

Vulnerability

What is vulnerability?

Vulnerability may be defined as “The extent to which a community, structure, services or geographic area is likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impact of particular hazard, on account of their nature, construction and proximity to hazardous terrains or a disaster prone area.”

Poor design and construction of buildings,

Inadequate protection of assets,

Lack of public information and awareness,

limited official recognition of risks and preparedness measures, and

disregard for wise environmental management.

Vulnerabilities can be categorized into physical and social, economic, environment vulnerability.

Physical Vulnerability: It includes damaged or destroyed by natural hazard such as earthquakes or floods. It is based on the physical condition of people and elements at risk, such as buildings, infrastructure etc.; and their proximity, location and nature of the hazard. It also relates to the technical capability of building and structures to resist the forces acting upon them during a hazard event.

Economic vulnerability: the potential impacts of hazards on economic assets and processes (i.e. business interruption, secondary effects such as increased poverty and job loss) Vulnerability of different economic sectors,

Social vulnerability: the potential impacts of events on groups such as the poor, single parent households, pregnant or lactating women, the handicapped, children, and elderly; consider public awareness of risk, ability of groups to self-cope with catastrophes, and status of institutional structures designed to help them cope.

Environmental vulnerability: the potential impacts of events on the environment. Natural resource depletion and resource degradation are key aspects of environmental vulnerability. Example: Wetlands, such as the Caroni Swamp, are sensitive to increasing salinity from sea water, and pollution from storm water runoff containing agricultural chemicals, eroded soils, etc.

