

Shelter Security in Kashmir: A Central Aspect of Long-term Recovery



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An Effort to Turn Local Tsunami Recovery into Regional Disaster Risk Reduction for the Poor

For Personal and Educational Purpose only

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Foreword

Salman Rushdie is a wordsmith of rare caliber. Writing in "The Times" of London, on November 12, 2005, in the aftermath of the Kashmir Earthquake, he wrote eloquently that *"death arrived in rare majesty; in a place where death has become a grubby, ugly, everyday affair"*.

At 9.20 38 IST, on October 08, 2005, I, as Chief of Staff of a Corps was on a round of inspections in Yol Cantonment in the Kangra Valley, under the shadows of the mighty Dhauladhars, when the Kashmir Earthquake, 7.6 on the Richter scale and epicentred 19 miles North West of Muzaffarabad, in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), arrived in grim majesty, heralding death and destruction in its wake. Coincidentally, I was, at that time, gathering data on the *Kangra Earthquake of April 1905, a 100 or so years ago*; when most of the Kangra Valley had been destroyed by the early morning earthquake of Richter scale 8 magnitude. In Baramulla and Uri where I was commanding a Division, I could intimately feel the shock, the numbness and the despair of the affected people. Many of them lost their loved ones, who were often buried alive in the rubble of stone, mud mortar, galvanised iron sheets and wood. What were once warm homes stocked with dried vegetables, fruit and fodder for the severe Kashmiri winter, became graves for thousands. I felt proud of my troops who rushed to help their brethren in the villages, with compassion and care, even as they dug out other troops who died in their high altitude defense works on the Pir Panjals and the Shamshabari Ranges.

The statistics that emerged were grim. 73,338 people including around 1000 Pakistani soldiers died in POK. In India, 1309 people including 107 soldiers died and over 7500 people were injured. Kahlil Gibran, the famous poet, is of course prophetic when he writes eloquently of the moving finger (death) writing and, having writ, moving on...but what about the living... those who survived and had to cope with life in the aftermath of death? Statistics put out by the National Disaster Management Division of India's Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) state that 37,607 masonry buildings collapsed in Kashmir. Most buildings were made with random rubble masonry and bricks laid in clay mud mortar and had galvanised iron roofs. No earthquake resistant measures had been employed in their construction".

Salman Rushdie, in his article, quotes a Kashmiri journalist telling him that *"no one can survive (the Kashmiri winter) in the border villages in a tent"*. Making a grim prophecy, he said, *"if we look away, Kashmir could become worse than the Tsunami"*. That this did not happen in Kashmir is a remarkable tribute to the Indian Nation, to its Army and to Institutions like the AIDMI which has done remarkable work in providing sensible and pragmatic shelter relief to the Earthquake victims in the Uri block of Baramulla District of Kashmir. They have done so with a focused vision anchored in the ground realities and a full understanding of the socio – cultural milieu. They have worked in synergy with the civil administration, the Army (which is deployed there in defense of the country's borders) and, most importantly, involved the local community and the victims in the rehabilitation process. This is the reason why they have succeeded. The focus of the AIDMI on Disaster Risk Reduction, before as well as after a disaster is most apt and forward looking. The two important dimensions they have followed in Kashmir for making Shelter Support more effective by involving the local communities/ affected people and by ensuring supply of sustainable construction material (without falling victim to *"compassion fatigue"*) have far reaching consequences and underscore the reasons why the AIDMI has succeeded where others have failed in providing timely, effective and sustainable shelter relief in Kashmir. All these aspects have been cogently brought out in the AIDMI issue, **"Shelter Security in Kashmir – a Central Aspect of Long-term Recovery"**. Moreover I compliment Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt and his team for putting across this well written compilation to readers all over the world. It is a national service of a rare order. ■ **Maj. Gen. Raj Mehta, (Retd.), AVSM, VSM**

Shelter Relief – More than A Roof

Shelter is considered as being one of the most basic human rights. Appropriate shelter is supposed to provide protection against climatic conditions like wind, rain, sun and cold, and should further represent a place of privacy and security. The type of shelter can vary according to geographical, climatic and welfare situations. It may be in form of masonry, clayed or wooden houses. No matter what they are made of, they provide a home for people - something essential for human beings.

The characteristics for "adequate" housing quoted by UNHCR are: legal security of tenure; availability of services, material, facilities and infrastructure; affordability, habitability, accessibility; location; and cultural adequacy. In immediate emergency cases these characteristics may not all be considered, as the meeting of the most basic requirements of shelter and the timeliness of providing emergency shelter matters more.

Indeed, dwellings are rarely built for eternity - they commonly tumble-down in the course of time. However certain events, like disasters can destroy them, and hit their inhabitants unexpectedly. Depending on the stability and construction of the houses and the strength of the disaster, shelter may be destroyed within seconds. Natural or man-made disasters devastate what was built up in month-long efforts. From the Tsunami catastrophe that affected the coastal areas of South Asia, South-East Asia and Africa in 2004, to the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, to the flooding in Surat 2006, the most recent and biggest disasters have shown witness to this fact.



All photographs in this issue: AIDMI

Emergency shelter in Saidpura village was completed quickly in anticipation of approaching winter.

In the case of disasters, one of the major things that affected people require, is shelter. After the most basic human need - drinking water and food, is fulfilled, and medical first aid is provided, the need for shelter should be covered. Consequently, after all kinds of disasters where the destruction of houses is involved, shelter relief should be provided for affected people.

Several forms of shelter can be differentiated. The first kind of shelter that is usually provided immediately after a disaster is temporary shelter. Temporary shelter can either be in form of tents, used as very short-term, emergency shelter, or in form of proper, but simple houses or huts that are intended to provide protection against different weather conditions over a longer period, like months or even years.

Sometimes the differentiation between temporary shelter, when in the form of houses and real permanent

accommodation, may be blurred. Due to the lack of resources to build up real permanent housing is often not possible in the next month or even years after a disaster. Thus, the construction of shelter, even temporary shelter, in a sustainable way is important. This may also provide the possibility to expand and improve the permanent shelter in order to transform them into permanent housing.

However, finding the right balance between a quality and longer-term orientated way of constructing shelter and the fast building up of basic short-term emergency shelter is challenging. There may unquestionably be awareness of the importance of sustainability of shelter, but still, in emergency cases the timeliness of shelter construction plays a more important role in order to provide the victims a roof over their head as soon as possible. ■

Shelter Security and its Relevance for Disaster Risk Reduction

In the field of Disaster Management, there has developed a concept called Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which focuses on reducing vulnerabilities and disaster risks to avoid or to limit the negative effects of a disaster striking a local community or environment, with a view to sustainable development¹.

Proper disaster risk reduction happens before a disaster occurs, but it is still reasonable to introduce it in areas where a disaster already happened, in order to be prepared for, or even prevent, the adverse effects of future hazards.

One of the areas of importance to effective risk reduction lies in the provision of safe, structurally secure shelter, which is closely related to the sustainability issues of the type of construction, for example. It is important for the reconstruction or provision of shelters to be of a sustainable nature, with the aim to ensure increased permanency of the dwellings. The reasons for this seem to be obvious. The need to renew the dwellings or totally rebuild the houses as a result of the previous lack of proper planning and execution, would comprise a wide range of disadvantages. These disadvantages may range from financial considerations to unnecessary work effort and general efficiency considerations. Still, in the past the sustainability of rebuilding was widely neglected.

In order to avoid these negative effects it should be asked what factors influence shelter security and what would contribute herewith to disaster risk reduction? The following points represent factors, that when taken into consideration, contribute to an achievement of more permanent shelter security²:



Reconstructing houses in an earthquake-resistant way is one method for sustainable recovery.

- **Materials used** – Materials should be chosen in order to withstand, or mitigate the damages of area-specific potential risks. Materials should be locally available and people should be familiar with them, to improve and facilitate the repair and replacement of old or defective parts.
- **Construction type** – The architecture and design should incorporate consideration of disaster related impacts.
- **Site selection of rebuilding** – Rebuilding in immediate high risk zones should be avoided. This however is a difficult task, due to various reasons such as the unwillingness of people to leave their familiar surrounding, give up their land and their work space; the unavailability of comparable land/soil; and high relocation costs.

The factors that influence shelter security can be identified through various methods like:

- risk assessment studies
- practical and theoretical (pre-) testing of constructions, architecture, materials
- lessons learned from previous mistakes

The importance of shelter security is also mentioned in the Hyogo Framework for Action in disaster risk reduction. This framework, that is part of the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), represents a comprehensive concept in the area of disaster risk reduction that is aligned to reduce disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries³. This framework also includes the emphasis on shelter security through safer housing construction introduction, the

1 www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng%20home.htm

2 For more information see: Barakat, Sultan (2003) Housing Reconstruction after Conflict and Disaster. Network Paper. Humanitarian Practice Network on ODI

3 World Conference on Disaster Reduction (2005) Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters

enforcement of building codes, and of land-use planning. Disaster risk reduction is a concept of disaster mitigation which advocates the importance of equipping a community against life threatening hazards, including the proper reconstruction of dwellings.



The poorly constructed house of an earthquake victim in Kashmir 2005 reflects poverty.

Poverty – Vulnerability – Shelter Security – DRR

Regarding Disaster Risk Reduction, special attention should be paid to the needs of the poor as they are often disproportionately affected by disasters. They often face higher vulnerability than wealthier people, caused by various reasons connected with higher exposure and susceptibility to disaster impacts. The higher exposure of the poor may derive for example from the type and stability of their dwellings, or the location - often

lying in higher risk zones. Their higher susceptibility may be linked to their lack of assets necessary for recovering after a disaster, which also comprises the need for building up damaged or destroyed houses.

The identification of vulnerability of the poor is necessary to detect potential

risk factors in the case of disasters. For this reason vulnerability assessments should be conducted⁴. Ideally, such measures should be taken before disasters happen, in order to mitigate or even prevent the negative impact of disasters. Still, conducted after a disaster they facilitate the setting of measures for future disasters and allow for the inclusion of lessons learned from former disasters. ■

For more information on disaster risk reduction, see:

- Department for International Development (2004). Disaster Risk Reduction: a Development Concern
- World Conference on Disaster Reduction (2005) Hyogo framework for Action 2005–2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. www.unisdr.org

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments

While vulnerability is connected with helplessness and unprotectedness, expressing a certain kind of weakness, capacity focuses on positive aspects and strengths as abilities and competences of people. In a disaster situation, several factors may increase vulnerability of the population. On the other hand the same factors may denote a certain type of capacity which can facilitate and accelerate the recovery process after a disaster, and also influence the impact a future disaster may have on the population. The following chart shows an example of a vulnerability and capacity assessment matrix a tool of detecting potential risk factors and opportunities to address them.

Influencing Factors	Examples	Vulnerability	Capacity
Physical/Material	Land, climate, health, skills and labour, environment, infrastructure, finance, housing, technologies	Poor construction of housing, Moderate health condition of population, Harsh climate	Advanced technologies, Highly skilled labour resources, Wealth of a country, Etc.
Social/Organisational	Existence/Management of Internal conflicts, Organisation of the Society, Political and Social Structure	Prevalence of war, Political unrest, Divided communities (e.g. by religion, race, caste...), Etc.	Political stability, Well organised communities, Unity, Etc.
Motivational/Attitudinal	Ideology or Belief System, Community Co-operation	No shared beliefs, Etc.	Strong shared ideology and belief systems, Experience in successful co-operation

Source: Adapted from Cannon, Terry et al. (2003) *Social Vulnerability, Sustainable Livelihood and Disasters. Report to DFID - Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Department (CHAD) and Sustainable Livelihood Support Office.*

Further tools for vulnerability and capacity assessments may be found in: ALNAP. (2003) *Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action. A Handbook for Practitioners.*

⁴ Tools for vulnerability and capacity assessments may be found in: Cannon, Terry et al. (2003) *Social Vulnerability, Sustainable Livelihood and Disasters. Report to DFID. Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Department (CHAD) and Sustainable Livelihood Support Office.*

Special Conditions for Shelter Relief after the Kashmir Earthquake 2005

Background information

At 9.20 a.m. Indian Standard Time on 8th October 2005 a major earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale struck the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The seismic activity in the region is the result of the geological action occurring from the collision of the Eurasian-Indian tectonic plates. Although this is responsible for the formation of the Himalayan mountain range, the same movement causes unstable geological activity increasing the risk of major earthquakes.

The epicentre of the earthquake was 19 miles North-East of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan, but the severity and intensity was such that it was felt throughout the whole region including in the Indian states of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The earthquake caused widespread devastation and damage. Figure 1 shows the main region affected by the earthquake and the epicentre.

At present, the region is split into three parts, Pakistan controls the North West, China the North East and India the South.

The two districts of Baramulla and Kupwara in the Indian Kashmir Valley

suffered extensive damage in particular. 95 villages in the Uri area of Baramulla and 42 villages in the Karnah area of Kupwara were severely damaged. In Baramulla district more than 90 percent of the houses in 54 villages were completely destroyed.

Special Conditions and Difficulties in Connection with the Earthquake in Kashmir

The earthquake in Kashmir claimed many victims and caused huge damage. Various factors influenced the terrible impact the disaster had on the affected people. Certain conditions prevailing in this region favoured destruction through the tremor and represented a major hindrance to emergency response. The vulnerability of people living in the affected areas was already quite high before the earthquake, which contributed largely to the extent of the damage and the number of victims.

One of the major reasons for their vulnerability was the construction type of the buildings used in the Jammu Kashmir region. The majority of the buildings that were destroyed or damaged were constructed using rubble masonry and bricks laid in clay mud mortar. The roofs of most houses

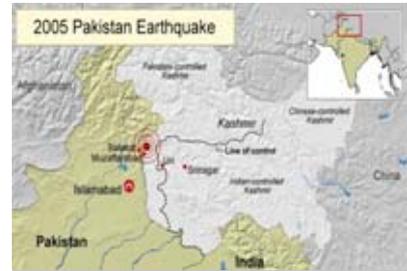


Figure 1. A 7.6 magnitude earthquake on October 8 killed thousands and left millions homeless in the Himalayan regions of Pakistan and India.

consisted of corrugated galvanised iron sheets. There were no earthquake resisting measures applied. During the earthquake these buildings were destroyed, due to the weakness of mortar used and the absence of bond stones. This led to delaminating of the inner and outer walls and the separation of the walls at the corners, finally resulting in the total collapse of the buildings⁸.

There existed building codes, set up by the government, however they were not enforced.

Extensive destruction of infrastructure led to problems with food and water supplies, shelter arrangements, electricity and communication networks.

Prevailing conditions after the earthquake worsened the situation and made the rescue and relief activities much more difficult. Aftershocks which followed the main tremor caused even more damage. Landslides provoked the blocking of roads that further increased the inaccessibility of

Date, Time:	October 8, 2005; 9:20 am (IST)
Magnitude:	7.6 on Richter scale
Epicentre:	95 km from Islamabad, 125 km from Srinagar
Duration:	30 seconds to 1 minute
Most Affected Areas:	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, North-West Frontier Province, India Administered Kashmir, Islamabad, and Afghanistan
Death Toll:	1,309 in India ⁵ , and 73,338 in Pakistan ⁶
People injured:	6,622 in India, 69,412 in Pakistan
People homeless:	150,000 in India, 2.8 million in Pakistan ⁷
Houses damaged:	Approximately 43,000 houses completely damaged and 110,000 houses partially damaged

5 Government of India

6 Government of Pakistan

7 International Organisation for Migration

8 Arya, Anand S. (2005) National Seismic Advisor. GoI - UNDP DRM Programme. Ministry of Home Affairs. GoI.

remote villages, already aggravated due to the mountainous terrain. The landslides also destroyed the power supplies.

Moreover the situation was exacerbated through low temperatures and wintry, harsh weather conditions hampering the emergency response efforts to reach remote areas.

Without a functioning road transport network, other avenues of reaching remote villages had to be utilised. In many remote villages and communities helicopters were needed for the first immediate rescue activities. Otherwise they could often only be reached by foot.

Helicopter airlifts were provided by the Army for initial supplies and medical treatment. Helicopters however were of limited availability, which placed a great pressure on the delivery of supplies in as short a time as possible. After some time, other countries provided air support but in the beginning, both India and Pakistan had to manage their own aerial relief efforts. Through a shortage of helicopters the urgent need to reach as many distressed people as possible could not be met sufficiently.

The onset of winter, that can be very harsh in this region, further required adequate emergency shelter. Many NGOs came in to the area with relief supplies, but initially the vast majority of shelter provisions were in the form of short-term occupancy fabric tents. These were acceptable for the first few days and weeks, but the approaching winter required a sturdier, winterised tent which would provide greater protection from the elements. These were in short supply and proved to be a problem since people were left unprotected from the approaching snow. The lack of winterised tents was



Damage and destruction due to the earthquake in Uri block of Baramulla district of Kashmir.

a situation not only isolated for just Pakistan or Kashmir; it reflected a worldwide shortage in production. Communities were forced to share the available winterised tents resulting in multiple families cohabiting in one tent, making for uncomfortable and cramped living conditions. The only other alternatives were staying in fabric tents or outside without any protection.

The political situation in the country represented another difficulty for the relief activities. The location of the most affected areas near the Line of Control (LoC)⁹ meant it was even more difficult than usual to reach the victims without prior clearance or arrangement from the Army and Government. The Army was the major force in the area before the earthquake struck and, due to the political situation, all decisions had to be certified and approved by them. This at times proved to be a double-edged sword – whereby protection and assistance were provided but the process on some occasions was time consuming.

The local economy suffered seriously. Structural building damage was so extensively severe throughout the most affected regions that it rendered

services unavailable. Local shops and their products were left exposed to the weather and theft, remaining unsold as local communities had no money to pay for goods. The loss of the power supply caused frustration, confusion and chaos, with the malfunctioning communication networks further delaying the response already caused by the remoteness of the villages.

The provision of emergency relief supplies was delayed due to a number of reasons. Examples represent the inadequate or incomplete availability of census data about the villages and their residents, and the lack of communication equipment which would have helped in allocating appropriate relief supplies.

All or at least some of these difficulties and special conditions mentioned in connection with the Kashmir Earthquake may represent critical factors in other disaster cases as well. Difficult circumstances surrounding a disaster can influence the relief efforts to a large extent. That is a major reason for the importance of being prepared for disasters and for considering the possibility of additional aggravating factors. ■

⁹ The term Line of Control (LoC) refers to the line that defines the boundary between two territories of different political or military entities. In this specific case LoC designates the military control line between India and Pakistan in the province of Kashmir, determined under this name in the Simla Agreement of the 2nd July, 1972. (Indian Ministry of External Affairs (1972). Clarification on LoC. <http://meaindia.nic.in/jk/loc-cl.htm#1.3>)

AIDMI's Work in Providing Shelter Relief in Kashmir

Shortly after the earthquake in Kashmir 2005 occurred AIDMI went to the affected region. After a meeting with government officials and the Army concerning the needs assessment after this earthquake, five of the affected villages in Indian Kashmir – Hathalanga, Mothal, Saidpura, Silikot, and Sohara in the Uri block of Baramulla district, were chosen by AIDMI for the provision of relief – on the basis that these villages were not covered by any other organisation. All these villages, except Saidpura are lying within the LoC and are therefore not easily accessible.



Affected people constructing their new houses, participating in the cash for shelter programme.

One of the main activities of AIDMI was the identification of potential beneficiaries in the affected villages allotted to AIDMI. In cooperation with the committee of each village and the Army, the most vulnerable and poorest beneficiaries were identified in order to provide them first with shelter material. The focus was put on people worst affected by the earthquake.

AIDMI's shelter relief process included community involvement in activities like the identification of appropriate kinds of relief, relief item selection, checking quality of relief items, selecting a supplier, transporting the relief materials to the village and relief distribution.

AIDMI was responsible for the provision of the shelter relief material, whereas the purchase and distribution of the material was done by involving the community and with the help of the Army. Also, in the monitoring process of the construction progress AIDMI involved the Army.

Due to the fact that many disaster-affected families are lacking

resources, it is not only necessary to give them material for shelter reconstruction but also provide them some sources of income that they can meet their specific or routine needs, such as food. To reach this, AIDMI applied the Cash for Work and Cash for Shelter programme. However, the main focus in Kashmir was on the Cash for Shelter programme.

System of Cash for Work Programme (CFW):

After a disaster, affected people are asked to do some (community) work, like cleaning or other activities chosen by the local committee. For this work they receive money (from AIDMI). With this money they can buy food and other items needed, thus encouraging the local economy.

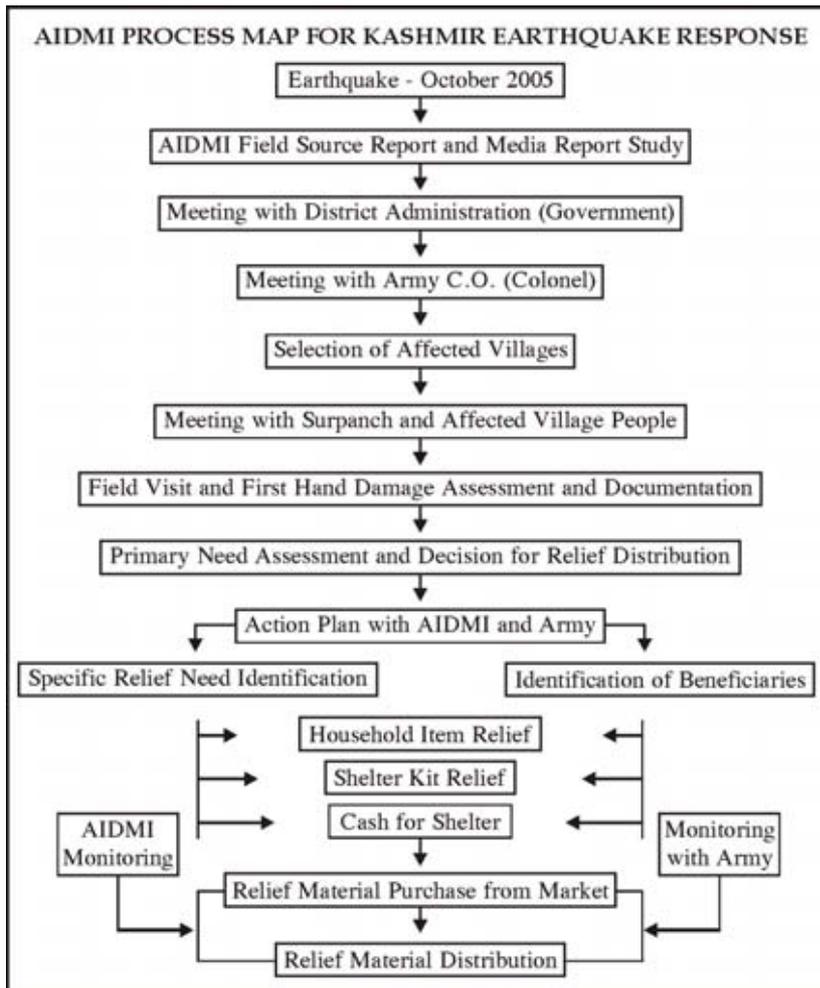
System of Cash for Shelter Programme (CFS):

This system works the same way as the CFW concept, however in this case the affected people are first provided with the material for building up their houses from AIDMI. When they have finished building up their houses they receive the money, and

the same process starts running as in the cash for shelter Programme.

Strengths of AIDMI's Shelter Relief Programme

- **Focus on long-term approach** – Houses are planned so that they could be up-graded without the need to build totally new ones. In addition to relief activities, long-term needs, like shelter development, water storage facilities, risk transfer through insurance security and establishment of community infrastructure were identified and addressed.
- **Extensive community involvement** – Local knowledge regarding shelter construction was appreciated and used e.g. in terms of locally available and appropriate construction material and suppliers. Needs assessments involving the communities were conducted, that helped to avoid duplicated or unnecessary relief provisions. Local capacity was strengthened, and thus the ability to react in future disasters improved.



- **Cash for Shelter Programme** – Affected people are provided employment. They build their own houses. They generate income, can buy food and other items they need for daily life. People feel not useless, gain knowledge about construction and the local economy is supported.

Learnings from Different Processes

a) Focus on the poorest:

The poorest are the most vulnerable members of a society who are worst affected by any disaster and take the longest to recover in the absence of external support. This hypothesis was strengthened again during the Kashmir earthquake. This is because their livelihoods are irregular and related to physical labour, which depend heavily upon normalcy of local businesses and public life. Since their

houses are highly damaged or destroyed due to the earthquake, they are forced to suspend their livelihoods and put efforts to save their belongings. With no money coming in everyday, they are not able to meet their daily needs. Their reserved resources, if at all intact after the disaster, do not last long. Therefore, AIDMI focuses first and foremost on the poorest and the worst affected.

b) Importance of community driven approach:

The experiences of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, 2002 communal riots, 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2005 Gujarat floods, and other disasters have taught AIDMI to formulate tailor-made, one-to-one relief approaches. Effective recovery requires participation of the entire community in decision making.

c) Linking relief resources with development:

The most important learning of the entire process has been the concept of focusing all relief actions in the direction of long term development. Persistence of action and adaptability in thinking are very important to utilise the resources of the relief phase, inter-linked with long term development. Thus, cash for work or cash for shelter activities were not only intended for temporary livelihood generation but also for community infrastructure creation and construction of private houses.

The following objectives were underlying AIDMI's efforts:

- Direct basic relief to the poor amongst earthquake victims in Kashmir
- Developing the foundations for community based rehabilitation and long term recovery
- Developing basic conditions for local capacity based risk reduction
- Carrying out national capacity building initiatives, for example in the form of advocacy campaigns of relief needs and rights of the victims, including issues on gender and livelihood; or workshops.

How Cash for Shelter represents the comprehensiveness of AIDMI's approach:

- It has a long-term focus, emphasises the needs of affected communities and its members and stimulates the local economy. All this is reflected in its relief activities.

Why AIDMI's approach to relief and recovery efforts was appropriate to the conditions in the area:

- The team worked in close contact with the main stakeholders in the area. The Government, the Army and villagers were included, in order to gain a greater understanding of the issues affecting the most vulnerable communities and general prevailing conditions. ■

Stakeholders Involved in the Shelter Relief Process in the Uri Area in Kashmir

– *An example of efficient cooperation of all stakeholders involved*

The shelter relief process in the affected region in Kashmir represents an example of efficient coordination of efforts of the different stakeholders involved. Engaged in the process were:

- **The Government** – Usually taking an important role in case of disasters, it performs various rescue and relief activities;
- **The Army** – Often providing the necessary resources like manpower or rescue material;
- **The NGO** – in case of the Uri Area: **AIDMI** – May have an intermediary function between different donors, in terms of administering and canalising the donations and organising relief projects, and affected communities; or even the government or the Army;
- **The affected people** – Provide a lot of useful input, in the form of knowledge, organisation and manpower.

All these stakeholders contributed to the success of the process.

The role of the Government:

The major role of the government consisted of coordinating (the activities of) the NGOs. They were responsible for their placement in the areas where needed, in order to avoid duplication of efforts by all NGOs concentrating on the same areas whilst other areas remain unattended. The government had the knowledge about the different areas, the destruction and could tell the NGOs where their help is needed.

In order to discuss the areas where different NGOs should be working and the design of the shelter and general coordination issues, the government



Hasmukh Sadhu, AIDMI team member, coordinating with Army Colonel, Mr. Gyan Mishra, and Surpanch in Silikote village to decide on relief issues.

organised meetings where the NGOs participated.

The role of the Army:

Due to the fact that the Army controls this region, they were the party from which permission was asked if relief work could be started there. Because of the strong military presence in this area that is centred near the LoC, the Army knew the area, the communities and its leaders, the houses and their inhabitants quite well. Thus, the Army could provide valuable information about the terrain, location of the houses and affected people to AIDMI.

The Army provided storage space for the material purchased by AIDMI and it helped with the distribution of the material. It provided previous information about the affected people so that their material can be picked up, and helped with the follow-up recording of data, including the material received and personal information.

Moreover the Army assisted AIDMI in the monitoring process of the building activities and was assuring the efficiency and the progress the people made rebuilding their houses.

The role of AIDMI:

AIDMI was first directing its efforts towards the planning and structuring of an adequate shelter relief process, using necessary resources in the most efficient way. To increase the efficiency, input from the different stakeholders was requested, i.e. local knowledge about material, terrain or material suppliers.

AIDMI assisted the community when necessary in the recovery process. It was the party actually responsible for shelter relief support in the Uri area, from the identification of beneficiaries and the detection of the needs of the affected people, to the provision of the material for building up shelter. Its role also included the coordination of the activities of the stakeholders involved.

AIDMI had a crucial role in the shelter relief process in the Uri area, however for the success of the process the assistance and collaboration of all mentioned stakeholders were indispensable.

The role of the affected communities and members of the communities:

The leaders of the communities that are in close contact with the community members participated in the damage assessment in which also AIDMI and the Army was involved, thus assisting them in this process. The affected people presented their needs regarding the size of their houses and participated in design planning, in order to provide information on their personal needs and transmit local knowledge on housing construction.

Another role of the affected community members was the rebuilding of their own houses and the participation in Cash for Work and Cash for Shelter programmes that



The needs of local community members are properly considered in shelter construction.

were planned by AIDMI and executed with the assistance of the Army. With the Cash for Shelter programme, AIDMI achieved with one single action at least three positive results: Firstly, the people built their own houses. Secondly, the money they received for

finishing their houses enabled them to buy things they need, from food to other household items. Thirdly, in this way also the local economy was encouraged and furthermore the people were not dependent on continued external assistance. ■

Table: The various stakeholders that can participate in a shelter relief programme

Stakeholders	Options for participation
State Government	The government often possesses staff capacity, overall knowledge about the country and resources; it can share the knowledge for coordination purposes to organise the other stakeholders and it can foster/facilitate the communication between them; it has the power to set standards.
Local and municipal authorities, (or the Army) where these exist	As a result of the growing trend towards decentralisation, local administrations often run basic social services and infrastructure and represent, in most instances, a rich pool of knowledge and expertise. Their role in preventing natural and technological risks (local authorities have the responsibility to identify the risks of each area and establish rules and laws) is paramount. They are also key actors in ensuring law and order, and in managing property matters and issues concerning land rights. It will be important to bring them onboard, with a positive attitude.
Local organisations (NGOs and CBOs)	Local organisations can serve as a useful and effective link with the population, increasing the efficiency of international actors, while ensuring that the programme is more suitably rooted in socio-cultural terms.
The small-business sector (such as masons and brick makers)	The small-business sector can stimulate the revival of the local economy, supplying materials and skilled labour.
Families and individuals	Families and individuals are most interested in the programme, and are ready to be directly involved in its design and implementation.

Source: Adapted from: ALNAP (2003). *Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action. A Handbook for Practitioners*

Two Important Dimensions for Making Shelter Support and Reconstruction More Effective

Often shelter relief itself is prefabricated and uniform for use all over the world, regardless of climate, culture and personal needs and the material is imported. Moreover, taking into account broader terms, the economy of an affected country is not considered. These facts may bring along various difficulties that hinder effective shelter support. In the following two important dimensions in connection with effective shelter support and reconstruction are described and it is explained why they are important:

Participation of local communities and affected people:

When a community feels reliant on an outsider, the impression and self respect felt diminishes in many cases. It has been seen to be more suitable and fruitful to have local input and participation when evaluating conditions pertaining to a community. This form of involvement provides the community with the sense of ownership and affiliation not afforded by manufactured shelter from outside organisations. It is expected for a person to feel more comforted living in an albeit makeshift shelter, as long



A village meeting with Army and community members in Baramulla district, J&K, for communication and information sharing.

as it is constructed with some form of personal involvement.

There have been many cases where inappropriate construction of shelters by agencies has been left unoccupied thus wasting resources and time. It is important to ensure the newly constructed form of shelter is appropriate and takes into account the cultural, religious and/or gender sensitivities of the area. For example

in a religious society such as Kashmiri Muslims, the males and females tend to be segregated and so require separate rooms, but many emergency shelters constructed by agencies are a one room occupancy style structure. There have been many examples of when one room structures were built but remained unoccupied as men and women could not share and live in a single room.

The participation of affected people and local communities not only avoids culturally and ethically inappropriate shelter construction, but also provides a measure to encourage local coping mechanisms and local capacity and can make the habitants feel more at home in their new shelters, as well as develop their skills to design and manage the construction of safe shelter in the future.

Consequently, the inclusion of the affected population and the consideration of their personal needs are of utmost importance in order to meet personal needs.

Five principles of sustainable housing:

- *Environmental sustainability* – does the chosen approach avoid depleting natural resources and contaminating the environment?
- *Technical sustainability* – can the requisite skills be introduced and passed on to others, and are the necessary tools accessible?
- *Financial sustainability* – can money or service exchange be accessed to pay for the work that needs to be done?
- *Organisational sustainability* – is there a structure to bring together the different stakeholders without, for example, needing to call on outside expertise on each occasion?
- *Social sustainability* – does the overall process and product fit within, and satisfy, the needs of the society?

Source: Norton, John (1999) in Barakat, Sultan (2003) Housing Reconstruction after Conflict and Disaster. Network Paper. Humanitarian Practice Network of ODI.

In general, who should be involved and thus be enabled to participate in the shelter relief process is shown in Table 2:

Sustainable reconstruction - Material
The selection of the material for constructing shelter represents a very important point in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of the shelter. With respect to the selection process of the material used, the inclusion of the affected people and a proper debate is essential. They are supposed to provide knowledge about local material available for building as well as information about their specific needs. Local availability of



A family in Silikote village in front of their new temporary shelter.

material eases the procurement in terms of accessibility and time, compared to the use of imported material. It also helps to save costs, is easier to maintain and has the advantage of encouraging the local economy.

When choosing the appropriate material for shelter construction the climate should be considered as well. Standardised tents or other types of shelter that were not winterised were not useful in the case of Kashmir, where the winter set in and the temperatures started to fall. The material chosen also had to resist the weight of snow. Thus, adaptation to local conditions is crucial.

Additionally, the possible hazards of future disasters have to be taken into account, when deciding on certain types of materials. For example, the Kashmir Region lies in a high to very high risk zone of seismological activity. The prevailing high risk of earthquakes was therefore considered in the type of material used for building

the new houses, in order to keep the potential destruction from future earthquakes as low as possible. ■

References and further information on this topic:

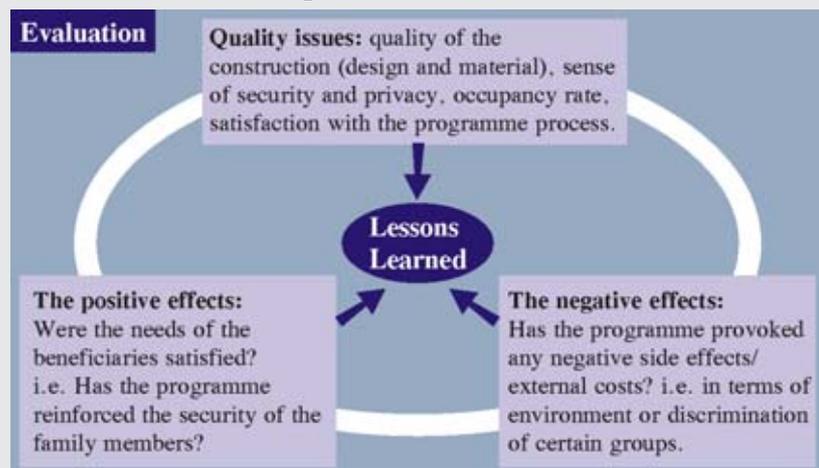
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Ways to assure Quality in the Shelter Reconstruction Processes

Monitoring represents one way of quality assurance of shelter reconstruction programmes. It may be conveyed through monitoring committees or designated persons with monitoring skills representing the different groups of stakeholder. The monitoring process should be conducted throughout shelter relief and should help to identify areas where support is needed and where things work well. The evaluation also plays a crucial role in terms of quality issues.

The **evaluation** of the processes takes place after the completion of the programmes and gives input for future improvements. It should include the participation of the programme beneficiaries in order to incorporate

Contents of an evaluation process:



Source: Adapted from: ALNAP (2003) Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. Participation by Crisis-Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action. A Handbook for Practitioners.

their views. Field visits and group discussion would be an appropriate

means for gathering information about beneficiary opinions. ■

Financing Options of Housing Reconstruction – Advantages and Disadvantages

Finance Option	Entire gift	Partial contribution of affected people through self-help		Loans
		Conventional Programmes	Cash for Shelter Programmes ¹⁰	
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Houses given to entitled (selected) beneficiaries - No need of repayment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiaries receive material and/or technical support - They build their own house or contract local labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as in conventional programmes plus: - People receive "employment" and cash for it - Local needs are identified: Locals are involved in design and size planning and material selection - Local knowledge is used - Preference of locally available material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common for reconstruction are long-term loans with or without normal interest rates
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No cost recuperation system necessary - Recipients' assets can be used for other needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No system for cost recovery necessary - Recipients' assets can be used to meet other needs - Increased involvement and participation of recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as conventional programmes plus: - Income is generated - No dependency on external food aid provisions - even people without previous assets have money to buy their own food, seeds or other items - Consequently the local economy is supported! - Local capacity is encouraged through participation! - Most comprehensive approach! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility for people without resources to rebuild their houses - Rebuilding according to recipients choice - Independence and sustainability encouraged
Dis-advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased dependency (on aid from outside) - Diminished local coping mechanisms - Local institutions weakened - Limited number of houses - No recuperation of money for new projects - Imposed solution, often no local contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diminished local capacity and undermined local institutions in coping - Materials used may not meet requirements - Due to time spent on building, recipients are prevented from income generation, which however may be vital for their recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination efforts, as a result of the inclusion of many stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for setting up a credit system - Additional financial burden for recipients - No experience of recipients with loan systems - Higher administration costs of loan systems - Exclusion of poor people due to lacking creditworthiness - Guarantees often required, e.g. house

Source: Adapted from: Barakat, Sultan (2003) *Housing Reconstruction after Conflict and Disaster - Network Paper*. Humanitarian Practice Network at ODI

¹⁰ AIDMI, that has developed this concept, successfully applied it in various disasters, for example the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 and the flooding in Surat 2006.

Kashmir Shelter Relief: A Rapid Overview

Extent of destruction



The damage of the buildings in the Uri area after the earthquake varied and was categorised by AIDMI in total, partial and internal collapse.



Public as well as private infrastructure suffered severe damage.

First shelter relief response



Tents were provided as shelter for the first days, after the earthquake.

Identification of beneficiaries



AIDMI met Army and community leaders to identify the poorest and worst affected people and examined damages and needs.

Joint consultation process and training on construction



Consultation process between AIDMI, the representatives of the affected communities and the Army about construction design and material. Training on construction for communities was also provided.

Material provision



Material provided by AIDMI were purchased from local suppliers and distributed under the Army's supervision.

Continued to next page

Construction of shelter



Beneficiaries constructed their own shelter thanks to the training provided by AIDMI. Construction progress was monitored by the Army.

Monitoring construction progress



In the construction process the Army had a monitoring and advising role to push the construction progress as money of the cash for shelter programme is only paid for finished houses.

Completed shelters



The shelters were completed and provided protection against harsh weather conditions in winter.

Challenges AIDMI faced



Challenges included landslides blocking the roads and herewith aggravating the access to anyway remote areas where most of affected people live.

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