

04

Contemporary Issues

Introduction

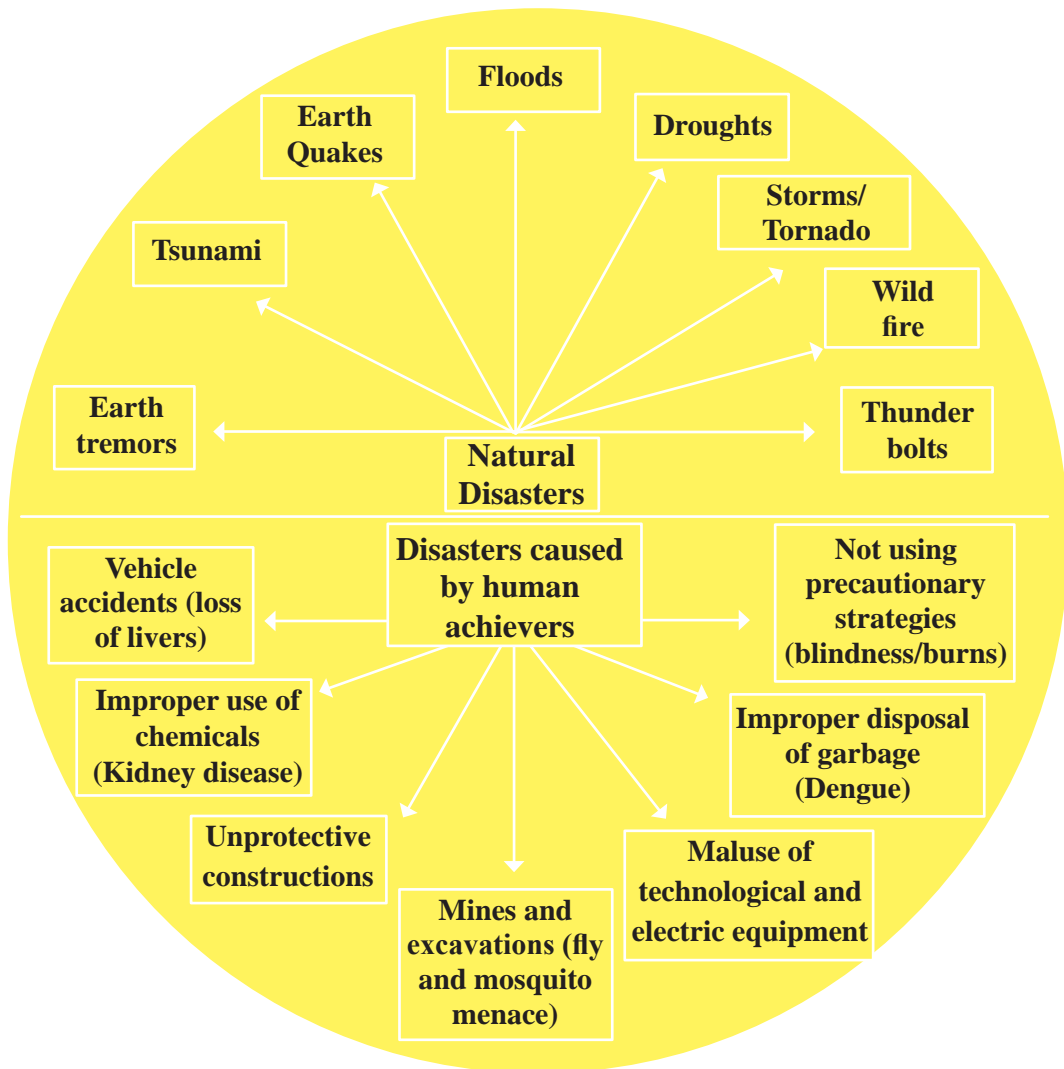
Natural disasters, accidents, hazards, improper life habits can be cited as the most powerful challenges for the protective existences of the human society. Natural disasters are a common phenomenon in the ecosystem. They may be conducive to the balance of natural ecosystems. However, at present these disasters have become more frequent and threat to human existence because of man's careless activities.

- After studying this lesson, you will be able to understand,
- How accidents and disasters occur
- Measures to be taken to minimize those accidents and disasters
- Various institutions from which you can obtain assistance in a disaster
- About the waste management process
- Harmful habits and improper use of drugs and how to prevent from the bad effects of them

It is also expected from these lesson to set the background to improve your knowledge, attribute and skills to contribute towards the sustainable development of the country while carrying out an affordable life style.

The accidents and disasters faced by man in modern society can be divided into two.

1. Natural disasters
2. Disasters caused by human activities



Natural disasters

Unfavourable conditions caused by extreme nature of the earth and its surroundings can be termed natural disasters. A natural disaster is not caused by man. But a natural disaster is harmful to both man and his properties.

Natural disasters occur for two main reasons.

1. Due to internal physical processes of the earth
e.g. : Tsunami, earthquakes, earth tremors, earthslips
2. Due to the changes in weather and climatic conditions.
e.g. : Floods, droughts, storms, lightening, cyclones, bush fires, el nino, la nino

Floods

Excessive rain and high tides naturally lead to floods. There are other causes as well. Inappropriate measures for urban development, faulty drainage systems, illegal constructions on land reservations on sides of canals and the discharge of waste water into the waters of the canals are other causes for floods.

Sri Lanka receives plenty of rainfall throughout the year. Therefore, constant flooding in most parts of the country is an issue. Flooding is natural. But human activity contributes mostly towards flooding.

Human activities towards flooding:

- Deforestation
- Filling up marshy land
- Sand mining from rivers
- Digging up mines
- Improper disposal of waste that cannot be decomposed easily
- Illegal constructions on river banks



Sand mining from a river

To minimize damage caused by floods:

- Rush to a secure place to avoid flood prone areas
- Avoid entering flood affected areas on foot or in vehicles
- Avoid contact with broken or fallen electric cables
- Refrain from eating flood affected food
- Refrain from using water from the affected areas
- Strictly follow the advice given by relevant authorities such as:
 - Disaster Management Centre
 - Meteorological Department
 - The Police
 - Local government institutions

Floods may occur due to natural causes other than human activities.

e.g. :- Blocking of estuaries on river banks (Kalu Ganga)

Storms/Cyclones

Violent and destructive winds that occur in tropical areas are known as cyclones. They take place centralizing low pressure zones in the atmosphere. Cyclones originate as a system of wind that blows clock wise and anti-clock wise. The speed of winds may exceed 350-400 k.m.p.h. Torrential rain accompanies heavy winds. Heavy winds and heavy rain can cause loss of lives and property. The cyclone that entered Sri Lanka on 24th November 1978 took away 900 human lives and caused much damage to property as well.



Measures to be taken towards safety during a storm

The Meteorological Department issues repeated warnings through the media. When such warnings are issued, one should:

- withdraw from affected areas
- go to a protected place
- take away a pre-arranged pack which consists essential and light items with
 - bottles of water
 - biscuits
 - a torch
 - a battery operated radio

If you are staying at home:

- check whether the walls and the roof are safe.
- remove all trees and branches of trees that can be harmful to the house.
- disconnect electricity.

Thunder storms

Thunder and lightning is a natural phenomenon. Thunder follows lighting. Lightning occurs when the water present in the high cumulonimbus (storm clouds) gets charged due to speedy powerful air waves that keep running up and by rubbing water droplets each other. Positive charges collect in the top layers of the cloud and negative charges collect in the bottom layers. An electrical discharge occurs when the amount of charges reach a certain level. It is known as lighting and thundering. The rise in temperature during daytime and convection during the months March – April, October – November cause heavy thunder storms. However, there can be thunder storms at any time of the year.



How can thunder storm damage be avoided?

- Avoid isolated open spaces, places or tall trees
- Avoid horse riding, riding bicycles and travelling on tractors. (open vehicles)
- Refrain from using telephones
- Refrain from touching metal items
- Unplug electric items from plug points
- Refrain from using electric items

Tsunami

Earthquakes on the seabed, nuclear explosions, volcano eruptions and meteors are causes for tsunami. When a tsunami occurs, powerful waves that originate in sea water spread in all directions. These waves cause a lot of damages to the coastal areas.



In history, the Tsunami disaster that took place on 26 December 2004 was the most destructive disaster that ever happened in this region. Approximately 31,500 people who lived in coasted areas, including passengers travelling in vehicles like buses, vans, cars and even in a train lost their lives from this unexpectedly arrived disaster. Around 550, 000 people were displaced. Houses, tourist hotels, fishing harbours and boats, vehicles and other properties were heavily damaged. It directly affected the coastal areas of Sri Lanka and other countries such as India, Indonesia, Thailand.

Human activities that heightened destruction with the Tsunami

- Removal of natural vegetation in the coastal areas
- Destruction of mangroves
- Damage to coral reefs
- Removal of sand bars in coastal areas

Measures to minimize damages caused by Tsunami

- Pay attention to announcements given by the media
- Withdraw from the affected areas when warnings have been issued.
- Make others aware
- Be alert about the signs of a Tsunami
- Rush to a safe area immediately
- Be aware of large tidal waves that can emerge at once and disappear

Drought

In simple terms, a drought is a period of insufficient rain to fulfil man's requirements with water. Insufficient rain is periodic and is identified as climatic drought. Droughts caused by insufficient rain are referred to as hydrological droughts. According to a climate report from the Ministry of Forest Conservation and Environment, a drought is a period in which a district receives less than 75% of its usual rainfall.



Animals affected by drought

Similarly a period of no rain for 15 consecutive days is also identified as a period of drought. As the South East, North Central and North West regions of Sri Lanka frequently face droughts, the following unfavourable and negative outcomes can occur.

- Shortage of drinking water
- Disruption to manufacture hydro electricity
- Drying up of streams and small tanks
- Reduction in ground water levels
- Loss of human lives
- Destruction of crop cultivations
- Destruction caused to wild animals



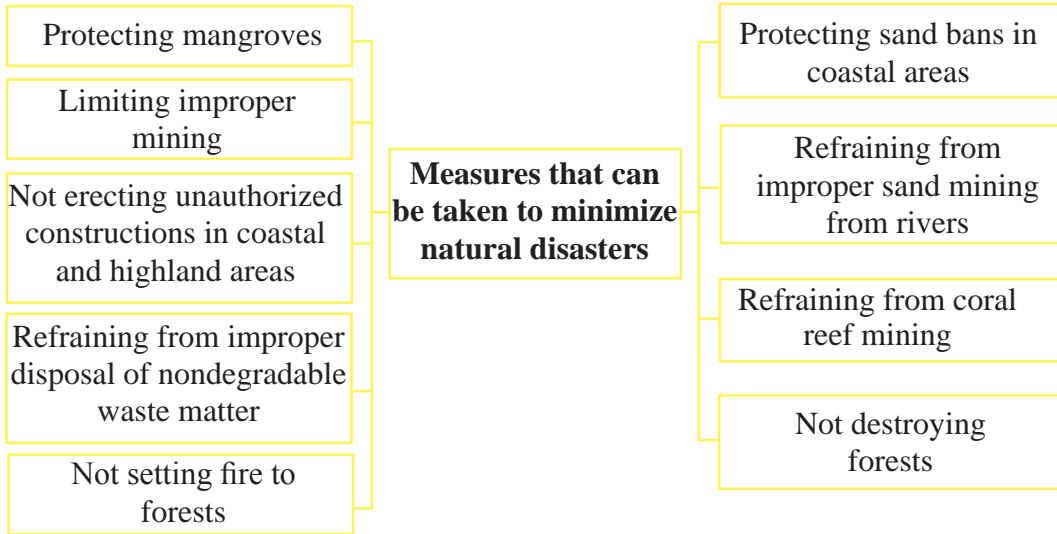
To safeguard from drought:

- Do not destroy forest cover
- Do not expose soil to extreme direct heat
- Conserve water
- Do not pollute water in streams, canals and rivers
- Plant trees, creepers and reforest
- Protect hydro catchment areas
- Use rain water harvest tanks



Man and the environment partaking the destructive effects of drought

Man consumes a large amount of natural resources. As a result, the damage caused to the environment is very high. If this damage is not minimized the damage caused by natural disasters will also increase. As responsible citizens it is our duty to avoid human activities causing natural disasters. Given in the chart are some guidance for us to follow:



Steps to be taken to minimize damages during a disaster

Many people become victims of disasters. On such occasions it is our duty to offer help as responsible citizens. Some immediate actions, we could take, are as follows:

- Being alert to awareness-raising from different relevant institutes and organizations and follow their advice
- Informing relevant institutions that provide services to minimize damage
- Saving the victims
- Giving correct first aid
- Taking victims to hospitals immediately
- Making the hospitals and security sections aware about the disaster or the accident
- Launching humanitarian operations for the victims
- Assisting the defence and health service providers



Medical treatments for victims



Distributing aids

In a disaster, it is our duty to protect properties of the victims. It is also important to support victims with compassion, safeguarding their self-dignity.

We must also prevent theft, looting and other anti-social activities. We must take steps to provide food, clothes drinking water and temporary shelter for the victims. It is our responsibility to help the government officers and other helping organizations for the proper distribution of aids provided by government institutions and by international organizations. It is the responsibility of the officers of respective institutions to provide water, electricity, communication facilities and to re-establish transport services.



Soldiers on a rescue operation

Institutions from which assistance can be taken when a disasters situation arises



Activity

- Prepare a file of information which consists of newspaper reports, photographs etc, related to disasters that take place due to human activities.
- Prepare a catalogue mentioning the institutions to which a natural disaster or any other hazard caused by human activities can be informed.
- From the recent past, Sri Lanka has become a natural disaster prone country where earth slips and floods are abundant. Write two suggestions that can be used to avoid those situations.
- During disasters, "Mass media play a major role." Prove this with examples from Sri Lanka.

Telephone numbers that can assist you in an emergency

110	Emergency Fire Extinguish and Ambulance Services
118	Operation Centre for National Security
119	Police Emergency Services
1959	Media Centre – National Hospital, Sri Lanka
1969	Emergency Call Centre for Users of the Southern Express Highway
1984	National Authority for the Control of Dangerous drugs – advice regarding rehabilitation of users of such drugs
1991	Complaints regarding environment and natural resources.

Disaster Management

In our lifetime we will have to face a hazard or a disaster anytime, anywhere. Our day-to-day lives can become ad hoc due to disasters and accidents. Therefore, we must always be vigilant about the possibility of an accident or a disaster. We should be informed and aware of accidents and disasters.

Although it is difficult to prevent accidents and disasters completely, we should have an instinct to identify them early. Therefore, we must always be aware of what is happening around us. Though it is difficult to prevent disasters completely, we can minimize the damages caused by disasters. This process is known as disaster management.

Although it is difficult to prevent disasters completely, damages caused by disasters can be minimized, This process is known as disaster management.

Different types of hazards

Let us identify accidents and disasters that can take place in places we inhabit most. The illustrations given below will help us to identify some of them:



An earth slip





**Nothing but ashes remain
Shoe factory on fire**

**20% of country land on
land slide risk**



**Daughter falls into the ditch
Dead body taken out from
Mahaweli River**

It is difficult to identify exactly places where accidents and disasters can happen.

However, accidents do happen in some of the places listed below.:

*Home

*Work site

*Armory

*School

*Road

*Reservoirs

*Surrounding

*Factory

*Rivers

Accidents and disasters can happen at any time of a day. However, we cannot delay or ignore our work thinking that accidents are waiting to happen.

Since accidents and disasters around us are likely to happen at any time, we must be vigilant, aware and act diligently.

Accident prone occasions

Kosgama - Salawa Armory destroyed due to a fire. People in an area of 6 km are re-located. (05.06.2016)

Run over by a stone crusher, a student dies



Destruction caused by the explosion of armory in Salawa, Kosgama

A large number of people and properties are destroyed as a result of a devastating landslide in Aranayake - Kegalle (18.05.2016)

You may have either heard about or read the above headlines and reports. Perhaps, you too may have faced similar situations. This type of unexpected accidents can occur even at school. News is published in newspapers to make students and people aware of these disasters.

We also use different types of fireworks in our homes on festive occasions such as Sinhala - Hindu New Year and Christmas. Careless use of these items can cause a lot of physical damages to us. Use of electricity should also be done carefully on different festive occasions.

The use of electricity on different occasions must be done with great caution and care. In homes, where there are little children, plug points should be kept out of their reach.

Different kinds of drugs, hot materials like cooking utensils, hot drinks, electric items, fragile things should be kept away from the reach of little children. Those who live in flats should be more concerned and take greater care to protect children. The danger of accidents caused by lightning is high on rainy days. We should not use mobile phones, electric items etc, on such occasions.

Similarly we need to be concerned about harm from animals, especially from serpents. There is a gradual increase in the numbers of people dying due to snake bites. It is important to be observant and watchful especially when walking around in the night.

Attacks from elephants and dog bites are frequently reported. The human-elephant conflict is acute nowadays. Many deaths are reported often from this conflict. Therefore, it is advisable for those who are living in the conflict areas to be informed about ways and means to avoid this conflict.



A dog biting a man



An occasion that shows the intensity of human-elephant conflict

Activity

- Analyze the accidents shown in newspaper extracts as shown in “Different types of accidents.” Follow the guidelines given.

Related to home	:
Related to school	:
Environment related	:
Workplace related	:
Other	:
- Use electronic and print media to find other such accidents and include them in the analysis above.
- Explain the reasons for the human-elephant conflict to be so acute at present.

Food and drug related accidents

- It is also important to pay attention to hazards that take place because of food and drugs too.

Newspapers report instances in which people have died of food poisoning.

- Failure to wash and clean all items of food properly.
- Consumption of outdated food items
- Consuming half cooked food.
- Measures adopted by sellers at different stages (ripening fruit, use of chemicals for storage)



Food poisoning can result from any of the points listed above. The consumption of processed food instead of natural food may also cause different allergies and other health hazards. Deviating from natural food and consuming instant food often, can also lead to unnecessary allergies.

Hazards can also take place due to improper storage of dangerous drugs, and pesticides. In homes, drugs should be kept out of reach of children. Accidents can be prevented by making sure only the prescribed dosage of drugs is given to elderly persons and children by a responsible adult.

Instructions for proper use of drugs

- Follow relevant medical advice
- Use the prescribed dosage
- Use drugs at the proper time
- Be aware of expiry date
- Store drugs under correct temperature
- Be aware of instructions in the label before use
- Avoid use of harmful drugs.

Accidents and disasters take place due to bad habits and behaviours too.

- e.g.-
- Driving after liquor.
 - Driving under the effect of bad impulses and emotions such as anger, sadness, depression, extreme happiness etc.
 - Using mobile phones while driving
 - Using narcotics and smoking

The numbers of accidents taking place due to these reasons keep increasing day by day. We must remain wise to minimize the numbers of such accidents.



When an accident or a disaster takes place, it is important to act consciously and confidently without being in a hurry. On most such occasions people gather just to see the disasters.

example: an accident

In an accident we must give our support to take injured people to hospitals and help the police with their legal matters. If people gather unnecessarily it could be a disturbance.

Disasters and accidents caused by human activities and by natural causes may not end up at once. They can occur as a chain of incidents.

e.g. :- A Tsunami, A landslide, a fire in an armory, a bomb blasts

On such an occasion those who merely visit such places can face several accidents. Therefore, we must refrain from gathering in such places unnecessarily.

It is also necessary to be aware of media reports to avoid chain accidents. Paying attention to weather reports, being aware of changes in natural surroundings, taking immediate action in the event of a landslide, are all helpful to minimize damages. It is also important to pay attention to the behaviours of animals, because they have a better instinct to identify the changes in the natural environment.

Our ancestors paid their serious attention to the sounds of frogs, emergence of grown and winged termites, the flying pattern of swallows etc. Accordingly, in the event of a natural disaster, they were able to help themselves immediately and others with minimum casualties. It is essential that we develop ourselves for instant action and make correct decisions to suit the occasion. Such timely and necessary action taken consciously and intelligently will not only help avoid accidents or damages but also help with quick management of a disaster situation. This will also contribute towards safeguarding lives and property and help with purposeful lives towards a developed country with a sound, strong economy.

Disasters due to human activities

Road accidents

Have you listened to this song frequently relayed on SLBC?

**When you take the wheel
Do not fly.
Follow road signs
Observe road rules.
Carelessness of drivers causes
fatal accidents.
The departed,
Leave sorrow behind,
Remained become helpless
throughout life.
Take the wheel – go on the journey
Do not be in a hurry.
Save others
Save yourself
Take care!**



A fatal accident



Improper road crossing

Sing this song, together with your teacher.

Accidents on roads are identified as the most common disaster today. Many lives are lost daily due to accidents. According to media reports, many lives are also made to suffer serious injury. Road accidents take away many valuable human lives that can otherwise be of great help to society. Such loss affects development of the country directly. At the same time, society faces a great responsibility to social welfare of the disabled.



A dreadful road accident

Road accidents in Sri Lanka 2010 - 2015

Information regarding road accidents in Sri Lanka (2010 - 2015)					
Year	Fatal accidents	Severe accidents	Minor accidents	Other	No. of deaths
2010	2575	6124	12560	16390	2721
2011	2498	6965	13196	17589	2677
2012	2317	7209	14680	17930	2449
2013	2190	6870	13525	13294	2365
2014	2260	7071	12784	13854	2440
2015	2590	7719	13095	13514	2801

Source : Police Automobile Headquarters - 2015



According to the above data, the victims of such road accidents may be people who left their homes for jobs, for education and other needs. Therefore, it is time for us to pay serious attention towards prevention of road accidents.

Do you know ? By 2014, road accidents within a day cause the following results:

- Accidents caused by vehicles 101
- Casualties 54
- Loss 20 billion rupees
- Deaths caused 7
- Damage to property 38

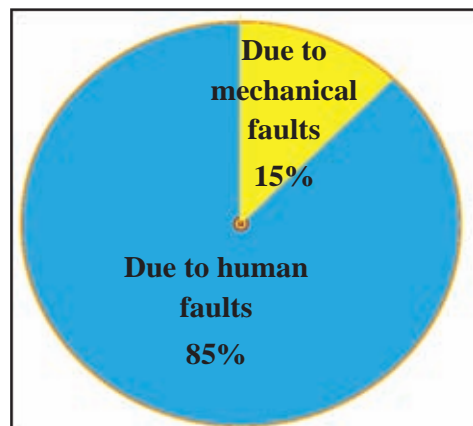
Primary causes for road accidents are as follows:

- Faults made by drivers
- Faults made by pedestrians
- Defects of roads
- Faulty condition of vehicles

About 85% of road accidents have occurred due to the mishaps of man. A look at the pie chart confirms this fact.

Faults made by drivers:

- Indiscipline
- Driving after liquor
- Driving with no valid licence
- Failure to follow road signs and signals or instructions of the traffic police officers
- Driving at high speed
- Driving under heavy fatigue
- Not being alert about other vehicles and pedestrians when driving vehicles



Faults occurred by mechanical faults and human faults



An incident of using a mobile phone while driving

- Not paying attention to weather conditions.
eg. - Misty weather condition
- Using mobile phones while driving
- Carrying an excess number of passengers
- Competition among drivers
- Different mental conditions of drivers
- Ignorance regarding road rules.

Faults made by pedestrians

Carelessness of pedestrians also contributes to most road accidents. Following are the faults common to pedestrians.

- Ignorance about road signs and road rules
- Refusing to walk on the right side of the road
- Walking in groups
- Refusal to use zebra crossing when crossing the road
- Using mobile phones while walking
- Wearing dark colour clothes at night



An incident of crossing the road while using hand phones

In using bicycles for riding:

- Riding bicycles in groups
- Riding at night without head lights
- Absence of red coloured reflectors at the back of bicycles.

Many riders face accidents because of the reasons given above.

Conditions of roads

Poor conditions on roads are also a reason for many road accidents.

- Potholes on roads filled with water
- Patches of oil on roads
- Dangerous bends
- Wet and slippery roads
- Incomplete road repairs
- Huge trees close to roads
- Absence of white lines and dotted lines
- Absence of road signs where necessary
- Traffic congestion on roads.



Condition of vehicles

Road accidents have also increased due to poor conditions of vehicles.

Some such conditions are as follows:

- Poorly lit headlights or no headlights at all
- Improper functioning of brake systems
- Driving on rainy days without wipers
- Use of worn out tyres and poor maintenance of vehicles
- Driving without signal lights
- Driving, using improper engine conditions
- Driving without using reflectors

Action to avoid road accidents

The best means to avoid road accidents applies to both road users and drivers. That is to follow road rules carefully.

Observe the following road signs carefully.



Road signs that are important for our day-to-day life

Road accidents can be minimized if drivers, riders and pedestrians pay careful attention to these road signs. You may be either a passenger in a bus, or a motor car or a pedestrian walking on the road. Wherever you are, observe carefully the road you take.

The government spends heavily to safeguard drivers and pedestrians displaying road signs, and fixing CCTV cameras. Using these measures, the government tries to ensure our safety on roads. Therefore, it is the duty of a disciplined driver to observe these road signs and rules and avoid unnecessary accidents on roads.

Responsibilities towards prevention of road accidents

Responsibilities of drivers	Responsibility of the government	Police responsibilities
Follow road rules as necessary	Maintain proper repairs to roads	Make drivers and pedestrians aware of road rules
Follow signs on roads	Maintain effective driver training	Abandon use of dilapidated vehicles
Do not drive under the influence of liquor	Mark speed limits and signs on either side of road	
Avoid excessive speed	Draw up programmes for the special attention of drivers	
Maintain vehicles in use		
Drive carefully in adverse weather conditions		
Proper use of headlight and dim light		
Use safety belts		
Motor cyclists to use helmets with chin bands		

Train accidents

Train accidents have also become a main type of accident in modern Sri Lanka. The number of victims to die from train accidents has increased rapidly. Main causes for train accidents are as follows:

- Walking on railway tracks
- Driving across railway tracks neglecting signals.
- Technical faults in railways
- Absence of gates at railway crossings
- Living recklessly on either side of railway track.



A fatal train accident

Ways to avoid railway accidents

- Ban footboard travel for passengers on trains
- Keep away from railway tracks
- Refrain from getting in or out of a running train
- Activate railway signals properly
- Repair and maintain railroads regularly
- Ensure proper and active use of safety gates across railways
- Railway control rooms to be vigilant about proper functioning of signals

In case of a road or train accident

In case of a road or a train accident several parties need to share heavy responsibilities. The parties are:

- Drivers
- Ordinary people
- The police

People's lives can be saved through the unity, cooperation and quick action of everyone mentioned above. Therefore, when an accident occurs:

- Take the injured to hospitals
- Inform the nearest police station as soon as possible
- Prevent unnecessary violence that can take place
- Collect money and other belongings of victims and hand them over to security officers or owners.

Listed above are the responsibilities of responsible and law-abiding citizens in such situations.

Activities

- Many road accidents are a common feature in Sri Lanka today. Mention the likely reasons for this state of affairs.
- Write four suggestions you wish to forward for the prevention of road accidents.
- Look at A, B, C, D given below. Write what they refer to.



A



B



C



D

Hazards that occur due to use of chemical substances

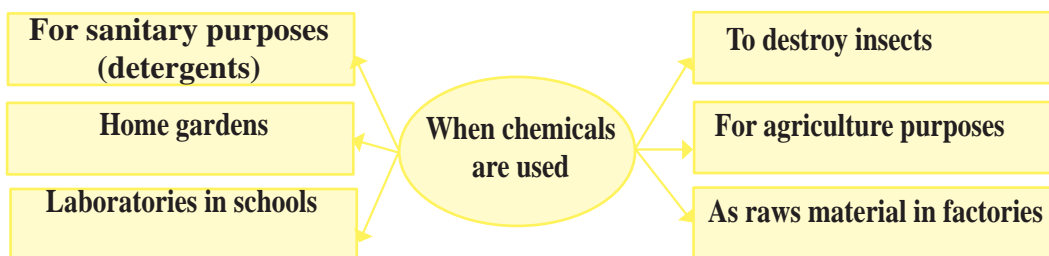
Different chemical substances are widely in use today for our domestic needs. Chemicals are used for crop cultivation, in factories and for production purposes. As a student, there are times for you to use chemicals in laboratories as well.

Incorrect and careless use of chemicals can cause harm to our health.

Given below is a Table showing statistics related to hazards caused by poisoning with chemical pesticides.

Cause for accident	2004		2005	
	No. hospitalized	No. death	No. hospitalized	No. death
Poisoning pesticides	16644	1281	16910	1270
Poisoning chemicals used at home	16978	226	17456	230

Sauce : Reports of medical statistics



Accidents with the use of chemicals include:

- Insecure storage
- Storage alongside food items
- Not displaying labels properly.
- Keeping chemicals within easy reach of children.
- Not following given instructions regarding use (wearing gloves, helmets, face masks, slippers etc.)
- Not using the proper concentration as recommended.
- Throwing empty or half empty bottles in to water ways.
- Using water ways to wash machines used for spraying agro-chemicals and pesticides

Have you thought about this?

How can chemicals enter the body? Chemicals can enter the body through:

- Contact with the skin
- Inhalation
- Food and drinks
- Contact with eyes
- Open wounds in the body
- Careless use of fuel pipelines
- Through Food

Steps to be taken when a chemical accident takes place

The following steps should be followed in case a chemical substance enters one's body,

- Identify the reason for the accident
- Give necessary first aid
- Direct victim to a doctor immediately
- If available, submit the containers, wrappings of the poison or chemical to the doctor.

If the identified poison, containers or wrappers can be submitted to the doctor, it will be helpful to start proper treatment. A patient who has inhaled poison must be removed from the poisonous environment immediately. Proper ventilation and several washes with cold water, need to be given. The patient should be immediately directed to a doctor.

Steps to be taken to prevent accidents caused by chemical substances

Numbers of accidents caused by chemicals keep increasing day by day. Therefore, it is essential to avoid such accidents. Measures to be taken to prevent such accidents are as follows:

- Safe storage
- Careful reading and following instructions on the label before using
- Storing away from the reach of children
- Storing so that the symbol of poison is displayed clearly
- Following the given instructions thoroughly and correctly when mixing or diluting
- Using gloves, masks and boots etc. according to instructions
- Buying only the required amount
- Refraining from keeping empty bottles in homes after use
- Refraining from throwing away empty bottles and other containers to reservoirs and to the environment after use.



Using protective garments when using pesticides



Poison symbol implying danger

Activity

- Mention the harm caused to man and the environment with the use of pesticides.
- Day by day, there is an increase in destruction and accidents caused by the use of chemicals. Prepare a list of activities to minimize such destruction and harm.
- Mention the traditional methods used by our ancestors, instead of chemicals and pesticides, on their crop cultivations.

Affordable lifestyles and sustainable development

With development, the modern world faces many differences. It is no secret that the industrial revolution has directly influenced these changes. The industrial revolution has affected the environment at a greater scale. Man has shown more attention to his requirements as against the law of nature. Accordingly, natural resources are fast decreasing all over the world. Sri Lanka also faces this problem.

In the past, lifestyles in our country were directly linked with national culture and sustainable development. You may have heard that our ancestors never depleted existing stocks but used them carefully preserving for future use. This means that they used only the necessary amounts. Our culture is complete with many examples in children's literature of poetry, song and verse used by our ancestors regarding use and preservation of natural resources. One such example of lyrics for children, translated, follows:

මේ ගසේ බොහෝ
පැණි දොඩම් තිබේ
පැහැල ඉදිල - බිමට නැමිල
බර වෙලා අතු
නංගිටයි මටයි
ගෙඩි දෙකක් ඇති
වැඩිය කඩන නරක ළමෝ
හෙම නොවේ අපි

**On this tree
There are many sweet
oranges.
Mature and ripe
The branches are heavily
laden with ripe fruit.
My sister and I
Need only two oranges
We are not bad children,
to pick more than two.**

அந்த மரத்திலே
தேன்தோடை நிறையவே
முற்றி பழுத்து - நிலத்தில் வளைந்து
கிளைக்கு சுமை கூடியே
தங்கைக்கும் எனக்கும்
காய்கள் இரண்டு போதுமே
நிறைய பறிப்பது நல்லதல்லவே -நாம்
நல்ல பிள்ளைகளே

This song we sang in our childhood symbolizes the concept of sustainable development.

Affordable lifestyles and awareness of use

The needs of modern man are very complex. But the resources available to fulfill these needs are limited. Besides, it is the responsibility of the modern generation to leave behind resources for future generations too. Therefore, we must all get used to affordable life styles. Affordable lifestyles means following a life style and consumption style to match one's own economic level.

Our ancestors invariably led affordable or simple lifestyles and consumption patterns. They showed great satisfaction with their basic needs: food, shelter and clothing. They used very simple tools with their everyday activities. Yet, the world went through changes and our ancestors too had to fall in line. Falling in line, they had to make adjustments to suit their lifestyles. However, such adjustments brought no harmful changes to their lifestyle, society, environment or culture.

In addition to basic needs, our parents and grand parents used bicycles, two-wheeled tractors and made economical use of firewood with their hearths. The bicycle came to be the most loyal to the family. The bicycle was used for both travel and the transport of goods.

Even the most developed countries in the world still use the bicycle as an environmentally friendly means of transport. Japan is a good example in this connection.

The Japanese use a bicycle to attend to most of their needs. The bicycle is widely used in Japan. Using a bicycle does not show or imply any social discrimination.

The two wheeled tractor is an environmentally friendly equipment used by man. It was very helpful for agricultural purposes. The two wheeled tractor that was used for both travelling and agricultural purposes was very useful equipment in the past.



Bicycle : eco-friendly and economic family vehicle



Cycling to work place



Tractor : for ploughing fields and transporting goods

Sustainable Development

"Sustainable use is the use of available natural resources by the present generation while preserving for the use of future generations"

Man has many needs. Among his needs,

- food, clothing and shelter
- water and electricity
- power supply
- travel requirements
- educational requirements
- relaxation and entertainment
- health and sanitary requirements etc. are more important

Therefore, a nation has to make it a habit to follow an affordable lifestyle to avoid being a burden to self, the society or the country.

All of us need to contribute towards sustainable development. To do so, it is important to pay our attention to the following facts.

- ★ Refrain from over consumption of resources
- ★ Adopt an environmentally-friendly life style
- ★ Adapt to existing rules and regulations
- ★ Dispose of garbage appropriately
- ★ Protect natural resources
- ★ Make economical use of natural resources
- ★ Preserve energy
- ★ Adopt environmentally friendly alternative sources of energy
- ★ Use environmentally friendly goods and services
- ★ Always act as responsible citizens.

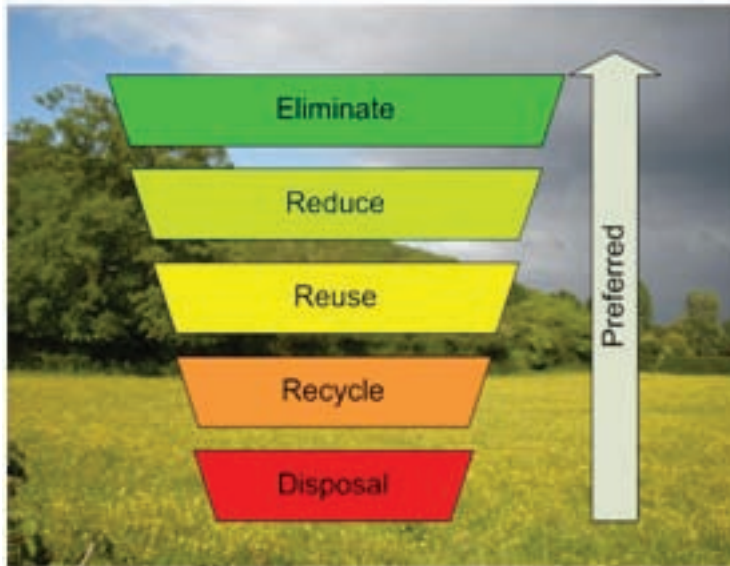


Dispose of garbage improperly



Dispose of garbage properly





Recycling of waste matter

Man, nowadays, faces many types of illnesses due to the failure to follow these facts. Meanwhile, there are “deadly diseases’ identified among villagers and discussed in common, these days. They are:

- Kidney ailments
- Dengue fever and the mosquito menace

The two ailments listed above have claimed many lives. The general opinion now, is, that glyphosate used for agricultural purposes, is the cause for kidney ailments. Similarly, we have to accept that improper disposal of waste materials is a cause for the spread of dengue and the the mosquito menace.

Both the state and the society have a great responsibility to eliminate these diseases. To protect future generations, we have to get together and carry out our duties responsibly. We also need to adopt and adapt to an affordable lifestyle and an affordable consumption style. This way, it will be possible to strengthen sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

Our ancestors never put themselves first. They always thought about future generations. Therefore, even if they did not get things, they felt that those to be born in the future needed to be provided for. They believed they could make use, while preserving for the future. An example for this belief, is a poem compiled by Tibetan monk Venerable S. Mahinda thero, titled "Yuthukame Agaya", ‘The Value of Duty’

The Value of Duty

- Child:** What are you doing grandpa?
Why are you digging the garden?
- Grandpa:** I don't think you cannot see
I am digging to plant a mango seed.
- Child:** You take great pains to plant a seed today
Will you get even one mango fruit to eat?
- Grandpa:** I don't expect a mango from this tree
I am only doing my duty
- Child:** If you cannot get the benefits
I don't understand why you should do this
- Grandpa:** I am surprised at your thoughts
If you grow up in this manner, you will be blamed
We are now eating the fruit from
Trees planted by our grand parents
We need to keep for those to follow
It is our duty.
- Child:** I now realize the value of my duty
Good bye, grandpa, I am leaving.

In a book compiled by Robert Knox titled “An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon”, he refers to our ancestors as a nation most anxious to fulfil our responsibilities. Therefore, from our youth we need to get used to fulfilling our duties and responsibilities. We need to do so adapting ourselves to an affordable lifestyle to suit an ever changing world. Such efforts will help us build a strong nation aimed at sustainable development.

Activity

- Mention how you can contribute towards sustainable development.
- Give examples to prove how our ancestors met their every day needs keeping to sustainable development.
- Collect information from the Internet on how helpful “The bicycle and the hand tractor” are and compile a booklet on the topic.
- With the assistance of your adults and the home science teacher prepare a list of nourishing food items for use with a nourishing meal.

Summary

- ⇒ Man has to endure natural disasters in his/her lifetime.
- ⇒ Man's actions have contributed heavily towards damage caused by natural disasters.
- ⇒ Society needs to identify the causes for natural disasters and take effective control measures to avoid such disasters.
- ⇒ Accidents are waiting to happen, anytime, anywhere, at any time in one's life.
- ⇒ It is not possible to completely eradicate accidents or disasters.
- ⇒ Awareness of disasters or accidents can minimize or avoid accidents.
- ⇒ It is the duty of a responsible citizen to act wisely in case of an accident.
- ⇒ Being aware of damage and disaster situations and assisting with disaster management can easily contribute to sustainable development.
- ⇒ There is an increase in accidents caused by drugs and chemicals, the present day.
- ⇒ Road accidents and drug related accidents are both caused by man. Awareness can easily help control the harm caused by both drugs and chemicals.
- ⇒ It is the duty of all responsible people to actively help victims in the event of a disaster.