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## Empowerment of Earthquake Victims in Bekasi through Legal Approaches and Community Service

### Abstract

The earthquake that struck Bekasi has caused serious impacts on the social, economic, and legal rights of the affected community. The purpose of this study is to examine and implement the empowerment of earthquake victims in Bekasi through legal approaches and community service in order to enhance their resilience and protect their rights. The methods employed include literature review, field observation, and the implementation of community service programs oriented toward legal education and access to justice. The results indicate that empowerment through legal approaches strengthens victims' understanding of their legal rights and increases their participation in the recovery process. In addition, community service fosters an environment that supports community resilience and self-reliance in overcoming the disaster. The study concludes that synergy between legal approaches and community service is an effective strategy to accelerate recovery and empowerment of earthquake victims in Bekasi, thereby contributing to the creation of a more resilient and sustainable society.

**Keywords:** Earthquake Victims, Legal Approach, Community Service

### 1. Introduction

Earthquakes are among the natural disasters that frequently occur in Indonesia, including in the Bekasi area. Such disasters not only result in physical destruction and material losses but also have psychosocial impacts and threaten the fundamental rights of victims. As an earthquake-prone area, Bekasi requires special attention to ensure that disaster victims receive protection, recovery, and empowerment in an optimal manner.

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Figure 1: Causes of the Bekasi Earthquake  
(Source: Kompas.com)

In reality, many earthquake victims lack adequate understanding of their legal rights and access to justice or other forms of legal protection. Limited legal knowledge and restricted access to legal services may prolong suffering and hinder recovery. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed one that integrates legal empowerment and community service. Setioputro, B., Yunanto, R. A., Haristiani, R., & Rokhmah, D. (2025).

This empowerment approach aims not only to provide legal education but also to raise awareness, build independence, and strengthen the capacity of victims to address post-disaster challenges. Through the synergy of legal approaches and community service, victims are expected to receive not only legal protection but also empowerment to recover and overcome difficulties independently.

Based on this background, this study focuses on examining and implementing empowerment programs for earthquake victims in Bekasi using a legal and community service-based approach, in order to build a more resilient and just society. Ahmad, G. (2025).

Although earthquakes are relatively rare in urban areas such as Bekasi, they still pose potential threats with devastating physical and psychological consequences. Their impacts extend beyond damaged infrastructure, loss of livelihoods, and disruption of social activities, raising legal issues concerning victims' rights to aid, compensation, and legal protection. Abdurrasyid, A., Pamungkas, R. A., Mulyana, B., Rahayu, S. T., & Oktavia, E. M. (2025).

Within this context, empowering earthquake victims in Bekasi requires two fundamental approaches:

- a. Legal approach, to ensure the protection of victims' rights, including proper housing, medical care, and social security.
- b. Community service approach, through which academics, students, social organizations, and the wider community can contribute to post-disaster recovery.

Empowerment of Victims through Legal Approaches: Protection of Victims' Rights  
Disaster victims are entitled to rights guaranteed by law, including:

- a. The right to immediate relief (Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management).
- b. The right to basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare.
- c. The right to safety and protection from discrimination during post-disaster handling.

Access to Aid and Compensation: Legal frameworks guarantee that victims are entitled to:

- a. Emergency assistance (logistics, medicines, clothing, and temporary housing).
- b. Compensation if negligence occurs, for example, from contractors failing to meet earthquake-resistant construction standards.
- c. Legal certainty in aid distribution to prevent misuse of authority or corruption in disaster funds.

#### Legal Advocacy and Education

- a. Providing legal assistance to victims in accessing government aid or compensation.
- b. Conducting legal education on disaster mitigation, standards for earthquake-resistant housing, and legal procedures if their rights are violated.
- c. Encouraging the involvement of Legal Aid Institutes (LBH) and professional legal organizations in victim advocacy.

#### Empowerment of Victims through Community Service: Social and Psychological Recovery

- a. Trauma-healing programs to reduce psychological impacts, especially for children.
- b. Community support through local volunteer groups to help victims regain the spirit of life. M. H., Assegaf, A. H., & Fauzan, R. S. (2023).

#### Economic Empowerment

- a. Skills training for victims to enable economic independence after losing employment.
- b. Community-based micro-enterprise programs (such as home-based businesses or handicrafts) to revitalize the local economy.
- c. Facilitating access to microcredit schemes (KUR) or grants for economic recovery.



Figure 2: House Damage Caused by the 4.9-magnitude Earthquake  
(Source: CNN Indonesia)

#### Education and Disaster Awareness

- a. Conducting disaster mitigation education in schools and communities to prepare for future earthquakes.
- b. Organizing community-level evacuation drills (RT/RW level).
- c. Utilizing information technology, including apps, social media, and community radio, to disseminate disaster preparedness education.

### Collaboration between Academia and Government

- a. Universities may assign students to thematic community service programs (KKN) supporting post-earthquake empowerment.
- b. Local governments can partner with NGOs, community organizations, and businesses to strengthen recovery programs.

Synergy of Legal Approaches and Community Service: Both approaches complement each other:

- a. The legal approach provides protection and certainty to ensure that victims' rights are fulfilled.
- b. Community service supports victims' psychological, social, and economic recovery, ensuring they are not merely aid recipients but become self-reliant actors in rebuilding their lives.

Through this synergy, empowerment of earthquake victims in Bekasi does not stop at emergency aid but continues toward long-term improvement of quality of life after the disaster. A holistic approach is therefore essential—legal frameworks ensure normative protection, while community service emphasizes socio-economic recovery and awareness. The combination of both enables victims to recover more quickly, build independence, and enhance resilience against future disasters. Rochman, U., & Subarkah, A. (2023).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework serves as a conceptual foundation for understanding and analyzing the empowerment of earthquake victims. In this context, several relevant theories include empowerment theory, legal theory, and community service theory. Together, these frameworks explain how legal approaches and community service can synergize in empowering disaster victims. Hijri, Y. S., Sulistyono, S. W., Kurniawan, W., & Salam, A. (2025).



Figure 3: BNPB Officers Identifying  
(Source: Transindonesia.co)

### 2.1. Empowerment Theory

Empowerment is a process aimed at increasing the capacity, independence, and access of disaster victims to resources so they can recover from adversity. Key concepts include:

- a. Zimmerman (1995) defines empowerment as a multidimensional process encompassing psychological, social, economic, and political aspects to strengthen the capacity of both individuals and communities.

- b. Friedmann (1992) highlights empowerment as a redistribution of power, enabling vulnerable groups (including disaster victims) to gain access to resources and decisions that affect their lives.
- c. Chambers (1995) introduces the concept of *people-centered development*, emphasizing that development should treat communities as active subjects rather than passive objects of aid.

In the context of Bekasi earthquake victims, empowerment theory focuses on:

- a. Strengthening victims' economic independence post-disaster.
- b. Enhancing social capacity through community support.
- c. Providing knowledge and skills in disaster mitigation.
- d. Ensuring legal access and justice so victims' rights are not neglected.

## 2.2. Legal Theory in Disaster Management

A legal approach provides legitimacy and certainty regarding the rights and obligations of both victims and the government in disaster management.

- a. **Legal Protection Theory** (Philipus M. Hadjon): Legal protection safeguards individuals' rights against arbitrary actions. Disaster victims are entitled to safety guarantees, access to assistance, and compensation for losses.
- b. **Theory of Justice** (John Rawls, 1971): In disaster contexts, justice requires that aid distribution be fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory.
- c. **Human Rights Theory**: Disasters do not eliminate fundamental rights such as the right to life, health, and adequate housing. The state is obliged to guarantee these rights through legal policies.

### National Legal Basis:

- a. Law No. 24/2007 on Disaster Management.
- b. Government Regulation No. 21/2008 on the Implementation of Disaster Management.
- c. Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights.
- d. Law No. 11/2009 on Social Welfare.

From a legal perspective, empowering Bekasi earthquake victims emphasizes legal certainty, protection of victims' rights, and accountability mechanisms in disaster response.

## 2.3. Community Service Theory

Community service reflects the application of academic knowledge and skills to solve real-life societal problems.

- a. **Participation Theory** (Arnstein, 1969 – Ladder of Participation): The success of community service programs depends on the extent of community involvement from planning to evaluation.
- b. **Social Capital Theory** (Putnam, 1993): Social capital—comprising networks, norms, and trust strengthens community solidarity in facing disasters and plays a key role in post-disaster recovery.
- c. **Tri Dharma of Higher Education**: Community service is one of the three pillars of universities, requiring academic institutions to contribute to disaster victim recovery through education, training, and community engagement.

In Bekasi, community service can be implemented through:

- a. Trauma healing and psychosocial recovery.
- b. Productive economic training for victims.
- c. Disaster mitigation education in schools and communities.
- d. Collaboration among government, universities, and NGOs in post-earthquake recovery. Republic of Indonesia. (2007).

Integrative Theory: Synergy between Law and Community Service

For optimal empowerment of earthquake victims, legal frameworks and community service must work together:

- a. Law provides certainty and protection, ensuring victims' rights and fair treatment.
- b. Community service strengthens social, economic, and psychological capacities, enabling victims to become self-reliant.
- c. This aligns with a holistic disaster management approach that addresses not only emergency response but also long-term recovery.

Relevance to Bekasi Earthquake Victim Empowerment

- a. **Empowerment theory** → foundation for victims' recovery and independence.
- b. **Legal theory** → foundation for protecting victims' rights.
- c. **Community service theory** → foundation for active participation of universities, NGOs, and society.
- d. **Integration of the three** → creates a comprehensive approach that addresses legal, social, economic, and psychological needs of victims.

With this theoretical framework, research on *Empowering Bekasi Earthquake Victims through Legal Approaches and Community Service* is grounded in a strong conceptual basis to analyze issues and provide effective policy recommendations. Central Lombok Regency. (2024).

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Approach

This study adopts a **qualitative approach** with a **descriptive-analytical method**.

- a. **Qualitative** → focuses on an in-depth understanding of victims' experiences, needs, and rights, as well as the role of law and community service in empowerment.
- b. **Descriptive-analytical** → describes field realities while analyzing them through empowerment theory, legal theory, and community service theory.

In legal terms, the approach used is **socio-legal research** (*yuridis-sosiologis*), meaning that law is examined not only from its normative framework but also its practical implementation in disaster-affected communities. Earthquake and Fire Management Simulation (SIGEMPAR) as a Disaster Mitigation Method. (2024).

#### 3.2. Research Location

The research will be conducted in disaster-affected or disaster-prone areas in Bekasi Regency, selected based on:

- a. The presence of earthquake victims.
- b. Existing government or social recovery programs.

- c. Community participation potential in empowerment and service activities.

### 3.3. Research Subjects and Objects

#### **Subjects (informants/respondents):**

- a. Earthquake victims.
- b. Local government officials (BPBD, Social Services, village/urban officers).
- c. Volunteers and civil society organizations.
- d. Academics/students engaged in community service.
- e. Legal practitioners/advocates/NGOs providing victim assistance.

#### **Objects:**

- a. Mechanisms of victim empowerment.
- b. Implementation of legal protection for disaster victims.
- c. Forms of community service in post-earthquake recovery.

### 3.4. Types and Sources of Data

**Primary Data:** collected directly through interviews, observations, and documentation. Examples: victims' experiences with aid and legal protection, government accounts of program implementation, and volunteer/academic perspectives on community service. **Secondary Data:** obtained from literature and official documents, including:

- a. Laws and regulations (e.g., Law No. 24/2007, PP No. 21/2008).
- b. Literature on empowerment, legal, and community service theories.
- c. Previous studies, BPBD reports, and government policy documents.

#### Data Collection Techniques

- a. **In-depth Interviews:** with victims, officials, volunteers, and academics to explore experiences, challenges, and the roles of law and community service in empowerment.
- b. **Field Observations:** to observe victim conditions, aid distribution mechanisms, and empowerment programs.
- c. **Document Analysis:** reviewing legal documents, government reports, community service archives, media reports, and disaster statistics.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Using the **Miles & Huberman (1994)** model:

- a. **Data reduction** → selecting, simplifying, and focusing on relevant data.
- b. **Data display** → organizing data in narrative, tables, or diagrams.
- c. **Conclusion/verification** → interpreting findings and relating them to the theoretical framework.

#### Data Validation

- a. **Source triangulation** → comparing data from victims, government, and volunteers.
- b. **Method triangulation** → combining interviews, observations, and documentation.
- c. **Member checking** → confirming interview results with informants for accuracy.

### 3.6. Research Ethics

As the study involves disaster victims, ethical considerations include:

- a. Protecting informant confidentiality.
- b. Obtaining informed consent.

- c. Avoiding traumatic questioning.
- d. Ensuring research outcomes serve academic and humanitarian purposes.

#### Research Design

- a. **Pre-fieldwork:** literature review, research permits, and site selection.
- b. **Fieldwork:** interviews, observations, and documentation.
- c. **Data analysis:** reduction, categorization, thematic analysis.
- d. **Report writing:** compiling results, discussions, and conclusions.

Thus, this research employs a qualitative descriptive design with a socio-legal approach. Data are collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using Miles & Huberman's model. Data validity is ensured through triangulation, while ethical principles are observed given the involvement of vulnerable groups. Difagana: A Policy Approach to Reducing Natural Disaster Risk. (2024).

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

The study on the **Empowerment of Earthquake Victims in Bekasi through Legal Approaches and Community Engagement** revealed several important findings, categorized as follows:

#### Post-Earthquake Conditions of Victims in Bekasi

- a. **Physical losses:** Most victims suffered damage to their homes and buildings, ranging from minor to severe.
- b. **Socio-economic losses:** Many residents lost their livelihoods due to damaged workplaces, declining productivity, and increased living expenses.
- c. **Psychological impact:** Trauma, anxiety, and insecurity remain prevalent, particularly among children and the elderly.
- d. **Limited access to aid:** While the government distributed relief, victims perceived the distribution as uneven, and some reported inadequate assistance. Nova Yanti, Indri Ramadini, Elvia Metti, Netti, Renidayati, & Erick Zicof. (2024).



Figure 4: BNPB Officers and Volunteers Assisting Victims  
(Source: detikNews detikcom)

## 4.2. Implementation of Legal Protection for Victims

**Victims' Rights in Legal Perspective:** According to Law No. 24/2007 on Disaster Management, victims are entitled to emergency aid, basic needs, and temporary housing. However, the findings reveal:

- a. Many victims lack awareness of their rights as disaster-affected citizens.
- b. Bureaucratic procedures in aid distribution are considered complex, delaying urgent assistance.

### **Role of Government and Legal Institutions**

- a. The Bekasi Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) provided logistical support, emergency shelters, and victim registration.
- b. Transparency and accountability issues in aid distribution led to dissatisfaction among some victims.
- c. Only a limited number of legal aid institutions (LBH) and lawyers actively assisted victims in claiming their rights.

### **Barriers to Legal Protection**

- a. Low legal literacy among disaster-affected communities.
- b. Limited number of advocates and legal aid workers in disaster areas.
- c. Inadequate monitoring mechanisms for aid distribution.

## 4.3. Role of Community Engagement in Victim Empowerment

### **Psychosocial Recovery**

- a. Trauma-healing programs conducted by volunteers, universities, and local communities were effective, especially for children.
- b. Community solidarity was strengthened through collective activities, such as mutual cooperation in clearing debris.

### **Economic Empowerment**

- a. Social organizations and universities initiated entrepreneurship training, such as home-based food businesses and handicrafts.
- b. However, limited access to financial capital hindered long-term success.

### **Education and Disaster Mitigation**

- a. Disaster mitigation awareness campaigns and evacuation drills were conducted in schools near affected areas.
- b. Although communities gained better understanding of initial disaster responses, long-term disaster preparedness requires further support.

### **Multi-Sector Collaboration**

- a. Cooperation among local government, universities, and NGOs was established.
- b. University students engaged in thematic community service (KKN Tematik Bencana), which had a positive but short-term impact.

## 4.4. Synergy Between Legal Approaches and Community Engagement

The findings indicate that the synergy between legal approaches and community engagement is not yet optimal:

- a. The legal framework provides formal protection but is hindered by bureaucracy and weak legal advocacy.
- b. Community engagement strengthens socio-economic and psychosocial recovery, but programs remain sporadic, short-term, and poorly integrated into government policies.

**An ideal synergy would include:**

- a. Stronger legal advocacy to ensure fair and transparent aid distribution.
- b. Long-term, structured community engagement programs enabling victims to rebuild self-reliance.

#### 4.5. Discussion

The Bekasi earthquake significantly impacted physical, social, economic, and psychological conditions. Victims lost homes, livelihoods, and faced trauma. This demonstrates that empowerment cannot be limited to emergency aid—it must encompass **legal, social, economic, and psychological aspects**.

Two main approaches complement each other:

- a. **Law:** Provides certainty of rights and formal protection.
- b. **Community engagement:** Promotes participation, recovery, and resilience.

##### Empowerment from the Legal Perspective

- a. **Implementation of Victims' Rights:** Although Law No. 24/2007 guarantees victims' rights, bureaucratic hurdles and unequal aid distribution reveal gaps between legal norms and field realities.
- b. **Government Responsibility:** The BPBD took action but did not fully meet expectations. As per John Rawls' theory of justice, fair distribution was not achieved.
- c. **Role of Legal Advocacy:** Minimal involvement of legal aid institutions left victims vulnerable. Legal advocacy is crucial for ensuring that victims' rights are respected.

##### Empowerment through Community Engagement

- a. **Psychosocial Recovery:** Trauma-healing and community activities effectively reduced psychological distress, aligning with Zimmerman's empowerment theory.
- b. **Economic Empowerment:** Entrepreneurship training encouraged self-reliance but lacked sustainability due to insufficient capital support, echoing Friedmann's empowerment theory.
- c. **Education and Mitigation:** School-based disaster drills improved preparedness, consistent with Arnstein's participation theory.

##### Synergy of Law and Community Engagement

- a. The legal approach ensures normative protection but is hindered by bureaucracy.
- b. Community engagement is practical and responsive but fragmented.

**Optimal synergy requires:**

- a. Collaboration between government, academia, and legal institutions to enhance aid transparency.
- b. Integration of community programs into government policies for sustainability.
- c. Legal advocacy combined with socio-economic empowerment for holistic recovery.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

Empowering earthquake victims in Bekasi requires a **multidimensional approach** integrating legal, social, economic, and psychological aspects.

- a. The **legal approach** plays a key role in ensuring victims' rights to aid, economic recovery, and property protection, as stipulated by disaster management laws.
- b. **Community engagement programs** effectively enhanced victims' capacities through legal education, psychosocial support, skills training, and local institutional strengthening.
- c. **Synergy among government, academia, legal institutions, NGOs, and businesses** is crucial for sustainable empowerment, extending beyond emergency relief toward long-term recovery.
- d. Overall, the combined legal and community approaches contributed to greater legal awareness, economic self-reliance, social solidarity, and disaster preparedness.

#### Recommendations

##### a. **For Government:**

- 1) Strengthen technical regulations and implementation of disaster laws.
- 2) Establish transparent and accessible contingency funds.
- 3) Integrate community empowerment into regional development policies.

##### b. **For Legal Institutions and Academia:**

- 1) Increase legal literacy programs for disaster-affected communities.
- 2) Conduct interdisciplinary research on post-disaster legal and social reconstruction.
- 3) Develop community-based legal empowerment models.

##### c. **For Communities:**

- 1) Actively participate in disaster preparedness training, risk mapping, and evacuation drills.
- 2) Strengthen social solidarity through disaster response groups.
- 3) Establish community-based microenterprises for sustainable economic recovery.

##### d. **For Private Sector:**

- 1) Contribute through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs focused on victims' economic recovery.
- 2) Provide capital access, job training, and infrastructure support.

##### e. **For Community Service Institutions (Universities and NGOs):**

- 1) Implement needs-based community service programs.
- 2) Establish long-term mentoring systems beyond emergency phases.
- 3) Engage students and volunteers as agents of community empowerment.

**In conclusion**, empowering Bekasi earthquake victims requires more than emergency relief; it must strengthen community resilience through **legal protection, social solidarity, economic independence, and participatory engagement**. Sustainable empowerment depends on the synergy of law, policy, and community-based initiatives.

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