

تحليل اسبتي

Weekly Analysis

Issue Number - 386

(June 25 – July 2, 2022)

Extensive Damages of Natural Disasters in Afghanistan; Solutions and Recommendations



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS' publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security events of Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them to design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.

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EXTENSIVE DAMAGES OF NATURAL DISASTERS IN AFGHANISTAN; SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters are those eruptions that emerge around all the world; but various countries find approaches to decrease its effects and minimize the risks of such disasters. Afghanistan has been greatly affected by natural disasters along the history, and a large number of Afghans lose their lives in such disasters that are preventable or at least its effects can be minimized.

In the few last weeks, in different areas of the country, floods and snowfall in some parts, resulted in personal and financial losses and on the other side the bloody earthquake in southeastern provinces caused a crisis. Though, specifically after this earthquake, nationally and internationally aids started with the affected ones from this earthquake but due to the lack of an effective mechanism, the distribution of these aids wasn't so effective and organized.

Natural disasters around all the world have two stages. One is pre-emergence stage and the other is post-emergence stage. In both of these stages, there are some technical steps that can prevent or decrease the amount of damage. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, there are no suitable pre- or post-disaster activities that results in increase of the damages of the disaster.

In this article, we discuss the enormousness of the damages of natural disasters in Afghanistan, the bloody earthquakes of the last three decades, specifically the deathful earthquakes of the last week in Paktika and Khost provinces, the mechanism towards natural disasters, and the possible solutions in this regard.

THE HEAVY SHADOW OF NATURAL DISASTERS ON AFGHANS

Deathful natural disasters take lives every year from Afghans in the past decades and beside this the displaced Afghans and the affected people are always facing many problems. As Afghanistan due to its climate and geographical location is always damaged by natural disasters, there is always an active ministry of disaster management or an authority of disaster



management but unfortunately overall not only there are very little or there aren't any beforehand steps but also after the disasters Afghan government only pay attention to the affected people for a short term and there are no long-term steps in plan.

According to research, Afghanistan is the ninth country where earthquake occurs mostly and specifically Afghanistan is located in the Hindu Kush Mount range where small collisions of the plates occur. Also, according to the estimates of 2020 Afghanistan is the eighth country with the highest drought. Afghanistan is also the eighth country among those 15 countries that its people are greatly affected by floods. The people these 15 countries make 80 percent of the world population that, on average, are yearly affected by floods.

In the past three decades, Afghanistan was hit by bloody earthquake that on average killed 560 persons yearly and just in the past decade nearly 7000 people were killed by earthquake. Beside earthquake, other natural disasters too always adversely affected Afghans. In the last two decades, after security issues, natural disasters took a greater sacrifice from Afghans. For example, only in 2012, Afghanistan bore 383 natural disasters that affected more than 258 thousand people in 195 districts and killed at least 479 persons.

DEADLY EARTHQUAKES IN AFGHANISTAN

According to some statistics, from 1997 till 2022 only five deadly earthquakes have killed more than 11000 people that its last one was that of Paktika and Khost which killed more than 1000 people.

One earthquake that occurred on the border of Afghanistan and Iran was measured 7.2 Richter that killed more than 1500 in both countries and it destroyed 10000 houses and caused more damage than 100 million dollars. That was worldly the deadliest earthquake of the year. In February and May of 1998, Takhar province of Afghanistan was hit by two earthquakes that caused 7000 deaths and were the deadliest earthquakes in the contemporary history of Afghanistan. Among the two the deadliest was that of May with its measure of 6.9 Richter and 30 kilometers depth and caused 4500 deaths and injured more than 10000. In March of 2002, Baghlan was hit by two earthquakes with the second the strongest measured 6.1 of Richter. These two earthquakes killed more than 2000 people. In October of 2015 Hindu Kush Mount was hit by an earthquake with 196 kilometers depth and 7.5 Richter that caused 100 deaths in Badakhshan. Even though this earthquake was too strong but as its depth was higher, it didn't have lots of damage.



Beside the above earthquakes, in 2005, 2009, 2010, and 2013 Afghanistan was hit by potent earthquakes that caused hundreds of deaths and its center was Hindu Kush Mount. Another natural disaster that hit Afghanistan in 2014 was the earth drift in Argo district of Badakhshan that killed nearly 2500 people and completely destroyed more than 300 houses.

DEADLY EARTHQUAKE IN PAKTIKA

On 22nd of June in 1:24 of midnight, the eastern provinces of the country were shocked by 5.9 Richter earthquake. The epicenter was 46 kilometers far from southeastern Khost city but this earthquake caused more destruction in Gyan, Barmal, Naka, and Zirok districts of Paktika province, however, the number of deaths in Sapira district of Khost province also reached to tens of persons. One main reason behind this destruction was that the epicenter was 10 kilometers deep. In such a case, the earthquake is in that specific region and so much damaging. Though this destruction had other reasons too, like the oldness and rawness of the houses. After the first earthquake, some other shocks were felt that had some deaths too. From these post-shocks we can mention the earthquake of 24th of June at 10 o'clock that had at least five deaths and 11 injured ones.

This earthquake is regarded as one of the deadliest earthquakes in the contemporary history of Afghanistan and is specifically the strongest in the last two decades. The number of killed ones in this earthquake was 1150 people and 3000 were injured that had financial damages with itself too which led to the destruction of more than 10 thousand houses.

A LOOK AT PROCESS OF ASSISTANCE

To the affected region assistance of public people, government and other countries and international organs started. These aids included cash, food, medical supplies, shelter and other various contents. Internal assistance was delivered by land and those of other countries through the airport of Khost and are still going.

The most considerable thing about the assistance was that nationally the love of the Afghans and their expression of nationalism was so considerable. After the earthquake, the people of the region quickly left their daily works and went to help the affected ones. After only a few hours from different regions of the country, public people and welfare foundations arrived beside governmental agencies. There were also cases like that of a man from Panjshir brought



his belongings and a tent to the affected people. In another case, a man from Herat donated 4 million Afghani to Ehsas Welfare Foundation and focused on not mentioning his name.

Although this affected area was a far located one with no proper route leading to it that its road was full of problems, but still nationally public and other welfare foundations and organizations participated widely in distribution of these aids. From these assistances we bring here the details of the aids of Ehsas Welfare Foundation. After some hours this foundation distributed aids of at least 15 million Afghani in Barmal and Giyan districts or in the process of distribution that includes food, house equipment, and other essential content that 5 million of it were distributed as cash or used for the treatment of the injured ones.

Currently, the most essential aid for the affected people is the long term one that internal welfare foundations have played their role in this regard. For example, the Ehsas Welfare Foundation plans to build houses for the people who lost most of their family members based on the financial aids from the people inside and outside the country. This foundation has also said that they want to build an orphanage in Sharana of Paktika province, for educating and taking care of tens of children that are left with no one to take their care.

The economic deputy to the prime minister of the Islamic Emirate, Mullah Abdul Ghani Biradar, has promised the affected ones while visiting them that before arriving this winter, they will build new houses to them. According to him, the government would be responsible at least of building 1000 houses.

THE RESPONSIVE MECHANISM TOWARDS NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters occur in different types including earthquake, flood, drought, storm, thunder, snowdrift, high temperature, low temperature and many others. Among them, some of them are caused by human activities. For example, air pollution and floods are a direct result of cutting jungles.

Overall, natural disasters occur all around the world in different types which have personal and financial damages that can't be stopped completely but at least for decreasing its level of occurrence or decreasing the level of the damages after its occurrence by different beforehand steps. According to researchers in this regard, the steps to decrease the damages of natural disasters are divided into four stages.

First: the stage before the emergence of uncontrollable and natural disasters

Second: the stage of the existence of a cause of natural disasters



Third: the time of emergence of the natural disaster

Fourth: the stage after the occurrence of the disaster

Among these four stages the most important stage is the one before the occurrence of the disaster which can decrease the possibility of occurrence of the disaster by using the existing facilities to create required capabilities and measures or minimize the level of damage in case of its occurrence. For example, one of these is rising the awareness of the public beforehand by the concerned agencies so that they can decrease its level of damage by pre-occurrence steps. In many cases it is evident that the people are in great danger of natural disasters but can't take a step regarding it due to their professional knowledge.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Afghanistan is one of those countries that is greatly affected by natural disasters. For decreasing this damage, the very first step is consistent, professional and effective public awareness that beside the Afghan government international aid agencies or organizations should also pay attention to.
- The agencies that are responsible for acting against natural disasters haven't been effective enough and despite the consumption of the considerable budget, they haven't been able to answer the call of people's problems. One reason of this is the lack of professional persons in the management. Considering this, the government and international assistance organizations must pay serious attention to this.
- The organizations to act against natural disasters are responsible to find ways for the risks of natural disasters and reduce these disasters so that such disasters can be prevented to the possible degree or at least at the point of its emergence, the degree of its risks be reduced.
- The organizations responsible for acting against natural disasters should be equipped with such professionals that start their job of saving the affected persons quickly and then rapidly act for reconstruction plans.
- In case of natural disasters, making such a strategy, effective capability and mechanisms to better distribute and organize aids for the affected people by national and international persons and organizations that leads to a strategic, planned and on time distribution to the affected people.
- Specifically, now, it is needed that the affected people in Paktika and Khost should be made should be given short term aids like shelter, medical assistance and food from the current aids and beside this the affected people should be assisted on the long term.



- Also, the districts of Barmal and Giyan and its neighboring regions are so much behind from the basic developments that even telecommunication networks are not available there and the road leading there are unpaved and somehow destroyed. This was also a reason that getting assistance there was somehow slow. That's why, it is needed that its roads should be paved, clinics, schools and other facilities should be paid attention to and for strengthening the economic situation of the people working opportunities should be build.
- As mentioned previously, the participation of the people in assistance in the last event was so considerable, for this reason, it is needed that people's this sense of Islamhood and Afghanism should be strengthened and the government should bring essence to the assistance process by the people. For example, the government at least help the people in providing them with transportation and getting assistance to the affected ones. Beside this, it is better that these assistances be evaluated by the concerned agencies so that these assistances in the future be encouraged and proven effective.
- For investigating the occurrence of natural disasters and its effects, in the concerned agencies international professionals should be hired so that they can investigate the occurrence of such events and its effects professionally and consistently. For example, after the earthquake, some other movements too can take lives that can be greatly recognized through investigations.

The end

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