

**DISASTER VULNERABILITY OF
RATNAPURA DISTRICT:
APPLICATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
SYSTEMS
FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

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DECLARATION

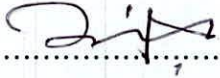
The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Prof CKM Deheragoda and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree.

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DECLARATION OF SUPERVISOR

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CONTENT

CONTENT	i
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER 01	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.2: RESEARCH PROBLEM	4
1.2.1: Vulnerability to Floods	4
1.2.2: Vulnerability to Landslides	6
1.2.3: Study Area	9
1.3: OBJECTIVES	10
1.4: METHODOLOGY	11
1.4.1: Secondary Data	12
1.4.2: Primary Data	15
1.5: DATA ANALYSIS	19
1.5.1: SINMAP model	20
1.5.2: Slope Stability Theory	21
1.5.3: Data processing	24
1.5.4: Processing of Digital Elevation Model (DEM) Data for the Elapatha DS Division	25
1.6: LANDSLIDE LOCATION THEME FOR THE ELAPATHA DSD	26
1.6.1: Creation of a Calibration Region Theme for the Elapatha DS Division .	29
1.6.2: Preparatory Grid Processing for the Elapatha DS Division	30
1.7: FLOOD FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY	32
1.8: GUMBEL'S METHOD	34
1.8.1: Gumble's Method for the Preparation of DEM and Flood Frequency pertaining to the Ratnapura Municipality	35

1.9: CALCULATION OF THE FLOOD RISK PERTAINING TO THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND ELAPATHA DS DIVISION	39
1.10: STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	40
CHAPTER 02	42
LITERATURE REVIEW	42
2.1: GIS BASED LANDSLIDE RESEARCH	42
2.2: GIS BASED RESEARCH ON FLOODS	50
2.3: GIS BASED LANDSLIDE RESEARCH IN SRI LANKA.....	55
2.4: GIS BASED FLOOD RESEARCH IN SRI LANKA.....	58
CHAPTER 03	60
3.1: GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA	60
3.1.1: Ratnapura Municipality	60
3.1.2: Elapatha Divisional Secretarial Division.....	64
3.2: GEOLOGY	66
3.3: SOILS	69
3.4: HYDROLOGICAL NETWORK IN THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY .	71
AREA	71
3.4.1: Hydrological Network in the Elapatha Ds Division Area	75
3.5. CLIMATE	76
3.5.1: Precipitation.....	76
3.5.2: Temperature.....	80
CHAPTER 04	82
4.1: POPULATION	82
4.1.1: Ratnapura Municipality	82
4.1.2: Elapatha DS Division.....	84
4.2: HOUSING CONDITIONS IN RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY	88
4.2.1: Houses Affected by Floods in the Ratnapura Municipality and Elapatha DSD.	89
4.3: INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES	95

4.3.1: Roads and Transport Services in the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DS Division	95
4.3.2: Water Supply in the Ratnapura Municipality & Elapatha DS Division..	96
4.4: LAND USE OF THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND THE ELAPATHA DS DIVISION	96
4.4.1: Ratnapura Municipality	96
4.4.2: Elapatha DS Division	100
4.5: EDUCATION.....	102
CHAPTER 05	103
5.1: DEFINITIONS OF FLOOD HAZARD AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	103
5.2: FLOOD ZONE ANALYSIS USING GIS IN THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY	105
5.3: ELAPATHA DS DIVISION	112
5.4: IMPACT OF FLOODS ON THE ROAD NETWORK OF THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY	113
5.5: IMPACT OF FLOODS ON THE ROAD NETWORK OF THE ELAPATHA DSD	116
5.6: FLOOD RISK ANALYSIS OF THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND THE ELAPATHA DSD	119
5.6.1: Flood Hazard Ranking in the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD.	119
5.6.2: Flood Vulnerability Ranking of the Ratnapura Municipality & the Elapatha DSD.	121
5.7: HAZARD MAPPING ON LANDSLIDES IN ELAPATHA DSD.....	125
5.7.1: Landslides in Elapatha DS Division.....	125
5.7.2: Application of the SINMAP Model for Landslide Mapping in the ElapathaDS Division	128
5.7.3: Stability Index Grid Theme in Elapatha DSD.....	128
5.7.4: Slope-Area Plot Chart of the Elapatha DSD.....	130

CHAPTER 06	134
POTENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND THE ELAPATHA DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT DIVISION.....	134
6.1: DISASTER MANAGEMENT	134
6.2: PREPAREDNESS PROCESS FOR THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY & THE ELAPATHA DS DIVISION.....	136
6.3: RESPONSE PROCESS APPLIED IN THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND ELAPATHA DS DIVISION.....	139
6.4: MITIGATION PROCESSES FOR THE STUDY AREA.....	141
6.5: RECOVERY PROCESSES FOR THE RATNAPURA MUNICIPALITY AND THE ELAPATHA DSD.....	146
 CHAPTER 07	 147
CONCLUSIONS	147
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	151
 REFERENCES	 xiii
APPENDIX	xxxviii

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Flood Vulnerability in the Ratnapura District	6
Table 1.2: Major Landslides Documented in the Ratnapura District	7
Table 1.3: Flood Levels from Ratnapura Gauge Stations (1983- 2003).....	13
Table 1.4: Distribution of the Household Sample by GND: Used for Administration of Questionnaire Survey Ratnapura Municipality.....	16
Table 1.5: Distribution of the Household Sample by GND: Used for Administration of Questionnaire Survey Elapatha Divisional Secretariat Division	17
Table 1.6: Organizations and Personals Participated in the Interviews.....	18
Table 1.7: Landslide Locations of the Elapatha DS Division.....	27
Table 1.8: Flood Levels from Ratnapura Gauge Station (1983- 2003)	33
Table 1.9: Floods Frequency Analysis of Ratnapura Municipality through Gumbel's Method.....	36
Table 1.10: Calculations based on Gumbel's Method for Estimating the Return Period of the floods in Ratnapura Municipality.....	38
Table 3.1: Grama Niladhari Divisions in the Ratnapura Municipality by Extent & Population	64
Table 3.2: Rock Types in the Elapatha DS Division	69
Table 3.3: Area of Main Catchments in the Ratnapura Municipality.....	72
Table 3.4: Basic Hydrological Profile – Upper Part of the Kalu Ganga Catchment	75
Table 3.5: Average Annual Precipitation (mm) - 1983 to 2007	78
Table 3.6: Average Annual Rainfall Intensity in the Upper Part of the Study Area_(1983 -2007).....	79
Table 3.7: Mean Annual Temperature in Ratnapura Municipality - Elapatha DS.....	81
Division	81
Table 4.1: Flood Affected Population in Ratnapura Municipality	83
Table 4.2: Flood Damage Faced by the Population of the Ratnapura Municipality & Elapatha DSD.....	84
Table 4.3: Occupation-wise Proportion of the Population of the Ratnapura Municipality & Elapatha DSD	85
Table 4.4: Number of Housing Units in Ratnapura Municipality (2006).....	89
Table 4.6: Housing by Number of Floors in the Study Area.....	90
Table 4.7: Housing Units Damaged in Ratnapura Municipality by the 2003 Flood Hazard	92

Table 4.8: Days of Inundation in High Hazard Area.....	93
Table 4.9: Distribution of Commercial Activities in the Ratnapura Town - 2008	94
Table 4.10: Distance between the Houses and the River.....	94
Table 4.11: Extent of Roads by the Authority Responsible for Maintenance	96
Table 4.12: Land Use in the Upper Parts of the Ratnapura Municipality and Flood Characteristics	97
Table 4.13: Land Coverage in Elapatha DS Division.....	101
Table 4.14: Conditions of Schools and Facilities in the Area.....	102
Table 5.1: Hazard Zones of the Ratnapura Municipality.....	106
Table 5.2: Flood Gauges for Different Return Periods.....	107
Table 5.3: Proneness to Flood Hazard Categorized by GN Divisions of the Ratnapura Municipality...	108
Table 5.4: Roads Heavily Affected by Floods in the Ratnapura Municipality.....	115
Table 5.5: Impact of Floods on Land Use in the High Hazard Area	116
Table 5.6: Land Use in High Hazard Zone of the Elapatha DSD.....	118
Table 5.7: Flood Risk in the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD	123
Table 5.8: Locations of Landslides in the Elapatha DSD.....	126
Table 5.9: Stability Class Definition	130
Table 5.10: Statistical Summary for Region 1 of the Elapatha DSD.....	130
Table 5.11: Summary of Statistics of the Area (in sq km) Found in Different Stability_Classes	131

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Map of the Study Area (Ratnapura Municipality and Elapatha DSD)	9
Figure 1.2a: Methodology of Data Collection in the Ratnapura Municipality and Elapatha DSD	11
Figure 1.2b: Stability Index Defined in the Area (Slope Space)	24
Figure 1.3: SINMAP Methodology for the Elapatha DS Division	25
Figure 1.4: Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the Elapatha DS Division.....	26
Figure 1.5: Locations of Landslides in Elapatha DS Division	28
Figure 1.6: Schematic Diagram of Slope Stability Model (SINMAP User Manual, 1998).....	29
Figure 1.7: Flow Direction Defined as Steepest Downward Slope on Planner Triangular_Facets on a Block Centered Grid.....	31
Figure: 1.8: Digital Elevation Model of the Ratnapura Municipality	35
Figure 1.9: Inundation Zones of the Ratnapura Municipality	37
Figure 3.1: Geographical Location of the Study Area: Municipality and Elapatha DSD.....	61
Figure 3.2: Digital Elevation Model of the Study Area.....	62
Figure 3.3: Grama Niladhari Divisions in the Study Area: Ratnapura Municipality.....	63
Figure 3.4: Grama Niladhari Divisions in the Study Area: Elapatha DS Division.....	65
Figure 3.5: Digital Elevation Model of the Study Area: Elapatha DS Division	66
Figure 3.6a: Geological Situation of the Ratnapura Municipality	67
Figure 3.6b: Geological Map of the Ratnapura Municipality.....	68
Figure 3.7a: Soil Types present in the Ratnapura Municipality	70
Figure 3.7b: Soil Types available in the Elapatha DS Division	70
Figure 3.8: Topographic Profile of the Kalu Ganga Basin NE > SW.....	71
Figure 3.9: Hydrological Network of the Kalu Ganga Basin	73
Figure 3.10: Stream Order of Upper Catchment in the Ratnapura Municipality.....	74
Figure 3.11: The Drainage Pattern in the Elapatha DSD.....	76
Figure 4.1: Total Population of the Ratnapura Municipality	82
Figure 4.2: Number of Housing Units in the Elapatha DS Division	88
Figure 4.3: Land Use in the Ratnapura Municipality	100
Figure 4.4: Land Use Pattern of the Elapatha DSD.....	101

Figure 5.1: Inundation Zones of the Ratnapura Municipality	106
Figure 5.2: Inundation Area by GN Divisions of the High Hazard Zones of the Ratnapura Municipality	109
Figure 5.3: Flood Depth and Height of the Locations in High Hazard Area	111
Figure 5.4: Inundation Zones in the Elapatha DSD.....	113
Figure 5.5: Road Network in the High Hazard Area	114
Figure 5.6: Land Use Patterns in the High Hazard Area	117
Figure 5.7: Land Use in the High Hazard Zone of the Elapatha DSD.....	118
Figure 5.8: Flood Hazard Ranking of the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD	120
Figure 5.9: Flood Vulnerability Ranking of the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD	122
Figure 5.10: Flood Risk Ranking of the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD	124
Figure 5.11: Types of Landslide in the Elapatha DS Division	126
Figure 5.12: Stability Index Map of the Elapatha DS Division.....	129
Figure 5.13: SA Plot and Statistical Summary for Region 1 of the Elapatha DSD	131
Figure 6.1: Disaster Management Process for the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DS Division	134
Figure 6.2: Sections of the Main Road Closed due to Flooding in the High Risk Area	138
Figure 6.3: Flood Plain in the Ratnapura Municipality Area	141
Figure 6.4: Distribution of the Buildings in Ratnapura Municipality.....	142
Figure 6.5: Disaster Management Plan for the Ratnapura Municipality	144

ABBREVIATIONS

- ADPC: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
- DEM: Digital Elevation Model
- DMC: Disaster Management Centre
- DSD: Divisional Secretariat Division
- DTM: Digital Terrain Model
- GIS: Geographical Information Systems
- GND: Grama Niladari Division
- GOSL: Government of Sri Lanka
- GPS: Global Position System
- ILWIS: Integrated Land and Water Information System
- LHMP: Landslide Hazard Mapping Project
- MC : Municipal Council
- MSL: Mean Sea Level
- NBRO: National Building Research Organization
- NPPD: National Physical Planning Development
- RMC: Ratnapura Municipal Council
- SINMAP: Stability Index Mapping
- SPSS: Software Package for the Social Sciences
- UDA: Urban Development Authority
- UNDRO: United Nations Disaster Relief Office

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**Disaster Vulnerability of the Ratnapura District:
Application of Geographical Information Systems for Disaster Management**

K.V.D. Edirisooriya Menike

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has 65,000 sq.km of land area with many areas prone to manmade and natural disasters. The last few decades has witnessed the occurrence of an increased number of natural disasters in Sri Lanka. Flash floods and landslides are the most common natural disaster in Sri Lanka and it contributes to 50 percent of the total disaster occurrences in the country that devastates lives and property year after year. The Ratnapura District is highly prone to natural disasters such as landslides, floods and strong winds. The vulnerability for landslides and floods is particularly very high in the areas such as Rathnapura Municipality, Elapatha, Palawela, Nivithigala, Kalawana, and Pelmadulla of the Ratnapura District.

The main objectives of the Study are to identify the disaster prone areas by their severity and to discover the real causes of disasters in the study area, with a view to developing a disaster management plan for the study area using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technology. The Ratnapura District is 3,275 square kilometers in land extent. Thus this study has been restricted to two areas namely; the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha Divisional Secretariat Division. These areas are heavily populated and highly vulnerable to floods and landslides when compared with the other areas of the District.

The Study is based on the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. Data was collected from published information sources, particularly on flood and landslide generation factors such as rainfall. The flood gauge levels required for the Study were

obtained from gauges used by the Survey Department, Meteorological Department and the Irrigation Department of Sri Lanka. Other secondary sources consist of relevant literature and digital maps (1:10000) of the Surveyor General's Department of Sri Lanka.

Primary data was collected through field surveys and interviews. Field observations were carried out to identify the drainage pattern of the Kalu Ganga, flood prone areas, land use patterns, and impacts of the disasters. Questionnaire survey was administered to ascertain the impact of floods such as; loss of lives, damage to property and houses, number of days of inundation and water levels etc. Random sampling method was used for selection of the sample for questionnaire survey and 10 percent units out of the flood and landslide affected populations were selected. ArcGIS 9.3, SINMAP, ILWIS technique and the statistical analysis software (SPSS 13.0) were used for digitizing, modeling, data analysis and interpretation. Hazard areas and risk areas were identified and classified in to high, medium and low hazard zones. Areas with a high risk of flood hazard are located towards the center of the Ratnapura Municipality. The Randola and Hangamuwa areas of the Elapatha DSD also had to face similar impacts from the floods. According to the findings of the SINMAP analysis, almost 13 percent of the land area of the Elapatha DSD is unstable and prone to landslide disasters.

It is envisioned that the hazard and stability index maps produced through this research will help planners and decision makers to take rational decisions on mitigation of negative impacts of floods and landslides in the Ratnapura Municipality and the Elapatha DSD.

Key Words: Vulnerability, GIS, SINMAP, Disaster, Floods, Landslides