

## The Factor, Sense of Community in Community Based Disaster Risk Management

○Subhajyoti SAMADDAR, Hirokazu TATANO

Arguments have been made by diverse scholars and practitioners for community participation in the decision making process as a critical mechanism for enabling the social implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies. The need for CBDRM is felt so ardent because of its two potential importance implications in the social implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies and programs. First, CBDRM can render the platform for free discussion among stakeholders to reach a consensus and to make a better informed choices. It also enables the local community to have better voice in the management and implementation process of rehabilitation and reconstruction process. Second, the catastrophic disasters tell us that the government or other external agencies cannot reach to community immediately after the disaster and start rescue and relief operations. Therefore, the capacity of the local community should be enhanced to support themselves during the emergency. This suggests the involvement of community in decision making process is an involuntary call for ensuring the disaster resilient society.

Successful CBDRM is essentially process dependent. A process mechanism includes who will be involved, when will be involved and what tools to be adopted and so on to achieve the set targets or outcomes (samaddar. The main drive of the process oriented mechanism is to ensure the quality of the means or participation exercise (Samaddar et al. 2017). To foster an effective process mechanism, various participatory tools and techniques are used, not least including participatory risk mapping, town watching,

participatory rural appraisal, workshop methods, Yonmenkaigi System Method, disaster games, and so on. The challenge for planners and practitioners is to select an appropriate and useful one. There are numerous participatory tools and techniques, however, all of them have only one objective, that is, to ensure effective community participation (Samaddar et al. 2015). If involving community is so simple and unidimensional, then one particular tool might be enough to ensure the objective. But, in reality, it is found that each participatory tool appears promising and claims better results. However, these claims have hardly any empirical basis or ever been defined in the light of defined criteria. There exists no defined set of criteria based on which one could examine the potentiality of the tool or method. So, for the practitioners, it is hard to decide which tool or method to select to obtain to which objectives.

The decision to set an ideal process of community participation is considered critical because the community's involvement has been understood and practiced at different levels - from passive recipient of information to key player of disaster risk management (Samaddar et. al. 2015b) . For example, some cases the community participation is limited at awareness building where the community is found merely a passive receipt of information from the disaster management authorities and scientists. In some cases, the community is invited to assess risks and provide feedbacks on disaster management plan and programs designed by the disaster management authority. Though, there are existing different levels of participation, but they all regarded by one concept or

term, community based disaster management. It leaves the question at what level community should be involved.

It will be a mistake to consider communities as homogenous entities and that the participation of any section of a community fairly represent the concerns and interests of the entire population. Communities are rarely a homogenous whole and their heterogeneity creates real problem for selection, representation and accountability of individuals, which brings an immense challenge to practitioners and planners to successfully carry out participatory programs. Sections of a community, who are often isolated from mainstream political and social organizations, are also often left unaware of opportunities for participation or they find it difficult to break the system. Similarly, the question often times encountered in community participation is who has the right to speak for the community? Determining who is a legitimate representative of the community is actually far from straightforward. This calls for the necessity of redefining the community specifically in a disaster management context. To define a community, a 'sense of community' is arguably the most critical component. It is characterized by caring and sharing among the people in a community, mutual respect and service to others that enable collective action to address local concerns and bring desired changes. Consequently, to design an effective participation program, the need for cultivating the "sense of community" is generally accredited. However, as community participation demands important costs including personal time, energy, social credits and so on, community members display varying degree of sense of community (samaddar et. al. 2015b). Some neighbors may value membership, others may not. The condition under which this sense of community is displayed may vary

as well. A neighborhood affected by a disaster may come together during the disaster but not sustain a pattern of caring and sharing after the disaster had passed. Therefore, there is a need to redefine the community, a need to identify factors and process of how the sense of community is formed as a response to, in the aftermath of and in adopting to long term disaster risk. Research seeking to bring in overarching issues in disaster management have received relatively little theoretical or empirical attention until recently. Hence, the proposed study will discuss from theoretical and empirical stands on how the community should be defined in disaster situations, what are the factors and processes of the formation of a sense of community and its consequences in designing and implementing community participation programs in disaster risk management context.

## References

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