

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION
FINAL EXAMINATION – NOVEMBER 2016
MCP2609 – DISASTER MANAGEMENT
DURATION: 03 HOURS**



Date: 26 November 2016

Time: 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

No. of Questions: 05

No. of Pages: 04

Instructions:

The paper contains two parts; Part I & Part II

Question number 1 in Part I is compulsory, Answer any three (3) questions from part II. All together answer 4 questions. Please note that illegible hand writing will result in loss of marks.

Part 1

01. Read the following passage and answer all questions.

Floods and rape of land reservations

Floods are one of the most common hazards in Sri Lanka. However all floods are not alike. Riverine floods develop slowly. Sometimes over a period of days. Flash floods can develop quickly. Sometimes in a just a few minutes without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries a deadly cargo of rocks, mud and other debris and can sweep away most of things in its path.

Overland flooding occurs outside a defined river or stream. Such as when a levee is breached, but still can be destructive.

Flooding can also occur from a dam break producing effects similar to flash floods. The recent rains caused floods in various parts of Colombo. The flooding of roads, business premises, houses and schools disrupted people's lives to various degrees. While some suffered little discomfort others were flooded out of their homes to become refugees.

Unauthorized buildings blamed

The authorities placed the blame on 'unauthorized' buildings which they claimed was the chief cause of flooding as they obstructed the proper drainage of water-a charge that is open to contest. They have overlooked the fact that the poor condition of roads and drains affects the efficient removal of surface water.

With regard to Rajagiriya and Pitakotte, these areas carry a network of canals that are also connected to the Parliament Lake. During the recent deluge slum dwellings built on the bunds of most of these canals and even beyond were flooded out.

Habarala factor

The real reason for floods during rains is the canals being choked with habarala (water hyacinth) overflowing there. The blockages also result in the formation of reservoirs of dirty, stagnant water, posing serious health threats to the people living in the area. But, the authorities have failed to tackle the problem. The removal of habarala from the canals appears to depend on the areas through which the canals 'flow'. Generally clearing of blocked canals are seen in more affluent areas –not the poorer areas this results in only certain parts of the canal being cleared serving no purpose because it does not facilitate the smooth flow of water.

What officials do and don't do

Unauthorized structures cannot be fully blamed for floods in the city. While accepting the reality that some unauthorized structures at times obstruct drainage systems, even authorized structures can be equally blamed now. With regard to unauthorized structures the question is: why did the authorities sleep while these unauthorized structures were being erected? Undoubtedly the major causes of flooding are blocked waterways and canals, street drains, construction of buildings on hitherto fallow land and uncontrolled and unofficial land fillings. The poor management of natural water retention areas is another concern. Consequently the authorities should take the responsibility for floods in the Colombo City and its suburbs.

However, while the authorities concerned have failed to arrest or minimize floods there are reports that a house holder found guilty of having a couple of tins and other utensils in his garden has been fined Rs 35,000 in courts. It is said to be part of strategy targeting the public to tackle the spread of dengue.

Land grabs

Another factor which aggravates flooding is the filling of marshy land. Whether land-fills are the results of proper planning or are the results of ad hoc decisions of politicians is not known. However, what takes place with land filling agendas point the finger at the latter. For example, a section of marshy land has been converted to a so-called 'playing field' by filling. Land adjacent to it is also a reservation that has also been partially filled. Against this catastrophe, certain areas of marsh are seen identified as 'reservations' where hopefully no interference of any sort is contemplated in the future. But such reservations are limited in comparison to the collective extents of landfills. And the future of such reservations is unpredictable.

Answers – where are they?

If the general public has identified the common reasons for floods the relevant authorities must have identified them as well. If so, what short-term measures are in place to correct the position? Are there long-term solutions as well? Most importantly what measures are being taken to arrest the blatant misuse of state owned land reservations?

Extracted by Daily Mirror

- (i) What type of disaster situation is discussed in the paragraph?
(3 marks)
- (ii) Identify major reasons for floods in Sri Lanka.
(3 marks)
- (iii) What are the human induced activities for flood occurrence?
(4 marks)
- (iv) Identify vulnerable elements.
(4 marks)
- (v) What are the direct and indirect impacts of floods?
(6 marks)
- (vi) Identify stakeholders those who have responsibility to avoid such a disastrous situation.
(6 marks)
- (vii) What is the author's conclusion in relation to overcome the situation.
(6 marks)
- (viii) As a disaster manager, identify short term and long term activities and responsibilities to overcome the flood in Colombo City.
(8 marks)

Total (40 marks)

Part II

02. I. Distinguish the terms given below with two examples each.

- (a) Hazard & Disaster
- (b) Preparedness & Mitigation
- (c) Accident & Calamity
- (d) Relief & Recovery

(8 marks)

II. Explain the different stages of disaster management cycle with examples.

(12 marks)

03. I. Explain the importance of Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA) in the disaster planning process.

(10 marks)

II Discuss the three stages which are important in the prediction process in early warning.

(10 marks)

04. I. Explain what is the significance of Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and its key functions

(8 marks)

II. Identify major functions of an Incident Command System and discuss the applicability of ICS in Sri Lankan Context.

(12 marks)

05. I. Discuss the factors to be considered while planning the rebuilding works after a major disaster, due to flood in Sri Lanka.

(10 marks)

II. Distinguish the terms ``weather`` and ``climate`` and discuss what kind of adaptation measures are required to combat climate change impacts in Sri Lanka.

(10 marks)

All copyright reserved