

# Disaster Preparedness at Provincial Level

## **P**rovincial strategies for disaster management

As already noted in chapter four, there has been an overwhelming reliance on the Pakistan army to take the lead in disaster management at both national and provincial level. This has meant that, in the past, most strategies have been limited to response and relief. Following the devastating Kashmir earthquake, the government took steps to devolve some of the authority and responsibility for disaster response, and to a certain extent preparedness, to the provinces and districts. Examples of linkages have been given in Chapter 4; for example, it has already been mentioned that, in case of army mobilisation, it is the responsibility of the provincial governments to provide all the support equipment. There is a cantonment of the 4th Corps of Army Engineers in Lahore for flood liaison and two counterpart authorities of ERRA, the Provincial Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority in Peshawar, the capital of NWFP, and the other called State Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority in Muzaffarabad, capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K).

Hence it is not that disaster management is run exclusively from the Centre. Below are brief overviews of disaster management at provincial level.

The Kashmir earthquake of 2005 was an unprecedented disaster causing more than 73,000 deaths, 128,309 injuries, and destroying over 500,000 houses and displacing 3.5 million people (ERRA 2006). The establishment of ERRA by the President of Pakistan is a result of this earthquake; and it took over the remaining relief work from the Relief Commission at its inception. On December 23rd 2006 a National Disaster Management Ordinance was promulgated and a National Disaster Commission established: it is this body that was responsible for setting up the disaster management authorities at national and provincial level. Other initiatives launched at that time include a vulnerability atlas for Pakistan funded by the UNDP; an Earthquake Prediction Centre which is being launched at the Centre of Physics, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, while the Earthquake Centres at Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw University, Karachi, and

Punjab University, Lahore, have been reactivated. There is also a centre of earthquake engineering at Peshawar University; and these initiatives are all to involve the provinces and districts of the nation as a whole.

## Mitigation and preparedness in provincial government institutions

Briefs on the roles of the different institutions involved in disaster management at provincial and district level are given below.

### *Provincial disaster management authority*

#### **Structure**

The National Disaster Commission directs every Provincial Government, as soon as possible after the issue of the notification under sub section (1) of section 3 of the act, by notification in the Official Gazette, to establish a Provincial Disaster Management Commission for the Province. A Provincial Commission is to consist of as many members, as may be prescribed by the Provincial Government but should include the following.

- The Chief Minister of the Province, who is the Chairperson, ex officio
- Other members to be nominated by the Chief Minister
- The Chairperson of the Provincial Commission may designate one of the members nominated under sub-section (b) to be the Vice-Chairperson

#### **Powers and functions**

Subject to the provisions of the act, the Provincial Commission has the responsibility for laying down policies and plans for disaster management in the province. Without prejudice to the generality of provisions contained in sub-section (1), the Provincial Commission may do the following.

- Formulate a provincial disaster management policy.
- Formulate a provincial plan In accordance with the guidelines laid down by the National Commission.
- Approve the disaster management plans prepared by the departments of the Provincial Government.
- Review the implementation of the plan.
- Oversee the provision of funds for mitigation and preparedness measures.
- Review the development plans of different departments of the province and ensure that prevention and mitigation measures are integrated therein.
- Review the measures being taken for mitigation, capacity building, and preparedness by the departments of the Provincial Government and issue such guidelines or directions as may be necessary.
- The Chairperson of the Provincial Commission shall, in the case of emergency, have power to exercise all or any of the powers of the Provincial Commission, but the

exercise of such powers shall be subject to post facto ratification of the Provincial Commission.

- Every Provincial Government shall as soon as may be, after the notification under sub-section 1 of Section 3 by notification in the official gazette, establish a Provincial Disaster Management Authority for the Province.
- The Provincial Authority shall consist of as many members as may be prescribed and shall include as its Chairperson the Provincial Director General or Provincial Relief Commissioner.
- There shall be a Director General of the Provincial Authority, to be appointed by the Provincial Government, with the status and powers of a Secretary of the Provincial Government, on such terms and conditions as the Provincial Government may prescribe.

### **District Disaster Management Authority**

#### **Structure**

Every Provincial Government shall, as soon as possible, after issue of notification under sub-section (1) of section 13, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a District Disaster Management Authority for every district in the Province. The District Authority shall consist of the number of members prescribed by the Provincial Government and, unless the rules otherwise state, it shall consist of the following members.

- Nazim of the District who shall be the Chairperson, ex officio
- The District Coordination Officer
- The District Police Officer, ex officio
- The Executive District Officer (EDO) Health
- Such other district-level officers, to be appointed by the District Government.

#### **Powers and functions**

- The Chairperson of the District Authority shall, in the case of an emergency, be authorised to exercise all or any of the powers of the District Authority, but the exercise of these powers shall be subject to *post facto* ratification of the District Authority. The District Authority shall act as the district planning; coordinating and implementing body for disaster management and undertake every measure for the purposes of disaster management in the district in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the National Authority and the Provincial Authority. Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section (1), the District Authorities are responsible for plans for disaster management for every district of the Province. The District Plan shall be prepared by the District Authority, having coordinated with the National Plan and the Provincial Plan. The District Plan shall be reviewed and updated annually. For the purpose of assisting, protecting, or providing relief to the community, in response to any disaster, the District Authority may give directions for the release and use of resources available with any department of the government and the local authority in the district, remove debris, carry out search

and rescue operations, and provide shelter, food, drinking water and essential provisions, health care, and services. It should also make provisions to establish emergency communication systems in the affected area and make arrangements for the disposal of unclaimed dead bodies. It can direct any department of the Government of the Province, any authority, or body under the district level to take such measures as are necessary in its opinion.

## **Departments of the provincial governments involved in disaster management**

### ***Planning and Development Departments (P & D Department)***

All four provinces have P & D Departments as a component of the Provincial Government. These are the principal planning bodies at the provincial level. They formulate, coordinate, and monitor development programmes and activities of various departments of the provincial government. The departments prepare medium-term development frameworks of development activities in the province.

The main objectives of the Planning and Development departments are as follows.

- Assessment of the material and human resources in the province
- Formulation of long- and short-term plans
- Recommendations concerning prevailing economic conditions, economic policies, or measures
- Examination of such economic problems as may be referred to it for advice
- Coordination of all economic activities in the provincial government

Although none of its functions directly involve disaster preparedness and management as such, the fact that these departments have the overview of financial and human resources in the provinces and development planning and projects, and liaise with external assistance, makes them linchpins in the provinces for activities leading to disaster preparedness and planning.

### ***Irrigation Department***

Until 1976, Provincial Irrigation Departments were responsible for the planning and execution of flood protection works. These departments continue to play this role but under the guidance of the Federal Flood Commission (FFC). Located at the provincial government secretariats, the departments play a prominent role in flood management through planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining flood protection works. They also carry out flow measurements on specific rivers and at irrigation canal sites.

The major flood-related functions include the following.

- Flow measurement at specific sites on rivers, canals, and 'nullah'
- Planning, design, construction, and maintenance of flood protection works

- Maintenance of data communication networks to provide river flow data to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore
- Supervision of the Flood Warning Centre (on behalf of the Relief Commissioner) to ensure timely dissemination of flood forecasts and warnings
- Director (Floods), IPD, in his capacity as a member FFD maintains close coordination with the Chief Meteorologist FFD for issuing disseminating flood forecasts and warnings
- Occasional updating of flood-fighting plans and execution of such plans during floods
- Implementation of flood fighting plans for activities to be taken before, during, and after the flood emergency

## Response of provincial government institutions

### *Provincial Crisis Management Cells or Centres (PCMC)*

Each province has a Crisis Management Cell under the Directorate of Civil Defence, but governed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. These cells or centres are linked to the National Crisis Management Cell at federal level. Like its federal government counterpart, the PCMC is responsible for monitoring and issuing the first call for action during the course of an emergency. It coordinates with the Civil Defence Directorate and other relevant agencies in rescue and evacuation efforts.

### *Police Department*

The police department under the provincial government is not only responsible for the law and order situation during an emergency, but also plays an important role in monitoring and giving the first report of a disaster. Pakistan has a substantial network of police stations with accessibility extending to village level, and this enables the police to play an important role in the first reports of incidents related to natural disasters. Police departments carry out these functions.

- To operate through the police telecommunication, i.e., the wireless and tele-printer network for information and messages to all relevant departments and agencies
- To ensure law and order during the emergency
- To provide assistance in flood warning, rescue, relief, and evacuation operations

## Relief organisation of provincial government institutions

### *Provincial Relief Departments*

Each of the four provinces in Pakistan has Provincial Relief Departments, headed by Provincial Relief Commissioners. The Relief Commissioner is normally a Member of the Board of Revenue and is assigned the functions of the Relief Commissioner in addition to his normal duties. Provincial Relief Departments are given the responsibility for disaster preparedness, emergency response, and post disaster activities. These

departments are an essential link between the disaster management agencies at federal level and the district, city, and local governments as well as the communities. The Relief Department primarily functions through control and coordination of the personnel and resources of other government departments. Relief functions at the district and tehsil levels are performed through the District and Tehsil Coordinators (formerly Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners) who coordinate with the other departments at these levels to execute disaster response.

The responsibilities of the Provincial Relief Departments include the following.

- To provide adequate resources to the district administration through coordination with provincial government departments and agencies
- To provide necessary funds to the district administration for relief work
- To oversee the working area of administration for relief work
- To obtain field reports of losses and report to the provincial and federal governments
- To assess and evaluate losses and give suggestions to the federal and provincial governments concerning relief for the people affected

The Provincial Relief Departments undertake flood preparatory actions such as inspection of flood protection measures and establishment of flood warning and flood relief centres at the local government level. Flood preparatory actions to be taken by the Relief Commissioner include the following.

- Arranging inspection of flood protection works by the Irrigation Department and Pakistan Army to ensure that all vital flood protection bunds are in a satisfactory condition
- Establishing flood warning centres and flood centres at district and tehsil levels
- Ensuring that all flood-related agencies and departments involved in flood mitigation are fully geared to perform the functions in their respective areas in the process of flood mitigation
- Ensuring that flood forecasts and warnings are disseminated without loss of time to all concerned and that they are fully aware of the actions to be taken in each situation

### ***Provincial Health Departments***

Health is a provincial subject in Pakistan. One of the immediate and most crucial responses to disasters is provision of emergency medical services. Provincial health departments are assigned the following tasks.

- To establish a system of high alert and a list of personnel to be mobilised when a danger warning is received or impact of disaster reported

- To establish an emergency cell (medical) to ensure better coordination in disaster situations
- To set-up medical camps and organise mobile medical teams to be sent to the scene of the disaster with minimum delay
- To ensure communication links between hospitals and the scene of the disaster
- To activate emergency field medical units

### ***Provincial Food Departments***

Besides health, provision of food to people affected by disasters is one of the highest priorities, not only immediately after the disaster, but also on a mid- to long-term basis. Provincial food departments are assigned to assist the relief cells in:

- ensuring adequate availability of food stocks in a disaster situation and
- organising ration depots in various locations as required by the local authorities.

### ***Provincial Agriculture and Livestock Departments***

In case of natural disasters, livelihoods, which in much of rural Pakistan are dependent on agriculture and livestock, need immediate rehabilitation: provincial departments are assigned:

- to assist in saving crops, agricultural land, and livestock in disaster situations;
- to make inputs like seeds , fertilizers, and agricultural equipment available to the victims of disasters on credit basis; and
- to survey and investigate the extent of damage to the crops and livestock and recommend compensation.

### ***Department of Communication and Works***

Provincial Departments of Works and Communications are expected to respond to disasters by:

- supervising, directing, and controlling protection of roads and structures;
- coordinating survey investigations of the extent of damage to roads and structures; and
- organising emergency repairs for restoration of public transport routes.

## **Legislation for disaster management**

Legislation in Pakistan is promulgated (as already stated in Chapter 4) through national or provincial parliaments in the form of an Act of Parliament. At times, the legislation can be promulgated by a direct notification from the Provincial Governor in the form of an ordinance, which may be later approved by the parliaments in the form of an act.

The office of Provincial Relief Commissioner was created and assigned the responsibilities for disaster management as outlined in the act.

Administrative powers were delegated to the provincial governments through establishment of the office of the District Emergency Officer.

In 2001, the provincial governments in Pakistan promulgated the Local Government Ordinance to establish a new, integrated Local Government System allowing the public to participate in decision-making. The new system provides for a three-tier local government structure comprising of district, tehsil (sub-district), and union council (village) administrations, each headed by and comprised of elected members of the public. Some of the responsibilities related to disaster management outlined in this ordinance are the following.

- Natural disaster and civil defence planning
- Water source development and management, storage, treatment plants, and macro-distribution
- Tertiary and secondary sewerage networks, treatment plants, and disposal
- Storm-water drainage networks and disposal
- Flood-control protection and rapid response contingency plans
- Solid waste management, treatment, and disposal, including landfill sites and recycling plants
- Toxic and hazardous waste treatment and disposal from industries and hospitals
- Environmental control, including control of air, water, and soil pollution in accordance with federal and provincial laws and standards
- Master planning, land use, zoning and classification, and reclassification
- Urban design and urban renewal programmes and promulgation of building rules and planning standards