

Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, and Preparedness to Natural Disasters of Schools in Southern Leyte, Philippines

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Abstract : Natural disasters have increased in frequency and severity in the Philippines over the years resulting to detrimental impacts in school properties and lives of learners. The topography of the Province of Southern Leyte is a hotspot for inevitable natural disaster-causing hazards that could affect schools, cripple the educational system and cause environmental, cultural and social detrimental impacts making Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) an indispensable platform to keep learners safe, secure and resilient. This study determined the schools' vulnerability and risk assessment to earthquake, landslide, flood, storm surge and tsunami hazards, and its relationship to status in disaster preparedness. Descriptive-correlational research design was used where the respondents were School DRRM Coordinators/School Administrators and Municipal DRRM Officers. It was found that schools' vulnerability and risk were high in landslide, medium in earthquake, and low in flood, storm surge and tsunami. Though schools were moderately prepared in disasters across all hazards, they were less accomplished in group organization and property security. Less planning preparation and less implementation of DRRM measures were observed in schools highly at risk of earthquake and landslide. Also, schools vulnerable to landslide and flood have very high property security. Topography and location greatly contributed to schools' vulnerability to hazards, thus, a school-based disaster preparedness plan is hoped to help ensure that hazard-exposed schools can build a culture of safety, disaster resiliency and education continuity.

Keywords : disaster risk reduction and management, earthquake, flood, landslide, storm surge, tsunami

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