DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC AWARENESS SYSTEM TO MITIGATE THE RISK DUE TO LANDSLIDES

N. I. PADMA KUMARA *, A. G. H. J. EDIRISINGHE AND U. R. RATNAYAKE

Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

Varies types of natural disasters are common in Sri Lanka and they occur frequently. The major types are landslides, floods and droughts. In recently past several large-scale disasters due to landslides and floods occurred in the wet zone of Sri Lanka. Rainfall is the main triggering factor for such disasters due to landslides and floods. Natural disasters cause social, economical and psychological impacts to community. Landslides though they occur in small areas can be more harmful as they may cause loss of lives due to its sudden occurrence. Landslide risk can be mitigated by minimizing the hazard and vulnerability. Public Awareness System is one of the helpful methods to minimize risk. The objective of this study is to prepare a proper guideline to use as a public awareness system in landslide risk prone areas based on field data collection.

The developed guideline focuses on the activities to observe and carryout during the three phases i.e. before the occurrence of the landslide, during the landslide and after the occurrence of landslide. Comprehensive disaster management plan giving due consideration to individual family units and community as whole is an essential part of public awareness system. In the first phase the Signs, which can indicate an initiation of a landslide is systematically observed and noted. During the second phase the activation of the landslide was identified and evacuation is carried out according to pre-planed system. The third phase deals with post-disaster management. The proposed flow of actions and information is shown in Figure 1.
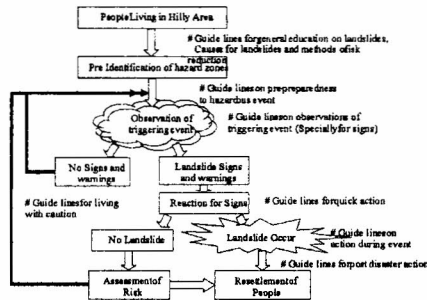

Figure 1: Schematic diagram for public awareness system

This public awareness system seeks community participation in minimizing the risk due to land sliding and there by reducing socioeconomic and psychological impacts.