

THE ROLE OF GATHERING SPACES DURING AND AFTER DISASTER: COMMUNITY RECOVERY THROUGH THE PRIORITY OF PUBLIC SPACES

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1. INTRODUCTION

After the big disaster, gathering space still plays an essential role in communities' recovery and disaster reduction. This research started by collecting post-disaster data and defining the role of museums, memorial places, and gathering spaces in community recovery. Then it pursued the research aims to 1) evaluate community space to study community adaptation and knowledge transfer and 2) compare the experience and information that residents have about the tsunami in Thailand and Japan and Earthquake in Thailand and Japan to provide better risk perception for future events. As it evaluates existing community space and the process of passing on knowledge to future generations, this research represents an essential element in dealing with future disaster preparedness with the help of information transfer and social-media impacts.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology involved fieldwork and data collection through on-site visits and interviews with key stakeholders. Field studies were conducted in Thailand in December 2024 and in Japan in September 2024. The study focused on a comparative analysis of the selected sites in terms of their use, location, duration of visit, design concepts, and commonly used symbols. Additionally, community engagement activities and participation during various events at each site were explored.

3. GATHERING SPACES

The creation of “community spaces,” especially in post-disaster areas, plays a vital role in recovery and resilience. Ghezelloo et. al [2] examined post-disaster placemaking efforts following the 3.11 disaster in the Arahama area of Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture, through multiple lenses—land-use transformation, placelessness, place attachment, and the reconnection of social capital. The findings revealed that long-term placemaking projects grounded in community participation were able to successfully create deeply meaningful “third places.” These initiatives preserved the valuable meanings of pre-disaster places while simultaneously creating new meanings for both users and the place makers themselves. This process helped to strengthen various dimensions of social capital and reconnect previously fragmented social ties.[3] Moreover, it was found that such

placemaking processes were highly flexible. In Thailand, some cases of community spaces, for example the “Tsunami memorial park” now provides additional functions with the local beach athletic field area, offering diverse functions, activities, and interventions. Further enhancing the sense of place, these efforts also contribute to global disaster learning and preparations, for example Minato no Mori Memorial Park in Sannomiya Kobe or Uosaki community park.



Figure 1. Gathering spaces case studies in Japan and Thailand

Community spaces in former disaster zones become case studies and important learning grounds for locals, visitors, and researchers, especially when integrated with technology, storytelling, and community engagement. These spaces are not only sites of remembrance but also crucial environments for the transmission of disaster knowledge. They serve as a bridge between memory and resilience, transforming past experiences into a foundation for future preparedness. Through active participation, storytelling, and spatial learning, such places help transform

trauma into the foundation of a more knowledgeable and safer society

4. CONCLUSIONS

Both Japan and Thailand have demonstrated how disaster recovery can be transformed into long-term resilience through community-centered approaches. In both countries, spaces function as sites of remembrance and education. Memorial spaces have evolved into powerful tools for education, fostering preparedness, and preserving collective memory. The integration of interactive learning, survivor narratives, and technology enhances their impact. Activities include workshops, reforestation, guided tours, and storytelling, and in addition, integration with technology (e.g., VR) enhances reach and interactivity. These efforts also foster intergenerational learning and improve disaster risk perception. As global risks increase, these models provide essential insights for disaster-prone communities worldwide.

5. REFERENCE

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