

Topic:

Disaster management in Pakistan

Outline

1. Introduction

2. Disaster and its different types

3. Glimpse of the damage caused by disasters in Pakistan

i- Damage by floods

ii- Damage by earthquakes

4. Mechanism of disaster management

i- Mitigation

ii- Preparedness

iii- Response

iv- Recovery and rehabilitation

v- Reconstruction

5. Analysis of the disaster management apparatus of the country

(a) Legislative structure of disaster management in Pakistan

- i - calamity Act 1958.
- ii - National Disaster Management Ordinance 2007.
- iii - National Disaster Management Act 2010.
- iv - Legislative structure in the Federating units and AJK.

(b) Administrative structure for disaster management in Pakistan

- i - National Disaster Management Commission
- ii - National Disaster Management Authority
- iii - Provincial Disaster Management Commission
- iv - Provincial Disaster Management Authorities

(c) Contributions by the disaster management institutions of Pakistan

- i - Contributions at the time of floods.
- ii - Contributions at the time of earthquakes
- iii - Contribution during Covid 19.

6. Analysis of the shortcomings in the disaster management apparatus of Pakistan

- i - Lacunas in the legal structure
- ii - Flawed process of disaster management.
- iii - Absence of early warning mechanism
- iv - Disaster prone construction activities

7. Recommendations for improvement in the disaster management system of Pakistan

- i - Improvement in statutory structure

ii - Installation of advanced early warning system.

iii - Improvement in disaster management planning.

iv - community sensitization.

8-Conclusion

Essay

How much helpless and miserable man is, can be well imagined by only those who have had the experience of facing the gale of some natural disaster with conscious eyes. Man - the super creature, the conqueror of the universe - is nothing more than a straw when challenged by the force of nature. Pakistan, unfortunately, falls in the list of those countries where natural forces repeatedly test the mettle and patience of the people. Fortunately, however, there is a comprehensive legal and administrative structure available in Pakistan today to deal with disasters in a professional way. Where National Disaster Management Authority Act 2010 forms the basis of the overall statutory structure related to disaster management in the country,

there are seven disaster management authorities including National Disaster Management Authority to deal with any sort of disaster at federal and provincial levels. Despite the fact that these authorities have been making tireless efforts to protect Pakistanis against the possible impacts of disasters, there are a number of lacunas and deficiencies in the overall system that limit the performance of these organizations and add to the miseries of the affected population. Some meticulous and well-planned measures to enhance the capacity of disaster management apparatus in Pakistan are certainly the need of the hour.

Prior to discussing what disaster management is, it is important to understand the concept of a disaster. According to International Federation of Red Cross, "a disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the society's ability to cope using its own resources."

There are four main types of disasters: Natural disasters include floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcano eruptions that have immediate impacts on human health; environmental emergencies include technological or industrial accidents, usually involving the production, use, or transportation of hazardous material;

Complex emergencies

involve a break-down of authority, and looting and attacks on strategic installations may be during conflict situations and wars, and.

Pandemic emergencies include a sudden onset of contagious disease that affects health, disrupts services and businesses, and brings economic and social costs.

As far as the damage caused by disasters in Pakistan is concerned, facts and figures collected by National Disaster Management Authority reveal that earthquakes, floods and draughts have resulted in more than 79077 deaths, 198000 injuries and 4303150 house damage case since 2005 in Pakistan.

Earthquake 2005 alone caused 73338 casualties and 128309 injury cases.

As far as disaster management is concerned, it has been comprehensively defined in the section 2(c) of the National Disaster Management Act 2010 of Pakistan. The section says that disaster management refers to managing the complete disaster spectrum, including preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation, and reconstruction. In fact disaster management is the mechanism of coordinating and utilizing available resources to deal emergencies effectively and thereby saving lives, avoiding injuries, and minimizing losses. Disaster management also deals with strategic and organizational management processes used to protect.

vital assets from hazard risks in such emergencies.

For a useful analysis of the system of disaster management in Pakistan, it is significant to understand the process of disaster management that starts from mitigation. These are the activities which actually eliminate the probability of disaster occurrence. Mitigating measures include building codes, vulnerability analyses, updates, zoning, and land use management and public education.

Preparedness is the second step of the disaster management process. It aims at achieving a satisfactory level of readiness to respond to any emergency situation through programs that strengthen the technical and managerial capacity of

governments, organizations, and communities.

The aim of emergency response - the third step of the disaster management process is to provide immediate assistance to maintain life, improve health and support the morale of the affected population. Such assistance may range from providing specific but limited aid such as assisting refugees with transport, temporary shelter, and food, to establishing semi-permanent settlement in camps at different locations.

The next step is recovery and rehabilitation. In this phase efforts are made to bring the lives of the affected people to normality. Provision of health, sanitation, and education facilities to the

affected people is a part of this phase. In most of the cases, affected people are paid monetary compensation by the Federal and provincial governments in accordance with the loss they have suffered because of disaster.

The final step of the process of disaster management is reconstruction. Reconstruction involves repairing and re-building the damaged parts of private properties and public infrastructure and undoing all the effects of the disaster.

Now it is time to have a look at the disaster management system of Pakistan. To start with, the legal structure needs to be discussed.

Calamity Act 1958 was the first piece of legislation

13

to provide immediate relief against the onslaught of disasters and the calamities in Pakistan.

In AJK, the Assembly enacted its own law with the name

AJK Disaster Management Act 2012 and in Gilgit Baltistan;

Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Act 2017 has been

enacted to provide legal framework for the disaster

management system functional in the region. In the wake

of earthquake 2005, National Disaster Management Ordinance

was promulgated in 2007. In 2010, the ordinance got the

assent of the Parliament and became National Disaster

Management Act 2010.

As far as the administrative structure is concerned,

emergency relief cells were established in 1971 and

Federal Relief Commission in 2005.

Disaster management institutions are present at three levels in Pakistan: at national level these are National Disaster Management Commission and National Disaster Management Authority, at provincial level, these are Provincial Disaster Management Commission and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities; and at district level, these are District Disaster Management Authorities. At all levels disaster management authorities carry out the implementation of policies and plans, examine the vulnerability of different parts to disasters and specify prevention measures.

After having discussed the statutory and administrative structure of disaster management in Pakistan, it is time to see what role these organizations have played at the time of

disaster. At the time when mega. earthquake jolted the doors and windows of Pakistan in 2005, although, no specialized institute was present for disaster handling, yet the whole Pakistani national and international community got united to lend helping hands to the affected people of Pakistan. Since their establishment after 2007, however, these were the disaster management authorities of Pakistan, which lead the relief and rehabilitation activities across the country in the wake of disasters and did a commendable job in alleviating the pains and sufferings of the people residing in disaster hit areas.

Although, disaster management apparatus of Pakistan has been playing an active role in pre-disaster and post-disaster phases, yet it is an irrefutable reality that there exist a

16,

number of shortcomings in the over-all system that detrimentally impact its performance adding to the miseries and sufferings of the people of Pakistan. To start with the statutory structure of disaster management is not the way. It should have been. Unfortunately, all the four provinces are still using the federal law which is though catering to their basic needs, yet is unable to deal with the peculiarities of the provinces.

The process of planning for disaster management is immensely flawed in Pakistan as a result of which the plan that is devised every year for fighting the disaster is nothing more than merely a useless pile of papers.

17

Another deficiency in the disaster management system of Pakistan is the absence of early warning systems that are used for giving prior intimation of disasters. These systems are commonly used in developed countries of the world and play a pivotal role in generating early warnings of riverine and glacial outburst floods (GLOF), particularly. These systems that are totally absent in Pakistan can be supportive in minimizing the damages of GLOF in the areas of Gilgit Baltistan specifically in Pakistan.

Similarly, the disaster prone model of infrastructural development is also an issue in Pakistan. Disaster Risk Reduction is a widely spreading concept that demands that the development

of cities and all the infrastructure should be made in such a way that the risk of damages caused by disasters is automatically minimized. Devising and implementing land use plans and building codes is a specific example of the very same thing. To what extent this element is missing in Pakistan is evident from the fact that the re-construction of Balakot city has been carried out at the very same place where it was located prior to the harrowing earthquake that devastated the whole city in 2005.

Although the flaws prevailing in the overall disaster management system of the country appear daunting enough to be handled successfully, yet in reality they can.

be got sid of if some meticulous measures are adopted for the purpose. For the purpose, the statutory structure of disaster management should be improved in Pakistan as the first step. The laws should be implemented and well supported by subordinate legislation in the form of rules and regulations.

Advanced early warning systems are also required to be set up in Pakistan particularly for the flood and earth quake forecast. The systems presently in place, do not provide forecast early enough for adopting sufficient precautionary measures.

Disaster management
Authorities should ensure the availability of advanced rescue machineries and equipment and

o) the same should be placed at such places, from where it can be shifted to the disaster hit points on immediate basis without any sort of impediment.

Community sensitization can also be helpful in minimizing the disaster related damages. Hectic campaigns should be launched through media and in educational institutions and people should be educated regarding the best suited immediate response at the time of disaster. Distribution of booklets, pamphlets and similar reading material can also be helpful in the purpose.

Conclusively, disasters have developed into a recurring feature not only in Pakistan but throughout the world. Presence of specialized organizations for fighting the disasters is immensely important for the safety of people's lives and properties and thanks to Allah Almighty that a complete framework is available in Pakistan for the purpose. Every year, disaster management authorities at all the tiers, play a leading role in the mitigation of the effects of disaster by ensuring coordination of efforts in disaster handling, participating actively in rescue operations, providing basic necessities of life in the affected areas, and educating common people and other stakeholders regarding their roles and responsibilities before and after the occurrence of disasters. Let's hope that the disaster

management organizations of
Pakistan reach the level of
such an excellence that
Pakistan never feel bound to
look towards other countries
at the time of disasters.
Let's pray it happens soon.