

## **Mass Media Communication Strategies during Rehabilitation and Reconstruction after Disasters in Aceh**

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**Abstract:** The role of media in disaster management is enormous. This is due to the community's dependence on information relating to major disasters so that what is informed by the media is true and accurate news. To encourage the community participation, it requires appropriate mass media to assist the process of channeling information from the organizers of BPBA to the community and disaster victims. The use of media to seize the influence of society, in recent centuries is a must, viewing the effectiveness of messages through the means. The problem is how to choose the right and cheap media, and reach the target area so that the messages we want to convey are effective to achieve the goals. The response of local mass media in Aceh Province to the news of disaster mitigation has been very positive, either in printed, electronic and other social media. It is just that the media coverage of the disaster mitigation program initiated by BPBA has received less attention from the media, mainly due to the low attractiveness of the news, the low quality of the program package, and often neglected by the BPBA itself when there is a socialization to the regions.

**Keywords:** *mass media communication; strategy; rehabilitation and reconstruction; disaster*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Mass media is a channel for people to know the disaster-related information which is happening in which disaster is news that related to human interest. Disaster news contains high news value so that the media are competing against the disaster news. Media information besides needed by the disaster victims for sharing the information of various emergency action, it is also needed by the government through *Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Aceh* or Aceh Disaster Mitigation Agency (BPBA) as information in making the policies and mitigation as well as the relief actions.

The role of media in disaster management is enormous. This is due to the community's dependence on information relating to major disasters so that what is informed by the media is true and accurate news. To encourage the community participation, it requires appropriate mass media to assist the process of channeling information from the organizers of BPBA to the community and disaster victims. In receiving the information from the mass media, many people are affected so that they do the same thing from what they have seen, read and heard.

The media which are currently in great demand by the people in Aceh are television, radio and newspapers. The audio-visual television is very influential on public audiences; this is because the information and the visuals heard and seen are easily understood. The people who watch television a lot will have the same view of "TV answers" if they are asked compared to the official data so that the assumption that television is a "messaging system" that instills or creates a false reality based on the picture shown by television is not based on the real reality.<sup>1</sup> Currently broadcast television is affordable and accessible to all regions of Indonesia. Almost every house has a television, besides as a source of information, it is also a medium of fast, cheap and easily accessible entertainment. Television is also easily to be understood and does not require literacy as people read newspapers or hear radio. Television is an electronic medium that spreads certain images and sounds that are essentially the same as living images.<sup>2</sup> Milton Chen says that watching television is a special activity, watching the television programs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kamaluddin, *Teori Kultivasi* in Syukur Kholil, *Teori Komunikasi Massa*, (Bandung: Citapustakan Media Perintis, 2011), h. 201. Also read in Saodah Wok, et.al, *Teori-teori Komunikasi*, (Kuala Lumpur: PTS Publication & Distributors SDN BHD, 2003), p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Deddy Mulyana and Idi Subandy Ibrahim, *Bercinta dengan Televisi*, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 1997), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. h. 6.

Television can reach a large mass and the actuality value of information or the news delivered is very quickly. It is similar to the role of the radio in conveying the disaster information. Radio can build the resistance of the people in facing the disasters through the speed and accuracy in providing the disaster information through the education about disaster, early warning, disaster events and its mitigation. To prevent it, it is required to identify the areas that are prone to disaster, and then do the mitigation so that the disaster does not affect the disruption of life and livelihood of many people.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Definition of Communication Strategy

Strategy is an overall plan in reaching the target even though there is no guarantee of the success. The term of strategy is widely used in the military world, but in many other fields it is also used even in different ways. In the communication study, strategy means a comprehensive plan in achieving the goal of communication effectiveness, so that messages conveyed the communicators give effect as expected, especially the changes in the communicant's attitudes, behavior, mindset and views to something. The purpose of communication in this case may vary depending on the communications field, for example in the context of disaster management is instructional communication that has the goal of achieving interactive educational process on the communicant side.<sup>4</sup>

It can be argued that communication strategies include the activities of planning, organizing, actuating, accounting and controlling as well as the elements in a management, and the communication strategy has a wider scope than management. The planning, moving, implementing, financing and supervising in communication strategies are different from those in general management. Although, it can be ascertained the success or the failure of a goal is determined by the strategy and management used. Likewise with a communication strategy that determines the success or the failure of a goal or the communication effectiveness conducted by the communicators. The communication effectiveness can be measured by the achievement of communication goals such as the changes in the communicant's attitudes, behaviors, mindsets and views to something that become the communicators' target. Communication strategy is needed when the process to achieve the communication effectiveness encounters many obstacles and challenges, both internal challenges and external challenges, so it is necessary to take various methods, patterns, techniques, models, and communication approaches tailored to the communicant's social and cultural conditions. As an example, in the communication strategy of disaster mitigation there are activities of preparation, implementation and concluding as well as various explanations of each of these activities. Motivating the goals to be always ready and interested in a subject and preparing the equipment used in communication activities. In the contemporary context, strategic issues are often linked to the method, technical, and tactical terms used. These three terms are actually still within the scope of the strategy, but they have more practical, detailed and detailed work. If it is linked in the issue of communication strategy to the disaster mitigation, then strategy can be said to be a comprehensive planning of the communication activities of disaster mitigation. The communication method has a more narrow meaning that is a coherent procedure used to solve and explain the aspects of communication, for example the things that can be expressed in communication methods are the methods of oral communication, interpersonal, group communication and mass communication.

The term method in this case is almost similar to the approach of a pattern or communication system that is considered effective to approach the communicant. Meanwhile technical problems and tactics in communication have a more limited understanding such as informative techniques, persuasive, cursive, pervasive, instructive and educative. Furthermore, tactics can be said as a certain way which is more practical in doing a momentary activity. In other words, many tactics relate to a person's ability to take advantage of the opportunities at times in doing a job.<sup>5</sup>

Marhaeni Dawn, identifies four determinants to achieve the effective communication, namely:

### 1. Knowing the audience

Knowing the audiences for communicators is the most principal for effective communication. Things that should be remembered the audience is not passive, but active, so that between the communicator and the communicant not only occur the interconnected but also affect each other. Between the communicators and the audiences there should be the same interest.

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<sup>4</sup>Pawit M. Yusup, *Komunikasi Pendidikan dan Komunikasi Instruksional* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1990), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup>. *Ibid*, p.74.

## **2. Composing the Messages**

Composing a message is determining the theme and the material which is the main requirement in influencing the audience through arousing their attention. Things should be remembered that at the same time there are various messages received by the same audience, only those who attract the attention are effective at affecting them when the others just pass by.

## **3. Defining the Method**

To achieve the effectiveness of a communication besides depending on the stability of the message content harmonized with the condition of the audience, it is also influenced by the method of delivery to the target. The method of messages delivery can be detailed from two aspects, namely in terms of implementation and in terms of the message contents. The execution way can be realized with two forms that is repetition method and canalizing as well as according to the form of its contents which are known as methods of informative, persuasive, educative and cursive.<sup>6</sup>

## **4. Selecting the Media Usage**

The use of media to seize the influence of society, in recent centuries is a must, viewing the effectiveness of messages through the means. The problem is how to choose the right and cheap media, and reach the target area so that the messages we want to convey are effective to achieve the goals. While Hafied Cangara, argues that in message management techniques so that the communication is considered effective there are two models of messages compilation, namely the preparation of messages are informative and persuasive.<sup>7</sup> The informative messaging model is mainly aimed at broadening the insight and the awareness of audiences are diffusion, simple, clear and not using the term. There are four kinds of informative messaging:

- a. Space Order, the messages management viewing the condition of place or space, such as local, regional or national.
- b. Time Order, the messages preparation based on time or period in chronological order.
- c. Deductive Order, the messages management from the general to the special.
- d. Inductive Order, the messages management from the special to the general.

Model of persuasive managing messages can be detailed as follows:

- a. Fear Appeal, the method of managing or delivering messages by scaring the audience.
- b. Emotional Appeal, the way of managing or delivering messages with emotional awakening audiences, such as revealing the tribal, religious, discriminatory, economic issues etc.
- c. Reward Appeal, the managing or delivery of messages by conveying promises, as in election campaigns.
- d. Motivational Appeal, the technique of preparing messages not with promises but by growing motivation psychologically.
- e. Humorous Appeal, the delivery of messages accompanied by humor so that they become the main attractions for audiences, not saturated.

In the communication domain, strategy means a comprehensive plan for achieving the communication goals. The purpose of communication in this case can vary, depending on the communications field, for example, instructional communication has a goal of achieving the interactive educational process on the communicant. This is because in the strategy includes planning activities, then in practice it came out the operation of the activities.

In the message presentation is known technique of composing one-sided message (one sided issue) and two sides (two sided issue). The research on the technique of messages compilation like this was done in an experiment by Hovland, Lumsdein and Sheffield. From the experiment it was concluded that the one sided method is only suitable for low educated audiences and they already know the information earlier so that its function is only to strengthen (reinforcement) existing information.

Any activity that supports the achieving process of these objectives can be seen clearly. The communication strategy is the preparation activities, execution and conclusions and various explanations of each activity in order to motivate the target to always be ready and interested in a subject matter used in the communications activities with the intention to change the behavior, attitudes and character of the target. From the set of understanding that has been proposed, the communication strategy in the case of disaster mitigation is any form of communication activities related to disaster, using mass media, communication between individuals or face to face.

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<sup>6</sup>Fajar, *Ilmu Komunikasi*, p. 183 – 203.

<sup>7</sup>Hafied Cangara, *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007) h.116.

## **The Strategy Steps of Communication**

### **a. Strategies in Delivering the Message**

Basically, humans in the delivering the messages besides using verbal code (spoken and written language) also use nonverbal code. Nonverbal codes are often called sign languages or silent languages. Onong Uchjana Effendy suggests that communication will fail if there is a discrepancy between verbal messages which are delivered with visible nonverbal messages.<sup>8</sup>

Albert Mehrabian as quoted Hafied Cangara states that the confidence level of people's conversation only 7 percent comes from verbal language, 38 percent of vocal sound and 55 percent of facial expression (nonverbal). He also adds that if there is a conflict between what a person says and his actions, then others tend to believe things that are nonverbal.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Mark Knapp mentions that the use of nonverbal code in communicating has the following functions:

- 1) Reassure what it says (repetition).
- 2) Showing feelings and emotions that cannot be expressed by words (substitution).
- 3) Showing the identity so that others can know it
- 4) Adding or completing the utterances that are perceived as imperfect.<sup>10</sup>

In the presenting the message it is known a technique of managing one-sided issue and two sided issue. The research about the technique of managing the messages like this was conducted in an experiment by Hovland, Lumsdein and Sheffield. From the experiment it was concluded that the one sided issue method is only suitable for low educated audiences and they already know the information earlier so that its function is only to reinforce the existing information.<sup>11</sup>

The method of presentation two-sided issue is by describing the good or the bad side of a problem which is more appropriate for those who have high education, knowing the information, but act the opposition or the controversial idea so that it causes the attitude of pros and cons. Besides the method of presenting the message, one sided issue and two sided issue, there are also known the methods of presenting a climax message and presenting anti climax message as well as the methods of regency and primacy presentations. The method of presenting a climax message emphasizes the very important things at the end of the messages; on the contrary the emphasis at the beginning of the message is called anti-climax. The method of regency presentation is to place the positive things at the end of the presentation, while the primacy method puts the positive things at the beginning of the presentation.

There are three theories that talk about the presentation of messages, namely:

#### *a) Over Power Em Theory*

This theory states that if a message is often repeated long and loud enough, then it will pass from the audience.

#### *b) Glamour Theory*

This theory states that if a message (idea) which is packaged with relevant, then offered with the power of persuasion, then the audience will be interested to have the idea.

#### *c) Don't Tell'em Theory*

If an idea is not conveyed to others, then they will not hold and ask it. Therefore they will not make an opinion about the idea.<sup>12</sup>

The messaging strategy described above is relevant for all forms of communication, whether it is interpersonal communication, group communication or mass communication. In this case D.W. Johnson, says that there are three criteria that must be met until the communication can be effective, namely: (1) messages sent must be easily understood by the communicant, (2) the message sender must have credibility in the eyes of the recipient and (3) the communicator must try to get the feedback optimally about the effect of the message on the communicant.<sup>13</sup>

Another opinion expressed by A.W.Widjaja, the message should be submitted appropriately, like aiming and shooting what comes out should be in accordance with the target. The message must meet the requirements of: a) The message must be general, b) The message must be communicated clearly not vague, c) The message should be conveyed in clear and compatible language to the communicant, the local situation and

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<sup>8</sup>Onong Uchjana Effendy, *Dinamika Komunikasi*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2001),p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Mehrabian dalam Hafied Cangara, *Pengantar Ilmu*, p.107-108.

<sup>10</sup> Cangara, *Pengantar ilmu*, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 119.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.109.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

the conditions in which it communicates, and) The message should be delivered in a positive form, e) The message should be delivered in a balanced manner. f) The message should be tailored to the wishes of the communicant.<sup>14</sup>

Indonesian communication expert Onong Uchjana Effendy, says that the message should be achieved as follows: a) the message should be arranged and submitted in such a way so that it foster the audience's interest, b) the message must use the communication symbols that can be understood by the communicant, c) the message can grow the personal needs of communicant and suggests several ways to meet the needs that arises in the communicant, d) the messages should be able to suggest various ways of solving problems that can be done by the communicant.<sup>15</sup>

### III. DISCUSSION

The media coverage will re-emerge during the reconstruction of infrastructure and public housing, after the disaster. This phase is the news era which is full of scent of corruption, collusion and nepotism among the government, especially the disaster mitigation agencies. The problem is the management of reconstruction and rehabilitation projects after the natural disaster until now still tends to shamble, loose responsibility and full of corruption. This happens because the planning, the implementation, the monitoring and the allocation of funds for projects that fall into this category of "emergency response" tend to be careless, because it is considered an urgent need and "emergency" condition. So far, almost all provinces and districts are "happy" if they receive any fund of post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation projects from APBN or States Budget, because besides their large number as the initial proposals, the project management is just (without tendering and weak supervision), the location of the handling is often in the interior areas so that it is far from public observations. This condition encouraged the press to publish the various sides of the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation program to the media. The media community seems to be saying "this is a project of corruption and collusion sources of the officials", "do not be happy on the suffering of disaster victims", as a form of the hearts speaking of the press. The problem is, if natural disasters in the future will get "profits" for the officials, despite the deep suffering for certain people, how can people avoid the natural disasters and instead try to make the disaster happens every time, there will be more victims and greater damage both infrastructure and public housing.

The news about reconstruction and rehabilitation after the natural disaster in Aceh has been a game for local media because it is suspected to have many problems surrounding project management, although up to now there is no single case of "emergency response" project has entered the area of 'investigation' of the law enforcers, even to the court in Aceh. Until now the officials or former officials of this "sacred project", are wandering untouched by the law. For information, during the Governor of Aceh, Irwandi Yusuf - Muhammad Nazar 2006 - 2012 the budget of APBN allocation for post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation projects managed by the Government of Aceh outside BRR was quite large.

The placement and the use of these funds in the form of a number of physical development such as embankment flood levee, bronjong river cliffs and cliffs, breakwater waves, in various locations of districts/towns. However, almost the average quality and the implementation are far less than expected in the planning, where the contractor executives are not only working under the pressure of GAM combatants as well as being subjected to extortion fees.

Similarly, the reconstruction and rehabilitation projects of the disaster-affected people's housing, there almost nothing goes without the act of corruption and collusion, and some even seem ironic, as the housing development for poor people built with APBA funds is reported to the center as housing reconstruction and rehabilitation of the natural disasters victims. The prediction of corruption and collusion in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of natural disasters victims, besides to the procurement of land location that is relatively safe from the threat of disaster, it is also in the physical implementation of the housing itself, either on the implementation of the tender, project quality or price of the project itself.

All the issues concerning the reconstruction and rehabilitation process are very interesting to be covered by the media press, as they are considered the state financial irregularities cases by the officials, although the role of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has not shown its power yet in Aceh Province. This is at least the role of the press man with his social control function as the fourth pillar of the democracy which has done its job well.

The warmth of the news on the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation phase in Aceh is a natural thing since in the process there are many irregularities, corruption and collusion by the executors. The news about the state financial irregularities until now is still hunted the journalists as one of the appeal of the news value for the public so that the perpetrators will be punished in accordance with the applicable law. The

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<sup>14</sup>A.W. Widjaja, *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi* (Jakarta: Bina Aksara, 2001), p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Effendy, *Dinamika Komunikasi*, p. 33.

main purpose is to realize the spirit of social media and the community toward the monitoring of the state management implementation by the clean and healthy government. Admittedly, the social media control toward the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation in Aceh has not been fully effective. There are still many locations, sides and modes of the implementation of these physical projects that have escaped from the media coverage, and many have succeeded in establishing the conspiracies with individual media press so that the news does not appear in the mass media but there is a conspiracy between the officials and the journalists by giving the "envelope", advertisement, or plane ticket to the journalists.

The reporting of the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation phase either by the local or national mass media in which the intensity is very high and complex because it contains more problems and attractiveness than the pre-disaster reporting and the emergency response. The problem and the appeal of the media in the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase lies in the opportunities of deviations and discrimination that are wide open, especially by the executing officials of the activities. Besides in the news at this phase the media tend to use social control function which has been acknowledged very effective and feared by all the societies. Because the social function of media control goes far beyond the authority of the law enforcement executor itself such as the prosecutor and the police.

Media coverage of irregularities or alleged corruption in a development activity may be carried out although it has not yet hold the concrete evidence as required in a prosecutor or police investigation. The more frightening thing is the impact of media coverage on a highly significant official, not only dropping self-esteem and credibility in the eyes of family and neighbors, but also can eliminate the trust and the morality among the relationships and the co-workers. Although it can be recovered if it is not proven to be aberrations and corruption, it will only be recovered for a long time.

The mass media reporting about the disaster mitigation program launched by BPBA is minimal. Many things cause the mass media reporting on the disaster mitigation are few, among them because of the programs lack of the attractiveness of the news, often abandoned and ignored by the BPBA, the BPBA communication with the media press is very bad, the BPBA lacks the funds to invite the mass media to participate in the event.

Aceh as a province prone to natural disasters, including the areas that almost throughout the year experienced the natural disasters. After the devastating earthquake and tsunami at the end of 2004, the natural disaster struck the *Rencong Land*, among them floods, earthquakes, landslides and others that claimed many lives, property and infrastructure losses. Therefore, the BPBA of Aceh has almost no time to stop in moving the disaster mitigation program, besides its vast areas as well as the programs to reduce the impact and the risk of complex disasters, not just the rescue and the evacuation efforts for individuals and the family but also for others around them.

Without the support and the role of the mass media in disseminating the disaster mitigation information, the task of BPBA becomes heavier because it is too difficult to convince the community with the rolled out programs. As well as the people in other areas who adopt and believe in a new program or idea on the media information, the media has been publishing a program or a good, true and useful idea to the society, then the program or the idea will be good and useful. Because, it is impossible for the media to publish the false thing and bad for the society, because they will lose the popularity and the public if it is not true. There is a theory of setting agenda that reinforces it, by assuming "an issue or news that is considered important by the media, it is considered important also by the public". That is why people do not have to bother and assume they suspect the media will conspire with others in false news to trap the public.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The response of local mass media in Aceh Province to the news of disaster mitigation has been very positive, either in printed, electronic and other social media. It is just that the media coverage of the disaster mitigation program initiated by BPBA has received less attention from the media, mainly due to the low attractiveness of the news, the low quality of the program package, and often neglected by the BPBA itself when there is a socialization to the regions.

There is a miscommunication between the media and the BPBA primarily in the need for funds to engage the media in its programs, or possibly the BPBA itself less understands the media information functions for society and culture, so it does not seriously put the media into every activity. Likewise, the media coverage of activities that are believed to provoke the emergence of natural disasters such as illegal encroachment and excessive exploitation of C minerals in Tangse, Pidie District, which caused the major flood disaster at the end of 2010.

The media spotlight on these two illegal activities was impressed there is no obstacle from the local government, which meant letting the community become bait of the disaster. Media coverage of natural disasters in Aceh was rampant in the event of the disaster. This is because naturally the natural disasters become one of the attractions of news other than the conflict. In every natural disaster there is always a human interest on the victims, whether the victims are killed, lost or injured including loss of property.

Besides that in disasters there are always many problems in the process of evacuating victims or handling refugees in the temporary shelters. The media coverage is also widespread in the post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation phase. The problem is the experience so far in the recovery and the reconstruction there have been many problems on the state financial irregularities, discrimination and collusion by executing officials, either in handling the victim's houses or in the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure or new infrastructure as the disaster prevention. However, there have been much news in mass media, but so far there is no media in Aceh that deliberately twists the disaster information (media provocation) with issues that can add to the suffering of the disaster victims. One thing that there should be thumbs up for the media crew in the province of Aceh unlike the media in Jakarta against various news such as the eruption of Mount Merapi in 2010.

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