

ABSTRACT

Landslides are among the most widespread geological hazards that threaten human lives worldwide, most especially on the mountainous regions of the world. On 1 March 2010, a devastating debris flow occurred in Nametsi village, Bukalasi Sub County, Bududa district in Eastern Uganda. The landslide event caused significant damage to farmland, crops, and livestock; claimed over 400 human lives and displaced an estimated 5,000 people. The high death toll and damage suffered by households from this landslide suggested high level vulnerability, absence of resilience and coping mechanisms. This study focuses on the assessment of household landslide hazard vulnerabilities and vulnerable elements in Bududa. It addresses the household awareness of landslide hazards, landslide early warning, mitigation, resilience and coping strategies that have been employed by households in the area over time. This was a qualitative study with a cross sectional approach. It was found out that in Bududa, children were the most vulnerable to landslide hazards followed by the elderly persons. Lack of awareness of landslide hazards, location of their homes on steep slopes and inability to run away quickly from the threat contributed to their vulnerability although most households in Bududa have places for evacuation in case of landslide occurrence. Meanwhile it was established that most people were able to cope with landslide hazards through prayers to God, the presence of many families around, talking to friends, support from nongovernment organizations and government. Assistance from relatives, use of personal savings and migration to other areas within relieved the impact. However it has been suggested that vulnerabilities in the area could be reduced through afforestation, proper siting of houses, restricting settlement and agricultural activities such as cultivation and grazing on the danger prone areas. Community participation in the management of natural resources, public awareness campaigns and outreach programmes are recommended. The relocation of settlements programme that was fronted by the government requires further investigation to be carried out especially in terms of willingness to relocate to safer places. Also more work needs to be done in the area to change production systems, improving household income levels, landslide hazard mapping, assessment, development of predictive models, early warning and slope monitoring mechanisms.