

Study Shows Nuclear Disaster at Fukushima was Preventable



Tokyo, September 23 (RHC)-- A study shows the nuclear disaster at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in 2011 could have been avoided. The study released in the science journal *Philosophical Transactions* said: "The Fukushima accident was preventable if international best practices and standards had been followed, if there had been international reviews, and had common sense prevailed in the interpretation of preexisting geological and hydrodynamic findings."

The study also paints a bleak picture of failures of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the operator of the nuclear plant, before the disaster, as well as the company's handling of the crisis.

Costas Synolakis and Utku Kanoglu, two researchers who used documents provided by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. National Research Council, Japan's bicameral legislature and TEPCO itself, wrote that the nuclear accident revealed striking inaccuracies in TEPCO's internal risk analysis, as well as "regulatory failures."

"The entire experience with TEPCO's pre-event internal studies, not to mention the entire methodology that has been used in Japan to assess tsunami hazards, points to the perils of insularity." The study also alleges that TEPCO researchers had long known that earthquakes could threaten power plants in the region. Despite that, necessary safety measures were not taken.

The researchers also question the vulnerable designs of some Japanese nuclear power plants at Fukushima. And the study warns that similar flaws could lead to more accidents in the future.

The administration of Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has already refuted allegations of structural failures in the past and said that its response to the disaster was adequate. Japan was about to face a potentially more significant disaster as several reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant started to melt down following the devastating tsunami in 2011.

More than 300,000 people were evacuated in the wake of the accident. The devastating tsunami also left 18,000 people dead.

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