

Disaster Preparedness Among Filipino Residents in Saitama City: Insights from Questionnaire-based Survey

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1. Introduction

Japan's foreign resident population has increased steadily over the past decade^[1], primarily due to labor migration, education, and demographic policy reforms. As foreign residents become embedded in urban communities, ensuring their disaster preparedness has become an important issue. Although Japan's disaster management framework is well established, effective preparedness depends on residents' access to information, understanding of procedures, and community participation.

Foreign residents are a diverse population whose disaster preparedness behaviors are shaped by cultural background, language proficiency, prior disaster experience, and social integration. Treating them as a homogeneous group risks overlooking community-specific vulnerabilities, thereby underscoring the importance of community-focused research.

Building on a 2024 survey of Nepalese residents in Saitama City^[2], this study examines disaster preparedness among Filipino residents, one of the city's largest foreign resident groups, through comparative analysis to identify shared challenges and community-specific preparedness patterns.

2. Methodology

A questionnaire survey targeting Filipino residents of Saitama City aged 15 years and above was conducted in August 2025 in collaboration with Saitama City. The survey was distributed to residents ($n = 1,641$) using online and paper-based formats in multiple languages. A total of 316 valid responses were obtained (response rate: 19.3%).

The questionnaire included 32 items covering demographics, disaster awareness and information access, household preparedness, evacuation planning, and evacuation-related concerns. Selected indicators are compared here with results from a 2024 survey of Nepalese residents conducted using the same questionnaire design.

3. Results

3.1. Disaster awareness and information access

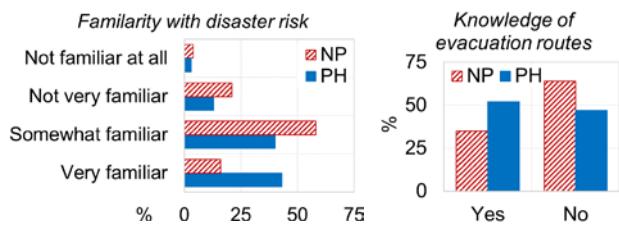


Fig. 1: Comparative awareness of disaster risk

(PH: Philippines, NP: Nepal)

Respondents in both communities generally recognized Japan's exposure to frequent natural hazards; however, this awareness did not consistently translate into familiarity with locally specific preparedness information. As shown in Fig. 1, Filipino respondents demonstrated higher familiarity with disaster-related risks. Nevertheless, substantial knowledge gaps persisted in both communities regarding evacuation routes, shelters, neighborhood disaster prevention activities, and emergency information systems, indicating challenges related more to information visibility and accessibility than availability.

3.2. Household preparedness and emergency planning

Filipino respondents reported higher levels of household preparedness, particularly in establishing

family emergency plans and fixed meeting locations; however, a considerable proportion of respondents in both communities reported having no family emergency plan (Fig. 2). Filipino respondents also reported higher levels of household hazard mitigation, whereas Nepalese respondents more often reported taking no such measures. In contrast, participation in disaster drills was very low in both groups, with most respondents reporting no prior participation, indicating limited engagement with formal preparedness activities.

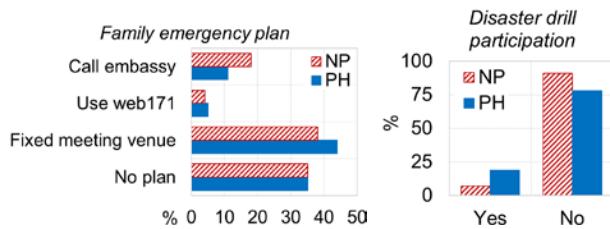


Fig. 2: Household preparedness level and participation in disaster drills (Nepalese vs Filipino respondents)

3.3. Evacuation shelters and specific concerns

Concerns related to evacuation shelters were prominent in both communities, with Filipino respondents, as did Nepalese respondents, emphasizing dietary considerations (Fig. 3). Uncertainty regarding food provision, communication support, and shelter conditions likely influenced perceptions of safety and willingness to remain at shelters, reflecting broader issues of inclusivity and communication rather than community-specific cultural practices.

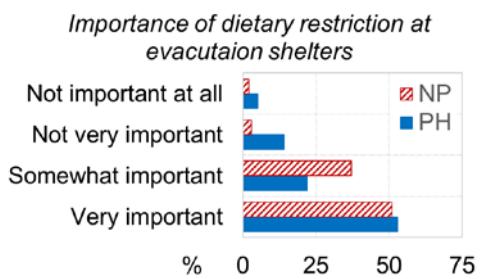


Fig. 3: Importance of dietary restrictions at evacuation shelters (Nepalese vs Filipino respondents)

3.4. Willingness to engage in local community

Despite existing barriers, respondents in both communities expressed strong interest in participating in community-based disaster preparedness initiatives, indicating willingness to join local activities if they

were accessible and relevant. This suggests that low preparedness levels reflect limited engagement opportunities rather than lack of motivation.

4. Conclusions

This study examined disaster preparedness among Filipino residents in Saitama City and compared key indicators with findings from a survey of Nepalese residents. Across both communities, general awareness of disaster risk was relatively high; however, practical preparedness (particularly participation in disaster drills, familiarity with evacuation procedures, and engagement with official information systems) remained limited, largely due to communication and accessibility factors rather than lack of motivation.

At the same time, differences such as stronger family-based preparedness among Filipino respondents highlight the influence of social organization and settlement patterns on preparedness behaviors, underscoring the value of community-specific, comparative research in identifying targeted intervention points.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of community-based approaches for inclusive disaster risk reduction in multicultural urban settings. Continued comparative research combined with locally tailored outreach will be essential for strengthening urban disaster resilience in an increasingly diverse Japan.

References

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- [2] Goit CS, Shimoyama Y, Saitoh M (2025) Disaster Preparedness Among Nepalese Residents in Saitama City: Insights from Questionnaire-based Survey. DPRI Annual Meeting, Paper No. E204.

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