

LANDSLIDE AWARENESS OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LANDSLIDE - PRONE AREAS IN SRI LANKA - A CASE STUDY OF HEDUNUWEWA CENTRAL COLLEGE, KOTHTHMALE

Chinthani Senavirathna¹, Jayani Chethana²

Sri Lanka is a well-known country that frequently experiences landslide disasters. Landslide awareness among school students in landslide-prone areas in Sri Lanka is essential for their safety and preparedness. Landslide education is included in school education as a result of the project of “Teaching Disaster Risk Management in Sri Lanka’s School” as an initiative after the devastating tsunami in 2004. Even though students learnt about landslides in their curriculum, the research aim was to identify the awareness level of the students to act in a landslide disaster. Landslide awareness of school students was examined through seven areas; education and training, awareness programmes, safety and mock drills, hazard mapping and zoning, community engagement, information dissemination, and collaboration with government agencies. The Likert scale was used to assess the level of awareness in the aforementioned areas. A questionnaire was used to collect data from grade eleven students at the school. These students were chosen because they had completed more than half of their secondary education, and some students will leave school based on their Ordinary Level examination results before entering grade twelve. Descriptive analysis and Thematic analysis methods have been used in this study. The findings revealed that all students had received landslide education through the Geography and Science curriculum. However, this section is taught as part of the lesson, along with all of the disasters. Furthermore, the results show that students in the schools have not participated in awareness programmes, safety and mock drills, hazard mapping and zoning, community engagement, information dissemination, or collaboration with government agencies. Only 10% of students have more knowledge of landslides as a result of village-level programmes. The recommendation is to increase practical-based sessions in schools to increase students' awareness and ability to act in a landslide disaster situation.

Keywords: Landslide Awareness, School Students, Landslide Education, Landslide Prone Areas

¹ *Department of Indigenous Social Sciences, Faculty of Indigenous Social Sciences and Management Studies, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine. chinthani@gwu.ac.lk*

² *Department of Indigenous Social Sciences, Faculty of Indigenous Social Sciences and Management Studies, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine.*