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Framework Considerations for Community Resilient Towards Disaster in Malaysia

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Abstract

Natural disaster has led to adversity resulted from its physical (immediate on-set) and social (long-term) impact. Physical impacts majorly involved human casualties and loss or damages to properties and infrastructure. Meanwhile, among social impacts to society are the psychosocial, socio-demographic, socioeconomic, and socio-politic disturbances. Reducing the risk and impact of the disaster therefore, requires various efforts to prepare and empower the community through the implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) during and after a disaster as it is proven that the community themselves are first responders when disasters strike. An excellent example would be the Kobe earthquake where most of the victims survived due to prompt actions taken by members of their community. This indicates that a well-informed community i.e. with high level of awareness and sound knowledge on disaster preparedness and mitigation played crucial role in preventing greater incident of human casualties and reduce socio-economic loss to the community. Therefore, building a resilient community has become part of DRR initiatives. Review of literature, however, suggests that there are gaps in implementation due to lack of understanding of resilient community concept and suitable community-based approach in promoting a community resilience spirit towards disaster. This paper is prepared to discuss the framework considerations for building disaster resilient community in Malaysia from three (3) perspectives of DRR namely; (1) resilient community's main capitals; (2) key drivers to community resilience and; (3) key deliverables of disaster-resilient community.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increased attention to the issues of building community resilience towards natural disaster. Various attempts have been made to understand how human or community systems should respond to internal and external disturbances. The increased phenomena of globalisation, neo-liberal ideologies resulting in the spread of global capitalism induced human and community transitional process to even the remotest parts of the world. Wilson [1] further mentioned that there is tangible evidence that the world is amplified by globalisation, climate change, population growth and the increasing movement of people within, as well as across countries and continents. There is a growing concern on the environmental and social disturbances relating to globalisation and climate change including increasing carbon emission, biodiversity loss and habitat destruction and disasters resulted from human-induced activities as well as natural process [2,3].

Natural disaster's physical (immediate on-set) and social (long-term) impact has led to adversity with the physical impact majorly involved human casualties, and loss or damages to properties and infrastructure. Among social impacts to society are the psychosocial, socio-demographic, socioeconomic, and socio-politic disturbances. Therefore, to reduce the risk and impact of the disaster requires various efforts to prepare and empower the community. Reducing the risk and impact of the disaster therefore, requires various efforts to prepare and empower the community. Among these efforts may include the implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) during and after a disaster as it is proven that the community themselves are the first responders when disasters strike. A well-informed community, i.e. with high level of awareness and sound knowledge on disaster preparedness and mitigation played crucial role in preventing greater incident of human casualties and reduce socio-economic loss to the community. Therefore, building a resilient community has become part of DRR initiatives.

Review of literature, however, suggests that there are gaps in implementation due to lack of understanding of resilient community concept and suitable community-based approach in promoting a community resilience spirit towards disaster. In this light, there is an increasing role for determination on the concept of community resilience towards disaster including identification of potential framework in building resilience at community level. Understanding towards the community resilience concept, according to [4], might potentially assist community preparedness, response and recovery in the short term from disaster. This paper is prepared to discuss the framework considerations for building disaster resilient community in Malaysia from the three perspectives of DRR namely; (1) resilient community's main capitals; (2) key drivers to community resilience and; (3) key deliverables of disaster resilient community.

2. Concept of Community Resilience

The term 'resilience' is rapidly gaining wide attention in social development and also becoming a popular subject matter for research topic [1,5]. It would be possible that the notion of resilience might potentially to enhance global community interest towards sustainable development concept (if not replace the concept) and also to become the buzzword in policy making and academic discourses [1]. Review of literature indicates that the term 'resilience' first emerged in 1973 during Holling's research on ecology field [5, 6]. Since then, the term had gained popularity and claims a wider usage and adoption across various research field and discipline. Scholars begin to incorporate and define the term resilience to suit their research fields; as resilience is understood as a process and outcome that will result in an ideal condition [1, 7]. In a more recent development, the term resilience has captured attention of social scientists conducting research on social and community development, particularly in understanding the resilience pathways at the local and community level [8, 9].

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