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Government-Communities Collaboration in Disaster Management Activity: Investigation in the Current Flood Disaster Management Policy in Thailand

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Abstract

The importance of collaboration in disaster management activity has been mentioned as a key point of professionalism in disaster management activities since there appears to be limitation in a single authority and they can no longer handle it. Thus, a set of concepts of disaster management, such as professional management, command, control and collaboration, and Incident Command Systems (ICS) becomes more debatable. Government's responsibility as first-hand respondent in disaster management has underpinned the close relationship between local government and communities which also affect the effectiveness in disaster response. However, the difficulty in collaboration always occurs, such as different perceptions, willingness, political will and expectation that undermine the effort of collaborative disaster management. Based on the concept of professionalism in disaster management, this research argued that it had the level of professionalism in disaster management. The aim of this research was to investigate the current flood disaster policies in Thailand after 2011. There were two objectives as follows: (1) to find the linkage and connectivity of flood disaster management policy in different levels of government (National level, provincial level and municipality level) based on the concept of professionalism in disaster management, and (2) to analyze the level of involvement of citizen toward the current flood disaster management policy. This research was composed using literature review in the current flood management policy, provincial development guideline, municipality development plan and some projects implemented or proposed to be carried out in local communities by comparing with concept of disaster management and participation theory.

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1. Introduction

Thailand experienced flooding from the ancient period with annual monsoon as the crucial factor. This circumstance happened in case of flooding in 2011; there were five tropical monsoons crossed during 25th July 2011 – 16th January 2012 which was originated from the northern region in August and became severe in September which caused floods throughout the central region of Thailand of approximately 14,241 Square Kilometers in November 2011. The afflicted area of flooding covered 65 provinces within some Square Kilometers and killed 657 persons at that time. The case of Thailand flooding in 2011 drew the attentions among scholars and communities to find out the improvement on regional watershed management in the future. Basically, the perception towards water management in Thailand was concerning of water scarcity issue in drought period than the issue of exceeding water in monsoon period, and the perception in flood disaster relief was addressed as the social welfare relief activity. As the result, flood disaster management concerned on defensive approach rather than offensive approach. The aspect of multi-boundary management was stated as one necessary factor in large-scale disaster management; there was no organization could deal with flood situation as a cross-jurisdiction organ in the professional way, although each governmental organ and division had data and information related to the flood situation; but, the linkage between those organs was not found. Moreover, the unclear of information, belated information and miscommunication among media and people were not something unique which led to misunderstanding towards the real situation of disaster.

Coordination among government and communities has been addressed as the crucial factor in disaster response, which could be addressed as professional approach of emergency management. However, the problems, such as late in response, communication, different of mutual understanding among divisions towards management in disaster situation undermined the effectiveness of disaster response and always occurred in the practices. This study argued that in order to increase the professionalism in disaster response, communities should play important roles and should understand more towards the professional ideas of disaster response rather than focusing on how to increase capability of the government.

2. Review Literature

2.1 *Coordination in Disaster Management*

Disaster Management can be defined as the entire process of planning and intervention to reduce disaster as well as the response and recovery measures, which is a neglected element in development planning. Traditional emergency management is rationale which is considered in the function of law enforcement and agencies as a temporary job, such as fire department [1]; but gradually it changes to a more coordinated of varieties of resources, techniques and skills for fast response and fast in the recovery process [2]. As the fundamental, coordination is the crucial aspect in order to fulfill towards post-disaster recovery in disaster management which also becomes the challenge nowadays [3]. Local government can play as the key role in disaster management activities in order to avoid loss of life in local communities [4]. The key points for local government and communities are the first-hand respondent in the threats of disaster [5]. Basically, the activities within responsibility of local government can be separated into two types which are comprehensive and integrated [4].

In order to increase the effectiveness in disaster management, organizations try to coordinate among different organs by applying the concept of governance, which is related to various fields, such as public administration, conflict resolution, and environmental management [6]. However, the definitions and core concept varied upon the application and situation in terms of governance that are as jointly determined; norms and rules are designed to regulate personal and group behavior [6] as the means to steer the process that influences decisions and actions within the private, public, and civic sectors [5]. The study on collaborative governance includes factors, such as general system context, drivers, the collaborative government regime (principle engagement, shared motivation, capacity for joint action) affecting the efficiency of collaboration in cross-border, multi-jurisdiction levels of government control [6]. The factors affecting coordination in disaster management are, among others, funding and

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