**

As mentioned previously, the reason why I chose to work on and conduct this research was to help JRS to understand the situation of dropout women for whom the project is aimed and to help JRS to serve them better. For a clear understanding of the life situation of dropout young women, it is very crucial to map the reasons why they were not able to finish their studies and why are they in need of this project. For that purpose, I am going to focus on the reasons for being a drop-out from studies.

### **5.2.1 Sickness in the family**

Some of the participants of the JRS project had to leave school due to an illness in the family. In some cases, parents or siblings were sick or the participant herself. On one hand, they had to take care of their sick family members and on the other hand, some of them had to take the responsibility also financially.

*I discontinued my studies because my father was ill. I did it to take care of my father, So after 9th standard, I discontinued my studies. Only my mother took care of the household. Then my father passed away so currently there are three women in the family – myself, her mother and grandmother. (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)*

*My father was sick and I stopped going to school. He could not earn money anymore. I had to start earning money as well. (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)*

Some of the respondents discontinued their studies because they had health problems. Some families had to spend a lot of money for treatment and they could not afford to pay educational expenses anymore. Some of them mentioned that they used to live at students hostels where the environment was not good and didn't even have basic hygiene standards. For example one of the respondents shared that she was suffering from a very bad skin allergy.

*I got a very serious sickness when I had the problem with my nose. So I had to discontinue my studies after 8th standard. My parents had to spend so much money for my treatment which ruined our family. (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)*

*I fell sick and I had to stay home. My sister and a JRS teacher convinced me, since you are not well, if you learn tailoring then you can stay home and work from home.*  
(Respondent 12 – Current Participant)

### **5.2.2 Insufficient financial situation in the family**

Some of the participants were drop-outs from the studies due to insufficient finances in the family. Families do not have enough money to afford to pay educational fees. For example, respondent 1 decided to discontinue her studies due to the irregular work of her father. She wanted to help her family to improve their financial situation. Her parents did not ask her to make this decision, It was based only on her will.

*It is not that my parents forced me to discontinue my studies but I thought that parents are struggling because of me. And since my father has some problems, his job is not regular and my mum is going for work to a firecrackers company so the salary will be very minimum. So I told to myself that I will discontinue my studies to help my family because the financial situation was very demanding.* (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)

*I discontinued my studies because my family was not economically well. They have no money to pay fees. She studied a bachelor of computer education. It was a degree course for three years. My family was not able to pay the money for my education. I thought that this is not helping the family so I decided to help them.* (Respondent 9 – Current Participant)

### **5.2.3 Insufficient financial situation in the family due to alcohol addiction of a parent**

As I mentioned before, there many problems in the camps resulting from alcoholism. In some cases, the insufficient financial situation in the family was the result of the alcohol addiction of a father. Head of the families earn money on a daily basis. After work, instead of going home, they are going to buy alcohol and spend more than half of the salary on that purpose. Due to this fact, there is not enough money in the families to pay educational expenses of the children. Children are forced by the family situation to discontinue the studies and start earning money to support the family financially.

*My Father is addicted to alcohol. He went for treatment already four times. He is drinking daily. There is no money for the family because once he earns some money, he spends all of it on alcohol. I have one brother and one sister, which means three children in total in the family. Seeing the situation that no one can offer to support her in studies, she said to*

*herself, ok let me get some training and then I can earn money to support the studies of my siblings. (Respondent 3 – Current Participant)*

*My brother is the only person in the family who earns money, he takes care of the whole family. He finished his 10th standard, and then he went for to a work to be able to manage the situation in the family. While his studying he went to do a part time job. He is taking care of the family, they are 4 sisters. My Father is not contributing. His father is a drinker. I had to leave the school to help my brother to earn money. (Respondent 11 – Current Participant)*

#### **5.2.4 Loss of a parent**

Some of the respondents were forced to leave their studies due to loss of one parent or both parents. Since parents are those who are responsible for maintenance of the family, the loss of a parent has of course a very negative impact on the life of the whole family. Children have to replace their position in the families earlier than they were supposed to do so. They have to find the job and start contributing to the family budget.

*I lost both my parents and I really needed to earn money and take care of my younger siblings. There was no one who could take care of us. (Respondent 8 – Former Participant)*

*I had an interest in studying but I lost my father and I stayed home with my mother. She was also working for a cool drink company. We received just a minimum salary per day which is around 100 rupees. I have also a younger sister. So due to the situation in the family, there was an inability to study. (Respondent 18 – Current Participant)*

#### **5.2.5 Arranged Marriage**

Some of the young women cannot continue with their studies because they are asked to get married. Marriages are in many cases arranged by the parents. In families where there are more girl children, parents do not send all of them for studies but they want them to get married as soon as possible. After the wedding, women do not continue with their studies but they are mostly taking care of the household and raising children.

*Some parents do not let study young girls because they want them to get married soon. The education is not a priority for a parents in all cases. They want us to get married soon. (Respondent 19 – Current Participant)*

*My family did not want me to study because we were five sisters in the family. Parents could not afford to pay for the education for all of us. They asked me to get married. (Respondent 7 – Former Participant)*

### **5.2.6 Infatuation**

As mentioned earlier, infatuation and early marriages are perceived as a problem in the context of Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu. Sometimes there is no way for a young couple to be together and they decide to run away together. They not only run away from parent's houses, but their studies are also discontinued. Due to this decision, young women do not have the opportunity to study again and it can influence their subsequent life. Without a completed education, they can face difficulties in finding a good job.

*Also some girls fall in love with boys, run away from their homes and come back. They stop going to school, it is a real problem. (Respondent 16 – JRS management)*

*Some girls in the camp fall in love with boys and then they run away together. Families get very angry and they are not going to school anymore. (Respondent 3)*

### **5.2.7 Lack of interest in studies and difficulties during the studies**

Not only the life difficulties forces the young Sri Lankan women to interrupt their studies. Some of them just did not have the interest in studying and going for further studies. It was their choice to discontinue the studies. On the other hand, some of them could have been interested in studying but as respondents mentioned, some subjects were very difficult to Job opportunities for Sri Lankan Women

I was not interested in studies. I did not want to continue with studying, I just wanted to find a job. (Respondent 12)

Few subjects were too tough for me. I could not finish some of them. I stopped my studies and started working in a cool drink factory. (Respondent 19)

## **5.3 Job Opportunities for Sri Lankan refugee women**

This chapter is related to job opportunities for Sri Lankan women inside and outside the refugee camps. It helps us to examine the available job market for Sri Lankan refugee women. Based on these statements, JRS staff can compare if the skills taught in the centre meet the job market and then adjust it accordingly.

As a major problem in a study conducted by The Refugee Council was the insufficient employment among Sri Lankan refugees. The study discussed the number of refugees who have a job is low. And it is more difficult for women to find a job than for men (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 9). The job opportunities for Sri Lankan refugee women are limited (European Commissions's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2012)

### **5.3.1 Inside the refugee camps**

The work opportunities for women inside the refugee camp are very limited. Respondents mentioned just a few options how women can earn money without leaving the refugee camps. Women mostly stitch or do jobs which are related to stitching. For example as respondent 17 mentioned, some of the Sri Lankan women decorate jackets with stones and pearls.

*Some of women do fashion work - they put pearls and stones on and around that. These kind of works for women are available in the camp – related to tailoring. (Respondent 17 – Current Participant)*

Respondent 16 mentioned that there are no jobs available in refugee camps. Women stay at home, taking care of the kids and household and the only income apart from the husband's salary are the benefits which are given to them by the Indian government. According to the respondent 16, those who had the training in the past go for a stitching job. The clothes are stitched for the companies. Another option how to earn money is to work as a shopkeeper in small shops which are present in refugee camps.

*No, there no jobs available inside the camp. They will remain in the camp and watch tv, take care of kids. And they are receiving some small amount of money from the government. Only a small amount of women are having their own businesses in the camp like stitching or something like that. Those who have training, not the majority, but some of them are stitching. Or some women are shopkeepers in the small shops inside the camp. And some of them are stitching clothes for big companies. All of these they are doing and send it. (Respondent 16 – JRS Management)*

Another important area where women work is handicraft work. They create candles, decorate places for functions, putting pearls and stones on jackets and another very fancy things.

*In the camp itself, they are doing some small handicrafts. (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)*

### **5.3.2 Outside the refugee camps**

There are various jobs which are available for Sri Lankan women outside the refugee camps. Sri Lankan women mostly work in any jobs which are available for them in their area. Respondent 16 shared that the job opportunities depends on the place where the camp is situated exactly. In the case that it is located close to the town, women can get all

the jobs which are available, according to their qualifications. If the refugee camp is situated close to villages, Sri Lankan women work mostly in agriculture.

Refugees are mostly working in casual labour work such as at the construction side or in the agriculture (Valetheeswaran, Rajan, 2011, p. 36).

*“Where the camps are remote, obtaining employment is almost impossible and the refugees must seek employment in other areas. If a refugee obtains a job in an area far away from the camp and is compelled to stay in that area for a number of days, then she/she faces the risks of losing registration at the camp”* (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 9).

The respondent also mentioned that not all women are interested in work. Some of them stay at home, and the income is secured by the benefits provided by the Indian government and husband's salary.

*It depends on many things for example where the camp is situated. If it is close to the town, women go there and get whatever job which is available in town. If the camp is situated in villages, some of them go for agricultural job. And many of the women they do not show the interest to go outside the camp for job, they choose to remain at home. They try to see what money they can get from the government and husbands are earning money. Sometimes, husbands do not let the women go out for work.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

These jobs are mostly with low qualification requirements. Sri Lankan women work as shop-keepers in several government shops, for example in fancy shops selling jewellery, shops selling fruit and vegetables, glossary shops, cake shops, pastry shops, pharmacies, stationery shops.

*Other women are working in ordinary shops – stationary shops, shops with sweets as a shopkeeper. Working in the pharmacy but they would get a less salary. They are just selling basic medicine.* (Respondent 7 – Former Student)

*They will be working in grocery shops or in sweets shops.* (Respondent 13 – JRS management)

*But if women are going outside, they are working mostly in shops like fruit shops, vegetable shops, glossary shops. some tailoring shops, they going there and work there.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

A large number of Sri Lankan women are working the textile industry. Some of them work as tailors, stitching various types of clothes. For example stitching churidar which is the typical Indian dress for women. Or blouses which are a necessary part of sari. Some

of them work in textile shops where they are cutting cloth or leather. They work for the government or private companies.

*Other women get work in government shops, in a textile shop – women are stitching outside in the government factories.* (Respondent 4 – Participant)

*Women stitch mostly. They work as tailors for various companies in their area.* (Respondent 14 – JRS management)

*Pieces of cloth will be given to the women along with the instruction what she should do with the cloth. For example, she is just cutting the cloth.* (Respondent 10)

Sri Lankan women work often as a labour workers on the constructions. Respondents mentioned that Sri Lankan women, for example, carry the stones or bricks on the construction. Many of them work as labour workers in companies. For example, respondent 16 mentioned that they are working in factories where firecrackers are made. Jobs available for refugees are mostly in shops, factories or in the fields. Some of the women are carrying stones for construction work. Refugees suffer from various injuries due to tough physical work (The Refugee Council, 1999, p. 9).

*If the camp is close to fireworks companies, in some districts, there are companies which make firecrackers. Some girls go here for a job.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

Another area where women work is in tourism. Some of them work in hotels, mostly as cleaners or helping in the kitchen with cutting or preparing food. They do not help with the preparation of the meals only in hotels, but also in school canteens. Some women also work in a catering companies where they are preparing the food for special occasions.

*Women work also in canteens at schools where they are working as helpers.* (Respondent 19 – Current Student)

*Second one catering –of course, they know cooking, but how to impress and make the things nicely arranged.* (Respondent 13 – JRS management)

Some women need to have a basic knowledge about computers because they also work in xerox companies, where the photos are for example printed. The ability to work with photoshop is essential and required.

*Some of them are working as computer jobs – xerox centre. Creating pictures in photoshops.* (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)

Higher qualification requirements are demanded for those Sri Lankan women who work as nurses in the hospitals. Many women work in this area too.

*Some other women work in private or public hospitals as nurses.* (Respondent 17)

*And those who finished nursing, they are going to hospitals for work. (Respondent 16 – JRS management)*

*I was not interested in studies. I did not want to continue with studying, I just wanted to find a job. (Respondent 12 – Current Participant)*

*A few subjects were too tough for me. I could not finish some of them. I stopped my studies and started working in a cool drink factory. (Respondent 19 – Current Participant)*

## **6 Research Results related to evaluation of JRS Life Skills Education Centre**

In the following subchapters the results related to evaluation of JRS Life Skills Education centre are presented below. As I mentioned before, it is not a standardized evaluation that has its strict rules in evaluating projects. During the research, the elements of evaluation are used. These three subchapters are related to the research subquestions related to motivation for joining JRS Life Skills Education Centre, perceived output of the project from the respondents' point of view, and recommendations for enhancement of JRS Life Skills Education Centre from respondents' point of view.

### **6.1 Motivation for joining JRS Life Skills Education Centre**

To understand better the background of the participants there is a chapter related the motivation for joining the JRS Life Skills Education centre. With a clear overview, JRS can understand more what was behind the decision to join to the project and adjust it accordingly. Various motivations are presented in the subchapters below.

#### **6.1.1 Acquiring skills**

Some of the young women who participate in the JRS Life Skill Education projects are coming to learn skills and something new. Acquiring skills is very important especially for those who could not finish their studies. Refugees face many restrictions in their lives but when they have skills, no one can take it from them. That will remain forever. Motivation to learn skills can ensure their source of livelihood. Respondent 6 mentioned that she used to work in the pharmaceutical industry, but due to a manipulation with chemicals she started to have skin problems. Learning skills like stitching, embroidering or beauty therapy do not have to necessarily affect the health of the women in such a significant way.

*I came to Grihini to learn how to stitch. I wanted to learn something to be able to earn money. (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)*

*I joined the centre because I wanted to. I used to work in a chemical factory and due to my previous job, I started to have skin problems. So I needed to learn a skill which will not affect my health and I will be able to earn money. So learning the skills was my motivation. (Respondent 6 – Former Participant).*

*I completed my 10th standard and my mother passed away, I was taking care of the home, I wanted to learn some skills and earn some money. The centre was introduced to me by the field officers. (Respondent 7 – Former Participant).*

### **6.1.2 Avoidance of Infatuation**

I already wrote about the infatuation issue in chapters above in a context of the problems which young women face in the refugee camps and also this particular issue was the reason for becoming a drop-out. Some of the girls are asked to come to Grihini centre by their parents after a consultation with a field officer. When they fall in love with someone in a refugee camp, and the family does not agree with that, they want to separate the couple in the hope that they will forget about each other.

*Since some girls are a drop-out, they can easily fall in love with someone. If they are remaining in the house, they see each other very often and most of the parents do not want them to get married. So girls are sent to Grihini. (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

*In the sense of early marriages, to avoid that, they send them to the Grihini. To prevent them from getting married. (Respondent 16 – JRS management)*

*Due to a love affair – or if they fell in love with someone, girls who are 15 years old fall in love with a man who is 30. so there is an age gap. So they send them to go Grihini for psychological support. (Former Student 4 – Former Participant)*

### **6.1.3 Psychological Support and Self-Empowerment**

Some of the participants of the project have joined the Life Skill Education Centre because they wanted to grow personally. They wanted to empower themselves. For example, respondent 17 mentioned that she came to the centre to find her own identity. To answer the question who is she as a person. She was also suffering from the infatuation when both families did not agree with the wedding and she was thinking about committing suicide at that time. So the reason for joining the project was also to seek a psychological support.

*I wanted to find out my identity. Who I am. (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

*I was in love with a boy and we wanted to get married. Then, he found someone else. I got hurt so much. The reason why I came here was to learn something and stand proudly in front of him. I wanted to show him I am able to do something, to achieve something! (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

#### **6.1.4 Avoidance of Sexual Violence**

As I already mentioned above in a chapter devoted to the problems which women face the refugee camps or in their lives, the issue of sexual violence was also discussed in this chapter. Some of the trainees are coming to the JRS Life Skills Education Centre for this specific reason. It is a way how they can escape from the environment where they were victims of sexual violence.

All the forms of violence which are present at refugee camps are against women (Mullen, 2012).

*Young girls are coming to the centre because of the potential sexual violence based problems. You can avoid sexual violence against women in the camps. Parents also send girls to the centre, because they think that they will grow mentally and get some skills. (Respondent 13 – JRS management)*

*My father attacked me sexually during the night. For that reason, I was staying at the hostel. When I discontinued my studies, I did not want to be at home. I was afraid. So I came here. I am afraid now, that he will do the same to my younger sister. (Respondent 11 – Current Participant)*

#### **6.1.5 Loss of a parents or parents staying abroad**

Some of the participants shared that they decided to join the JRS Life Skill Education Centre due to the loss of a parent or both parents in the family. Suddenly, they became responsible for a source of livelihood in the family. There was a need to learn skills to be able to get a job with which they will be able to take care of a household.

*Some of the students who have joined Grihini came because they lost their parents. There was no one who could take care of a family, sometimes to take of other siblings too. Thanks to the training they become able to earn a money for ensuring the running of the household. (Respondent 13 – JRS management.)*

Some participants joined the project not because they had lost their parents but because their parents were staying abroad. Thanks to the intervention of JRS field officers, young women did not stay at home alone and came to pick up the skills and work on their personal development.

*Some of other girls came here because of the family problems to the centre, their mother or parents were abroad so there was no one who could take care of her. (Respondent 6 – Former Participant)*

### **6.1.6 Fulfilling the basic life needs**

Young women who joined Grihini came for various reasons. Some of them came because the financial situation in the family is so tricky that there is no proper food in families. Some of them eat just plain rice every day. For some of the young women, the centre represents the place where they can have three meals per day along with snacks every day.

*Other girls who were with me in Grihini came to have good and regular food. Their families were very poor. (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

*We went through a very tough time in my family and we did not have money for food. So along with the aim to learn skills, I also came to have food. (Respondent 11 – Current Participant)*

### **6.1.7 Getting the certificate**

Some participants joined JRS Life Skill Education Centre because they wanted to get a certificate. With a certificate, it is much more easy to get a job for young women. And especially when they are a drop-out. They can prove the skills they have gained during their training.

*I needed to have some certificate so I asked the field officer. (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

*Many girls are coming in order to gain a certificate. With a certificate, they are more employable. (Respondent 14 – Former Participant)*

## **6.2 Perceived output of the project**

In the following subchapters, there is mentioned perceived output of the project from the respondents' point of view. After reading this chapter, the understanding of the impact of the project on participants' life is going to more evident. With these findings, JRS staff can assess whether the project is giving the participants what they want.

### **6.2.1 Self-Confidence**

Almost all respondents mentioned that their self-confidence was built during the six months training at the JRS Life Skill Education Centre. The self-confidence is one of the missions of the project which has been fulfilled.

*I have gained self-confidence, especially when I am addressing the public. (Respondent 8 – Former Participant)*

*I am more confident, I want to continue my studies. (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)*

*My confidence was built here. I believe I can do many things now. (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)*

They could notice the change in various ways. For example, some of the respondents shared that they did not want to attend any of the cultural events in the past, where they would have to dance, speak or sing in front of other people. After staying in the centre, learning many things and going through different experiences, it has changed.

*Here, everything is nice. And in the camps, there are many dancing and singing competitions, but I have never participated before. But here, I have got the self-confidence. I can also speak in front of others. I can dance, do drama. (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)*

They feel capable of doing many things, to achieve their own goals. Which meets the goal of the project to be able plan their own future. Sri Lankan young women used to be mostly very shy and did not have the courage to talk to people or speak publicly. After the training, when the participants' confidence was built up, they are able to not only to communicate with people confidently but also to actively participate in the various festivals.

*Before coming to Grihini, I was very shy to come out from the house and speak with others. Now I am going very freely. I am able to come out from the fear. I has gained self-confidence. (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)*

*I went only for work and then I stayed at home. Usually, my family did not allow me to speak loudly, even during watching TV. They always said to me that because I am a girl, I should never shout. Here, I am very spontaneous. Before I came here, I have never been doing anything voluntarily. But now I am active in different kinds of activities. When I go home, I will keep the TV on very loudly and start shouting. (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)*

*She used to be very silent and she is very friendly with her father. she is a very silent type and felt shy often. Even when someone is scolding her, she would not respond. Her mother used to scold her a lot. She did not respond and let the things go. Recently, she is able to speak with her mother with such freedom. In that area she has grown a lot. (Respondent 19 – Former Participant)*

*I also used to be a very silent character, and when she gets angry she used to scold only her mother not other people. She used to be very shy, now she is very confident and brave to address and defend herself. (Respondent 18 – Current Participant)*

A JRS staff member mentioned that the change which is evident among the participants is the courage to face the challenges in their lives. According to his opinion, they do not give up. This opinion was supported by one participant of the training. She mentioned that if she failed, she will try things again. She will not give up.

*Yes, they are more self-confident, they do not give up so easily.* (Respondent 14 – JRS management)

*Yes, after the training... I am more self-confident, I do not give up. If I fail, I will try the things again.* (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)

For example, the respondent who studied at the centre a few years ago shared that thanks to the self-confidence which she gained that time, she is able to cope with a difficult life situation which she faces now. Her husband left her and she stayed alone with the kids.

*The holistic training gave me self-confidence and hope. My own life is an example. My husband abandoned me with two children but after the things I have got in the training I am able to manage my life.* (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)

### **6.2.2 Skills**

Young Sri Lankan women definitely gained the skills during the stay at JRS Life Skill Education centre. Through gaining skills the overall goal of the project halfly fullfilled because participants increased their skills in tailong which is required at job-markert. As they are mentioning they learned to stitch various types of clothes, beauty therapy, cooking and handicrafts, spoken English. They know how to stitch not only the clothes for women but also for children. During their handicraft classes they learnt how to create dolls, bags and flowers. All this decoration work is very appreciated and required in a local market. During the beauty therapy classes they learnt for example how to make a face mask and face wash etc. With these skills they can find a job easily and improve the economic situation, not only theirs but also the economic situation of their families.

*Before, I did not have any skills. After the training, i am able to find a job as a tailor.* (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)

*When I spoke with my father, I told him not to worry about the money. Now, I can do stitching and I will find the job. I will manage everything.* (Respondent 1 – Current Participant)

*Suddenly my economic status has been improved because I can do not only stitching but also I am doing handicrafts. Creating small bags.* (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)

*Making dolls, making a bag, making doll, flowers, stitching the dresses, designing dresses for children, she has learnt a lot but she is not able to express it. (Respondent 6 – Former Participant)*

*I learnt how to make face mask, cooking, face wash, coffee making. (Respondent 18 – Current Participant)*

Their new obtained skills do not have to help the family only from the economic point of view. They stitch clothes for their family members as well which can save the money because they do not have to pay to tailors. In the society they are coming from, services of tailors are very sought-after.

*Yes, after her training she came out and started stitching clothes for herself and for other members in my family. (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)*

*I studied at Grihini and with the help of my sisters, I got a job in a textile company and I was working there for 2 years after 2 years I was stitching at home for herself and family members. (Respondent 15 – Former Participant)*

Some of the young women found a job as tailor teachers. The skills which they learnt at the JRS centre were sufficient for teaching others how to stitch and other work related to stitching.

*I was learning in the centre how to stitch. In the camp itself, I was teaching after the training in Grihini again by another NGO. (Respondent 7 – Former Participant)*

*I am earning money. I am a tailoring teacher for ten students in the camp. I am getting money as a teacher. (Respondent 5 – Former Participant)*

Apart from skills which are used as a source of livelihood, they learnt skills which are needed in their personal life. They learnt how to take care of the household.

*Before going there, I was not used to doing all the housework, but after I learnt it was very useful for my daily life. (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)*

### **6.2.3 Emotional consciousness**

Respondents shared the differences which they identified after the participation at JRS Life Skills Education centre. They feel the changes in the way they think and they started looking at things from different perspectives. They became more interested in getting to know new information and more open to speak and share their own opinions.

*Broad thinking has been changed, we are able to speak in the meetings, able to share and get to know a lot of information. (Respondent 8 – Former Participant)*

Another change which the participants described is related to their own life situations. They started to reflect on their own lives, families and the situation they went through in the past. Respondent 9 learnt respect for others. She shared how she has never realised the hard work her mother has to do to take care of the family. After staying in the centre, she realised that she did not help her with taking care of the household and she wants to change it after coming back home.

*At home, I just wanted to be talkative and I did not help my mother. Now I understand how hard my mum has been working. Now, I feel that when I go back I have to help my mother. I have realised many things. I have learnt about respecting others.* (Respondent 9)

*After the counselling, I started to understand my family situation.* (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)

Some of them had no feelings or emotions at all. After the counselling in the centre, they started to feel things again and reflect on their emotional changes.

*After my studies, 12th standard, I wanted to go for more studies, but my family cannot afford that, I wanted to learn skills. When I came, I had no feelings, I did not think about my family, I did not want to. But after two months I started missing my family, but I am coping with that.* (Respondent 2 – Current Participant)

#### **6.2.4 Hope for a better future**

For some of the participants, the stay at JRS Life Skill Education centre meant they finally found some hope. Hope that their life situation can improve. For example, respondent 10 feels skilled and confident about tailoring which she learnt at the centre. She believes that with this skill she will manage everything on her own and maybe after earning money start studying again to increase her social status. The mission of JRS Life Skills Education centre „to make them plan out their own future for a meaningful life“ was fulfilled.

*I got some hope and I can manage everything on my own because of my tailoring skills. I am more confident, I want to continue with my studies. But I am confident with tailoring, I just need to earn some money and maybe I can start studying again and find a good job.* (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)

#### **6.2.5 Reduction of negative emotions**

Many young women went through tough situations and got traumatised. Most of them have never spoken about their own issues with any psychologist or counsellor. Despite the domestic violence, sexual and psychological violence took place in the families. Due

to these very difficult events, young women live in the fear. Most of these problems have arisen from the alcohol addiction which is present in the camps as I already mentioned in the chapter related to problems in the camps and lives of the trainees.

At JRS Life Skill Education centre, young women participate in various activities which are therapeutic based. For instance, anger therapy. Based on these experiences, participants started reflecting their own struggles in their lives. The stay at the centre helped them to understand their feelings and more importantly to cope with them. For instance, respondent 10 mentioned that after the counselling, she thinks that she is able to forgive her father who used to abuse her sexually. Respondent 3 used to be very angry with her father due to his alcohol addiction. She met a counsellor in the past and he asked her to write a letter to her father and tell him what she feels. After reading this letter, her father stopped drinking again for few days but unfortunately started again very soon. She became more frustrated. After staying in the centre, she feels calmer and the anger towards her father has decreased.

*Since my father is addicted to alcohol, and many times, he beats my mother, and I am afraid. And when I see my father when he is drunk, I got scared automatically. I got some help from the counsellor, he told me to let him know how he makes me angry, just take some paper and write it all down. And let him read how you felt after the situation, she gave it to him, and he did not drink for two days, and then he started again. Now, I just reduced the anger. I am getting less angry.* (Respondent 3 – Current Participant)

*I used to feel so much anger towards my father. Now due to my stay here and counselling, I am able to forgive him.* (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)

### **6.2.6 Positive approach to education and self-development**

Another output of the project which I have identified in the interview is the change of approach to the education. Based on the interviews with current and also former trainees of the centre, I could notice the real desire for education. Even some of them said that they were never thinking about studying various subjects. For instance, respondent 3 shared that after the anger therapy which she passed with other women, she would love to study psychology. Most of the current trainees I spoke with, want to continue with their studies. I can state that the training has a really positive effect on the motivation for studies of the participants.

*I wanted to learn more. So I got some training from another institution after finishing the training at Grihini.* (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)

*I really want to start studying again. If it is possible, I will finish studies. (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)*

*Now I have some interest, I want to study psychology and also I want to at least complete my nursing course, but there are no financial sources, so there is no hope. (Respondent 3 – Current Participant)*

### **6.2.7 Economical Independence**

The important output of the project is the economic independence which women can abound. The skills which they learnt at the JRS centre like tailoring, handicraft and beauty therapy do meet the needs of the local market as we can see in a chapter dedicated to a job for Sri Lankan refugee women. With the skills they obtained, they can find a job easier than before when they just left school and had no experience. With a job, they obtained the economic independence for themselves and for their families as well.

Another very significant fact which is important to realise is the relation with self-confidence and skills. As I mentioned before, almost all respondents shared that their self-confidence has increased. With self-confidence, they can ask for a job confidently and demand their rights at the workplace. When confidence is not built up, even the best tailors can not find a job. They do not have to find a job and work as an employee but they can start their own businesses. As one of the respondents mentioned, she was confident enough to start her own business.

*The stitching is only the skill, it is not the whole life. But I have learnt how to go out and speak with others. So that manner I have learnt. With that manner, I can use my skills only. (Respondent 7 – Former Participant)*

*My husband abandoned me, and I stayed just with my kids. But I am able to manage myself and my family. I am economically able to take care of my kids. (Respondent 4).*

*Now after studying at the centre, I do not depend on anyone with money. I am able to take care of myself. I have gained the confidence and I am able to address the public. That was the only option for girls like me, to go to the centre and learn skills. When women want to find a job outside the camp, they have no other option and go somewhere and learn the skills. So the centre was the only option for me. With skills I started a complete new life. (Respondent 8 – Former Participant)*

*When they finish the training at Grihini centre, they become more confident and they can also demand their salary. Because they are confident enough and they have skills. They*

*themselves can get a job individually. They can start their own business. (Respondent 16 – JRS management)*

*It was a new birth, at school only the education is given but there it was also about something different. The confidence is given and build up without the man or boy. With that confidence, she started with the support of her parents to have her own business – shop. (Respondent 17 – Former Student)*

### **6.2.8 Position in refugee camp hierarchy**

I mentioned various changes which have happened in participants life after joining the JRS Skills Education Centre above. What is very interesting to point out is the change of role which some of the women described. Some of the participants became the role models for other young women in the camps. And based on that, other people joined the centre.

With the self-confidence and skills, women became the leaders during various functions in the refugee camps. They are the leaders among the group of other women. For instance, when different NGOs search tailoring teachers in refugee camps, they always want to cooperate with former JRS Life Skill Education centre students.

*There are many changes in me which have changed my life. By my inspiration, they are another two girls who joined Grihini. I used to be afraid if I was asked to come forward and speak in public. Now I am able to speak without being shy. I built the self-confidence. (Respondent 4 – Former Student)*

*In the camp, these Grihini students take a lead. And among the women, they spontaneously lead the group. They are able to help others when the government gives them training and other NGOs come and train the camp women. In that case, our former students are given a job as teachers. They are able to successfully run the family. (Respondent 16 – JRS management)*

### **6.3 Discovered Problems during the current training**

During the interviews with current students the problems with teachers were revealed. There was not a good relationship between the students and teachers. Based on the respondents' statements, the teachers separated participants into groups. They divided them in to groups by their popularity. They asked the students who they liked more and what others are saying about them.

*But now, there are some problems among the students. There was a problem between the students at the beginning, then between the teachers and now the teachers came together and are separating the students into groups. And one teacher was dominating to everyone. There are a few groups, some of the girls are close to the teachers and informing them what other girls are saying about them. (Respondent 20 – JRS management).*

Another problem which respondents identified with the teachers is the fact that they have not taught them all the themes and activities they were supposed to teach. But in the report which was submitted to the field officers it stated that they did so. And the respondents also shared that they teach some techniques only to a few women, only those who are their favourites. During some activities, such as yoga or mediation, teachers are supposed to accompany young women to prevent any injuries. But in the end of the training, none of the staff accompanied them.

*They started to teach how to use the material of wastage, paper etc. They have started but it is not completed. They used to watch us during the yoga and meditation lessons, but no one is coming now, even Sister does not. (Respondent 9 – Current Participant)*

*Actually, they were supposed to teach a lot of things, and they have informed Father and Sister that they have taught everything. But many things have not been taught. For example the material of wastage. They have not finished the teaching yet, but in the report, it is written that all is done. We are simply wasting our time because nothing is taught here. The problem in this centre, with this training, is that girls are divided into separate groups. They are fighting with teachers, few things are taught personally, just for some girls. (Respondent 11 – Current Student)*

## **6.4 Recommendation for JRS**

In the following chapter the recommendations are going to be presented. The recommendations can help the JRS staff to improve the project according to the needs of the participants.

### **6.4.1 Teaching of different designs of tailoring and handicrafts**

Many respondents mentioned the need to add few methods of training related to tailoring which they think is useful to know. For example, they suggested to start teaching to stitch various kinds of blouses. According to their opinion, the basic is taught in the project, but there is a need to focus on more designs.

*I would need training for blouse designing. They taught just the basic things, we need to learn how to sew various kinds of blouses. (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)*

*We need different training in blouse designing. We only know how to stitch the basic blouse. (Respondent 7 – Former Participant).*

It added that it is also very important to know how to stitch clothes for special occasions, like wedding and festivals, which are better salaried. The respondents would also appreciate devoting more time to stitching clothes not only for women but also for men and children.

*If I learn how to sew the blouse for a wedding, I can easily get 2,000 rupees. It is better paid. (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)*

*Then they want to stitch the jacket and then dress for boys. Shorts and pants. How to stitch it. (Respondent 10 – Current Participant)*

One of the respondents also mentioned that there is a one technique where the flowers are sewed into saris which they think would be really effective to know because this technique is really sought after. It is a kind of embroidering so she suggested to focus more on embroidering as a technique in general.

*The changes what she expected was embroidering. Preparing flowers on the sari. On the sari they make some kind of design. (Respondent 17 – Former Student)*

Respondents also shared the need to dedicate more time for cutting. They consider it as the most important part of tailoring which is the key to knowing. So they would really appreciate the extra time given to cutting.

*The extra time needs to be given for cutting. Even the cutting of the clothes should take a longer time. There are only two teachers and when they are showing it and if they want to teach everyone, it takes time. It is very difficult for teachers to teach all of them. The time should be given more for cutting. (Respondent 17 – Former Student)*

Respondent 17 suggested teaching a technique called screen printing. When this technique is used, the special ornaments are created on the sari.

*Screen printing – there will be a small bag, it's made of cotton clothes. It is used in Tamil Nadu when you go to invite someone for your wedding – it is yellow colour. This kind of activity can be added. On the plain saris, we can also print – this technique is called screen printing. (Respondent 17 – Former Student)*

Apart from other suggestions, the respondent also proposed to give a sewing machine to each alumni of the JRS Life Skills Education centre. As respondents are mentioning, that would help them start their own businesses.

*I was really lucky, because I was given the sewing machine at the beginning which helped me to start my own shop. All girls should get one. They are from poor families, they do not have money to buy the sewing machine. (Respondent 17 – Former Student)*

#### **6.4.2 Advanced level of Computer Skills**

It is important to mention that currently there is computer training taught to the participants of the project. It did not use to be the part of the training before. Almost all former participants mentioned that computer training is desired. The most useful area seems to be the training in photoshop. As mentioned previously, young Sri Lankan women can find a job in xerox shops where basic orientation in photoshop is required.

*I would definitely add the computer classes. Computer knowledge is really required. You can get a job if you know how to work on a computer. (Respondent 5 – Former Student)*

Another skill which the respondents asked for is ten fingers typing. The respondents suggest being able to type with ten fingers in Tamil and also in the English language. Respondents perceive as very important to deepen their knowledge in MS Office (MS Excel, Powerpoint, Word).

*Computer training – when the computer training is given to us, we can go outside and get a job for example in photoshop, typing, MS Office. (Respondent 4 – Former Participant)*

*Actually, they should train us more with computers. For example in MS Office (Respondent 10 – Current Participant).*

*Type – writing – computer writing – writing by 10 fingers (English and Tamil), photoshop (Respondent 17 – Former Participant).*

Although computer training is already present at the centre, from the respondents' point of view it is not sufficient. The computer classes should be more regular and consist of more lessons. Existing computer lessons take place in blocks because Jesuit Brothers come to teach this subject in their free time. Based on the respondents' interviews, the classes should be organised regularly.

*It was there but it was not regular, only some Brothers are coming to teach them for 4 or 5 days. But it is not enough, there is a need of extension. (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)*

### **6.4.3 Adding Different Types of Trainings**

Respondent 17 mentioned that she would consider it as useful to add training of mobile services because women can find a job in mobile shops. For that purpose they need to understand the systems and the basics can be taught to them at the centre.

*I think that mobile service should be taught to girls. Because they can find a job in mobile companies.* (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)

As they mentioned, accounting would be useful to add to the current setting of the training. And other skills which could help young women to find a job easier is the catering based knowledge. According to the respondents 13, if they know how to arrange the food in a professional way, they can find jobs in catering companies.

*Also accounting can be taught and catering for some functions. For example how to design the fruit.* (Respondent 7 – Former Participant)

*Second one catering – of course they know cooking, but how to impress and make the things nicely arranged.* (Respondent 13 – JRS management)

Another suggestion from respondent 7 was to start teaching basic medical knowledge which could be used for future nursing studies. The respondent perceived that there is a demand for nurses jobs in the market.

*The training that JRS gave us, that was about the skills. But we also need to go for further studies, for some diploma courses. We can work as nurses in the hospital* (Respondent 7 – Former Student).

The respondent thinks that teaching different kinds of handicrafts would be useful for women. They could earn money easily with this ability. As I mentioned in chapter 4, the jobs market has a demand for handicrafts.

*They should learn how to make candles, paper plates, putting flowers into pots but nicely arranged. Then create bags with special ornaments.* (Respondent 13 – JRS management)

### **6.4.4 Arranging Regular Alumni Meetings**

During the interviews with the respondents one very interesting fact showed up. The fact is that many young women are empowered and confident after staying in the centre for six months. But after coming back to the refugee camps where the environment remains the same, they have to face a totally new reality. And as respondent 17 mentioned, many of the alumni do not continue with the things they have learnt at the centre. As respondents propose, alumni should meet regularly to encourage each other and to make the changes in their lives sustainable. Respondent 16 pointed out that young women, after finishing

their training at JRS Life Skills Education centre, tend to lose their positive approach and the hopeless situation in the refugee camp discourages them again. Respondent 16 also mentioned that the only way to escape from this life in the camp is to go back to Sri Lanka.

*As soon after the training in Grihini centre, many attend but when they are coming back to their camp, many of them do not continue. JRS could make an arrangement to gather them at least once in the month. To encourage them to start to something.* (Respondent 17 – Former Participant)

*Even after the training, we can do some follow-up meetings. We can organise them, we are doing that and come to know it because after the training they are coming to camps with high spirit, they are coming there positively. But the reality in the camp discourages them again.* (Respondent 16)

*The only way to escape from this camp life is to return to Sri Lanka.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

Respondent 16 shared that JRS already started with arranging meetings of former participants in the camps. They were thinking about creating some income-generation program where women would share the money together. They try to form them into groups and to guide them and motivate them. But as he highlighted, the main aim of this meeting is to bring them together because of they much more power as a group in the refugee camp than as individuals.

*We are going to the camps and meeting our formal students. Just to encourage them and slowly we guide them, depending on where they are. And also we try to put them into a group, try to find some income-generating program. In some places we are able to help them, to find some income generating program and to form them as a group. In many places, we are not able to do that. So what we are doing now, we form them as a group and encourage them. To form them as a group and to save money, a saving system. We hope that we can slowly motivate them and they are able to save some amount of money. With that money, they can think of starting some income generating program.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

*We will tell them that as a group they can share the experiences and also that as a group, they will be stronger in the camp, a kind of unity in the camps, support to each other and also some space for them to come out of the houses and come for a work.* (Respondent 16 – JRS management)

Respondent 14 mentioned that the idea to form a group and bring alumni together is unique because they can share the talents together and learn one from each other. He pointed out that some of the women are capable and interested more and some of them less. After the group is formed, they can think about providing some income together.

*All the students who are studying in the centre, they do not come out as capable. Few will be more interested and some of them less interested. So those who are skilful they are going out for a work. In order to tap the skills, the group would be helpful. The group will support each other. Each of them will have some few skills and they will support each other. When they share, so each one will have an idea what to do. First of all is to share the talents which they have and then they can also provide some income as a group.*

(Respondent 14 – JRS management)

Respondent 17 mentioned that the skills are given to young women in the centre but for example the financial situation in the family has not changed. So for setting up her new business she needs at least some financial sources.

*Skills are given in the centre, but family is not able to give a sufficient amount of money to the girl to produce something. It is very costly. But she was lucky and JRS gave her a sewing machine, so they helped her at the beginning.*

(Respondent 17 – Former Participant)

*She also suggests JRS provide a loan to the alumni together as a group with some interest. Some interest 1 or 2 rupees. So the money would go back to JRS. They could ask as a group for a loan.*

(Respondent 17 – Former Participant)

But on the other hand, respondent 16 mentioned that JRS cannot provide them with any loan. JRS gave them the skills and there is a need to reflect how the skills could help them to improve their life situation. At the same time, when JRS management sees that a group of young women are skilled and just need a financial support at the beginning, they can support them. But they can support just a few of these women, not all of them.

*Do not expect that JRS will give you some financial support now, you think in which way you will use the skill which JRS has given to you. At the same time when I see that there is a group of girls who are skilled but there is a need of financial support, we help them by providing sewing machines. And also income – generating a program, I can help few girls, not as a loan but a donation. Maybe with 5,000 rupees, they can start their own business but I cannot help all of them. I can help just a few.*

(Respondent 16 – JRS management)

Another important actuality to realise is the advantage of this centre is the fact that it residential based. There are no disturbances and young women can focus on their development fully.

*Even they have training inside – if they keep the training in the camp. Maybe because of the timetable, they cannot participate fully because any of them can enter and call to go home.* (Respondent 14 – JRS management)

#### **6.4.5 Providing Scholarship for Alumni**

Some of the respondents mentioned the possibility which they would really appreciate which is to get a scholarship for continuing their studies. According to respondent 7, tailoring could only be a part time job and they could focus on the studies while they are earning money. As far as I know, JRS provides students scholarships where school fees are included, but there is no special fund for those women who are already drop-outs and went through the JRS Life Skills Education Centre.

*And during our free time to stitch but only as a part-time job. The basic of nursing can be taught there or JRS could support them for scholarship and they would study some diploma course.* (Respondent 7 – Former Participant)

*JRS could give us some money to start studying the subject we really want. My family does not have money to pay my studies but I would really want to go to school.* (Respondent 19 – Current Participant)

#### **6.4.6 Motivating and Assisting with searching job**

The Project Director mentioned the possibility to motivate the former participants and accompanying them in finding a job. Employment counselling could be given to the graduates. JRS field officers who are present in refugee camps could visit those who finished the training and provide them with the counselling along with motivating them. The respondent also mentioned the option to facilitate the link between the employees and employers.

*After finishing the training, we can make a link between the government factories. We can have another JRS man to help to create the link between women and employers.* (Respondent 15 – Former Participant)

## 7 Discussion and Suggestion

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of research results. **The main research question was: what is the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee women like and what is the perceived output of the project and the recommendations for its enhancement from respondents' point of view?**

The main research question was answered through fulfilling the research subquestions. The research subquestions were answered by obtaining the information related to the life situations of the participants, the perceived output of the project and the recommendations for its enhancement. The answers for the research subquestions are going to be concretized below.

The first research subquestion was: **What are the specifics of the participants' life situation? (Problems faced in the refugee camps and in their lives, the reasons for being drop-outs)**

This subquestion was answered because I found out the problems faced by the participants in the refugee camps and in their lives, as well and the reasons for being drop-outs and the motivation for joining JRS Life Skill Education Centre.

There are various *problems faced by the participants* of the JRS Life Skills Education centre in the refugee camps and in their lives. **Some of the problems are specific for the Sri Lankan refugee population living in Tamil Nadu in general.** These problems are described in details below.

There is a lack of clearly defined rights for Sri Lankan refugees. Due to this, people can take advantage of them for instance in the workplace. Some employers are aware of the refugees' inability to fight back and instead of promised salaries they are not giving them anything. Living in the refugee camps is perceived as the problem itself. Camp life can be very tough and demanding. Many aspects of their life after staying in JRS Life Skills Education Centre changed but the environment they are living in remains the same. The changes in their lives are not sometimes sustainable. The life conditions in refugee camps where Sri Lankan refugees are living are inadequate. There is a lack of privacy and insufficient conditions for living such as small houses next to each other with plastic sheets instead of a proper roof. But the conditions in refugee camps are diverse and depends on the districts and particular refugee camps.

The Refugee Council study refers to a lack of proper shelter as well which is considered as the main problem in refugee camps. The living conditions are very inappropriate and

the huts built for refugees should have been used just as a temporary solution. The living conditions in these huts are much more demanding during the summer or raining seasons (The Refugee Council, 1999). Some of the refugees stay in government buildings, abandoned schools and halls or shelters used during the cyclone as the study of Professor Bertram Bastiampillai's mentioned as well (Bastiampillai, 1994). Another study referring to the accommodation and living conditions of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu is Priti's study from 2014. The Indian government takes care of shelter, water and electricity facilities (Priti, 2014). These studies deal more with the descriptions of refugee camps rather than the impact on the life situation as this study does.

*"Each hut had a constructed area of 10 feet in length and 10 feet in breadth and the roof was constructed of asbestos and mica sheets." (Priti, 2014)*

**Lack of privacy** has a negative effect on children's education. They cannot concentrate on studying because of the noisy environment in the refugee camps. JRS established tuition centres where the teachers are available for students and the environment is calm. The reputation of the centre is disturbed by **the negative outlook** of the older generation present in the refugee camps which influence the parents' opinion about the tuition centres. Some of the senior citizens tell parents that young women are not coming for the study purpose but for chatting with young men which is a very sensitive issue in this traditional society. **Toilet facilities are not sufficiently** built and the lack of privacy is also present here. Bathrooms are also the place where conflicts take place.

As I already mentioned above, **alcohol addiction affects** the lives of Sri Lankan refugee women in various ways. It has a negative impact on women's **personal safety**. The male population suffers from alcohol addiction which can result in risky situations for women. The instructions are given to young women to stay inside the houses and not to open the doors when drunk men are trying to get inside. The purpose of this instruction is to avoid the possible assaults. The situation is even more complicated when there are no male members in the family.

The awareness related to gender-based violence should be given to the participants stay in JRS Life Skills Education Centre. But the awareness should take place at all levels. Not only for the participants of the project but for staff and policy makers as well (Dianis, Timar, Damscheit-Berg, 2016).

The study in the journal Transition dedicates to issues faced by refugee women. Women, especially those who are single, may experience the sexual harassment not only from those who are living the camps but also from outsiders (Yoldi, Basili, 2001, p. 18).

Young women consider older drunk men more dangerous than young ones. On the other hand, addiction of male members can result in various violence in the family. Some of the participants witnessed **domestic or sexual violence**. The present alcohol addiction in the family can have also the negative impact on children's education. Families do not have enough financial sources to pay the educational fees of their children. Money is spent on alcohol instead of paying educational fees. Some children are forced by the family situation to stop studies and start earning money. Another issue related to safety problems is the insufficient sanitation facilities in refugee camps. The construction of bathrooms is poor and they have situated far away from the houses. An outsider can see easily inside.

**The infatuation** is another problem perceived by the participants in the refugee camps. Young people fall in love with each other which results in conflict in the families. The society in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu is traditional. According to customs, the partner is chosen by the family. The marriages are mostly arranged. Infatuation among youth can lead to marriages in early age and running away from the families. These marriages mostly do not last for a long time and divorce is not perceived by the society very well. On the other hand, some of the parents ask young women to get married early which results in discontinuance of their studies.

Another problem faced by the participants **is an inferiority complex and psychological issues**. Women are not self-confident and do not believe in their potential.

For answering the research subquestion the reasons for **being drop-outs are characterised below**.

Participants became drop-outs as a consequence of various life situations such as **sickness in the family** or their own sickness that stopped them from continuing with their studies. They were supposed to take care of sick family members or to secure the family financially. **The inadequate financial situation** was another reason for discontinuation of studies. Families of the participants were not able to secure educational fees. **Lack of finance was caused by the alcohol** addiction as well. Some of the participants could not finish their studies due to loss of parents. They had to start earning money to secure their life and as well as the life of their siblings. Not only the reasons related to finance cause discontinuation of their studies. Young women were also asked **to get married**. As I mentioned before, some of them fell in love and run away from the families with their boyfriends. As the result, education duties were not fulfilled. Lack of interest in studies was the last cause which was identified during the research.

Another answering of research subquestion is going to be presented below. *What was the motivation for joining JRS Life Skills Education Centre?*

**Various participants' motivations** for going to the JRS Life Skills Education Centre were identified. Discovered motivations can help JRS to understand the impulse for joining the JRS Life Skills Education Centre as well as the participants' background.

**Learning skills** was a very significant motivation for joining the JRS Life Skills Education Centre. Skills can be the source of livelihood not only for participants but for their families as well. Another reason for coming to the centre was **infatuation**. Young women were sent to the centre to avoid an unwanted marriage. The question is if this motivation meets the purpose of the project. Should this be a reason for coming? Aren't there different young women who are in bigger need of staying in the centre?

Some of the participants joined the JRS Life Skills Education centre **to seek a psychological support and to grow personally as well**. Some of the young Sri Lankan women suffer from an inferiority complex and they went through tough life situations which affected them. The article dedicated to refugee women in a journal called *Transitions* discussed the psychological problems faced by refugee women. These problems result from anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorders and psychosis (Yoldi, Basili, 2001, p. 20). The JRS centre is the place to get a psychological support and space for personal empowerment. Based on my stay in the JRS centre, I would suggest to focus more on the psychological issues of the participants. Some of them suffer from trauma and during some activities, the trauma could be opened in an unsuitable way. There is a need for regular meetings with a professional psychologist. Another thing which I suggest is to try to assess the life situation of participants at the beginning.

Some of the young Sri Lankan women are coming to the centre **to avoid the sexual violence** which they face at home. The JRS centre represents a safe place to stay and for some of them to fulfil the basic needs. Some of the trainees are coming to the centre to have a regular and highly nutritional food. The life situation of their families is so insufficient that they have only one meal per day that consists mostly of plain rice.

Some of the participants became abandoned **due to loss of parents**. Some of the participants' parents are **staying abroad** as well. Women are coming to learn skills to be able to take care of themselves. Some of them came to obtain the certificate that can ensure better job opportunities.

Another answering of research subquestion is going to be presented below. *The research subquestion was formulated: What are the jobs available for Sri Lankan refugee women? (Inside and outside the refugee camps)*

There are various jobs available for Sri Lankan refugee women inside and outside the refugee camps. Jobs inside the refugee camps are limited and mostly women go outside for work. Most of the work which is possible to perform inside the refugee camp is stitching related. Some of Sri Lankan women can work in small shops as a shopkeeper as well. Available **jobs outside** the refugee camps are much more diverse. There are various factors which influence the employment of Sri Lankan women. It depends on the location of the refugee camp. If the camp is situated close to the town, it is easier to find a job, depending on qualifications. If the camp is located in a rural area, Sri Lankan women work mostly in agriculture. A large number of women work in the textile industry as tailors or helpers taking care of cutting. Sri Lankan women also work as labour workers at the construction sites or shop-keepers in various shops. They mostly work at low-requirements jobs. Some of them work in areas of tourism as cleaners at hotels, helpers at kitchens or catering related positions. Computer related jobs are also available for women outside the refugee camps. They can find a job at Xerox companies. High-qualification jobs such as nurses are available for Sri Lankan women at hospitals.

As we compare the jobs opportunities and the setting of training, the most widely skill which is needed is stitching. With this skill, they are able to find a job inside and outside the refugee camp as well. Some of the jobs that were presented above are labour work related and for these types of jobs there is not a need for special training. Cooking is taught at JRS centre as well, but catering is a much more complicated matter. I suggest to add lessons related to catering as well. Computer lessons are provided in the JRS centre but the extension of working with photoshop programme is needed.

Another research subquestion was: *What is the perceived output from the respondents' point of view? (What has changed in the respondents' life after joining JRS Life Skills Education centre)*

The most significant output was the **self-confidence** which was built during the stay in JRS Life Skills Education Centre. Participants perceived the changes in various ways. Shyness has reduced, activism for participating at cultural events in the refugee camps has increased as well as the ability to speak confidently with other people. Based on the results, women are able or think that they are able to face the challenges in their lives with courage and **hope for better future**.

The self-confidence is the key element. Without the self-confidence, women would not be able to demand themselves and present the skills in front of employers. This particular output does meet the mission mentioned in the project proposal which is: to train the drop out girls to have self-reliance, self-confidence, self-image and to face challenges of life. The only concern I have is, if the self-confidence is sustainable after coming back to refugee camps.

Participants gained the **skills** in JRS Life Skills Education Centre such as stitching various types of clothes, beauty therapy, cooking and handicrafts and spoken English. The skills learnt at the centre can improve the economical status of the participants and their families. besides economic importance, it also has a practical significance because women can stitch the clothes for themselves and their families as well. Apart from economic profit, it has also a practical one. Sri Lankan women are also taught how to take care of the household and family.

The skills taught in JRS centre meet the perceived needs of the job market from the respondents' point of view as well as the aim of the project mentioned in JRS project proposal which is: To avail employment for youth and dropout students of 107 camps through increasing their tailoring and technical skills by providing vocational trainings.

**Emotional consciousness** has raised during the stay in JRS centre which is another perceived output of the project. Project participants are able to look at things from different perspectives. They started reflecting their lives and think about the situations they went through. As the result of difficult life situation they had negative emotions which have reduced after staying in JRS centre due to counselling.

Apart the emotional consciousness, women's **negative emotions have reduced** after staying at the JRS Life Skills Education centre. As I pointed out before, some of the young Sri Lankan women had to face various difficult life situations. Some of them were caused by the family members. The anger towards them has reduced after staying in JRS centre and women started reflecting more about the family situation.

I find it important to focus more on psychological counselling. Almost all of the participants have gone through difficult situations in their lives and it would certainly be beneficial. I suggest to find someone who is a psychologist by profession and has a professional approach and experience. Especially in this case, a female psychologist would fit better. At the beginning of the stay in JRS centre, all women should speak with the psychologist or to participate in activities that could discover the potential issues which they could work on during that six months.

A study dedicated to Mental health issues in Tamil refugees and displaced persons was published in Patient Education and Counselling discuss various mental issues which were identified based on interviews with Sri Lankan refugees. This study is concentrated only on the psychological aspect of the life situation of refugees and on both – men and women. Sri Lankan refugees suffer in general from these mental issues: anxiety, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), depression, fear of repatriation, lack of hope and barrier to work (De Vries, 2001, p. 21).

The **positive approach to education** has been built in the JRS centre as well. The desire for continuing studying was very evident among the participants. Some of them want to continue with their studies and to work on their personal development too.

When the desire for further studies is identified, I suggest to consult the options with the JRS field officer. Changes which the project participants or JRS staff identified should be systematically documented. For example the formator should meet the each of the students in person individually and discuss not only the changes but also the feelings. The only concern is, if the formator which is present in the centre is qualified for such meetings and discussion or if she is able to address the issues. If not, the training regarding dealing with traumatised people is needed or at least to be able to recognize and address the psychological issues.

*“Services should be provided by gender-sensitive staff that are trained on violence against women, gender equality, and women’s empowerment. Wherever possible, services should be provided by female professionals“* (Dionis, Timar, Domscheit-Berg, 2016)

Another input of the project identified during the research is **economical independence**. After staying in the JRS Life Skills Education Centre, women are more economical independent to take care of themselves and their families too. Economical independence enables them to face the challenges in their lives. The significant fact identified is the relation between the skills and the self-confidence. As I mentioned before, participants used to be very shy before the training, after training they believe in themselves and in their skills. If the self-confidence is not built up along with the skills, the effect is not so obvious.

**The position in refugee camp hierarchy** has changed after participating at the JRS centre. The social status has increased after joining the JRS centre and some of the participants became rolemodels for other young women and leaders during the various events in the refugee camps.

Another research subquestion to answer was: *What are the recommendations for enhancement of JRS Life Skills Education centre from respondents' point of view? (proposed changes in the project)*

This subquestion was answered by recommendations suggested by the respondents. The details and concrete examples are presented below.

The basic tailoring lessons should be followed by the **advanced level**. Respondents suggest focusing more on stitching different designs of blouses and dresses. Sri Lankan women would really appreciate knowing how to stitch **dresses for various cultural events** such as marriage ceremonies. The ability to stitch the clothes for these occasions can increase the financial sources. Respondents recommended devoting more time for **cutting practice** as well as embroidering since it is technically more difficult and time-consuming. One of the respondents suggested giving a sewing machine to each participant after finishing the training to support them at the beginning of their own business.

Another participants' recommendation is to focus more on **learning computer skills**. The current computer lessons should be advanced and more regular. Sri Lankan women can find a job in Xerox shops where orientation in the Photoshop programme is needed. Apart from the Photoshop Programme, participants should be able to manage the work with MS Office. Another recommendation shared by the participant is to add ten fingers typing which can help them to find a job in office.

In addition to these recommendations, respondents mentioned adding a different kind of training would be very useful. For example, basic **orientation in mobile services** should be taught in the JRS centre because some of the women can find jobs in mobile shops. **Handicraft** lessons should be extended as well. Cooking is already taught in the centre, but the catering training could be very useful. Respondents mentioned that with this training they could find a job easier. Some of the Sri Lankan refugee women work as nurses at hospitals. Respondents suggested to add lessons related to medicine for a better orientation for those would like to study nursing.

Another participants' recommendations are to **arrange the meetings** of former participants of JRS Life Skills Education regularly. To meet up, share the experience and maybe also start with some income-generating program. What is important to mention is the fact that as a group women are becoming more powerful in the refugee camps. Some of the participants of the projects would really appreciate a financial support at the beginning of their business from JRS. Very significant fact occurred during the research.

After staying six months in the JRS Life Skills Education Centre, young women are empowered and confident. Their perception of their life can completely change. But the question is what will happen after coming back to the refugee camps? Young women are going through resocialization process. They are empowered, more able to face the challenges in their lives. But the society in the refugee camp remains the same. Some of the participants describe the fact that after coming back to refugee camps women are discouraged again. So the question is what to do to make the changes sustainable? To make the changes in women's personality sustainable, there is a need for a regular meeting of former participants who belong to one group. The statement is based on sociologist George H. Mead in his book called *Mind, Self and Society*. This book deals with creating self as a component. The new identity which was obtained through the training can be sustainable only with a regular interaction within the group it was built up. As Mead mentioned: "*Selves can only exist in definite relation to other selves. The individual possesses a self only in relation to the selves of the other members of his social group.*" (Mead, 1934, p. 164). So as mentioned, JRS already organises a meeting of former students. But the key is not to meet just random former participants but those who belong to the same group (same batch).

Some of the respondents also mentioned the possibility of providing scholarships for those who completed a stay at JRS centre and are willing to continue with their studies. Tailoring could be a source of livelihood as a part time job and the way to earn money for studies. As was presented before, women are coming to the centre from poor families. They have a problem to cover the basic needs. The motivation for studies is not enough, the financial sources are needed as well.

Some of the respondents shared the need to motivate former students as well as the option to assist them with searching for a job. JRS field officers could facilitate a process of making the link between former students and employers.

During the research, some of the current respondents mentioned the problems they faced in JRS Life Skills Education Centre. There were personal conflicts between the participants and teachers at JRS centre. Respondents share that teachers separated students into groups based on the popularity. Those who were preferred by the teachers were taught in more details. Some topics were documented in the reports as taught but in reality, activities had not been finished. Teachers used to accompany participants during the yoga or meditation lessons to prevent injuries. By the end of the stay, no one accompanied them.

It is important to remember that this is a residential project type. Just the fact that all of the participants and teachers are staying for six months at one place is very demanding. The movement is limited within the complex where the centre is present. Teachers stay and sleep at the centre too. Apart from going out for shopping at the market or a few weeks holidays, they are still with participants. Teachers should have a separate place to stay, where they could relax as well. Staying with participants twenty-four hours per day is bound to result in various conflict of some kind. Teachers do not only teach but take care of the students too. I suggest providing teachers professional training to make them able to cope with and handle those situations. And maybe if it is possible to recruit a person who will be responsible for taking care of the participants in the centre to avoid the exhaustion of teachers.

I am fully aware that this research has not covered all the issues faced by the Sri Lankan refugee women in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, India. There can be various different reasons for becoming a drop-out as well as many other motivations for joining JRS Life Skills Education Centre than presented in this thesis. The perceived output of the project could be more diverse along with the recommendations with a bigger number of respondents. Another weakness of this research is definitely the language barrier because I could not speak with respondents directly. Despite this research having definite weaknesses, I hope that the main research question, along with research subquestions, was answered as I presented above in detail. I was dependent on JRS contacts and had many time restraints during the interviews because I could not visit refugee camps as a foreigner and chose the respondents by myself.

I believe the research produced some very interesting issues to be examined in a different study. I suggest focusing on living conditions for women in refugee camps as a separate topic for different research. Another recommendation is to create a quantitative study examining the job market in all districts where the refugee camps are located. Another study could be to interview participants a few months after coming back to refugee camps and examine what is happening in their lives.

The main purpose of this research was to make the JRS staff members aware of the situation of drop-out Sri Lankan women and understand the underlying elements of their lives to adjust the setting of JRS Life Skills Education Centre accordingly. The perceived output of the participants can help JRS to examine if the project reflects the purpose. And finally, the recommendations can be used by JRS for enhancing the setting of this project as well. The study can be used by others who are willing to learn more about the Sri

Lankan refugee women because currently, there is just one study dedicated purely to Sri Lankan refugee women written in English.

## **Conclusion**

This Masters thesis focuses on the Evaluation of the JRS Life Skills Education Centre in the context of the Life Situation of Sri Lankan refugee women. The qualitative approach was used in this thesis. The thesis is divided into three main parts: theoretical, methodological and analytical.

The theoretical part is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on Refugees in India, including subchapters dedicated to India International Obligations, UNHCR mandate in India, Status of Refugees in India, Categories of Refugees in India and Selected indicators of the quality of life of refugees in India. The second chapter deals with Sri Lankan refugees. The following subchapters are present there: Conflict in Sri Lanka, Influx and Admission of Sri Lankan refugees, Divisions of Sri Lankan refugees, Selected indicators of the quality of life of Sri Lankan refugees and Sri Lankan refugee women. The third chapter focuses on presenting the international catholic organisation Jesuit Refugee Service, concretely the activities of Jesuit Refugee Service South Asia.

The methodological part includes subchapters dedicated to defining the research question, a qualitative approach in research, method, technique and instruments of obtaining qualitative data, study participants, data processing method, ethnical issues in research, possible weaknesses of research and qualitative data analysis.

The analytical part is divided into three chapters. Two of them are dedicated to the research results and the last one to discussion and suggestions.

The aim of this thesis was to assess the life situation of Sri Lankan Refugee Women with the past or actual experience of the JRS Life Skills Education centre and to provide the perceived output of the project as well as recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' points of view. The aim of the thesis was fulfilled by assessing the life situation of Sri Lankan refugee women with the past or actual experience of the JRS Life Skills Education centre along with the perceived output of the project and recommendations for its enhancement from the respondents' point of view.

The thesis can be used for the Jesuit Refugee Service organisation for enhancing the project as well as information for those who are interested in Sri Lankan refugee issues.

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## List of respondents

<b>Respondent No.</b>	<b>Basic characteristic</b>
Respondent 1	Current Participant, drop-out due to unfavourable financial situation in family
Respondent 2	Current Participant, drop-out due to sickness in the family
Respondent 3	Current Participant, lack of finance in the family due to father's alcohol addiction
Respondent 4	Former Participant, tailor, drop-out due to alcohol addiction in the family
Respondent 5	Former Participant, Married, one child, housewife, came to learn skills
Respondent 6	Former Participant, Married, two children, tailor, came to learn skills
Respondent 7	Former Participant, married, one child, own bussiness – shop with clothes
Respondent 8	Former Participant, married, tailor
Respondent 9	Current Participant, drop-out due to unfavourable financial situation in family
Respondent 10	Current Participant, drop-out due to her sickness
Respondent 11	Current Participant, drop-out due to unfavourable financial situation caused by alcohol addiction of her father
Respondent 12	Current Participant, drop-out due to her sickness
Respondent 13	JRS management, working with JRS for many years, Sri Lankan refugee
Respondent 14	JRS Management, working with JRS for many years, Sri Lankan refugee
Respondent 15	Former Participant, single, Self-employed tailor
Respondent 16	JRS management, very familiar with Sri Lankan refugee topic
Respondent 17	Former Participant, single, self-employed tailor
Respondent 18	Current Participant, drop-out due to lack of interest for studies
Respondent 19	Current Participant, drop-out due to insufficient financial situation in family
Respondent 20	JRS management, working in the refugee camps directly
Respondent 21	Current Participant, drop-out due to insufficient financial situation caused by alcohol addiction of father