

High Risk Disaster: Vulnerable Community with Limited Preparedness

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Understanding the socio-economic condition of the community and the level of vulnerability and preparedness is crucial in anticipating earthquakes and tsunamis. The risk depends on the nature of hazard and vulnerability. Previous disaster experiences indicate that vulnerable people with low preparedness are at great risk to become disaster victims, indicating by a large number of lives lost and people injured. The experiences also show that a community with limited socio-economic conditions has difficulty in recovering its economic life. Poverty affects its lack of capacity to provide its daily basic needs. Therefore, its dependence on reliefs from government and other stakeholders is high.

LIPI has carried out study on socio-economic conditions and preparedness of communities in high risk disaster areas, particularly in the Districts of Padang Pariaman, Serang, Cilacap and Sikka, and the city of Bengkulu. The main objective was to understand socio-economic and preparedness conditions of the community in the context of earthquake and tsunami disasters. The study use a combination between quantitative (survey) and qualitative (indepth interview and focus group discussions) methods.

The study result indicates that the level of socio-economic vulnerability of households varies among the locations, between almost vulnerable and vulnerable. The highest index value is found in the District of Sikka, followed by the District of Padang Pariaman. This means the community in both locations is vulnerable. The index value in other locations is less than in these areas, so they are classified as almost vulnerable. However, the level of socio-economic vulnerability of the communities is even worse when considering distance of the locations from coastlines. It explains that locations near the coast are more vulnerable than the locations far from the coast.

However, the LIPI study also shows that most of the study locations are not enough prepared in anticipating earthquake and tsunami disasters. The level of household preparedness varies among the locations with the lowest index value in the District of Sikka and the highest in the District of Serang. The index value of household knowledge as relatively high, therefore they are categorized as prepared in all locations, except in the District of Sikka which is classified as almost prepared. However, the basic knowledge of the household members is not followed by the action needed for anticipating earthquakes and tsunamis.

This indicates that community preparedness is still crucially and urgently needed. Realizing the high degree of their vulnerability to natural disasters, the people of Indonesia have no other choice but to be prepared in anticipation of such disasters. Efforts to improve community preparedness

therefore, have become very important and various initiatives and activities are being readied and applied, particularly in high-risk areas.

Keywords: Disaster, Community, Vulnerable, Preparedness