

Social Response of Local Governments during the Great East Japan Earthquake

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In Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures, more than 1,000 people were killed or missing each due to the 2011 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami. It is thought that damaged local governments have faced a lot of difficult problems concerning social responses caused by the wide-area catastrophic damage. In this study, this disaster was considered as a wide-area catastrophic disaster, which is defined a disaster that causes catastrophic damage to two more prefectures in Japan. Social response problems of local governments during this disaster show that the limit of social response of damaged local governments gave no emergency provisions to sheltering residents and the limit of social response of supporting local governments gave difficulty of lifting rescue using a helicopter to residents isolated in tsunami evacuation buildings. In conclusion, understanding the particular problems concerning social response under a wide-area catastrophic disaster is considered essential for reducing damages of next catastrophic disasters. It is recommended that particular problems concerning social responses under the 2011 event are discussed by using more data that will be published and hearing the local governors in the damaged area and so on.

Keywords: Social response, The great east japan earthquake disaster, Tsunami, Local government, Catastrophic disaster