



A study to assess the knowledge about disaster preparedness among inhabitants in a selected urban area, Bangalore, with a view to develop an information booklet

Ceeba Francis

Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

Background Disasters in modern times have transcended borders of nations and class and have a devastating impact in terms of human and material losses. As the recent tsunami demonstrated, disasters can take diverse regions unawares and wreak havoc on a hapless populace. Global initiatives for disaster preparedness and reduction should, therefore, be given the highest priority by the international community.

Keywords— Knowledge, Disaster, Disaster Preparedness, Community inhabitants, Information booklet

1. INTRODUCTION

Background Disasters in modern times have transcended borders of nations and class and have a devastating impact in terms of human and material losses. As the recent tsunami demonstrated, disasters can take diverse regions unawares and wreak havoc on a hapless populace. Global initiatives for disaster preparedness and reduction should, therefore, be given the highest priority by the international community.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study were

- To assess the knowledge on disaster preparedness among community inhabitants.
- To determine the association between knowledge on disaster preparedness and selected demographic variables.
- To develop an information booklet on disaster preparedness.

3. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- (a) Knowledge: Refers to awareness among people on facts related to the disaster, its nature, impact and measures taken by them to face it as assessed by self-administered questionnaire.
- (b) Inhabitants: People residing in the selected urban area, Bangalore
- (c) Disaster Preparedness: Refers to measures taken by people to face natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and manmade disasters like bomb blasts, fire accidents.

4. DELIMITATIONS

- Data collection is restricted to 4 weeks.
- The study is delimited to adults between 21 to 50 years of age in the selected urban community, Bangalore.

5. INCLUSION CRITERIA

- People willing to participate.
- Adults between 21 to 50 years of age.
- People present in the community at the time of the study.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- People who do not know to read and understand English and Kannada
- People who are not willing to participate in the study

7. ASSUMPTIONS

- It is assumed that community inhabitants have inadequate knowledge on disaster preparedness.
- It is assumed that knowledge on disaster preparedness is influenced by variables like age, sex, religion, marital status, education, occupation, family income per month, previous experience of disaster and type of family.

8. PROJECTED OUTCOME

This study will improve people's knowledge of disaster preparedness thereby preparing them to face any kind of disaster efficiently so that loss of property and life can be minimized.

9. METHODS

A survey approach was adopted for the present study and research design adopted was descriptive design. The study was conducted on 100 subjects in Mahalakshimpuram, Bangalore, from 03-09-2007 to 03-10-2007 after obtaining permission from the Medical Officer, Urban Family Welfare Center, Mahalakshimpuram. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

10. RESULTS

Among the 100 respondents, 32 per cent of them had inadequate knowledge, 53 percent of them had moderately adequate knowledge and only 15 percent of them had adequate knowledge on disaster preparedness. The range of knowledge score was between 0–40. The mean was 23.26 with a standard deviation of 8.9.

11. INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

The first assumption was that community inhabitants have inadequate knowledge on disaster preparedness. This assumption was supported as a majority of the respondents (85 percent) lacked adequate knowledge on disaster preparedness.

The second assumption was that knowledge of disaster preparedness is influenced by selected demographic variables. Statistically, a significant association was found between knowledge on disaster preparedness and variables like religion, education and type of family. Religion-wise, Muslims demonstrated a higher level of knowledge as compared to Hindus and Christians. Education wise, graduates and postgraduates demonstrated a higher level of knowledge as compared to others. Type of family wise, respondents living in nuclear families demonstrated better knowledge than respondents living in joint families. However, there was no association found between knowledge on disaster preparedness and variables like age, sex, marital status, occupation, family income/ month and previous experience of disaster.

11.1 Implications of the study Findings of the study

- **Nursing education:** Nurses should be pro-active to face disaster when it strikes. The nursing curriculum should incorporate a vast section on disaster preparedness. Disaster 49 training should be a part of the diploma and graduate nursing syllabus. Disaster nursing should emerge as a speciality. Nursing students should impart knowledge on disaster preparedness as a part of health education.
- **Community health nursing practice:** Community health nurses act as a catalyst for any change in the community. They play an important role in educating and preparing the community to be disaster prepared. The information booklet developed in the present study will serve to improve the people's knowledge of disaster preparedness. Mass education and disaster training programmes can be organized to make the community disaster preparedness.
- **Nursing Administration:** The nurse administrator should organize activities to train her subordinates and the people in the community to be disaster prepared.
- **Nursing Research:** Extensive research studies can be undertaken in different fields to quantify the magnitude of deficiency of knowledge on disaster preparedness and the needful can be done.

11.2 Limitations

1. Sampling being convenient technique was not a true representative of the study population
2. Only certain aspects of disasters and disaster preparedness were assessed.
3. There were many dropouts during the study.

11.3 Recommendations

The study can be replicated on a larger sample in a different community setting. Follow up study can be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the information booklet.

- A quasi-experimental study can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of a disaster training programme. A similar study can be done in schools, colleges and hospital personnel.
- A study can be undertaken to compare the knowledge between the urban and the rural populations. A similar study can be undertaken with different methodology.

12. REFERENCES

- [1] The government of India. Draft study on corporate involvement in disaster management 2005 [Cited 2006 Nov 10]; Available from URL: <http://www.wc.dr.gfdr.org/imgs/pdfs/draftstudyofcorporate>.
- [2] Rao DP. Disaster Management, Available from: URL: <http://www.director@nrsa.gov.in>
- [3] Disaster preparedness. Times Foundation India Times, Available from URL: <http://www.timesfoundationindiatimes.com>
- [4] Park K. Park's textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine. 18 ed. Jabalpur: M/s. Banarsidas Bhanot; 2006. P. 600-5
- [5] Sanders S, Bowie SL., Bowie YD. Lessons learned on forced relocation of older adults: the impact of Hurricane Andrew on health, mental health, and social support of public housing residents. Journal of Gerontological Social Work [Serial online] 2003 [Cited on 2006 Nov 10]; 40(4): [23-5]. Available from: URL: <http://search.epnet.com>
- [6] Menon VC, Kava S. Info changes disasters. Infochange India News and Features development News on Disasters in India [serial online] 2006 [Cited 2006 Nov 10]; [1-8]. Available from :URL: <http://www.infochangeindia.org/disastersibp.jsp>