

Discourse on the Community Rehabilitation Plan and Relocation Devised by Junior High School Students

- Study of Minami-Sanriku-cho, Miyagi prefecture, devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake -

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Urban districts and fishing villages in Minami-Sanriku-cho, a maritime area, were severely damaged by the tsunami of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the recovery plan has been progressing primarily through community relocation. The affected area has a tight-knit community with strong relationships. However, the elderly are more outspoken than other community members, and not everyone in the area can freely voice their opinions. Still, the recovery process takes a long time. In Japanese provincial towns and fishing villages where populations are declining, it is important to acknowledge the opinions and contributions of the younger generation regarding town development and rehabilitation.

This research examines the town rehabilitation planning process, which was written by adults and junior high school students during integrated study periods at schools, and states the importance of the younger generation's participation in the town's development and rehabilitation.

As a result of this research, the following points surfaced: (1) By thinking about the town's rehabilitation in the context of their own lives over the next ten years, the rehabilitation participation method can specifically be imagined. (2) It is important to create a program in which community members can genuinely share and discuss the dilemma of their love for their hometown and desire to work on rehabilitation and their desire to move out of their hometown to fulfill their dreams. (3) At first, they were inclined to itemize their requests to present to the government, but after seeing the affected area and listening to those involved, they noticed several things and were able to objectively imagine their own situation, along with the area's available resources. (4) Those who are willing to stay in the area look for convenience and those who are willing to move to larger cities wish for rehabilitation as their hometown just like before the disaster. It is important not only to encourage the younger generation to continue living in their hometown but also to discuss methods of rehabilitation that will involve outside help. (5) The younger generation is more likely to discuss the tradition of carrying on in the disaster aftermath in a positive manner, which is one example of a taboo topic among adults when rehabilitation planning is discussed. Including themes that are likely to result in dead ends, it is important to put the younger generation's proposals to use in the actual rehabilitation process.

Keywords: plan for recovery, education, community relocation

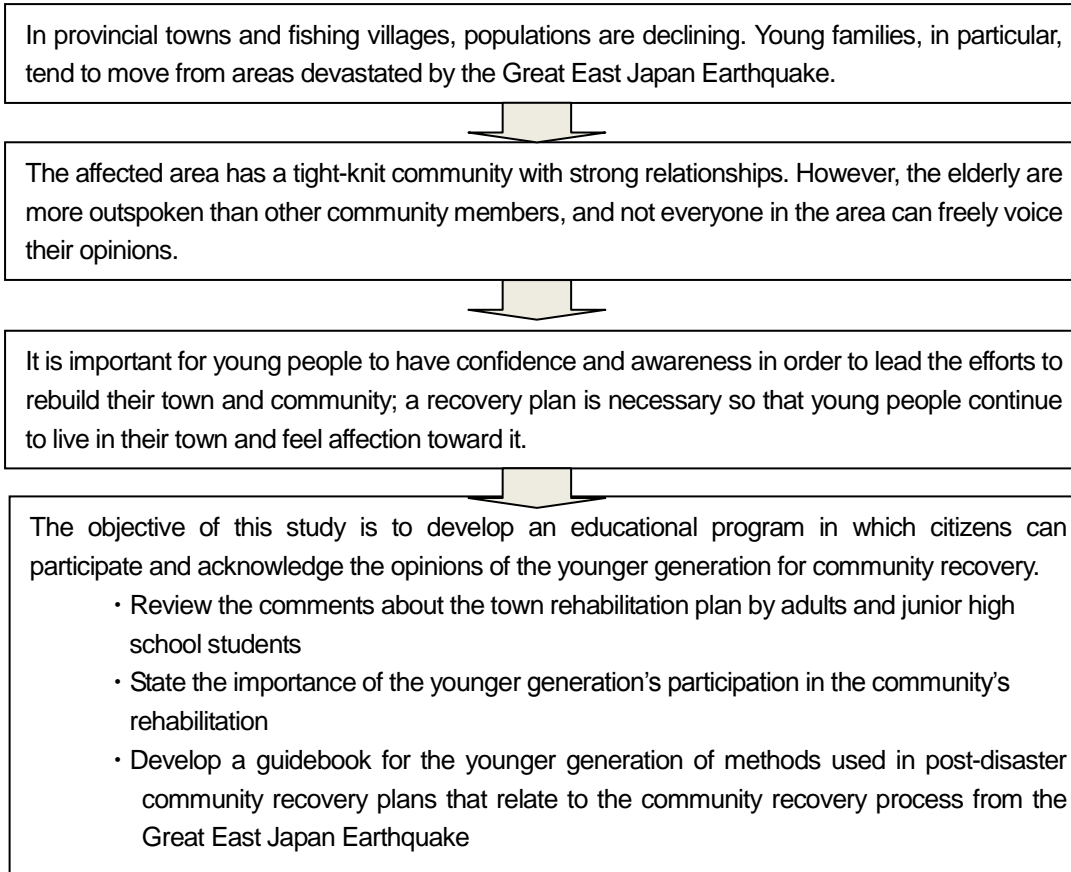
1. Introduction

1-1. Importance of the younger generation's participation in the recovery process

Urban districts and fishing villages in the maritime area were severely damaged by the tsunami of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the recovery plan has been progressing primarily through community relocation. The affected area has a tight-knit community with strong



relationships. However, the elderly are more outspoken than other community members, and not everyone in the area can freely voice their opinions. Still, reconstruction takes a long time. In Japanese provincial towns and fishing villages where populations are declining, it is important to acknowledge the opinions and contributions of the younger generation regarding town development and rehabilitation.

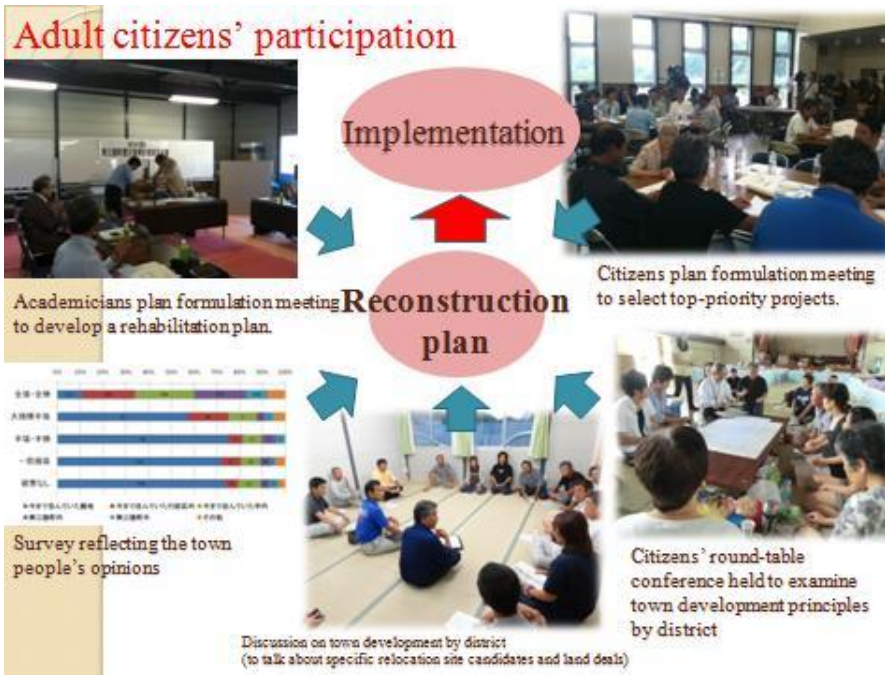


1-2. Objective

This research examines the town rehabilitation planning process, which was spoken by adults and junior high school students during integrated study periods at schools, and states the importance of the younger generation's participation in the town's development and rehabilitation.

2. Process of formulating reconstruction plans and adult citizens' participation

Urban districts and fishing villages in the maritime area were severely damaged by the tsunami of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the recovery plan has been progressing primarily through community relocation. The affected area has a tight-knit community with strong relationships. However, the elderly are more outspoken than other community members, and not everyone in the area everyone can freely voice their opinions.



Rehabilitation of Fishing Villages

Community Relocation (Disaster risk reduction)

- Workplaces and marine products processing factories to be located on lower ground.
- Residential area to be relocated to higher ground
- Building regulations for lower ground construction prohibit building houses
- Road planning not to be isolated by Tsunami damage

Points of discussion

- Priority depends up on where people stand. "To live at ease by fast building a house", "To live stress-free by quickly building a house and to resume fishing operations are the first considerations as residences have been secured with temporary housing."
- Villagers prefer "individual community relocation"; however, there are many elderly people and a decreased number of families, and young families, in particular, move out of town.
- Land use plan for lowland has not been arranged.



3. Recovery planning program for junior high school students

Our program is composed of four steps. In step 1, emphasis was placed on students' spontaneous ideas and motivation. During the discussion for this step, we did not give the students any information about recovery processes that took place after previous disasters. We also constructed 10-year calendars for the students and the town. In step 2, we played a card game and participated in role-playing. We also discussed the dilemma of their love for their hometown and their desire to move out of their hometown to fulfill their dreams. In step 3, we discussed the recovery process that occurred after previous disasters. In step 4, we took a field trip to Niigata prefecture, which was damaged by the 2004 Chuetsu Earthquake, and visited the relocation village and public housing that had been provided for victims. We also held discussions and conducted a workshop for planning community relocation and developing a recovery plan.

Some students who are willing to stay in the area look for convenience and other students who are willing to move to larger cities wish for rehabilitation as their hometown just like before the disaster. It is important not only to encourage the younger generation to continue living in their town but also to discuss the methods of rehabilitation that will involve outside help from.

	Points of discussion by adults	Points of discussion by junior high school students
Area size necessary to move about in daily life and in the future. Decline of population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people move their houses from the coastal to the inland area (but in the latter, they require a car to conduct daily activities). Particularly, young families not involved in fishery tend to move their houses. 	<p>Many students will leave town after graduating from high school because they have career goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They say that they return to their hometowns several times a year. They imagine that their parents will continue to live in their hometown.
Participation in community recovery	<p>Town meeting for recovery planning: Most of the participants tend to be proactive.</p> <p>Explanatory meeting for housing recovery support: all generations attended the meetings.</p> <p>Community meetings: all generations attended the meetings, but the proactive participants offered their opinions.</p>	<p>Some students will work in their town in the future (for example, as firefighters, public officials, or engineers).</p> <p>Some students will participate in a town meeting, in volunteer activities to support victims, and in the community festival.</p> <p>Some students find it hard to imagine ways in which they can participate in recovery efforts.</p>
The love their hometown.	Fishing village case: they have tight-knit relationships with relatives, and their community is independent.	<p>They love their hometown.</p> <p>They have tight-knit relationships with classmates.</p> <p>They are motivated to inherit the older generation's traditional festivals and performances.</p> <p>Some students suggested that regular annual meetings should be held so that people who have moved out of town can attend.</p>
Points of discussion for relocation	<p>Most people agree on a policy of relocation for town recovery.</p> <p>The points include the following: (1) condition of the location, (2) village integration, (3) relocation terms (the area of the land, time to supply the new land).</p>	<p>Enticement of commercial shops is positive, but they do not have excessive expectations.</p> <p>Students suggested the importance of the community supporting the elderly. Victims who live in public housing are close to the ex-neighborhood.</p> <p>Students suggested the importance of participation in discussions for recovery by those who were born in the community and spent their childhood there.</p>
Work on life recovery plan	Victims' priorities for recovery projects are different based on their attributes: (1) town central residents or village residents, (2) fishermen and related industry or others, and (3) request for public housing or building new houses themselves.	Those who are willing to stay in the area appreciate convenience, while those who are willing to move to larger cities desire rehabilitation of their hometown to restore it to the way it was before the disaster. It is important not only to encourage the younger generation to continue living in their town but also to discuss the methods of rehabilitation that may involve outside help.
Traditions regarding disasters	Taboo topics: for example, remain public buildings for memorial damaged by the tsunami	The younger generation is more likely to discuss the tradition of carrying on in the disaster aftermath in a positive manner.

To develop a program in which the younger generation can participate in the community's recovery, six important points need to be considered:

- 1) Defer to the area size necessary to move about in daily life and in the future
- 2) Sustain relationships with people who have moved out of their hometown and involve them in recovery activities
- 3) Create a program in which they can genuinely share and discuss the dilemma of their love for their hometown and desire to work on rehabilitation and the desire to move out of their hometown to fulfill their dreams
- 4) Create a program that presents a situation in which the youth are free from adhering to adults' opinions
- 5) Respect the importance of listening to a diversity of opinions and issues for community recovery
- 6) Recognize the needs of some people to feel that their psychological wounds are being cared for through discussions about community recovery, because these discussions give them the motivation they need to move forward

4-3. The importance of conducting an educational program during integrated study periods at school

Three points were made in the educational program conducted during integrated study periods at school:

- 1) Students can imagine their future and the recovery of their town. They can genuinely share and discuss the dilemma of their love for their hometown and desire to work on rehabilitation and the desire to move out of their hometown to fulfill their dreams.
- 2) Students can reflect on and discuss their town's recovery independently. They can think about how they can participate in recovery efforts and whether they will or will not be living in the town after 10 years.
- 3) Students can objectively reflect on and discuss their town's recovery. By studying recovery stories of other disasters, they can recognize similarities and differences between their town and the study cases. They can also discuss the problems and resources of their town objectively.

5. Conclusions

5-1. Conclusions

As a result of this research, the following points surfaced: (1) By thinking about the town's rehabilitation in the context of their own lives over the next ten years, the rehabilitation participation method can specifically be imagined. (2) It is important to create a program in which community members can genuinely share and discuss the dilemma of their love for their hometown and desire to work on rehabilitation and their desire to move out of their hometown to fulfill their dreams. (3) At first, they were inclined to itemize their requests to present to the government, but after seeing the affected area and listening to those involved, they noticed several things and were able to objectively imagine their own situation along with the area's available resources. (4) Those who are willing to stay in the area appreciate the convenience, while those who are willing to move to larger cities desire rehabilitation that will restore their hometown to the way it was before the disaster. It is important not only to encourage the younger generation to continue living in their hometown but also to discuss methods of rehabilitation that will involve outside help. (5) The younger generation is more likely to discuss the tradition of carrying on in the disaster aftermath in a positive manner, which is one example of a taboo topic among adults when rehabilitation planning is discussed. Including the themes that are likely to result in dead ends, it is important to put the young generation's proposals to use in the actual area rehabilitation process.

5-2. Research topics for the future

I plan to develop a guidebook for the younger generation of methods used in post-disaster community recovery plans in relation to the community recovery process of the Great East Japan Earthquake. In addition, I plan to develop a training program for the younger generation about pre-disaster recovery planning, making

the best use of the results of this study.

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