

Identifying the Risks on Philippines' Pre- and Post-Disaster Media Communication on Natural Hazards

Authors : Neyzielle Ronnicque Cadiz

Abstract : The Philippine is a hotbed of disasters and is a locus of natural hazards. With an average of 20 typhoons entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) each year, seven to eight (7-8) of which makes landfall. The country rather inevitably suffers from climate-related calamities. With this vulnerability to natural hazards, the relevant hazard-related issues that come along with the potential threat and occurrence of a disaster oftentimes garners lesser media attention than when a disaster actually occurred. Post-disaster news and events flood the content of news networks primarily focusing on, but not limited to, the efforts of the national government in resolving post-disaster displacement, and all the more on the community leaders' incompetence in disaster mitigation-- even though the University of the Philippines' NOAH Center work hand in hand with different stakeholders for disaster mitigation communication efforts. Disaster risk communication is actually a perennial dilemma. There are so many efforts to reach the grassroots level but emergency and disaster preparedness messages inevitably fall short.. The Philippines is very vulnerable to hazards risk and disasters but social media posts and communication efforts mostly go unnoticed, if not argued upon. This study illustrates the outcomes of a research focusing on the print, broadcast, and social media's role on disaster communication involving the natural catastrophic events that took place in the Philippines from 2009 to present. Considering the country's state of development, this study looks on the rapid and reliable communication between the government, and the relief/rescue workers in the affected regions; and how the media portrays these efforts effectively. Learning from the disasters that have occurred in the Philippines over the past decade, effective communication can ensure that any efforts to prepare and respond to disasters can make a significant difference. It can potentially either break or save lives. Recognizing the role of communications is not only in improving the coordination of vital services for post disaster; organizations gave priority in reexamining disaster preparedness mechanisms through the Communication with Communities (CwC) programs. This study, however, looks at the CwC efforts of the Philippine media platforms. CwC, if properly utilized by the media, is an essential tool in ensuring accountability and transparency which require effective exchange of information between disasters and survivors and responders. However, in this study, it shows that the perennial dilemma of the Philippine media is that the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) efforts of the country lie in the clouded judgment of political aims. This kind of habit is a multiplier of the country's risk and insecurity. Sometimes the efforts in urging the public to take action seem useless because the challenge lies on how to achieve social, economic, and political unity using the tri-media platform.

Keywords : Philippines at risk, pre/post disaster communication, tri-media platform, UP NOAH

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