

Study on Rehabilitation Support in the Rural Context after Gujarat Earthquake

Focusing on the establishment and work of SETU (bridge)

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SETU, Sustainability, Citizen Participation, Information Management, Stakeholder Coordination*

1. INTRODUCTION

In January of 2001, the devastating earthquake (magnitude 7.7) hit the Gujarat State of India. According to the Government of India, 20,005 people were killed, and 166,000 were injured. More than 15 million people, 42 percent of Gujarat citizens, were affected by this earthquake. In order for the relief and rehabilitation for damaged community by this earthquake, a great number of organizations from in and outside of India came to Kutch for support. In August of 2001, a field research was conducted to evaluate the works done by these organizations. As a result, the research identified one organization called SETU (meaning of bridge) took an important role in the relief and rehabilitation effort. The purpose of this research is to identify the characteristics of this unique organization.

2. SETU

(1) Background Information

The extent of damage of this earthquake was very extensive. As responding to this extensive damage, effort of governmental organizations, NGOs and International Organizations was significant. One of notable effort was the government policy and strategy of work with a view of sustainability and NGO involvement.

The background information of Kutch pointed out that the area had serious problems such as, disaster (natural), caste system (social/cultural), panchayat system (political), poverty (economical) and so on. Also, it identified that Kutch had a long history of NGOs activities and its network.

(2) Structure and work of SETU

SETU, consisting of professionals, local NGO members, and local people. established a cooperation system with other stakeholders (governmental organizations, and local and non-local NGOs). With the purpose of “information management” and “stakeholder coordination”, SETU

collect and distribute information and coordinated between stakeholders effectively when necessary. The subjects of its activities have changed over time, from relief phase to rehabilitation phase, rehabilitation phase to development phase.

(3) Effectiveness

The result of field research conducted in 10 villages was analyzed by following categories: rehabilitation done by 1. without NGOs, 2. outside NGOs, 3. local NGOs, and 4. NGOs with SETU. The analysis identified the effectiveness of SETU as:

- 1) coordination between NGOs and most needed local people,
- 2) support sustainability of rehabilitation work in affected area

3. CONCLUSION

As a result of SETU's work of “information management” and “stakeholder coordination”, the effective rehabilitation work which met the local people's needs was achieved. The effort would not have achieved without its unique structure and relationship with other stakeholders. Although the earthquake was the direct reason why SETU was established, the background of Kutch should not be ignored. There are close relationship between the cause of problems occurred after earthquakes and the background of Kutch in general. Therefore, SETU should try to work on solving root cause of the area.

As a result of this study, the characteristics of SETU was identified as above, the next objective for the future research is to identify how to apply the organizations with similar characteristics in different contexts.

Additionally, in order to promote and achieve self-help of local people and community, the future role of SETU must be considered.