Chapter 4

HUMANITARIAN AID LOGISTICS: SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humanity has faced various natural and man-made disasters. Owing to those disasters, countless people have died and huge amount of material damage has occurred. Earthquakes, floods, extreme droughts or colds, volcanoes have been the great natural disasters that human being faced.

The eruption of Vesuvius Volcano is the most known of these natural disasters in history. In the 2nd century AD, all the living beings had disappeared in Pompei city. Although it has not precisely been proved yet, the dinosaurs became extinct due to the ice age caused by a meteor hitting the Earth. This hitting created dust and smoke that prevented sunrays from reaching to the earth. Although these two events are the extreme examples of natural disasters, they had serious impact on human being and nature and need to be mentioned to demonstrate the severe consequences of natural disasters.

Disasters can be categorized as natural disasters and man-made disasters. Natural disasters can take place owing to natural causes such as earthquakes, flooding, typhoon and tornadoes. Man-made disasters are known as artificial disasters are that emerge as result of misuse or overuse of technologies created by of science and industry. For example, a possible leakage from the nuclear power plant is man-made disaster and can cause harmful effects lasting for decades.

Having overviewed historical disasters scope, humanity was not well prepared against the disasters in the past, sometimes embraced these natural disasters as

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limit the movement area of humanitarian aid workers. In many countries, certain dietary habits, culture and traditions may have negative impact on aid. For example, in some countries, foods containing genetically modified substances are not consumed (Rodman, 2004, 17). Alternatively, because of political problems, the affected country may not want to receive help from the country wıth of which she has problems. This may prolong the aid process and may adversely affect the effective use of resources.

Sometimes the aid is not in the type that meets the needs of people who have suffered disaster. For example, sending very thick winter dress to disasters in too hot regions.

CONCLUSION

Disaster or humanitarian aid logistics has newly been conceptualized discipline after serious and dreadful disasters human experienced because of nature and man-made causes. As human being has mismanaged nature for its development and progress, the scope of disasters has been widened and their implication on humans has also relentlessly been expanded.

Humanitarian logistics is mainly implemented in accordance with the principles of logistics discipline. In the humanitarian logistics supply chain, management of an integrated logistics system and harmonizing the resources, goals and objectives are essential as in the commercial supply chain.

However, humanitarian aid logistics differs from commercial logistics in many aspects; however, key difference lies at concept that aimed at assisting people in trouble at disaster without considering maximizing profit. Saving the life is also the essential principles of humanitarian aid logistics. The establishment of an effective, rapid and functional humanitarian supply chain management is aimed in humanitarian logistics rather than maximizing profit.

There is a necessity to find the most accurate, comprehensive, efficient, holistic and rapid action for disaster logistics to provide humanitarian aid in inadequate infrastructure and environment composed of many unknowns and uncertainties. In this perspective, local, national, and international efforts toward humanitarian aid must be harmonized with knowledge and expertise of all international organizations focusing humanitarian aid logistics.

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