

THE ROLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FLOOD  
MITIGATION AMONG MALAYSIAN COMPANIES

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## DEDICATION

*This thesis is specially dedicated to my parents, wife, son and all my family members who have supported me through this journey.*

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## ABSTRACT

Rapid industrialisation in the developing countries has contributed to an increase in natural disasters such as flood hazards. Rise in the losses due to disasters is an indicator of non-sustainable development. Although the natural forces in Malaysia have been mainly liable for the natural disasters in the past, recently human intervention in nature is worsening the flood hazards. As the world moves closer to the year 2020, the country is expected to face serious challenges in flood management. The floods in the year 2014 is an example of the increase in the magnitude of the flood disaster. In this scenario, it is imperative to have a holistic plan to face this challenge. Since private sector can play a key role in flood mitigation, the role of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) in flood mitigation is one area that has to be studied. This study aims to understand the role of Malaysian listed companies in flood mitigation through their CSR programs and involvement of other stakeholders in successful implementation of flood mitigation process. The study also highlighted a few recommendations to improve the CSR effort of companies in the process of flood mitigation. The research employed a qualitative method and the data was collected using the semi-structured in-depth interview. The first stage of the research involves a content analysis of 928 company websites and online published CSR related documents of the Malaysian listed companies. The second stage involves an in-depth interview with the companies CSR executives, NGO representatives, individual volunteers, CSR advisors and the government representatives. Subsequently, the data was analysed using qualitative content analysis. The key findings of the study indicated the need for the companies, NGO and the government to understand the multifaceted meaning of CSR. The study also highlighted the importance of understanding the need for flood mitigation, each stakeholder's roles and responsibility and their contribution in the flood mitigation exercise. The findings also proposed to have collaboration among the stakeholders. Based on the findings, the research has presented a model in which the companies, NGO and the government need to share the responsibilities equally and develop a social contract that leads to the effective and successful implementation of flood mitigation exercise. Theoretically, the study proposed a model between stakeholders for flood mitigation in Malaysia. Practically, the results will provide good guidelines for the corporate sectors and the government to cope up with the challenge of flood management and in building a resilient community which will be well equipped to handle the effect of such disasters. It will encourage the corporate to help the government in pre-disaster mitigation and preparedness instead of only contributing to the relief funds after the disaster. Hence, this research will help in managing the expenditure efficiently on the flood risk management initiatives by choosing the right collaboration for maximum business and societal outcomes that aligns with the government policy in the 11th Malaysia plan.

## ABSTRAK

Perindustrian pesat di negara-negara membangun telah menyumbang kepada peningkatan bencana alam. Peningkatan bencana alam adalah sebagai petunjuk pembangunan yang tidak mampan. Walaupun kuasa alam semulajadi di Malaysia pada masa lalu bertanggungjawab terhadap berlakunya bencana alam namun intervensi manusia terhadap alam semula jadi semakin memburukkan kejadian banjir. Menjelang tahun 2020, Malaysia dijangka akan menghadapi cabaran yang serius dalam pengurusan banjir. Keadaan banjir dalam tahun 2014 adalah salah satu contoh peningkatan jumlah bencana banjir. Dalam senario ini, adalah penting untuk mempunyai rancangan holistik untuk menghadapi cabaran ini. Peranan tanggungjawab sosial korporat (CSR) dalam mitigasi banjir adalah satu bidang yang perlu dikaji, di mana sektor swasta dapat memainkan peranan penting dalam usaha mengurangkan banjir. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memahami peranan syarikat tersenarai di Malaysia dalam usaha pengurangan banjir menerusi program CSR mereka dan penglibatan pihak berkepentingan lain dalam melaksanakan proses pengurangan banjir. Kajian ini juga menekankan beberapa cadangan untuk meningkatkan usaha CSR syarikat dalam proses pengurangan banjir. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dan pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara mendalam yang berstruktur. Pengumpulan data peringkat awal melibatkan analisis kandungan laman web syarikat dan dokumen CSR yang diterbitkan dalam talian yang berkaitan dengan syarikat-syarikat Malaysia yang tersenarai. Peringkat kedua melibatkan wawancara secara mendalam dengan eksekutif CSR syarikat, wakil NGO, sukarelawan individu, penasihat CSR dan wakil kerajaan. Seterusnya data dianalisis menggunakan analisis kandungan kualitatif. Penemuan utama kajian menunjukkan keperluan bagi syarikat, NGO dan kerajaan untuk memahami maksud CSR dari pelbagai aspek. Kajian ini juga menekankan untuk memahami keperluan pengurusan pengurangan banjir, keperluan untuk memahami peranan dan tanggungjawab pihak berkepentingan dan sumbangan setiap pihak berkepentingan dalam mitigasi banjir. Penemuan ini juga mencadangkan keperluan untuk mempunyai kerjasama di kalangan pihak berkepentingan. Berdasarkan penemuan ini, kajian ini telah mencadangkan model di mana syarikat, NGO dan kerajaan perlu berkongsi tanggungjawab secara adil dan membangunkan kontrak sosial yang membawa kepada pelaksanaan pengurusan banjir yang berkesan dan berjaya. Secara teorinya, kajian ini mencadangkan model di antara pihak berkepentingan untuk pengurangan banjir di Malaysia. Secara praktikalnya, hasilnya akan memberi garis panduan yang baik untuk sektor korporat dan kerajaan untuk menghadapi cabaran pengurusan banjir dan membina masyarakat berdaya tahan yang mampu untuk menangani kesan bencana tersebut. Ia akan menggalakkan korporat membantu kerajaan dalam usaha pengurangan dan persiapan pra-bencana bukan hanya menyumbang kepada dana bantuan selepas bencana berlaku. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini akan membantu dalam menguruskan perbelanjaan ke atas inisiatif pengurusan risiko banjir secara efisien dengan memilih kerjasama yang tepat untuk hasil perniagaan dan hasil masyarakat yang maksimum yang sejajar dengan dasar kerajaan dalam Rancangan Malaysia ke-11.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AMRC	–	Asian Monitoring Resource Centre
CPSS	–	Center for Public Policies Studies
CSR	–	Corporate Social Responsibility
ESCAP	–	Economic & Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific
IDNDR	–	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
ILO	–	International Labor Organization
NAHRIM	–	National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	–	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	–	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	–	United Nations
WBCD	–	World Business Council for sustainable Development
WMO	–	World Meteorological Organization

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Overview

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an integral part of a global organization. Ensuring business commitment to CSR has become an additional responsibility to the business leaders. CSR is defined as the “actions that appears to further some social goods, beyond the interest of the firms and that which is required by the law” (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). There is a mutual relationship between economic influencers and civil society (Edwards, 2004). The modern society will not be able to develop and maintain sustainable social goals without accessing the surplus created by the market economies (Mercer, 2001). As such, business leaders have an added responsibility to ensure that their organization commits itself for the CSR. It plays a crucial role in the current scenario in terms of providing access to economic, cultural and social rights to the underprivileged communities.

According to World Business Council for sustainable Development (WBCD) (2000), CSR is defined as ‘the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life’. Ethics, economic and legal are three main areas of CSR and a combination of ethical, legal and economical areas describe the level of corporate social responsibility in any organization. The social responsibility of the various stakeholders who contribute to the economic development of the society has been researched by various academicians and business management practitioners and scientists.

Since the early 1990s as a result of the globalization of economy, decision making on CSR initiatives reflected an increased desire for “doing well by doing good”. More corporations started picking strategic areas of focus that fit with corporate

values. The corporations have started selecting initiatives that support their business goals. They support issues related to core products and core markets or the issues that provide opportunities to meet their marketing objectives. CSR is now slowly becoming a part of the business strategy. The companies invest on issues which has the potential of giving them a positive support during the times of corporate crisis or any government policy changes. They involve in the issues which gets the attention from the employees, customers and the surrounding community (Philip Kotler & Nancy, 2005).

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The CSR concept has evolved in multiple aspects, and many authors have contributed to its evolution. During the 1950s, the primary focus was on businesses' responsibilities to society, but there was scant discussion of linking CSR with business benefits (Bowen, 1953; Drucker, 1954). Bowen (1953) was one of the pioneers who introduced the concept of CSR. In the decade of 1960s, many different ideas and perspectives related were discussed and this became a basis for the social changes that were ushered. The business perception was that the expectations communicated by the stakeholders must be addressed by the firms. This also led to the conclusion that the CSR research had an explicit ethical obligation. The CSR researchers in the decade of 1960s discussed about the relationship between the CSR and the financial performance of the corporates (Frederick, 1960). The researchers initiated the study on the significance of the relationship to analyse if CSR makes any business sense to the organisation.

The CSR concept has evolved over a period of time, initially it was called as Corporate Social Responsibility and included an ordered content of CSR (Bowen 1953, Davis 1960) and systematic level of normative corporate social responsibilities which was given by the Carrolls Pyramid (Carroll, 1979). Then it changed to Corporate Social Responsiveness which defined the corporation's capabilities to take social actions (Ackerman, 1973; Preston Post, 1975, Frederick 1978; Carroll 1979). Later the model of Corporate Social Performance was introduced by Carroll (1979). According

to Carroll's pyramid (1979), CSR has four main part, the first one is the economic responsibility. This is the foundation of all other responsibilities, the second one is the legal responsibility, third one is the ethical responsibility and finally the fourth one is the philanthropic responsibility. This pyramid set a base for the dimensions of CSR and research developed in this area (Wood 1991).

In the early 90's, Freeman (1984) introduced the concept of stakeholders, this new definition of the corporation disclosed its relationship with the stakeholders and was called as the Corporate Social performance Management. This was the new stakeholder's concept of CSR (Clarkson 1995, Donaldson 1985, Preston & Post 1997, Sachs *et.al.* 2006). Further research continued in the area of stakeholders' development. In the new millennium, the concept of Corporate Citizenship gained prominence which was the model formed of corporations in relation to its stakeholders (Longsdon Wood, 2002). In the recent times the relation between corporate social responsibility and social problems has derived a new concept called the Corporate Sustainability (Van Marreviyk, 2003).

Decades of evolutions of CSR shows that CSR concept is underpinned by six dimensions i.e. economic, social, ethical, stakeholders, sustainability and voluntary. In recent times, one of the dimensions that is gaining prominence is sustainability. Although, the concept CSR has gained relevance in the past few decades, there has been ambiguity in the way it is defined. The reason for this is the absence of an agreed upon normative basis underpinning CSR. It has become one of the important topics for both the academicians and practitioners (Fontaine, 2013).

Globalization has brought about changes in the global environment and this has influenced the institutional settings of different countries across the globe. This has resulted in drawing a new direction for the corporate accountability. The increasing acceptance of some of the international standards related to the best practices and the corporate sustainability guidelines has influenced CSR and environmental management (Hedberg and Malmberg, 2003). The expectation from the stakeholders involved have increased and this has compelled the companies to consider the social and the environmental dimensions in their business strategies (Sobhani *et al.*, 2009).

Past studies have highlighted that companies focus on powerful stakeholders' expectation and engage with them actively (Buhr 2002).

Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility of the company will enhance its ability to handle some of the critical issue like climate change (Hamzah & Abdullah, 2018). Climate change has increased the risk of natural disasters and this has become of the main agendas for the governments, especially in the developing countries. This is considered as one of the major challenges for humanity since the last century. Climate change has changed the weather patterns globally, resulting in the change of the global ecosystem. Hence the climate change has become an issue which is difficult to cope (Pitt, 2008).

Rapid industrialization in the developing countries has contributed to an increase in natural disasters (Husaini, 2007). Rise in the losses due to disasters is an indicator of non-sustainable development. The increasing number of natural disasters across the globe due to the climate change in the last decade has influenced the increase in the corporate involvement in the natural disaster management. This has become of the as one of the prominent CSR activities of the company. Natural disasters are generally seen as "Acts of God" (Coombs, 1999), and they generate various acts of immediate relief and assistance from business sectors (Twigg, 2001). The rapid economic growth has spurred risk exposure and vulnerabilities. The need for a comprehensive action plan to mitigate disasters has gains importance. The action plan should include prevention, preparation, response and recovery. This includes the warning system which with help in prevention and preparation for the disasters like flood. One of the keys to the success of the comprehensive action plan is the coordination between the relevant authorities for evacuation of victims, search operations, rescue operations and relief operations.

Previous literature in the field of emergency response and disaster management has concluded that more resilient society can respond to the disasters in a better way. It has stressed the importance of joint efforts of government and private organizations for disaster management (Flynn, 2007; Hutchinson 2011). According to Edwards (2008), recovery efforts after disaster, must be joint and coordinated between business

community and government. The findings of the past study on the role of CSR in disaster reduction have highlighted how the corporate can help in disaster management. However, sustainability is a major challenge to CSR work in this field (Johnson, *et.al*, 2011). Twigg, (2001) has highlighted the need for a mechanism to overcome the isolation of the agencies in these areas and share lessons between them.

The corporations engage in the disaster related CSR initiatives for instrumental and ethical reasons. In the case of predictable or more stable threat, proactive long-term initiatives included a broader stakeholder group (Johnson *et.al*. 2011). The past studies have shown that the company's response to the disaster through their CSR efforts in disaster response have created a positive response in the consumer evaluations (Ellen, Mohr & Webb, 2000). This has motivated the companies to respond to the natural disasters through their CSR programs. Irrespective of the past CSR performance of the company, whenever the company involves in the CSR program for natural disaster, it is most likely having a positive impact on both the tangible and the intangible assets of the company. Hence, the companies view it as an opportunity to get involved in the CSR related to natural disasters (Becker-Olsen *et,al* 2006; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Although some literature exists on the role of CSR in coordination, cooperation and reduction of destruction, sustainability is still the critical issue because majority of the corporates do not have programs which are long term but short-term programs for response and recovery stage of disaster (Johnson *et.al* 2011). This shows the importance to develop a mechanism to share experiences between them. The human and the economic losses due to disasters in the Asia pacific region are alarmingly high (Economic & Social Commission of the Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) ,2015).

### **1.3 Background of Problem**

CSR is one of the widely discussed topics these days and the corporates are expected to behave socially responsible on a wide range of issues (Welford and Frost 2006; Engle, 2007). Despite, CSR being a widely discussed topic, there is still ambiguity about the CSR definitions (Jackson and Hawker, 2001). This has led to abundance of definitions which are in most cases skewed towards a specific interest and thus holding back the development and implementation of the CSR concept. However, these biased definitions are not supported by any empirical research (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Hence, the ambiguity in the CSR definition might be a significant problem. One of the significant problems with the biased definitions is that, it might lead to different perceptions of CSR and this might hinder productive engagements. This problem is further escalated as there is no methodology to verify if the definitions are biased or unbiased. Therefore, it is challenging to develop an unbiased definition.

Even if an unbiased definition of CSR, there is still some confusion as to how CSR should be defined. However, the analysis of the different definitions has shown that the existing definitions are in conclusion in agreement with each other. Therefore, it can be concluded that the confusion in the CSR is more related to its social construction in a specific context, rather than its exact definition (Dahlsrud, 2008).

CSR concept of is a broad and is interpreted in many ways depending on the specific context. Carroll (1979) categorised CSR into four categories i.e economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. As per this categorization, economic responsibility was one of the most important part of CSR of an organization, followed by the legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibility. However, later Schwartz and Carroll (2003) revised this into the three-domain model which included only the economic, legal and the ethical responsibilities. United Nations (UN) has described the concept of CSR as the relationship of the companies with the with all the groups as per the needs, goals and the values of the society in which the company operates. The groups that are affected by the company's actions are referred to as the stakeholders (UN, 2000).

The study by Dahlsrud (2008) has highlighted that the environment dimension of CSR is given least importance as compared to the other dimensions. However, the environment factor has become very critical dimension due to the focus on global climate change. Flood disaster is one of the affects due to global climate change. This makes it imperative to focus the CSR efforts of the companies towards the flood mitigation programs. The United Nations has initiated many steps in the direction of natural disaster reduction in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). However, there has been very little progress towards this direction. Although, it was retreated that the primary responsibility rest with the government, the UN had hoped the private sector would join in the collaborated effort (Hooke, 2000, De la Poterie & Baudoin,2015).The involvement of the companies in disaster management has been one of the contested issues in CSR (Horwich, 1993, Jameison ,1996, Handmer, (2000), Twigg, 2001, Johnson *et.al* 2011).

The recent studies have shown a shift towards the investment and enhancement of the disaster resilience through collaborative public- private partnerships and principles of corporate social responsibility (Adeniyi *et,al*, 2016).Flood is one of the most devastating and frequently occurring natural disaster worldwide. The flood affects the most to the poor people in the developing countries. The causes of flood might vary according to the geographical conditions (Islam, *et.al.*,2016). One of the challenging tasks in the developing countries like Malaysia is the disaster management due to the limited resources and capability to tackle the programs to mitigate disasters (Hochrainer-Stigler *et al.* ,2015). The discussion about the disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness in the recent literature related to CSR and sustainable development (Twigg, 2001, Johnson *et.al* 2011). There previous literature has linked CSR to natural disaster, and it is evident that natural disasters cannot be managed by the government alone and needs the involvement of all stakeholders. Similarly, flood mitigation is a complex problem and needs solutions at various levels and both structural and the non-structural measures. The past literature review has shown that the studies related to concept of CSR in relation to flood mitigation is limited. Therefore, the first issue of this study is to will take forward a deeper understanding of the concept of CSR among selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation.

Over the last 50 years, floods have been observed to causing devastating damage to infrastructure and property, impairing economic growth while bringing about widespread loss of life and human suffering (Barredo, 2009; Jongman et al., 2012; UNISDR, 2011). These multiple effects from flooding is the result of human-environment interaction in complex social-ecological systems. It is difficult to change the land use pattern as the measures implemented in one place might affect the landscape in the other area. Due to this reason it is difficult to predict in advance or demonstrate during the flood event (Thaler *et al.*, 2015). This complex interaction of social, ecological and physical processes in flooding, according to Wheater (2002), poses significant challenges for understanding, modelling and managing flood. While both the aforementioned drivers of increased flood risk and the implications of flooding have an impact on a wide range of sectors, and efforts to plan for and manage floods has considerable complexity and uncertainty.

The trend mentioned by famous world bodies indicate increasing losses by disasters, affecting even more severely to underprivileged people in less developed countries (Re, M., 2002; IFRC, 2003; EM-DAT, 2005.). According to IFRC (2002), \$200 billion financial losses and 594,899 deaths were faced in less developed countries since 1990. It is quite ironic and alarming that the number of casualties per disaster, in last decade of 20th centuries were 400% more in less developed countries as compared to highly developed countries. Recent years have seen mounting global pressure for enactment and adoption of stricter legislations pertaining to environment protection in and around the globe. Companies are taking proactive initiatives for emission reduction in anticipation of future policy, and societal and competitive developments with respect to environment. Research on environment has not been conclusive (Christman, 2000), but studies link environmental commitment with enhanced profitability, particularly in high growth industries (Russo and Fouts, 1997). Evidence suggests proactive environment management enhances firm's market value (Klassen and Mc Laughlin, 1996), reputation, and financial performance (Alvarez et al., 2001; Miles & Covin,2000). The impact of firms' proactive environmental practices on market share, profitability, and return on investment is better in environmentally conscious companies compared to non - conscious companies (Ahmed et al., 1998).



Researchers Bhatt (2002) and Wisner et al (2004) believe that though natural disasters cannot be stopped but their destruction affects can be minimized. There have been many efforts to strategize against disasters to reduce destruction (UN/ISDR, 2004). Over the last half-century, floods have caused severe damage to infrastructure and property, impacted negatively on economic activity, and brought about widespread loss of life and human suffering Jongman et al. (2012) and UNISDR (2011) reports have discussed the severity and impacts of floods in last fifty years. Variation of watercourses, cutting of trees etc. have worsened the damages caused by these natural disasters.

When firms focus their social actions on communities in and around their area of operation, they reap the benefits of a socially responsible image among their employees and the local community (Husted, 2003). Partnership of Life Insurance Corporation of India with micro-credit federations in the rural Andhra Pradesh besides improving its penetration of the rural market and expanding the base has also increased its gross margin by 27% (Brugmann and Prahalad, 2007). The investments in community development activities help a firm to obtain competitive advantages through tax savings, decreased regulatory burden, and improvements in the quality of local labour (Waddock and Graves, 1997a).

While there is an extensive research on CSR in the context of ethics (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987; Carroll, 1991; Garriga and Mele, 2004; Joyner and Payne, 2004), financial performance (Pava and Krausz, 1996; Becker-Olsen et al., 1996; Kotler and Lee, 2005; Vogel, 2005), marketing (Burke and Logsdon, 1996; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Maignan et al., 2004; Mohr et al., 2005), public relations (Clark, 2000; Esrock and Leichty, 2000; Frankental, 2001; Snider et al., 2003), and industrial case studies addressing specific company activities (Anderson and Bieniaszewska, 2005; Kanchan, 2010), and in different parts of the world (Hills, 2007; Kusku, 2007), very little academic research has specifically addressed the nature of CSR-based emergency management activities.

## Natural disaster events, by type (1998–2018)

Source: CRED EM-DAT

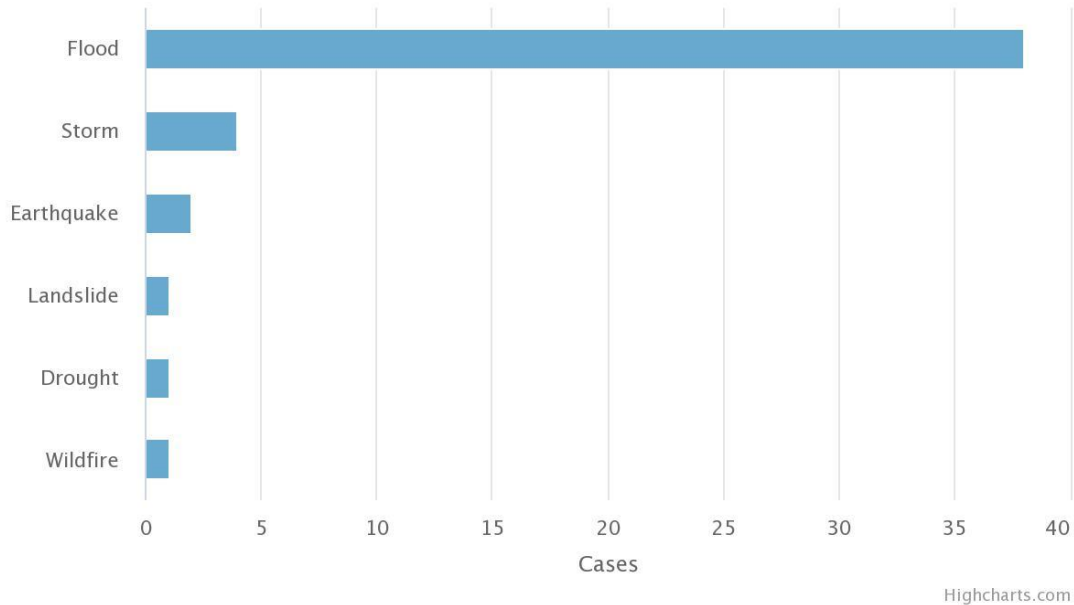


Figure 1.1 Natural Disaster events by type

Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) collected by Belgium-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) shows that Malaysia has sustained a total damage of nearly US\$2 billion (RM8 billion) in that period. Most of the carnage in Malaysia has been caused by floods, making up 38 out of the total 51 natural disasters in that period. In the last two decades, floods have affected over 770,000 people, killed 148 people, and caused US\$1.4 billion or roughly RM5.82 billion in damages.

The most devastating natural disaster experienced in Malaysia is flood. Throughout Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak, there are a total of 189 river basins with the main channels flowing directly to the South China sea and 85 of them are prone to recurrent flooding (89 of the river basins are in Peninsula Malaysia, 78 in Sabah and 22 in Sarawak). The estimated area vulnerable to flood disaster is approximately 29,800 km<sup>2</sup> or 9% of the total Malaysia area, and is affecting almost 4.82 million people which is around 22% of the total population of the country. However, a few ‘corporate social responsibility’ studies of Malaysia represent organizations interest less in community and climate and more interest on human development and tangible assets (Husaini, 2007). Hence, the present study fills in this

gap in literature and will study the extent of CSR related to natural disaster among the listed Malaysian companies

People can adapt to floods by taking various adaptive measures, such as raising one's home above the highest flood level, by placing sandbags, or by taking out flood insurance. Lindell and Perry (2000) classified adaptive measures in the disaster management as per the phases of the hazard life cycle, i.e mitigation, preparedness and recovery. The three phases occur in various stages of the actual flood event which is known as the hazard life cycle or the safety chain. The adaptive measures that is taken at the stage when there is no significant flood threat is known as the mitigation measures. Since these measures do not require action during the impact, it is referred to as a "Passive protection measure". A few of the example of such measures are building the houses above the highest flood level, taking flood insurance etc. Preparedness measures are implemented shortly before or during the impact. This is known as the "Active protection measures" like placing the sandbags, evacuation and moving the furniture's to the upper floors. The recovery stage is the activities that involves in supporting the affected people in returning to the normal state. This mainly involves in the rehabilitation and some of the examples are cleaning the affected area, counselling etc (Lindell & Perry, 2000, Brinke, 2008).

Asia Pacific is severely affected by natural disaster and is one of the top disaster-prone area in the world. Due to hefty showers, Malaysia has faced many natural disasters in past few decades as described by Mohamed Shaluf & Ahmadun (2006). Harmeling (2012) describes that Malaysia is 85 among 180 countries in risk index score of climates. According to Yusuf and Francisco (2009), Malaysia is not among the greatest susceptible countries to weather changes; However, the damages caused due to these disasters are huge. Research advocates that there are drastic changes in eco system which affects the climate. Moreover, according to National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia (2006), rainfall has increased almost 10%, while temperature has increased drastically. Flood and famine are the most critical potential problems in front of Malaysia at end of this decade. According to National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM , 2006) report and Salmah (2008), 10–18% is yearly increase in rainfall in north-eastern coast at the mid of century,

moreover the yearly rise in sea level is 1.25 mm in last 30 years. It is expected to rise between 20 cm and 90 cm in the next 100 years. According to UNISDR (2011) and Jongman (2012), floods have caused a negative impact on the economic development of Malaysia over the last half a century, due to the severe damage it has caused on the infrastructure and property. It is one of the major causes for human suffering and loss of life.

The ability of the countries to manage the impact of the disaster will have implication on the growth and development of the country. In the past few years, the losses due to the natural disasters has increased significantly because of the continuous occurrence of major disasters. According to Economic & Social Commission of the Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), almost \$1.2 trillion have been lost in last 35 years in the countries of low income. More severe and more impactful floods are forecasted in future because of climate changes, as change in sea levels and different rain patterns is one of the indicator of worsen flood situation. Wend Chan (1995) alarmed that development of the country will depend upon the ability to manage the disaster. Human life is the most precious thing, which can be protected by better preparations for natural disasters. Moreover, post disaster recovery cost can be minimized by investing time and money on the disaster mitigation and preparedness activities. This in turn will help any country in the long run. Investing in disaster preparedness will help save lives and reduce the financial burden of the post-disaster response and relief efforts thus helping in maintaining the countries long term development. The multi-hazard mitigation council in America found that for every \$1 spent on pre-disaster mitigation to prepare for the natural disasters like flood about \$4 is saved in post disaster damages (Cutter *et al.*, 2013). The fact of this net saving of \$3 by every \$1 investment could be true for the companies if their CSR spending can be deliberately channelled to the initiatives for flood preparedness.

According to Weng Chan (1995), government's relocation arrangements have not got encouraging response, so private sector has to be taken on board for people's awareness and education for other ways to handle issues. In recent decades, economic losses due to natural disasters have risen sharply. Flood makes an enormous impact on the environment and society, creating a tremendous monetary expense for the

government, businesses and individuals alike (Herweijer *et.al.*, 2009). This therefore makes the management of floods or disaster an enormous task that the government cannot handle alone, promoting the need to reach out to corporate organisations (Johannsdottir *et.al.*,2016, Allen & Craig, 2016).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by unprecedented challenges and opportunities arising from globalisation, the desire for inclusive development and imperatives of climate change ((Johannsdottir *et.al.*,2016, Herweijer *et.al.*, 2009).The private sector companies' investment in the CSR activities related to the flood mitigation can be advantages to the company, the government and the community as a whole. The uncertainty surrounding the flood, and the complex process understanding and managing flood is a challenge (wheater, 2002). Therefore, Hall and Solomatine (2008), stress upon the importance and complexities to handle natural disasters and growing risks of floods. This makes it necessary to have a collaborative effort from all the stakeholders to manage floods effectively. A collective risk handling approach has been developed because the results of better structures to handle flood disasters are not encouraging, and the discussion of collaborative requirements also stressed this issue (Johnson and Priest, 2008, Heintz *et al.*, 2012).

According to Cutter et al (2013), damages can be reduced by four folds by spending more on preparedness for disasters. The past experience with the flood has shown that a collaborative effort is necessary to efficiently manage floods (WMO 2009, 2006a, 2006b; Merz *et al.*, 2010). An integrated flood management not only requires the structural defence measures but must be well complimented with soft measures like insurance, emergency awareness training etc. This is possible only through integrative and collaborative efforts from all the involved stakeholders through public, government, private and NGOs participation (Huitema *et al.*, 2009). NGOs and businesses organizations are very important in governance together with governments. According to Moon (2008) and Midttun (2005), public and private sectors join to debate and cultivate private sector regulation. New self-regulations can be developed for better governance. Stakeholder management and joint ventures with other organizations and industries is also very important for better governance. The private sector companies' investment in the CSR activities related to the flood

mitigation can be advantageous to the company, the government and the community (Simona, 2011). Therefore, the second issue is to explore the CSR involvements of Malaysian companies and other stakeholders in the flood mitigation.

Role of NGO's for successful CSR has significantly increased (Nijhof *et.al.* 2007). Being responsible is on the agenda for governments, businesses, and individuals. The power that is currently located in the state was previously widespread and extended through a network of relationships and many other groups: women, youth, pensioners, ethnic groups, environmentalists, and so on. Many of these social movements have become institutionally non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These are non-profit institutions (the market) and not really government institutions. NGOs are private institutions that serve the public interest and unofficial channels, supporting social projects, at local, national, or international levels. (Alice & Costa, 2015). The partnership is an emergent process, fundamentally concerned with self-efficacy over community welfare, as well as being driven by individual organisational goals (Labib Eid & Robert Sabella, 2014). Finances are not a barrier for the multinationals organizations to partner with the NGO's. This can help the government to handle the disasters efficiently and improve the preparedness level. According to Twigg (2001), different stakeholders need to learn the collaborations and coordination to prepare better and contribute.

The over-reliance on structural and hard engineering solutions has not helped in reducing the flood risk. Quick urbanisation and industrialisation have enhanced the task for flood management as frequent occurrence of floods is expected. Moreover, according to Weng Chan (1995), the impact of floods can be more fatal in future. That is why a comprehensive plan must be developed to handle these natural disasters. The flood disaster management is one of the complex process as it involves many different stakeholders and involves a lot of uncertainty. Flood disaster management needs an interdisciplinary coordination as it is one of the globally affected disaster and requires involvement of multiple authority. As a result, flood disaster management may sometimes lead to conflicts between the decision makers (Heintz *et.al.*, 2012). Therefore, the third issue of this study is to investigate the issues concerning CSR

practices among Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation process.

The fact sheet post flood disaster released by the Centre Public Policies Studies (CPPS) in Malaysia has highlighted that the duplication of the efforts is one of the main weakness in the current flood management system in Malaysia. One of the major challenges faced by global leaders and the citizens is the climate change. Climate Action is one of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) given by the UN. Disaster mitigation is also one of the key focus areas in the 11th Malaysian plan under the strategic thrust pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience. Combating climate change and reducing disaster risk which in one of the three priority area under the Enhancing Environmental Sustainability through Green Growth which is the Pillar V in the new 11th Malaysia plan after the mid-term review(Economic Planning Unit, 2015). Local expertise and knowledge are the most critical along with any process or collaborated effort. Challies *et.al* (2016) stressed the need of research on the local preparedness level with a focus towards a collaborative effort.

The past CSR literature have focused more on the efforts from the organisation or the community in general. Garriga (2004) suggests the necessity to develop a new theory on the business and society relationship, which should integrate the four dimensions of the CSR theories namely instrumental theories, political theories, integrative theory and ethical theory. Lee (2008) suggest that future research needs to refocus on basic research in order to develop conceptual tools and theoretical mechanisms that explain changing organizational behaviour from a broader societal perspective. Ghobadian *et.al.*, (2015) suggested that there is a paradigm shift in the public mind set and they focus on the challenge issues related to population growth and climate change. The future studies should focus on building theories and models of business that link CSR. In the case of flood mitigation there is a need to build a collaborative model between stakeholders with a focus on the social contract theory. Therefore, the fourth issue of this study is to develop a model for flood mitigation exercise of selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders. Finally, the fifth objective will be to suggest recommendations for the improvement of flood mitigation practices of the selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders.

## **1.4 Problem Statement**

Although there has been a lot of studies focused on getting a clear and unbiased definition for CSR, still there is a confusion regarding the CSR definition. The analysis shows that the existing definitions are to large degree congruent. Thus, it was concluded that the confusion is not so much about how CSR is defined, as about how CSR is socially constructed in a specific context (Dahlsrud, 2008). The past literature review has shown that the studies related to concept of CSR in relation to flood mitigation is limited. Therefore, the present study will take forward a deeper understanding of the concept of CSR among selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation.

Interest in the role of business in sustainability and equable development has grown in recent years, with call for partnerships between the public sector, private sector and civil society through commercial initiatives and CSR. Sharing of expertise and knowledge is very important in current world. To date, disaster mitigation and preparedness have scarcely featured in the debate. There have been some calls for greater private sector involvement in disaster reduction but there has been little attempt on what role it might play. The present study explores the CSR involvements of Malaysian companies and other stakeholders during the flood mitigation.

The fact sheet post flood disaster released by the Centre Public Policies Studies (CPPS) in Malaysia has highlighted that the duplicating of the efforts as one of the weakness in the flood management system in Malaysia. Disaster mitigation is also one of the key focus areas in the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan under the strategic trust pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience. One of the reasons for this is lack of coordination between the various agencies (CPPS,2015). Therefore, this study investigates the issues concerning CSR practices among Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation process

Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. Weather patterns are changing, sea



levels are rising, weather events are becoming more extreme and greenhouse gas emissions are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature is likely to surpass 3 degrees centigrade this century. The poorest and most vulnerable people are being affected the most. Sustainable development is the overarching principle underpinned by green growth initiatives to enhance environmental sustainability, while achieving higher economic growth and increasing resilience of the nation against climate change and disasters. This is strongly consistent with one of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) that focuses on Climate action. Private, public and non-profit sectors need to learn how to collaborate with each other for the disaster mitigation and preparedness activities. It is recognized world over that integrating social, environmental and ethical responsibility into business ensures long term success, competitiveness and sustainability. The collaboration between the NGOs and company can the company will help the government to handle the disaster relief and improve its preparations. Instead of ill planned and unnecessary relief goods (Twigg, 2001). Therefore, this study developed a model for flood mitigation exercise of selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders. The study will also suggest recommendations for the improvement of flood mitigation practices of the selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

1. To take forward a deeper understanding of the concept of CSR among selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation.
2. To explore the CSR involvements of Malaysian companies and other stakeholders in the flood mitigation.
3. To investigate the issues concerning CSR practices among Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation process.
4. To develop a model for flood mitigation exercise of selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders.

5. To suggest recommendations for the improvement of flood mitigation practices of the selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

Based on the problem statement outlined the five research objectives are formulated:

1. What is CSR from the views of the selected Malaysian companies and the stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation?
2. How do the Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involve in flood mitigation?
3. What are the CSR issues surrounding the flood mitigation exercise from the perspective the selected Malaysian companies and stakeholders?
4. How can the flood mitigation exercise of selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders be modelled?
5. What are the recommendations for the improvement of the current flood mitigation practices of the selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The significant contributions of the present study are two-fold, i.e the contribution to the body of knowledge and policy implications. The study adds to the body of knowledge in the area of CSR for natural disasters, specifically in the area of flood mitigation in Malaysian context. The review of past literature in the field of CSR has shown that most of the studies have ignored the CSR role of the companies in the field of natural disasters (Twigg, 2001, Johnson *et.al* 2011). Increase occurrence of natural disasters has presented a social challenge for the corporate companies. The success of CSR projects largely depends on government and NGOs roles and accountability. Its most likely that the companies would be able to carry out the CSR

intervention on their own and need to take help of local NGO for effective implementation of CSR activities. Just allocating funds is not adequate but it is expected that the company need to work in the CSR intervention along with the NGO and government. For this purpose, effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism needs to be in place or else it has lot of loose ends where there is a threat that money may be siphoned off under the name of CSR.

The study contributes in practice to the Malaysian government and CSR practitioners of Malaysian companies. The Malaysian government wants to use CSR to position themselves as a leader in the region. They have identified strong corporate governance, transparency and responsible business practices as a means of differentiating the business investment climate in Malaysia. The recent floods have highlighted the need for flood management in the country. CSR can play a vital role in involving the private sector firms in flood mitigation in a structured way. The study will highlight the potential areas of CSR spending which can contribute to flood mitigation and building the resilient communities in flood management. This will serve as a guideline for the government and the corporate entities to identify priority areas to focus on for effective CSR program implementation.

The results and recommendations of this study will help in encouraging and strategizing a collaborative effort between the private sector and the NGOs for better flood risk management. In the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia plan one of the six strategic thrust is to pursue green growth for sustainability and resilience (Economic Planning Unit, 2015), hence the findings of the study can be helpful in achieving this strategic thrust. Furthermore, one of the game changers in the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysian plan is to embark on the green growth. However, to achieve this one of the important strategies is to have shared responsibility to implementation flood mitigation CSR initiatives. The results will help in devising a strategy to effectively share the responsibility of flood risk management between NGOs, Malaysian company and the government. The budget announced by the government for 2017, the Malaysian government plans to spend RM450 Million expenditure on the flood mitigation projects. It is evident from the past study that every \$1 spent on flood mitigation saves \$4 during the recovery stage. Therefore, flood mitigation is one of the important issues for Malaysia as it will contribute to the

sustainable development of the country. Hence this research becomes more relevant in the present scenario in Malaysia.

The flood disaster in Malaysia is one of the effects of the global climate change. The climate change action is also one of the sustainable development goals set by UN. Combating climate change and reducing disaster risk is one of the three priority area under the Enhancing Environmental Sustainability through Green Growth which is the Pillar V in the new 11th Malaysia plan after the mid-term review. The recommendations of this study will support in the development of a fundamental framework for climate change actions in Malaysia using a new social contract approach based on resilience thinking.

According to Husaini (2007), rise in natural catastrophes has some prominent reasons but rapid industrialization has contributed the most in the developing nations. This has been attributed to a more frequent and severe flooding events, presenting unprecedented threat to the fabric of communities. The impact of flooding around the world is widely documented, prompting relevant stakeholders to take actions (Mullins & Seotanto, 2013). The poor and the side-lined are more exposed to these disasters. The social and environmental issue can be tackled by the corporation and government by engaging in the response, recovery, planning, and mitigation of disasters.

Based on researcher's best knowledge, the study on the role of CSR in flood mitigation remains an untapped area. The study will provide good guidelines for the corporate sectors and the government to cope up with the challenge of flood management and in building a resilient community which will be well equipped to handle the effect of such disasters. It will encourage the corporate to help the government in pre-disaster mitigation and preparedness instead of only contributing to the relief funds after the disaster. It will also serve as a guideline for the government to identify the key areas for CSR spending. Currently, a proactive approach is required as the country is expected to face serious challenges in flood management in the future.

## **1.8 Scope of Study**

The study focuses on the data related to the CSR initiatives of the listed Malaysian companies. Firstly, the study takes forward a deeper understanding of the concept of CSR among selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation. Secondly study explores the CSR involvements of Malaysian companies and other stakeholders during the flood mitigation. Thirdly, the study investigates the issues concerning CSR practices among Malaysian companies and other stakeholders involved during the flood mitigation process. Finally, the study gives recommendations for the improvement of flood mitigation practices of the selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders and develop model(s) which reflects existing flood mitigation practices of selected Malaysian companies and other stakeholders.

The study included all the listed Malaysian companies which are involved in disaster management. The study focused mainly on the companies CSR activities related to disaster management related to flood. The study used the qualitative approach, this involved the content analysis on the company websites of the Malaysian companies and face to face interview with the stakeholders involved in the flood mitigation in Malaysia.

## **1.9 Conceptual Definitions**

- 1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** CSR is defined as ‘the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life’.
- 2. Disaster:** When the impact of the hazard on a group, person or a socio-economic structure overwhelms their ability to cope

3. **Vulnerability:** The extent to which a group, person or a socio-economic structure is affected by the disaster.
4. **Mitigation:** Mitigation involves the steps to reduce vulnerability to disaster impacts such as injuries and loss of life and property.

### 1.10 Organization of the Study

This chapter introduces the thesis. It begins with the general overview of the CSR. The background of the study discussed the CSR dimensions and some studies related to CSR and natural disaster. Later, in the next section the background of the problem was discussed. Subsequently, the problem statement established followed by the research questions and objectives of the study. Further discussions on the significance of the study recognized for body of knowledge and the practical implication of this study. The chapter one ends with the discussion on scope of the study, conceptual definition and finally the organization of the thesis. Chapter two discusses the literature related to CSR and flood mitigation. The discussion begins with the conceptualisation of the CSR and the predominant research approaches used in the CSR research area. To position the discussion within the dimension of flood mitigation and Malaysian companies, the chapter proceeds to describe the CSR of the Malaysian companies in relation to flood mitigation. The CSR is reviewed in the perspective of the social contract theory. The final summary of the literature review concludes in chapter two.

The chapter three explains the research methodology used in this research. The discussion begins with the research paradigms and goes on to discuss the research approaches used in this study. Next, the discussion turns into the research tools and data analysis employed in this study. Data collection methods which include the content analysis on the company websites and certain public documents related to the CSR and flood mitigation in Malaysia. The content analysis approach are discussed in detail in this chapter. The chapter ends with discussions on data management, and finally concludes with the summary of chapter three. Chapter four discusses the modus

operandi and findings of the website and document analysis. It begins with the description of the modus operandi which consists of the identification of the website, content analysis and finally the findings are discussed. The chapter the elaboration concludes with the summary of chapter findings of website and document analysis.

The chapter five discusses the thematic analysis of the in-depth interview data. The interview data is analysed using the thematic analysis and themes and sub themes are identified. The chapter ends with a summary of the thematic analysis which gives details of the themes and subthemes. The procedure of generating concepts and categories is presented in order to illuminate understanding on how the analysis finally arrives at the findings. The chapter six presents the discussion on the findings from the website and document analysis and the findings from the in-depth interviews. These findings are compared for differences and similarities with the past literature. Next, discussions on contribution to the knowledge and implication of the study are presented. The chapter also discusses the general research contribution and implications of the study. The chapter ends with the recommendations for the successful flood mitigation exercise., overall conclusion and the recommendation for future research.

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