

Mediator Intervention and Auto Regulation Treatment Methods for Children and Adolescents Affected by the Tsunami 2004 in Sri Lanka

*Dr. Samudra Senerath
Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education*

Epidemiological studies show that natural disasters can have widespread and devastating impact on health and national community stability even when only a few individuals are primarily affected. On December 26, 2004, Tsunami waves spawned by a magnitude of 9.0 earthquake hit Indian Ocean countries. This unprecedented natural disaster claimed more than 200,000 human lives in the developing countries. Sri Lanka suffered a heavy damage over more than 50 % of its coastal-belt region; tsunami took away over 40,000 lives, left nearly 1 million people homeless, and exposed millions of children and adults to traumatic events. Researchers investigate short-and long-term consequences, encounter heavy tolls on mental health of those who are affected. A significant increase of pervasive psychosocial problems, and effort in coping strategies were associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

However, in spite of the large volume of the psychosocial problems, new approach such as “mediator intervention” for psychological adjustment or well-being for children in Sri Lanka is negligible. This study was therefore, intended to contribute to narrow this wider gap by investigating the long-term psychosocial consequences and the facilitation of psychological adjustment or well-being for tsunami-affected children and adolescents. The present study implemented two types of interventions. (1) A mediator training program for counselors (MTPC) conducted by professionals in psychology for those who became mediator (counselors) for treatment towards affected children and adolescents (2) A mediator intervention for children (MIC) with holistic treatment approach. The MIC involved autoregulation methods: EMYK[®], (Relaxation Training with Elements of Yoga for Children) DANCEPRO-Biodanza[®] for children, painting therapy, an imagination of a safe place exercise, and client-centered counseling for affected children and adolescents.

To study the effect of the intervention, a quasi- experimental two groups pre-test and post-test control group study design was conducted. The subject which consisted of 80 children and adolescents affected by the tsunami were divided into two groups, i.e. experimental group (EG, n= 40) and control group (CG, n= 40). Pre-test and post-test were administered to both groups. The Childhood

Post-traumatic Stress Reaction Index (CPTS-RI), the Revised Children’s Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS), Child Coping Questionnaire (CCQ), self developed questionnaire for the educational, along with additional items designed to tap on important tsunami- related experiences, socio demographic data, and psychological well-being (Kurz-Skala-Stimmung/Aktivierung [mood, fearlessness, activation, and relaxation] [KUSTA]) scale were employed for the affected children. A one-group pre-test and post-test design was conducted, to evaluate the effect of the mediator (counselors) trainings. Data were collected by self developed knowledge based screening test from 20 counselors, with female (n=12) and male (n=8). All participants were from Matara District in Southern part of Sri Lanka.

The results revealed the degree of disaster exposure and subsequent psychosocial losses i.e., experience of property destruction, death, missing, and injuries of their close family members and friends contribute to the PTSD symptoms, prior intervention, children encountered mild-to severe PTSD symptoms. The intervention findings gave significant support that auto regulation treatment methods reduced the overall PTSD, anxiety, educational difficulties, and change the coping styles in EG in contrast to the CG. The EG children's mood, fearlessness, activation and relaxation revealed substantial improvement. Through the mediator training program, counselors' knowledge was significantly increased in comparison to the pre-test.

Functions of the Income Generating Programmes in the non-formal settings in Sri Lanka

*L.M. Kapila Bandara
Lecturer, Department of Humanities Education
Faculty of Education*

Background

Non-Formal Education (NFE) provides various learning opportunities for the empowerment of all the people within a community and aims to improve their quality of life. It is open to meet the specific needs of particular groups of children, youth, and adults in the community. It includes various kinds of educational activities such as agricultural extension, skill training, health, family planning and Income-Generating Programmes (IGP).

Various income-generating courses have been implemented within the NFE framework in different locations in Sri Lanka with the purpose of improving personal, professional and social life of the community. Main focus of this study was to examine the functions, strengths and weaknesses of the IGP.

Methodology

The database of the 2007 given by the Non Formal Education unit, Ministry of Education was used to identify the study sample. One educational zone was selected as the primary sample unit from the seven Educational zones of the Western province and four Community Learning Centres (CLCs) were selected as the operative sample unit from the above selected primary sample unit.

The data was obtained using questionnaires and interviews from the participants, instructors and project officers of the CLCs and observation was used as the data collecting tool to identify the basic facilities available in the CLCs.

Findings

CLCs do not function properly due to the negligence of relevant authorities and the expected outcomes cannot be achieved from the existing IGPs due to lack of coordination with the system and poor linkage with the other institutions.