

Effectiveness of Early Warning Dissemination: A Case Study on Tsunami Early Warning in Sri Lanka

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Media & Communication technology has an important role to play in disaster communication by educating people about natural disasters. As the whole world is entertaining the results of new communication technology, the attention of the disaster management experts has driven towards, using this new technology in disaster communication. Accurate and timely information about natural disasters were needed not only for the people at risk, but also for the government officials, community leaders, donor agencies and media, to take necessary steps to reduce risk as well as to speed recovery. Effective risk reduction involves mitigation measures in hazards prone areas. It may also involve overcoming the socioeconomic, institutional and political barriers to the adoption of effective risk reduction strategies and measures in developing countries. Therefore, effective disaster communication is very essential for the sustainable disaster risk reduction. As Sri Lanka is a country accustomed to disasters, this is an important fact. In 2004, tsunami hit Sri Lanka without any prior warning. But in April, 2012 the Disaster Management Center, official institution involved in Early Warning dissemination, was equipped with new technology. Therefore, this paper is aiming at investigating the effectiveness of the present Early Warning dissemination mechanism in Sri Lanka. The study, being basically quantitative, employed descriptive statistics for analytical purpose using the primary data collected in one GN Division in Galle district. The study revealed that the strongest method of Early Warning dissemination is the Siren. The community was already aware on the way they should behave on such an event. The trust worthiness about the Early Warning message seemed to have a link with the authority of the party who disseminate the message. Furthermore, the electronic media seems to have a good reputation among the public regarding their work in Early Warning dissemination.

Key words: *Disaster communication, Early warning, Disaster risk reduction, Natural disaster*