

**Impediments in Community Preparedness: A Study on Relationship of  
Community and Public Institutions in Natural Disaster Management in Pakistan**

(コミュニティ防災における課題: パキスタンの防災マネジメントにおけるコミュニティと行政間の関係に関する研究)

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It is evident that disaster frequency is on rise and data at the world level has proved this trend. This trend also followed in Pakistan and in last five year two natural disasters i.e. Kashmir earthquake 2005 and 2010 Flood Pakistan impacted and caused many casualties and big loss of infrastructure. Thus, realizing the importance of disaster risk reduction for sustainable social, economic and environmental development, the Government of Pakistan has embarked upon establishing appropriate policy, legal and institutional arrangements, strategies and programmes to minimize risks and vulnerabilities and these steps were taken after 2005 earthquake. After five years of government efforts, the catastrophe of 2010 Flood showed their failure in managing devastation impact.

Though, system of the disaster management at different tiers was established but the important link of public institutions and community is missing in legislation and practice as well. Natural disaster event occur suddenly and its impact is huge and it is difficult for the public agencies to cope it alone. Therefore, there is need that communities be prepared and for this purpose the links with public agencies at local level need to be established.

For achieving the objective of this research two type of approach was used i.e. analyze the public institutions relations among them and their mandate in the total disaster management phases for this purpose key informant interviews were conducted with the officials at national, provincial and local government level. Further, these were analyzed on the basis of their functions and their working during the hazard impact of 2005

earthquake and 2010 flood Pakistan. Beside this, questionnaire survey is conducted with three communities with the recent hazard impact scenarios. These three communities were selected on the basis i.e. i) earthquake affected community ii) Flood affected community and iii) located on safe place and did not have any impact of these two disasters.

Analysis of key informant interviews reveals the fact that no mechanism is devise in the new legislation for the ensuring the community participation. Further, there were step taken which shift the Paradigm in Disaster Management Process from reactive to proactive but still system could not involve the communities in disaster management process actively. There is also conflict within the legislation for disaster management promulgated at two different time 1958 Act and 2006 Act for disaster management and this give mandate to two different agencies at national and provincial level which creates the confusion in managing the process and it becoming like many cooks for one dish. Early Warning and post disaster communication system needs to be vitalized through media like Radio is vital source during a big hazard impact which can work if there is electricity breakdown and big loss of infrastructure.

Analysis of the community questionnaire throws light on the facts like rural areas are vulnerable in both ways i.e. physical as almost 75% houses unpaved and socially due to their low level of education that hampered in the reception of information from public agencies. This showed in the reception of early warning advisory and only 42% people in flood affected area answered in Yes while 58% said they could not get any information from the Government. While the local government units said that they informed the people in advance.

Community awareness is low for the knowledge of the evacuation in case of any hazard impact and this very basic information showed their low preparedness level in any natural hazard impact. On ranking of the agency for receiving of information and training activities, only earthquake affected community ranked local government units as at the top i.e. 37% while other districts they pointed mass media and in rural areas school also

got significant percentage i.e. 32%. School teacher is a change agent in rural areas and they have respect in the society, thus this platform can be utilized to increase the awareness.

Rural communities have the forum for discussion of the issues but there is need to utilize that forum for disaster awareness and religious forum is also an important tool that can involve the community in rescue and relief activities as religious teaching is to help those who are in trouble or pain.

Though community showed their interest in the disaster response activities and they also feel that public agencies cannot cope with it alone and there is need to involve themselves and utilize their own resources. But it needs to be vitalized through some channels and it can be done through the public agencies or local elected representative can organize communities for this purpose. Same way, women role in disaster activities is important as they take care children and elderly family members and their awareness can decrease the disease spreading in emergency situation.

This study leads to the fact that community awareness is significantly low for the disaster management process. Further, any plans cannot be implemented unless community will participate and own it by themselves. Therefore, community participation should be enhanced in policy making and in devising strategies.