

War-Affected Children and Psycho-social Rehabilitation

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The main purpose of this paper is to examine the inception, developments, functionalities and new trends of psycho-social rehabilitation in war-affected contexts. There is limited conformity among experts over the elements that need to be inherent to a psycho-social rehabilitation programme on war-affected children. Specially, there is a huge debate regarding the western medical rehabilitation approach in healing war-affected children worldwide. Therefore, in this paper, it is expected to explore the basic elements that need to be considered before applying any psycho-social rehabilitation methods of rehabilitating war-affected children. This paper provides a theoretical discussion regarding the relationship of war-affected children and psycho-social rehabilitation, and therefore, this paper is solely based on a literature review on the relevant subject. According to literature, the impact of war on children was mainly given attention after the Second World War. Initially, most researchers focus their attention on negative psychological effects and the 'risk factors' of war. Later, they found that all children are not affected equally and was not subjected to mental trauma in the same manner, but varied levels of other effects. The main cause for this has been identified as the differences in coping mechanism of each child and these mechanisms either depend on their personality traits or the social context. Therefore, in later years, the researches focused on identifying those mechanisms as 'protective factors' that prevail in war situations. However, the different viewpoints in research findings on 'war-affected children' enable to re-strategise psycho-social interventions.

As a result, three main components were identified as an important determinates when conducting a psycho-social rehabilitation process in the war context. First is the diagnosis of the impact of war on affected children, there can be varied levels of impact which needs different methods of rehabilitation. Second is analysis on 'social context', which refers to the immediate physical and social setting, including culture, religion, traditions, beliefs, people, structures and institutions. Third is the concept of 'healing', which refer to mental, social and spiritual restoration of an individual.

Finally, this study concludes that in order to heal war-affected children in a successful way, three main components should be taken into account. The first one is the level of war impact on children. The second one is the rehabilitation methods that are available and the third is resources (human and material) available to conduct the healing activities.

Keywords: *War-affected children, Psycho-social rehabilitation, Healing, Social context*