

Sociocultural and Economic Aspects in Restoration after Tsunami Hit: Minamisanriku, Miyagi, Japan

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This research discusses sociocultural and economic aspects through description of initiatives taken by local people and organizations in Utatsu area, Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture, for reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake and huge tsunami hit in March 2011. Utatsu is located on the coast of Isatomae-Bay, the Pacific Ocean. The key industry of town is fishery, however, the number of people involved in fishery has decreased since 1990, and the town also has issue related to aging of population year by year. Like any afflicted people by huge tsunami induced by the earthquake, Utatsu residents had to move to another area located higher hillside and start to rebuild their life. This research focuses on two initiatives: a painting-art project and *miso* factory (*miso* is fermented soybean paste, a traditional preservative food in Japan) managed by local housewives. Interviews were conducted to some key stakeholders of those initiatives, and its results were qualitatively analyzed. The interview revealed some positive changes in mind among participants, especially young generation, as well as problems and obstacles long-deep rooted in the local socio-economic structure of the area, for example, mental conflicts between communities, concerns to influence of radionuclides from Nuclear Power Plant accident in Fukushima. The research concludes with a view regarding a possible way forward to their sound rebuilding and reconstruction.

Keywords: tsunami, reconstruction, community, sociocultural and economic aspects, Minamisanriku