Mechanism: Guarantee and Participation of the Physically Challenged in Disaster Prevention & Relief

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Abstract. The physically challenged are vulnerable in disaster prevention and relief. What we ignored are not only their basic human rights but also their capabilities and emotional needs to offer others help. A rational disaster prevention & relief mechanism, including uniformly national project related to disasters to ensure physical challengers basic rights, green channel allowing licensed physical challengers’ participation and a legitimate regulation to ensure their effective participation, is necessary to be established. In this article, I analyse instances happened recently, provide suggestion to solve the problems. By analyzing the instances, I will point out our mistakes. Some of them could be easily avoided with participation of physical challengers. Thus we can establish a new disaster prevention & relief mechanism to ensure their rights and improve efficiency in reconstruction with their special abilities.

Introduction

Human beings, ever since born, have suffered from numerous natural and human-led catastrophes, from tsunamis to terror attacks. Caused by such disasters, several egregious results encumbered the development of our society. A considerable number of activities taken by participants exaggerated the demerits and disadvantages of the physically disabled people. Nevertheless, remained indifferent in disasters, physical challengers’ distinctive insights have been hardly realized. The stereotype, that disabled people are the burden in disasters relief rather than the force making potentially considerable contribution, causes the higher rate of death for disabled people. Unfortunately, compared with ordinary people, physical challengers are more vulnerable in calamities. Since a higher rate of loss can usually be found for the physically challenged, both proprietarily and vitally. For example, morality of disabled people is over twice higher than that of ordinary people.

There have been an increasing number of natural disasters since the 21st century. A series of measures are necessary to be taken to face the challenges. And in the plan, we have to ensure the equality between physical challengers and ordinary people. Not only should human rights be respected, but they also could get chance to participate relief as well, if they would. Therefore an equal disaster relief plan is need to be established, which should reduce property loss and trauma. We may build a balanced and efficient disaster relief system to equalize rights among groups in the society.
Physical Challengers--A Vulnerable Group in Natural Disasters Organization of the Text

With a gradually increasing environment pollution and rising amount of natural catastrophes around the world, physical challengers are always suffering from difficulties when disasters and reconstruction. Designed for ordinary people, the form of communication we using are not very convenient for them, which may cause their missing the alarm when disasters happening. Meanwhile, because infrastructures were destroyed, lack of supply or service on artificial limbs etc. may heavier their potential injuries. In addition, as a specific group, their reasonable demands for accommodation could not be met in the period. The extremes frequently taking place, the disabled people in most areas, are afflicted with the fellow problems.

As have stated, few countries have put emphasis on the reasonable demands of the physically disabled or realized the group’s distinctive flairs. For instance, the guidance, protection, and training provided for the disabled people should have been designed for them. But currently none of these have been involved in any disaster prevention plan. And on the condition that there is a shortage of emergency crew, the physically challenged is seldom permitted to participate in such field, even though some of them have been qualified.

Lack of equality concerning physical challengers in systems of disaster prevention & relief, thus their human rights and chance of participation are ignored. Therefore a heavier rate of death was caused in calamities. For example, 37 disabled people, trapped in a nursing home during the Katrina typhoon, were drowned on account of the delayed aid; A large number of the disabled, lost their lives due to the difficulty in escaping in the “911” incident. Shortly after the Sandy typhoon, the disabled were settled in shelters established by commercial medical agents, without acquiring proper medical service.

Moreover, discrimination towards this vulnerable group of the society permeates in disaster prevention and relief activities. Owing to the usually chaotic situation in disaster areas, such prejudice is barely realized and proved. A mechanism which proceed evaluation on behaviors of crew and determine responsibilities is necessary to establish prevent from infringement in emergency. For instance, only one shelter for the disabled existing in Ulster, the USA, which circumscribes the disabled people’s where to escape when emergency occurs. Furthermore, the pre-arranged plan goes that all the physically challenged should accept service at that place wherever they live. In this case, the challengers are not only deprived of freedom of choice, but suffer from an higher risk objectively. This shelter, declared to be capable of settling all the disabled in this area, takes no account of practical problems from the feeding of guide dogs to the possible communication with deaf people. The evacuation plan, including evacuation routine, public signs, and transportation vehicles, failed to meet the justified needs of the disabled people as well.

Solutions--Establishing an Equal Disaster Prevention & Relief mechanism

Confronted with the worsening environment pollution and disastrous incidents, participation of all society plays an important role disaster prevention & relief. And it also embeds the essence of building harmony. As an indispensable part of social members, the physically challenged possesses the inneglectable potentials in contributing to disaster prevention and relief work. The disabled people themselves are actually a magnificent force in extremes and emergencies. The current estimation of both the abilities and protection for the disabled people lead to tragedies that could have
been circumvented. Measures are needed to ensure their equality when disasters. In this way, we could also lower the cost of disaster prevention & relief, using their specific abilities. Thus we come up some suggestion as follows.

**Designing Pre--arranged Plan of Disaster Prevention and Rescue with no Regional Differences**

Based on the randomness of possible disasters, the protection for the physically challenged in disaster prevention and rescue plan in cities and villages should not be overlooked. We should encourage the service which takes the physical challengers into account. In order to recognize the importance of accessibility to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communication, in enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, services for the physically challenged, from communication to transportation, should be assured and intensified in disasters.

**Establishing Mechanism that Allow Physical Challengers to Participate in Disaster Prevention & Relief**

Compared with ordinary people, the advantage of physical challengers are obvious in disaster prevention & relief. To maximize the benefits, measures which are necessary to be taken can be listed as follows.

1. The long-term place for the disabled people in the disaster management committee should be offered;
2. Conferences associated with the disaster should invite the representatives of physically challenged people;
3. Opportunities in professional training should be provided when they take part in volunteer. And with a increasing number of physical challengers’ participation in the future, they can also be listed in emergency contact to improve peer aid.

**Promoting Related Regulations**

Were the regulations and policy concerned with national security, city planning and citizenship well-established, the disabled people would be served in a way most suitable for them. Therefore, we can reduce the effect of physical differences. For example, any factories possessing hazardous chemical equipment must inform not only the regulator, but also the local emergency management committee when discovering the release of toxic substance. Local emergency management department needs to ensure the right of access of information of the stakeholders, making the such information public in time. Furthermore, apathy or discrimination towards the disabled people should be legally prohibited when organizations and individuals participating in disaster prevention and rescue plan. Once found, they have to pay punitive compensation.

Various professions, including staff in public security, transportation and medical, representatives from commercial institution, industry and mass media, should be attracted when organizations making plans on projects related to disaster prevention & relief, potential risks estimation and exercise. Meanwhile, though there exists an obvious difference among individuals’ hearing, sight, and comprehension ability, the guarantee of communication for the physically challenged should be treated differently from the ordinary people. Only by respect the wills of the disabled and accord to their abilities could this obstacle be overcame. High-tech should be employed in to smoothen communication, e.g telecommunication and video chat. For example, photic equipment
should be employed in the alarm system to inform the visual challenged. It is an epitome of employing technological resources to realize effective communication.

**Conclusion**

In recent years, natural disasters and emergencies serve as severe threat for the physically challenged group in their development, and even survival. The government’s active participation in relevant activities deemed as a source of protection for the vulnerable group, not only benefits the physically challenged, but contributes to the society’s virtuous cycle of justice and human rights.

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**References**


