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COMMUNICATION DISASTER HANDLING IN MOUNT SINABUNG ERUPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the communication disaster treatment received by the refugees of Mount Sinabung Eruptions in Karo Regency. The main problem here is that the government very focused on physical development that communication matters for the refugees. Communication disaster treatment is very effective to reduce the risk in disaster. This treatment supposed to held in every phase of disaster, mitigation, preparedness, respond, and recovery. Most of the time, the government did not pay attention about communication process at all especially at the mitigation and preparednes phases. There was some communication treatment at the respond and recovery phases, but it is not maximal. Even in recovery phase, the action is having an unfinish solution. They build the building, the gave land to the refugees, they gave food, but they did not gave enough information about the important situations.

Keywords: Communication Disaster, Communication Management, Sinabung.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mount Sinabung, or also called as Deleng Sinabung in Karo, is one of the mountains in Karo Regency. A Volcano as high as 2460 masl is formed on the edge of the Northwest Toba Tua cavity. The *Strike Slip* fault line extends along the western boundary of Toba, the upper part of which forms the continuous Mount Sinabung to the Northeast until Sibayak Volcano is a second-order fault (Indonesian Disaster Data 2014: 30).

After a break for hundreds of years, one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia has changed from type B to type A due to volcanic activity since the first eruption in August 2010. After that, Sinabung Volcano was silent for 2 years and again erupted in September 2013 and still Eruption to date. The volcanic activity of Sinabung continues to fluctuate volatile. The "Beware" status was in effect for 23 November 2013 until 8

April 2014 and after that it dropped to "Standby". Many scientists and volunteers try to examine the activities of Mount Sinabung because there are not many records in history that indicate the pattern of activity.

The long period of activity of the Sinabung Volcano caused a large refugee wave. In 2010, when mountain status was raised at "Beware" level, about 12,000 people were evacuated to the safe area. Even so, the condition of Sinabung that tend to be unstable had made some residents anxious to return to their homes. However, in the period of 2013-2014, major eruptions re-occur and make the population of 17 villages and 2 hamlets to be evacuated. Not only the refugees, the eruption of Mount Sinabung, followed by hot clouds in February 2014, left 17 people dead, 14 died in the scene and others died in the hospital due to burns.

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The number of victims should be able to be minimized if the disaster management is reaching maximized. Reminding, the number of victims is not only the numbers that meet the statistics of the report but humans as a symbol of life with all the resources it has. Therefore, not only reducing casualties, good disaster management is essential to minimize the risks and impacts of disasters.

The Government, in this case the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) is an institution that became the main command in disaster management. The Center for Information Data and Public Relations BNPB becomes the main gateway of information flows related to disasters and mitigation. BNPB has representatives in each region, Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), so ideally each region has adequate disaster management resources. On the other hand, there are also non-governmental organizations specializing in disaster or non-disaster, with more experience in handling pre-disaster, disaster and post-disaster.

However, if you look at the process of disaster management in Indonesia to date, various aspects are still being a problem such as disaster management of Mount Sinabung. Setio Budi HH in his Journal of Disaster Communication: Aspects of the System (Coordination, Information and Cooperation) quoted Budi (2011: 23) stating that following various legal reinforcements, institutional and disaster management experience still leaves many issues both conceptually and field .

The main issues are Communication, Information, Coordination and Cooperation. From the aspect of speed, exactness, accuracy, communication and information aspect becomes problematic, especially when talking about information confusion, misplaced actions such as uneven logistics, non-integration or overlap

between sectors in disaster management are still prevalent. This shows that the existence of the ego-sectoral aspect and the understanding of the integrated policy and implementation aspects of the natural disaster aspects have not yet become the main agenda. The communication and coordination aspects of the related parties are two important points in disaster management which must always be synergized in every disaster handling. Because, in the communication already includes elements of information and in coordination already includes elements of cooperation. Both of these aspects, communication and coordination, require an integrated system between the government and the community for disaster management from pre-disaster to post-disaster to proceed as planned.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Disaster Communication

The eruption of Mount Sinabung had become the attention of the media. This was because Sinabung has long been "sleeping" before it finally erupted and caused the surrounding community to be relocated. Many social problems then arose, but then the problem of Sinabung is considered as an ordinary event, and not defined as a disaster.

So, what kind of incident then referred to as a disaster? According to Coppola, disasters can be defined as those hazards for which the consequences may be so great as to overwhelm the local capacity to respond (Coppola, 2009: 75).

More specifically, an event can be categorized as a disaster when there is a lost of life, some are physically wounded, there is a damaged or missing item, and environmental damage. In disaster situations according to Smith (1992) there can be direct loss, as well as indirect loss.

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Direct loss of fatalities, injuries, cost of repair or replacement of damaged or destroyed public and private structure (relocation cost / temporary housing, loss of income, Community response costs, cleanup cost (Coppola, 2009: 50).

Indirect losses are not necessarily felt, but they have long-term effects on society. Indirect loss of loss, input / output losses of businesses, reduction in business / personal spending ("ripple effects"), loss of institutional knowledge, mental illness, bereavement (Coppola, 2009: 50).

Disaster handling has four main phases, namely mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Based on Disaster Mitigation Education Center (P2MB) University of Indonesia, disaster mitigation is a series of efforts to reduce disaster risks, both through physical development and awareness and capacity building for disaster threats. Mitigation is related to risk component reduction.

Preparedness according to RI constitution no. 24 of 2007 on disaster management is a series of activities undertaken to anticipate disasters through organizing as well as through appropriate and efficient measures. Preparedness involves the process of equipping affected community groups with the use of efforts to increase their chances of survival in disaster situations and to minimize financial losses and other losses. The method undertaken at this stage is to train and equip disaster management skills at every level of government, as well as to train the community in relation to what actions they can take to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and other risks.

The main focus at the response stage is the action taken to reduce or eliminate the consequences of a disaster, whether the result of what will happen, is happening, or has happened. This action aims to limit injuries caused by disasters, loss of life, and damage to property and the environment.

The response phase begins when a potential disaster is seen and ends when disaster is declared over.

The last phase is the recovery phase. Recovery covers repair, reconstruction, or reassemble what has been lost during the disaster. This recovery period requires a longer time and a more intense process than the other 3 phases. This more intensity will involve more people, institutions, and financing.

Disaster knowledge is important and can not be ignored. In many cases of disaster in Indonesia, many repetitive disaster effects are due to lack of knowledge about the disaster. In fact, Indonesia is one part of the world that is prone to disaster. The management of communication management in a disaster situation is an absolute matter. Communication management will help the public to be well-informed against the various hazards in disaster conditions.

Damon Coppola (Coppola, 2009: 16) made several important goals in the management of communication management such as: 1) Raising public awareness of the hazard risk, 2) Guiding public behaviour, 3) warning the public, 4) increase or enhance knowledge, 5) refute myths or misconceptions, 6) influence attitude and social norms, 7) Develop skills, 8) reinforce knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, 9) suggest/enable action, 10) show the benefit of behaviour, 11) increase support or demand for services, 12) coalesce organizational relationship. In disaster situations, every member of the community concerned requires "access to reliable, accurate, and timely information at all levels of society before, during, and after disaster" (Jha, 2010: 253).

b. Communication Management

Many assumptions has stated that management is merely related to the economy, but in actually management is

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related to humans. It is about how to organize human resources for stand together to achieve organizational goals. More specifically related to the changes that occur in humans when they move from individuals to organizational humans (Klikauer, 2008: 9).

Communication is an important part of human activity. The flow of this activity involves social interaction with other human beings, and ultimately without good management will lead to potential conflicts of different interests. Communication can be regarded as the foundation of effective management. As a general practice, the goal of communication should be to clarify information to the level of depth required by the receiver (Pritchard, 2004: 1).

Communication activity exists in every communication activity starting from initiation process, planning process, programme execution process, control process, until closing process. After it can be seen its effectiveness. The effectiveness of communication can only be seen through the feedback given by the recipient. The obvious test of communications effectiveness is to ask the receiver in the communications model to reiterate what has been said or what commitments have been made (Pritchard, 2004: 199).

The basic concept of managerial in the context of communication has a peculiar principle. There are 4 main managerial principles in the communication context:

1. Comprehensibility: Does management communicate work related issues *comprehensively*, so that one can understand what in fact is happening at the business level and beyond the borders of an enterprise? Is managerial communication precise, inclusive, intelligible, complete, broad enough to form a view thorough and ample enough?

2. Sincerity: Does management's communication offer *sincerity*? Is communication has done in a good faith? Is there no scope for manipulation left? Has management avoided misleading people? Does communication lead to guided decisions as opened up under conditions of rational choice that offer choices within management organised confinements?
3. Legitimacy: Is management's communication *legitimate*? Does one's acceptance lead to a legitimisation of managerialism? Is management's claim a hidden legitimacy of a corporate judgement covered in professionalism?
4. Truthfulness: Is management's communication based on *truth*? Can one believe and trust in what has been said? Is there any evidence supporting their claim? Is the evidence good enough? Is the offered information upon which one acts or reaches a decision truthful or untruthful, even unintentionally?

In research conducted by the World Bank team (2010), there are several institutions that deal directly with the communication and information process during a disaster. There is a government, which must coordinate the entire process of information and communication. Speaking of the government, of course not only the central government but also the local government. At the second level is an information management agency that is an agency specifically involved in assistance and reconstruction, as well as local communities that will assist the communication management process. There are also international organizations that can assist the communication management process while still coordinating with local communities.

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United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN / ISDR) in the book of Community, Environment and Disaster Risk Management Vol 7 (Shaw, 2011: 27) has made several communication and information management steps to reduce disaster risk:

1. Provide easily understandable information on disaster risks and protection options, especially to citizens in high-risk areas, to encourage and enable people to take action to reduce risks and build resilience. The information should incorporate relevant traditional and indigenous knowledge and culture heritage and be tailored to different target audiences, considering cultural and social factors.
2. Strengthen networks among disaster experts, managers, and planners across sectors and between regions, and create or strengthen procedures for using available expertise when agencies and other important actors develop local risk reduction plans.
3. Promote and improve dialogue and cooperation among scientific communities and practitioners working on DRR, and encourage partnerships among stakeholders, including those working on the socioeconomic dimensions of DRR.
4. Promote the use, application and affordability of recent information, communication, and space-based technologies and related services, as well as earth observations, to support DRR, particularly for training and for the sharing and dissemination of information among different categories of users.
5. In the medium term, develop local, national, regional, and international user-friendly directories, inventories, and national information-sharing systems and

services for the exchange of information on good practices, cost-effective, and easy-to-use DRR technologies, and lessons learned on policies, plans, and measures for DRR.

6. Institutions dealing with urban development should provide information to the public on disaster reduction options prior to constructions, land purchase, or land sale.

Update and widely disseminate international standard terminology related to DRR, at least in all official United Nations languages, for use in program and institutional development, operations, research, training curricula, and public information programs.

3. RESULTS

a. Life Before The Eruption, No Mitigation At All

There were 3 villages located at Mount Sinabung valley, Bekerah Village, Simacem Village, and Suka Meriah Village. People in these three villages generally work as farmers with coffee, oranges, corn, chilies and potatoes as the main commodities. With stable agricultural conditions, people used to be able to harvest vegetables regularly every three months, and two weeks to harvest coffee. A good level of soil fertility makes the area around this area ideal for farming. Every household can own up to hectares of land.

Socioeconomic conditions were relatively stable. With stable harvests, the economic level of the residents is fairly good. For education matters, each village has a school from elementary to high school. Cultural life and art also went well, the culture of togetherness through Goro-goro Aron and "Kerja Tahun" still carried out regularly

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The condition of Mount Sinabung which had been 'sleeping' for hundreds of years has made the government and the community not pay attention to the dangers of Mount Sinabung. Mount Sinabung has for many years been one of the climbing destinations in Tanah Karo.

The villagers did not get any information about the potential disasters from Mount Sinabung. Residents are not provided with an enough knowledge about disaster. Life goes normally without realizing that the danger was right in front of their own eyes.

b. Life During The Eruption, No Preparedness

Vulnerable groups such as women, children, disabilities, and the elderly are groups that need attention. Vulnerable groups are categorized as having physical and psychological risks. Vulnerable groups should get top priority to be saved.

Handling of vulnerable groups in disaster communication can be in the form of information about accessible locations, rescue training for men to help rescue vulnerable groups, or trauma healing. Based on the focus group discussion that has been carried out with residents there was no special effort made for the vulnerable group of the Mount Sinabung eruption disaster.

Children actually experience a decline in confidence. Children who previously attended school in their respective villages, during the disaster phase stayed in refugee camps. They have sent to the nearest to the evacuation area. The thing that later happened was that these children mocked by other school students, such as the words "Hey refugee children!". This makes the children then feel they have no self-esteem.

In addition, there was an assumption in the community that the refugees are actually lucky because they get a lot of assistance. It impact on the negative

attitudes of the community to the refugees. It is true that they have gotten a lot of help from the government, international institutions, local communities, and universities, but that assistance does not necessarily relieve stress and sadness because of the loss of property, hometown, their normal lives that taken away by disasters.

From several groups who often provide assistance, the university is a group that can be said to be quite concerned about the problem of disaster communication for these vulnerable groups even though it cannot be said to be maximal because it is not done with a planned timeframe. Universities in North Sumatra such as USU, UNIMED, UMSU and several other universities often perform simple trauma healing for a range of groups. Activities such as playing and singing together are often done to help them to forget a little about the disaster.

Unfortunately, activities like this are starting to be rarely carried out after they move to the Siosar area. Some residents actually feel that staying in refuge is even better than after being transferred to Siosar. There were not many campus representatives who came, played, and sang with them anymore, or tell stories. Meanwhile the children still felt inferior as labelled as refugee children, and there are still elderly people who often looked at Mount Sinabung from afar, wondering where the land was.

c. Life During Respons Fase

When Mount Sinabung erupted for the first time in 2010, the they got confused about the information, They were asked to return to the village even though there was no information on whether the village was safe or not. After returning to the village in the morning, there was another eruption at night. Then they have to runaway again from the eruption.

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After the second eruption, the residents survived to stay in temporary evacuation which was made in public hall (Karonese called it Jambur) around Kabanjahe City. About 3 months of staying in refugee camps, residents are again encouraged to return to their homes. This time it was even delivered by the regent. And apparently the situation is still not safe. 2013-2014 was the peak of Mount Sinabung's volcanic activity and resulted in a large influx of refugees. In crisis conditions, people are in *dire need* of information to reduce anxiety and uncertainty. The information needed is related to safety points, evacuation locations, the presence or absence of lives, education and health services during evacuation. Information about the victims was obtained from television (the victims did not come from residents, instead students came to the disaster site), safe places and evacuation locations from the village head, and the danger points to avoid were obtained from BMKG. Although there is information distribution, it is not maximally organized.

During the evacuation period, residents often moved from one Jambur to another. The move information was delivered orally by local people or soldiers. At beginning, the residents initially searched for their own safe points such as Jambur and Koramil (military residence). After that, the army took part in helping with the provision of food and the installation of tents for evacuation.

d. Life During Recovery

Siosar referred to as Land Above The Clouds. The area that was once a protected forest area does have natural beauty and is suitable as a tourist area. But, actually moving to Siosar also does not necessarily solve the problem of the former refugees. Residents who previously owned hectares of land had to start from scratch with an area of 0.5 hectares with soil conditions that still

did not match the type of plant they normally planting. Residents still have to adapt to the very cold air and the strong winds, and the existence of clean water that is still very limited with a bad quality. With a little sarcasm the residents said, "since living in Siosar, we are getting ugly".

Access to educational facilities is still difficult where students have to go out of the village area to go to school while Siosar distance with the nearest school is very far. Every village in Siosar is actually has a PAUD building, but because there has been no handover between BNPB to the village, the building cannot be used and is still locked. Some children's play facilities have even been damaged even though they have not been used for education.

In addition to physical development, the thing that should not be forgotten is the people's need for information about disaster. Information that can increase their knowledge capacity to adapt to the effects of disasters. While in Siosar, there are actually efforts to increase people's knowledge about disasters. There is a Disaster Preparedness Cadets Training (TAGANA) for young people where these young people are given knowledge about salvation when a disaster occurs. Unfortunately, some youth were reluctant to participate in this activity because the government only provided transport money for a month. The issue of the amount of assistance was also criticized by one of the village heads for being considered to spoil the people. However, there are also village heads who actually assess aid as the main obligation of the government or organization that comes to the village. One of the communication mediums that people like is the Perkolon-kolong art event. For residents, the existence of this cultural event helps them to momentarily forget the pain of losing their hometown, and the difficulty of adapting to a new place.

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4. CONCLUSION

Mount Sinabung has not stopped issuing volcanic ash to current day now on. The dust effect was not only felt by the closest villagers, but it could also be felt to Kabanjahe, and also Brastagi. Learning from the previous ineffective handling of disaster communication, prevention efforts are needed to reduce disaster risk for rural communities who still live around Mount Sinabung such as Payung Village, Kutarakyat Village, Batukarang Village, Selandi Village, and other villages.

Some of the efforts that can be done include:

- Disaster communication activities must be carried out more conceptually by involving experts in accordance with the needs of the community by considering the different characteristics of each phase of handling
- Active communication about disaster during the mitigation phase, both through structured extension activities in youth, women and schools. Learning from the absence of disaster communication efforts at the initial mitigation stage, it is better for the government to focus more on disaster risk prevention measures, especially in areas surrounding the Mount Sinabung area.
- For the Siosar region, the government can reduce physical assistance, but focus on non-physical assistance, especially related to efforts to bring people closer to access information according to their needs. Access to information such as information on trauma healing, information on social welfare services, agricultural information services, information on clean water treatment information.
- It is necessary to establish a frontline and official Disaster Communication

Volunteer to disseminate information needed in disaster conditions, such as information on safe points, evacuation locations, schedules for counseling and trauma healing activities, disaster knowledge updates for the community both in the vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups.

- Recovery of disaster effects on humans cannot be completed only by providing physical facilities and taking a long time. One medium that is preferred by the people is Goro-Goro Aron. The government can use this medium to convey information and knowledge about disaster. This art activity can also reduce the effects of post-disaster trauma on the community.

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