ABSTRACT

Flood disasters are a common phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Whilst state and private institutions are the primarily respondents in flood disasters, the participation of the Sri Lanka Army in flood disaster mitigation, management, and recovery has increased exponentially over the recent past. This study critically analyses the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Special Forces Regiment of Sri Lanka Army in flood hazard situations. In order to understand the involvement of the Special Forces in flood disasters and identify the key factors which contribute to the effectiveness of the Special Forces in these disasters a comprehensive review of literature was conducted. Based on the findings from the literature the conceptual framework of the study was developed. Conceptual framework consisted four independent variables i.e. physical and mental fitness training programmes, special training programmes, special equipment, and specialised skills and techniques, and one dependent variable i.e. Operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard. Four hypotheses were developed to test the conceptual framework, namely $H1_0$: physical and mental fitness programmes does not improve operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard, $H2_0$: Special training programmes does not improve operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard, $H3_0$: Special equipment does not improve operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard, and $H4_0$: Special skills and techniques does not improve operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard. The main data collection instrument used to collect the data to test the hypotheses of the study was a semi-structured self-administered questionnaire. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed using simple statistical methods, whilst content based analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data obtained from this instrument. Based on the findings from the study, the null hypotheses $H1_0$, $H2_0$, and $H4_0$ were rejected, whilst the null hypothesis $H3_0$ was not rejected. Given that rejection of the null hypotheses $H1_0$, $H2_0$, and $H4_0$ imply that physical and mental fitness training programmes, special training programmes, and specialised skills and techniques have a positive impact on operational readiness of Special Forces in flood hazard, this study recommended that SF increase investment in these areas.