

Universality of Humanitarian in Pakistan Earthquake 2005: A Case Study

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Abstract: *The earthquake 2005 was one of the major earthquakes in the history of Pakistan which affected Kashmir the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Over 75,000 people in nine districts lost their lives, and an estimated 120,000 more were injured. The affected area was massive, covering 30,000 square kilometers of mostly rugged, mountainous terrain- foothills of the Himalayas. Hundreds of communities were completely destroyed and more than a third of its population killed (IRIN Pakistan, 2006). This paper reveals that the national and international humanitarian response to the crisis was far-reaching. Practical reconstruction and rehabilitation were carried out by Turkey, Japan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (UNICEF, 2006). National and International NGOs played their role to help affected people out and also rich peoples of society came forward and gave donations for the rehabilitation process.*

Key Words: *Universality, Humanitarian, Earthquake, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation*

I. Introduction

Disaster is a sudden adverse or unfortunate extreme event which causes great damage to human beings as well as plants and animals. Disasters occur rapidly, instantaneously and indiscriminately. These extreme events either natural or man induced exceed the tolerable magnitude within or beyond certain time limits, make adjustment difficult, result in catastrophic losses of property and income and life is paralyzed. These events which occur aggravate natural environmental processes to cause disasters to human society such as sudden tectonic movements leading to earthquake and volcanic eruptions, continued dry conditions leading to prolonged droughts, floods, atmospheric disturbances, collision of celestial bodies, etc. (Joshi, 2008).

Disasters have always co-existed with civilizations. With technological advancement, development initiatives resulted in the creation of a lot of infrastructure and permanent assets. Gradually material development detached man from nature on one hand, and increased vulnerability of the human population, on the other. The progressive increase in loss of life, property and deleterious effect on environment due to disasters moved the international community to look at disaster management in a new perspective, which transcends international barriers, anticipates possible threats and enables tackling of disasters from the pre-stage. The last decade (1990-1999) was observed by the International Community as the 'International Decade for natural disaster reduction', a decade dedicated to promoting solutions to reduce risks from natural hazards. The international dimension of disasters was realized and a protocol sought to be established so that when it comes to suffering of humanity, help from the International community flow in right earnest.

Disasters are as old as human history but the dramatic increase and the damage caused by them in the recent past have become a cause of national and international concern. Over the past decade, the number of natural and manmade disasters has climbed unavoidably.

Like other South Asian countries, Pakistan continues to suffer from a plethora of natural and human induced hazards that threaten to affect the lives and livelihood of its citizens – natural disasters including floods, earthquakes, landslides, cyclones, and drought to human induced disasters such as fires, civil unrest and terrorism, refugees and internally displaced people, health epidemics, transport accidents, industrial accidents and war. The human impact of natural disasters in Pakistan can be judged by the fact that 6,037 people were killed and 8,989,631 affected in the period from 1993 to 2002 (World Disasters Report 2003).

Pakistan lies in a seismic belt and therefore suffers from frequent earthquakes of small magnitudes. Earthquakes normally occur along the Himalayas, Karakorum's and partly Hindu Kush ranges in the north, Koh-e-

Suleiman range in the west with Chaman fault line along Quetta, and Mekran fault line along the sea coast. Their occurrence is normally associated with the dynamics associated with the Indian plate exerting continuous pressure on the Eurasian land mass. In 1935 an earthquake of above 6.5 on Richter Scale intensity rocked Quetta leaving 35,000 dead. From 1974 to 1990, approximately 5669 people were killed due to earthquakes in the Northern Areas (NA), KPK and Baluchistan. There was a significant earthquake that occurred in February 2004, in KPK resulting in 24 deaths and over 129,000 people were affected. Pakistan is known to be vulnerable to a wide array of natural and man instigated disasters, but October 2005 earthquake was the worst natural disaster that the nation has experienced in the recent history. Post October 2005 earthquake studies confirm country's continued vulnerability to the hazard in these regions.

Table 1: Major Natural Disasters In Pakistan(Loss In Terms Of Human Lives)

| Date | Died | Affected | Damage \$ |
|---------------|--------|------------|-----------|
| May 31, 1935 | 35,000 | - | - |
| Nov. 27, 1945 | 4,000 | - | - |
| Dec. 28, 1974 | 4,700 | - | 3,255 |
| Oct. 8, 2005 | 73,338 | 2,869, 142 | 5,000,000 |

Source: EM – DAT Emergency database. <http://www.em.net/disasters/pr>

According to Khan (2006), the earthquake that hit northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005 caused widespread destruction, killing over 73,000 people, severely injuring many more and leaving millions without shelter. The affected areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) suffered extensive structural and economic damage, with vulnerable groups in this mountainous region bearing the brunt of the disaster. The devastation was spread over 30,000 square kilometres of treacherous Himalayan terrain. Most educational institutions were destroyed, killing over 18,000 students. The majority of health care units and hospitals collapsed, the communications infrastructure was unusable and all essential utilities were disrupted; in all, the affected area was strewn with 200 million tons of debris. Hundreds of post-quake tremors and constant landslides multiplied the shock and trauma, while the onset of winter threatened the lives of the survivors. This was without question the worst natural calamity in Pakistan's history; recovering from it is going to cost billion of dollars.

“Over 75,000 people in nine districts of NWFP and AJK lost their lives, and an estimated 120,000 more were injured. The affected area was massive, covering 30,000 square kilometers of mostly rugged, mountainous terrain- foothills of the Himalayas. Hundreds of communities were completely destroyed and entirely destroyed, and more than a third of its population killed.”(IRIN Pakistan, 2006b). “In the districts of Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Neelum, and Poonch (AJK), and Abbottabad, Battagram, Kohistan, Mansehra and Shangla (NWFP), there was severe damage- if not total destruction- affecting private housing, public infrastructure, social services, and communication systems. 2.8 million people were left without shelter- and at a time when the winter was just setting in. about 203,574 damaged, constituting approximately 84% of the total housing stock in AJK and 36% in NWFP. In most sectors and physical damage to building and infrastructure was comparatively higher in AJK than in NWFP. By February 2006, it was calculated that 69,412 people had been severely disabled, and that 58,897 people suffered minor injuries.” (UNDP Pakistan, 2006, p1).

Destruction of earthquake 2005 could be revealed by destruction of houses of affected regions. This study shows that 100% living was affected by disaster. In total, 75% people substantiated complete demolition of houses, while remaining 25% claimed partial damage.

Table 2: Destruction Of Housing By 2005 Earthquake

| House damage | Area wise breakdown | | | Total |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|-------|
| | Bagh | Mansehra | Muzaffarabad | |
| Completely Damaged | 80.7% | 77.5% | 69.9% | 75.2% |
| Partially damaged | 18.4% | 22.0% | 30.1% | 24.4% |
| Not damaged | 0.9% | 0.6% | 0.00% | 0.4% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 3 explains the area wise house damage caused by earthquake. Remarkably, data regarding house damage shows approximately similar trends as shown in district profiles prepared by ERRA.



Table 4: Extent Of Damages-Housing Sector

| Damage | Number | % |
|----------------------|--------|----|
| Destroyed | 108283 | 71 |
| Partially Destroyed | 34001 | 22 |
| Negligibly Destroyed | 10676 | 07 |

Source: internal sources of ERRA- Housing sector

This table shows that Private housing sector suffered a huge loss in the district; as many as 108,283 (71%) houses were completely damaged/destroyed and 34,001 (22%) were partially damaged while 10,673 (7%) were negligibly damaged.

Table 5: Damaged To Crop, Livestock And Irrigation- NWFP (KPK)

| | Direct Damages (Rs. Millions) | Indirect Damages (Rs. Millions) | Total Loss (Rs. Millions) |
|------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Crop | 746.8 | 182.8 | 929.6 |
| Livestock | 3933.8 | 2370.0 | 6303.8 |
| Irrigation | 83.7 | - | 83.7 |

Source: ADB/WB Pakistan 2005 Earthquake- Preliminary Damage and Need Assessment

The Pakistani people from all regions and walks of life generously donated relief supplies in both goods and money for the earthquake victims. The magnitude of that disaster found the Government alone unable to provide relief to the people affected by this earthquake. Appeals to the people of Pakistan to help the government in its relief efforts brought needed donations, relief goods and volunteers to work in the hospitals and the earthquake hit areas. Helicopters ferried the injured from remote areas to the hospitals of Rawalpindi and Islamabad every day. Relatives of the injured traveled to the twin-cities by road; they experienced a long and painful search for their loved ones. Devastated with heavy losses of human lives and homes, those poor people often traveled on foot from one hospital to another looking for their injured loved ones.

In the international response to the 2005 Kashmir earthquake many countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations offered relief aid to the affected regions. The aid given was in the form of monetary donations and pledges, as well as relief supplies including food, medical supplies, tents and blankets. Rescue and relief workers were sent from different parts of the world to the region and they brought along rescue equipment, including helicopters and rescue dogs. In KPK and Kashmir, the Pakistan Army supervised an immediate assessment of the extent of damage. The Government of Pakistan opened President's Relief Fund for Earthquake relief operation, and also appealed for International Aid. They appealed for blankets, tents, medicine, warm clothes, food and many more supplies. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) offered free delivery of goods from anywhere in the world to Pakistan. Turkey offered to airlift relief goods that arrive in Turkey to Pakistan free of cost.

Soon after the earthquake struck, NGO's started their relief efforts. Kashmir Relief and Development Foundation (KRDF), a UK based charity setup relief camps in all the major cities of Azad Jammu Kashmir and KRDF volunteers worked around the clock to help the earthquake victims. That included distribution of tents, food supplies, clothing and shelter with the help of individuals and various organizations. The Pakistani people from all regions and walks of life generously donated relief supplies in both goods and money for the earthquake victims. The magnitude of that disaster found the Government alone unable to provide relief to the people affected by this earthquake. Appeals to the people of Pakistan to help the government in its relief efforts brought needed donations, relief goods and volunteers to work in the hospitals and the earthquake hit areas. Helicopters ferried the injured from remote areas to the hospitals of Rawalpindi and Islamabad every day. Relatives of the injured traveled to the twin-cities by road; they experienced a long and painful search for their loved ones. Devastated with heavy losses of human lives and homes, those poor people often traveled on foot from one hospital to another looking for their injured loved ones. Three surgeons from Harley Street went out for a week to help with the victims of the earthquake and set up a field hospital in the town of Bagh. In the midst of the disaster, Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), an agency affiliated with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) responded by mobilizing specialized staff, volunteers and resources. FOCUS conducted search and rescue operations and distributed essential relief items to tens of thousands of families in the affected areas of Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, and other remote regions of the country. A large number of American, European, and Asian nonprofits also entered the region and mounted a massive relief operation. In late 2006, Pakistan approved \$20 billion development scheme for reconstruction of the earth-quake hit zones in Azad Kashmir. A land use plan for Muzaffarabad city had been prepared by Japan International Cooperation Agency. Pakistan established the Earthquake Reconstruction & Rehabilitation Authority to rebuild the area.

Many countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations offered relief aid to the region, in the form of donation as well as relief supplies including food, medical supplies, tents and blankets. Rescue and relief workers came to the region from different parts of the world bringing rescue equipment, including helicopters and rescue dogs. The United Nations appealed for donations of US\$272 million to help victims of the quake. The International Association of Lions Clubs (LCI) & Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) donated an amount of US\$892,000 for the reconstruction of 150 houses along with supporting infrastructure and a water supply system at Village Anwar Sharif, Muzaffarabad, and Azad Kashmir. The International Director of Lions Clubs International, Lion Malik Khuda Baksh handed over the houses to their occupants on July 26, 2007. Mr. Raja Zulqarnain Khan, President of the Azad Kashmir attended as the Chief Guest of the Ceremony. A team of volunteer New York City paramedics traveled to the remote villages of Kashmir two weeks after the earthquake and treated over 200 patients a day in a two week relief effort. Many international relief organizations served for an extended time, particularly in the hard hit areas of NWFP and rural Kashmir. The Federal Relief Commission (FRC) of Pakistan Government, Armed Forces, International donors, UN agencies and local NGOs joined hands to undertake the huge operation for delivering emergency relief against challenges such as mountainous terrain, distant and difficult to access communities, changing weather conditions, resource constraint, and overwhelming suffering of the people.

II. Conclusions

In 2005, Pakistan experienced the most disturbing earthquake in its history. Pakistan government and humanitarian agencies initiated wide range of relief efforts for the survival of victims. This study is an effort to show that how quickly and effectively the relief efforts carried out by the NGOs and the government. The study indicates that though both, government of Pakistan and NGOs' played significant role during rescue and relief assistance. The Government of Pakistan immediately realized the enormity of the task and appealed to the international community for emergency assistance. The Government of Pakistan and national & international agencies took immediate measures for rescue, relief and reconstruction for 3.5 million affected people of NWFP and AJK. This study investigates the role and performance of Pakistan government and humanitarian agencies during relief and emergency aid assistance to 2005 earthquake victims. Generally, donor agencies and the external sources prefer to channelize emergency assistance to disaster victims through international and/or indigenous NGOs due to all pervasive corruption and misappropriation of relief funds on the part of the Governments. "The government of Pakistan and participating social, national, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with the help of domestic and external sources initiated massive rescue and relief activities in the area". (ERRA, Annual Review 2005 to 2006). "Both, government of Pakistan and NGOs played important role in relief distribution and rehabilitation activities. Government of Pakistan established the central coordination office for rescue and relief started to work at Prime Minister (PM) Secretariat immediately after the earthquake. Federal Relief Commission

was established on 10th October 2005 to mobilize all resources, to coordinate activities and to facilitate flow of relief goods” (ERRA, Annual Review 2005 to 2006).

Most of the case studies, including this one, have shown that humanitarians are not always adept at navigating political shoals, despite political and strategic interests – whether international, national or local – never being far below the surface. In the earthquake context this poor political analysis was apparent in a number of areas, including the limited understanding by many international staff of the role of the army in Pakistani society, the structure and role of local government which was largely bypassed, the political economy of aid, and the politics of Kashmir. Among other things, this limited understanding of the political context contributed to a fundamental misreading by many agencies of the nature of security threats. While many agencies have invested considerable resources to enhance the security of their staff and assets, there is still a need for more and better analysis of local contexts and of the place that humanitarians, wittingly or not, occupy in the political landscape.

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