



A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON SCHOOL-BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN SRI LANKA

S.M.M.S. Afreen^{1*} and S.M.M.S. Himaya²

¹ Technology stream, KM/KM/ AI- Manar Central College, Maruthamunai

²Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

afreen0899@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the Planet has been subjected to the perils of rapid climate change. The term "disaster" was reinterpreted after sociologists reexamined mankind's interaction with the environment: In this view, a disaster is an unavoidable societal transition process. Natural and man-made disasters cause problems on societies, resulting in multiple casualties as well as environmental, social, and economical damages that are beyond the control of the community. Sri Lanka has a population of 18.7 million people and a land area of 65,000 square kilometers (Department of Census and Statistics, 2001). Droughts, floods, landslides, cyclones, and coastline erosion are the most common natural hazards that strike Sri Lanka (Tissera, 1997). Tsunamis are rare, yet they can be devastating. Recent research into the tectonics of the Indian Ocean region suggests that earthquakes are becoming more common. The 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka proved to be the one occurrence wherein thousands of people died due to their inability to defend themselves. As a result, the disaster acted as a major impetus for the government and its partners to find out how citizens could learn about what had happened as well as be safeguarded from future calamities. As the incidence of natural disasters and their destructive consequences rises, gaining information and applying it is viewed as the most effective technique for preventing them.

As educational institutions, schools are responsible for providing effective disaster management education, raising societal disaster management attention, and enhancing communities' disaster management capacities. Schools are responsible for not just educating disaster management skills, but also serving as evacuation shelters. The occurrence of disasters has a high level of unpredictability. If a calamity strikes during the school day, schools must consider the risks that students have access to and act immediately. Furthermore, schools will be able to implement an all-hazards management approach if they can develop a comprehensive strategy that incorporates actual environmental preparation, software planning, and disaster drills. Injuries, deaths, and damage to property can all be efficiently decreased, and school disaster preparedness can be improved as a result. From the premise of a whole-hazards management strategy, our study examined into schools' disaster management and disaster training duties.

- Assist administrators and employees in identifying risks, planning, and implementing physical security measures;
- Building skills and resources for disaster and emergency preparation, response, and rapid recovery;
- Assisting schools in building disaster and emergency plans that are relevant to their local needs and reflect best practices internationally and nationally.



2. METHODOLOGY

For this review, we obtained 104 papers from reputable journals and websites published between 2000 and 2021. PubMed, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Science Direct were among the databases used. The repeated pieces were removed. We excluded papers without empirical methods to disaster risk management (DRM) education with the focus group of children after a thorough reading process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 School disaster management

A continuous, adaptive management and reaction plan for dangerous events is referred to as disaster management. Based on the event's occurrence process, disaster management stages are split into mitigation, readiness, reaction, and recovery. Pre-disaster operations include mitigation, reducing risk, prevention, and preparedness. Pre-disaster actions are carried out during the response period, while recovery and reconstruction are carried out after the disaster (Wang et al., 2011). Each school must have a well-thought-out, community-based school safety strategy. A School Disaster Management Committee must be formed to carry out various preparedness and mitigation measures related to the response plan. SDMC must be operational at all times throughout the year. Using the all-hazards technique, schools can prepare and plan for an emergency in the same way, irrespective of the crisis event (Wang, 2016). Developing plans for ensuring people's safety and assessing disaster resilience are all part of school disaster management.

Its objectives are to:

- safeguard children and employees from harm
- reduce the impact of damage while ensuring that children keep receiving an education and
- cultivate and sustain a safety practices (Wang, 2016).

The school catastrophe management procedure (Ellena, 2010) is described as follows:

I. Plans and evaluations: Establish or improve school disaster management committees; identify risks, disasters, vulnerability, ability, and resources; and develop continuous education response plans and communication methods. The approval, dedication, and cooperation of the top levels of school leadership are required for the development of a comprehensive school-based emergency response plan; it must be done from the top down. Local government, experts, non-governmental organizations, and the surrounding area should all be included with the annual school action plan.

II. Physical and environmental safety: All actual catastrophe risks are minimized by structure safety maintenance, regional basic facilities, and environmental disaster risk reduction (DRR). Non-structural DRR is built and maintained by constructing and maintaining protective facilities and firefighting equipment.



III. Organizational and resilience development: To improve organizational and resilience abilities, establish and apply standard operating procedures (SOPs), responses and prevention measures, and training programs.

Practice, assessment, and advancement are the fourth and final steps in the process. On a regular basis, hold situational model trainings. Create assessment indicators for school disaster management utilizing exercises, testing, reflection, DRR updates, and preparedness plans. The development of school-related disaster management strategies will be aided by a scenario-driven, reality-based method to situational simulation drills.

3.2 Children's disaster education

Climate change is causing a catastrophe for more than 175 million children per year, despite the paucity of statistics on the amount of children affected by natural and man-made disasters all around world. According to experts and authorities, children are bodily, mentally, and cognitively reliant on parents for safety and protection against tragedies and disasters (Tuladhar et al. 2015). According to the outcomes of many studies, people seldom forget what they learn at an early age. As a result, beginning to understand catastrophe prevention and risk reduction strategies at an early age is quite advantageous (Muzenda-Mudavanhu et al., 2016). In recent decades, children's disaster education initiatives have been seen as a novel approach to disaster risk reduction. Many hypotheses have supported the effectiveness of these programs. Education can influence children's risk perceptions (National Research Council, 2011).

According to research conducted in countries such as Japan, there is a direct correlation between education, increased risk awareness, and pupils' risk mitigation activities. Encouraging children to understand the essence of prevention and preparedness could aid them bridge the gap between what they know and what they do (Faber, 2014). Today, disaster education should be addressed particularly as a method to develop kid resiliency and knowledge transfer in order to lessen the risk of disasters in their homes (Sawada, 2006).

The most important component of children's training is the disaster preparation phase. As a result, awareness of the importance of children's preparatory education is vital for families, schools, and medical personnel (Muzenda-Mudavanhu et al., 2016). In this way, identifying the suitable group is the first step in establishing disaster education for children.

Schools and families are the first to react in the case of a disaster for schoolchildren. Based on the circumstances and timing, families or school personnel may begin first aid and coordinate the emergency rescue of children to safe places and hospitals. As a result, children's education is entirely dependent on their families' and schools' efforts.

4. CONCLUSION

As per this study, schools are the best place to get comprehensive disaster management training and raise society disaster awareness. A school disaster management committee should be established in each school. It is worth emphasizing that a disaster risk management strategy will assist administrators in estimating the risk and implementing physical protection, as well as reducing injuries, deaths, and damage to property, and improving school resilience to



disasters. It is suggested that policy guidelines be developed to analyze disaster exercises and training programs be implemented to ensure that all of the students in the school are there. People who have been trained can better protect themselves and others. As a result, high quality educational programs for persons affected by catastrophes must be planned and designed. As a result, the effect of these programs must be evaluated in order to determine their strength and weakness.

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