

SS.ARTS.16

EXPLORING INJURY RELATED ISSUES OF FEMALE LANDMINE VICTIMS IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY OF THE KOKKUTHUDAIVAI DIVISION IN THE MULLATHIVU DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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In Sri Lanka, the conflict between the government and the Tamil guerrillas resulted in an unquantifiable number of landmines abandoned or deliberately left in the Northern and Eastern regions. One of the inevitable consequences of the strategic landmine implanting in the Northern and Eastern regions was that thousands of innocent civilians became victims of landmines. Given the war situation prevailing at the time, where males were absent from their houses, female members tended to engage in both livelihood and household matters. The main objective of this study is to analyze the gender wise distribution of landmine injuries in the study area (Kokkuthodaivai) during the period of 2005-2009. This study also aims to identify health related issues of the female landmine victims.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed for the study. Questionnaire surveys and semi- structured interviews were conducted to collect primary data and unpublished reports of NGOs were used to gather secondary data. The sample size was 50 and simple random sampling method was used. Data were analyzed using statistical procedures.

The study revealed that the majority of injured landmine victims were females (55%) and that injuries were sustained while engaging in day to day activities. In terms of age, the study found that respondents' age varied between 12 to 50 years and that the mean age was 31 years. The majority of landmine victims in this study represented the age group 31 to 45 years. The injuries were mainly located in the lower extremities with few reports of damage to the upper part of the body. It was also observed that 69% of individuals sustained eye injuries and 27 % of the sample suffered from hearing loss. When the age groups of male and female victims were compared, majority of female victims belonged to the age group of 31 to 45 years.

The study concludes that the proportion of female victimization in landmine explosions is higher than male due to higher exposure to outdoor day-to-day activities and this victimization has caused many health related issues among women.