

Lessons learned from the recovery after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Sri Lanka

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Large tsunami is a low-frequency event and its impact continues for a long time. Therefore, long-term monitoring of impact and recovery after the event is crucial. In order to understand the lessons learned from the previous large tsunamis, we review the damages and recoveries both short-term and long-term after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka had been devastated by the 2004 tsunami, causing loss of approximately 30,000 people along the coastal area. In terms of impact to the natural coast, severe erosion and sedimentation has occurred both onshore and offshore. The recovery processes both for nature and human society have started soon after the event and continues even now in some extent. In fact, coastal environments have been well recovered and it is not easy to find any damages due to the tsunami along the coast. The affected human society has also recovered well, which is good for daily lives of local people. On the other hand, it is rather difficult to keep human memories about this event. Although, tsunami memorial monuments had been built in several places, part of the written characters were weathered and had become unreadable now. Considering that Sri Lanka has been suffered many costal disasaters including, tsunami, cyclones and severe coastal erosion, understanding and predicting past and future coastal hazards, development of a monitoring system, and capacity building are the keys for future disaster mitigation.