

Trafficking, Stress and Its Effects on the Quality of Life of Women: Rehabilitation through Relaxation Techniques



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Abstract

The present study is based on secondary data aiming at identifying relationship between trafficking, stress and its effects on the quality of life of women and their rehabilitation through relaxation techniques. Human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry (behind illegal drugs and arms trafficking). It reportedly generates \$32 billion every year. Of that number, \$15.5 billion is made in industrialized countries. The International Labour Organization estimates that women and girls represent the largest share of forced labor victims with 11.4 million trafficked victims (55%) compared to 9.5 million (45%) men. Contributory factors of trafficking are: leaving a place of poverty to gain wealth, political conditions, war, social and Cultural practices, etc. Trafficking involves forcefulness and coercion. Person entangled in trafficking live in stressful situation that deteriorate quality of their life. Both stress and quality of life affect daily living conditions such as energy, fatigue, sleep rest, image & appearance, self-esteem, concentration, level of independence, social relationships, participation in and opportunities for recreation/ leisure, etc. Relaxations are the supportive therapy proposing a way through which one can reestablish a sense of well-being. It delivers a holistic healing effect in the daily routine, affecting body, mind and spirit.

Keywords: Trafficking, Stress, Quality of Life, Relaxation Techniques.

Introduction

Human trafficking is a heinous act where human beings are treated in an inhuman manner and it is the worst human, rights violation prevailing in human society. The phenomenon of trafficking has increased significantly over the past two-three decades both globally and in Asian countries.

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world, including the United States and other developed countries. It is estimated that human trafficking generated billions of dollars of profit per year, second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime, as the victims rarely come forward to seek help because of language barriers, fear of the traffickers, and/or fear of law enforcement. Though both the acts are illegal but the former is done with the aim of exploitation of a person and it may occur locally, nationally or internationally. However, people smuggling is the illegal movement of people across international borders in exchange for money and the person is free after the arrival.

Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to lure their victims and force them into labor or commercial sexual exploitation. They look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons, including psychological or emotional vulnerability, economic hardship, and lack of a social safety net, natural disasters, or political instability. The trauma caused by the traffickers can be so massive that many may not identify themselves as victims or ask for help, even in highly public settings.

People can be trafficked for many different forms of exploitation such as:

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1. Forced Prostitution
2. Forced Labor
3. Forced Begging
4. Forced Criminality
5. Domestic Servitude
6. Forced Marriage
7. Forced Organ, Removal.

According to some estimates, approximately 80% of trafficking involves sexual exploitation, and 19% involve the exploitation³ of other forms. According to the census here are approximately 20 to 30 million slaves in the world today. According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year, of which 80% are female and half are children.

Out of these trafficked people, victims of sex trade are most vulnerable and they usually enter this heinous crime syndicate around 14 years of age. Human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry (behind illegal drugs and arms trafficking). It reportedly generates a profit of \$32 billion every year. Of that number, \$15.5 billion is made in industrialized countries. The International Labour Organization estimates that women and girls represent the largest share of forced labor victims with 11.4 million trafficked victims (55%) compared to 9.5 million (45%) men.

As per the estimation of The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

1. 51% of identified victims of trafficking are women, 28% children and 21% men
2. 72% people exploited in the sex industry are women
3. 63% of identified traffickers were men and 37% women
4. 43% of victims are trafficked domestically within national borders

Contributory Factors

Leaving a Place of Poverty to Gain Wealth

Many victims want to get out of their situation so they risk everything to leave the place that sees them mired in poverty. This gives the human traffickers bait to lure victims to move to a different country.

Traffickers lie, promising jobs and stability in order to recruit their victims. Upon their arrival to another state or region, captors take control. Most often they are kept in places, from where they cannot make it back to their home.

Political Conditions

Political instability, militarism, generalized violence or civil unrest can result in an increase in trafficking as well. The destabilization and scattering of populations increase their vulnerability to unfair treatment and abuse via trafficking and forced labor.

War

Armed conflicts can lead to massive forced displacements of people. War creates large numbers of orphans and street children who are especially vulnerable to trafficking. Their families have either passed away or are fighting a war, complicating child-rearing.

Remarking An Analisation

Social and Cultural Practices

Many societies and cultures devalue abuse and exploit women and girls, creating perilous living conditions for these women. With little opportunities of upward mobility and with little value placed on women and girls, they are more vulnerable to human trafficking.

Effects of Human Trafficking

Whatever is the kind of trafficking, it involves forcefulness and coercion, and all the surveys related to human trafficking reveal that the majority of victims are women. Once the person is entangled in any kind of trafficking he/she live in stressful situation for a long time and thus, the quality of their life deteriorated. Failure of prevention of persons from trafficking is the administrative failure of states. As long as the Person is in the grip, of traffickers, help is not possible. It is possible only when the person has been disentangled from the grip of traffickers. However the scars of these tortures are so severe that they continue to hound one for a long time. As a result strong symptoms of stressfulness and deteriorated quality of life have been observed in the process of rehabilitation of rescued persons. Thus the rehabilitation process would not be complete, if the rescued person is not able to cope with the brunt of the dreadful memories of those days. It would therefore be worthwhile to explore the aspects of stress and quality of life.

Stress

Stress is a normal phenomenon in the routine life of every individual. Most of the time some amount of stress is good for the efficient functioning. When it goes beyond a certain limit, it casts adverse effect. The term stress has different meaning for researchers in different discipline. In the field of social science stress refers to a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the mismatch between situational demand and the ability of individual to meet those demands. It is more concerned about people's interaction with their environment and the resulting emotional disturbances. Prolonged exposure to the stressful situation leads to many kinds of psychological and physiological illness. Persons trapped in human trafficking face stressful situation for a long time. Entrapment in trafficking is a traumatic event for the victim resulting into the various after effects. Thus the persons rescued from the traffickers manifesting many kinds of abnormal symptoms should incorporate relaxation techniques in their life to allow them to find solace.

Some of the common symptoms as an after effect traumatic event are listed below.

Shock and Disbelief

Person may have a hard time accepting the reality of what happened.

Fear

Person may have apprehension that the same thing will happen again.

Sadness

A grief over the miss-happening of past

Helplessness

The sudden, unpredictable nature of traumatic event may leave person feeling vulnerable and helpless.

Guilt

An adverse feeling over the deeds, during the period of entrapment particularly in case of sexual harassment.

Anger

Person may be angry at God or others he/she feels are responsible.

Shame

Especially over feelings, or fears person can't control.

Relief

Person may feel relieved that the worst is over, and even hopeful that life will return to normal.

Besides the above emotional disturbances there is a marked reduction in the persons' perception related to quality of life. The term quality of life is described below:

Quality of Life (QOL)

At the time of evaluating the burden of a chronic illness it is important to study the quality of life of the individual. There are many factors corresponding to accelerate or delay the recuperating process, quality of life is one of them. It is an important indicator of health and well-being that determines the effectiveness of treatment plan decides the priority for the distribution of resources, and help in policy developments⁶.

Quality of life is concerned with the general well-being of persons as well as societies. It outlines the negative and d positive features of life and indicates life satisfaction including everything from physical health, family, education, employment, wealth, religious beliefs, finance and environment. Quality of life includes a wide range of contexts such as international development, healthcare, politics and employment.

In common terms, quality of life (QOL) is the perceived quality of persons' daily life, that is, an assessment of their well-being or lack thereof. The concept of quality of life involves emotional, social, and physical aspects of the life of individuals. In health care, health-related quality of life (HRQOL) is an assessment of how the individual's well-being may be affected over time by an illness or disorder (WHO, 2005).

Aims of the Study

1. To identifying relationship between trafficking and stress among women
2. To examine the effects of trafficking on quality of life of women
3. To identify the ways of healing the brunt of trafficking

Methodology

In the present study secondary data was used. The investigator reviewed various research papers related to human trafficking, stress, and quality of life. On the basis of findings of the reviewed articles following conclusions are drawn.

A research undertaken by author to examine the effect of relaxation exercise on mental wellbeing among 120 male and female undergraduate students of AMU, Aligarh on Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) in 2018, shows better

Mental Wellbeing of exercise group as compared to non-exercise group irrespective of gender differences.

Benson's Relaxation Response Technique

This technique was developed by Benson (1975). This is very easy to practice as the methods are very lucid and provide immense relief in the state of anxiety and physical exhaustion. The methods are as follows:

1. Find a quiet environment free of distractions. A private room-away from Telephones, street noise, and other interruptions.
2. Choose a word or a phrase-a mantra to focus on. Dr. Benson recommended the word 'ONE'; but you may prefer something else, like love' or 'peace'. Once you pick up your word, however, stick to it, says Dr. Benson. In time, then you will come to associate that word with the calming effects of the relaxation response.
3. Sit upright in a comfortable position, with your hands resting naturally in your lap.
4. Let your eyes close gently and take a few moments to relax muscles and quite your mind (sometimes few deep breaths help).
5. Now breathing normally, more aware of each breath working with the slow natural rhythm of your breathing, repeat your focus word or sound silently whenever you exhale.
6. Disregard distractions, they are not important; "a passive attitude appears to be the most essential factor in eliciting the relaxation response." Dr. Benson point out thoughts, imagery and feelings may drift into one's awareness. One should not concentrate on these perceptions but allow them to pass on."

Continue the exercise for 10 to 20 minutes, seek your judgment or break an occasional peak at a wristwatch to gage your time. Don't use a tier or alarm clock as the noise can be too disturbing. When your tie is up remain, quiet, with your eyes closed for a few minutes, to allow your thoughts to re-adjust to full wakefulness.

Results and Conclusion

Both stress and quality of life affect daily living activities which are summarized below:

Physical Health

It includes:

1. Energy and fatigue
2. Pain and discomfort
3. Sleep and rest

Psychological Aspects

It includes:

1. Image and appearance
2. Negative feelings
3. Self-esteem
4. Thinking
5. Learning
6. Memory
7. Concentration

Level of Independence: It includes:

1. Mobility Activities of daily living
2. Dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids
3. Work Capacity

Social Relationships

It includes:

1. Personal relationships
2. Social support
3. Sexual activity

Environment

It includes:

1. Financial Resources Freedom
2. Physical Safety and Security
3. Health and Social Care
4. Accessibility and Quality Home Environment
5. Opportunities for Acquiring new Information and Skills
6. Participation in and opportunities for recreation/leisure

Spirituality/Religion

It include Personal beliefs Religion /Spirituality

The after effects of traumatic event in the form of trafficking results into the feeling of stress and perception of deteriorated quality of life concerned with both mind and body. Mind is the center of all the experienced happenings of the human beings and it enters the interior world from the external world. This needs consciousness and awareness. Consequently, physical, mental and spiritual advancement is the best path for progress. This improves physical & mental health. Human body is an instrument, which is the basis of the activities of the soul and spiritualism. It is obligatory to utilize them for the cheerful future and high living. A vigorous mind lives in a healthy body therefore it is essential to keep the body fit for a healthy mind and exciting diverse accomplishments.

Relaxation is a technique that encompasses physical movement (rhythmic breathing and/or muscle tensing and relaxing in categorization, sitting in a specific position/environment) envisioned to cause reduction in perception of environmental stimuli, muscle tension, anxiety, stress and pain. Relaxation has been designated as a 'state of relative freedom from both anxiety and skeletal muscle tension, and as bringing 'the mind of the participant to a state of balance and peace. A more widespread view came from Sweeney (1978) who defines relaxation as 'a positively perceived state or response in which a person feels relief of tension or strain'. This comprises psychological aspects of the relaxation experience, such as the pleasant sensation and deficiency of stressful or uncomfortable thoughts¹⁰.

Relaxations are the supportive therapy proposing a way through which one can reestablish a sense of well-being. It delivers a holistic healing effect in the daily routine, affecting body, mind and spirit.

Relaxation and imagery are universally used to treat various side effects of sever disease and its treatment. Relaxation techniques comprise Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), Relaxation Response, Autogenic Training, Cue-Controlled Relaxation and Guided Imagery, Guided Somato-Psychic Relaxation (GSPR), Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Hypnosis, Biofeedback, Deep Rhythmic Breathing and so on. Any relaxation exercise can be used to get rid of the emotional disturbances caused by traumatic event. Benson's

relaxation response technique is one of the prominent relaxation techniques which are described below.

Conclusion

To conclude, any type of relaxation technique is a great and cheapest way to help with physical as well as psychological health problems like stress management, anxiety and depression due to a trauma such as trafficking and help victims to cope with this trauma and enable them to adjust their daily activity. It is neither about peace of mind nor enjoying a hobby. Rather it is a process that decreases the effects of stress on individuals mind and body and reduces feelings of anxiety, depression and any other negative effects. It also helps us manage our life and thus increase the quality of our life. Despite the massive brunt posed by the traumatic experience of trafficking, relaxation should be strived for. Therefore to facilitate more effective rehabilitation of victims, government and social media should take restorative and awareness measures and thereby aim at curbing the after effects of these hideous crimes. It would thus be imperative to run relaxation programmes to promote a better life for such people and reinvigorate their spirit.

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