

The Effective Disaster Response in Cambodia : Implications from Focus Group Interview

Jeon, HyeSook* · Lee, Kwonmin* · Lee, Yeseul* · Park, Eun-Gyu** · Choi, Yong-Sang*

* Center for Climate / Environment Change Prediction Research (CCCPR), Ewha Womans University

** Dept. Climate and Energy Systems Engineering, Ewha Womans University

Abstract

This study investigates effective measures for disasters in Cambodia, since this country undergoes high economic growth and encounters severe damage from disastrous weather events. We could deduce effective disaster measures ten topics from two times of focus group interviews. First, the need of realistic and effective policies, securing budget for policy implement, technical development support, official education and training expansion were suggested for effective government policy and improvement of plan. Second, enhanced disaster response training and monitoring by NGO, improved social responsibility of enterprise, careful execution of hydro-electric development were mentioned for socially responsible support and cooperation in private sector and civil society. Third, regarding reinforcement of community activity, active tree planting, enhancement of awareness training of importance of disaster response, focusing on participants of disaster response education were agreed for effective disaster response. This study would provide preliminary data to help reducing disaster damage and planning socio-economic security for vulnerable people.

Key Words : Effective disaster response, Cambodia, Climate change, Focus group interview

Introduction

- According to the 2017 Natural Disaster Report, there were 335 disasters, resulting in more than 95 million lives and \$ 335 billion in economic losses (CRED, 2018). However, Asia is the most vulnerable in the world, with 44% of all natural disasters and 70% of the affected population in Asia (CRED, 2018).
- Among Southeast Asian countries, Cambodia is said to have achieved poverty alleviation through rapid economic growth over the past two decades, and this driving force for economic development is the increase in exports based on 'sewing' (World Bank, 2017). However, the problem of weak social safety nets is still raised, and the UN Global Crisis Index shows that disaster spending is the 8th largest in the world.
- There is strong need about effective disaster response in Cambodia as the damage is getting bigger due to irregular local torrential rains every wet seasons.

Rain

No rain

Method

- Focus groups interview (FGI) is one of the method for data gathering in qualitative research (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997). The study was approved (ewha-201904-0008-01) and two interviews were conducted with four participants from Cambodia, as shown in the table below.

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Gender | Male | Male | Male | Female |
| Age | 22 | 39 | 34 | 38 |
| Grade | Graduate school 3rd semester | Graduate school 8th semester | Graduate school 2nd semester | Graduate school 11th semester |
| Major | Physics | Physics | Urban administration and planning | Life Science |
| Period of stay in Korea (year/month) | 1/2 | 4/8 | 1/1 | 5/7 |

Result

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Government | <p>Realistic and effective policies</p> <p>“Cambodia also integrated climate change into the national structure plan. All the infrastructure and all the developmental checklist integrated climate change but mostly they deal only with infrastructure like road and bridge, they don't have any intention to invest in other sector. It's still a problem.[3]”</p> |
| | <p>Secured policy enforcement budget</p> <p>“Of course the government is doing all kinds of these things but limited activity. Something like that. Those include the financial support, the technology that are the main things that the government of Cambodia cannot do the big things.[2]”</p> |
| | <p>Technical development support</p> <p>“I think this is the general problem of developing countries. Not only Cambodia. Limited capacity, limited technology. In terms of technology we don't have such like in Korea. So alarming is only when it happens on TV or on the radio but actually it's in danger.[2]”</p> |
| Private sector | <p>Extensive official education and training</p> <p>“There is an effective way that the current government try to educate people in terms of how to be safe from the natural disaster which is the local TVs. But I guess not only that there should be more training to the community head. Especially to those who are in the province, the areas that frequently are the problems.[2]”</p> |
| | <p>Enhanced disaster response training and monitoring through NGO</p> <p>“NGO has an important role in monitoring. Participation in terms of providing education to the people of the communities and... when I say monitoring I guess it's basically to monitor the activities of the government. Because we don't fully trust the transparency that is practically done by the government or by the local authority in terms of fighting, reducing the effects of the natural disaster.[2]”</p> |
| | <p>Promotive corporate social responsibility</p> <p>“For the private sector, some government provide small community to develop infrastructure like some small infrastructure in terms of contribution to the environmental issues. For example, some small grant to develop their community. Some like private companies private sector they also allocate some grant.[1]”</p> |
| Community | <p>Thoughtful implementation of hydropower generation</p> <p>“I would like to add also on hydropower plant because we don't only use the plant in Cambodia but also in all Mekong river country because from our experience, the hydropower in Lao and in Vietnam also makes some destroy in Cambodia. Also like for this reason the looking a lot tree and reservoir to stop the border.[4]”</p> |
| | <p>Active tree planting</p> <p>“I think planting trees is the general idea how people in the government try to do is to plant more trees and stop cutting trees. That's quite general fighting climate change. We believe in our opinion that reducing that kind of disaster like flooding that should be a way in terms of planting trees, but I think to be effective, the government as well as whole Cambodian should care about that planting trees.[2]”</p> |
| | <p>Enhancement of awareness education on the importance of disaster response</p> <p>“I think most people do not know the advantage of the tree. if they grow the mango tree or coconut tree, if you ask them why do you grow that kind of tree, they just want to have mango or coconut. But they don't think about something related to the environment. If mango doesn't produce any more they will cut it. I think education is also very important. We have to think about this.[1]”</p> |
| | <p>Focusing on participants of disaster response education in community</p> <p>“I think the most who get training is ladies. Like he said from the previous meeting, they all go out to work and they join in training. But woman have more. They need to take care of the household so they get the training but they cannot manage at the moment because they cannot leave their house. They are in charge of taking care of animal, property and household, they are likely to stay in the house.[3]”</p> |

Reference

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