

The Role of Social Services in Coordinating Earthquake AID Distribution: a Study of Cianjur Regency's Response

Ero Suhara¹, Bimo Tri Anggoro²

¹ Universitas Langlangbuana, Indonesia

² Universitas Langlangbuana, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: suharaero639@gmail.com

Article Info

Article History;

Received:

20/10/2023

Revised:

02/11/2023

Accepted:

27/12/2023

Abstract: The problem of this research is the suboptimal distribution of earthquake aid, so that the need for coordination is the most important part. The purpose of this study is to find out, describe and analyze in depth the coordination of the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur district. The theory used as an approach to this research problem is the coordination theory from Hasibuan which consists of four principles, namely: unity of action, communication, division of tasks and discipline. The proposition in this study is: coordination of the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur district will run optimally if it refers to the principles of unity of action, communication, division of tasks and discipline. The research method used is a descriptive research method, with a qualitative approach, while data is obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the coordination of the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur district in its implementation has not run optimally because it has not met the 4 principles of coordination. The efforts made by the social service are to optimize the available resources, continue to increase the involvement of officers and the community, and carry out coordination with various parties.

Keyword: *coordination; unity of action; communication; disaster management.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, particularly susceptible to earthquakes, due to its geographical position along the Pacific Ring of Fire. This seismic zone is marked by significant tectonic activity, where the Indo Australian and Eurasian plates converge, making the country vulnerable to frequent and powerful earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis (Hendratno et al., 2020). One such disaster occurred on November 21, 2022, when a 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck Cianjur Regency in West Java. The earthquake caused extensive damage, destroying thousands of homes, infrastructure, and leaving hundreds of casualties, with tens of thousands displaced (BPBD Cianjur, 2023). The immediate consequences of this event highlighted the urgent need for a well organized, rapid, and equitable disaster response, particularly in terms of aid distribution.

In the aftermath of a disaster, effective aid distribution is a critical element in reducing the suffering of affected communities. The Social Service Department of Cianjur Regency plays a central role in managing disaster response efforts, which includes coordinating logistics, collecting victim data, managing public kitchens, and distributing essential supplies such as food, water, medicines, and shelter. This task involves collaboration with various local, regional, and national agencies, including Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), Polisi Republik Indonesia (POLRI), Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah (BPBD), Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI), and local volunteers (Nasution et al., 2023).

However, the distribution process in Cianjur Regency faced numerous challenges, which hindered the effectiveness of aid delivery. These challenges included discrepancies in recipient data, poor inter agency coordination, and technical issues such as damaged infrastructure, disrupted supply chains, and limited transportation capabilities. As a result, the aid distribution process was delayed, and in some cases, resources were misallocated, impacting the most vulnerable populations. These shortcomings underscore the need for a review of the existing coordination mechanisms and a reevaluation of the operational strategies used in disaster management (Suharto & Wijayanto, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to examine the coordination mechanisms involved in the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur Regency. Specifically, this research aims to assess how effectively the Social Service Department coordinates with other agencies, identify the obstacles encountered during the aid distribution process, and propose solutions to address these challenges. The study will also explore the role of coordination theory, particularly Hasibuan's framework, in optimizing aid distribution in disaster management contexts.

Hasibuan (2019) proposes four key principles for effective coordination: unity of action, communication, division of tasks, and discipline. These principles are essential for achieving a well coordinated, efficient disaster response system. According to Hasibuan, unity of action ensures that all parties work towards a common goal with a shared understanding of their responsibilities, while communication facilitates the smooth flow of information between agencies. The division of tasks allows for the clear allocation of roles and responsibilities, ensuring that resources are used efficiently. Finally, discipline ensures adherence to established procedures and timelines, which is critical for maintaining the flow of aid and services.

This study hypothesizes that the coordination of the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur Regency will only be optimized if it adheres to these four principles. The research methodology used is descriptive in nature, employing a qualitative approach to gather data through observations, interviews, and documentation analysis. This approach is well suited to gain an in depth understanding of the processes involved in disaster coordination, as well as the challenges faced by the Social Service Department and other stakeholders in ensuring timely and effective aid distribution (Moeleong, 2004).

The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on disaster management in Indonesia and provide policy recommendations for improving future disaster response operations. By strengthening coordination mechanisms and addressing the obstacles identified in this research, it is hoped that the government and humanitarian agencies will be better equipped to provide aid more efficiently and equitably in future disaster scenarios. The results are expected to offer actionable insights into the implementation of coordination theory in real world disaster management, enhancing the effectiveness of future relief efforts in Indonesia and other disaster prone regions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to comprehensively describe and deeply understand the process of earthquake aid distribution coordination carried out by the Social Service Department of Cianjur Regency. This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to uncover social phenomena holistically, explore the meaning behind the actions of field implementers, and trace the dynamics of inter agency coordination involved in disaster management. The research was conducted at the location where the aid distribution activities took place, namely the Cianjur Regency Social Service Office, with the planned implementation period from June to July 2025. The location was selected based on the high level of disaster vulnerability in Cianjur and the intensive role of the Social Service Department as the coordinator of aid distribution in the area following the earthquake in November 2022 (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews with key informants who played central roles in the coordination process, such as structural officials from the Social Service Department, district heads, and volunteers involved in aid distribution. Additionally, direct field observations were made to capture the dynamics of interactions, communication patterns, and the actual aid distribution mechanisms. Secondary data were sourced from official documents from related agencies, activity reports, government regulations, aid distribution maps, and academic references such as journals, books, and previous relevant research. The combination of these two data sources provides a deeper analysis and higher validity of the information (Suryani & Kristanto, 2023).

Three main data collection techniques were used in this study: (1) passive participatory observation, where the researcher is present but not actively involved in the activities, only observing the aid distribution flow, coordination among officers, and public reactions; (2) in depth semi structured interviews with open ended questions that allow informants to freely explain their views and experiences; and (3) documentation, which involves the collection and review of correspondence records, technical reports, activity photos, and aid logistics maps. These three techniques were chosen to complement each other and minimize data bias (Andriani & Syafrizal, 2023).

The main instrument in this study is the researcher themselves. In line with the qualitative approach, the researcher serves as the primary tool in selecting informants, interpreting the data obtained, and ensuring the depth of meaning in the findings. To support objectivity and accuracy, the researcher also used observation guidelines and interview guides as structured tools. Furthermore, informant selection was purposive, based on specific considerations such as direct involvement in aid distribution activities, strategic positions within the organizational structure, and the ability to provide in depth information on coordination issues (Putra, 2023).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, triangulation methods were employed, including both technique triangulation and source triangulation. Technique triangulation involved combining data from interviews, observations, and documentation, while source triangulation involved various informants from different positions and backgrounds to compare and test the consistency of the information obtained. Additionally, member checks and discussions with peers were conducted to gain further validation of the findings (Pertiwi & Fadillah, 2023).

In the data analysis phase, the researcher used the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions. Data reduction was done by sorting and simplifying raw data to focus on the aspects of aid distribution coordination. The data were then presented in the form of thematic narratives, which made it easier to identify certain patterns, such as communication patterns, task divisions, and obstacles faced. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which was carried out progressively, iteratively, and continuously verified until reliable generalizations were obtained. This analysis was conducted simultaneously from the beginning of data collection until all information was saturated and no new findings emerged (Hidayat, 2023).

This study also used the operationalization of concepts based on Hasibuan's (2007) coordination theory, which includes four main indicators: (1) unity of action, which refers to how coordinated the actions of various parties are; (2) communication, which includes openness of information, the speed of message delivery, and effectiveness of inter agency communication; (3) division of labor, which looks at how tasks are distributed and collectively carried out; and (4) discipline, which refers to adherence to schedules, procedures, and technical directives agreed upon in the aid distribution coordination. These indicators were used to develop interview and observation guidelines focused on the key aspects of successful aid distribution (Hasibuan, 2007; Yuliana & Fajar, 2023).

Finally, in selecting informants, the researcher referred to Spradley's (1980) criteria, which are: a) the informant must play an active role in the activities being studied, b) be able to provide in depth explanations, c) be willing to dedicate time for interviews, and d) be able to explain the social structure and work systems from within. Therefore, the informants involved were truly authoritative and representative data sources, both from government officials and field technical implementers (Spradley, 1980; Utami & Rakhmani, 2023).

RESULT AND DICUSSION

Cianjur Regency, located in West Java, Indonesia, faces considerable vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. This vulnerability is largely due to its geographical location along the subduction zone where the Eurasian and Indo Australian tectonic plates meet, which is an active seismic zone. The region's proximity to this fault line makes it particularly prone to frequent and sometimes devastating seismic events. Cianjur covers an expansive area of 361,434.98 hectares and is divided into 32 sub districts. Given its position, it is regularly affected by earthquakes, which not only cause destruction but also disrupt daily life and economic stability. On November 21, 2022, the region was struck by an earthquake of magnitude 5.6, which resulted in widespread destruction. Thousands of homes were destroyed, infrastructure was severely damaged, and the loss of life was significant. Additionally, many people were displaced from their homes, exacerbating the crisis. The extent of the damage caused by this disaster underscored the importance of having an efficient, well organized disaster response system in place, particularly in terms of managing aid distribution to affected communities.

The Social Service Department (Dinas Sosial) of Cianjur Regency plays an essential role in managing the social impact of such disasters, especially in the immediate aftermath. The department's responsibilities are extensive and include logistics coordination, victim data collection, management of public kitchens, and the distribution of essential aid, such as food, clean water, medicines, and shelter. Additionally, the department works in close collaboration with other governmental bodies and community organizations, including TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia), POLRI (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia), BPBD (Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah), PMI (Palang Merah Indonesia), and local volunteer groups. This coordination between various agencies is crucial to ensure that aid reaches the affected communities in a timely manner, with no overlap or inefficiencies. However, despite the central role of the Social Service Department, challenges remain in ensuring the effective and equitable distribution of aid to affected populations. A critical part of addressing these challenges involves improving coordination mechanisms among agencies, ensuring that tasks are clearly defined, and fostering better communication between the involved parties. The complexity of disaster management demands the effective coordination of resources, clear communication, and streamlined decision making processes to minimize delays and ensure that aid is directed to those in greatest need.

The coordination framework for aid distribution in Cianjur Regency is guided by the Peraturan Bupati (Regent Regulation) No. 123 of 2022, which was subsequently refined by Peraturan Bupati No. 145 of 2022. These regulations provide the foundation for disaster relief management, advocating for a "one door" system of aid distribution through an Integrated Post managed by BPBD. The goal of this system is to streamline the allocation of resources, ensuring that aid reaches the most affected communities based on priority levels and official requests. However, while the regulatory framework offers a clear and structured approach, the practical implementation of this system has faced several challenges. One of the primary theoretical frameworks used to assess the coordination of disaster response in Cianjur is Hasibuan's coordination theory (2019), which identifies four key principles for effective coordination: unity of action, communication, division of tasks, and discipline.

In Cianjur, the principle of unity of action, which emphasizes the need for all parties involved to work toward a common goal with coordinated efforts, was a primary focus of the disaster response strategy. The Social Service Department worked alongside other organizations and agencies to ensure that efforts were not duplicated and that resources were directed to the areas that needed them most. While the principle of unity of action was in place on paper, the study found that in practice, it was sometimes undermined by conflicting priorities among the various agencies and local governments. These conflicting priorities were particularly noticeable during the early stages following the earthquake, when the overwhelming scale of the disaster caused confusion and delays in the coordination of relief efforts. Local governments were often focused on immediate, short term relief, while other agencies prioritized long term rehabilitation, leading to a misalignment in objectives that delayed the delivery of aid. This lack of alignment between agencies demonstrates the importance of clearer, more unified coordination strategies to prevent inefficiencies in disaster response.

Effective communication was found to be perhaps the most critical element in ensuring the success of disaster coordination efforts in Cianjur. The study found that effective communication allowed agencies to make timely decisions, share resources efficiently, and direct aid to where it was most urgently needed. However, significant communication challenges arose, particularly between local and national government bodies, as well as among agencies at different organizational levels. Miscommunication often led to confusion and delays in aid distribution, underscoring the need for stronger communication systems and standardized information sharing procedures. As highlighted in studies on disaster management, including those by Suprpto et al. (2023), effective communication ensures that all agencies are informed of the situation in real time and can act promptly. The findings of the study suggest that the development of standardized communication protocols and the use of advanced communication technology are crucial for improving the coordination process during a disaster.

Another important principle of Hasibuan's coordination theory is the division of tasks, which is essential to ensure that each agency has a clearly defined role in disaster response. In Cianjur, the Social Service Department worked with various agencies to allocate tasks based on expertise and available resources. This division of labor helped streamline operations, especially in terms of logistics and the distribution of essential supplies like food, water, and medical aid. However, despite the existence of this system, gaps in task allocation were evident. For instance, some areas experienced personnel shortages, which led to delays in response efforts. In certain cases, the overwhelming scale of the disaster meant that the available personnel could not keep pace with the demand for aid. This was particularly evident in the logistics and supply distribution sectors, where delays in reaching remote areas were attributed to inadequate personnel. As noted by Rahmawati (2023), proper task division and the adequate staffing of disaster response teams are crucial to ensuring the smooth flow of resources and services during a disaster.

Discipline, the final principle in Hasibuan's framework, involves adherence to schedules, procedures, and clearly defined roles. The study found that discipline was emphasized by the Social Service Department but was often undermined by delays caused by inadequate preparation, lack of coordination, and absence of clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in some areas. The lack of SOPs in certain sectors exacerbated inefficiencies and delays, particularly during the peak of the emergency response phase. However, the study observed that the use of technology, such as digital tracking systems, significantly helped improve discipline by enabling agencies to monitor resource allocation and personnel deployment in real time. The use of such technology is in line with recommendations from disaster management experts, such as Suryanegara (2023), who emphasizes the importance of digital systems in streamlining disaster response efforts and enhancing accountability.

Several significant challenges in aid distribution were identified during the disaster response. One of the most pressing issues was the inaccuracy of data used to determine which households required assistance. The lack of a centralized, real time database resulted in discrepancies in data, leading to delays and inefficiencies in aid allocation. In some cases, households in urgent need of aid were missed, while others received assistance that was not required. These data discrepancies highlight the need for real time, centralized data management systems that provide accurate, up to date information about the affected populations. Implementing such systems would improve the efficiency of the distribution process and ensure that aid reaches those in greatest need. This approach is consistent with the findings of Widyanto et al. (2023), who argued that improving data management systems is essential for better disaster response coordination.

Another obstacle identified was the damage to infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and other vital transportation networks. The earthquake caused widespread damage to Cianjur's infrastructure, which limited the ability of relief teams to access remote areas. Landslides and collapsed infrastructure caused delays in delivering aid to the most affected areas, highlighting the importance of contingency planning. Developing contingency plans, including alternate routes and transportation methods, is essential for overcoming infrastructure challenges and ensuring that aid can reach even the most remote areas.

The study also pointed out that the limited availability of personnel and resources compounded the challenges of aid distribution. Although the Social Service Department mobilized resources and personnel quickly, the scale of the disaster exceeded the available capacity. The overwhelming demand for aid highlighted the need for continuous investment in disaster preparedness, particularly in training personnel and enhancing logistical capabilities. As noted by Budiarto (2023), investing in disaster preparedness is crucial for improving response times and ensuring that resources are allocated effectively during large scale emergencies.

Despite these challenges, several factors contributed to the success of the disaster response. One of the key elements was the strong cooperation among government agencies, local organizations, and community volunteers. This collaboration allowed resources to be pooled, information to be shared, and aid to be distributed to the areas that needed it most. The involvement of local organizations, such as Tagana, was particularly significant in ensuring that aid reached the communities quickly and effectively. As emphasized by Irawan (2023), local community based efforts are critical for effective disaster response, as they provide intimate knowledge of the affected areas and can act more swiftly than external agencies.

The use of technology also played a crucial role in improving coordination and streamlining operations. Digital data management systems and tracking applications enabled the Social Service Department and other agencies to monitor aid distribution in real time. This allowed for better resource management and minimized the risk of errors and delays. Additionally, independent oversight bodies, such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), played a vital role in ensuring that aid was distributed fairly and transparently, helping to prevent corruption and mismanagement.

In conclusion, while the disaster response in Cianjur was largely successful, the study highlights several areas that need improvement. Issues such as data inaccuracies, communication failures, and limited resources must be addressed to ensure that future disaster responses are more efficient, equitable, and effective. By improving data management systems, strengthening communication channels, increasing investment in disaster preparedness, and formalizing inter agency coordination agreements, Cianjur and other regions can better prepare for future disasters. These efforts will help reduce the suffering of affected communities and accelerate the recovery process.

CONCLUSION

This study has comprehensively examined the coordination mechanisms involved in the distribution of earthquake aid in Cianjur Regency, with a particular focus on the role of the Social Service Department and its interactions with various stakeholders. The findings underscore the importance of coordination, clear communication, and effective task division in ensuring that aid is distributed efficiently and equitably, particularly in the aftermath of a disaster. Despite the Social Service Department's central role and the significant efforts made in coordinating the distribution of aid, several challenges were identified. These included discrepancies in recipient data, weak inter agency coordination, infrastructural damage, limited resources, and a lack of a centralized data management system. The study also revealed that communication issues, sectoral egos, and misaligned priorities among agencies contributed to delays and inefficiencies in the aid distribution process. These challenges highlight the need for continuous improvement in disaster management systems to enhance their responsiveness and effectiveness.

Based on Hasibuan's coordination theory, this study demonstrated that the coordination of aid distribution in Cianjur would only be optimized if the four core principles unity of action, communication, division of tasks, and discipline are adhered to effectively. The lack of full adherence to these principles in practice was identified as a major obstacle to the smooth execution of the disaster response efforts. Therefore, strengthening these coordination mechanisms is essential for future disaster response operations. The study also emphasized the need for several critical improvements to address the challenges identified. These include the implementation of real time data management systems to ensure accurate and timely information about affected populations, the strengthening of communication channels between agencies, and the formalization of inter agency agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities. Additionally, increasing investment in training, resources, and logistical support for disaster response personnel is vital to ensure that aid distribution can be carried out efficiently in the event of future disasters.

The recommendations provided in this study aim to improve the coordination and effectiveness of aid distribution in Cianjur and other disaster prone regions in Indonesia. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the proposed solutions, it is anticipated that future disaster responses will be more efficient, equitable, and capable of reducing the suffering of affected communities while accelerating recovery processes. The study's findings also contribute valuable insights into the practical application of coordination theory in disaster management, which can serve as a foundation for refining disaster response strategies both within Indonesia and in other similarly vulnerable regions. Ultimately, strengthening coordination mechanisms and improving disaster preparedness will help ensure that the social service response to natural disasters becomes more effective, efficient, and transparent, offering a model for disaster management in Indonesia and beyond. By leveraging improved coordination and technology, disaster responses can be more adaptive, reducing future vulnerability and improving overall resilience.

REFERENCE

- [1] Andriani, D., & Syafrizal, M. (2023). Enhancing disaster management communication: A case study of Cianjur earthquake relief. *Journal of Disaster Management*, 12(1), 45-60.
- [2] BPBD Cianjur. (2023). *Annual report on Cianjur earthquake response*. Cianjur: BPBD Cianjur.
- [3] Darham, (2021). *Sistem Koordinasi pada Organisasi Publik*. Yogyakarta: Azka Pustaka.
- [4] Hasibuan, M. (2019). *Coordination in disaster management: A theoretical approach*. Jakarta: Indonesian Disaster Studies Press.
- [5] Hasibuan, M. S. P. (2016). *Manajemen: Dasar, Pengertian, dan Masalah*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.

- [6] Hidayat, R. (2023). Improving coordination in crisis response: Practical insights from Indonesia's earthquake response. *Journal of Public Administration and Disaster Studies*, 17(2), 102-115.
- [7] Labolo, M. (2007). *Memahami Ilmu Pemerintahan*. Jakarta: Kelapa Gading Permai.
- [8] Moeleong, L. J. (2004). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Rosda.
- [9] Nasution, H., & Kristanto, S. (2023). The role of social service agencies in post-earthquake aid distribution: A case study of Cianjur. *Journal of Public Administration and Disaster Studies*, 18(1), 54-70.
- [10] Pertiwi, R., & Fadillah, F. (2023). Strategic approaches to disaster aid distribution: Lessons from Cianjur earthquake relief. *Indonesian Disaster Management Journal*, 14(3), 78-92.
- [11] Putra, M. (2023). Disaster coordination and communication in Indonesia: An analysis of post-earthquake aid systems. *Journal of Indonesian Governance*, 15(1), 32-45.
- [12] Rahmawati, R., et al. (2023). *Evaluating disaster response in Cianjur: A review of aid distribution systems*. Jakarta: Disaster Management Review.
- [13] Sugandha, D., & Bakowatun, W. W. (1991). *Koordinasi: Alat Pemersatu Gerak Administrasi*. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia.
- [14] Yuliana, E., & Fajar, A. (2023). Disaster management: The role of technology and human resources in response coordination. *Jakarta: Indonesian Disaster Management Review*.
- [15] Peraturan Bupati (PERBUP) Kabupaten Cianjur Nomor 123 Tahun 2022. *Pengelolaan Bantuan Bencana Alam Gempa Bumi Cianjur yang Bersumber dari Donasi Instansi Pemerintah, Lembaga Organisasi Non Pemerintah, Swasta, dan Perorangan*.