Chapter 8

Local Communities Platform for Restoration of “Kizuna”: Reconstruction of Human Bonds in Communities Damaged by Nuclear Disaster

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ABSTRACT

Residents of towns near nuclear power plants have been forced to evacuate to other areas due to the nuclear disaster, being scattered and living in various parts of Japan, causing “empty time” which will lead to collapse of the local community in these areas. Dispersed residents hope to restore their hometown along with the community, and the government also puts up restoration of “Kizuna” as a keyword for reconstruction. It is therefore proposed in this chapter to develop a platform that can systematically accumulate information owned by the local government and residents with ICT, for the purpose of restoring “Kizuna”. With this platform, residents mutually dispatch information on daily living on their own. This will help maintain association of information which will be necessary to recollect memories; therefore sharing of such information will be promoted and the “empty time” will be filled.

INTRODUCTION

The large earthquake of magnitude 9.0 that occurred on March 11 in Tohoku region in Japan evoked the enormous tsunami and nuclear plant accident (see Figure 1). The series of disasters was officially named the “Great East Japan Earthquake”. Approximately two years have passed from such disaster, but those who live in the neighborhood of the nuclear plant still remain evacuated and cannot return to their hometown.

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According to the later described survey result, the evacuees desire to return if their towns become safe. However, there are many evacuees who doubt securement of safe life without threat of radioactive materials. Especially young people of child-raising age tend to doubt the reliability of safety and refuse to return to their hometown. The young with working ability tend to work in the city to which they are evacuated because there are many employment opportunities while the elderly tend to stay at the evacuation center in Fukushima Prefecture. Therefore, the local communities are in crisis of separation and some families even live separately.

On the other hand, the local governments of the evacuation zone prepare recovery plans and desire to reconstruct their towns as residential towns. Safety securement is the top priority, but it is also necessary to somehow keep connection between the local communities in order to reconstruct their towns as residential areas. According to the survey for the evacuees, the top reason why people want to return to their hometown was feeling of attachment to the towns where they have lived for a long time.

This chapter, thus, proposes the platform to anchor the people’s bonding and feeling of attachment to their hometown under the active and ever-changing circumstance by using life log and social graph.