

Landslides have become common natural disasters in Sri Lanka in terms of loss of lives and properties. The study of socio-cultural aspects of landslide-prone areas is important for assessment of risk at regional level. A study was conducted in Yatiyantota landslide area in Kegalle district with the objective to study the existing socioeconomic conditions of the communities, to ascertain their aims and aspirations, and to estimate the value of land and property in a landslide-prone area. Three categories of households (i) affected and yet to be rehabilitated/relocated (ii) not affected but living in high-risk areas, and (iii) relocated areas were interviewed using a structured questionnaire following a base map of the area. Dialogues with selected households and discussions with real estate traders and other relevant organizations were other research methods employed in the study.

Main reason for people to live in the area is its close proximity to main roads. Total value of land and properties are estimated at Rs 14 million. Labour force participation is about sixty six per cent. Male to female ratio is higher than the national average. Limitations in relocating the affected people to safe locations include inadequate employment opportunities and other essential services. People prefer to be within 5 km of the present location if they are relocated.

It observed that the continued concentration of people into this area and their activities have had a direct relationship in inducing landslide in the area. The cumulative effects of these losses broadly threatened the economic and social life of the people who reside in Yatiyantota landslide area and will continue to be severe if total numbers of households are not relocated.