

The citizen participation in the environmental management plan and expected empowerment as its determinant

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The purpose of our study is to clarify the effect of citizens' expectation of empowerment on their intentions to participate in the waste management program. Many citizens as well as experts have become to think citizen participation (CP) is essential for implementation of environmental policies. A few cities began to introduce citizen participatory methods to make a basic plan to set a goal of waste reduction. But, CP has not yet worked well. Although almost citizens admitted CP, they did not attend CP. Consequently, we can not realize the social benefit of CP. This is a case of social dilemma.

We did a social survey to look for the facilitating and inhibiting factors of CP in Nisshin city which would make their plan with citizen's participation. We hypothesized that citizens evaluate CP from the aspect of social benefit. However, when they decide whether they participate or not, they focus attention on the aspect of individual benefit and cost, especially expected empowerment. Furthermore, we expect that a contextual factor like personal network strengthen the expected empowerment and weaken the individual cost. We collected 471 samples using snowball sampling method with mailing. We asked the leaders of all volunteer groups registered in the city to distribute the questionnaires to their members. The collection rate was 73%.

The main results are as follows. General evaluation of citizen participation was very positive and the main determinants of general evaluation were expected social benefit. Behavior intention to participate CP was negative and the main determinants of participation were expectation of individual benefits as empowerment and individual cost.

Introducing CP in the environmental planning, social benefit should be emphasized. The administration should disclose the information and discuss with citizens about the necessity of environment management plan and CP. But, at the stage of eliciting citizen participation, expected empowerment should be emphasized as well as be done social benefit. If the citizen have no prior experiences of empowerment from the voluntary activity, it is difficult to get many people's participation. So, our next task is to find what kind of actions can encourage citizen participation.