

Community Vulnerability to Landslides in Bangladesh

ABSTRACT. This study develops an understanding of the root-causes of community vulnerability to landslides in the CHD. To begin, two distinct groups of communities were identified, namely the urbanized hill communities and the indigenous hill communities. Seven urbanized and four indigenous communities were selected and compared by developing and applying mixed methods. Quantitative information from household-level questionnaires was associated with qualitative maps and diagrams from participatory rural appraisal surveys.

The urbanized hill communities were found to be highly vulnerable to landslides, as they are attracted by city pull factors, deprived of social justice and involved in indiscriminate hill cutting for developing settlements. They fail to incorporate indigenous knowledge and are culturally less aware of how to deal with hazard extremes in the hilly environment. In contrast, the indigenous communities have a distinctive history and culture, inherited lifestyle, customs, beliefs and values, traditional housing pattern, land tenure and ownership, administrative system, and agricultural practice as a major livelihood. These unique characteristics are facilitating the indigenous communities to address the different dimensions of community vulnerability to landslides.

