

Conference on Disaster Management in Balochistan: Issues & Options



October 8, 2007, Quetta, Balochistan

Proceedings Report

Organized by:



**Participatory
Development
Initiatives**

Supported by:



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1. Introduction / Background

Balochistan has been experiencing worst drought conditions since last one decade. This largely affected its surface and groundwater resources as well as other natural livelihood resources. The province was still bearing the brunt of the drought that heavy rains and floods hit the province in June 2007. The floods devastated majority of the districts of the provinces almost crippling its infrastructure, killing hundreds of the local communities and leaving millions homeless.

The government's response was delayed and flawed resulting in increase in the deaths and other community losses as well as outbreak of diseases etc as an aftermath of the disaster. Although the response of international community and civil society organizations was positive, however, the flaws in the governmental procedural framework and unnecessary hurdles in the work of the international communities also resulted in delays in the civil society response to the flood disaster. The government's slow response and flawed policies and procedures resulted in delay of more than 21 days in issuing international appeal for relief and rehabilitation of the affected areas and communities. In the normal cases, such appeal is issued within 24 to 72 hours of any disaster.

Even after the passage of more than three months, the local newspapers are full of the stories about the deprivation of the local communities of relief and rehabilitation, reports of political favoritism in the cases of relief and rehabilitation as well as flaws in the relief and rehabilitation mechanisms.

On the eve of International as well as Pakistan's National Day of Disaster Reduction, PDI decided to organize a Conference on "Disaster Management in Balochistan: Issues and Options?" with the support of Oxfam GB. The conference was aimed at discussing the flaws in the disaster response and management in Balochistan. The conference brought different stakeholders including the provincial government representatives, Balochistan PDM authorities, elected representatives, people from civil society organizations, experts etc on one platform to discuss the issues related to disaster response and management in Balochistan and also bring forth options for improving the disaster response and management mechanisms in the province.

2. Conference Objectives

- To discuss the overall legal and administrative flaws in disaster preparedness, response and management in Balochistan
- To discuss the status of governments response including relief and rehabilitation with regard to the recent rains and floods in Balochistan
- To discuss the key cause of flaws in the legal framework and implementation mechanism and also present suggestions for improving disaster management including rescue, relief and rehabilitation and other process in Balochistan in Balochistan

3. Conference Proceedings

The conference proceedings were initiated with the name of Almighty Allah. Mr. Ali Ahmed recited verses from Holy Quran. The proceedings were chaired by Mr. Zafar Baloch Member Provincial Disaster Management Authority and Secretary Livestock Balochistan. The conference proceedings were divided into two sessions i.e. Presentation Session and Question Answer / Comments Session



4. Presentation/ Speech Session

4.1 Sikander Brohi, Director, Participatory Development Initiatives [PDI]

There are different definitions of disaster. One of the definitions reads, “A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community/ society to cope using its own resources”.



It is a fact that Pakistan is a disaster prone country. Basically, Pakistan is a country with diversity not only of people, cultures, and traditions but also of physiography with an almost unbelievable range of landscapes and environments; mighty rivers and huge deserts; and fertile plains, thick forests, and towering mountains. This landscape is a perfect recipe for disasters caused by natural hazards.

Although the country is prone to variety of disasters, however, the key disasters which frequently hit Pakistan are Floods [Riverine Floods- Flash Floods], Droughts,

Earthquakes, Landslides, Cyclones, Urban Fire etc. Some of the newly emerged disasters also include seawater intrusion, major terrorist activities and even large scale migrations as a result of tribal clashes and conflicts between the tribes and the law enforcing agencies.

Like the other parts of Pakistan, many of the above mentioned disasters also hit the different areas of Balochistan. The disasters often hit Balochistan include flash floods, cyclones, droughts and earthquakes etc. There are many reasons to believe that the frequency and the intensity of different disaster are expected to increase in different parts of Balochistan. For example:

- Frequency of major flood disasters has actually increased over the past three decades.
- Impacts of climate change may well lead to an increase in both the frequency and magnitude of floods
- The heavy monsoons usually occur from July to August, but recently they have begun to occur into the month of September
- We also experienced early or pre monsoon rains in 2007 which brought floods in Balochistan
- Mountains in Pakistan experience the monsoons in the waning stages, every few years or so the monsoons can be exceptionally intense and strike the western mountain fronts
- Unlike the northern boundary, the western boundary of Pakistan defined by the Chaman strike-slip fault, Sulaiman-Kirthar ranges, and the Makran subduction zone have had several major earthquakes in the last 100 years
- There is possibility of increase in the level and intensity of flash floods due to deforestation in Balochistan
- Intensity and severity of Cyclones may increase due to global warming

In such a situation, what we need the most is the disaster management. In fact disaster management involves policies, administrative decisions, and operational activities related to various stages of disaster. Usually there are four phases of disaster management which include: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, and each phase involve a great deal of effort and skills.

Some efforts have been made at the government level for disaster management in Pakistan. In this connection, establishment of National Disaster Management Authority at the national level and Provincial Disaster Management Authority at the provincial level are the key steps taken by the governments. However, still there are many gaps in the disaster management in Pakistan as well as in its different provinces including Balochistan. Some of the gaps are as under:

- Pakistan lacks coherent multi-hazard disaster preparedness plans at all levels of the government and public arenas. The existing strategy for disaster preparedness in the country revolves around mitigation for river-flood hazards through structural measures such as spurs, embankments, and related protection works
- Balochistan is threatened by flash flood hazards is much greater than that threatened by river floods. Preparedness for meeting this challenge is virtually negligible. There is hardly any evidence that vulnerable communities are trained to respond disasters effectively

- Instead of continuously revising, upgrading, and ensuring implementation of building codes, Pakistan made the building codes virtually redundant.
- Multi-hazard vulnerability maps, which form the basis of mitigation as well as preparedness, are non-existent. Seismic hazard zonation and relevant earthquake-resistant building codes are either non-existent or not implemented.
- Mountainous dwellings and linking roads lack slope-stability data which, in combination with the lack of vulnerability maps
- There is dearth of knowledge and information about hazard identification, risk assessment and management and linkages between the livelihoods and disaster preparedness among the disaster management institutions
- Disasters are viewed in isolation from the process of mainstream development. Large Scale Development Projects are bringing new forms of disaster: Mirani Dam, Soorab Dam etc
- There is lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of different institutions and agencies. In this case the key issues are: Who will issue the first call for response? Who will conduct the search and rescue operation? Who will supervise evacuation of the survivors? Who will provide the relief? Who will carry out rehabilitation and reconstruction?
- Lack of Civilian Institutional Development. Pakistan Army in disaster response; Overwhelming role assumed by one agency has virtually barred the civilian government agencies and communities from taking on responsibility.
- Pakistan needs to develop civilian institutions, especially at local government and community level, to not only formulate preparedness plans but also respond effectively.
- National Disaster Management Authority still regulating the civil society. It should work on the disaster management rules, regulations and implementation

The level of frequency and the intensity of the disasters in Pakistan and Balochistan also emphasize the need that we should come out of the old concept of relief rescue and relief. Now the disaster preparedness (DP) has to be approached holistically because it is difficult to isolate preparedness from other components of disaster management (DM) such as reduction, response, and recovery. There is need of a paradigm shift in DM from a relief-driven approach to a more preparedness-driven approach. The local communities should be at the centre of DM plans. They are the first victims of natural hazards and the first respondents. Local knowledge should be respected and combined with other knowledge to improve the design and implementation of DM activities. Functional and efficient communication among key actors at local, national, and international levels needs to be improved in Disaster Management. There is strong need of district; tehsil and UC level disaster preparedness and management policies, plans and skills. Research should be continuous process into disaster management that adapts to the cultural, geographic, and social system. There is need to review the laws and rules at the federal, provincial as well as district level to improve those laws to ensure a positive legal framework.

4.2 Ms Yasmeen Lehri, Director Programs PEACE Balochistan

There are three stages of managing any kind of disaster i.e. rescue, relief and rehabilitation. About 18 districts of Balochistan were badly affected during the current floods in the province. We have been in the field since the flood disaster hit the province on June 25, 2007 and we have observed that there have been large scale weaknesses and

delays in the process of rescue and rehabilitation especially on the part of the government departments.

The government's efforts with regard to the rescue of the affected people were largely ineffective. For example, in Union Council Garhi Rehman of Naseerabad District population of 20,000 was affected as a result of the floods. What the government did for the rescue of the whole population was to send only four boats. Out of those boats two were inoperative, and only two boats were used to evacuate 20,000 affected people from the worst flood hit areas.



The delay and inadequate efforts for the rescue of the people resulted in more deaths and as a large number of people including women and children remained marooned in the flood affected areas. The Condition of the women and children was appalling as they were facing different water born diseases and were also facing severe food shortages.

Another important thing which was observed during the floods was that the Government tried to link the human crisis of flood disaster with politics and political situation. The government tried to downplay the disaster by trying to show that the scale of the disaster was minimal. This was done by making the international organizations believe that there was not a serious disaster and thus there was no need of any major rescue, relief and rehabilitation operation.

Although the human rights of the people of Balochistan are being violated in different ways since long, however, this was a serious violation of their human rights when they were left alone and the disaster which hit them was downplayed only in the name of politics. As a result, there was severe lack of effectiveness and efficiency in the activities related to rescue and relief of the flood affected.

It is also unfortunate that the civil society also could not play the role which it was expected to play. Due to variety of reasons, the civil society also proved to be helpless. One of the key causes of this helplessness was also that there was no data available. The situation was not clear. When the disaster hit Kashmir and Northern Areas, the Government saved its face by saying that it was after long time that such a disaster has hit Pakistan.

Therefore, the government machinery was not prepared for such scale of disaster. However, in the case of Balochistan, there were experiences of Kashmir and also information from the Metrological Department about the possibilities of large scale floods in Balochistan. Despite that there was no preparation to the level that there was even no data available about the scale of damage even after many days following the disaster. This hindered the ability of the civil society to respond quickly.

Another issue which is equally matter of concern is that despite the passage of more than three months to the flood disaster still we are in the phase of rescue and relief and the key phase of rehabilitation has not been initiated. Interestingly, in some areas, still the process of assessment and data collection is continuing which is a regrettable act as the people

have passed three months in post disaster trauma and we have still not been able to support them by providing them relief and rehabilitation.

We think that the key cause of such mismanagement was that there was no disaster specially flood response strategy with the government and the government tried to relate the disaster with the political situation and the politics by informing the UN Agencies that there was no disaster of any major scale in the province. The delay in the rescue was to the extent that in many areas the people have to live in the heavy flood hit areas for almost two months. This resulted in many waterborne diseases in those areas affecting the women and children at large scale.

Weak coordination was also seen among the civil society organizations following the flood disaster in Balochistan. The coordination among the civil society was not so strong to respond the crisis collectively. This was also one of the results in the delayed and poor response of civil society after the flood disaster.

In such a situation, there is strong need that the coordination of the government and civil society as well as the coordination among the civil society organizations should be enhanced in the province and the disaster issue of Balochistan should be seen in the context of humanitarian crisis in place of looking the disaster with the lenses of politics and political situation in the province.

There is strong need of initiating the important phase of rehabilitation in the flood affected areas of Balochistan. It is because all the key livelihood resources of the millions of the local communities of 18 districts of Balochistan are destroyed and degraded. Those resources include the land resources, the irrigation water resources, drinking water resources including the water supply schemes and drinking water ponds.

Similarly, the education and health facilities are destroyed in Balochistan. There is need to launch a major program of the rehabilitation of the damaged land, irrigation water, drinking water resources, schools and health centers as to ensure that the affected communities start their normal life and there is no threat of food insecurity in the province as a result of degradation of the land and water resources.

There is also strong need to launch a campaign to revive volunteerism in the province by creating a larger pool of volunteers to face the onslaught of the future disasters because there are fears of more disasters in Balochistan including the floods, cyclones and earthquakes etc.

4.3 Prof. Manzoor Akbar Kundi, University of Balochistan

Disaster management which was previously called crisis management is an important subject, because the disasters are very much related to the human beings. The history of the disasters is as old as the human history. The disasters can hit any region and to any society, with varying scales and intensities. Some disasters are nature born while others are man made. I would say that the majority of the disasters are basically man made.

For example in the case of the floods in Balochistan, the major disaster occurred due to Mirani Dam flows which are again a man made disaster. Similarly, if one day Tarbella

Dam is broken, its intensity of the human loss would not be less than the atom bomb. It would also be a human induced or manmade disaster.

The key issue is how to manage the disaster or crisis with its key phases of rescue, relief and rehabilitation. Balochistan is a multi ethnic and multi geographical society. It is a disaster prone area. There is threat of almost all the key disasters including the floods, cyclones, droughts and earthquakes. The key question is how to manage the disasters.

The terminology of managing disaster means to increase capabilities of the communities to properly counter the threat and onslaught of the disasters. For such situation, there is need of developing the human capacities as well as systems. Being a welfare state, it is the responsibility of the state to develop the systems and increase and enhance the capacities of its citizens to counter the disasters.

There is no any society in the world which does not face the challenge of the disaster. The example of Japan was quoted here. The earthquakes of high scale do hit Japan frequently. However, it is the level of the disaster management in Japan that no loss occurs despite the earthquakes of such scale. If the earthquake of the same scale hits Quetta, I think it would bring complete destruction in the city because of the low level or lack of disaster management in Quetta Balochistan.

Balochistan is more vulnerable to disasters also because, it is the biggest province of Pakistan [areas-wise], there is severe lack of infrastructure and majority of the communities are living in the rural and backward areas. Besides, the floods would now become a common phenomenon in Balochistan also because of global warming.

However, there are many examples which show that the disasters including the floods are properly managed if management systems, skills, capacities and capabilities of the local communities are enhanced. We can give the example of Bangladesh which is a flood prone country. Every year, there are floods in the Bangladesh. However, there are systems in the country to manage the floods and people have skills to manage the floods at local/ community level. This results in less damage and human losses in Bangladesh even in the case of major floods.

Similarly, Balochistan has also constant threat of droughts. A scholar had written somewhere that they saw their cattle dieing, now they would see their children dieing. So the scale of the droughts would also increase in Balochistan again mainly due to the phenomenon of global warming. The threats of earthquake are also looming large on the province of Balochistan.

One of the key concerns with regard to disaster management is also that our traditional values have largely vanished. There were traditional values of collective response to the disasters and other eventuality at community level. However, those values no more exist. For example, the elder people in Balochistan tell that in the past, when there were rains and floods, there was drumbeating and people would bring their bullocks and the ploughs and other irrigation instruments to harness the rain and floodwaters. However, now although there are tractors available with the local communities, but they would again look at the government and other agencies to come to their rescue.

Another important factor which makes the communities of Balochistan more vulnerable to disasters is the weaknesses in the local bodies system. Although this system is quite old in Pakistan, however, it has still not become strong because of the interference of those in power and the agencies. The way the corrupt people are facilitated to win the elections of the local bodies and the way those people are used for specific political gains, has resulted in weaknesses in this system. Has the real local representatives of the people elected through this system, they would have played key role in disaster management at the local levels.

Therefore, to face the challenges of disaster in Balochistan, there is strong need that road infrastructure should be developed in Balochistan on war-footing basis, local bodies be strengthened and effective trust building and capacity building of the local communities be made for proper disaster management in the province. Following are my general observations with regard to disaster management in Pakistan:

- Disaster management in Pakistan basically revolves around flood disasters with a primary focus on rescue and relief. After each disaster episode the government incurs considerable expenditure directed at rescue, relief and rehabilitation.
- Applied disaster management policy sometimes carries strategic biases that are aimed at protecting locations and infrastructure of greater economic, political and strategic significance at the cost of areas and communities with lesser influence and importance.
- Within disaster management bodies in Pakistan, there is a dearth of knowledge and information about hazard identification, risk assessment & management, and linkages between livelihoods and disaster preparedness. Disaster management policy responses are not generally influenced by methods and tools for cost-effective and sustainable interventions.
- There are no long-term, inclusive and coherent institutional arrangements to address disaster issues with a long-term vision. For instance, the Emergency Relief Cell is mandated to deal only with post-disaster scenarios.
- Disasters are viewed in isolation from the processes of mainstream development and poverty alleviation planning. Some of the large-scale development projects are bringing new forms of disaster and adding to the vulnerability of at-risk communities.
- Disaster Management, development planning and environmental management institutions operate in isolation and integrated planning between these sectors is almost lacking.
- Absence of a central authority for integrated disaster management and lack of coordination within and between disaster related organizations is responsible for effective and efficient disaster management in the country.
- State-level disaster preparedness and mitigation measures are heavily tilted towards structural aspects and undermine non-structural elements such as the knowledge and capacities of local people, and the related livelihood protection issues.
- Disaster and relief departments and organizations largely remain under-resourced, untrained, and not given required importance within administrative hierarchy. A dedicated fund for disaster management at the federal level has never been a part of the overall development planning.
- The officials of two important organizations engaged in disaster management e.g. Emergency Relief Cell and Federal Flood Commission are not provided with

adequate training. A great deal of uncertainty prevails among government employees about their stay in any disaster related organization / department, which contributes towards working with less interest and efficiency.

4.4 Imdad Ali, Coordinator Civil Society, SPO Balochistan

We are thankful to PDI and Oxfam for arranging this conference on an important issue of disaster management in Balochistan. We really appreciate the advocacy efforts of PDI which it was engaged in during the drought and later on flood disaster in Balochistan. Their efforts reflect from the assessments, email alerts and such seminars and conferences.

There is a general mistaken feeling about the disasters. Usually it is assumed that the disasters are basically the wrath of Almighty Allah upon the local communities due to their wrong doings. It is due to this perception that the local communities and even the governments take little interest in the management of those disasters. Therefore, the first and foremost issue is the need of awareness among the local communities about the occurrences of the disasters, their causes and the precautionary and management measures which the governments and the local communities should take to reduce the disaster losses.



Although it is a fact that we can not completely control many disasters, however, we can reduce the level of the losses including the livelihood and human losses. It is the responsibility of the government to create awareness among the local communities about the disasters and also strengthen their capacities to reduce the losses of the disasters.

Historically Balochistan has been prone to different disasters. Balochistan has been witnessing the disasters like earthquakes, droughts, cyclones and floods. However, it is unfortunate that there is no strategy at the provincial as well as district level to face and counter those disasters.

The recent floods in Balochistan clearly exposed the lack of strategies and management plans in Balochistan. There were many flaws in rescue and relief operations in the province. From the beginning a Cluster Approach was adopted. Different Cluster Groups were prepared under the platform of UNHCR. However, all the cluster system was centralized in Islamabad. Therefore, all the kinds of approvals and key decisions were made in Islamabad. This delayed the process of rescue and relief and also largely affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the flood relief activities in Balochistan.

Similarly, at the government level there was no decentralization of National Disaster Management Authority [NDM]. Although later on Provincial Disaster Management Authority [PDM] was formed in Balochistan and also District Disaster Management Authorities [DDMs] were notified, however, it was too late. Even after the delayed forming of the PDM and DDM, there was and still there is serious lack of coordination between PDM and DDMs in Balochistan. Besides, DDMs have neither financial resource

nor capacity and capabilities to contribute towards disaster management in their respective districts.

The lack of coordination was also witnessed among the INGOs and even UN agencies following the flood disaster in Balochistan. There were many agencies which wanted to support the local flood affected communities. However, they were not provided NOCs to reach at the affected communities. Although, the policy and the attitude of the government with regard to issuing NOCs was wrong and flawed, however, the higher authorities of those agencies also refrained from sending their Pakistani staff to the disaster hit areas only on the pretext that their international staff has not received NOC, therefore, they are unable to visit and support the flood affected areas. This policy by both the government and the INGOs resulted in increase in the miseries of the flood affected communities which were simply disaster affected people and had nothing to do with the politics of procedures, rules and NOCs.

Similarly, the issue of accountability and transparency is also related to the government as well as the UN Agencies and INGOs. There was flash appeal of Millions of Dollars. Where this money has gone, as still large number of local communities has not received proper relief, while the rehabilitation process is almost miles away from those local communities?

It is really unfortunate that more than two million local communities have lost their livelihood resources, but still many agencies are engaged in the assessment phase. This would further increase the miseries of the local communities and there is severe threat of food insecurity if the livelihood resources of the local communities are not rehabilitated on time.

It was also responsibility of the government especially its agencies like PDM and DDMs to facilitate the assessments and other data collection requirements as to ensure that relief and rehabilitation process is initiated on time. However, it seems that there is still lack of coordination between PDM and DDMs in the province with regard to data collection and dissemination process.

There is strong need of coordination between the government and the NGOs and INGOs as well as coordination among the government departments from the federal to provincial and district level. There is also need to increase the capacity and the skills of the local communities with regard to disaster management as different disasters may occur with great frequency in Balochistan in the future.

4.5 Sultan Ahmed Tareen, District Coordinator, BDN Mastung Balochistan

I think PDI jointly with Oxfam has taken good initiative to discuss the issue and find out ways out to further improve the government and civil society performance. There were serious loopholes in the management of flood disaster in Balochistan. The relief distribution mechanisms were not effective and political considerations were also kept in mind during the distribution of relief goods. It is unfortunate that we usually think of doing something for the communities after the disaster has already hit them. In the case of recent disaster also the villages submerged in the floodwater, crops were destroyed, and tube wells were destroyed. It was then that we started thinking of providing relief to the disaster affectees.

What is more important that we should look at the management side of the disaster? We should think that how can we ensure management of the disasters that lesser losses occur when the disaster hits us. For that purpose, there is strong need of training on how to manage the disasters. There is need of organizing the local communities and developing their skills on disaster management.

In think providing food and nonfood items to the affectees of the disaster is not the disaster management. It is a very meager component of the whole process of disaster management. We have to proceed from the disaster relief to disaster management to minimize the threats to the lives and livelihoods of the local communities.

4.6 Wali Mohammed Zehri, General Secretary SHINE Balochistan Dera Murad Jamali

As for as the issue of the lack of coordination is concerned, it is the fact that overall the coordination is lacking. Some organizations from Quetta initiated relief activities in our district. However, the role of the local organizations to manage the disaster was appreciable. They took the responsibility of providing food and other facilities to more than 1500 affected population. They also organized the affected communities and also coordinated with the local government and other national and international agencies. Although a number of organizations belonging to Quetta and other areas played their role, however, basically the work of the local organizations was more appreciable.

However, it is unfortunate that the local organizations are not being given importance. The role of the district government is also negative. The District Nazim has never properly participated in the flood relief activities. All the so-called teams formed in the district existed only in the name, while they played no role in the relief activities in the district.

4.7 Mola Bux Umrani, Program Coordinator, THE NEEDS Naseerabad

The role of the district governments was very ineffective in Balochistan in the matters related to flood relief activities. I would give the example of Naseerabad District where our NGO is working. The role of District Government Naseerabad was not only ineffective but there were also cases of depriving the local affected communities of the relief items and those relief goods were illegally stockpiled in the warehouses of the influential people. Recently a raid was conducted at a place in the district and the truck loads of the relief items, which were send by Punjab Government, were recovered.

Same is the case of compensation. The local communities, whose houses have been completely destroyed, are being paid a meager amount of Rs 15,000 which is certainly not adequate for them to build their houses again.

4.8 Mohammed Arif, President, All Balochistan Progressive Private Schools Association

We should be prepared for different kinds of disasters. However, have we ever thought that how should we create awareness among the masses to properly manage the disasters? It is unfortunate that we have not prepared such minds which should play active role once the communities are hit by different kinds of disasters. The disasters would continue to

inflict serious losses till we prepare the local communities and their minds to face such disasters as it is said that no body plans to fail and some fail to plan.

The private and the government schools of the country including Balochistan have been playing their due role in the nation building. Be it census, elections or the issue of providing shelter to the affectees of disaster, the buildings and the staff of the private and government schools have always been at the service of the government and the local communities.

In this whole scenario, we have a complaint from you people, who are engaged in disaster management activities that you have never utilized our services in the hour of need. While talking benefit of this gathering, we once again present ourselves before you. We once again request you to please accept our services in the hour of crisis, in the hour of any kind of disaster. We would be ready and happy to serve our nation as we are already serving the children of our nation. However, we would also request you that use us with planning, not in a haphazard way. We would request you to build our capacities. There is no dearth of good teams with us. We have good teams of male and female teachers as well as male and female students. The need is to harness their capacities and use at the time of disaster.

There was talk of the post and pre-disaster issues. There was also talk of awareness among the local communities. Generally we are impressed of what was discussed here. However, the key issue is how much serious we are in the implementation. Because, it has been the tradition that we make big claims and big promises in the seminars and conferences and forget all the things once we are out of the seminar or conference venue.

One of our sisters talked about providing chlorine to the disaster affectees in Kashmir and Balochistan. But is the water which we the citizens of Quetta re consuming, safe and clean? The underground tanks prepared in Quetta by WASA have never been cleaned or repaired. Has any one checked those tanks? How rats have made their resting places in those tanks.

Similarly, there is also trend of blaming the government on each and every issue. However, we have to look at our own role also. The elected representatives in the local government are also our own people. Look at what Nazim of Quetta is doing with the city. He is more concerned about developing “food points” in Quetta in place of looking at the concerns and real issued of the common people of Quetta.

4.9 Ms Naushaba, Society for Community Support, Quetta

We are really thankful to PDI and Oxfam on organizing such a wonderful and important conference. The important question before us is how to minimize the gap in coordination between the government and civil society. I think in this connection, PDI can play important role in bridging the gap between the government and civil society.

I would share some experiences of our organization. Following the flood disaster, we focused the areas of Naal and Zehri in District Khuzdar, where we distributed food and nonfood items among 100 percent affected communities. Similarly, we also focused the Dasht Union Council of Gawadar District. Our observations are as under:

- There was overall lack of information. No valid data was available for proper planning and implementation
- It is regrettable that following the flood disaster all the organizations are working on relief , while there is little work on other aspects of disaster management in Balochistan
- Some disasters are unpredictable; however, there are some disasters, which can easily be predicted. For example in the case of floods, the predictions of Metrological Department are 80 to 90 percent true. The question is as to why we do not make proper preparations face such disasters. Even for future, how much prepared we are? Are there some stocks available to face any eventuality in the future? Are our resources and teams ready to even provide basic rescue facilities in the case of any disaster?
- PDI has emerged as very affective civil society organization. We think that there can be strong link between the government and PDI. There is need that PDI and government links should be further strengthened and a collective and strong source of data collection sharing and coordination should emerge
- There is strong need of working together and filling the loopholes, especially with regard to mutual cooperation and coordination

4.10 Noman Qazi Program Coordinator SEHER Quetta

PDI and Oxfam have made a great contribution in organizing this important conference. Our organization has been engaged in rescue and relief activities in different districts of Balochistan. We have been working on the relief and now are entering in the phase of rehabilitation.

We think that there is strong need of coordination between the government and civil society organizations as well as among the civil society organizations in Balochistan as to provide proper relief and rehabilitation to the flood affected communities of Balochistan.

The coordination among the civil society would not only ensure proper relief and rehabilitation of the local communities, but it would also ensure that there is no duplication in the efforts of the civil society and the proper and genuine affectees receive support. There is also need that we should not create dependency trend in the local communities. To prevent such situation, there is need that we should make efforts to empower the local communities through our relief and rehabilitation support mechanisms.

There is strong need of disaster preparedness. In place of reacting to the occurrence of the disasters, there is need that we should prepare the communities for them by increasing their disaster preparedness and management skills. Therefore, there is need of initiating projects on the disaster preparedness and sustainable solutions. There is a need to collectively work for the planning strategies to counter and minimize the losses of the disasters in Balochistan.

Threats of different disasters in Balochistan are very much reality. Therefore, it is time that we should prepare the local communities to mitigate the threats of disaster and reduce the risks which they face in the case of any hazard in their area. Therefore, there is need of disaster preparedness awareness training to the local communities. The role of media can also no be undermined in this whole process.

4.11. Zafarullah Baloch, Member Provincial Disaster Management Authority [PDM] Balochistan

It is a fact that Balochistan is a disaster prone region. There are possibilities and threats of almost all kinds of disasters including floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis. However, it is not correct to say that the government did not play its role in the post disaster [flood] situation in Balochistan. The government and its agencies were alert. We have been holding frequent meetings following the flood disaster, almost on the daily basis. The heads of key provincial agencies used to participate in the meetings which discussed the day to day situation and took key decisions with regards to rescue, relief and rehabilitation.



It is also incorrect to assume that the government agencies had no data. We had all the kinds of data and the same data was also regularly updated. Whosoever contacted us and asked for data, we provided them the same. I am Secretary Livestock and I ask all of you sitting here that have any one of you ever visited my office and asked for data or post flood livestock vaccination in your district?

Our work with regard to the flood rescue and relief was so impressive that even the international agencies wrote in their reports that it was in Balochistan that the provincial government was ahead of all the civil society agencies in the relief work while in other provinces the civil society was ahead of the government.

Despite such an impressive work, I would say that there is still need of improvement because being disaster prone province, we would be facing more such deadly disasters in the future and it is our responsibility to prepare ourselves and increase our capacities to counter and minimize the damages and losses of the future disasters.

The government is alive of the situation. We are in the process of preparing different plans and strategies and also improving the strategies and plans which are already prepared. PDM is also active on different fronts. However, we would certainly need the support of civil society organizations in our efforts to build such systems that human and

livelihood losses of the local communities are minimized in the case any disasters hit the province in the future.

5. Question –Answer and Comments Session

Following the presentation session, the floor was opened for question –answer and comments. Ms Yasmeen Lehri of PEAC Balochistan moderated the session. The participants took interest in the session to the extent that it continued till



Iftar. Some questions were directed towards the speakers specially the speech of PDM member Zafarullah Baloch. All the speakers were given proper time to respond to the queries of the participants.

Besides, there were also comments of the participants, who shared their own experiences and their own perspective with regard to the issues of disaster management as well as the rescue and relief phase of the recent floods which hit Balochistan. The participants also gave suggestions for improving the disaster management in Pakistan in general and in Balochistan in particular.

Some of the key points raised by the participants of the conference during the question-answer session are as under:

- The common people face disasters of various kinds daily in their lives. Therefore, the importance of the big crisis or disasters has largely reduced in the eyes of the common people. There is lack of collective consciousness.
- Balochistan is facing problems from the outset as the province is seriously lacking basic infrastructure. There are few roads and link roads and there is dearth of schools and basic health units in the province.
- We are talking about the psycho-social issues but we have to look at the root-causes. Unless there is change in our social system, we would not be able to play our role in the collective efforts for the betterment of our society. We have to use our all the resources towards ensuring that a sense of collective consciousness is created. We have to create a sense of social responsibility.
- The basic issue is how to manage the crisis and there are still major flaws in managing the crisis. I would give the example of my own area and villages. We found no support from any control room or DCO office when the disaster hit our communities.
- In the cluster meetings at UNICEF Office we were really surprised as well as dejected to see that concern of the majority of the participants was how to prepare

and receive projects. There was little attention on the real and genuine sufferings of the common people of the flood affected areas.

- When the earthquake hit Quetta, Mastung, Kalat and Khuzdar in 19935, the human loss as a result of that disaster was lesser only because at that time majority of the people use to live in the traditional huts [locally known as Gidans]. Presently, majority of the communities are living in Pucca and Katcha houses. Therefore, the possibilities of the losses as a result of any future earthquake are very much high.
- There is little change in the attitude and the strategies as far as the government and its departments are concerned. The government departments are still in the habit of usurping the amounts which are payable to the local communities as compensation for the deaths of their dear ones or losses of their livelihoods.
- It is also unfortunate that the political parties and groups are also not playing their due role. This was widely observed during the current floods in Balochistan. This was widely witnessed and observed during the current floods in Balochistan. Although individually the political activists played key their role, however, the collective action from the political parties was not witnesses during the whole saga.
- It is unfortunate that we are usually thinking in the frame of projects. By doing so, we usually ignore the real needs of the common people of the different areas. For example during the recent floods *Kambals* were distributed in the hot areas of Balochistan, where they were not needed actually.
- There were serious issues of quality of the materials distributed of the materials distributed. For example the rice which was distributed had bad smell. It is certainly unjustified to distribute low quality material among the already affected communities.
- Role of the youth following the flood disaster in the province was appreciable. They played very active role in providing rescue and relief to the local communities.
- We think that there are plans with NDM and PDM Balochistan. We the members of civil society should support them to properly implement those plans. Basically what is lacking is the realistic approach. For example, we are told that the Chief of PDM was invited to chair this conference. However, we see that he is not here. It is an important conference. He should have been here to listen and respond to the civil society concerns.



- We think that it is also not correct to say that the NGOs are doing nothing. We think we should avoid making allegations against each other. We should properly work towards the betterment of the local communities.
- Although it is difficult to predict earthquake, however, many other disasters can be predicted. Are we prepared to face those disasters? When cyclone hit the coastal areas of Sindh, a TV channel was interviewing DCO Thatta. When he was asked as to how many boats are still in the coastal waters, he replied that he has no information.
- Basically it is the lack of will power, which is hindering them from playing their role in reducing the risk and sufferings of the local communities affected by disasters.
- Both the government and the civil society level what is basically lacking is the lack of proper implementation. Therefore, we need to develop a core team of young volunteers to undertake prompt and immediate relief activities in the disaster prone areas.

6. Conference Recommendations

Following recommendations were presented in the conclusion of the conference and were passed by the participants of the conference:

- The disaster preparedness has to be approached holistically because it is difficult to isolate preparedness from other components of disaster management such as reduction, response, and recovery. There is need of a paradigm shift in disaster management from a relief-driven approach to a more preparedness-driven approach.
- The local communities should be at the centre of disaster management plans. They are the first victims of natural hazards and the first respondents. Local knowledge should be respected and combined with other knowledge to improve the design and implementation of disaster management activities.
- Functional and efficient communication among key actors at local, national, and international levels needs to be improved in Disaster Management. There is strong need of district; tehsil and UC level disaster preparedness and management policies, plans and skills.
- Research should be continuous process into disaster management that adapts to the cultural, geographic, and social system. There is need to review the laws and rules at the federal, provincial as well as district level to improve those laws to ensure a positive legal framework.
- There is strong need that the coordination of the government and civil society as well as the coordination among the civil society organizations should be enhanced in the province and the disaster issue of Balochistan should be seen in the context of humanitarian crisis in place of looking the disaster with the lenses of politics and political situation in the province.
- There is strong need of initiating the important phase of rehabilitation in the flood affected areas of Balochistan. There is need to launch a major program of the rehabilitation of the damaged land, irrigation water, drinking water resources, schools and health centers as to ensure that the affected communities start their normal life and there is no threat of food insecurity in the province as a result of degradation of the land and water resources.
- There is also strong need to launch a campaign to revive volunteerism in the province by creating a larger pool of volunteers to face the onslaught of the future disasters because there are fears of more disasters in Balochistan including the floods, cyclones and earthquakes etc.
- Providing food and nonfood items to the affectees of the disaster is not the disaster management. It is a very meager component of the whole process of disaster management. We have to proceed from the disaster relief to disaster management to minimize the threats to the lives and livelihoods of the local communities. There is strong need of disaster preparedness. In place of reacting to the occurrence of the disasters, there is need that we should prepare the

communities for them by increasing their disaster preparedness and management skills.

- The private and the government schools of the country including Balochistan have been playing their due role in providing shelter to the affectees of disaster. There is strong need to seek the services of the male and female teachers and students during the disasters. For that purpose it is important to build the disaster management skills of teachers as well as students.

Annex:

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