

Disaster risk management in Pakistan before and after the 2005 earthquake

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Pakistan is a disaster prone country and poor risk management made it more vulnerable to a wide range of hazards including, avalanches, cyclones/storms, earthquakes, floods, glacial lake outbursts, landslides, river erosion and tsunami.

The 8th October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan found the country totally unprepared. The epicenter of this 7.6 magnitude earthquake was near the Muzaffarabad and tremors were felt in cities like Kabul and Delhi. Almost half of the homes in Muzaffarabad were destroyed; North West Frontier Province (NWFP) was hit very badly. Reports indicated a death toll of more than 70 thousands and almost 50 thousand people injured during this strongest earthquake in the region. The shallowness of the earthquake (10 km focal depth) and frequent aftershocks contributed significantly to the destruction.

This earthquake led the government to completely rethink their disasters management strategy. This work is an effort to discuss the vulnerability of communities in Pakistan and the factors leading towards the susceptibility to natural disasters. We have tried to portray the natural and non-natural factors which influence disaster vulnerability, to describe the stance of Pakistani government during natural disasters occurred in the past and proposed what necessarily steps should be taken by the government to minimize the risk imposed by the natural disasters.