

Exploring mental health services among “climate-victims” in a cyclone affected area of coastal Bangladesh

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Life..as we see it!



Background

- The Government of Bangladesh has identified the coastal zone as ***'vulnerable to adverse ecological processes'***
- German Watch 2015, CRI declared Bangladesh as the **6th** ranked country in long term climate risk
- Every year Bangladesh is afflicted by cyclone creates huge impact on physical & mental well being
- This mental health issues related to disaster is a neglected topic in Bangladesh

Objective

To explore the institutional initiatives and interventions in reducing post disaster mental health disorders in a cyclone affected village of coastal Bangladesh

Methods

Study Type

It was an exploratory study

Study Site

Koira Upazila, Satkhira, Khulna

Study Time

January 2015-June 2015

Study Participants

- Key informant from different stakeholders
- Affected people residing in the study area

Sampling procedure

Purposive Sampling was used to reach the key informants and affected population

Study Tool

- Mapping paper
- In depth Interview guideline
- Recorder

Findings

Government & NGO health facilities

Facility Type	Total (No.)	# capacity
No. of Upazila Health Complex	1	50
No. of Union Sub-Centres	1	0
No. of Union Health and Family Welfare Centres	4	0
No. of Rural/Urban/Thana Dispensaries	0	0
No. of Community Clinics	27	0
No of Trauma Centres	0	0
No. of MCWCs	0	0
No. of Chest Disease Clinics (TB clinics)	0	0
No. of Private Clinics/Facilities	1	5

of NGOs working-9 including BRAC, Grameen Bank, Rupantor, World Vision, Ahsania Mission, Proshika etc

Story of an empty land!

One health care provider described that they went to a remote place 15 days after the Aila. The tidal bore flooded everywhere and he saw an empty land with lots of mud where one person and his son sat silently. They did not answer any question; later he knew that this gentle man lost his wife and two of his daughter during the cyclone. They found one dead body of his daughter and did not find others. After that moment he became totally silent and spent all the time to the place where he had a house.



Experience of a school teacher

A girl was found in class 9 after 5/6 months of Aila with repeated fainting & abnormal behavior who was completely normal & among the toppers of her class. After a series of investigation a female teacher explored that She was a victim of sexual assault in the relief camp & she never told about her experiences before to anyone.

Quote by a health professional

There are a number of children here who are much traumatized. Some cannot remain standing, some have become uneasy, some have become restless and some have become stiff. There are some children who cannot hold a pen properly now. The image of waves and pain of losing family members have disturbed them psychologically.

One NGO worker experienced and shared

“After Aila, I found many children of Koira were playing grave-grave, burial-burial. They made dolls and buried them in clay made burials. Even some of them have made small trees & destroying them by false sound of wind remembering the disaster.”



Policy makers view explained by NGO worker

“Our NGO is closely linked to health ministry of government. Government high official said in a meeting what is mental health? What is psycho social initiative? What is PTSDs? What will I do with the crazy people after disaster? Where people cannot get food, lost their houses, cattle & resources, you people are talking about mental health!”

Vulnerable group in disaster



Women & extreme age group (e.g:children/geriatric population) are more vulnerable towards mental health issues & often been out casted due to several socio-cultural reasons.

Recommendations

- Counseling service: One-stop crisis center in each sub-district (upazilla)
- Need a full unit of psychosocial and mental health committee in national level and mental health policy should be a separate division under the Health Ministry.

Climate-resilient Bangladesh

- This study has tried to explore the gaps in health care services with a specific focus on **mental health** by analyzing the voices of the victims to deal with natural disasters-the **worst** impact of **climate change**
- To make a resilient & responsive health systems implementation of effective health programs are needed by integrating **climate resilience** issues

The message

- Provision of mental health policy in both disaster management & public health agenda is needed
- A separate comprehensive psychosocial and mental health policy for disaster management should be established and we need to ensure that the policy is implemented.

Thank you

Happy New Year 2017



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