

## **Abstract**

**Background:** Disasters increases the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence is a minimum standard of the health action in humanitarian response. Displacement of the population may come across with sexual and gender related issues at the camps where they get temporary shelters. In Sri Lanka the camp management is done by multidisciplinary team approach where multiple stakeholders lead by the government will be handling the camp management during disaster situations in which the Grama Niladhari is the grass root level government official.

**Objectives:** To assess the preparedness of Grama Niladharis of Ratnapura District in prevention and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence in camp settings during disasters.

**Research Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Ratnapura district including Grama Niladharis working in the Ratnapura district who has working experience of more than six months. 502 Grama Niladhari in all 17 divisional secretary areas of the Ratnapura district were included to achieve the required sample size. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics review committee of the National Hospital Sri Lanka.

**Results:** Number of participants were 455[response rate 90.63%] and the sample consisted of more females [50.1%]. Only 69.0% of the participants had received any training on camp management. Overall knowledge is satisfactory in majority [77.6%] of the participants in prevention and response to SGBV in disaster situations. More than 50% of the participants had favorable attitudes. More than 50% had been engaged in camp management during their working years and only 82.6% of them had disaster preparedness and response plan for their division.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Although majority of the participants had satisfactory knowledge and attitudes, a remarkable percentage of the participants were not satisfactory about certain important aspects. Training programs aiming to improve the knowledge will be helpful. Relevant authorities should take necessary action to make sure that all the GN division to have a disaster preparedness and response plan and to enhance the infrastructure facilities in pre-identified shelter sites.

**Key Words:** Grama Niladari, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Disaster Situations