

COMPLETION REPORT

Comparative Study of Community Awareness Towards Tsunami Disaster in Malaysia, Japan and Indonesia

Syahrir Ridha (+2)

Senior Lecturer

Department of Petroleum Engineering

Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS

Tsunami became a shared concern of many countries, especially in the aftermath of the great Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and the great East Japan tsunami in 2011. Presently, all countries leaders realized that the risk of tsunami hazard is possible to be reduced if the international communities cooperate to raise the level of public awareness toward tsunami, as well as the level of preparedness prior to the disaster event. Although almost all countries have formulated key policies for raising the public awareness and preparedness towards tsunami disaster, however, in practice, the community awareness in one country may differ to others since every place has its own governance priority, budget availability, and characteristic of society. In this project, the progress and challenges of some countries; Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan on governing the Tsunami Awareness-Preparedness Programs are studied, reviewed and analyzed. Some major successful programs disseminated in these countries are highlighted and discussed further to inspire other countries for better policy making. It is found that the involvement of every stakeholder and public awareness level in Japan are relatively high because many large disasters that have struck along its history which made its people being more experienced and aware. Hence, the people of Japan generally present as well-prepared and awareness communities when facing similar disaster. Indonesia has successfully achieved significant results as the budgeting or financial strategies have been well allocated to empower the local governments, such as by providing them guidance materials, intensive trainings, and additional incentives. However, further condition is that the cultural obstacle of the people which is not proactive to seek disaster-related information and the risk as they need. The remaining challenge constitutes that the national strategy, even though it has been drafted for some time, however, it has not been implemented with sufficient funding support. In addition, the process and outcome monitoring and evaluation are not performed well. A lack of coordination; weak knowledge management; and poor communication strategy have also become obstacles in enhancing public awareness to nurture a culture of resilience. While in Malaysia, both the technological readiness and the human readiness upon tsunami have been adequately upgraded after the great Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. However, it was found that the people in the surrounding areas were not aware of the tsunami risk as they did not know what the siren is for and there were no designated tsunami evacuation zones and evacuation routes for them although the Malaysian Government had installed tsunami sirens in the region. Additionally, by considering the fact that coastlines around Malaysia remains the most-visited tourism destinations, it is also important to enhance communication with tourism-related businesses and ensure their readiness against future risks of tsunami disaster. Furthermore, both Indonesia and Malaysia start to do substantial effort and progress in constructing institutional arrangements, architectures, structures, and governance to deal with natural hazard risks and disasters, particularly tsunamis after the December 2004 tsunami disaster. Adaptation and improvement on the approach programs for the society awareness are deemed necessary, especially on stakeholder's preparedness, public awareness and also future challenges.

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