

ABSTRACT

An Assessment of the Impact of Surface Flooding, and the Response of Residents of Different Socio-Economic Status in the Kingston Metropolitan Region

Delando Roy Lewis

Man's search for favourable settlement sites often leads to the choice of potentially hazardous locations. Such sites include mountain slopes, riverine and flood plain locations. Naughton (1976) noted that the risk of flooding in the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) was primarily limited to the major rivers that form its boundaries or the gullies and depressions of the surface of the alluvial plain on which the city is built. Another influential factor is the flat nature of the existing topography at some localities within the KMA and the dormitory area of Portmore combined with man-made drainage and its related inadequacies of design and maintenance. The occurrence of flooding leads to recurring damage which requires yearly expenditure to correct. Such expenditure derails developmental progress.

The focus of this study was two-fold. Flooding like other natural hazards have a differential impact on different socio-economically divergent communities in urban Jamaica. Secondly, the factors

which led to mitigation adoption were investigated.

It was found that experience and the frequency of disaster exposure were more important factors in mitigation adoption than socio-economic status. Furthermore, the human use system was seen as an essential contributing factor to the damage potential. The poor were, therefore, more prone to disasters with losses to this group, though of less absolute value being more disruptive to life support systems.