

## Need for Legislating the Responsibilities of Stakeholders Engaged in Disaster Management in Sri Lanka

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W. M. S. B. Wanninayake<sup>1(\*)</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

(\*) E.mail: sisirawanninayake@gmail.com

During the previous few decades, the occurrence of disasters has seen an increase in Sri Lanka and globally. Loss of lives, economic and social damages were identified as major consequences of disasters. Pertaining to the number of affected people around the world, floods dominated followed by droughts, storms, extreme temperatures, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and wildfires. Within the period of 2006 and 2016, 7,174,663 people were affected, 264 died 18,685 houses were completely destroyed and 74,189 houses were partially damaged due to floods in Sri Lanka. Moreover, 112,231 people were affected and 206 people died while 1328 houses were completely destroyed and 6667 houses were partially damaged by landslides in Sri Lanka. The catastrophic tsunami event in 2004 caused the biggest ever reported damage by a natural disaster in the country. The research was conducted with the aim of identifying the performance of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders who engage in disaster management in Sri Lanka and to find issues and defects in operations. Empirical data were collected through discussions with relevant government officers. Descriptive method was used to analyze primary and secondary data. The results showed that a number of responsible agencies have not been performing their duties properly in respective stages of disaster management cycle because they have no mandated responsibilities specified by the law. Even the main body established under the provisions of Disaster Management Act, No.13 of 2005, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) has power only to coordinate the agencies, but no authority to have judiciary actions through Court of Justice against incidences which create disasters and violations. It was identified that particularly in district, divisional and village level, although the DMC, District Secretaries, Divisional Secretaries, Security Forces, Police and few more agencies had worked to manage the disasters. Some stakeholders who have responsibilities in managing disasters were not engaged properly. The author could identify that the absence of specified roles and responsibilities for stakeholders was responsible for this malfunction. In conclusion, powerful enactment of roles and responsibilities of stakeholder agencies with proper management mechanism should be established to reduce the possible disaster risk.

**Keywords:** Disaster management, legal provisions, mechanism, roles and responsibilities, stakeholders