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Inclusive Urban Infrastructure

A COMMUNITY PROFILE OF LUNUPOKUNA

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The CMRD Community Profiles display information about a broad range of factors from a specific location. The baseline information helps in researching, planning and analyzing material for studies that are in progress or development. The community data and illustrations are from both primary and secondary sources. Authorship is usually collective, but the principal writers are named. The papers are generally available in the English language, with some in the Sinhala and Tamil languages.

Front cover photograph: *Railway line along with Lunupokuna settlment by M.M.Alikhan (2022)*

A Community Profile of Lunupokuna

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LOCATION AND PHYSICAL LAYOUT CHARACTERISTICS

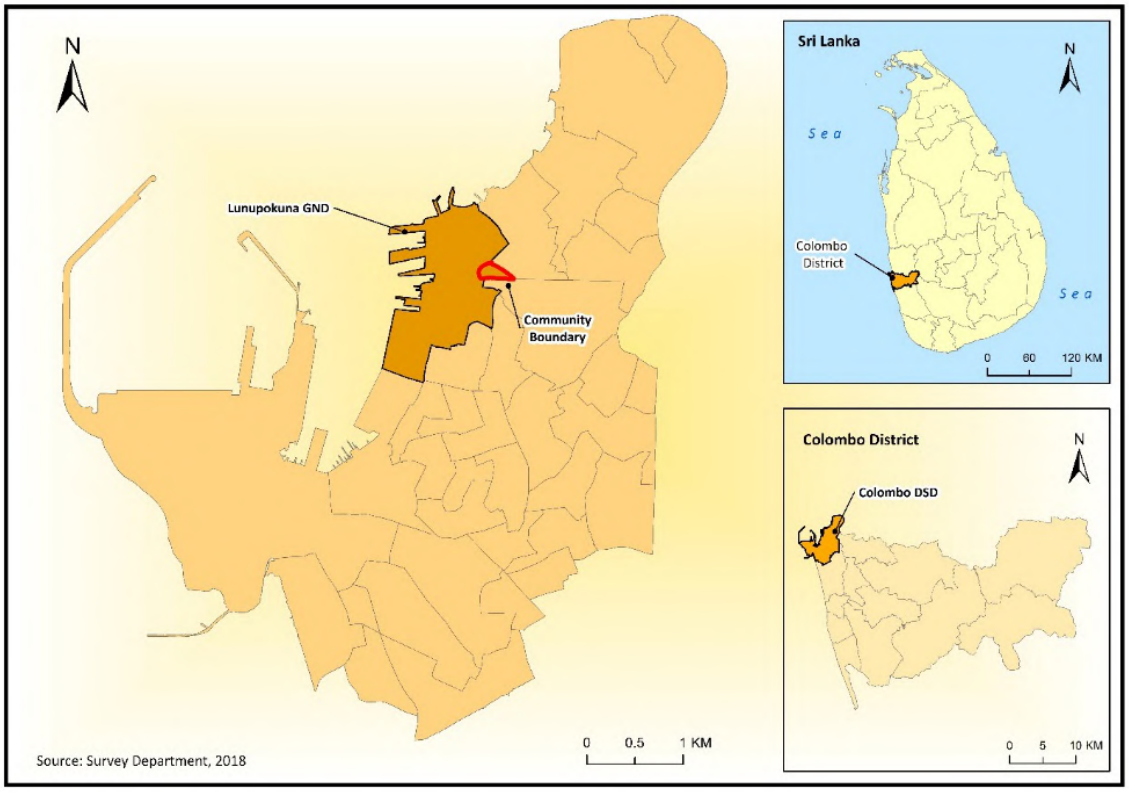

Figure 1 Lunupokuna GND Community Boundary

Lunupokuna is located at 6°57'24" North Latitude and 79°51'46" East Longitude. The Lunupokuna Grama Niladhari Division (GND) is an administrative sub-unit of the Colombo Divisional Secretariats Division (DSD) of the Colombo District, Sri Lanka (see figure 1 & 2). The community is known by several names such as Red Bana, Aluth Mawatha and Ibba Waththe. The following location map and google image indicates the Grama Niladhari Division of the community

Figure 2 Google Image Lunupokuna GND and Community Boundary

1.1 Physical Layout

The specific community studied in the research is in the Lunupokuna GND's northeastern area. The small settlement is triangular in shape. A canal flows through the northern section of the area, a main road runs along its western edge, and a rail track passes through the southern part of the settlement on its way to the harbour (see figure 3). The Colombo harbour owns around 50% of the land in the larger Lunupokuna GND

1.2 Housing Structure

There is no particular housing structure in the community. The type of housing and its design are influenced by the land's characteristics, density, and the resident's financial situation. Individuals reside in small houses that are constructed on no more than one or one-and-a-half perches of land. Although some homes have two floors, others have only one. These homes have a small living area, kitchen, and one or two rooms (often one room). Only a very small percentage of households have their own private toilets. Some houses have cement floors and temporary asbestos or tin roof shelters. Houses are packed closely together due to the lack of space and there is congestion, which makes it difficult for the occupants to get enough ventilation and light. The majority of the land parcels are owned by the government,

specifically the Municipal Council, the Railway Department, and the Port Authority. Some of the people possess 'T' cards (i.e., temporary ownership cards issued by a past government) as proof of their tenure on the lands.

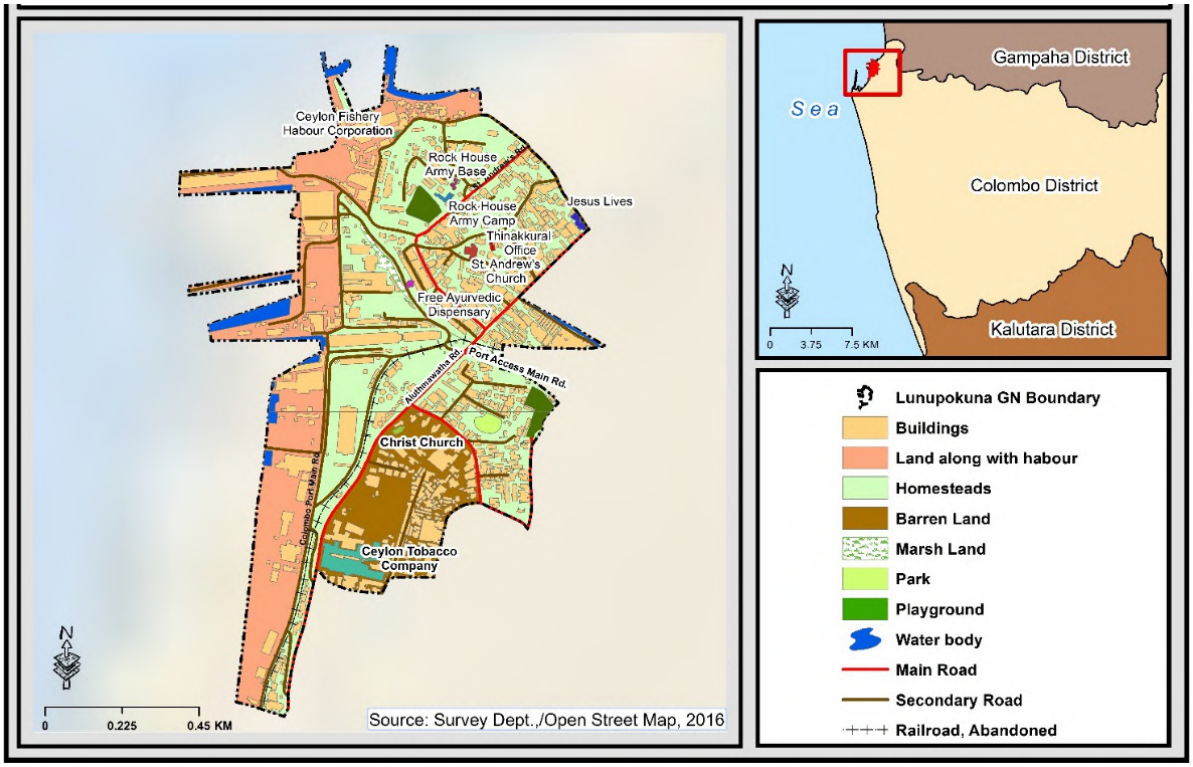

Figure 3 Lunupokuna GND

2

HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

2.1 Origin of the allottees

In the 1986s, residents of the community were relocated from the nearby squatter colony 328 Watte. The settlers received a loan of Rs. 20,000 to build their homes in the 1 and 1/2 perches of land. The loan was provided by the National Housing Development Authority (NHDA). People changed their wooden homes to brick homes after securing the loan. The residents of this community continue to make their loan payments to the NHDA – an amount of Rs. 500 or so every month. They also have Tax Deeds (Badu Oppu), and pay taxes to the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC). Encroachers had built a significant number of wooden houses across the neighbourhood, most of which were situated close to an abandoned railroad track and a canal.

3

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

3.1 Demographic profile

The overall population in the Lunupokuna community is 12,423 as per the 2012 population and housing census. The proportions of men and women are 51% and 49% respectively. Sri Lankan Tamils make up the majority of the population, with a 50.7% share. The Sinhalese comprise 41.8%, Sri Lankan Moors 4.0%, Indian Tamils 2.6% and other religions 1% make up the remainder. Young dependents (0-14 years) make up 21.4% of the population, while youth and adults (15-59 years) make up 67.8% and senior dependents (60 years and beyond) make up 10.8%. Around 42% of residents have completed their secondary school. Another 19.6% of

them received only a primary education, while 3.4% fall into the "no-schooling" category (all the statistics based on GND-Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2012).

4

SERVICE DELIVERY

4.1 Water

The primary source of water of the Lunupokuna community is the tap line with direct connections to the residents' premises (73%). This service is provided by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB). However, approximately 19.4% have tap lines outside the premises (public taps). People who live in wooden houses do not have a tap line within their premises. Therefore, they use common taps for their day-to-day routines. They do not face any water scarcity as sufficient amounts are available.

4.2 Sanitation: Toilet

Approximately 75% of houses have their own toilets. The remaining 25% of individuals use public bathrooms. Those with their own toilet facilities lack adequate drainage systems, and all of their effluent is discharged into the canal. In addition, the the drainage pipes for wastewater disposal are narrow, that only a small amount of wastewater is expelled. During rainy days, and especially during periods of intense rainfall, the drains quickly fills with runoff water. When there is persistent downpour, the waste runoff will enter the houses.

4.3 Hygienic conditions

Garbage disposal is another concern facing the neighbourhood. Since residents lack an adequate garbage disposal system, they dispose of their trash in the canal or in public spaces (see figure 4). The effects of this activity contribute to flooding during the rainy season. There are also environmental and health concerns associated with air

Figure 4 Discarded waste along an abandoned railroad

pollution and flooding. As a result, mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue are prevalent in the area.

4.4 Energy

According to the census data from 2012, electricity is the predominant source of lighting for the houses. 92.6% of the households use electricity from the national electricity grid, while 7.3% use kerosene lamps for illumination. Approximately 55.4% of houses use gas as their primary cooking fuel. Additionally, 40.3% use kerosene, and some houses utilize both gas and kerosene to reduce their gas consumption. Around 3% of families utilize firewood for cooking.

4.5 Transportation

The neighbourhood is in close proximity to major roads. The majority of the people depend on the public transportation, which is easily accessible to the residents. However, the roads are frequently in poor condition. Despite the fact that they are frequently reconstructed they are perpetually in a damaged state. Especially on rainy days, the roads are riddled with potholes filled with rainwater, posing a number of traffic difficulties.

4.6 Communication

The majority of the locals utilize prepaid mobile phone connections. Due to their lack of interest in paying bills, they have little interest in using landlines or post-paid connections. Smart phones are used to access their online education services (as it is essential, and they had no choice during the pandemic lockdown). Television watching and/or radio listening have become essential components of their daily routine.

5

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