

**Diary  
2014**



# **WOMEN OF PAKISTAN**

**Rebuilding Lives Courageously  
After each Disaster and Crisis**



# Diary 2014

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## Women of Pakistan: Rebuilding Lives Courageously After each Disaster and Crisis



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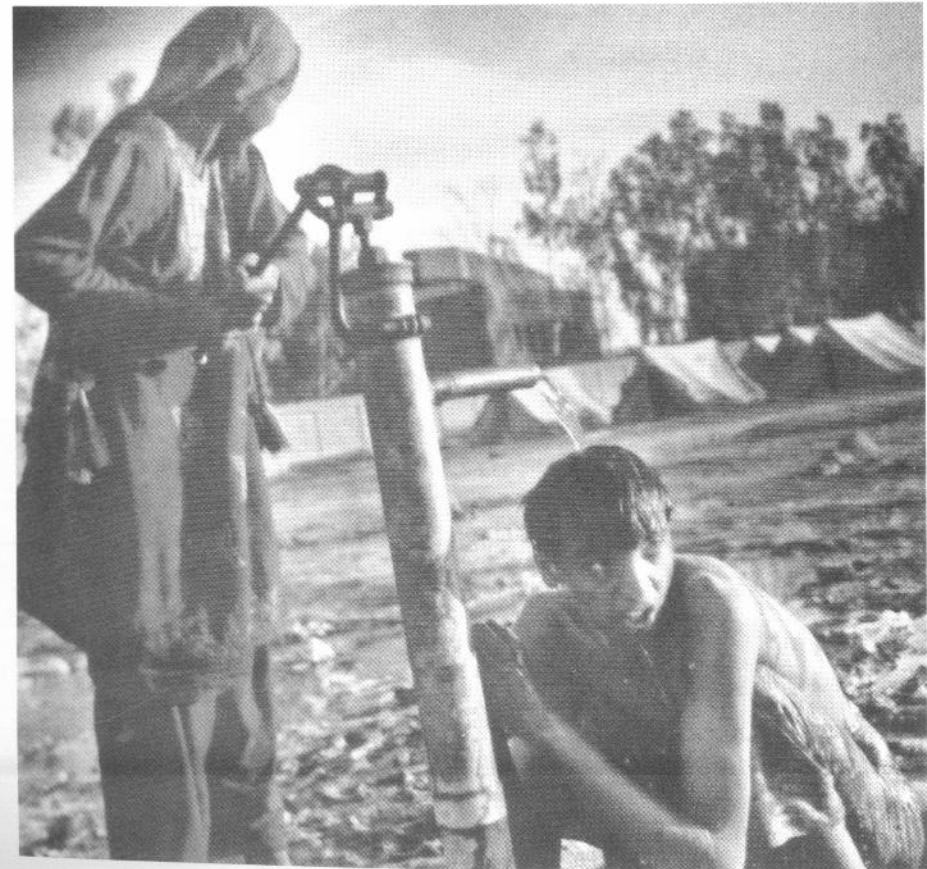


7. Establish age- and sex-disaggregated databases of the affected populations immediately after the onset of disasters, and ensure that the identified needs of women and child survivors are addressed on a priority basis, during the initial response and post-disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation stages;
8. Involve CSOs already focusing on gender-responsive work in affected areas, and develop the capacities of women's organizations in handling disaster risk prevention and management strategies;
9. Raise the awareness of decision-makers, policy-makers, planners, managers and field-based staff about the special vulnerabilities and capacities of women, children and minority groups when faced with emergency situations;
10. Review and update the existing Code of Ethics for Media – in consultation and cooperation with the media representative bodies – to deal effectively with humanitarian situations, to encompass a highlighted projection of the concerns of women and children, using a sensitive approach which protects their dignity, does not intrude into their privacy, and avoids using interview questions and print, video or audio images which aggravate the affectees' feelings of hurt and deprivation;
11. Institutionalize effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that relief and rehabilitation services reach the most vulnerable and deserving, and that disaster situations are not exploited by powerful vested interests, or for political ends;
12. Establish feedback processes to prevent marginalization, neglect or oppression of the affectees due to class, religious or gender disparities, and establish/reinforce support institutions as per their expressed and identified needs;
13. Ensure adequate and informed participation of women and youth in all relief, early recovery and reconstruction interventions – not just as beneficiaries, but also as stakeholders, i.e. planners, managers and implementers;
14. Associate Women and Gender Resource Centres, as well as gender experts, with the coordinated planning of sectoral and cross-cutting humanitarian initiatives of Government, NGOs, the UN and donors;
15. Promote awareness amongst women, men, youth and children in hazard-prone areas about disaster risks and disaster preparedness, including through improved media (particularly FM radio) information and education programmes, and extension workers;
16. Ensure security of shelter for internally displaced children and women, and put in place measures to avoid the likelihood of their becoming victims of forced labour, physical and sexual abuse within the camps; and to prevent their abduction and trafficking;

17. Equip camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with basic services geared to the identified needs of women and children – health (including reproductive), hygiene, nutrition, sanitation, adequate lighting, privacy, psychosocial/trauma counseling, and particularly for children and young girls and boys – safe spaces for education and recreation;

18. Employ resettlement, rehabilitation and resilience-building measures among affected communities in their places of origin, ensuring that developmental processes are sustained and progressively improved from previous levels for women and men, girls and boys, through:

- help in rebuilding shelters;
- restoration/provision of basic services;
- provision of new learning/training opportunities;
- revival of livelihood sources and provision of new economic options for both men and women survivors, with special attention to those who work mostly in the non-formal sector and whose needs are, therefore, liable to being neglected.



# Suggestions on Women's Empowerment for Election Manifestos of Political Parties



Naheed Aziz & Tahira Abdullah

## WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HUMANITARIAN/CONFLICT-RELATED EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

To mainstream gender perspectives and approaches into all disaster prevention and risk reduction policies and laws; and to operationalize and further improve the National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) strategies at the national, provincial and further decentralized levels, the following measure are to be taken:

1. Adhere to the basic principles outlined in the National Disaster Management Strategy:
  - Adopt proactive disaster prevention and preparedness approaches that contribute to better, more cost-effective and sustainable risk mitigation, rather than sole dependence on disaster response;
  - Take appropriate steps to start removing gender-related development disparities, not only for risk mitigation in the face of disasters, but as a development imperative for all situations;
  - Use these situations as opportunities to build better living conditions, social norms, and gender relations;
  - Develop disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plans related to the mandate of all Federal and Provincial Ministries and Departments;
  - Use sectoral plans to develop coordinated multi-sectoral policies, protocols and implementation mechanisms;
2. Support gender analysis of the relevant laws, plans, operational systems/guidelines; followed by revisions as per the identified requirements; and annually review the existing plans and systems, based on lessons learned from the most recent experiences of the impact of disasters on both women and men (2005, 2009, 2010 and 2011);
3. Gear macro-level DRRM policies, rehabilitation, and infrastructure reconstruction standards towards positive social, economic, political change, and introduce safeguards to prevent regression in social norms;
4. Establish a larger cadre of trained women and men staff to deal with various aspects of disaster prevention, response, relief, recovery and rehabilitation, besides providing the necessary equipment and emergency funds to district-level risk management structures;
5. Establish a network of well-equipped, decentralized Civil Defence and First Aid Training Centres, and provide First Aid training to female and male youth and adults through educational institutions, youth centres, and community centres;
6. Conduct and maintain updated region-specific hazard and vulnerability analyses; and streamline early warning systems to improve their timeliness, the quality and comprehensiveness of the information and its outreach to affected communities;



The most vulnerable people among them are pregnant women, young mothers, babies, besides elderly persons and ailing individuals.

"All our valuables were swept away and we could only manage to save our lives and the lives of our children. But our troubles are not yet over as unfortunately we are suffering even at this relief camp," grumbles a tearful young mother holding a child in her arms.

Babies are not getting milk at the relief camp, she says, explaining that they are too young to consume the food being provided here.

"A majority of women and children at this camp have been suffering from diarrhoea, frequent vomiting and abdominal pains.

"The lone doctor at the camp gives us medicines, but they are not making us well," complains another woman.

Health needs of the flood victims are very serious, with many of them complaining about chronic ailments and almost all children suffering from malnutrition. But no special arrangements seem to have been made by the government to meet the extraordinary situation.

In reply to a question about facilities being provided at the relief camp, a couple of women say that the families get meals twice a day but do not get breakfast or tea and have to live on the leftovers in the morning. "The first meal is provided at 2pm and the second at 9pm. By that time our children have already gone to sleep without food," one of them adds. She also complains about the choked sanitation system.

People who failed to salvage and bring along their bed mattresses while fleeing their homes have to sleep on the floor in the absence of bedding facilities at the camp. Also the families are in need of new clothes, especially for children, utensils and water containers.

Revenue officials at the camp assert that the temporary accommodation has been arranged only a few days ago and measures are being taken to improve the conditions.

They express ignorance about the childbirth for which the family had to pay Rs. 2,000 to a private doctor. But they claim that the other pregnancy case was handled with their support and the family did not have to pay for that.

"The children have been vaccinated against polio while tests for hepatitis will be carried out soon. Lady Health Visitors will also be posted here tomorrow," says Saleem Baloch, a revenue official, when asked about prenatal and postnatal care of women.

Dr. Syed Abid Ali serving at the relief camp was unaware of both delivery cases. He says the flood victims have been suffering from common infections and so far there has been no outbreak of a disease. "If they are provided with proper food and safe water, many of their health problems will certainly be solved," he observes.

Ghanwer Khan Leghari, The Executive District Officer for Revenue, says he will personally look into the complaints, especially those related to health and will ensure that

the situation improves at the earliest.

According to him, the city's six flood relief camps set up in Gulshan-i-Hadeed, Gadap, Manghopir, Gulshan-i-Maymar and Khokarapar are playing host to more than 1,800 flood victims. "Besides many families, who are not registered with the government, are staying at their relatives' place in different parts of the city," he adds.

Dawn – September 23, 2011

About 500 000 women affected by the floods were estimated to be pregnant in any given month; many of them faced the bleak prospect of giving birth unattended.



Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan

## Notes

## Food, health problems mount at relief camp



A flood victim lies with her newborn baby on the floor of the relief camp. - White Star

KARACHI: Still recovering from the exhaustion of early morning childbirth, pale-faced Naimat lying with her newborn on the floor of a relief camp in district east of the city takes great pains to narrate what she and her family have been through, after the floods hit their small village in Sanghar.

"I have only eaten some biscuits since morning. I am hungry but there is nothing to eat," the frail woman tells Dawn while Khalid standing close to her and their seventh child says that he needs money to buy his wife some food.

"I am penniless and can't purchase the food and medicines my wife needs right now," he says showing a prescription given by a private lady doctor who handled the delivery.

Their grievances were shared by the Hajjani family who also had come from Sanghar after the floods devastated their village.

"I paid Rs. 2,000 to a private lady doctor running a clinic near the relief camp for the delivery case as there is no lady doctor at the camp. No doctor has examined my daughter-in-law after the birth," replies Sudhuro, the grandfather, when asked about her post-natal care.

The relief camp set up in a non-functional hospital in Gadap, off the Superhighway, is home to more than 800 flood-hit people, mainly from Sanghar, Tando Allahyar, Tando Adam, Shahdampur and Matairi. They have been staying here for more than a week.

So far, 313 children, 231 women and 331 men have taken refuge at the non-functional hospital, which currently has the largest concentration of flood victims in Karachi.

A visit to the relief camp shows that the homeless families have found a safe place where they can live till normality returns to their hometowns but food, bedding and medical facilities remain in short supply.

cal supplies out to them, let alone manage to keep them manned at a time when the provision of potable water and daily meals are the first priority of the donors and aid workers. Besides these excruciating basic needs, the vulnerable women and children, even those few who are not suffering from physical ailments, are carrying a lot of emotional hurt and distress.

Whilst provisions for basic human survival are somehow being ensured to keep the displaced alive, there is a dire need for women volunteers from the cities to reach out to the displaced women in distress. The need for counselling services, even in an informal manner, cannot be overstated. Government and NGO aid and relief agencies as well as women's rights groups should recruit women volunteers from the big cities and take them to marooned communities where the volunteers can help relieve the psychological stress of the displaced women simply by listening to them.

At a time of distress listening to their problems or inner feelings can have a therapeutic effect. The women in distress need to talk, share their grief, tell of their agony and worries and they are waiting for those who can help by lending a sympathetic ear. Public and private-sector hospitals and medical colleges with psychiatric departments should arrange regular weekend trips to the displaced communities. Serving doctors, counselors and even students can do a great deal of service to humanity by simply being there and listening to the women in distress and hearing their tales of loss and sorrow.

Many of the flood victims lived in abject poverty even before they were displaced from their homes; they have practically nothing to go back to after the water recedes. The least the volunteers can do is to give them some hope by being there and showing they have not been forgotten or abandoned regardless of the cruel reality that surrounds them.

It is critical that the volunteer counselling teams that go out to the affected communities comprise women volunteers who have unhindered access to the women victims of the disaster that need them most. The presence of women volunteers, even if for a day in a given community, can also have a sensitising effect on the women flood victims' male family members when they see that their women are not alone and left at the mercy of circumstances.

There are many international experiences and models from African countries suffering from drought or conflict that have shown that community work and services, especially when undertaken by empowered women amongst the less empowered groups, have a measurable positive impact in mitigating the trauma caused by the tragedy at hand. The effort is very doable and it must be undertaken by concerned groups without further delay.

**By Murtaza Razvi, Daily Dawn - December 15, 2011**



Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan



## Swiss doctor to run in marathon for victims support

ISLAMABAD: Doctor Clementine Holloway, fighting with the injuries of earthquake victims in Mansehra will run in Lahore Marathon to encourage people for supporting the helpless and needy. The Switzerland-based doctor has run in the 2001 New York Marathon and is naturally athletic. She is currently associated with French NGO Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) and posted in District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Mansehra. Clementine arrived in Pakistan seven weeks ago and has treated a number of victims besides dozens of routine patients in the district hospital.

"I want to run in the Marathon for telling people about the support of earthquake victims as hundreds of children, women and older people who are in need of help", she said while talking to The Nation here on Wednesday. Clementine, who is also a mountaineer and has climbed many peaks up to 4000 meters height, however said that her basic aim was helping the victims of earthquake areas. She will go for marathon only in case of getting time from her hectic activities at the hospital. She had been practising for a long race before coming to Pakistan although was unaware about this activity. "I had a routine of running four to five hours a week when I was in Switzerland but after coming here I could not find time for physical training", she stated. "I have heard Lahore is a very cultured city and it would be nice running there especially when I am in this part of the world for a very special cause", she replied to a question.

Clementine further stated that she was advised by many people for not coming to Pakistan and was briefed about the hazards of terrorism here but she found nothing like that in this country. "I found a totally different nation than I was told and people here are much cultured. They welcome foreigners in their country and are friendly", she said adding that she liked Pakistani traditions very much. However she was concerned about the cultural barriers for women and said they can't actively participate in sports and other activities while obeying the social customs.

"It is very hard for women to run in marathons and participate in other sports while wearing scarfs and other traditional clothes. There must be a few relaxations", she observed. Clementine said that her aim of participating in marathon was not winning despite the fact that she had a good performance in the New York race, which was competed by many known athletes. "Suppose I win I would donate all the prizes for earthquake victims", she responded.

When asked about climbing the second highest mountain of the world, K-2, she said she would come back to Pakistan and will climb this mountain but that would not be higher than 6,000 meters. "Pakistan is a nice country, its people are brilliant and places are lovely. Being here is nice every time", she concluded. Sharing her experience in Hospital to treat injured people of affected areas she said that October 8 earthquake was a horrible disaster which claimed thousands of lives and left many injured. "Situation is still not good in affected areas as they need help and support to survive" she added.

Informing about diseases in affected areas she said daily about 10 Pneumonia, 10 Respiratory and about two Burn cases are being examined in the DHQ hospital. "There

is no fear about any epidemic disease in Mansehra and its surrounding areas," she said. Giving her message to the community she said that everyone should do well for victims of affected areas. "Every individual should play their part to help earthquake victims", she added.

**Khurram Shahzad, The Nation – January 26, 2006**

## Women of disaster

Humanitarian aid organisations estimate that some 1.2 million women of reproductive age are still caught up and marooned in the flooding that washed away their homes and subsistence livelihoods in Sindh.

The total number of women and children affected is said to be no less than four million. The water from the heavy rains in July refuses to go away. This is partly because rainwater drains were breached by the better-off farmers and water was diverted into the fields and settlements of the poor, inundating entire communities. The waterlogged earth refuses to suck in the residue which since has unleashed skin, gastrointestinal diseases and malaria.

Women and children remain the most vulnerable sections of the affected people because of their low social status within their own households; they have little say before adult men in sharing whatever little help gets out to them, as men continue to get the preferential treatment within the social hierarchy. Many a woman is left to her fate, virtually abandoned, with her food and medical needs grossly neglected.

Aid agencies say that the affected women include some 115,000 expecting mothers who are endemically anaemic, malnourished and overburdened with domestic chores and worries even as they struggle to stay alive in highly stressful conditions. Many are in camps perched on hillocks above the water level or in dilapidated public buildings surrounded by stagnant water that has turned brackish for want of draining. While their men may be able to lay their hands on non-essentials like paan and tobacco, women are handed down barely enough to satisfy their hunger; their men's wants take precedence over even their basic needs of drinking water, food and compassionate treatment.

Those who have been to the flood-displaced people's camps will say that they have seen glimpses from a living hell. The outreach of the aid agencies has remained sporadic at best; donors and volunteers have not been able to penetrate large swathes of the affected population, especially those marooned in far-flung areas that lie way off the main roads.

Even when help reaches such communities, it is only in the shape of the leftovers by what has been spared after distribution among those displaced who are relatively easier to reach. Not everyone can afford to arrange for transport or has the strength to wade through stagnant water to reach safer ground near the main roads, and so the suffering continues, untold and largely invisible.

Of the 800 odd basic health units and dispensaries in the affected areas, over 200 have reportedly been washed away. As for the remainder, it is a challenge to get any medi-

Friday 28

Saturday 29

Sunday 30

## UNFPA for maternal health care improvement

ISLAMABAD: Terming maternal health a serious concern in Pakistan, UNFPA Country Representative Dr. France Donnay stressed the need for adequate maternal health care as every day at least 50 women die during the delivery cases. "There should be healthy improvement in maternal health cases as about 90 percent delivery cases are dealt in homes as awareness is necessary to save a number of lives," said Dr. France Donnay, addressing a press conference at a local hotel here on Friday.

She was flanked by UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Jan Vandemoortele, and UNHCR Representative Mr. Michael Zwack. Informing about situation of maternal health in affected areas Dr. Donnay said that about 80,000 pregnant women are dwelling in relief camps and their damaged houses. "With the assistance of UNFPA mobile teams about 600 delivery cases have been handled," she said adding that there is a need to educate people about serious concern of maternal health.

"There is need for more female doctors for 80,000 pregnant women survivors as nine Mobile Services Units are operating and ten more will be set up in the near future," she maintained. UNFPA is also working in close partnership with the WHO, Ministry of Health and other agencies in the UN Health Cluster to provide Basic Health Units and Mobile Health Services in many of the affected areas.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Mr. Jan Vandemoortele said that now there are not much chances of second wave of deaths but we should remain vigilant all the time. "So far, there is no risk of epidemic disease as provision of quilts, blankets, corrugated iron sheets are our priority to keep people warm and dry in chilly weather" he said, adding that now many of the affected areas look like iron sheet country.

Responding to a question he said that yet no date has been fixed for the closure of the camps. Camps will not be closed till the proper arrangements of the affected people of NWFP and AJK, he added. Informing about disruption of food items delivery he said some time the relief efforts disrupt due to snow and rain in the quake hit areas as our efforts to provide food items continue. He said that more than five million CGI sheets will be delivered in the quake-affected areas at the end of this month. However he admitted that more blankets, quilts, heaters and iron sheets are required.

UN has made contributions of 343 million dollars which covers sixty-two percent of appeal of 550 million dollars. Twenty-seven helicopters are providing relief goods to the affectees in quake-hit areas at a cost of half million dollars daily, he added. He expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for providing donation of 46,000 metric tons of wheat to the World Food Programme worth 8.3 million dollars. Speaking on the occasion UNHCR Representative Michael Zwack said 21,998 tents, 620,651 blankets, 83,476 plastic sheets, 1,773 plastic rolls, 7,527 mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets, stoves, heaters and other non-food items have been provided to the quake-stricken people.

UNHCR is currently supporting the local authorities and NGOs in 31 planned camps with 62,575 people in NWFP and AJK, he added.

## Issue-based reporting emphasized

ISLAMABAD: Issue-based reporting, be it print or electronic media, should be encouraged for the better understanding of social issues. This was underscored at the launching of a series of 15 radio programmes produced in the disaster-hit areas to mobilize the public for their continued support for the rehabilitation and rebuilding process, at a local hotel on Thursday. The programme titled Chalo Phir se Muskoraen (let's smile again) has been recorded by Uks, a research, resource and publication centre on women and media.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Uks Tasneem Ahmar said while looking at the key policy issues such as peace, gender, governance, social services and justice, the series tried to address questions such as: Will the shared tragedy bring opportunities for lasting peace? How will women cope with the issues of livelihood insecurity? Are the relief and reconstruction plans and policies gender-sensitive? What is the role of local government in relief and rehabilitation? What is the impact of the earthquake on drinking water and irrigation? How has the public education system been affected by the earthquake? What key principles should guide reconstruction?

She said a selected team of producers travelled extensively in the affected areas in search of answers to the above-mentioned questions, the radio programmes have mixed investigative journalism and interviews of affected people. Original music has been composed for the series reflecting the programmes central theme of hope and courage. She said unlike regular radio programmes for entertainment, the series had been recorded right amongst the affected people, sharing their true feelings towards life which had undergone a huge transformation after the disaster. Sharing her experience, radio producer Sadia Haq said initially it looked impossible to be there personally.

However, after reaching the affected areas and looking at the people's strength to fight against all odds, the job became much easier "Every time we needed help, people from the affected areas were there to help us," she said. Financial assistance for the series has been provided by the Asia Foundation as part of its "mobilizing the media for democratic reform programme".

**Dawn – April 01, 2006**

## New quake-related radio programmes launched

ISLAMABAD: Uks new radio project, 'Chalo Phir se Muskoraen' (let's smile again), a series of 15 persuasive and powerful radio programmes produced on site of the earthquake-hit areas, with the aim to mobilize the public for their continued support in the rehabilitation and rebuilding process has been launched recently. The series of 'Chalo Phir se Muskoraen' has been produced while keeping in mind the key policy issues such as peace, gender, governance, social services, health, land reforms, education, water, role of military, devolution and justice at the earthquake-hit areas.

Not only this but to address questions such as: will the shared tragedy bring opportunities for a lasting peace? How will women cope with the issues of livelihood insecurity? Are the relief and reconstruction plans and policies gender-sensitive? What is role of

the local government in relief and rehabilitation? What is the impact of the earthquake on drinking water and irrigation? How has the public education system been affected by the earthquake? What key principles should guide reconstruction? And many broadcasters from Pakistan, representatives of civil society organizations, state media, and donor agencies would also give their input on these issues.

A special team of Uks producers was selected which travelled extensively to the affected areas in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and in search of answers to the above-mentioned questions. The programmes in this series are a mixture of investigative journalism and interviews of the affected people. Original background music has been composed for the series reflecting the central theme of hope and courage, says Sadia Haq, producer of the programme.

Talking about Uks, she said that it was a non-government organization to initiate a radio production house run by a team of female broadcasters and journalists. 'Meri Awaz Suno' under their production was the only radio programme in Pakistan that was for women and by women, she said, adding that for the Asia Foundation, Amal Human Development Network and APWA they had produced programmes, as well. Through the programmes, she said they shared opinions on a whole variety of themes including HIV/AIDS, women's trafficking, prostitution, drug abuse, reproductive health, violence against women and many others, adding Uks was also contributing to train female journalists, raise women's profile in the local media and not to portray them in stereotypical ways.

It has participation from different FM stations across Pakistan. These include the newly launched channels from Azad Jammu Kashmir, Abbottabad along with their partners from Sindh, Punjab and NWFP provinces. The team of the Uks producers hoped that the launching ceremony of this project 'Chalo Phir se Muskoraen' would help to draw attention and interest from all the stakeholders towards the recent earthquake survivors, and rehabilitation process. Moreover, they looked forward for the participation of FM radio stations to disseminate their programmes' message through their channels by airing them on basis of Public Service Broadcasting, including a pictorial gallery and a 15-minute introductory radio programme especially prepared for the audience.

**Shrisha Wasif, The Post – April 16, 2006**





our special needs will improve the situation.”

Morgan Morris, UNHCR’s team leader in Muzaffarabad, says the agency is also strengthening the ability of local non-government organizations to provide services to earthquake survivors: “Our community services experts have had several training sessions with different partner organizations, helping them to understand the camp aspects and apply them in the field.”

For Zainab, her job doesn’t end when she leaves the earthquake survivors in the tent camps; everyone in the region was affected and she has to counsel a female co-worker on the drive back.

“It’s good to talk to someone about the terrible experience you’ve been through. This will help you to overcome the trauma,” she tells Maria Bano, a social mobiliser with UNHCR partner BEST.

“The earthquake completely destroyed our home and now we are sleeping in a tent pitched right in front of our house,” says Maria. “My 24-year-old brother goes out of his senses every now and then and we can’t do anything about it. And my mother lost a sister.”

Zainab’s sympathy and advice brings some relief to Maria but for many in Pakistan the earthquake has changed everything.

“I was a final year student doing a Masters in Microbiology and now I have no interest left in my studies,” says Maria. “I am just too scared most of the time.”

The Frontier Post - June 15, 2006

## **Disaster management measures Speakers stress for measures to curtail pregnant women’s suffering**

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on Saturday stressed on adopting specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) during emergencies such as floods and earthquakes to help the affectees, particularly those who are women, with the assistance of government agencies.

During a disastrous situation, women and children are most vulnerable and usually confront multiple problems, they said.

In this regard, the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) has consulted government departments and National Disaster Management Plans (NDMPs) and Provincial Disaster Management Plans (PDMPs) across the country and already notified the SOPs for any emergency situation.

Rahnuma-Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP), with the support of Research and Advocacy Fund (RAF), conducted a ‘National Level Experience Sharing’ workshop at a local hotel.

Speakers said that Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) has been developed which is related to basic, limited reproductive health facilities for use in an emergency.

They were of the view that if MISP is adopted as part of the SOPs of NDMA then whenever an emergency occurs, the government machinery will be prepared, stocked and trained to immediately respond to the needs of the most vulnerable group of the affected population: women and children.

MISP for reproductive health (RH) is a coordinated set of priority activities designed to manage the consequences of sexual violence, prevent excess neonatal and maternal morbidity and mortality, reduce HIV transmission and plan for comprehensive RH services in the early days and weeks of an emergency.

The main goal of MISP is to reduce mortality, morbidity and disability among populations affected by crises.

MISP includes a pre-packaged set of kits containing drugs and supplies aimed at facilitating the implementation of priority RH services in the early phase of a crisis. The UNFPA is in charge of assembling and delivering these RH kits. As logistical problems are common in crisis settings, agencies should prepare by including RH supplies within their overall medical supply procurement.

Rahnuma-FPAP, under this endeavour, has carried out extensive advocacy and lobbying campaign and reinvigorated strong linkages and partnership with stakeholders concerned at the national and provincial level.

It organised provincial/regional level consultative workshops at the capital cities of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan, participated by representatives of concerned PDMPs, officials of Health, Social Welfare and Population Welfare Departments and line agencies, members of CSOs and media.

It also organised a national level consultative workshop in Islamabad which was overwhelmingly participated by federal and provincial government functionaries including parliamentarians, officials of PDMPs and NDMPs, line departments and ministries, members of INGOs, CSOs and print and electronic media.

Through concentrated advocacy endeavour, Rahnuma-FPAP has been successful in garnering requisite and mandatory commitment from provincial and federal governments for the inclusion of MISP in the SOPs of the National Disaster Management Plans (NDMPs) and Provincial Disaster Management Plans (PDMPs).

Asghar Ali, director-general FDMA, Shahid Malik, director SDMA/AJK, Zia Ahmad Khawaja, director admin SDMA/AJK, Massoodur Rehman, SDMA/AJK, Ajay Kumar, PDMA/Sindh, Muhammad Ali, PDMA/Sindh, Muhammad Haseeb Khan, FDMA, Rahat, FDMA, Faisal Naseem, PDMA/Balochistan and Farrukh Latif attended the workshop.

**Daily Times - December 30, 2012**

Wednesday 29

Thursday 30

Friday 31

## UNHCR lends women's touch to Pakistan's relief camps

MUZAFFARABAD: In emergency situations, where out of sight often means out of mind, people who are unable to stand up for themselves risk being left by the wayside - whether women, children, the elderly or the disabled.

In quake-hit Pakistan, where women prefer the privacy and safety of their tents, discovering their problems and needs is a major challenge that the UN refugee agency is trying to tackle in a culturally sensitive way.

"Helping earthquake survivors is a unique and unforgettable experience," says Zainab Fazal Hussain, who came from the UNHCR office in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi to help earth-quake survivors in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir in the far north.

As part of the UNHCR community services team, Zainab keeps an eye on the facilities for women in the emergency camps set up after the 8 October earthquake and reports difficulties back to the office in Muzaffarabad.

"Women have special needs and certain special groups like single mothers, widows and the disabled may have problems getting access to different services and relief items," she says.

"We have formed 27 women's committees in camps to look after these needs and are in the process of forming more. Each committee has female volunteers in the camps that go around and talk to women, identify problems and discuss them with aid workers to find solutions.

"As the lead agency for camp management under the overall UN effort, the UN refugee agency is supporting the Pakistan authorities in 144 relief camps, 26 of them planned and 118 spontaneous sites, hosting some 140,000 people in North West Frontier Province and Pakistan-administered Kashmir."

Aid workers, whose activities were disrupted by storms at the start of the month, are bracing for further snow and rain and have intensified their winterization drive in the camps. Additional camps have also been set up in case there is a fresh exodus from higher elevations by people who have so far stayed on despite the loss of their homes.

Each day Zainab and members of partner organizations try to reach more camps around Muzaffarabad to help set up women's committees and explain the role they have to play.

"At the moment," says Nighat Naqvi, a resident of Kochaey Saeedan camp in Kashmir's Jhelum valley, "we don't have proper bathrooms for women, there's no place to wash clothes and no proper water system in place. At times women in the camp have to walk down to the river from the camp to wash clothes."

She adds: "We have more than 400 people in the camp but there are no arrangements to take care of women. Setting up a women's committee and talking to UNHCR about

struggled then before the earthquake but now it is hopeless.”

Daily Times – September 09, 2006

## Women earn from flood-plucked fruits

THATTA: Blessing in disguise fits fine in the case of these devastated women who are making a living by selling bananas and watermelons caught while streaming down with flood water from orchards.

Though the calamity had treated them with brutality but their spirits are now revived by the ray of hope they discovered after finding the treasure trove, a treasure it is for them as these fruits not only provide them nutrition but are also a source of earning.

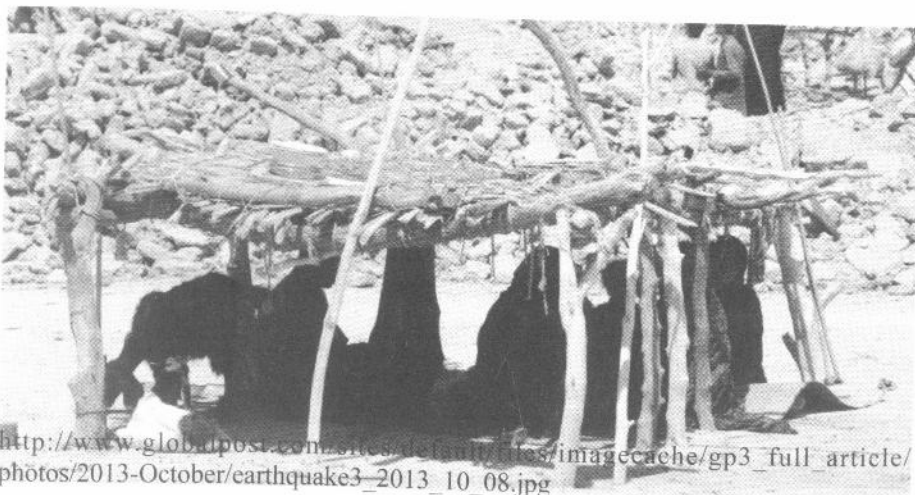
The pavement of Sujawal Bridge, popularly called Doolah Darya Khan Bridge, is a place where old and frail women in their tattered attires are found selling bananas and watermelons. The inundated landscape around speaks volumes of their sufferings.

These women were questioned by some journalists as to why they were taking so much of trouble when floods have washed away everything even their smiles and hopes. The optimistic reply that it's better to earn from the toil than to wait for aid, was enough for the idlers to hang down their heads in shame. The women added that though they were bereft of even basic necessities but to earn something for a living was a godsent gift.

Mai Jandi is one proud 70-year-old woman who sells bananas, watermelons and some other fruits retrieved by her grandchildren from the Indus. The fruits are streamed down the Indus after being plucked by flood water from katcha areas along the riverbed.

Besides, women in many areas appear on the doors of city dwellers offering chicks and eggs at lower than the market price.

Dawn – August 26, 2010



[http://www.globepost.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/gp3\\_full\\_article/photos/2013-October/earthquake3\\_2013\\_10\\_08.jpg](http://www.globepost.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/gp3_full_article/photos/2013-October/earthquake3_2013_10_08.jpg)



[http://america.aljazeera.com/content/jam/articles/0150925/photos-pakistan-skillsmoreban300people\\_jer\\_content/mainpar/imageslideshow/slides/image.adapt.960.high.jpg](http://america.aljazeera.com/content/jam/articles/0150925/photos-pakistan-skillsmoreban300people_jer_content/mainpar/imageslideshow/slides/image.adapt.960.high.jpg)



Speaking during a discussion arranged by Aurat Foundation (AF) on Gender-based violence in flood-affected areas, Sherin Javed, programme officer of Violence Against Women project, said that women faced harassment at the hands of officials and other people associated with aid distribution.

She said that women heads of families particularly suffered problems in access to aid given by government and international organizations.

"Women usually have no access to information about aid distribution and remain deprived of any kind of help", Mrs. Javed said while comparing instances from Oct 2005 earthquake, IDP crisis and the recent floods.

Representatives of different organizations working with the UN agencies also mentioned complaints by women concerning favouritism and sexual harassment of women by men, including officials and aid workers, during aid distribution in camps.

Shabina Ayaz, AF resident director, said that besides harassment, women could even face a more serious issue of human trafficking in such crisis. She emphasized that there should be proper data of flood-hit womenfolk to provide them protection.

"Human trafficking cases surfaced in post-earthquake situation and women are also vulnerable to traffickers' mafia in the flood-hit areas, but no affected family comes forward due to fear and cultural constraints," Ms. Ayaz said. She said that forced or early marriages in the post-earthquake time and recently in flood-stricken areas were a visible example of how parents feared for the security of their daughters.

She said that the government should set up vigilance committees to report cases of harassment of women. The NDMA and PDMA should set up one women's desk each to support women affected in a disaster.

The community should also select its leaders to guard against traffickers and other criminals, as in such crisis the government only remains concerned about food distribution, the participants suggested.

They also decided to set up a fact-finding committee to probe if there were any cases of missing girls/women and trafficking in the post-flood situation.

Nazneen, a Swabi-based NGO worker, said that during a survey in two union councils of Charsadda district she found that 22 women were heading their families and all of them complained about lack of access to aid.

Women also had no computerized identity cards in many cases which was one reason they did not get aid. The government should provide such women with new CNICs, they proposed.

The speakers also proposed that the government should implement 'gender reform action plan' so that long-term measures could be taken to support women.

**Sadia Qasim Shah, Dawn - October 01, 2010**

## Women hit hardest in quake aftermath

MUZAFFARADAD: Traditional coping systems have been stretched to breaking point following last year's massive October 8 earthquake and women are bearing the brunt. Nearly 75,000 people died in the October quake that flattened towns and villages making some 5,500 women widows and particularly vulnerable.

Gula Jan lost her husband seven years ago, but her position is typical of many of the widows at Chelha Bandi camp for quake survivors, who are relying on the waning support of extended family. "Since (my husband died) my brother has supported us, but he lost a lot in the earthquake and cannot support me anymore. He also has eight children of his own," Gulab said from the camp, in Muzaffarabad. "I was a maid before but there are no jobs for me now and even if I would find work again it would not be enough for my family. Besides, I have no land either, the earthquake took it," she said. In the aftermath of the quake, vulnerable groups such as women have been hardest hit according to the government. The northern areas of the country are largely rural where women already struggle with gender discrimination, social exclusion, illiteracy, socio-economic difficulties and low incomes.

According to tradition, women in this strongly conservative region traditionally stayed at home raising their children while men went out to work. Since the disaster their roles have changed drastically. Women are often the main breadwinners for the family where the male head of the household has either died or suffered permanent physical disabilities. The government's Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has established a social protection strategy to focus on vulnerable groups in the earthquake hit districts of NWFP and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the ERRA, customary practices often denied women their right to inheritance and limited their access to property, income and livelihood options. The government has recommended providing technical assistance to vulnerable groups including widows, but it would primarily only be available to property owners. For the majority of the poor, who have no property, community-based care options are being considered, but no plan has yet been finalised. While the quake aftermath has highlighted women's vulnerability, family and kinship structures have proved expedient in coping with another vulnerable group - orphaned children.

Neatly 41,000 children became orphans as a result of the earthquake and nearly all have been spontaneously fostered by extended family members. While most cultures consider children who have lost both parents to be orphans, in Pakistan a child who has lost his or her father is considered an orphan too. Older women who provide for the protection of orphaned grandchildren must ensure their own safety as well as that of those in their care. Nuran Bibi is a grandmother to nine children who lost their parents in the earthquake. "I don't know how it will work out. I cannot support all nine of them," Nuran said from her shelter. Naheed Bibi, 18, the oldest of Nuran's grandchildren, goes to an Islamic school and will become a teacher within a year. Now living in Chamra Camp, also in Muzaffarabad, her future is uncertain. "I don't know what will happen to us," said Bibi. "When I finish school I cannot support the eight others and my grandmother. My father was a shopkeeper and my mother a housewife. We

Friday 26

Saturday 27

Sunday 28

## Media and women of earthquake-affected areas: 'Government used media to distort women's image'

PESHAWAR: The state used print media to project women in the quake-hit areas as helpless and identity-less without men, to encourage foreign intervention in the area, said Dr. Huma Haq, a cultural anthropologist at the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. She was speaking at a discussion arranged by the Aurat Foundation on 'Media and Women of the Earthquake-affected Areas', at the Peshawar Press Club on Wednesday.

"Media acted as an extended arm of a very masculine state," Haq said, adding that news stories projecting women as helpless victims after the death of their male family members did not do any good for them. She said 'stereotype' reporting such as 'women and children left without men' and 'women and children kidnapped' categorized women with kids and depicted them as weak and helpless incapable of looking after themselves and that the state must take them into protective custody to ensure their safety.

She said that steps taken by the government during the recent years had alienated it from the people adding that people preferred the Pakistan Army, NGOs and foreign forces such as NATO and the US Army to carry out relief activities. She said restricting entry into the quake-hit areas on the grounds that not everyone could be allowed in these areas due to their sensitive nature was done only to conceal facts.

She said that women of the area had proved on several occasions that they were capable of taking care of themselves. "The problem is that the state does not allow them to help themselves suggesting that if left without state patronage women would make wrong decisions," she said. She said that the print media acted as a tool for the military government and depicted women of the area as an oppressed segment of the society which she said, instead of helping themselves gave others a chance to intervene and take advantage of the situation.

She said that women living in the tent villages of Islamabad felt insecure due to presence of men who were strangers to them. Rakhshanda Naz, the resident director of the Aurat Foundation, said that the government was encouraging the idea that women were not capable of doing anything on their own and that 'others' should come and help them. She said men from the quake-hit areas had similar thinking that marriages taking place in the area were "not out of joy but were meant to dispose of a useless commodity".

**Javed Afridi, Daily Times – December 29, 2005**

## Need to check harassment of women in flood-hit areas

PESHAWAR: Women rights activist have voiced concern over gender-based violence in flood-hit areas and demanded of the government to set up a women's desk at every disaster management body to check the trend.

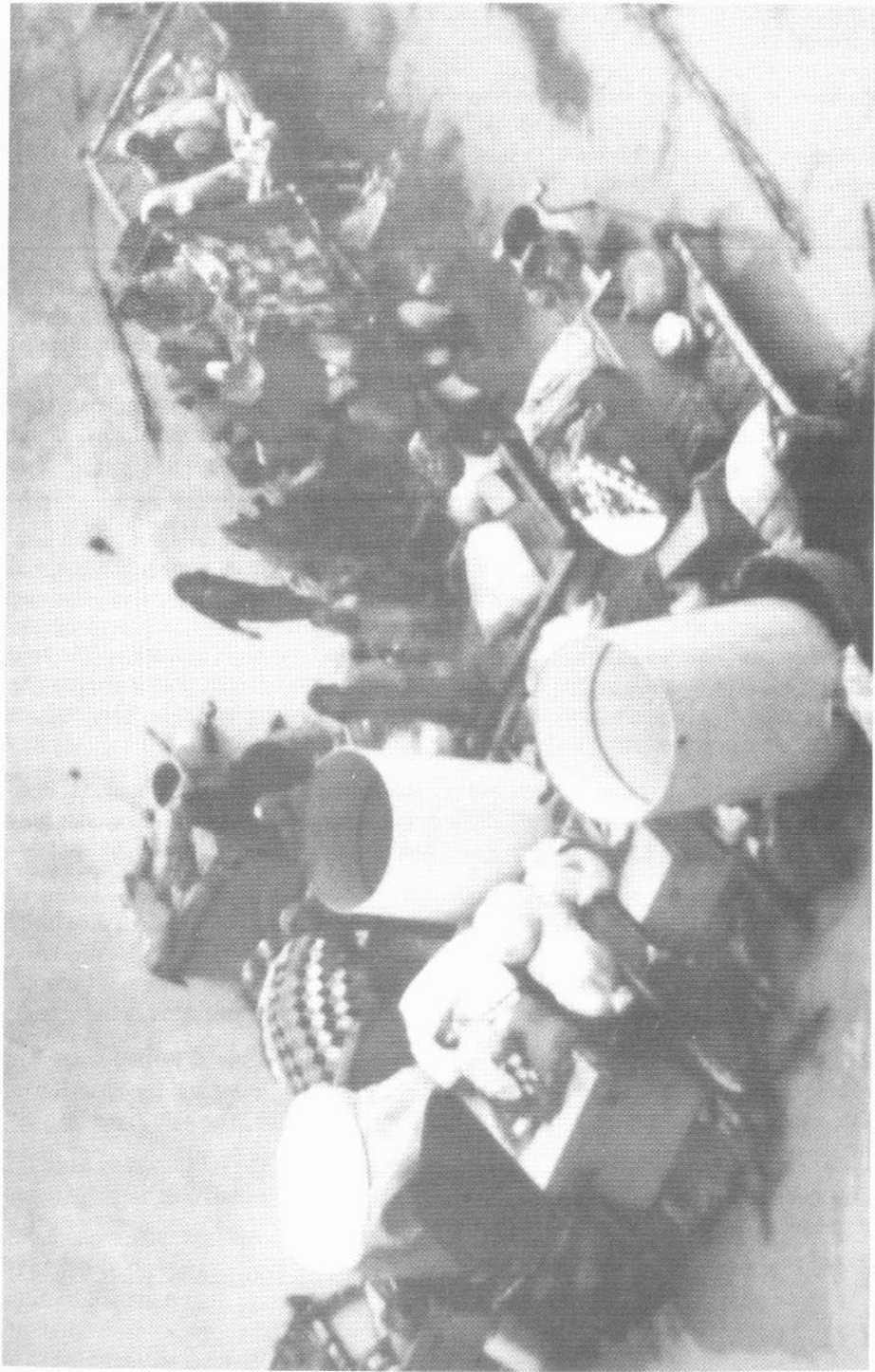


Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan



report, men out-migrate for livelihood opportunities; this is especially relevant in the mountainous region of the country where an estimated 63% of households are headed by women because the able-bodied men have left to seek livelihood opportunities elsewhere. These women are responsible for the family's agriculture along with taking care of the young and elderly. This trend is fast spreading to other rural areas also. Another contributing factor towards women's vulnerability is related to socio-cultural aspects. Evidence indicates that amongst the poor, it is the women who suffer the most in any disaster.

It has been reported that women are up to 14 times more likely to be killed from natural disasters than men. During the 2004 Asian Tsunami, 60-70% of deaths in Indonesia were of women. According to a UNFPA report, during the 2010 Pakistan Floods out of 20 million people displaced, 70% were women. Many studies show that matters like public shame, social and at times restrictive clothing, and lack of survival skills such as swimming and climbing trees contribute to a higher death rate among women as compared to men during disasters like cyclones and floods. The challenges associated with prevailing socio-cultural practices are not easy to address but increasing frequency of disasters make it crucial to start looking into these features to see what can be done to enhance the resilience of women.

One of the most employed strategies to conform to gender obligations by various organizations is to put gender as a cross-cutting theme and thereby claim that their responsibility towards integration of gender equality is fulfilled. However, the saying, "no one sees when it crosses or cuts", holds true here. It is important that gender equality must not be left at the theoretical, discussion, or strategy levels and all efforts must be made to ensure that gender equality is fully integrated and resourced through an all-inclusive planning and implementation. Unfortunately, this has remained an, as yet, unattained goal.

The author heads IUCN's Climate Change and Resilience Programme in Asia. He can be reached at [ali.raza@iucn.org](mailto:ali.raza@iucn.org). **Ali Raza Rizvi, Daily Dawn- June 6, 2013**

## Floods multiply women's woes

Amina Sajid walks into the hospital holding her lower back. Shabeena Begum, a health worker, takes her hand and makes space for her on the bench in the doctor's room.

The room is swamped with women carrying babies and young children attached to their arms and legs. Amina pulls back her burka and pats her small protruding belly as she talks to the health visitor. She says she isn't sure of her exact age and smiles shyly. She thinks she is either 16 or 18 years old.

Amina carried her first child for three months before miscarrying and is at the clinic in Pir Sabaq, Nowshera, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Concerned about the health of her six-month unborn baby, Amina's hands covered in henna patterns, motion to the health visitor where she is in pain. Her back and abdomen hurt and she can only feel faint movements from her baby every three days.

Pir Sabaq like many villages in the province felt the full force of the worst floods in Pakistan's history. Large areas of the village look like they've been flattened by an earthquake; hundreds of homes are now piles of rubble and dust. Amongst all, a UK-based medical organisation is providing urgent medical care to women like Amina, who are pregnant and have nowhere else to turn. The charity set up a health clinic in Ganderi and Pir Sabaq days after the floods.

Women walk for up to six hours to reach the hospital and seek medical treatment from Dr. Hasiba Tarin and two female health workers. On average, 250 patients a day arrive at the clinic. Shabeena Begum, 30 a health worker and medical technician in Pir Sabaq, says since the floods many women have suffered miscarriages. She says women have been coming to the hospital in large numbers. Many have suffered miscarriages and complain about internal bleeding. Others are showing the signs of exhaustion and developing anaemia.

"The women are stressed about their pregnancies, hoping and praying their babies will be delivered healthy and the men are stressed sitting inside all day wondering how they will manage to survive with no job or money. One woman came to the hospital and said since the floods her husband had gone mad. She says all he does is sitting inside the house and screaming," says Shabeena. Dr. Tarin is the only female doctor in the district of Nowshera and takes care of the health of thousands of women. "Around 40 per cent of pregnant women give birth prematurely, most at least one or two months prematurely. I have seen many cases of women miscarrying and a high number of women giving birth to stillborn babies since the floods," says Dr. Tarin.

I walk through the dusty backstreets of Pir Sabaq to meet Fateh Ali, a traditional birth attendant who has been delivering babies in Pir Sabaq for 40 years. I asked her how many babies she has delivered. She smiled and raised her hands and said 'thousands.'

Fateh Ali says her hands are like an ultrasound. All she has to do is touch a woman's belly and she knows which position the baby is in and when the woman will give birth. She bounces through the streets excited, as she wants me to meet a baby that she delivered three days ago. Ambar Ajmal is wrapped up warm in blankets next to his mother Zahida, 18. This is her first baby and she is exhausted by the birth.

Zahida was heavily pregnant when the floodwater came. She says the water had reached her knees when her family decided they must all leave and travel to Raisai Pur, a town near Nowshera. Fateh Ali points to Ambar's neck. The baby has a rash but he also appears to have a deformity.

She hands him back to his mother and says the family will need to take the baby to see a specialist doctor to understand his medical condition.

**Shaista Aziz, Dawn- December 02, 201**

"The women will transfer their skills to others after getting training at the centre," he said.

Dr. Usman Raza, Prime Foundation deputy-director, said that they launched the project after devastating rains and floods in the country last year. The floods, he said, had directly affected more than 3.8 million people, including 70,000 pregnant women, only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The project activities also include refresher trainings for midwives in flood-hit areas of Nowshera and Charsadda. Another vocational training programme will be launched for women in Charsadda," he said.

Dr. Raza said that health-related issues were intertwined with deplorable economic conditions of households owing to which they combined vocational training programme with a basic health literacy course for women in flood-affected areas.

"It will not only provide them with a long term means of income for their families but also help create healthy behaviour in them," he said.

Dr. Saeed Anwar said that goal of the project was to contribute to improvement of family health through strategies targeted at capacity building of women in flood-affected districts of the province.

The project, he said, was aimed at improving maternal health through capacity building of midwives practising in Charsadda and Nowshera coupled with promotion of family health through integrated health and economic interventions for flood-hit women in those districts.

"The project will directly benefit 128 practising midwives by providing them an opportunity to improve their practical skills," he said.

An estimated 12,800 women of childbearing age, along with their families, will benefit from this programme in one year while the vocational training component of the project will directly benefit 80 women.

The indirect beneficiaries of the project include 640 families of these women. Only women aged 15 to 40 would be considered for vocational training, he said.

**Dawn – March 28, 2011**

## **Women enjoy better health services in quake-hit areas**

MUZAFFARABAD: Many mothers and children in areas hit by last year's earthquake have better access to health care than before the disaster, after restoration of services due to joint efforts. Most survivors, including the estimated 5,000 women who give birth each month, still face a range of threats to their health. Exposure, crowding, weak diets and bad sanitation compound pre-existing problems in this poor region, where birth rates are high, women typically deliver at home and maternal mortality is severe.

But one year on, mobile services and temporary healthy facilities set up by numerous aid agencies in collaboration with the Government are now reaching people throughout the affected districts, including areas that were poorly served prior to the earthquake.

More than 5,000 women have already given birth in prefabricated mother and child health facilities erected by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. UNFPA is putting up 34 such facilities in Muzaffarabad and Mansehra districts, ranging from sophisticated maternity centres to basic health units. The Fund also supports ten mobile clinics, reaching women and children in isolated villages that never had health services before. The all-female, live-in staff in the UNFPA facilities provide primary care, prenatal checkups, and skilled deliveries round the clock.

Hundreds of women have undergone lifesaving procedures. Complicated cases can be referred to the berthing units at Mansehra district hospital and the AIMS hospital in Muzaffarabad, where UNFPA has provided equipment and support medical staff. Last month, doctors at the AIMS hospital conducted 406 deliveries including 72 caesarean sections. "Pregnancy and childbirth are always dangerous in remote areas," notes Dr. France Donnay, the UNFPA Representative in Pakistan. "The hardships suffered by the earthquake survivors have increased the risks women face. But lifesaving services are now widely available in the affected areas and, thankfully, women are using them more than ever before".

**APP, The News – October 10, 2006**

## **Climate change - the invisible women**

The devastating floods of 2010 and 2011 were a profound reminder of Pakistan's vulnerability to extreme weather events and other impacts associated with climate change. The Monsoons are becoming unpredictable; the recent floods, directly affecting around 20 million people, were termed as "the worst floods on record" and caused the largest displacement of people in the history of Pakistan. It is anticipated that cyclones and storms will increase in frequency and magnitude; and sea water will inundate many coastal populations especially in the low lying areas of Thatta and Badin. These events are having both direct and indirect adverse impacts on people generally and, like all things, are not gender-neutral!

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been suggesting for some time that the social impacts of climate change will vary, depending on factors like age, socio-economic class, occupation, and gender. The general supposition that the negative impacts of climate change would have the same effects on men and women has now been disproved. Like most other areas, women and men experience climate change differently due to their differential roles, and that existing gender inequalities worsen women's coping capacities. If we look at Pakistan, the scenario is alarming as existing conditions put rural women at high risk against climate variability. It is estimated that up to 80% of rural women in Pakistan are engaged in agriculture and they work on average 15 hours a day.

The extreme weather events and degraded resources are putting further burden on their daily chores and making them increasingly vulnerable. According to a World Bank

**The earthquake** of 2005 that shook many parts of Pakistan was indeed the first and the worst natural disaster that I have ever witnessed. I still remember the way my house in Islamabad shook, objects flew and then crashed and the fear that gripped us all. Everyone turned to their TV sets, as this was the time when the world of media had been invaded by dozens of 24/7 news channels. For many days to come, we sat glued to our TV sets to get the latest on casualties and then on efforts for the rehabilitation of the survivors.

For us at Uks this was not just a casual activity; to watch the media and then analyse the content was part of our work. And hence, began the first ever effort of analyzing disaster reporting through a gender lens.

We found that the reporting/coverage of this disaster was no different from that of Hurricane Katrina or the Aisan Tsunami where the coverage was, by and large, very stereotypical and from a male perspective. This male domination of newsrooms became overwhelmingly prominent during the 2005 earthquake. Most of the news coverage was devoid of any gender sensitivity, presenting women as mere helpless victims. While men were projected or presented as brave survivors, helping others, media's bias for reporting sob stories of women survivors was more than obvious. Rather than bringing up stories of how courageous most of these women were in the given situation, the focus was more on establishing that women were so dependent on their physical and biological characteristics, including their ability to procreate that now since so many had been rendered disabled, many found it useless to live on. The media missed the real story while covering mass marriage ceremonies in the quake-hit areas, where a number of young girls in the earthquake hit region were hurried into forced marriages by worried parents or guardians. These mass marriages indicated how unprotected young girls in our society are. There were no reports on the fact that there were more women casualties because women in these very conservative areas rarely venture far from their homes, most of them were indoors and died when their homes collapsed on top of them.

There were many issues and to bring the media on board, Uks held a round table meeting with national and international media persons to discuss this lack of understanding of the root causes of women's vulnerability to disasters - with a focus on 2005 earthquake. A content analysis that looked at the data of one week's media monitoring was shared. The data revealed that there were very few exclusive stories on how women are affected during any natural disaster. The media was also briefed on why should there be more focus on women's stories, especially those that focused on cases of alleged rape, kidnapping and harassment of women in camps.

This was just the beginning. Uks then took on a series of trainings aimed at sensitizing the media on gender and gender-sensitive disaster reporting/coverage.



I still remember how during the course of one training, a media person known for his gender sensitivity was taken aback by the fact that the relief packets distributed during and after disasters must be marked 'men' and 'women' as the latter need supplies like sanitary napkins. With this level of ignorance or naiveté, most of the media wasn't gender-blind on purpose; only that it had never given any thoughts to women-specific issues such as menstruation, pregnancy, post-partum syndrome, etc.

From 2005 till now, Uks has continually tried to sensitise the media on how to (or not to) report on disasters. Portraying women as sufferers was to be replaced by images of women in positive roles. The media has been made to look at how any disaster of such immense proportion can actually foster optimism and a better future for those most adversely affected. From personal experience in the field I have come to meet women who previously strictly followed the rules of chaddar and chardivari (veil and walls) saw the outside world for the first time. In many areas, women would rather be left to die in agony than be taken to a hospital. The disaster forced them to look after themselves in the absence of brothers, sons and husbands and discover that inner strength they never knew existed. We could still benefit from unbiased reports of how the disaster has actually liberated some women. Media should try that these women are not pushed back to their pre-disaster conditions but, taking this natural mishap as a window of opportunity, should instead transform the existing social and economic inequities. Women's empowerment in the disaster areas must be treated as a very powerful issue, which must receive equally effective media coverage.

I must mention the many series of radio programmes produced by Uks on the 2005 earthquake and the rebuilding and rehabilitation. From "*Chalo Phir se Muskorain-Let's smile again*" a 15-programme series on 2005 earthquake, "*Nae Manzilain, Nae Rahain - New Destinies, New Avenues*", a six-programme series on people's participation in the post-earthquake reconstruction to "*Aao Sunain Unkahi Batain, Unsuni Kahaniyan, Let us hear Unheard Voices, Untold Stories*", a series of eight radio programmes to advocate women's empowerment during reconstruction in the earthquake areas. Each series brought out the untold stories and unheard voices of women, mostly the marginalized ones and helped raise issues of women's empowerment in the earthquake areas of Pakistan.

Uks radio programmes '*Hamaray Haqooq, Hamari Zimadarian- Our rights, our responsibilities*', had many stories of how the 2010 floods had impacted people - especially women across Pakistan. A series '*Zindagi Rawan hai - Life goes on*', was based on how the recent floods have impacted upon women and their lives. The focus has always been on how we, as media content producers, can follow these simple guidelines that the media must not project the stereo-

typical images of women as "helpless victims", instead bring out the more positive and success stories of how women cope with the increased workload following a disaster, how they play their roles as care-givers, how their resilience helps them rebuild their and their families' lives. I feel a lot of credit goes to my Producers who followed the ethical and journalistic guidelines given out at Uks. Also the fact that Uks has more women Producers than men has always been a great help in getting stories from women.

I would like to end with a positive story. Soon after the 2005 earthquake, a private FM channel started a radio programme, "Jazba-e-Tameer" (Spirit of [Re]Building), to provide information, along with small packages based on features and interviews. There must have been hundreds of such packages, but one stands out in my memory. Saadia Haque produced a simple yet brilliant programme on gender roles. She narrated how while strolling in the quake-hit areas, she came across a group of children playing football (or cricket) and she stopped to chat with them on how much fun they were having, the girls complained that the boys wouldn't let them play. The programme ended with the girls unanimously declaring in a slogan-like reply that if given a chance they could beat the boys in the game and win. Giving women (and girls) a voice - especially in times of crisis and disasters - is what we really need.

Wishing you a happy and peaceful New Year!

**Tasneem Ahmar**

Director, Uks Research Centre



<http://chm.pops.int/portals/0/Images/PakistanFlood-GMendel-film376x259.JPG>

# Women flood-affectedees: issues and challenges

By Tahira Abdullah

Today, barely two months later, how many people in Islamabad or the posh areas of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta, or the highest echelons of power, still remember what happened on 29th July 2010? Or is the pull of carrying on Life-As-Usual, i.e., lavish celebrations of births, birthdays, weddings, fashion shows, musical concerts, exhibitions, restaurant-hopping, shopping, and even business meetings, seminars and conferences in several-starred hotels, *inter alia*, too strong to spare any more thoughts for our forgotten flood-affected sisters and brothers and children still in acute distress and deprivation? But the Indus disaster will not disappear in a hurry, even if we, like the proverbial ostrich, now avert our eyes, turn our thoughts away, and bury our heads in the sand.

In this part of the world, we are used to heavy seasonal monsoon rains with periodic flooding, alternating with periodic drought, punctuated by the occasional devastating earthquake such as EQ-2005, and mass migrations, with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). So in what way was the summer of 2010 different? For Pakistan, the summer of 2010 changed everything.

It will forever stand out in our memory as a nightmare experience of a slowly-unfolding and long-continuing flood of Biblical proportions, with over 21 million people, i.e., one-eighth of the population affected, along with over one-fifth of the land mass across all four provinces: Balochistan (where it started much earlier in mid-July), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Sindh, as well as Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and AJK.

The worst to reach and handle, have been the inaccessible north-western mountain areas, especially Malakand (KP) and GB, where neither boats, helicopters nor trucks could reach, due to thousands of broken bridges, washed out roads and tracks, and disappeared mountain sides, due to severe landslides, complicated by sustained bad weather. We are back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, using mules and porters to climb dangerous terrain, laden with relief items and tents.

Winter rains and snows started early September, and unless urgent drastic action is taken, around 6 million people face death by pneumonia, extreme cold or starvation - the most vulnerable being women, children and the elderly, as always.

Volunteer women relief workers find that no matter whom they have to deal with (Government, UN, NGOs, philanthropists, showbiz personalities, media), women's specific issues, needs, concerns are neither heard nor given priority, even after being raised and pointed out. This is particularly true of NDMA, the weekly UN general coordination meetings, and the sectoral and geographic

clusters. They are marginalized and confined to the Gender Task Force and the Protection Cluster.

Thus, women's issues are still falling through the cracks. It is STILL Business-As-Usual-By-Men-For-Men-Of-Men-Decisionmakers. Women are STILL the OBJECTS - the weaker, invisible, ignored and segregated sex, to be "included" in the numbers being crunched in terms of mouths to be fed, tents to be pitched, and non-food items to be provided. They are STILL considered "beneficiaries" vs. actors in continuing patriarchal and paternalistic modes of humanitarian assistance, deprived of the lens of human rights and human dignity.

Human dignity has not been in much evidence in relief work regarding men either. The sheer scale of the disaster and the huge affected population has overwhelmed the Government, to the extent that distribution of early relief, especially cooked food, nearly always ran short, thus provoking anger, food riots, chaos, and law and order situations.

**The most pressing issues were and still remain:** 1. **Data:** for proper planning for Flood Response, Recovery, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (FRRRR), we need accurate numbers of flood-affected men, women and children, disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location (by district), and occupation/livelihood.

2. **Women-Headed Households (WHHs):** the Government does not recognize WHHs, preferring to register such households under the name of the family patriarch or the nearest male sibling. This naturally deprives women of land and property rights, financial compensation, livelihoods, and other urgent support.

3. **Equity and Equality in Compensation:** the GoP has announced a first tranche of cash compensation of Rs.20,000, to be followed by Rs.80,000, amounting to a total of Rs.100,000. Compared to Rs.225,000 given to each earthquake-affected household, this is an inadequate sum, given the populist slogan of "Build Back Better" (BBB), and also in view of huge escalations in inflation and poverty, especially the feminization of poverty (a ratio of 3:1 in Pakistan) since 2005. But whatever the amount, WHHs need to be registered before they are eligible for it.

4. **Identification:** Women, especially those in the rural areas, traditionally do not have national identity cards (which also disenfranchises them in elections), meaning they do not have access to bank accounts, credit/debit/SMART/WATAN cards, or other forms of identification. For fair and equitable FRRRR, this is essential. It is recommended that mobile teams (including women staff) of NADRA urgently need to reach out to flood-affectedees in the rural areas, relief camps and host families, in order to provide ALL women and men with CNICs and registration.

5. **Shelter and Infrastructure:** in line with the Build Back Better (BBB) populist slogan, this time around the reconstruction needs to keep in mind the



particular needs of privacy and access of 48% women and 10% disabled/special population, as well as environmental and climate change considerations. There is a need to focus especially on latrines/toilets, kitchens, water sources, hygiene, sanitation and sewerage in the shelter component.

**6. Health issues:** (i) the GoP gave a figure of over 300,000 pregnant women who would deliver before the emergency ended, who were either in temporary tent shelters or still camped on roadsides and river banks. While I+N NGOs, the UN, private and volunteer health personnel did make some efforts at providing ante-natal, natal and post-natal care and RH/EmOC/Ob-Gyn services, these fell far short of the huge need and women did deliver out in the open without medical help; (ii) the floods brought special problems, e.g. injuries, snake bites, infected water-borne gastric diseases, and malaria. It was observed that mostly men and boys received treatment, especially as cultural constraints prevent women from seeing male doctors and paramedics; (iii) there was a totally inadequate number of women medical and paramedical health service providers; (iv) there was inadequate focus to ensure girls and women were included in vaccination drives; (v) loss of family and community, shelter, livelihoods, incomes, and the onset of disease, disability and displacement has caused in women and men a widespread loss of coping mechanisms, self-respect, dignity and self-confidence, leading to anger, insecurity and trauma, needing both short- and long-term interventions. While a few NGOs and volunteers have provided psycho-social trauma counselling services, they are required on a much larger scale than the current availability, and for a longer duration.

**7. Violence against Women and Protection Issues:** The GoP did not focus on this extremely important dimension of the disaster, but some NGOs and civil society volunteers are doing so. It was reported (but cannot be verified) that some criminal elements were kidnapping girls and women during the initial emergency rescue and relief phase, under the guise of priority evacuation, food and shelter provision. Trafficking, sexual abuse, forced prostitution, child labour, GBV, divorce, desertion, abandonment of women and senior citizens, sale or coercive "adoption" of women and children have been reported, but they have not received the attention they deserve and poverty-stricken flood-affected families are too scared to come forth with evidence and file reports with the police.

**8. Education issues:** (i) the flood-affected areas had high poverty and low literacy rates (especially girls) to start with. Now, the loss of schools, teachers and time means that extra efforts are needed to motivate parents to send all their girls and boys to the temporary camp schools; (ii) the public education system needs to rehabilitate the educational infrastructure and teachers on a priority basis; (iii) a new focus is required on teaching lifeskills, coping mechanisms, self-awareness, self-confidence and how to face disasters.

**9. Disaster preparedness skills training:** this should include swimming and mountaineering lessons for everyone, including all girls and women, as well as

basic survival skills in harsh terrain and harsh weather conditions.

All humanitarian workers, groups and civil society volunteers need such training too.

**10. Energy and Fuel:** Women are responsible for gathering fuel wood for domestic energy and fodder for livestock. The pre-flood deforestation led to massive landslides, soil erosion and unprecedented flooding, uprooting huge numbers of trees, hence a massive national campaign of reforestation is required on an urgent basis, along with the provision of alternate and renewable energy sources and village electrification. Changed water courses, rivers, lakes, streams will cause further destruction unless urgently addressed.

**11. Food Security, Employment and Livelihoods:** (i) Pre-floods male migration for employment and high poverty levels meant that large numbers of women and WHHs worked in agriculture, forestry, livestock, dairy and food security - which are now severely damaged or destroyed; (ii) large numbers of livestock and poultry also perished in the floods, with a negative impact on women's income as well as nutrition levels; (iii) in the 81 districts, employment and livelihoods are lost or threatened, but while men used to and could still migrate again, what will rural agricultural women do? (iv) women need agricultural extension, training and inputs for Agriculture and Food Security, e.g. organic seeds and fertilizer; Livestock, Irrigation, Social Forestry and Horticulture; also marketing and quality certification; (v) likewise in urban districts, employment, livelihoods, vocational skills training and credit programmes must include women, especially home-based workers at the outset.

**12. Human rights and human dignity; special measures for women:** (i) reports are surfacing of forced return of IDPs - contrary to human rights Conventions and UNOCHA's Guiding Principles, which mandate informed, voluntary, consensual return; (ii) the GoP needs to ensure male-female joint title deeds in reinstating lost land records, assets ownership, property, grant of new land and cash compensation; (iii) free legal aid to women to process claims for compensation and inheritance of land and property; (iv) the GoP needs to focus on women and girls' special need for protection, security, safety, honour, dignity, respect and upholding their human rights; (v) sex-disaggregated data must be collected and used in policymaking, recovery and rehabilitation (e.g. how many girls' schools vis-à-vis boys' schools were destroyed? how many female vs. male teachers and health workers are dead or missing?); (vi) civil society, NGOs and the media need to step up their advocacy, monitoring and watchdog roles in all phases of FRRRR.

In conclusion, women need to be seen as equal partners in every aspect of FRRRR and broader, longer term disaster management. They need to be treated not as passive "beneficiaries" and "recipients" of humanitarian assistance, but also as active participants and agents of structural change and societal transformation in post-floods rehabilitation, and to be seen not just as the "affectedees" - i.e. objects of pity, sympathy and "protection" - or relegated, ghet-



toized and marginalized to the category of the “vulnerable population”, which includes orphans, widows, trafficked, abandoned and disabled women and girls, considered deserving only of social welfare and philanthropic charity.

We have reiterated our knowledge, information and recommendations on humanitarian and development needs since the EQ2005. All that is required now is the political will and commitment to implement them. Civil society and NN-GOs are playing a watchdog role and will not let the Government abdicate its Constitutional responsibility to all its citizens, and especially its 48% women and girls. Our innate humanity forces us to do no less.

*Tahira Abdullah is a peace and rights activist, development professional and volunteer humanitarian worker.*

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## Are in fact 34,000 or any women paramedics “missing”?

In Floods 2010, a still-mysterious case is that of the thousands of “missing” paramedical women primary and reproductive health care workers (including LHWs, LHVs, FWWs, FWAs, midwives and nurses). A UN consultant reported back in early August that she had been informed by the relevant GoP Ministry that around thirty-four thousand women paramedics had gone “missing” [*sic*] in the flooded districts. But, despite frantic and sustained efforts of women’s rights organizations and health-related I+N NGOs, to date neither has the GoP managed to rebut or rectify that figure if it was factually incorrect (e.g. through a roll call of those workers who are present), nor has it provided an explanation for where the “missing” women might be, nor has an effort been made (and shared with the public) to trace them. A GoP spokesperson publicly responded to an INGO query thus: “No, not 34,000, ONLY [*sic*] 10,000 female health staff are still missing, probably Absent Without Leave (AWOL).” Worried relief workers wonder whether they are really AWOL, or have been swept away forever in the furious gushing waters; or injured, or kidnapped, or trafficked for forced prostitution, domestic labour, ransom or sexual abuse. No answers are forthcoming and no real data either. (Tahira Abdullah)

“In the past  
I have  
witnessed  
many natural  
disasters  
around the  
world, but  
nothing  
like this”

Ban Ki Moon  
UN Secretary-General



Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan

Wednesday 29

Thursday 30

Friday 31

زلزلے سے دب جانے والی دو خواتین کی لاشیں 15 ماہ بعد درست حالت میں برآمد

مظفر آباد (آئی این پی): جہلم ویلی میں 18 اکتوبر کے زلزلے کے 15 ماہ بعد گہل جڑا کے مقام پر لینڈ سلائیڈنگ کے بلے سے 2 خواتین کی لاشیں درست حالت میں نکال لی گئی ہیں جبکہ دو افراد کی لاشیں ابھی بلے کی نیچے دبئی ہوئی ہیں۔ سابق ممبر ضلع کونسل اور پیپلز پارٹی کے رہنما سید امین شاہ نے بتایا کہ ان کی بیٹی پروین اور بھتیجی زاہدہ کی لاشوں کو 8 اکتوبر کے زلزلے کے 15 ماہ بعد درست حالت میں نکال لیا گیا ہے جنہیں کل 11 بجے آبائی گاؤں گہل جڑا میں سپرد خاک کیا جائے گا۔ کوثر پروین اور زاہدہ بی بی 18 اکتوبر کو دیگر 20 افراد سمیت پہاڑی کے نیچے دب گئی تھیں 18 افراد کی لاشیں نکال لی گئی تھیں جبکہ 4 لاشیں بلے کے نیچے دبئی ہوئی تھیں۔

روزنامہ ایکسپریس۔ فروری 5، 2007

نقشہ بی بی نے سہارے سے چلنا شروع کر دیا، 5 کلو وزن میں بھی اضافہ۔

64 دن بلے میں دبے رہنے والی خاتون اب خود کھانا کھا سکتی ہے، آدھ گھنٹہ روزانہ فریو تھراپی کی جاتی ہے۔

نقشہ بی بی کو جب لایا گیا وہ مفلوج تھی صحت یاب ہو کر جلد اپنے گھر منتقل ہو جائیگی: ڈاکٹر وسیم خواجہ۔

اسلام آباد (لیڈی رپورٹر): 64 دن بلے میں دبئی رہنے والی نقشہ بی بی کی صحت بہتر ہو رہی ہے۔ اب نقشہ بی بی نے سہارے سے چلنا پھرنا شروع کر دیا ہے۔ گزشتہ روز ”خبریں“ سے گفتگو کرتے ہوئے پاکستان انسٹیٹیوٹ آف میڈیکل سائنسز کے ڈائریکٹر ڈاکٹر وسیم خواجہ نے بتایا کہ نقشہ بی بی کو جب 16 دسمبر کو یہاں لایا گیا تو وہ ذہنی اور جسمانی طور پر مفلوج تھی لیکن ان 20 دنوں میں اس کے وزن میں 5 کلو کا اضافہ ہوا ہے اور اس کی خوراک بھی زیادہ کر دی گئی ہے اور اب وہ اپنے ہاتھوں سے کھانا کھا سکتی ہے اور روزانہ آدھے گھنٹے کی فزیو تھراپی سے اس نے سہارے کے ساتھ چلنا شروع کر دیا ہے۔

روزنامہ خبریں۔ جنوری 7، 2006

## Relief workers provide positive role models for women

BISHAM: Near her house in the small town of Bisham, 250 kilometres northeast of Islamabad, Nasreen 10, is playing a game with her younger neighbours. Free briefly from their domestic chores, the girls are pretending to be doctors tending to a rag doll that lies on a bed of twigs, its arm and leg bandaged.

While the earthquake of October 8, 2005 destroyed many lives and many dreams, the relief effort that came after it and the exposure of remote communities to teams of volunteers and experts who rushed to devastated areas from around the world and from major cities in the country, seems to have generated a new vision.

This is certainly true for Nasreen and her younger sister, Noor 8. Both girls, the daughters of a local shopkeeper, want to study medicine and are undeterred by the fact that they are not yet enrolled at primary school. "I saw women here who helped the injured people and injected babies so they would not get sick. I want to be like them," Nasreen shyly told IRIN.

Fortunately for the child, her father, Ibrahim, supports the idea as "I am amazed at the way some of the women working here were able to help our people. Along with the men, they climbed hills, even drove vehicles and attended to our injured womenfolk. I want my daughters to study and be like them," he said. In Shangla district, making up a part of the picturesque Swat Valley, the literacy rate for the population of 541,000 is under 15 percent. For women, the figure stands at 3.7 percent and even in Bisham one of the biggest towns in the area, most girls do not go to school. But the arrival of thousands of relief workers, many of whom were women, appears to have inspired many women in Bisham and in neighbouring Battagram district. While Ibrahim is making plans to enroll his girls at school, alongside his two sons, others, such as Zeenat Bibi, 25, front a village nearby hopes to persuade her husband, Jamil Khan, to let her start a small stitching business.

Like over 150 other female quake victims who braved the icy winter at the Mehra Camp, in Battagram, Zeenat learnt how to stitch under an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) funded programme "The whirr of the machine made me feel powerful and somehow strong. I love being able to design small clothes for children and even other women," she said. With many of the quake-affected areas in the NWFP ranking among the most orthodox and conservative in the country, simply the chance to see women at work in different roles as camp organisers, teachers, doctors, journalists and as a part of architectural or geological teams has given many a new perspective on life. Even men have admitted to being greatly impressed by women volunteers, including young women. Omar Gul, 32, in Battagram, who has worked in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said: "At first people here did not believe me when I told them that there, women worked in offices, as engineers and in shops. Now they have seen it themselves."

In addition, awareness raising programmes linked to health and other concerns have also helped empower women. "Women loved to hear new things and to have their own queries about issues answered," said Swiss nurse Anna Tina Heckle, who has spent the last month working with the Social Welfare Organisation Living Education in quake-hit areas.

All these factors have created a new awakening among many women and girls in quake-hit areas. How far the experience will help them overcome the orthodoxy that still prevails in many regions and to benefit in one way or the other from their experiences, remains to be seen.

**Daily Times – November 09, 2006**

## A year later, a mother weeps

**GARHI HABIBULLAH:** Every day since a devastating earthquake struck Pakistan last year, Bilqees Khatoon has visited the grave of her youngest daughter, a teacher killed when her school collapsed. Khatoon weeps and prays at her daughter's grave which is surrounded by an iron grill and bedecked with flowers. The air is scented with ittar perfume.

Khatoon's daughter, Saima Irum, is buried in a cemetery for victims of the October 8, 2005, earthquake that killed more than 73,000 people in Pakistan. The cemetery is

next to the site of the government high school in the NWFP where she used to teach senior girls. "I can't get it out of my heart, the circumstances she died in. She could have survived but chose to die to save the lives of her students," Khatoon said. When the earthquake struck, soon after classes began on a Saturday morning, Saima was out of danger. But she dashed back into the school to help her students.

"The students had panicked and clutched on to her as the roof collapsed on top of them," said Zakir Shah, who lives next to the school. "We found her body in bad shape after a few hours. Her mother was distraught and is still the same," he said. Garhi Habibullah, a small town in the scenic Balakot valley, was near the epicenter of the 7.6 magnitude quake. About 17,000 school children across Pakistan's northern mountains were killed when their schools caved in. Nearly 900 teachers died with them.

The conservative Muslim values and traditions of rural Pakistan means that most women stay at home and look after their families. Saima was different. She had an education and, at the age of 28, she had the world at her feet. A popular teacher at her school, she was engaged to be married immediately after the Muslim festival of Eid to a Pakistani businessman in London.

The earthquake came three weeks before Eid. "She was such a dutiful and nice girl. We had arranged the marriage for her and she was looking forward to her new life outside Pakistan," said her brother, Babar. Saima's old school is now running in pre-fab classrooms. Her students hold regular fatcha, or prayers for the dead, for Saima and on the first anniversary of the disaster they will hold a commemoration.

"She was a wonderful teacher and very caring. We miss her a lot," said Maria Zakir, who was lucky to escape when the building collapsed. Every day, the students see Khatoon tidying up her daughter's grave. Every day Khatoon grapples with her grief. "Only someone who has lost a daughter who was as close to me as Saima can understand my pain. My heart still does not accept she is no more," she said.

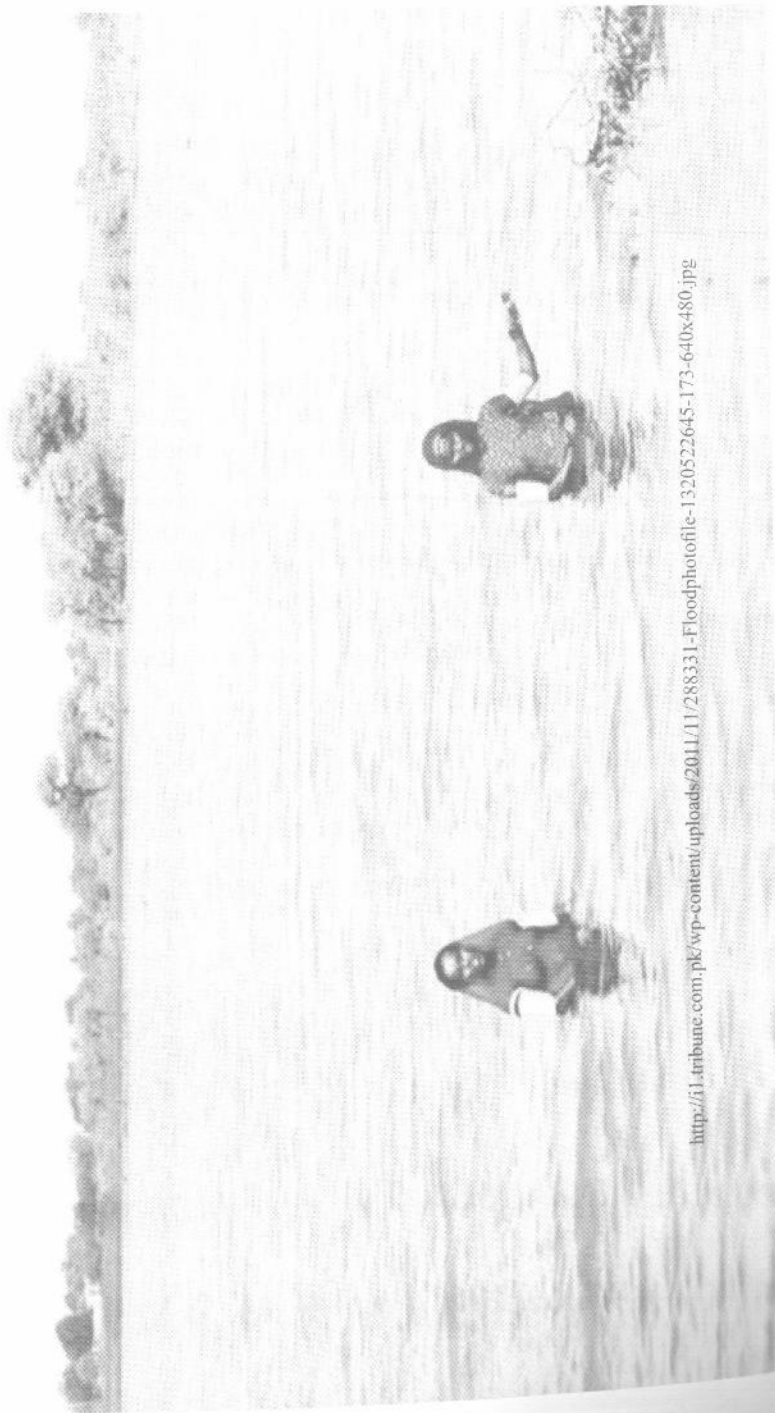
"I come here daily to seek comfort and patience. Sometimes I visit the grave two or three times in a day when it gets unbearable for me," she said.

**Daily Times - October 02, 2006**



Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan





<http://f1.tribune.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/288331-Floodphotofile-1320522645-173-640x480.jpg>

2014

February

Saturday 01

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Sunday 02

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Monday 03

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## زلزلے سے بردہ فروشی تک

کرنل خالد اقبال چکالہ میں دفاعی فرائض پر مامور تھے۔ 18 اکتوبر 2005ء سے چار روز پہلے وہ اپنے بال بچوں سے ملنے چھٹی لے کر شہر بالا کوٹ پہنچے اور زلزلے میں اپنی بیوی سمیت جاں بحق ہو گئے۔ اس روز ان کے تینوں بچے اپنے سکول میں تھے۔ تینوں محفوظ رہے اور اپنے گھر واپس پہنچے تو دیکھا کہ ان کے والدین دنیا میں نہیں رہے تھے اور واحد سہارا پھوپھی جوتھی تھیں۔ بڑی بچی مہک رانی کے بقول ”ہمارا گھر یا لا کوٹ لاری اڈہ کے قریب واقع گاؤں نزائیں تھا۔ جب ہم سکول سے واپس آئے تو والدین چچا اور دادی کی لاشیں دیکھ کر سہم گئے۔ وہاں سے ہمیں متاثرین کے عارضی پناہ گاہ میں بھیج دیا گیا۔ بعد میں ہماری پھوپھی رضیہ بیگم ہسپتال سے ملیں۔ ان کی ٹانگ ٹوٹ چکی تھی۔ پھر وہ بھی ہمارے ساتھ متاثرین کے کمپ میں رہنے لگیں۔ ایک دن ہم آٹھ دس بچے کمپ سے کچھ فاصلے پر پانی بھرنے گئے۔ واپسی پر کچھ عورتیں بھی ہمارے ساتھ شامل ہو گئیں اور باتیں کرنے لگیں۔ اسی دوران انہوں نے ہمیں کچھ سنا دیا جس سے ہم بے ہوش ہو گئے۔ جب ہوش آیا تو ہم سارے بچے جنگل میں بنے ہوئے ایک گھر میں بند تھے جہاں چالیس بچاس کے قریب بچے تھے۔ وہاں موجود گروہ کے آدمی ہمیں یہ کہہ کے خوفزدہ کرتے تھے کہ جس بچے نے ہوشیاری دکھائی اس کا دل یا گردہ پہلے نکال دیا جائے گا۔ وہاں ایک لیبارٹری بھی بنی ہوئی تھی جس میں بچوں کے جسم کے اعضا نکالے جاتے تھے۔ ہر عشتہ چند بچے غائب ہو جاتے اور پھر واپس نہ آتے۔ ایک دن موقع پا کر ہم دونوں بہنیں نکلنے میں کامیاب ہو گئیں جبکہ ہمارے گیارہ سالہ بھائی علی رضا اور دیگر بچے پکڑے گئے۔ ہم بھاگتی رہیں اور پھر تو سانسے مینار پاکستان تھا۔ وہاں ہم نے ایک گارڈ کو بتایا تو اس نے ہمیں لاہور ایچی ہوم پہنچا دیا جہاں سے چند روز بعد ہمیں اسلام آباد کے ایچی ہوم میں منتقل کیا گیا۔ میں نے میٹرک کے سپر مائسٹر بورڈ سے دیئے تھے۔ رول نمبر 92283 تھا جبکہ میں گورنمنٹ ایلیمینٹری سکول فار گرلز بالا کوٹ میں زیر تعلیم تھی جہاں میرا رول نمبر 16 تھا ہمارے ایک ماموں رفاقت راولپنڈی پولیس میں تھے ہماری معلومات کی روشنی میں ایچی والوں نے بہت تلاش کیا ہے لیکن ابھی تک ہمارے کسی رشتہ دار سے ہمارا رابطہ نہیں ہو سکا۔“

قارئین اوصاف اس واقعہ سے صورت حال کی سنگینی کا بخوبی اندازہ لگا سکتے ہیں جس پر حکومت اور انسانی حقوق کی پاسداری تنظیموں اور ہمارے ذرائع ابلاغ کو سر جوڑنا اور عملی قدم فوری اٹھانا چاہیے کہ زلزلے کی کوکھ سے ایک انتہائی خوفناک انسانی المیہ جنم لے چکا ہے۔ ہمیں زلزلے کے دوران اور بعد میں اب تک ہم ہو جانے والے بچوں اور خواتین کے ورثا اپنے لاپتہ عزیزوں کی تلاش میں جگہ جگہ سر گرداں دکھائی دیتے ہیں۔ خیال آتا ہے کہ کیا انسان واقعی گم ہو گئے ہیں؟ نہیں بلکہ اغوا ہو کر اب تک کہیں سے کہیں جا پہنچے ہوں گے۔ ذرائع ابلاغ ان کی تصاویر چھاپ کر ہی تلاش میں مدد دے سکتے ہیں لیکن سرکاری مشینری تو بہت کچھ کر سکتی ہے۔ آئے روز قومی اخبارات میں ایسی چشم کشار پورٹس شائع ہوتی ہیں۔ جن میں عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ نو عمر بچوں اور نوجوان لڑکیوں کے اغوا میں ملوث گروہ پسماندہ اور غریب ممالک میں سرگرم عمل ہیں اور پاکستان بھارت، بنگلہ دیش، سری لنکا اور دیگر جنوبی ایشیائی ملکوں سے لڑکوں اور لڑکیوں کو اغوا کر کے خلیج ریاستوں اور یورپی ممالک میں سہل کر کے فروخت کر دیا جاتا ہے۔ وہاں انہیں مزدوری اور بیگار کے دھندوں پر ہی نہیں بلکہ جنسی قہر خانوں میں دولت مندوں اور سیاستدانوں کی تسکین پر مامور کیا جاتا ہے۔

جہاں تک خلیج ریاستوں کا تعلق ہے تو طویل عرصے سے امیر و کبیر عرب شیوخ تقن طبع کی خاطر اونٹوں کی دوڑ کے مقابلوں میں اغوا شدہ اور خرید کردہ نو عمر لڑکوں کو استعمال کرتے ہیں۔ ان کی ریاستوں سے اب تک سینکڑوں اغوا شدہ بچے پاکستانی سفارتخانوں اور سمندر پار پاکستانی وزارت کی کوششوں سے واپس لائے جا چکے ہیں۔ مزید بچوں کی وہاں موجودگی کی مصدقہ اطلاعات فراہم کرنے کے باوجود ان کی بازیابی کی کوئی پیش رفت گزشتہ کئی ماہ سے دکھائی نہیں دی۔

ہمارے قومی ٹیلی وژن نے زلزلے کے بعد ”درد آشنا“ کے نام سے ایک مفید پروگرام زلزلہ متاثرین کو درپیش مسائل اور گمشدہ افراد کے بارے میں اطلاعات کی فراہمی کے لئے شروع کیا تھا اور پی ٹی وی ہیلپ لائن بھی قائم کی گئی تھی۔ متاثرین کی آس بندھی تھی کہ اس پروگرام کے وسیلے سے مزید کامیابیاں سامنے آئیں گی لیکن پی ٹی وی کے ارباب اختیار نے انسانی خدمت کی میجائی سے ہاتھ کھینچ لیا۔

گزشتہ سال 18 اکتوبر کے زلزلے کے وقت مقامی سکولوں میں موجود طلبہ و طالبات کی کثیر تعداد ہمارے قریب تلے دب گئی تھی لیکن زخمی ہونے والے کئی بچے جن میں نو خیز طالبات کی بڑی تعداد شامل تھی جن کو پہلی کارپروں اور گاڑیوں کے ذریعے ہسپتال لے جاتے دیکھا گیا لیکن بعد ازاں ان کے بارے میں کسی شہر کے ہسپتال سے کوئی ریکارڈ نہ مل سکا جس سے ذہن اسی طرف جاتا ہے کہ انہیں اغوا کر لیا گیا ہوگا۔ اغواء کرنے والے انہیں کہاں لے گئے ہوں گے یہ کوئی نہ جان سکا کسی نے بھی جاننے کی کوئی جتوئی نہیں کی۔ اس طرح زلزلہ متاثرین کی تمام خیمہ بستیوں کے ریکارڈ سے بھی گم ہونے والے افراد کا پتہ چلا۔ بعض جرائم پیشہ اور دلال قماش کے مردوں عورتوں کو خیمہ بستیوں کے ارد گرد منڈلاتے دیکھا گیا اور کچھ لوگ پکڑے بھی گئے جن کا تعلق منظم گروہ سے ثابت بھی ہوا۔ آج پسماندہ ملکوں میں انسانی سمگلنگ ٹریفنگ اور خرید و فروخت کا مذموم کاروبار عروج پر ہے اور دنیا بھر میں اسے ہدف ملامت بنایا جا رہا ہے اور اب مہک رانی کی کہانی میں معلوم ہوا کہ بچوں کو کوئی منظم گروہ زلزلہ زدہ علاقوں سے اغوا کر کے نامعلوم مقامات لے جا کر ان کے گردے وغیرہ نکالنے کا مکروہ دھندا کر رہا ہے۔ کیا اس انسان دشمن مافیہ کالقع قمع کرنا حکومت اور انسانی حقوق کے پاسداروں کا فرض نہیں؟ خدا را وطن کی کلیوں اور پھولوں کو توڑنے اور مسلنے والے سنگ دل درندوں کو تلاش کر کے پاکستان کے گلشن کو اجڑنے سے بچا لیجئے۔

افتخار حسین زوار۔ اوصاف۔ ستمبر 2006-7

## Earthquake survivors evacuating hospitals after rape issue: Nurse Chanda records statement

LAHORE: More than half of the earthquake survivors admitted in major hospitals of the city, have left the hospitals after the rape issue of a quake survivor girl at Mayo Hospital Lahore while others are heading to leave.

According to the details, about 95 earthquake victims were admitted to the three major hospitals of the city including Mayo, Jinnah and Services Hospital. But as the news of a rape incident with a quake survivor minor girl broke out, more than half of the patients (57) left the special wards set up for the treatment of these people.

The media reports published in November show that more than 20 earthquake survivors were under treatment in the emergency earthquake survivors' ward at Jinnah Hospital Lahore, more than 58 patients at Mayo while 17 were admitted to the Services Hospital Lahore. Pakistan Observer's previous survey discloses that 58 quake survivors were under treatment at Mayo Hospital till November 28 but 25 patients were discharged from the hospital between last ten days including the six days after the rape issue. While fresh details provided by reliable sources reveal that almost 17 out of 20 earthquake patients prematurely left the Jinnah Hospital while only 2 out of 17 patients were remaining in the Services Hospital till date.

It's pertinent to mention here that the administrations of all these hospitals refused to provide official facts and figures about the earthquake survivors' enrolment in the wards as this scribe contacted them. On the other hand, the alleged rape victim (aged 15 years) did not appear before the police for recording her statement and medico-legal examination Friday till filing the report. According to the media reports, her uncle Maulana Akram of Jamiah Asharafia Neela Gumbad had promised Chaudhry Shafqat, Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Investigation, to present the girl before police on Friday.

Earlier on Friday morning, Board of Management KEMC and Mayo Hospital Lahore held an emergency meeting under the supervision of Board Chairman Professor (retd) Fateh Khan Akhtar. According to the sources, the Board members discussed the rape issue and its after-effects including the abrupt departure of the quake patients.

They have also planned to build up the confidence of quake survivors under treatment in the hospital. On the other hand Brig Tauqeer Ghuman, head of Chief Minister's Inspection Team, on Friday recorded the statements of concerned staff regarding an alleged rape of quake-survivor girl by the Medical Officer (MO) (Dr. Maqsood) of the earthquake victims' ward at Mayo Hospital. According to the derails, Brig Ghuman probed Additional Medical Superintendent (AMS), Deputy Medical Superintendent (DMS) Dr. Manzoor Chaudhry. Superintendent Nursing Staff Mrs. Musharraf, two staff nurses including Chanda who was also named in the case, Security Head of Mayo Hospital Maj. (retd) Mateen and other paramedical staff. Head of CM Inspection team held one-to-one interview with all the staffers without any interval from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm on Friday while no one was allowed to enter the site during the investigation.

**Hussain Kashif, Pakistan Observer – December 10, 2005**

## Repercussions of rape case — Hospitals told to monitor women earthquake victims

LAHORE: The Punjab Health Department has ordered strict surveillance of earthquake victims, especially women in Punjab's hospitals following an earthquake survivor's alleged rape by a Mayo Hospital senior medical officer. Health Adviser (Technical) Dr. S. Anwar Ahmad Bugti issued instructions titled 'Medical Care and Female Patients' to all principals of autonomous medical institutions, all heads of special health institutions, all Executive District Officers (Health) and all tehsil and district headquarters hospitals' Medical Superintendents. The instructions said women patients especially

earthquake victims, were not being treated in accordance with the protocols and instructions laid down by the Health Department. It said segregated women's sections had either not been set up or were not being monitored and this could cause serious administrative and social problems. The Department has ordered separate earthquake victims' sections with effective security and monitoring of visits and activities of individuals and associations

"Preferably, only female staff should be appointed for examination, treatment and care of female patients," the instructions say. Matrons or nursing superintendents have been directed to check women's wards regularly and ensure all issues are reported on time. Medical superintendents or additional medical superintendents have been directed to be accessible to staff and people. All problems are to be thoroughly investigated followed by immediate corrective measures.

"The administration should not involve media in any explanations or clarifications. Issues must be referred to the Health Minister or the Health Secretary, who may officially brief the media," the instructions say. **Ali Waqar, Daily Times – December 22, 2005**

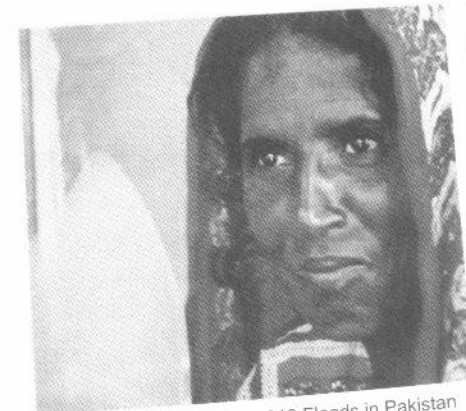
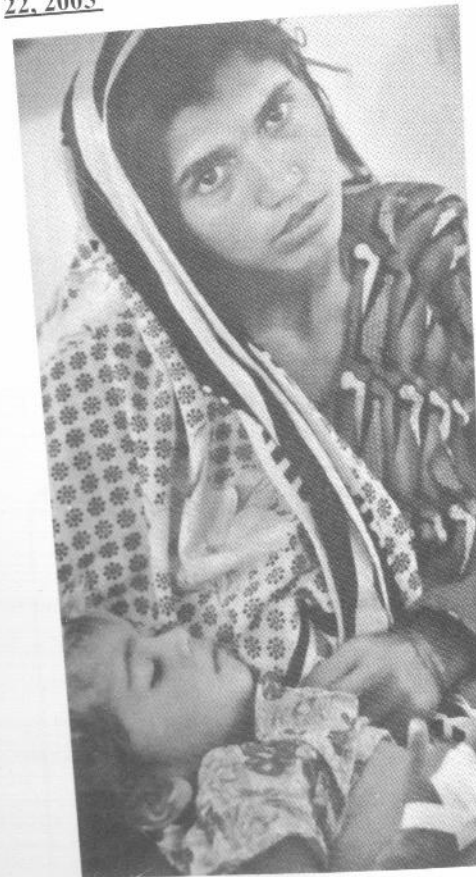


Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan



Thursday 27

Friday 28

Saturday 29

## گرلز ہائی سکول گڑھی حبیب اللہ نجی ادارے نے خوبصورت عمارت تعمیر کر دی

گزشتہ سال ہولناک زلزلہ میں 57 طالبات جاں بحق اور 71 زخمی ہو گئی تھیں

اسی دن سوچا کہ شاید میں امی ابو اور سہیلیوں کو کبھی بھی نہ دیکھ سکوں گی: کنول سعید

کئی بچیوں کو ان کے بالوں سے پکڑ کر نکالا، گھر پہنچی تو معلوم ہوا کہ خاندان جاں بحق ہو گئے: ٹیچر شاہین

خوف پہلے دن کی طرح بیٹھا ہوا ہے، کلاس فیلوز کو یاد کر کے رو پڑتی ہیں: طالبات

گڑھی حبیب اللہ (بی بی سی ڈاٹ کام): گزشتہ سال کے ہولناک زلزلے میں گورنمنٹ گرلز ہائر سیکنڈری سکول گڑھی

حبیب اللہ میں تباہی کے نتیجے میں ستاون طالبات ہلاک اور اکثر زخمی ہوئی تھیں۔ سکول کے بلے میں بچیوں کے بیگ

کتا میں اور چپل ہر طرف بکھرے پڑے تھے۔ سکول کے اندر ایک وائر ٹینک ہے جو اس دن خالی تھا اگر بھرا ہوتا تو

شاید نقصان بڑھ جاتا۔ سکول کے بالکل پاس ہی ایک قبرستان ہے جہاں اسی سکول کی کچھ لڑکیاں اور گڑھی کے

دوسرے بہت سے ہلاک ہو جانے والے دفن ہیں۔ تعمیر نو کی بحالی کے ادارہ کی طرف سے تو اب تک تعلیمی اداروں کی

تعمیر کا کام شروع نہیں ہو سکا تاہم ایک نجی ادارے جمال دین شوگر ملز رحیم یار خان نے اس سکول کی تعمیر کا بیڑا اٹھایا

اور مختصر عرصے میں خواہ عارضی ہی سہی مگر ایک خوبصورت سی عمارت تعمیر کر دی۔ نویں جماعت کی طالبہ کنول سعید اسی

سکول میں اپنے ایک کان سے محروم ہوئی اُسے یاد ہے کہ اس وقت اس نے سوچا کہ وہ شاید کبھی اپنے امی ابو اور

دوستوں کو نہ دیکھ سکے۔ ساتویں جماعت کی طالبہ روبینہ اشرف ایک پاؤں سے محروم ہو گئی، زلزلے کے دوران دیوار

اس پر آگری جس سے اس کا پاؤں بری طرح زخمی ہوا اور بعد میں کاٹ دیا گیا، اسی سکول کی ٹیچر شاہین بی بی اس دن

کے واقعات کی عینی شاہد ہیں۔ وہ روزانہ صبح مظفر آباد سے یہاں پڑھانے آتی ہیں۔ زلزلے کے دن جب وہ سکول

کے قریب پہنچیں تو شدید جھٹکے شروع ہو گئے۔ وہ اور ان کا بیٹا زمین پر بیٹھ گئے جھٹکے اتنے شدید تھے کہ سکول کی بلڈنگ

ان کے دیکھتے دیکھتے نیچے آ گئی اور اسکے بلے سے بچوں کی چیخ و پکار کی آواز سنائی دینے لگی۔ کئی بچیوں کو انہوں نے

بالوں سے کھینچ کر باہر نکالا جب وہ اپنے گھر مظفر آباد پہنچیں تو انہیں پتہ چلا کہ ان کے خاندان زلزلے میں ہلاک ہو

چکے تھے لیکن ان کے چھوٹے چھ بچے زندہ تھے۔ سکول کی طالبات چاند سائرہ وحید اور بشری مصطفیٰ نے بتایا کہ ان کے

ذہن میں زلزلے کا خوف پہلے دن کی طرح بیٹھا ہوا ہے وہ اپنی کلاس فیلوز کو یاد کرتے ہوئے رو پڑتی ہیں سکول کی

وائس پرنسپل تنویر اختر نے بتایا کہ یہ اب علاقے کا واحد سکول ہے جہاں نہ صرف گڑھی حبیب اللہ بلکہ ضلع مانسہرہ کی باقی

یونین کونسلوں کے علاوہ مظفر آباد سے بھی طالبات ہیں زلزلے میں دو ٹیچرز بھی ہلاک ہو گئیں تھیں جن کی جگہ ابھی تک کوئی نہیں آسکا۔  
نوائے وقت۔ اکتوبر 11 2006

## Women suffered more than the men

BAZARGAI: Samina Wali is three months pregnant and desperate for an abortion. One look at her living conditions and it is easy to see why she would consider such a taboo action in an area of Pakistan known as the Jihadi belt. Her home and its contents have been reduced to a pile of rubble. And, unlike many of the now homeless survivors of the earthquake, the 30-year-old, who already has six children, doesn't even have a proper tent. "I have no shelter. How can I give birth?" she asks a medic, gesturing to the plastic sheet under which she lives with her family. Samina will not get her wish.

Abortion is forbidden in Pakistan except for medical reasons. There is, of course, the distinct possibility that the baby will not survive. Disease and infection are now rife among the tent dwellers in the ruins of Bazargai, a mountain village in Batamori in the NWFP. But a more pressing killer is the weather. Within 10 days everything will be under several feet of snow.

The medic Shabana Ashraf continues her rounds in the village, where every house bar one has been flattened. The 24-year-old is one of five staff running a medical camp in Bazargai. Operating out of two tents, one for women and one for men, it caters for around 5,000 people living in the surrounding area. Survivors with major injuries have been taken to hospital, and the medics are now focusing their attention on keeping survivors alive through the winter. More than 100 patients are treated each day, around 30 percent of whom already have chest infections, including potentially fatal pneumonia. Typhoid has also broken out, and scabies is rife. Diarrhoea, dysentery and depression are also common.

Shabana is one of two female medics in the camp and as such is a vital resource, as some men are reluctant to allow their wives to be seen by male doctors. There were more women victims of the tragedy than men, for they were more likely to be at home when the earthquake struck at 8:45 am. "When the women doctors came to the camp, the number of patients increased," said Dr. Rubina Saigol, director of Action Aid Pakistan, which runs the facility. "A lot of men didn't want to take their women to see a male doctor and a lot of women were denied medical care. This is a highly religious area".

"The idea of purdah and the four walls of the house are very strong here. Women have less access to hospitals because of strong social traditions. Our entire emergency response is specifically geared towards helping women and children, because they are dying and the most affected", Saigol said. The charity has also hired a gender coordinator to make sure women receive the aid that is due to them.

There are particular medical problems for the women here. With no toilets, men are able to use the fields at any time, but women only feel comfortable venturing out there very early in the morning or at night. The incidence of urinary tract infections is high,

and women no longer have the privacy to wash and dry the strips of cotton they use during menstruation. Fifty percent of married women are pregnant. Both mothers and newborns will run the risk of tetanus and septicaemia.

Courtesy The Independent Daily Times – December 20, 2005

## Muzaffarabad girls still filled with gloom

MUZAFFARABAD: The building is pristine, magnificent and earthquake-resistant too. But all this has not diminished gloom and fear that prevails among its occupants, as and when they remember their colleagues who departed from them for good on Oct 8, 2005. One year on, the students of Government Postgraduate College for Girls, located in the heart of Muzaffarabad, have not been able to come out of emotional shock in the aftermath of the killer quake which left 150 of their fellows dead and another 25 wounded.

"I was making a phone call to my predecessor when suddenly the earth seemed to be moving up and down followed by heartrending screams from outside," recalled Principal Dr. Shahjahan Saima, as she spoke to Dawn in her office here on Saturday, taking a break from her work on a computer. The prefabricated structure has been built on the site of one of the two fallen buildings by a Turkish non-government organization. However, in view of growing number of students, the college administration is compelled to hold some classes in tents pitched on the premises.

Dr. Saima said she was trapped in her (previous) office when the quake struck. "By the time I managed to find a space to rush out, one of the two double storey buildings had crumpled. There was dust and smoke outside, making it too difficult to recognize anyone," she said. In the collapsed building, two classes were being held for as many as 800 pupils. "The trapped girls were crying with pain and shouting for help. There was complete chaos. Their white dresses had turned red and blood was streaming on the ground," she said with bedewed eyes. "I can never forget those scenes. It's not possible to forget them."

Asked if the students had recovered from trauma, she replied in the negative. "They are much better than earlier. But if you say the fear is gone, it's wrong. People (students) are still traumatized, suffering from post-traumatic stress symptoms and disorders. It will take them long time to recover." A clinical psychologist, Dr. Saima said she launched counseling services for students so as to convince them to resume studies. "Initially, they were not ready to return (to college). Nor were their parents ready to send them. But gradually, we have regained our strength."

Saba Kazmi, a student of 4<sup>th</sup> year, was in the building which collapsed. In her class alone, 43 girls perished. She was also trapped under the rubble and was recovered after 8 hours with broken jaw by a youth whose own sister was lying dead next to her. "We had lost hopes of life. Our mouths were full of dust and we were crying for water to quench our raging thirst," she said. While speaking of her deceased friend Shakila, whose body was recovered after eight days, she broke down into tears. "She was such a good girl that despite the passage of one year I have not been able to scratch her

memories," she said, wiping tears with her palm.

Dr. Saima said that shortly after the tremor, fathers of many girls as well as students from the town's college for boys reached her institution and carried out the rescue operation. But the last dead body was recovered on the tenth day of the quake. "Had the boys not reached, the toll would have been much higher," she said. Political Science lecturer Yasmeen Imtiaz was also in the same building that caved in, taking her class on the second floor. By the stroke of luck, she walked to the rear classroom and sat on a bench after feeling headache when suddenly the quake struck and toppled the building. Twenty-two students in her class were killed, but she survived miraculously. However, downstairs, English lecturer Fareeda Khanam was not as lucky as Ms. Imtiaz.

Narrating her story, she said the girls had become courageous. But in the same breath she admitted that psychological effect of the quake still prevailed deep down in the hearts and minds of teachers and pupils alike. "I don't know why I feel sort of suffocation inside the building," she said of the prefabricated structure. Student Shamyla Rafiq said fear had not gone. "I know this building is earthquake resistant, but I don't know why sometimes I am overpowered by a state of fear that we may face an Oct 8 like situation," said Shamyla Rafiq from a suburban area.

However, her colleague Sadia Rashid said their teachers and parents had encouraged them a lot to learn the art of living in adverse situations. "But it is a fact that whenever there is talk of earthquake, those horrific scenes are refreshed," added the 19-year old. "Yes, the landscape of our institution has changed, but those bitter memories still haunt us," said 3<sup>rd</sup> year student Ambreen Ibrar. Earlier, all the students held Quran Khawani for the deliverance of the departed souls and during the recitation of Quranic verses, many lost control over their emotions.

Tears started rolling down their cheeks, dampening the papers of the chapters of Quran in their hands as they sat crossed-legged on a white sheet. The Quran Khawani was followed by a brief function where teachers and some students delivered brief speeches to pay tributes to their fellow students. Chairman AJK Cultural Academy Jawad Hussain Jafri also attended the function.

"Let's seek forgiveness from the God in this holy month that He should not subject us to further trials. Let's pray that those who have left us cheer in the Gardens of Eden," concluded Mr. Jafri at the function

**Tariq Naqash, Dawn – October 08, 2006**

## **Girl Guides' rehab services lauded**

PESHAWAR: NWFP Minister for Information, Asif Iqbal Daudzai, while highly eulogizing the relief activities and social services of the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (NWFP) after the devastating October 8 earthquake, Tuesday announced annual grant of Rs 0.5 million for the association on behalf of the provincial Chief Minister and assured full support of the government in capacity building of the Girl Guides.

Addressing the awards distribution ceremony of the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA), as chief guest, he said the whole nation was proud of the Girl Guides who

extended valuable services in the hour of trial for lessening the sufferings of the affectees. He hoped that being representatives of the Muslim society; the Girl Guides would continue serving the society. The ceremony amongst others was also addressed by the MNA Razia Azizuddin, who is also President of the association, and Commissioner PGGA (NWFP) Suriyya Usmani, who highlighted the importance of Girl Guides in the society. The Information Minister said that the provincial government fully shared the woes of the quake-stricken people and would not take rest till the last affectee was rehabilitated. Terming the people of the Frontier as religious-minded, he exhorted the women to be character role models for the women of the other provinces so as to promote Islamic values in the country.

"Islam is the only religion that has given due rights to the womenfolk and the MMA government as per the teachings of Islam has established a separate university, medical college, sports directorate as well as 14 colleges for the women to enable them acquire education in an environment suited to them," maintained Asif. Earlier, the Minister distributed gold medals, awards and shields among the Girl Guides, guiders and all others concerned, in recognition of their services.

**The Post – May 17, 2006**

## **Efforts to improve women's health urged**

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Health Inayatullah has underscored the need of comprehensive and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders, both in public and private sectors, to improve the poor health status of women and children in the developing countries. He was addressing the concluding session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial International Conference of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan.

The Health Minister, while referring to the poor health and social indicators in the developing countries, urged that it was joint responsibility of all to work for overcoming the deteriorated situation of women and children to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by 191 countries of the world. He said that the government was well aware of the situation and a series of reform initiatives were being taken to improve health care delivery system. He said that the country was giving proper attention towards improving mother and child healthcare facilities to reduce maternal and infant mortality rate.

He went on to say that improvement of the reproductive health system was the cornerstone of national policy and that was why efforts were being made to improve healthcare system in backward areas of the country. He elaborated that introduction of LHW programme, midwives training and special incentives to female staff working in periphery were solid steps of the government to achieve the goal. Pointing towards the steps being taken by the present provincial government, the Minister said that the government had increased budget allocations for the health sector.

**The Nation – November 21 2006**



In emergencies  
young  
children  
are always the most  
vulnerable. The  
floods increased their  
health risks: they  
were in urgent need  
of water, food, shelter  
and medical care.

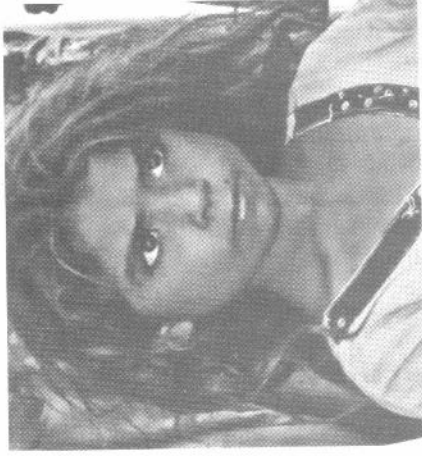


Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan

2014

Mar/Apr

Sunday 30

Handwriting practice lines for Sunday 30.

Monday 31

Handwriting practice lines for Monday 31.

Tuesday 01

Handwriting practice lines for Tuesday 01.

Saturday 26

Sunday 27

Monday 28

## سیلاب اور خواتین ”شرکت گاہ“ کی امدادی سرگرمیوں کا جائزہ

جولائی اور اگست کے مہینوں میں پاکستان میں آنے والے تباہ کن سیلاب نے دو کروڑ سے زائد افراد کو متاثر کیا، لاکھوں بے گھر ہوئے، بچے، بوڑھے، خواتین در بدر ہوئے، نہ گھر بچے، نہ سر کیس، نہ پل، نہ سکول اور نہ ہسپتال، سب کچھ پانی کی لہروں کی نذر ہو گیا، پوری پاکستانی قوم نے یک جا ہو کر سیلاب متاثرین کی مدد کی اور سیلاب کے دوران عوام میں ایثار اور قربانی کا وہ جذبہ دیکھنے میں آیا جو زندہ قوموں کی نشانی ہوتی ہے۔ پاک فوج، حکومتی اداروں اور عام لوگوں کے علاوہ غیر سرکاری تنظیموں نے بڑھ چڑھ کر امدادی سرگرمیوں میں حصہ لیا، لیکن یہاں پر ایک بات شدت سے محسوس کی گئی کہ ریلیف اور امدادی اشیاء اکثر اثر رسوخ والے اور طاقت ور لوگ لے جاتے ہیں، جب کہ کم زور آسانی امداد کا انتظار ہی کرتے رہتے ہیں۔

سب سے زیادہ مسائل کا سامنا ان خواتین کو درپیش ہوا جن کے گھروں میں یا تو مرد نہیں ہوتے یا پھر بیماری کی وجہ سے وہ امدادی سامان حاصل کرنے کے لیے نہیں جاسکتے تھے۔ تاریخ گواہ ہے کہ جنگ ہو یا قدرتی آفت ہمیشہ خواتین اور بچے ہی سب سے زیادہ متاثر ہوئے ہیں اور ان کی جانب بہت کم توجہ دی گئی ہے۔ حالیہ سیلاب میں بھی ایسے بے شمار واقعات سننے کو مل رہے ہیں جو انسانیت کی تذلیل کے مترادف ہیں۔ کئی علاقوں میں نوجوان خواتین گم ہو گئی ہیں جن کو سیلاب بہا کر نہیں لے گیا بلکہ سیلاب سے بھی زیادہ خوفناک لوگ لے گئے۔ سیلاب سے متاثرہ علاقوں میں بے یار و مددگار رہ جانے والی خواتین کو بھی بہت کم امداد ملی، تاہم کچھ حکومتی اداروں اور غیر سرکاری تنظیموں نے خصوصی طور پر خواتین تک امداد کی رسائی کو اپنا ٹارگٹ بنایا، پشاور میں کام کرنے والی غیر سرکاری تنظیم ”شرکت گاہ“ ویمین ریسورس سنٹر نے سیلاب زدہ علاقوں میں صرف ان خواتین تک امداد پہنچانے کو اپنا مشن بنایا جن کے گھروں میں مرد نہیں تھے۔ اضلاع سوات، چارسدہ اور نوشہرہ کے دیہاتوں میں خصوصی طور پر خواتین کے لیے امدادی کیمپ لگائے اور نہ صرف ان کی روزمرہ ضرورت کی اشیاء فراہم کیں بلکہ بیمار اور حاملہ خواتین کے لیے میڈیکل کمپس کا بھی اہتمام کیا، جہاں خواتین کو مفت طبی سہولیات کے ساتھ ساتھ مفت ادویات بھی فراہم کی گئیں۔

شرکت گاہ پشاور کی ڈائریکٹر سائرہ نے بتاوا کہ انہوں نے گھر گھر جا کر چندہ اکٹھا کیا۔ گھروں سے کپڑے اکٹھے کیے گئے جو بعد میں سیلاب سے متاثرہ خواتین میں تقسیم کیے گئے۔ گھر گھر چندہ جمع کر کے جو فنڈز اکٹھے ہوئے ان پیسوں سے متاثرہ خواتین کے لیے سامان خریدا گیا۔ شرکت گاہ نے اپنے فنڈز سے بھی ہزاروں متاثرہ خواتین کے لیے اشیائے خورد و نوش اور کپڑے خرید کر دیئے، شرکت گاہ کی ٹیم نے خود یہ سامان متاثرہ خواتین میں تقسیم کیا اور اس کے لیے باقاعدہ ایک طریقہ کار وضع کیا، متاثرہ علاقوں میں خواتین کو خصوصی کارڈز دیئے گئے اور سامان تقسیم کرنے والے دن کارڈ رکھنے والی خواتین کو ہی سامان دیا جاتا تھا، جس سے نہ افراطی کا خدشہ ہوتا نہ ہی مستحق خواتین امداد سے محروم ہوتیں نہ ہی کوئی ہنگامہ آرائی ہوتی۔ سائرہ نے بتایا کہ شرکت گاہ کی ٹیم خود متاثرہ علاقوں میں جاتی اور جن خواتین کے گھر متاثر ہوئے تھے، ان کی چھان بین کر کے ان کی ضروریات کے مطابق مدد کی جاتی، شرکت گاہ کی شگفتہ ہدایت، صدف ملک اور دوسری خواتین اپنے ساتھ لیڈی ڈاکٹروں کی ٹیم لے کر سوات کے دور دراز مقامات میں جا کر متاثرہ لوگوں کی مدد کرتی رہیں بلکہ اب بھی کر رہی ہیں۔ سائرہ نے بتاوا کہ مرد تو کسی طرح امداد حاصل کر لیتے ہیں لیکن خواتین کے لئے امداد کا حصول بہت مشکل ہوتا ہے۔

it has established six tented Health Units in the Union Councils of Battal, Hillkot, Jhal Gali (Konch valley) and Nawazabad, Jabori and Panjool (Siran valley). These winterized facilities are providing vulnerable communities in earthquake affected areas with critical primary health care (PHC) services.

To date, 48,676 people have received health care from the Mercy Corps with its global headquarters in the US and UK consistently ranks as one of America's most effective and efficient charitable organizations. Last year, more than 92 per cent of its resources went directly to programmes serving people in need. In 2005, Mercy Corps was entrusted with US \$71 million by donors for the five major crises that include Tsunami, Katrina, Stan (a widespread food crisis in Niger) and earthquake in Pakistan.

**The News – February 05, 2006**

## Initiative helps flood-hit women fight poverty

MUZAFFARGARH: Kalsoom Mai, 40, lost her husband Ghulam Husain to the mighty Indus when the flood hit her village Sarkiwala in Alipur tehsil in 2010.

The village is located just a kilometre east of the Indus. After the flood, Kalsoom faced displacement, disease and acute poverty for months, but now her hard days are over. She is working on an 'all widow project' and earning money. Mauza Sarki's all paths are now being brick lined and all sideways are green.

Kalsoom and dozens of other widows are working on a community infrastructure improvement project and are brick-lining pathways of their village. The project is funded by a private bank and supervised by a non-government organisation.

Kalsoom told Dawn many women lost their husbands to floods and ensuing diseases. She said five women's husbands died of snake bite.

"This project has brought economic empowerment for us," she said. Under the project, she said, funds were being provided by the Tameer Micro-Finance Bank and logistic support by Awaz Foundation.

She said widows working on the project brick-lined a 240-metre pathway every day. Women working on the project were paid through the bank and they had also been given health insurance.

Seeing their active involvement in the development of the area, some donors have installed solar water plants for farmers.

Awaz Foundation Chief Executive Ziaur Rehman said the organisation built 1,500 shelters in the locality and installed 19 solar pumps for tube wells. But all these initiatives may go waste if flood strikes the village again.

The irrigation department failed to make the spurs along the Sarki area and now the Indus water is threatening the area.

**Dawn – August 04, 2012**

## 80% of women in quake-hit areas do not seek care in public health facilities: study

ISLAMABAD: In the run up to the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the earthquake-hit areas to be launched in April, Mercy Corps, an international Humanitarian Organization, has initiated a study on the health seeking behaviour of females in some of the worst hit areas of Siran and Konch valleys in district Manshra.

Explaining the rationale, Mercy Corps Pakistan's Country Director Faiza Janmohamed says that the study is important as more than 80% of women do not seek care in public health facilities. "It is commonly observed that many pregnant women do not access essential obstetric care during or shortly after delivery even though it is during this period when most of the maternal deaths occur," she adds. To gather accurate data the study will target those mothers who have given birth to a child after the earthquake and the age of their baby is not more than 3 months.

The findings of the study will be shared with the partners engaged in the health care delivery in the earthquake-hit area as there has been widespread concern among them regarding providing medical care to pregnant women in affected areas. As per estimates of Dr France Donnay of UNFPA, there are 80,000 pregnant women in the area and 7000 births took place every month. Ninety percent of the deliveries are taking place without the help of skilled attendants.

Mercy Corps has been working in areas of Balochistan and Sindh since 1985. Soon after the earthquake in October it expanded its activities to AJK and NWFP. In health,

**شہد خٹک: روزنامہ ایکسپریس ستمبر 7، 2010**

اور ساتھ ہی خود بھی متاثرین کی بحالی کے لیے اقدامات کرے۔

بعض خواتین گھروں سے باہر نہیں جاسکتیں اور پھر مردوں کے ساتھ خواتین کے لیے قطاروں میں کھڑے ہو کر امداد حاصل کرنا تقریباً ناممکن ہوتا ہے، اس لیے انہوں نے خواتین کو امداد پہنچانے کا بیڑہ اٹھایا۔ شگفتہ ہدایت نے بتایا کہ بعض علاقوں میں ایسی خواتین بھی تھیں جن کو ایک ہفتہ تک امداد بھی نہیں ملی تھی۔ حکومت کو بھی چاہئے کہ وزارت بہبود خواتین کے تحت ایک پمپنگ ہاؤس تشکیل دے کر خواتین کی خصوصی مدد کی جائے۔ متاثرہ علاقوں میں خواتین کو شدید مشکلات کا سامنا ہے اور ہزاروں حاملہ خواتین کا مسئلہ الگ ہے جن کو ڈیلیوری کس کی ضرورت ہے۔ شرکت گاہ نے اپنی سی کوشش کی ہے کہ ان خواتین کو ڈیلیوری کس میا کی جائیں لیکن یہ صرف ایک تنظیم کے بس کی بات نہیں ہے، حکومتی اداروں کو بھی آگے آنا ہوگا۔ بد قسمتی سے صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا میں وزارت بہبود خواتین اس سلسلے میں کچھ بھی نہیں کر رہی۔ ان حالات کو دیکھتے ہوئے یہی کہا جاسکتا ہے کہ حکومت کو اس ضمن میں مزید تیزی دکھانی چاہیے اور جس قدر ہو سکے متاثرہ علاقوں میں سہولیات پہنچائی جائیں۔ خواتین کی بحالی پر زیادہ سے زیادہ توجہ دی جائے کیوں کہ خواتین کی حالت ہمارے ملک اور خاص طور پر بے جا رسموں رواجوں کی زنجیروں میں جکڑے علاقوں میں ویسے ہی بہت خراب ہے اور ایسے علاقوں میں جب کوئی مصیبت آتی ہے تو اس سے متاثر تو سب ہی ہوتے ہیں لیکن خواتین اور بچے خاص طور پر مسائل کا نشانہ بنتے ہیں، نجی فلاحی اداروں نے زلزلہ، سوات آپریشن اور سیلاب میں اپنا کردار واضح طور پر دکھا دیا ہے، جو لائق ستائش ہے۔ حکومت کو بھی چاہیے کہ وہ ایسے اداروں کی حوصلہ افزائی کرے



## Clerics order quake aid groups to fire women workers

ISLAMABAD: Muslim clerics in earthquake-hit Azad Kashmir have told agencies to fire all local women employees or face violent protests, officials and religious leaders said Thursday. The threat, given to district officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bagh city Tuesday, will dent hopes that the October 8 quake could have a positive effect on women's rights in the conservative region. "We have told the administration that we won't allow NGOs to exploit our women and asked them to give a date suitable to them for removal of all female workers," Syed Atta Ullah Shah prayer leader of the Bagh central mosque, told APP, "If our demand is not met then we will take direct action and extreme steps."

"There will be demonstrations and damage may be caused to public property and a law and order situation would be created in the area", he added. The religious leader said locals were angered by "obscene" activities at NGOs. "They hire beautiful girls and take them to Islamabad for enjoyment. They keep women in offices as decoration pieces because we know that women have no work and there no such work that men cannot do," Shah said. The 7.6-magnitude earthquake Pakistan's worst ever disaster left more than 73,000 people dead and three million homeless. Tens of thousands remain in tented refugee camps. Aid groups say female workers are vital to ensure that religious and social conventions are respected when dealing with women in the devastated region, especially for health matters.

The United Nations, which has coordinated aid efforts after the quake, said it was aware of the issue. "Discussions are going on with the government and clergy. Things are not finalized yet," Raabya Amjad, public information officer for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs told APP officials and police said the administration had assured the clerics that a solution would be found by September 3. "They warned that NGOs' cars and compounds will be stoned and burned, shops will be closed and demonstrations will happen throughout Bagh city if NGOs fail to fire all female employees," one aid official said on condition of anonymity. The clerics had told NGOs that they were thankful for their help in the wake of the disaster, but that it hurt their beliefs and social values to see Muslim women mixing with strangers, the aid official said.

The Post – August 25, 2006

## Four quake couples married

PESHAWAR: Quake victims had a reason to celebrate on Saturday as four couples got married at the rehabilitation centre in Hayatabad. The newlyweds will begin their new lives in a relief centre in Peshawar. Two bridegrooms, Mohammad Munir and Abdul Qadir, were living in the relief and rehabilitation centre, while Bilal was from Lahore and Gul Mohammad from Abbottabad. Two of the brides were sisters and all married their relatives to whom they were already engaged.

Mrs. Riaz, a Social Welfare Department Officer, told Daily Times that the wedding

celebrations began two days ago giving a much needed respite to the quake victims. Wedding invitations were sent to NWFP Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani and Minister Sirajul Haq but they did not come, officials at the relief centre said. Mrs. Riaz said an anonymous philanthropist from Peshawar made the arrangements for the wedding ceremony. Peshawarites provided generous funds for the walima ceremony, wedding gifts, including gold jewellery and the bridal wear, she said.

Akhtar Amin, Daily Times - December 18, 2005



Photo Courtesy: From Despair to the Dawning of Hope, WHO's response to the 2010 Floods in Pakistan

Many people were  
**traumatized and**  
needed psychosocial  
support

Thursday 29

Friday 30

Saturday 31

## Women in quake areas start speaking out

ABBOTTABAD: On a bitter cold afternoon late January about 600 women, quite a few with eyes barely showing through veils, trooped into a huge marquee to make their feelings known about the poor progress of rehabilitation after the devastating Oct. 8 earthquake. They were attending a 'People's Assembly' organized by the Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation, a non-government organization (NGO) that has been working with rural communities in the Mansehra division of the North West Frontier Province.

Some clamoured for shelter and food rations while others pointed to the need for female doctors and gynaecologists and girls' schools in their villages. There were also many who did not like the design of the homes being planned and said so. But all of them demanded to consult. Their mood belied the predicament they were in. Even the squally weather failed to dampen their zest. "Who would've thought that these rural women, normally perceived as submissive, would be so feisty!" said Rashida Dohad, a programme adviser with the foundation, who has worked in these parts ever since the catastrophe took place.

"The idea was to expand the political space of the marginalized so that they are able to effectively engage with the state," explained Dohad. Since the success of that first assembly, the foundation has held others with similar results. "We wanted to provide the women a platform to share views, hopes, and fears about reconstruction of homes, of rebuilding health and education facilities, and of achieving livelihood security," said Dohad.

The quake mostly affected northern Pakistan, close to the borders of Afghanistan, where religion and custom demand that women remain behind the veil and defer all decisions to their menfolk. But, since the quake, women have become more visible than ever before, even if the fears and aspirations they express remain largely unattended. Four months after the 7.8 Richter earthquake, that killed over 80,000 people in the northern parts of Pakistan and rendered an estimated 2.5 million homeless, aid remains short despite an enormous effort by both the government and international relief agencies. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the foundation began some measure of disaster mitigation. Its volunteers organized villagers in groups and started setting up serais (temporary shelters) providing a complete package of relief including shelter, food, and other essentials, right at the doorstep of the affected people.

This meant no displacement, greater security for women, ability to continue agricultural activity, better access to water and sanitation facilities, ability to guard household possessions, harvest and tend to livestock and begin reconstruction and planning. This and the ability to participate in village level rehabilitation and greater community solidarity and cohesion, generated greater demand for more such serais. By the end of Nov. 2005, the foundation had set up serais in 36 villages in three districts serving more than 6,100 households (nearly 50,000 population).

The women may be the poorest of the poor in Pakistan, but they showed during these gatherings, that they were not ready to remain voiceless any more. "This is our chance to speak out. We may live in villages but we, too, are Pakistanis," said Zarina, a bubbly

woman in her 30s.

With their menfolk migrating to urban centres to find jobs, women have, for years, been quietly heading households. "They were shouldering the responsibility of managing homes, even before the earthquake. The main source of local income is livestock, which women have traditionally managed," explained Dohad. With men returning to their respective workplaces in the urban centres, the responsibility of reconstruction too will be borne largely by women.

A prime concern has been accessing the Rs. 175,000/- per household being given out. "We have heard about the government's package for home reconstruction, but are not sure if we will get it," said a weather beaten Hukumdad, in her forties, from a village called Sirla. Many expressed discontent over the compensation with the cost of labour and transportation having skyrocketed. "The money is not enough for reconstructing our homes. Earlier, labour charges per day were Rs.200 (3 dollars) but now these have gone up to Rs. 500-600 (8-9 dollars)," said Madiha from Buruj village.

However, the foundation's report states otherwise: "Though inadequate, some genuinely affected households have confirmed receipt of this amount. Many undeserving households have also reportedly benefited from this compensation. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the distribution of compensation for death, Rs. 100,000 (1,600 dollars), is ineffective and plagued with corruption." Others questioned the mechanism of giving the amount to the male heads of households. "We have an equal right to this compensation package," muttered many women, having gathered enough courage. "The earthquake has left deep crevices in our land, it is not fit for reconstruction, where will we go?" was the anxious comment of a participant. "We are tenants, what will happen to us?" worried another. They suggested that the government should allocate plots to affected households. "The government's package is quite frankly gender-blind. Its mention of women is in relation to widows and they are bracketed with orphans and the disabled. But all women are not widows!" said Dohad.

The foundation has suggested to the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority to disburse the house-rebuilding package in a joint bank account of the male and female heads of household. Policy initiatives such as this can bring a huge difference in the status of women at the household level, and ensure that the government's stated objective to 'build back better' is met. While there was general unanimity over following building codes for safe reconstruction, quite a number of women lamented that the prefabricated models neither met their traditions nor respected their privacy. "We need a design that respects our privacy and purdah," has been a common refrain.

Many young girls attending the people's assemblies spoke passionately about their right to education. "Are girls less important than boys? If we are equal then why is our education not given due importance?" asked Aasiya from village Sihali. "Our pleas to reconstruct our dilapidated school building were simply ignored. Who will be held responsible for the deaths of students if it caves in?" questioned Rabya, a student of the Garhi Habibullah Girls' School where more than 200 girls were buried alive. Rabya herself was trapped under falling debris for more than two hours before she was rescued. Dohad sees here "a real opportunity to change traditional power relations which

can bring a lasting change". "Reconstruction must not only rebuild, but must also significantly improve conditions in devastated rural areas, reducing the vulnerability of the rural poor," said Ali Asghar Khan, the chairperson of the foundation.

**Zofeen Ebrahim, Dawn – February 23, 2006**

## 10 skill-learning centres for women to be set up in remote quake-hit areas

ISLAMABAD: To address gender concerns of earthquake survivors the Ministry of Women Development Islamabad will start 10 skill learning centres for the women in remote and unreachable locations of AJK and NWFP. These centres will be operational in different locales within 90 days and serve as entry points for a series of programmes designed for women of the earthquake devastated areas.

The programme will be in partnership with NGOs and aims to bring the skilled workers of far flung areas under the national umbrella of gender empowerment through skill training and microcredit entrepreneurship said Nilofer Bakhtiar, Advisor to the PM. Together with President AJK Sardar Mohammad Anwar Khan she addressed a huge gathering of locals, at Rangla Pahari, a union council in district Bagh where the Ministry distributed winter relief packages among women and children.

Dhiirkot, Malot and many small union councils of Bagh district have been severely hit by the 8<sup>th</sup> Oct disaster. Casualties and injuries in the area have been in thousands and an equally large population is rendered homeless. Very little relief has reached the remote area, informed the affected. It was verified by local volunteers who stood out in their bright orange jackets. However the Rs. 25,000 compensation by Islamabad has been given to all households said President AJK addressing the public meeting. When he inquired about those still awaiting compensation there was no claim.

He also affirmed that another Rs. 75,000 for the earthquake-affected has been promised by the Government of Pakistan and expressed his gratitude for the overwhelming support. Local leaders pledged to rebuild and reconstruct their homeland and promised to make a new start. The huge meeting ground booming with slogans is encircled with debris and ruins.

**Narjis Zaidi, The News – December 28, 2006**

## Women in quake-hit areas break old barriers

MUZAFFARABAD: The massive quake flattened Shazia Noreen's house and killed her daughter. Her life shattered, Noreen defied convention in Pakistan's male-dominated society and went out to find work.

Putting together meagre savings, she built a small corrugated-iron shop next to the tent where her family now lives. "It is our family tradition to keep women in the house, but I'm going to change that tradition," Noreen said with a grin.

Noreen is one of countless women in northern Pakistan whose lives were turned up-



side down by the Oct 8 earthquake. With many men out of work, Noreen's husband lost his motorcycle taxi in the disaster — and their family is destitute; some women have broken with tradition and found a job and their men folk, however reluctantly, have gone along with it.

Noreen said that, with no money coming in, her husband had agreed to let her open her shop. The flood of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have come to help with quake relief has given women an unprecedented opportunity to get out of their homes, "Most women can't even buy an aspirin on their own," said women's rights activist Taqdees Gillani. "They have to consult their brother, father or husband first. But NGOs have provided them a chance to come out". Rights workers say there has been a big change in attitudes towards women and work.

"It is a sudden and vast change," said Raja Nawaz, Project Coordinator with the International Human Rights Observer Organisation. "Before this disaster, it was very difficult to get females to work in the private sector or in the NGO sector. It astonishes me that women have started working outside their homes."

Not Easy: The Pakistani government, though criticised at times for what women's activists see as failure to act against injustices against women, promotes an enlightened, moderate form of Islam and female rights. Norcen Arif, minister of Social Welfare in Pakistani Kashmir, was enthusiastic about the trend of women working, saying financial independence would give them more freedom.

"If she is financially strong, she can decide how to live her life, otherwise she has to listen to the dictations of her husband," Arif said. But in many parts of the country, including its northern mountains where the earthquake struck, women working outside their homes is seen as a violation of deep-held religious and traditional beliefs.

"It is not very easy for women to come forward and do a job," said Khaki Ismail, another rights observer. "It is considered against our faith when women work outside their homes and it can bring shame upon the males of the family."

An Islamic scholar in Muzaffarabad said a woman could work if her husband, brothers or father had no objections and as long as she covered her face and body, but he said he was concerned about the safety of the new working women. "I am not satisfied that in the NGOs women or girls can do their work safely," said Kazi Bashir Ahmad, registrar at the city's Islamic court. But for some families, the earthquake ended such traditional ways of thinking. Noor-ul-Ain said she had always wanted to find a job when she finished studying, but her father had never agreed. But after the quake struck, badly damaging her family home, he relented.

**Daily Times – January 14, 2006**

## Protecting vulnerable displaced women

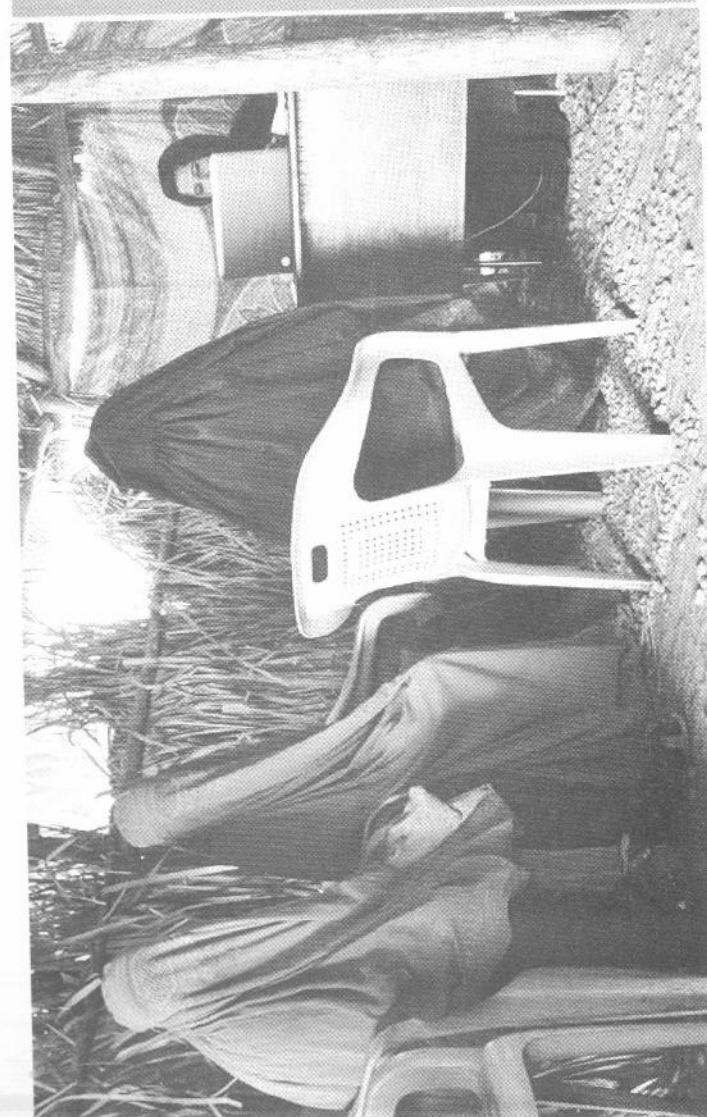
**RAJOLAI, Pakistan, 27 August (OHCHR)**

At the age of 20, when most young women dream of an ideal future,

Sajida's life took an impossible turn for the worse. A quake in January camp killed her 20-year-old husband, leaving her a widow with a

three-month-old son. "I don't know what the future holds for me, but I am worried about my child's future; how will I feed him and clothe him," Sajida said, quietly sobbing behind her veil. The death of Sharif Ahmad,

one of 15 people killed in the March attack, left Sajida's fate in the hands of her elderly grandfather-in-law and her brother-in-law.



## The wonder of 'tender loving care'

Of the thousands of stories coming out after the earthquake of 8/10, some have sad endings; others are in limbo and waiting to be told but now and again we come across one that makes us rejoice at the marvel of what a little love and affection can do when showered on someone in distress. One such story is that of a young girl who cannot tell her name and who is not yet "out of the woods," as they say, but is so much better that the volunteers who work with her are full of hope she may eventually recover and lead a normal life. She was brought to the hospital with a bad head injury and operated on. It has not been determined as yet whether she was mentally disturbed from the beginning or it was the trauma of the earthquake that shattered the fragile equilibrium of her psychological well-being, but she is improving day-by-day and may be able to tell her own story one day.

The tale of her misfortune has already been written by a colleague a few weeks ago. He highlighted her unstable condition and brought it to the attention of a few dedicated volunteers, who immediately took her in hand and now protect this girl like they do their own children. Because she is about 14 or 15 years old, her security in the hospital was a cause for concern as she was in a ward where boys were also admitted and male attendants had free access. After the volunteers took her in hand she was shifted to a safer facility and is being cared for there. In the beginning she would not speak to anyone and had the look of a frightened animal but it is amazing what a change has taken place in a few weeks after the love and affection she is receiving.

This girl with the sad eyes and rosy cheeks now writes a few letters of the alphabet in Urdu; says a few words and shows affection for other girls in the facility where she is staying. She is also very attached to the volunteers who work there. I am not a familiar person in her life but she did not want me to leave when I visited the place. "Why are you leaving?" she asked tearfully in the dialect she knows and clutching my arm. "Don't go, don't go." It is the same heartbreaking cry each time the volunteers leave but they too have families to care for, though they make it a point to go back regularly each day.

No one has come forward to claim the girl and no one has inquired about her either. Since she is unable to give any information about herself, it will not be possible for volunteers to find her family but one of them is hoping to go to Muzaffarabad to see whether anyone recognizes her from her photograph. Of course all care will be taken to see that she does not fall into the wrong hands. In the meantime, she is getting the love and affection of so many people I doubt it can be matched but family comes first, I guess. If no family is found, then what her fate will be no one knows. Hopefully, it will be an "all's well that ends well" story.

Ishrat Hyatt, The News – December 19, 2005

## Earthquake deepens women sufferings

ISLAMABAD: In the aftermath of October 8 catastrophe, women of the affected areas have become defenceless against increasing incidents of domestic violence, health

problems and were overburdened with domestic responsibilities, said Oxfam Advocacy Officer, Yamina Mokrani. She was speaking at the "National Recipient Conference of Earthquake Victims" arranged by Sungi Development Foundation at a local hotel on Friday.

The event focused on developments since last year's earthquake that killed 70,000 people mostly school children and women and rendering 3.5 million homeless. Approaching winters, withering tents, lack of basic amenities, absence of standard schools, business community dilemma, besides many other concerns were part of the deliberations. Yamina spoke of women's increased vulnerability and how to minimize the impact of last year's disaster.

"October 8 earthquake had exacerbated the traditional gender gaps. Women were now sole bread earners in many cases. They travelled great distances to fetch water. Treatment on the ground is degrading and the rural women did not have access to legal counseling or anyone to fill out their forms," she said. Women were largely absent from public debate and economic activities. Their work load and stress had increased.

"Poor women are responsible for livestock, collecting wood for fuel, agriculture and collection of water and now removal of rubble without recognition for their endless efforts to make ends meet," said Yamina as she listed the concerns. Last year's earthquake had horrific consequences on young girls who had given up their studies and were taking care of their little brothers and sisters or the disabled members of their families. "Young girls and women also feel exposed because they are living in temporary shelters and strangers (men, assessment teams and the army) roamed around," she said.

Dawn – October 08, 2006

## Ten industrial centres for women to be set up in AJK

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister Nilofar Bakhtiar said on Saturday her Ministry would open ten industrial centres for women in Azad Kashmir. She was talking to media persons during her visit to quake-affected areas of Azad Kashmir. She said opening of these industrial centres would provide an opportunity to women of Azad Kashmir to earn and become financially independent. She also had a meeting with women and girls of Rangla Pahari and assured them of the government's support in their hour of distress. She distributed trucks of relief goods containing winter clothing and bedding at Rangla Hills, Dheerkot, Guldana and Malot.

APP, The Nation – December 25, 2005

## Difficult for AJK girls to pursue studies in quake-hit areas

MUZAFFARABAD: Nazia Bibi has had hard times in pursuing her studies because of financial constraints and absence of a separate middle school for girls in or around

her mountain village, south of the AJK capital. Her addict brother does not show any interest in household affairs and her widowed mother relies on a paltry amount of Zakat, yet she is determined to carry on her studies. "It was very, very hard to continue studies, but I did not give in to the adverse conditions out of my fondness," said the 14 year old eighth grade student. Bibi lives in Chandera village, more than 5000 feet above sea level, in union council Charakpura which was completely devastated in last year's earthquake. "Up to class five, it was my teacher who provided me books and stationery. And after that, absence of a girl's middle school in the area was the major problem," she told Dawn in her village.

Khalid Ahmed, a primary school teacher, said he got her admitted to a middle school for boys, although the head teacher was reluctant to take a girl on rolls. It's not a problem of Bibi alone. Hundreds of girls in the conservative rural belt face similar problems. Not only parents find it difficult to send their girls to co-education schools but the girls themselves feel uncomfortable in such institutions. Charakpura, a union council of 18 villages, has only one high school and four middle schools, all for boys, although the ratio of school-going girls at primary level is higher than that of the boys.

"It was in view of this problem that some people made a request to the head teacher of boys' high school to grant admission to the girls willing to pursue their studies," said Mr. Ahmed. "There are difficulties in co-education but we cannot help it, after all we have to educate our girls," he added. Mr. Ahmed also heads the Committee for Child Protection and Development (CCPD), a brainchild of Save the Children, a UK-based charity engaged in aid activities in the quake-hit zone.

"The aim and objective of the committee is to put in place a system for child protection at community level," says Beenish Khaleel, charity's assistant programme officer. She says a large number of girls discontinue their studies either due to poverty and unawareness or for want of separate girls schools. Co-education, says Salma Sarfraz, a student of 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Anwaar Sherif High School, may work well in cities, but it is unsuitable for rural areas.

"Honestly speaking, we don't feel comfortable in our class," she said. Discontinuation of education lands girls into other problematic situations, like early marriages against their wishes. Nazish Sudheer pointed out that even the parents who favoured girls' education were compelled to change their mind due to long distances between their villages and high schools. "It may not be much difficult for boys, but is certainly difficult for girls. The government must do something to end this tendency," said a student of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The unusual forthrightness of students is in itself is a pleasant change which they attribute to the SC/UK advocating their rights, something they never knew about before the quake. The charity has also constituted "children councils" at village level to create awareness among children about their rights. "When we started, it was a new thing not only for the children but also for their parents. But now things are changing pleasantly," said Ms. Khaleel.

Her assertion was corroborated by Ms. Sudheer who is chairperson of Anwaar Sherif village Children Council.

"Before we had no or little idea about our rights, for example, if our parents are hesitant to continue our education we can persuade them. Even if there is no separate school, that does not mean we should be deprived of our right to further education," she added. The children council and the CCPD members hold joint meetings once in a month where children highlight their problems and needs through skits, tableau and discussion. "And at the national level, we have been conducting and hosting walks, seminars, radio programmes and media briefings to draw attention of the government officials and the community at large towards the issues confronting children, Ms. Khaleel said.

According to her, after identifying cramped accommodation in schools as another serious problem, they have constructed 30 structures for primary schools in Union Council Charakpura. Elsewhere in Muzaffarabad and Bagh districts it has provided 189 structures, 44 of which are under construction.

It has also provided technical and financial support to the directorate of education planning for establishment of education management information system, which plays a vital role in the success of any programme.

Education department officials admit that in some areas they have yet been unable to establish separate schools for girls. "We are in picture of the problem and we are working out strategies to overcome it," said an official. Back in Chandera girls wish this should not take too long or else many more girls will continue to land in the darkness of illiteracy.

**Dawn – October 11, 2006**

## **Flood-hit women more susceptible to mental health problems**

KARACHI: In the aftermath of the devastating floods in the country, there is a dire need to attend to the physical and psychological needs of women and children, the two most vulnerable groups in any disaster-like situation as the survival of a child is intrinsically linked to the mother's well-being.

Women's susceptibility to illness and exploitation in a calamity increases if they are part of a conservative society that imposes social and cultural restrictions on them.

These were some important points highlighted at a seminar on "Mental health and long-term illness: the need for continued and integrated care" organised by the Psychology Department of Karachi University at the Arts Auditorium on Tuesday.

Giving a presentation on the effect of disasters on women's mental health, Dr. Unaiza Niaz, the director of The Psychiatric Clinic and Stress Research Centre and president of the Pakistan Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, said the experience of global natural disasters had shown that women suffered the most in these circumstances and were more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Gender inequality with respect to human rights, low economic, health and education status make women more prone to psychological illnesses and exploitation before, during and after a natural disaster," she said.



Supporting her point of view with facts gathered by experts, she said that gender-influenced post-traumatic stress disorder came out in 42 out of 45 international studies. "The intensity and the scale of the severity of the disorder increase in conservative societies like ours. Being a parent contributes to the stress caused by disaster," she informed the audience.

The recent floods, she said, was the worst disaster in the country's as well as in the UN's history which had affected 20 million people. A vast majority of them constitute women, pregnant women and children.

The women, according to Dr. Niaz, are likely to have a lasting negative impact of the disaster on their mental health due to a number of factors including poor nutrition, the lack of access to care and social isolation.

"They are also known to be forced to provide sex in exchange for food or shelter in emergency situations, fostering sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies," she said.

Recalling her observations during the 2005 earthquake, Dr. Niaz said that she saw cases of women who were abandoned by their husbands because they got handicapped in the disaster. Women and young girls staying at camps also complained of sexual harassment by relief workers, she added. Referring to a study conducted in Manshara in 2005, she said that 95 per cent of women were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after the earthquake.

She also spoke about the special needs of pregnant women in disaster situations and said that they needed higher amounts of water to keep them and the developing foetus hydrated, among other things. Lactating women, infants and young children had critical nutritional requirements that should be looked into in a crisis.

"Children have a very strong sense of belonging to home. Displaced children are likely to suffer from emotional problems as they feel lost. Then, there is the case of 'permanently pregnant women' in Pakistan. It's painful to see a pregnant woman with two little children; carrying one in her arms while holding the other by her hand."

Recommending measures to check the growth of psychiatric illnesses, she said the World Health Organisation had acknowledged that mental health was a neglected subject and had proposed that it should be made part of primary health care physicians' training. "Building community resilience, strengthening preventive medicine and improving surveillance are critical to ameliorating the long-term impact of mental illnesses," she concluded.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Afridi, the head of the Psychiatry Department, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, underscored the need for giving adequate attention to mental health and said that research had shown that 80 per cent of all modern diseases were somehow linked to the state of mental health.

"Stigmatisation and misconceptions are two major factors that prevent people from seeking treatment. A few people suffering from any psychological illness consult a doctor and those who do fail to comply with medical advice," he said, adding that

cost-effective interventions were available to promote mental health. He lamented the misplaced priorities of successive governments and said there was no planning to meet the health needs of the masses.

Dr. Hina Qureshi, a consultant haematologist at the Kidney Centre, spoke about the prevalence of thalassaemia, haemophilia, leukaemia and sickle cell anaemia in Pakistan and stressed the need for pre-marital and pre-natal counselling in order to minimise the risk of genetic disorders.

"Patients of haematological disorders go through a lot of pain, both emotional and physical. The handling of such patients is a challenging task that constitutes providing proper medical service and psychological counselling to the patient as well as to his or her family," she said.

Dr. Nargis Asad of the Aga Khan University Hospital, Prof. Dr. Shahana Urooj, and Rubina Feroz, the Chairperson of KU's Department of Psychology, also spoke.

**Dawn – November 03, 2010**

## **Maternal health care for flood-hit women**

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is providing comprehensive reproductive health care services even one year after the devastating flood that hit the vast areas of the country as part of its humanitarian response.

According to a press release issued here on Sunday, the fund's immediate response after the flood was to support basic reproductive health services for the displaced. Now, during the recovery phase, the fund is focusing on upgrading health facilities to provide comprehensive emergency obstetric care to the women.

The flood brought to the forefront the women living in rural and underprivileged areas of Pakistan as some of them had never been to a doctor before. Current maternal mortality figures show that one of 89 Pakistani women dies of maternal causes whereas complications of childbirth still account for one-fifth of the deaths among the women of the childbearing age.

An estimated 500,000 pregnant women were among the 20 million people affected by the last year's flood. Their vulnerability was further exacerbated by malnutrition, trauma and fatigue due to long journeys to safer areas or to the camps and by subsequent poor hygiene.

Given the immense needs, UNFPA in collaboration with the government and civil society partners started to deliver urgently needed maternal health services through mobile service units as part of an outreach programme for areas that had no functional health facilities.

Damaged health facilities were refurbished and female health care providers were recruited to restart basic services. The fund, among other things, provided personal hygiene, newborn and clean delivery kits to tens of thousands of women. Reproductive health equipment and supplies sufficient to cover an estimated population of 6 million

Today, the emphasis is on helping flood-affected people rebuild their lives. "Majority of people have gone back but some are still here and are in need of services. Those who have gone back are more aware of their health needs," says Ccemab, a community health worker from Khairpur, Sindh. "Women who come to see us are much scared that there will be another flood this year and they will again lose the little they have managed to build back in a year," she adds.

“The buying capacity of the flood-affected people who have returned to their areas has decreased significantly,” says Dr. Jameel Chaudhry, UNFPA Provincial Coordination Officer in the Punjab. “There is a need to provide them with the services at minimal cost or free as the people who have returned to their homes, cannot afford to bear the out-of-pocket health expenses.”

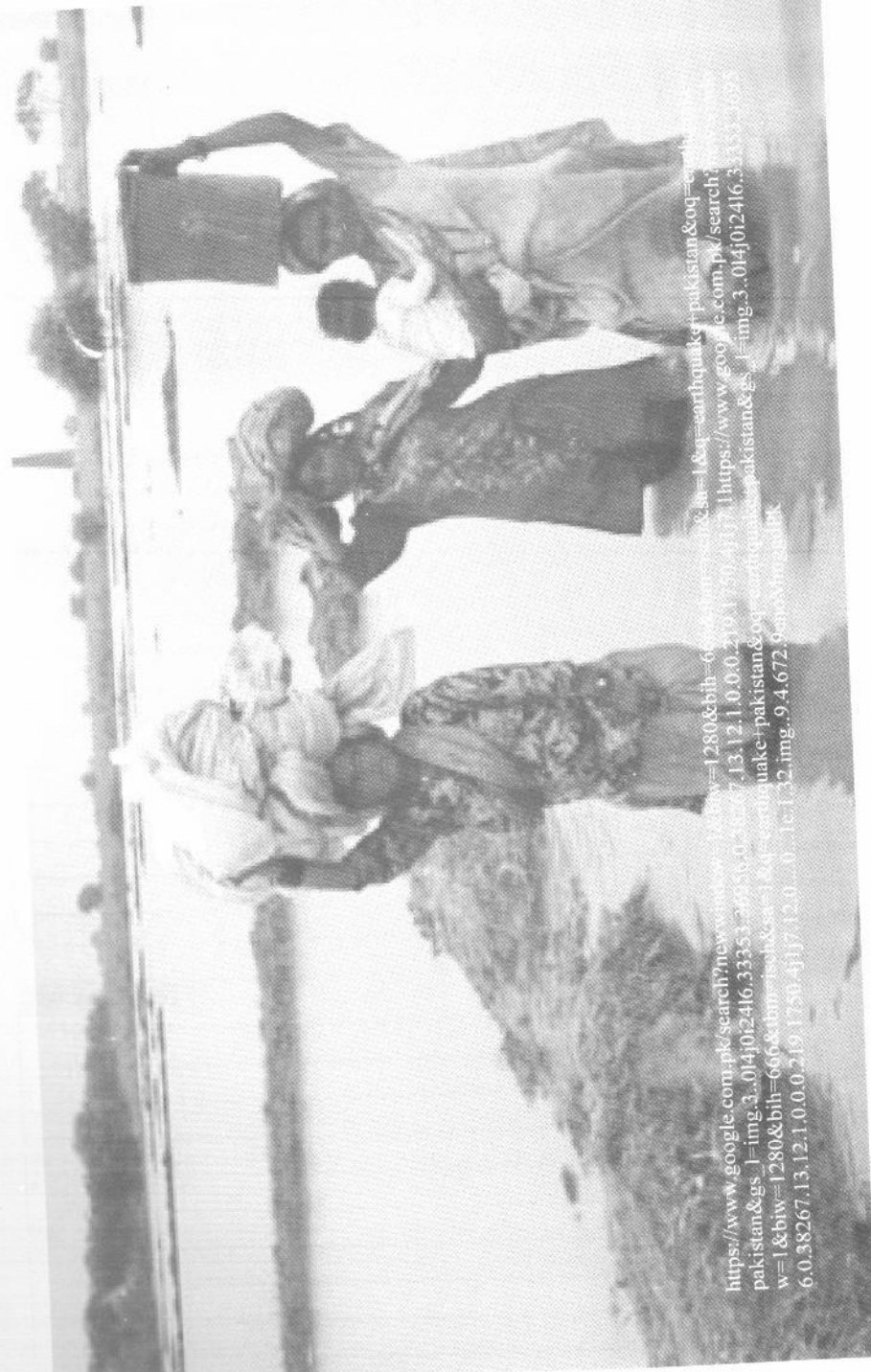
The fund is now working to provide, where possible, free reproductive health services in government-owned health facilities. The focus is to strengthen quality and improve the accessibility of the services. However, sustainability of services remains the biggest challenge as it requires support and commitment from the government at district and provincial levels.

A programme aimed at protecting displaced women and girls from violence was also initiated last year. Coordination mechanisms, co-led by the Department of Social Welfare, were set up both at the federal and provincial levels. Referral systems were established for the survivors to receive medical, legal, and psycho-social support. Twelve women-friendly spaces were also set up to reach women in affected communities.

“UNFPA will continue to provide humanitarian assistance in reproductive health and gender-based violence programmes for flood-affected communities as well as for the conflict-hit internally displaced persons (IDPs),” said Rabbi Royan, UNFPA Representative in Pakistan.



<http://www.cms-uk.org/Portals/2/images/News/2009/Pakistan-women-IDPs-IRIN-450px.jpg>



## A tale of two sisters

After the earthquake of 8/10 many children have been traumatized because of what happened to their loved ones, their homes and to themselves. Some have recovered outwardly but inwardly nurse the scars of their experience. Some passive by nature, have accepted their fate while others, who had dreams, are troubled and want to ask -Why?

"The stories about these children would fill volumes. This is just one of them. After being evacuated from Muzaffarabad, 11-year-old Zaheena and Zahida, 8, were brought to the Children's Hospital in Islamabad where Zaheena had a full length plaster put on her leg because it was broken at the thighbone. While they were in the hospital, they were visited by a teenaged brother who snatched money and saleable items given to them by sympathizers and mistreated both girls. In one incident he tried to strangle the younger one because she resisted. Their torment ended when Dr. Zaheer Abbas recognized the boy as a drug addict, banned his entry in the hospital and shifted the girls to the 'unattended' ward. Everything went smoothly while volunteers visited the hospital because Zaheena also suffered from a bladder problem and needed a constant change of pampers, but as the number of helpers dwindled, patients were not getting enough attention from the overworked hospital staff. Pampers could not prevent bladder discharge from entering the plaster which compounded her discomfort.

One day, a volunteer, Naila, was horrified to see festering blisters on Zaheena's body so she called the doctor on duty, who promised a check-up but failed to show up. Being a go-getter, she then contacted the higher authorities, which resulted in the plaster being removed and the girls shifted to the National Institute of Special Education in the care of an NGO Women's Kid Trust because they had no relative to keep an eye on them in the hospital. It was a joyous day for both the sisters as they were bathed and sat out in the sun. "We have seen the sun after so many days," said Zaheena to anyone who was listening, brushing her hair, laughing all the while in happiness.

Unfortunately, it was short-lived because a psychologist questioned her about her experience despite the staff telling her to give the girl a few days to settle down. She went into a stage of shock after recalling her experience and retreated into her own world for ten days before getting normal. I'm happy to say now both girls are very happy as they are learning to read and write — they did not go to school previously — and a male cousin has turned up as the nearest relative. The question is, what's in the future for these girls because though the extended family system ensures there is always someone to look after them, the picture does not look rosy.

Their father died four years ago and the family (mother and four children) was being looked after by this cousin. Their mother and his wife died in the earthquake but his three children survived. The girls' elder brother also died in the earthquake and he is survived by a wife and three children. That means he has to shoulder the responsibility of a total of ten children and an adult to be cared for, besides himself. He is a soldier in the army and though his pay packet will be regular, he will barely manage to feed them, let alone send them to school. Since both girls are doing so well at learning the three Rs it seems a pity that their education may be stopped, especially since it is having such a therapeutic effect on them.

Volunteers say Zaheena lives up to her name (zaheen=intelligent) while Zahida is a bright, outgoing child. "Tell me what you do during the day," I asked. "I eat and I write and then I eat again", she replied with a mischievous grin. She had a broken jaw and eating helps to exercise it. The sad part of this interaction between the volunteers and these and other children is that they are going to miss the tender loving care they have been given here, especially all the girls, who are not on the priority list of affection in the family circle.

**Ishrat Hyatt, The News - December 09, 2005**

## Floods 2012 when the heavens pour down misery, women bear the brunt

### After floods hit parts of the province, they had to double their efforts on farms

KASHMORE: When thick grey clouds hovered over Karim Bux Jakhrani village in Kashmore on Monday, the women living there let out wails of despair as they watched the sky with wide eyes. The men, on the other hand, hardly even looked up. Those who fall for gender stereotypes would be quick to attribute this difference to men being 'inherently' more valiant and inexpressive. But the reality is that after three consecutive years of flooding, it was the women who bore the brunt of the calamity and they may have more to lose than men if tragedy strikes again. Karim Bux Jakhrani village, which is 15 kilometres from Kandhkot city, was one of the areas affected by the down-pour in Sindh last year. There are around 200 houses in the village, which around 250 children and more than 200 women call home.

After disaster struck, the men were mired in debt as houses were damaged and crops were swept away. Their solution: Get women to double their efforts on agricultural fields and have more children so that there would be more hands on deck. "Our lives now just revolve around reducing the debts that we have accumulated," said Naziran, a 40-year-old woman who lives in the village. Her husband is also married to another woman with whom he has 10 children. Like the other men of his village, he has more than one wife so that he may have more children to help him on the fields. "Polygamy is a custom here. No one objects because in a male-dominated society, a woman has no right to voice dissent." When disaster struck, it was she who pacified wailing children and made sure they were well-fed while her husband ventured off on his own.

Moorzadi, another resident of the village, started stitching clothes to pitch in and help support her family. It takes her 20 days to finish a kurta which fetches only Rs. 400. "There's no other way for me to earn money. I get a pittance, but something is better than nothing as I have to feed my grandchildren," she said. "Women place the Holy Quran over their heads when it rains. We can't afford more damage. We can't tolerate the pain of relocating and the cries of children." The other women living in the village have similar stories to share.

The women claim that they toil to help their husbands but the men don't reciprocate. "We aren't taken to hospitals when we have fever, headaches and other symptoms.



The privilege of visiting a hospital is only reserved for emergencies," said Naziran. Pregnant women have to tolerate the pain of childbirth and risk infection as there is no maternity home in the area to assist delivery and the husbands don't bother taking the wives to far-off hospitals. After the floods destroyed everything, women even had to wait until night to relieve themselves as there were no washrooms. It was only when a team from Research and Development Foundation with the collaboration of Oxfam helped them rebuild the village that things started getting better.

"Our lives now just revolve around reducing the debts that we have accumulated because of the floods," said Miran, a 40-year-old woman who lives in Karim Bux Jakhrani village

Naziran added that despite the contributions women make, they can still be killed over suspicions of karokari. "We just can't talk to other men. Even if there's an emergency and the men of the house are away, we can't ask other males for help. Another villager, Ali Hasan, confirmed the existence of these harsh rules, "We won't tolerate women who have relationships with other men outside the house."

**Sameer Mandhro, Express Tribune – March 1, 2013**

## **Flood-hit women seek protection**

ISLAMABAD: Women from the flood-hit areas on Tuesday urged the government to take urgent steps for their protection, saying they continue to bear the brunt of the natural disaster one year on.

Talking with women attending a public forum on "rebuilding lives post-flood 2010" organised by ActionAid Pakistan and its local partners, expressed serious concern over denial of rights after the floods.

They regretted that women were not included in the government's relief and reconstruction packages. They said majority of women were not entitled to receive Watan cards and had no separate food distribution centres.

Misbah Farid from Kot Addu said she had to travel by foot to a safer place for miles after having a caesarean birth. She said health facilities in the aftermath of the natural disaster were inadequate.

Rizwana, from the same area, said special arrangements should have been made for pregnant women. "We are getting substandard food and there is no milk for children." She added that absence of separate toilets for women in transitional camps was another major issue for them.

Shabana Yasmeen from Shahdadt Kot she had to go across a mountain to reach a safer place.

Zainab from Layyah said the flood destroyed livestock and many people, including her family, lost their livelihood.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the forum, the flood-affected people urged the

government to immediately announce a long-term agricultural rehabilitation programme. They said provision of livestock, poultry, seed and fertilisers to small farmers, particularly women peasants, must be ensured.

They also demanded starting cash for work and kitchen gardening projects and above all "including women in all decision making processes".

Jamal Ahmed, country director ActionAid Pakistan, termed the biggest ever flood last year in Pakistan's history had serious impact on public and household development initiatives.

Touqeer Fatima Bhutto, Sindh's Minister for Women Development, acknowledged that women were not "prioritized in government flood response mechanism", particularly in the case of Watan cards. However the Sindh government pioneered a movement to distribute land among flood-affected women peasants, she pointed out.

Responding to criticism over ineffective role played by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) during the natural calamity, Anika Khan, gender advisor Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said the two institutions were merely responsible for coordinating flood response at all levels.

She added that NDMA lacked resources and manpower to play a meaningful role. She regretted that there was no gender cell in NDMA or PDMA. **Dawn - July 26, 2011**

## **1.6m children, pregnant women hit by flood**

ISLAMABAD: There are 1.36 million children and 240,000 pregnant women among over 8.8 million people affected by the recent rains and floods in Sindh.

National Disaster Management Authority's chairman Dr. Zafar Qadir told a press conference on Monday that the total number of women affected by the floods was 4.13 million.

He said about three million patients had consulted the medical facilities in the affected areas. "If it is assumed that many of the patients had a repeat visit to the medical facilities, the number of flood victims suffering from various diseases would be between 1.5 million and 2 million," he said.

Dr. Fawad Khan, Health Cluster Coordinator of the National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Network, said over 20 per cent of the patients were suffering from acute respiratory infection.

NDMA Health Coordinator Dr. Sabeena Durrani said 17.6 per cent of the patients were suffering from skin diseases and 11.8 per cent were suspected for malaria.

Suspected cases of measles and meningitis represented less than one per cent, she said.

In children aged up to five years, skin disease (19.2 per cent) is the most reported illness, followed by acute diarrhoea (17.2 per cent), upper respiratory tract infection

(16.5 per cent), suspected malaria (11.6 per cent) and lower respiratory tract infection (4.1 per cent). The doctor said diarrhoeal diseases constituted 18.2 per cent and acute respiratory infections 20.6 per cent of reported cases in the group.

Dr. Durrani said 48 emergency health kits each catering for a population of 6,000 for one month and 57 diarrhoeal disease kits each sufficient for 1,000 people for a month had been distributed.

She said 1.4 million water purification tablets, 1,132 hygiene kits, 6,000 anti-snake venom doses and 5,811 rapid diagnostic test kits for malaria had also been distributed.

**Dawn – September 26, 2011**

## Male casualty in quake

### Workload increases on women, children

PESHAWAR: Women and children in the quake-hit areas of the Frontier province have been facing an uphill task of increased workload, mainly because of deaths of male members of their families and loss of sources of livelihood. This was stated in a study conducted by the IUCN, according to which almost all respondents, including women and children, said their workload had greatly increased after the October 8 earthquake.

Even families which had their males were quoted in the study as saying that men often went to their destroyed houses in order to look after their animals and to protect the remaining assets and the women and children were required to cater to the workload. "The absence or death of male members of the family means that women are left to cope alone in difficult circumstances," said the study. Even small children also share this pressure, it said. "I bring water from the water supply tank in the camp. I also bring wood and do any relevant work as my mother and elder sisters cannot go outside the tent due to purdah (veil) and the unfamiliar environment," a small girl was quoted in the study as saying. It said that most of the people in the earthquake area depend on agriculture and forestry for their livelihood.

According to the study, women worked for prolonged hours in the fields sowing, weeding and harvesting. Besides they were also involved in work like cooking, gardening, poultry farming, collecting firewood, making handicrafts and husbanding livestock. The study said that the earthquake had destroyed all these sources of livelihood and in nearly all the earthquake-affected areas where the study was conducted it showed that economic life had come to almost a complete standstill. The loss of employment and livelihoods, even for a short period of time, is likely to precipitate a fall into extreme poverty, it added. Apart from it, most of the jobs in the affected areas are in the agriculture and service sector, which had received a severe blow because the landslides and rockslides caused by the earthquake had resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries to farmers, their families and their livestock.

"We are not able to go back to cultivate the damaged lands. Even the areas where ag-

ricultural land has not been affected much there is an urgent need to obtain seeds, tools and fertilizers for the upcoming Rabi season; and to restore critical infrastructure such as irrigation systems, farm to market roads, and agro-processing facilities," it quoted some families as saying. Due to the earthquake huge holes and gulfs have developed in the lands, it said, adding that heavy rocks rolling down from nearby mountains now cover the cultivatable land. There is no land now for cultivation and agriculture, it said.

During the study, the respondents were also asked as to what could be done about the problem. They replied that heavy machinery was needed to remove the huge stones and without their removal their lands and irrigation system could not be restored and it would be impossible for them to cultivate their lands and begin normal lives once again. Among the respondents were representatives of a few organizations which were engaged in relief and rehabilitation activities. The study found that no organization was working to restore agricultural lands even in relatively safe places.

At the time the study was being conducted most of the organizations were still busy in carrying out relief work, distributing food and providing material for shelters.

**Dawn – June 08, 2006**



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## Woman pulled out alive after 63 days

MUZAFFARABAD: in an unprecedented incident, a rescue and relief team of Al-Khidmat pulled out a woman from under the debris of a collapsed building in Muzaffarabad, 63 days after the October 8 earthquake.

BBC Urdu reported that 40-year-old Naqsha Bibi had been rescued on December 10, and local people looked after the woman for two days. She was handed over to a team of German doctors on Monday and was immediately shifted to Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) Hospital at Kamsar Relief Camp. Locals said that the woman's parents and two brothers had died in the quake.

Doctor Hafiz at PIMA Hospital said that Naqsha Bibi was weak and was being kept in the Intensive Care Unit. He said that her recovery might take two weeks. The rescuers said that they found remains of food in the debris. They said that some rainwater had accumulated under the debris, which might have saved the woman.

Daily Times - December 13, 2005

## Workshop for women of quake zone

ISLAMABAD: An international NGO World Vision (WV) plans to hold a workshop in the earthquake zone wherein 30 villages and women organizations from union councils will participate. The one-day orientation workshop will be held under Kaghan Integrated Programme of World Vision for women's organizations from two Union Councils of Balakot tehsil, Mansehra, today (Thursday). As many as 30 villages and women's organizations from Union Councils Hungrai and Satbanni will participate in the workshop.

World Vision Kaghan Area Development Manager Farid Alam said "our programme serves about 7,000 children and their families, we need and value communities' input in order to develop our projects in education, livelihood and emergency response and disaster mitigation". He said, "We are organizing this event because we want to create a sense of responsibility and ownership of programmes, developed by World Vision Pakistan for Kaghan". The World Vision, under a three-year strategy for working closer to communities through to 2008, is engaged in carrying out various projects on education, livelihoods and disaster mitigation in Kaghan area of Balakot tehsil, areas of Oghi tehsil, and Siran valley of Mansehra district devastated by the October 2005 earthquake.

The News - June 07, 2007

## Smile returns to amputee girl

Islamabad: After losing her right leg in the debris of her mud house that collapsed in the October 8 earthquake in Alai, Battagram, three and a half year old Ayesha developed psychological trauma and would start screaming whenever she saw any alien face. The brave child had managed to come out of the debris through a small hole with one leg

without the help of anyone. However, soon after the incident, her psychological condition worsened as whenever she tried to touch her right leg or saw other children wearing shoes or playing she would start screaming. She wanted her leg back! Thanks to her module prosthetic leg, now the smile is back on her innocent face and she can walk again. Her eyes full of hope, Ayesha took her first step with her prosthetic leg at a news conference here on Monday. She would take some time to adjust to her new leg.

Six days back, Ayesha was brought to Ayub Medical Centre, Rawalpindi, where she has received a module prosthesis the latest artificial limbs sharply different from the conventional prosthesis that is still in vogue in Pakistan but dates back to the World War II period. Limbless Foundation, a UK-based NGO, provided the latest artificial limb to Ayesha and will be offering them to 600 other amputees free of cost. Its low weight and real leg-like shape and lot of other technical edges have made module prosthesis popular in the developed world.

Fitting someone with limb prosthesis can improve their quality of life. A properly-fitted prosthesis can restore the ability to walk or grasp and manipulate objects meaning greater independence, the ability to return to work and recreational activities, besides a better body image and improved self-esteem.

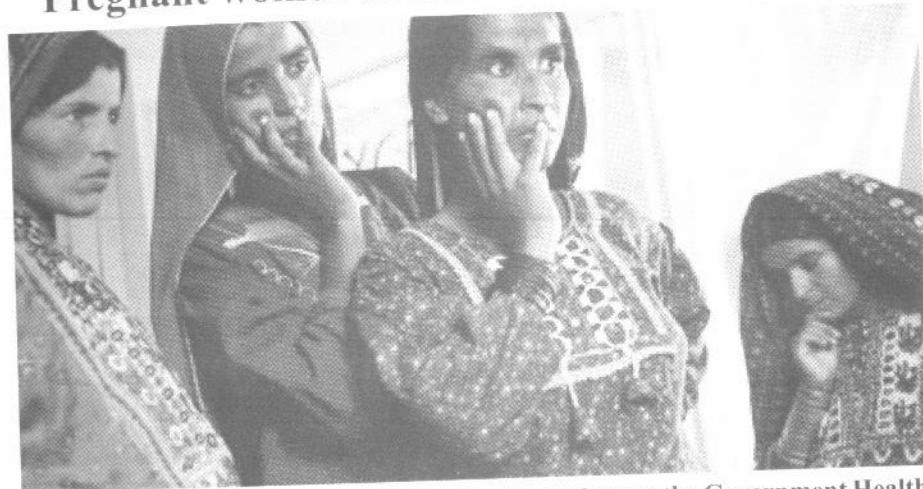
**NO INFRASTRUCTURE:** In Pakistan where about one million people lost their limbs in the earthquake and where amputation is so common that even in minor accidents doctors have to go for it, there is no infrastructure available for this latest artificial limb. Zia-ul-Haq, the project coordinator of Limbless, told Dawn that the diffusion of this new technology in Pakistan needed another seven years and that too if the government agreed to make a plan and worked with the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics without further delay. He said a sustainable plan should be made in which companies manufacturing prostheses should move their plants to Pakistan, where local people should be trained in fitting and repairing them.

Mr. Haq said prosthetic devices and components needed repair. Boys and girls whose body growth was not yet completed needed some alteration in the sockets and other components of their prosthesis after six months. So Ayesha has to visit the hospital after each six months till her heights fixes at one point. This sustainable process can involve a long time, he said. Besides, these limbs are more expensive as the cost ranged from Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 120,000. The repair could also put burden on the poor, he said.

Certainly, the latest limbs were the best option. A conventional prosthesis leg weighed from seven to eight kg and those who relied on them often suffered from backbone-related problems. While, a module prosthesis leg weighed only between one kg and one and a half kg. He said it was a big challenge for the government to provide the amputees with latest artificial limbs in order to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society. The best option is to work jointly with international donors after convincing the prostheses companies to outsource their manufacturing capacity to Pakistan, he maintained.

**Dawn – December 14, 2006**

## Pregnant women in rain-hit areas at high risk



**Figure 1: women wait to be attended by health workers at the Government Health Clinic in the village of Babrio Jat, Thatta, Sindh, Pakistan on July 2, 2011. – File Photo (Sam Phelps/Dawn.com)**

HYDERABAD: Pathani, an anaemic middle-aged pregnant woman, sits in a dingy room of a relief camp of Sanghar — one of the worst rain-affected districts of Sindh — for her medical examination by a mobile team of doctors.

She is expected to deliver her ninth baby. A gynaecologist advises her to take normal and rich diet till childbirth. The advice is not unusual because all gynaecologists give the same advice to expecting mothers for normal childbirth. But for Ms. Pathani and her likes it seems extremely difficult because they are facing extraordinary times following a disaster triggered by recent monsoon rains in lower Sindh in August and September.

According to a recent assessment by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), 8.9 million rain-hit people include 240,000 pregnant women and 1.36 million children.

Torrential rains have rendered expecting mothers more vulnerable to malnutrition. They are high risk cases and senior gynaecologists fear that maternal mortality rate might shoot up in Sindh this year because of the conditions these women live in. "You must take regular food daily till you deliver the baby," Dr. Anjum of People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) advises Ms. Pathani as she listens to the doctor attentively and calmly in the camp's room where conditions remain depressing.

"I had normal childbirth so far and hope this one too will be normal. But supply of food remains irregular and we are dependent on what is provided to us here," she told the doctor.

Under present conditions antenatal care of expecting mothers emerges as a big issue for health providers.



**Figure 2: According to a recent assessment by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), 8.9 million rain-hit people include 240,000 pregnant women and 1.36 million children. – File Photo (Sam Phelps/Dawn.com)**

Pregnant women with rural background even otherwise turn up in hospitals with symptoms of anaemia, hypertension disorder and social neglect that put them at high risk usually. Recent havoc visiting these rural settlements has led to more complications in cases of expecting mothers.

Chairperson of the Department of Gynaecology, Liaquat University Hospital of Jamshoro, Prof. Dr. Roshan Aara, said rain-hit women suffered from psychological trauma too. "Now they don't have access to normal food. I fear pre-term labour cases among them," she said.

Malnutrition would haunt them seriously and they were not able apparently to handle it on their own unless a serious initiative was taken (by the government and non-government relief agencies), Dr. Roshan Aara said. "There will be cases of newborns with low-weight due to malnutrition on mother's part," she added.

She pointed out that facilities even in tertiary hospitals remained below par even if there was no disaster. "Our hospital-based study indicates that we have 1000-1100 mortality per 100,000 live births among women," she said.

According to her, 40 childbirths are reported daily at the hospital. "We have only six tables for childbirths," she said.

She feared that mortality rate in Sindh might go up this year because of serious complications among displaced women. "There will be unsafe deliveries and abortions too," she said.

Dr. Pushpa Srichand, a gynaecologist, is of the view that these mothers would not have access to skilled birth attendants in camps or in tent cities set up in different rain-affected districts. They need to be shifted to tertiary hospitals if possible.

"Nutritional deficiency among mothers leads to high chances of low-weight among newborns and preterm labour can't be ruled out," she said.

Often, she added, rural women normally had anaemia and high blood pressure. "Bleeding before, during and after childbirth endangers lives of mothers," she said. According to her, present situation is likely to aggravate conditions of expecting mothers.

Medical experts and health indicators rate Pakistan among the countries having high maternal mortality rate. As many as 276 women die per 100,000 live births in the country. Some doctors claim the figure is even higher in remote areas. According to them, maternal mortality goes as high as 700-1000 per 100,000 live births in remote areas.

Doctors describe postpartum haemorrhage (bleeding), malnutrition, infection and hypertension as main cause of mortality among pregnant women.

The maternal mortality has also become a social issue that society seriously needs to look into.

Expecting mothers like Ms. Pathani continue to depend on medical assistance provided by mobile medical teams or any nearby health facilities, though most of the units are said to be dysfunctional. These mothers are hard-pressed to fulfill their requirements of nutritional diet at this stage. Besides, their transportation to teaching or district-level hospital is a big issue.

Such mothers, presently homeless, have a tough time in relief camps. Doctors fear a lot of unsafe childbirth this year.

**Dawn - October 8, 2011**

## Technical Training for Flood-hit Women

PESHAWAR: Speakers at a ceremony stressed the need for empowerment of women by imparting them technical skills so that they could play an active role in development of the country.

"Imparting technical skills to women is the need of the hour. The women affected by natural and man-made calamities desperately need to learn vocational and technical skills to be able to earn livelihoods for their families," said Asmatullah Khan Gandapur, director-general Technical and Manpower Department, on the occasion of inauguration of a vocational training centre in Nowshera Kalan on Sunday.

He said that the centre would offer courses in beauty care, tailoring and embroidery to enable flood-affected women to improve their economic conditions.

The project "improving family health through capacity building of women in flood-affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" has been launched by Prime Foundation Pakistan in collaboration with Canada-based International Development and Relief Foundation to help flood-hit women.

Mr. Gandapur said that women formed half of the country's population so bringing them into mainstream could prove beneficial in long term.



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J							
A	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
N	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	

							1
F							
E	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	

							1
M							
A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
R	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31					

			1	2	3	4	5
A							
P	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
R	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30			

						1	2	3
M								
A	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Y	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

J								
U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
N	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	29	30						

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3	4
J							
U	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
L	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

							1	2
A								
U	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
G	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

								1
S								
E	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
P	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	28	29	30					

				1	2	3	4	5
O								
C	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	26	27	28	29	30	31		

								1
N								
O	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
V	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

								1
D								
E	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
C	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	28	29	30	31				

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