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LIVING WITH DISASTERS; A STUDY OF HOUSING IN AREAS PRONE TO RIVERINE FLOODS



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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
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M.Sc. (Architecture)

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University of Moratuwa

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ABSTRACT

Natural disasters occur every day and everywhere in the world; Man inhabiting these areas, often face the loss of lives and settlements, and damage to the property. He loses means of livelihood and encounters great hardships. However when immediate risk of danger is over, and the period of tragic misery has passed, he returns to his natural habitat and continues to live in the same environment, starting life all over again from the beginning. Floods, in Sri Lanka, regarding, which this study concentrates, are a seasonal disaster, which people have learned to live with, in spite of the damage to life and settlements. The main objective of this study therefore, is to discuss guidelines which can help minimize the damage to buildings, by planning and designing and by use of suitable building material. The indigenous methods so far used in building construction have been obtained through a study of literature, as well as by a field study conducted in flood prone areas of Ratnapura and Ruwanwella in Sri Lanka. It is evident that much of the damage to life and buildings is due to the lack of a scientific knowledge of the methods so far used. Therefore, the recommendations presented in this study will help to minimize to a great extent, the damage caused by floods, today and enable people to minimize to some extent the after effects of this seasonal disaster.

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