

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the involvement of Sri Lankan armed forces in disaster management with greater emphasis on natural disasters. Invariably the military forces in a country has an inherent responsibility to assist civil authorities at civil disturbances caused by public unrest, general degradation of law and order and especially during disastrous events, given it natural or man made. The study attempts to comprehend the concepts of disaster management, the institutional arrangements in place to face the challenges of disaster risk management in Sri Lanka and looks in to natural hazards and vulnerabilities that prevail in the country.

Droughts and floods are the most significant natural hazard in Sri Lanka while landslide, tropical cyclones and lightning present considerable risk. The risk of volcanic activities and earthquakes are negligible but tsunami waves of December 2004 proved that improbable is not synonymous to impossible. Although Sri Lanka is a minor risk spot of natural disasters, lesser economic development of the nation amplifies the losses, merely on the lack of economic strength to prevent an efficient and effective disaster management and respond scheme. Other problems inherent in subsisting institutional structure that faces the challenges of post disaster management is lack of preparedness in contingencies, resources deficiency and co-ordination delays.

Few sample analysis on how the country has handled recent disasters especially in mega floods occurred in 2003 and the tsunami are used to stress upon the institutional intricacies and capability of military forces in disaster management. Finally the study concludes with a proposal to enhance the performances of the Sri Lankan armed forces in disaster preparedness and response.