

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DIFFERENT APPROACHES OF JAPAN & IRAN IN NATURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT TOWARDS DEVELOPING THE POLICIES

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The special geographical location of countries like Iran and Japan has always made them susceptible to natural disasters like earthquake. Throughout the history, they have caused great financial losses and human damage. Moreover, in the 20th century Iran was one of the top six countries affected by earthquake not mentioning other disasters.

During the last two decades, extensive measures are taken in both countries to achieve successful preparedness level to encounter earthquake disasters. After 1995 Kobe earthquake which imposed relatively high human losses (almost 6400 persons) and great economic losses (nearly 100 billion USD) and having learned lessons from this earthquake, we are now witnessing the valuable achievements in disaster management during earthquakes in Japan.

At the international level, Iran and Japan's position should certainly be compared with respect to different viewpoints so as to be able to figure out a proper pattern for decision making and policy making. So, many of these cases need to be viewed on macro basis and to have long-term and gradual programming.

This research was descriptive-comparative study. The DRM literature of both countries reviewed and set of criteria extended and compared to find the best approach for Iran as a vulnerable country.

Findings show that there are five main criteria that can compare these two countries. The first criteria was based on "usage of existing condition" that is one of the most important differences that show how the countries make use of the existence of the conditions that have become available; then the governmental "Standards" in case of disasters compared. Government standards to deal with and to handle disaster related issued such as relief, reconstruction, property compensation, etc., vary widely; public awareness and cultural issues was the third, public education and improved safety culture is an undeniable necessity if a country is seeking for safety status; the obvious differentiations on Documentation part put it in fourth place, documentation of all measures taken related to disaster is a necessary action and should be planned for assessment, modification, quality improvement and proper transfer of experiences and information is only possible with a systematic documentation. Governmental approaches to attend the lessons learnt from previous disaster was the last criteria. an important government approach for prevention with regards to lessons learned from previous disasters is to pay special attention to regulated construction, formulate and update technical criteria and codes and direct people and private sector towards legality and accountability.

The analysis of the situation of these two countries can help the disaster managers, policy and decision makers to improve their capabilities and compare the approaches of one of the developed and well known countries in managing the earthquake consequences and developing countries with the applicable criteria.

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