UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TOWARDS FLOOD CALAMITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

Flooding is the most significant natural hazard in Malaysia. In recent years, flash floods have caused havoc in the country but the precautionary measures in disaster preparedness are still lacking. Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to focus on the community as the key actor or primary beneficiary of disaster preparedness. A qualitative approach was undertaken to evaluate community preparedness towards flood calamities in flood-prone areas in West Malaysia. Respondents from nine different regions shared their insights and experiences on the communities' preparations in anticipation of the annual flood season. The findings showed that communities were not prepared for the flooding although they were informed of the pending disaster. The preparation by government agencies were not enough to match with the large size communities and villages inundated with flood. The community leaders acknowledged that having emergency drills and sharing information may enhance awareness before the flooding but not during the disaster period. The implication of this study is that disaster preparedness should be part of the standard operating procedure for communities that are prone to flooding. Educating and training the communities on disaster preparedness is suggested in order to minimize casualties.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"We have learnt about disaster in the past that the dangers from disaster are unavoidable, but by actions, we can compound or diminish them and difference is in preparedness."

-Ban Ki-moon, Secretary of General of the United Nations (2011)

Disaster is when a natural hazard affects a vulnerable population (Ainuddin and Routray, 2012). Events such as the 2011 Japan earthquake, the 2006 Indonesian Tsunami, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 have left horrified images and triggered great responses from around the world (Casper, 2011).

In Malaysia, heavy rainfalls caused deluge in most of the states including, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor, Kedah and Pahang (Disaster Report, 2013). A few areas such as Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu experienced flash flood and has caused temporarily closed several road in the city (New Straits Times, 2014). According to Pandey and Okazaki, (2005), victims of natural face properties damage, trauma, fatality and their homes when flood hits. Consequently, social and economic losses have effect on nation's development.

Upon the occurrence of any disaster, vulnerability is an all-time favourite subject that gets attention. The fact that many countries are still not investing enough in prevention and preparedness, has caused people to be exposed to disaster risks, fatalities and development disruption (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Through systematic efforts, community may increase their resilience to disaster by understanding about preparedness and reduce the impact of disaster when it happens. Thus, to strengthen people's capacity to cope with hazards, community-based disaster management plays an important role to ensure this aim. It is the capacity of a community to respond to the consequences of an adverse event by having plans in place so that people know what to do and where to go if a warning is issued (Yodmani, 2010).