

Rebuilding Lives-Post 2010 Floods

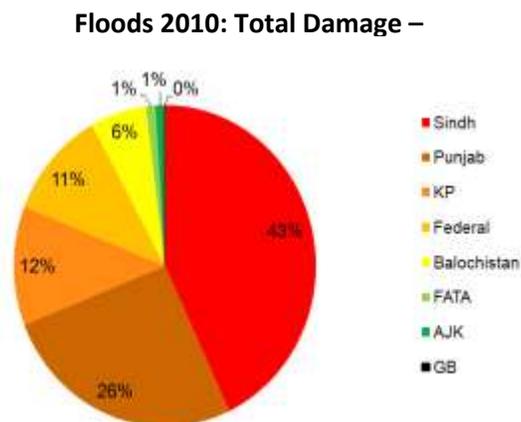
Pakistan's Policy Challenges in Responding to the 2010 Floods

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The 2010 floods were the worst ever in the 63 years of Pakistan history. 1,980 people were killed and 1.6 million houses were destroyed, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of more than 20 million people all over Pakistan. The recovery is still at an early phase – the full recovery will take some years due to the magnitude of the disaster – but the one-year anniversary of the floods is a good opportunity to do some initial evaluation of the response.

Specifically, the Government of Pakistan and other stakeholders can take immediate actions both to improve the human rights situation in the on-going recovery and to ensure that, if and when a disaster of this magnitude occurs again, the authorities and the population are better prepared.



Source: World Bank (WB), Damage Need Assessment (DNA)

These actions should include¹:

Prioritize Women in all Compensation and Rehabilitation Packages:

The Government of Pakistan should re-distribute land to women, especially landless rural women to fulfil their constitutional right to access, control and ownership of land, as well as to end the circle of poverty for the most vulnerable sections of society.

The 2010 floods submerged nearly one-fifth of land in Pakistan, washing away cattle and over 2 million hectares of standing crops. The floods also exposed the depth of existing poverty and deprivation in Pakistan, especially in terms of gender inequality. Although women are the largest contributors to Pakistan's agro-economy, they have been perpetually denied access, control and ownership of land and

¹ ActionAid Pakistan along with its partners, civil society organizations and networks while not only responding to the floods through relief, recovery and rehabilitation processes has been proactively engaged in raising these policy issues, gaps and challenges. This analysis is drawn not only from our flood response work but also our on-going work at various locations especially our policy engagement in 2005 earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation campaigns.

remain the most neglected section of the flood affected population. Throughout Pakistan, millions of farmers – including women, who grow the majority of food crops – are working on land they do not own, giving between half and two-thirds of their crops to landlords. In Pakistan, only 1-2% of women own land, and even this small percentage may not have access and control over the land they own on paper. More than 70 per cent of the flood affected areas in Sindh and Southern Punjab are home to a large number of farmers and women peasants. Given the feudal system prevalent in these areas, farmers get very little of the compensation or rehabilitation offered. For women the impact is doubled due to the patriarchal nature of the society, as the men in the household will take up most of the services. This will especially be the case if there is a scarcity of food, water, medicine or other essential services.

When the floods hit Pakistan 2 million hectares of crops were ready for harvest. Given that about half the workforce works in the agricultural sector the flood also resulted in a massive loss of livelihoods. While some received compensation for the loss of income, women farmers– as they do not qualify as “farmers” according to government policy –were not recipients of the government-backed compensation schemes.

To help rural families and landless women farmers overcome this cycle of exploitation, the provincial government of Sindh has recovered 95,000 acres of its own land from the flood, distributing it to roughly 5,800 peasants. The Sindh government deserves credit for targeting land compensation measures towards women; however, these policies are yet to be implemented and there is no clear timeline for distributing land to the women farmers of Sindh. While women are legally allowed to own land, social obstacles have discouraged women from realizing these rights. In 2008, the Sindh government launched an initiative to advance the legal rights of women through land distribution. It would have been an important step in addressing denial of rights to women in a society ruled by patriarchal mind-set and values— but lack of support from the larger society prevented the project from moving forward.

Provision of Agriculture Inputs to Small Farmers to Ensure Food and Livelihood Security:

Government should ensure the provision of agricultural inputs (esp. seeds and fertilizers) through comprehensive agriculture rehabilitation package to ensure sustainable food production by small-scale women/farmers; the foundation of rural communities' food & livelihood security and price stability.

According to the FAO agricultural assessment report, the monsoon floods caused damages of unprecedented scale to agriculture crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry and have destroyed primary infrastructure such as tube wells, water channels household storages, houses, animal sheds, personal seed stocks, fertilizers and agricultural machinery. The floods struck just before the harvesting of key crops, including cotton, rice, maize, vegetables and sugarcane and on the onset of the Rabi (winter) wheat planting season which normally starts in September/October.

Although the provincial governments especially Punjab and later on Sindh commenced a major wheat support program during November and December 2010 with provision of wheat seeds and urea fertilizer to the full farm unit if the land holding size was less than 10 acres. Larger farm owners could get subsidized loans. The estimated cost of the scheme was PKR 8 Billion (PKR 3.36 Billion Punjab, PKR 3.72 Billion Sindh). **Around 30% of the farmers were not able take advantage of these state interventions in time. Farmers also reported that the wheat seed that was distributed by the government was of low quality and in some cases too late for the wheat crop. The government distributed Urea fertilizers instead of the required DAP fertilisers, which were more expensive. Around 30-60% of small famers purchased seeds at a high interest rate, often borrowing money at high interest or selling livestock and jewellery cheaply².**

² Field assessment done by AAPk in Feb 2011 in Kot Adu and Shahdad Kot through interviews and focus group discussions

The loss of livestock, issues related to land e.g. erosion, silting and levelling and damages to the water courses also added to the challenges faced by the small farmers and landless peasants as it hampered the production of the next crop.

Poor people especially women and children suffered due to an increase in the price of staple foods³. One of the main coping mechanisms for the inability to buy traditional food was to change what they ate. **Poor families responded to higher food prices by eating cheaper foods with lower nutritional value, consuming less food in each meal and skipping meals altogether**⁴. This dietary modification can aggravate the hunger and malnutrition situation especially in areas of Sindh⁵, with serious health implications for women and children.

Revisiting National Disaster Management Act 2010 (NDM Act 2010)

Government should revisit NDM Act 2010 to make it more comprehensive, responsive and gender sensitive with appropriate financial allocations; and state of the art institutional disaster management structure at all administrative levels.

In the early phase of flood response, there was a lack of coordination among various government departments. Without clear coordination, some efforts were duplicated while some things that should have been done promptly were left out. With this in mind, the Government of Pakistan should revisit the legal framework for disaster risk management (DRM) in Pakistan to make the legislation more comprehensive and free of duplication. **The existence of parallel legal structures and institutions results in unclear line of command and control and fixation of responsibility e.g. the duplication and overlapping of roles and responsibilities arose between National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) which affected the process of provision of “Watan Cards”⁶ to the people.** According to NADRA, 1.48 million Watan cards have been issued and PKR 27.5 billion disbursed across the country and also that it has effectively and transparently resolved 151,220 complaints from flood affected population who had been facing different problems in getting Watan cards. The recipients of cards had only been able to withdraw the first instalment of PKR 20,000/- and not the second instalment of PKR 80,000/-. According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in only a few affected areas more than 50 per cent of those eligible had actually received the cards. **The Government of Pakistan should abide by its promise and ensure that the Watan Card scheme is fully funded and distributed to all who are eligible.**

To address such issues there should be clear legal instruments at each administrative level which should support and supplement each other. Legislative and institutional overlapping of DRM in Pakistan are evident from laws like NDM Act 2010, West Pakistan National Calamities (Prevention and Relief) Act 1958, The Civil Defence Act 1952(As Amended In 1993), Punjab Emergency Service Act 2006 etc. DRM related laws do not refer to previous policies or attempt to incorporate the provisions of existing laws. The responsibility for ‘Declaration of Disaster’ is of critical importance in responding to disasters; however, the current legal framework is inadequate on this count as well. NDM Act 2010 fails to identify an office with the authority to declare an event a disaster, thus mobilizing the appropriate response. The protection structures at the state level to protect the marginalized sections of the society mainly women and children

³ Field assessment done by AAPk in Feb-Mar 2011 in Layyah and Bhakkar through interviews and focus group discussions

⁴ Field assessment done by AAPk in Feb-Mar 2011 in Layyah and Bhakkar through interviews and focus group discussions

⁵ http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media_6750.htm accessed on 20.7.11.

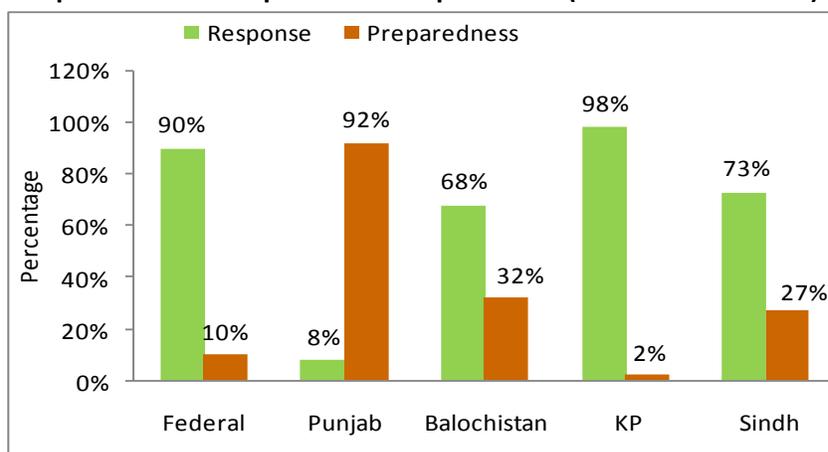
⁶ Watan Cards was announced by the government as a cash grant in which the affected people would get PKR 100,000/- in two instalments; PKR 20,000/- as a first instalment and the rest as a second instalment.

are either non-existent or insufficient. The DRM framework is also silent about the gender specific needs and issues of increased GBV in the aftermath of disaster. The present legal framework is deficient in providing forceful provisions for District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), and is partly responsible for the non-functioning of the district level disaster risk management structures which restricts community based disaster management.

There is a need to allocate sufficient financial resources for a comprehensive DRM policy and infrastructure along with the response efforts. After the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir, Pakistan has aligned its policy towards a more comprehensive DRM framework that encompasses preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and

rehabilitation. However, there is still a disconnect between policy and public financing of DRM even today. A lot needs to be done at the national level to align public financing with a comprehensive DRM policy. The government should focus on disaster preparedness by allocating greater priority and resources to preparedness activities in order to reduce vulnerabilities to different types of disasters and to minimize the adverse impacts of disasters⁷.

Expenditure on Response and Preparedness (2003-04 to 2007-08)



Source: Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS) calculations from Federal and Provincial Budget Books 2003-2008

The protection structures at the state level for marginalised communities - including women

and children – are either non-existent or insufficient. The DRM framework is also silent about gender specific needs and issues of increased GBV in the aftermath of disaster which needs to be changed.

ENDS

⁷ The legal and public financing analysis presented in the this policy brief around disaster management structures in Pakistan was done jointly by Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS) and ActionAid Pakistan.