Indonesian Mental Health Association Investigation in Palu, Central Sulawesi.

The condition of people with psychosocial disability who lived in confinement or shackling, during and post-disaster in Central Sulawesi

[Picture 1]
Introduction

The protection for people with psychosocial disability during a state of emergency within the Conventions of Rights for People with Psychosocial Disability (UN CPRD), Article 11, “Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies”- State Parties shall take every action that is needed and guarantees the protection and safety for people with psychosocial disability in any situation of risks, including a situation of armed conflict and in the case of natural disaster in accordance to their obligation under the international law which also includes the international humanitarian law and the international law of human rights.

In September of 2018, a natural disaster occurred in Central Sulawesi in the form of an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.4 SR, followed by a couple of aftershocks and then a wave of tsunami as high as 5 meters, not to mention a liquefaction of land happened in one village (See photo No. 1). According to a data from the government, there were around 2.081 victim that died, 1.309 victims that were not found, 12.568 injured and a staggering 206.194 people were evacuated to 122 points of evacuations.

So far, when a natural disaster occurred in Indonesia, persons with psychosocial disability who are being restrained and kept inside the house are the one who get forgotten the most. They are being left behind in the place they’re being restrained/kept. During evacuation, they have never been the center of attention and not being evacuated on equal basis as others. It has never crossed the villagers and the local government mind to take them to a place for refuge. People with psychosocial disability are treated as an outcast without the rights being protected. They never made it in to the report of the earthquake’s victims that was given by the local government and there was no further news about them post-disaster.

Seeing this, Indonesian Mental Health Association in partnership with TCI Asia Pacific, feels the need to conduct an observation at a various location that were affected by the disaster in Central Sulawesi and to see directly the condition of those with psychosocial disability that are still being shackled during and after disaster.

The Aims of Observation

Ministry of Health’s basic health research of the year 2013 states that Central Sulawesi is ranked third for the total amount of people with psychosocial disability. According to this data, we tried to find information regarding the whereabouts and the condition of those with psychosocial disability when the disaster occurs and post-disaster.

Indonesian Mental Health Association considered that it is necessary to conduct an investigation in the disaster areas where there were people with psychosocial disability who were still being shackled. The aim for this observation is to find out whether or not they got the same treatment as other residents who lived there when the disaster occurred and their condition post disaster.

The observation was conducted at Sigi region, Donggala and Palu. The three regions experienced severe impacts from the earthquakes.
Time and Location

The observations were conducted for 7 days, starting from November 28 until December 4, 2018 in 3 areas in the province of Central Sulawesi. These 3 areas are, Palu, Donggala and Sigi.

The locations we visited are:

1. Watatu Village, South Benawa Sub-district, Donggala
2. Kabobona Village, Sigi
3. Balongga Village, South Dogo, Sigi
4. City of Palu
5. Lembasada Village, Donggala

Data Collection and Observation method

As a start, we collected data from the the local (province and districts) office of social affairs to have preliminary picture about the local residents with psychosocial disability that are being shackled at their houses and newest information regarding their whereabouts and the condition of them post-earthquake, tsunami and liquefaction.

We also asked to be connected to local social workers who had been working in the respective areas and explore the possibility for the social workers to be our guide.

We collected additional information from local residents and the social workers on the situation before, during and after disaster.

In each observation we were accompanied by local social worker which we found to be the most useful as they knew very well the areas the had been working in.

We visited houses of persons with psychosocial disabilities in these 3 areas. Personal approach and additional information from social service workers and head of the villages were required to obtain information before and after disaster.

As this was a preliminary observation we did not yet use a structured interview sheet.

Barriers

The biggest obstacle was the difficulty of gathering information about the number of people with psychosocial disability who were being shackled in those areas. Data from the 2013 Ministry of Health Basic Health Research and data from the local social affair affices are not enough to give adequate information of such persons who lived in that area including those who lived in confinement/are shackled. There were still a lot of people with psychosocial disability who are shackled or lived in confinement that have not been put in the database that a review is needed for a more accurate data. We had to rely more on the informal informations from local people and social workers.
The road towards to the location was hard to be accessed because it was heavily damaged by the earthquake and tsunami and the places that were visited was located in the villages, far away from the towns, most of them are located in remote areas.

We couldn’t gather data from areas that were already disapeared or completely destroyed in the earthquakes, tsunami or liquefactions. The inhabitants of those areas had perished. Since there were no data of the situation of persons with psychosocial disabilities in those areas prior the disaster, we could not get any information who might be victims and died in those areas.

Another obstacle is the time limit. We only conducted this research for 7 days and had to start from scratch. This is certainly not enough considering the geographical difficulties and the difficulties to gather primary data. Further research is needed.

Observation Findings

1. Watutu Village, South Banawa Sub-district, Donggala district

In this village, we found 2 people with psychosocial disability that were being restrained at different locations. This village felt huge tremor during the earthquake, so much so that the villagers evacuated to the top of the mountain to save themselves. However, both of them were left behind, still being restrained during the incident. According to the information from the head of the village, there was no help from the local government to help them evacuate to the designated place. Most of the houses were traditional houses built of wood. It’s more resilient during earthquake compare to houses made of concrete. Therefore many of the houses, eventhough damaged, were still standing and not collapsed during the earthquake. Fortunately this saved many lives, including PWPD who were schackled and could not run away.

a. Yos Sudarso

This 17 years old teenager was being shackle in a platform in his house that was made of wood. During the earthquake, his family saved themselves by going to the mountain and stayed there for 2 days without bringing the boy with them. There was no effort in releasing the boy from his shackles or to evacuate him to a safer place. The boy was shackle near the kitchen on a platform in a stilt house above a 3-meter wooden pole near a small cliff.

[Pic 2]
b. **Hersen**

Shackled and locked from the outside in an empty house made of wooden roof and wall. The empty house is located next to the family home. He was shackled after being sent home from Madani Psychiatric Hospital on June 2018. Both of the houses were damaged because of the earthquake, the poles are broken and there are cracks on the floor. During the earthquake, the family left Hersen behind, still caged and his foot was shackled. They were afraid to set Hersen free from his cage, so they just left him behind. A few weeks after the earthquake, the family was visited by health workers and from the Red Cross. But Hersen’s condition had not changed after the visit. He was still in shackling.

[Pic 3]
2. Kabobona Village, Sigi district

Sigi District is a place that was affected by the earthquake and liquefaction. Many of the victims were drowned to the liquified soil and being dragged by the flood. One of the location that was hit by the liquefaction is Kabobona Village. It was so bad that it caused houses to be sink as deep as 1 to 3 meters. In these villages we found 2 people with psychosocial disability that were affected.
Doc: resident’s house that sank 1.5 meters into the ground.
Doc: resident still use the house after liquefaction. This house once had ceramic floor that were submerged under the 1.5 meter of mud. The mud had hardened and formed the floor of the house.
a. **Mr. Nono**

A 43 years Mr Nono had psychosocial disability but was not in schackling. He was doing some gardening around the house during the earthquake and liquefaction had half of his body buried in the mud and was dragged by the flood for several hundred meters. Mr. Nono screamed for help and lucky for him he was saved by the citizens there. When the family knew that Mr. Nono was safe, they immediately brought him to safer place with them and then they evacuated to a evacuation shelter. There were no health or other services there for Mr. Nono post-earthquake.
a. Wandi

He had an emotional trauma post-beating which caused an injury on his head. For a year, Wandi lived alone, locked up in a 4-meter squared shack. During the liquefaction that caused the residents’ house to sink, the family member saved themselves without letting Wandi out of the room, the wooden shack sank into the mud. Luckily when liquid entered the room from the floor, Wandi got dragged by the flood out to the door and was dragged for a few hundred meter. He screamed for help and half of his body was beginning to sink. Villagers managed to help him before drowning and he was placed to the nearest mosque. There was no help given to Wandi, unlike the other residents. Wandi then looked for other place to rest. He then stayed at an open hut in the village.
3. **Lambara Sub-district, City of Palu**

   This city also suffered from heavy damage when disaster occurred. The tremor destroyed the roads and locations near the coast were being swept by a 5-meter wave of tsunami. We had acquired a location of a person with psychosocial disability in this area, located in a higher ground that was not affected by tsunami although the tremors caused all of the residents to run for safety to the mountain. Since this location is close to the city, the houses were mostly build by bricks and concrete and suffered heavier damage compare to the wooden houses in remote villages.

   a. **Mr. Safarudin, 42 Years old**

      He was shacked since 2015. He is the second son of 2 siblings and was looked after by his 77 years old mother. During the earthquake, all family ran for safety up to the mountain and left Mr. Safarudin alone, still shackled. One of the family member was sent check on Mr. Safarudin’s condition. After seeing that the house was still intact, the family assumed that Mr. Safarudin was fine therefore they didn’t open up the shackle from his feet and left him again, without concern of the following earthquakes and aftershocks.
The following day they left the mountain and went for the designated place of refuge that has been provided by the local government. Mr. Safarudin, again, was left behind, still shackled in the empty house in the empty village. During their 10 days stay in the refugee center, the family visited claimed that they visited Safarudin once a day to feed him.

According to the family, Mr. Safarudin’s data was in the village resident database and community health center’s record. However the health center/village office didn’t give any support and access to the refugee center for Mr Safarudin.

(Pic 11)

(Doc: Front view of the house)
(Doc : rear view of the house)
4. Ujuna, West Palu.

This region was affected by severe earthquake, that got many houses cracked and collapsed. Weo faced a difficulty in finding people with psychosocial disability in this area because of minimum access and information. The family member also hesitated to give information to the social affair offices regarding shackling.

a. Edi

Edi is a 41 years old man who lives with his siblings and a diabetic mother. He was chained and confined in a concrete, cage like room with iron bars. During the earthquake, his siblings immediately saved their mom and run towards a safer place leaving Edi behind in the house, still shackled. The following day, they found Edi outside of house, he saved himself by smashing the iron trellis and the locked wooden door.

The family and other villagers went to refugee center but none of them took Edy to the shelter. Edy was left behind in the empty village. The mother’s argued that she was afraid that other villagers would not accept Edi and would treat him as a threat. The distance between the
refugee center and the house was around 2km. The family claimed that they checked on Edy everyday to fed him.

After the family returned to the house from the refugee center, Edy was put back in the confinement.

[Pic 14]

*(Doc : Locked wooden door as an access to the confinement)*
(Doc: Edy in his cage. The hole in the left wall was to deliver food, the wall on the right were cracked due to the earthquake. The cage was newly built. Before it was made by wooden plank.)
5. South Petobo, Sigi

South Petobo region suffered quiet a considerable damage, many of the roads were damaged and there were a lot of wreckage there. This region was once isolated because there was no access for transportation and the communication network was disconnected.
(Doc: Ruins of buildings caused by earthquake in South Petobo)
a. Mr. Ramli

A month before the earthquake, Mr. Ramli was just got discharged from Mandani Psychiatric Hospital and was not allowed to go out of the house. When we went there, we got an information that Mr. Ramli has passed away. During the earthquake, Mr. Ramli who was sitting in the kitchen got hit by the concrete wreckage and his right calf was heavily torn, so much so that the bone is visible.

He was forced to tie his injured leg using a piece of cloth so that the blood could stop spilling out and to save his mother. He wound was temporarily bandaged at the community health center, but there was nearly no medication and the wound was so severe he needed hospital treatment. He couldn’t go to the hospital because of the distance and the road was severely damaged by the earthquake made it impossible to travel. He died 4 days afterwards because of an infection on his wound.
(Doc: Here is the place where Mr. Ramli got hit by concrete debris, back then when this kitchen have concrete wall. The rest of the house was made of wood and still intact. This kitchen was located under a wooden house that was built on stilt. The rest of the house was still intact. Only the part that was built by concrete was collapsed)
6. Lembasada Village, Donggala

This region that was heavily affected because of the earthquake is located at around 2km from the coast, but it was not affected by the tsunami. When the disaster occurred, all of the residents ran up to the mountain to save themselves, there were a few residents who stayed up in the mountain for a month in fear of a tsunami and following earthquakes.

a. Salim
Aged 45 and had been confined for more than 20 years inside a small, cage like building made of concrete. During the disaster, this region experienced severe tremor, so much so that it made the residents fled towards the top of the mountain. Mr. Salim’s family also took refuge on the mountainleaving Mr. Salim behind without releasing him from confiment. The family said they didn’t know where was the key of the cage.
There was no help nor evacuation effort done by the local government post-earthquake for Mr. Salim

[Pic 21]

[Pic 22] Mr. Salim’s cage.
b. Abidin

Abidin has been confined for several years. During the earthquake, his family took refuge in the mountain for 8 days, they didn’t want to take Mr. Abidin because they were afraid that he might disturb other villagers there. After that they were evacuated to refugee center. During the evacuation, there was no effort from the local government to evacuate Mr. Abidin.
Mr Abidin in his cage.

7. Palu
   
a. Samsudin

   Samsudin was chained to the wall in his family’s home. During the earthquake, the family crawled their way out because the earthquake heavily shook the house. They immediately saved themselves by going to the street and they just rest it in God’s hand what would happened to Mr. Samsudin who was still chained inside the house. The family took refuge at a refugee center for 8 days and during their stay there. They visited the house from time to time to their belongings in the house to make sure those were not stolen and to check out Mr. Samsudin’s condition. Since there was no injury because of the earthquake, the family still didn’t want to let go of the shackle that binds Mr. Samsudin’s feet. There was no evacuation effort from the local government for Mr. Samsudin
Mr. Samsudin.

**Conclusion:**

- It’s a sad fact that shackling and confinement of PWPD is still widespread in the location of natural disasters in Indonesia.
- There was no adequate data about them, their location and their condition.
- There was no care or social protection or other government program to assist them and their families.
- The only treatment available was only hospitalisation in a mental hospital in the province’s capital.
- During the disaster, almost all of them were left behind, many still in shackling and/or confinement, while the families and other villagers escaped, regardless risk of following quakes.
- When the families and other villagers were evacuated to the refugee centers, most of them were again left behind for days or weeks in the empty villages, many still in shackling or confinement.
There were no effort from local government or aid workers to evacuate them.

After the families returned to the houses, a few who were unchained were put back in confinement.

Eventhough there were visits from government officials or red cross, there were no assistance delivered to them. Our observation took place nearly 3 months after disaster. It was suppose to be the start of the recovery phase but therewere no improvement of their conditions whatsoever.

**Recommendation:**

- Effort to have adequate data on the situation of PWPD
- Effort to free PWPD from shackling and confinement using multisectoral approach that answer the comprehensive needs of PWPD and not falling into forced treatment of medical approach, including social protection, job/income and other assistances.
- Seriously include the needs of PWPD into **every steps and phases of disaster management.**
- Ensure the improvement of the condition of PWPD as one goal of recovery process during disaster.
- Other recommendations to be followed.

Additional photo about the recent condition post-disaster
House collapsed into the sea on the coast of Donggala
House got dragged for as long as 100m when the soil turned liquid during liquefaction after the quake.