

**A STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS AT MIHINTALE
DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT AREA IN THE NORTH CENTRAL DRY ZONE OF
SRI LANKA**

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World at present is affected by from various environmental hazards and disasters due to natural and human activities. Natural hazards have imaged from the natural system such as landslides, earthquakes, wind storms, tsunami, and droughts. Societal hazards are generated from the socioeconomic phenomena such as wars, crimes, and corruptions. The occurrence of natural hazards cannot be avoided because they are the natural and inevitable, but societal hazards can be controlled. Hazards are termed as disasters when they cause extensive destruction to property and human lives. After Tsunami in 2004, proper institutional framework was established under the Disaster Management Act No 13 in 2005 in Sri Lanka. However, it has observed that some people in the rural areas are affected by various kinds of environmental hazards. The objective of this study is to identify various hazards and give suggestions to minimize adverse impacts of them. Three Grama Niladari Divisions i.e. 578 Ruwangama, 579 Namal Wewa, 94 Mahakanadarawa South in Mihintale Divisional Secretariat area have been considered as the study area. Thirty households were selected randomly as the sample. A questionnaire, key person interviews, field observations were the main primary data collection methods. Secondary data was collected from relevant local institutions. SPSS and Ms Excel Software packages were used for data analysis. According to the results, droughts, floods, and cyclones are the major natural hazards in the area. Man-made hazards are more common in this area especially, elephants damaging human property and lives, and monkeys are destroying cultivations and properties. There is a trend of increasing societal hazards than natural hazards in the area due to various reasons. Poor socioeconomic conditions of the people in the area have led to creating more environmental hazards. Hence, a proper disaster management mechanism is needed for the area.

Keywords: disaster management, environmental hazards, societal hazard.