

Abstract:

In the recent past, Kenya has experienced a series of disasters, both natural and human related. Whenever these disasters happen, the local communities are found off guard, thus leading to loss of lives and property. This research was conducted to establish how the stakeholders of Tabaka soapstone industry are prepared in the issues of occupational safety and health hazards in all steps of value chain, particularly in Gucha South District. The study adopted exploratory research design targeting responses from the soapstone value chain who included; soapstone miners and workshop workers, managers, employees, local leaders, the chiefs, head teachers, in charge of clinics/dispensaries /Hospitals, District officers, children officers, traders among others. The data collection methods entailed focus Group Discussions, key informant interviews, observations and secondary data. Data collection and analysis was purely qualitative. The study established that falling stones, in case of snapping of ropes, ladder breaking, softness of some soapstones and collapsing of the caves, dusty environment, handling of shredded papers, sanding in water for long hours, scanty dressing during rainy season, noise and diseases are major forms of occupational and health hazards which pose challenges in the soapstone mining areas . The study established that Malaria, Septic wounds, Pneumonia, Typhoid and Asthma are the most prevalent diseases in Gucha South District. The researcher recommended that the Government must sensitize the stakeholders on the hazards associated with soapstone mining and how to cope with vulnerability occurrences.