

## ABSTRACT



Landslides are one of the common and frequent natural disasters in Sri Lanka. Over past several years from 2003, occurrence of landslides gradually increased causing extensive damage for lives and properties. School is an ideal setting for health promotion activities and can be used as the focal points for transferring knowledge on landslides to the community.

Therefore this study was aimed to describe the level of knowledge on landslides and its preparedness among Grade 12 students in Badulla Educational Division. A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among 660 students enrolled using cluster sampling technique with 97% response rate. Data collection was carried out using pretested self-administered questionnaire.

Majority of study participants was Sinhala (92.5%), Buddhists (92.2%) and representing Badulla divisional secretariat area (48.9%).

Level of knowledge on landslides and its preparedness, among students were assessed and associations between levels of knowledge with socio economic factors were assessed using chi-square test and statistical significance was tested at 95% confidence level.

The level of overall knowledge on landslides was satisfactory among 75.6% of students while 80.8% of students had satisfactory overall knowledge on landslide preparedness. Ninety eight percent of participants knew that landslide occurs due to both natural and manmade causes, 99% of participants knew that heavy rains is one of the triggering factors for landslides and 93.8% of participants identified, Grama Niladari as one of the responsible Government official to be informed, when warning signs of landslide appear.

The overall knowledge on landslides and its preparedness was significantly associated with ethnicity, level of education and profession of parents ( $P < 0.05$ ). There was no statistically significant association between employment status of parents, having participated for exhibition or workshop, having watched or listened to news on television or radio and having personal experience regarding landslides.

Even though the majority of Grade 12 students in Badulla Educational Division had satisfactory overall knowledge on landslides and its preparedness, knowledge gaps in areas such as landslide prone districts in Sri Lanka, manmade causes for landslides and people who need special attention during an emergency evacuation, was identified by this study. This gap could be filled by including more lessons on landslides and disaster

risk reduction activities in the school curriculum. In addition, guidelines for schools need to be introduced in order to enrich the importance of preparedness for landslides among school teachers and students. Other than the theoretical approach, it is required to organize the landslide simulation exercises on school environment to achieve better preparedness. All these measures may help students to act as messengers to communicate and educate their families about landslides and its preparedness.