

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS LEVEL, KNOWLEDGE ON EMERGENCY
RESPONSE AND VULNERABILITY TO DISASTERS BY SRI LANKAN
FEMALES**

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A dissertation submitted to the
Department of Management Studies
in the
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
of the
Open University of Sri Lanka
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration degree.

2009

68592

Abstract

Over thirty thousand people in Sri Lanka suffered death due to the tsunami disaster. The data relating to the impact of tsunami on Sri Lanka has revealed that a greater number of females than males have been reported dead or missing due to the said disaster. The fact that a higher number of female deaths were caused by tsunami disaster brought to the surface the issue that Sri Lankan females are more vulnerable to disasters than males. There is no evidence indicating that any research has been carried out focusing specifically on the disaster preparedness level, knowledge on emergency response, and skills and training in disaster mitigation and emergency response by Sri Lankan females in comparison to males.

The objective of this research was to find out whether the disaster preparedness level, knowledge on emergency response, and skills and training in disaster mitigation and emergency response relating to Sri Lankan females are low in comparison to the Sri Lankan males which influence their vulnerability to disasters.

Based on the theoretical framework and literature survey on disaster management and gendered vulnerability to disasters, three hypotheses were developed. Quantitative data as well as qualitative data relating to the independent variables were collated through a standardized research questionnaire carrying 35 questions. The questionnaire was distributed equally amongst a sample of 144 males and females residing in four administrative districts of Sri Lanka, and thereafter the hypotheses were tested through the application of the technique for testing the difference of two population proportions assuming a normal distribution. Further, qualitative data were collated through interviewing a cluster sample of Sri Lankans who have personally experienced the tsunami disaster in 2004.

The findings of this research support the supposition that disaster preparedness level, knowledge on emergency response, and skills and training in disaster mitigation and emergency response pertaining to Sri Lankan females are lower than Sri Lankan males.

In the conclusion of this research the researcher has recommended to agencies involved in disaster management in Sri Lanka to address the issue of higher vulnerability to disasters by Sri Lankan females when planning for disaster preparedness and mitigation.

