The Role of Public Administration in Disaster Risk Management (A Study on The Responsiveness of Banjarnegara Regency Local Government to Natural Disasters in 2025)

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Abstract

Disaster management is an integral part of public administration functions in ensuring the safety and welfare of society. This article aims to analyze the role of public administration in disaster risk management, focusing on the responsiveness of local governments in addressing natural disasters in 2025. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method in Banjarnegara Regency, one of the disaster-prone areas in Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, documentation, and field observations involving local government agencies directly engaged in disaster response. The findings reveal that public administration plays a crucial role in three key aspects: mitigation, preparedness, and emergency response. The local government demonstrated a rapid response in aid distribution and inter-agency coordination, although challenges remain in terms of human resource capacity and disaster information systems. The article recommends strengthening institutional capacity, optimizing information technology, and enhancing community participation as strategic steps toward more effective and sustainable disaster risk governance.

Keywords: Public Administration, Disaster Risk Management, Local Government, Disaster Response, Banjarnegara.

1. Introduction

Natural disasters pose a serious threat with widespread impacts on social life, the economy, and governance. In countries like Indonesia, which has complex geographical conditions and lies within the Pacific Ring of Fire, events such as landslides, floods, and earthquakes are nearly unavoidable occurrences. In this context, public administration plays a strategic role in disaster risk management through effective planning, coordination, response, and recovery processes. According to Frederickson (2020: 118), public administration is not only concerned with the technical management of bureaucracy, but also with how the government responds to the collective needs of society, especially during emergencies. This view is reinforced by Denhardt and Denhardt (2021: 43), who assert that public service should be oriented toward collaboration and active community participation, not merely on the effectiveness of administrative instructions. Therefore, citizen participation and government responsiveness are key to adaptively addressing public issues. Furthermore, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), in its *Global Assessment Report* (2022: 71), emphasizes that effective disaster risk governance must be supported by institutional capacity, human resources, and robust local-level response mechanisms. In this regard, local governments play a critical role not only in disaster response, but also in conducting mitigation and preparedness systematically, based on data, and with community involvement. The community-

based disaster risk reduction approach is considered one of the most effective strategies. Suharini et al. (2020: 11), in their study of the SIBAT team in Semarang, showed that collaboration between the community and village officials in disaster education and simulation significantly improved local resilience.

In addition, Soetono et al. (2024: 93) highlight the importance of strengthening fiscal and institutional capacity of local governments to support disaster risk management. They noted that budget allocation has generally been focused on emergency response rather than sustainable prevention and mitigation. In fact, a preventive approach has been proven more cost-effective in the long term and can significantly reduce the socio-economic impacts of disasters. This is also supported by the findings of Rizqon et al. (2023: 225), who stated that the Disaster Risk Index directly influences the amount of disaster relief funds allocated by local governments, although the efficiency of its use still needs improvement. A case study in Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java, highlights the urgency of strengthening the role of local government in disaster management. This region is highly vulnerable to landslides and floods, especially in sub-districts such as Karangkobar, Banjarmangu, and Pagentan. The implementation of the "Disaster Resilient Village" program in this area, such as in Sirongge Village, has shown promising results. According to Wulandari and Purnomo (2022: 160), non-structural mitigation efforts through community education, village mitigation forums, information boards, and volunteer engagement have proven to increase public disaster preparedness. However, challenges remain, particularly in building equal relationships between village officials and residents. As Mabutho and Moyo (2021: 7) pointed out, many citizens still act only as passive implementers of government policies, hence empowerment efforts must be carried out in a more participatory and inclusive manner.

On the other hand, challenges in fiscal governance also deserve attention. Soetono et al. (2024: 96) proposed the diversification of disaster risk financing sources, including through microinsurance mechanisms and public-private partnerships to strengthen regional fiscal resilience. This is important considering the evolving dynamics of disaster risk due to climate change and urbanization. Meanwhile, collaborative and decentralized governance approaches remain fundamental principles, as emphasized by Sutrisno (2021: 134), who stated that decision-making involving active participation from local communities will enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of disaster programs. In conclusion, effective disaster risk management depends not only on the technical capacity of bureaucracy, but also on strengthening participatory, adaptive, and collaborative values within the practice of public administration. The assessment of Banjarnegara District Government's response to natural disasters in 2025 is important not only as a reflection of institutional effectiveness, but also as a contribution to academic discourse and the formulation of sustainable policy recommendations. Public administration must act not merely as a policy implementer, but as a facilitator in building collective community resilience against disaster threats.

2. Literature Review

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method, focusing on the Government of Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java Province. The research site was chosen based on its high disaster vulnerability particularly to landslides and floods as well as the active intervention by local government in disaster

management efforts throughout 2025. According to Yin (2018: 16), case studies allow researchers to explore complex contextual phenomena in real-world settings, especially regarding public policy and government responses to crises. This approach is considered appropriate for analyzing how local public administration responds to disaster risks adaptively and collaboratively, as also recommended by Latif et al. (2021: 85) in their study on local government disaster responses in Indonesia. Data collection employed multiple techniques to strengthen the validity of the findings. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with officials from the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), sub-district authorities, and community leaders directly involved in disaster response. These semi-structured interviews provided flexibility in exploring substantive field issues. This technique follows the guidance of Kvale & Brinkmann (2015: 34), who emphasize the importance of building trust between interviewer and informant to produce authentic and reflective data. Furthermore, the study by Taqi et al. (2022: 123) demonstrated that in-depth interviews are highly effective in uncovering the role of local actors in community-based disaster governance.

Second, documentation served as a source of secondary data, including policies, disaster response activity reports, and relevant local regulations. These documents were used to trace the administrative record and institutional commitment of the local government in managing disaster risks. As Bowen (2009: 29) noted, documentation is an important tool in qualitative research, as it provides textual evidence that supports narrative analysis and data triangulation. A similar study by Haris et al. (2020: 211) showed that policy documentation can reveal how principles of good governance are implemented in disaster response practices. Third, field observations were carried out directly at disaster-affected locations, such as Karangkobar and Banjarmangu Sub-districts. The researcher observed emergency response activities, aid distribution, and interactions among actors (government, volunteers, community members). The aim was to capture the ongoing social dynamics in emergency situations that are often not documented in official records. As explained by Spradley (1980: 54), participant observation is a powerful method to understand the meaning of social actions within specific cultural contexts. This aligns with the approach used by Widiyanto & Nugroho (2021: 144), who directly observed volunteer and citizen interactions during evacuation processes to understand the effectiveness of local social roles.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014: 33), which consists of three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved filtering essential information from interviews, documents, and observations. The data were then presented in thematic narrative form, allowing for in-depth interpretation of key findings before drawing inductive conclusions. This technique is relevant for systematically portraying the complexity of policy phenomena and bureaucratic behavior. A similar approach was used by Nurfadillah et al. (2023: 188) in their study of local government responses to flooding in South Sulawesi. To ensure data validity, this study applied credibility testing through source and technique triangulation. Triangulation was performed by cross-verifying information from interviews, documentation, and field observations to obtain a holistic and consistent picture. Additionally, member checking was conducted by confirming findings with key informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations aligned with the informants' intended meanings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 314), this

technique is crucial for enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative research. The study by Wibowo et al. (2020: 273) also showed that triangulation and member checking can significantly improve the validity of findings in local disaster management studies.

3. Method

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4. Result and Discussion

This study found that the role of public administration in disaster risk management in Banjarnegara Regency during 2025 is divided into three main aspects: (1) disaster mitigation, (2) emergency response, and (3) multi-stakeholder collaboration. These three aspects reflect how the local government applies the principles of public administration in addressing the risks of natural disasters, particularly landslides and floods, which are predominant in the region.

Public Administration and Disaster Response

Public administration is fundamentally the process of managing public resources directed toward achieving state objectives, primarily through policies and public services. In the context of disaster management, public administration plays a strategic role as the institutional framework responsible for cross-sectoral and multi-level government coordination. According to Rosenbloom et al. (2021: 12), public administration consists of managerial, political, and legal dimensions that interact with one another in bridging the interests of the state and society. These three dimensions are essential in designing a disaster response system that is not only efficient but also fair and participatory. In disaster situations, the effectiveness of emergency management systems heavily depends on the capacity of public administration to perform its coordinating and responsive functions. Haddow, Bullock, and Coppola (2020: 45) emphasize that the success of disaster management is determined by the ability of public administration to respond quickly, manage inter-agency coordination, and involve communities in the response process. In this regard, public administration is not merely an implementing actor but also a collaborative facilitator that must be able to integrate various resources and interests.

This theory is supported by Widodo et al. (2022: 88), who found that the capacity of public administration at the local level directly influences the effectiveness of disaster response. In Banjarnegara Regency, for instance, the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) plays a central role in organizing emergency response and mobilizing village volunteers. However, challenges remain in the form of sectoral bureaucracy, which often hampers coordination processes. Therefore, institutional governance reforms that are more adaptive and inclusive to crisis dynamics are needed. It can thus be concluded that public administration plays a vital role as an

institutional system that governs the processes of mitigation, preparedness, and disaster rehabilitation in a coordinated and adaptive manner. The success of disaster response is not solely determined by the technical capacity of the bureaucracy but also by its ability to coordinate across sectors and empower communities. At the local level, such as in Banjarnegara Regency, challenges like limited inter-sectoral coordination and procedural inefficiencies continue to hinder rapid and inclusive crisis responses. This theoretical perspective is further strengthened by Rosenbloom et al. (2021), who assert that the managerial dimension (bureaucratic efficiency), political dimension (public interest representation), and legal dimension (justice and formal rules) must complement each other in creating effective public service delivery. Additionally, Haddow, Bullock, and Coppola (2020) affirm that public administration is the main actor throughout the entire disaster management cycle from mitigation to recovery and must prioritize coordination and local empowerment principles.

Disaster Risk Management

Disaster risk management is a systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reducing the potential impacts of disaster events. According to UNDRR (2022: 23), risk management is not solely focused on post-disaster response but encompasses preventive and mitigative actions that are strategically designed and evidence-based. This requires the integration of spatial data, local risk assessments, and community involvement in all phases of disaster management. The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)* serves as a key reference in guiding risk reduction policies within national and regional development agendas. At the local level, governments are required to translate this global framework into concrete policies. Rachmawati et al. (2021: 197) argue that mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into regional development plans is a crucial instrument for building regional resilience. Banjarnegara Regency has shown such efforts through the updating of its Disaster Risk Map and the implementation of the *Disaster Resilient Village (Destana)* program, although these have not been evenly distributed across all areas. Mitigation implementation remains constrained by fiscal capacity, gaps in human resources, and low disaster literacy in remote areas.

In addition to technical aspects, social aspects such as citizen participation are also essential elements. Research by Nugroho & Hapsari (2020: 115) shows that the success of risk reduction efforts heavily depends on the level of trust and collaboration between the government and the community. When communities are involved from the planning to the evaluation stages, the effectiveness of mitigation programs increases significantly. Therefore, strengthening local capacity and building community work networks must become long-term strategies in disaster risk management based on public administration. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that effective disaster risk management requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach—from risk mapping and preventive policy to active community participation. Banjarnegara Regency has demonstrated initiatives through the updating of its Disaster Risk Map and the formation of *Destana* communities; however, implementation remains uneven across the region. Disparities in capacity and disaster literacy in remote villages remain major barriers to achieving equitable regional resilience. These findings are reinforced by the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)* adopted by UNDRR (2022), which emphasizes the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development and the necessity

of community participation as key actors in decision-making processes. In addition, the theory of *Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)* as explained by Nugroho & Hapsari (2020) advocates for placing local communities at the center of effective and contextual risk management systems.

Local Government Responsiveness

Responsiveness is one of the key indicators in assessing the quality of public administration, especially in emergency contexts such as natural disasters. Denhardt & Denhardt (2021: 67) state that a responsive government is one that can understand and respond to the needs of the community quickly, accurately, and responsibly. In the case of Banjarnegara Regency, emergency response was evident in the rapid activation of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the deployment of the Quick Response Team (TRC), and the establishment of an integrated logistics system. However, initial communication challenges in remote areas highlight the need for innovation in disaster information systems, both technology-based and rooted in local wisdom. Responsiveness also reflects the extent to which local governments can bridge community needs and manage available resources efficiently. A study by Putra et al. (2022: 210) found that emergency response performance heavily depends on the clarity of standard operating procedures (SOPs), personnel readiness, and logistics availability. The Banjarnegara government has taken positive steps, but there is still room for improvement in involving communities as active actors in disaster response, especially in villages with limited access. This calls for the development of response strategies based on inclusivity and local adaptation. From the perspective of the New Public Service (NPS), the community is no longer seen as a passive object of policy but as an active partner in public service. Denhardt & Denhardt (2021: 102) emphasize the importance of collaborative relationships between bureaucracy and citizens in building trust and legitimacy. Programs such as the River School (*Sekolah Sungai*) and community-based SAR (Search and Rescue) training in Banjarnegara are good examples of community participation. However, according to Fitriani et al. (2023: 146), challenges remain in reaching vulnerable groups and isolated areas that have yet to receive adequate disaster education and training interventions.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that local government responsiveness in facing disasters is not only demonstrated through rapid emergency response, but also through the ability to communicate effectively, build public trust, and develop inclusive systems. Banjarnegara Regency has shown good practices in terms of rapid response, but still faces challenges in early communication with areas lacking access to information and in engaging residents of remote villages. Innovations in disaster information systems and community-based approaches are essential solutions. These findings are reinforced by the New Public Service (NPS) theory by Denhardt & Denhardt (2021), which emphasizes that good public service must encourage community participation and treat citizens as partners rather than objects of policy. In the context of disaster management, this approach enables governments to respond to citizens' needs in a more relevant and accountable manner. In addition, the Governance Responsiveness theory by Putra et al. (2022) asserts that the quality of service in crisis situations is determined by institutional capacity to respond quickly and accurately to changing needs.

5. Conclusion

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that public administration plays a strategic role in disaster risk management, particularly at the local government level. The case study in Banjarnegara Regency reveals that this role is manifested in three main aspects: disaster risk mitigation, emergency response, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. These aspects illustrate how the local government not only performs administrative functions but also builds a governance system that is resilient and responsive to the region's disaster vulnerabilities, especially landslides and floods. The Banjarnegara Regency Government has shown a commendable level of institutional responsiveness, as reflected in the swift activation of disaster command posts, the deployment of Quick Response Teams (TRC), and community-based initiatives such as the River School (*Sekolah Sungai*) and Disaster-Resilient Villages (*Destana*). However, the effectiveness of implementation on the ground still faces significant challenges. These include limitations in human and fiscal resources, disparities in information access, and low disaster literacy in remote areas such as Kalibening and Wanayasa. This indicates the need for a more equitable and adaptive governance strategy tailored to the region's geographic and social conditions. Conceptually, these findings reinforce contemporary public administration theories, such as those proposed by Rosenbloom et al. (2021), which emphasize the synergy between managerial, political, and legal dimensions in managing public affairs effectively. Moreover, the *New Public Service* approach by Denhardt & Denhardt (2021) is highly relevant, as it positions the public as active partners in disaster risk governance, rather than merely policy recipients. Thus, public administration is not only required to be bureaucratically efficient, but also collaborative, participatory, and adaptive in addressing the increasingly complex dynamics of disaster risk.

Suggestions

Strengthening the institutional capacity of local governments is a top priority for improving the effectiveness of disaster risk management. Local governments, particularly through the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), must receive adequate budgetary support and recruit competent human resources. In addition, it is essential to conduct regular training focused on technology-based disaster management and the use of up-to-date data. The goal of this capacity building is not only to ensure BPBD's responsiveness in emergency situations but also to enable it to proactively develop evidence-based mitigation and preparedness strategies. On the other hand, the development of an integrated and real-time disaster risk information system has become an urgent need, especially in areas with limited communication infrastructure. This system should actively involve community participation in the early reporting of disaster events using simple technologies such as SMS gateways, mobile applications, or even community radio. In this way, disaster information can be disseminated quickly and comprehensively, enhancing early warning systems and reducing government response time on the ground. Furthermore, increasing community participation equitably is key to building inclusive regional resilience. Disaster literacy programs and resilient community training must be expanded to reach villages that have not yet been covered, so that all segments of society attain an equal level of preparedness. This is vital for reducing risk disparities between central and peripheral areas that are often marginalized in policy planning. Finally, a cross-sectoral or *whole-of-government* approach is needed in disaster risk management. All

regional agencies must treat disaster risk reduction as a shared agenda, not solely the responsibility of BPBD. Cross-departmental and inter-agency collaboration will strengthen program sustainability and ensure policy integration at every stage of regional development.

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