

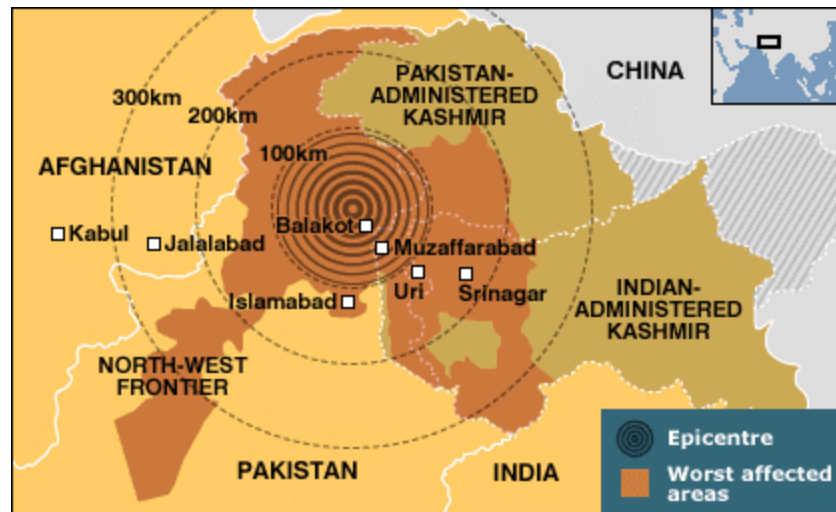
Ecotourism Society Pakistan (ESP) Report Mountains are bleeding

www.ecotourism.org.pk



ESP has sent a letter to Rehabilitation in charge Gen. Zubair for controlling ill planned constructions in mountain areas. ESP with the support of 10 Members of National Assembly have

decided to move as a legislative Bill. Parliamentarian Commission for Human Rights has assured its full support to help us to launch a campaign within the parliament. ESP is thankful to Director General ICIMOD Nepal Mr. Campbell who has sent a manual of construction of school building in mountain areas and this manual has also sent as a reference with the letter. The manual was handed over by Dr. Farooq of ICIMOD to the President of ESP Agha Iqrar Haroon in Islamabad.



ESP appreciates that Chief Minister Punjab Ch. Pervaiz Ellahi has assured ESP that new building rules would be introduced in Murree Hills and he has also passed orders for the stopping construction of multi storey buildings in Murree Hills with immediate effect. Moreover ESP Core members in their meeting highly appreciated commendable role of US marines who are looking after logistics and providing all out support to people of devastated areas



Dear
Friends,
The team
of
Ecotourism
Society
Pakistan
comprising
of
student
of
Government
college

Lahore, F.C College Lahore, Punjab University, Hajvari University Lahore, Central Model School Lower Mall Lahore and Labour Welfare School Nishtar Town visited the devastated areas during the time of October 13 to October 20. This is report prepared by students. The Report is in two parts. The first part has been done by President ESP Agha Iqrar Haroon, Rubina Bokhari, Saleem Shazad, Attique ur Rehman and Sibtain Ali. Both parts are available here and they may help other people to think and work together.

Moreover, a new team headed by Dr. Waseem Mirza of Mirza Hospital Jhelum is busy in Muzafarabad and Muhammad Hussain sanitarium Samli Company Bagh as ESP, Al-Markaz and Mirza Hospital have joined hands to work together. Our experience indicates that instead of working in solo it is helping us to work together. Therefore ESP requests other NGOs to work together and join hands to face this devastation instead of working separately.

ESP highly appreciates Edhi Foundation, Insaar Burney Foundation, Comsats Abbotabad campus and all other you have done tremendous job during the last 10 days. ESP also appreciates United States of

America as its marines are working shoulder to shoulder with Pakistani nation to face the difficulties of relief work.



ESP has also prepared a letter has been handed over to Rehabilitation in charge Gen. Zubair on October 24, 2005 for controlling ill planned constructions in mountain areas. ESP with the support of 10 Members of National Assembly has promised to support legislative ill to

move in forthcoming session.

Part One
Assessment Report
Relief Activities in Balakot headed by Haris Aftab

Introduction:

The members of Ecotourism Society Pakistan (ESP), left for Balakot on October 13, 2005 and worked there for 10 days. Our findings are here below:

Findings:



After collecting the required goods, eatables, medicines and some cash, we left for Balakot with a truck full of the mentioned goods. When we got there we found it totally illogical to park our truck on the roadside and distribute things among the locals. Because we thought that relief goods, eatables, medicines are being misused. People have started stocking things by them selves. You see familiar faces around the trucks stocking things for themselves. So few are getting more than what is needed and other might not be getting any thing. Relief goods are there but there should be a total control on proper and equal distribution of these goods. We have to keep one thing in mind and that is the fact that the locals of that area need our support for not one week or one month, the time period might just stretch over year(s).

There are Afghanis present there as well who have started collecting the things which we fear they might sell to locals at higher prices later.

Locals are not being made part of the relief activities going on there. They feel lost on there own land and most of the work is being done by the foreign teems, army and volunteers who have go there from all over the country. They are just waiting for things to happen for them.

With more and more people now moving towards the camps and living in camps, there is a problem of proper sanitation as there are no toilets and bathrooms. Other than this a lot of litter of used goods such as empty packs of milk, juices, dates, empty bottles, empty bags can be seen everywhere.



So we assessed the area and decided to move back and give the relief goods to some hospital where they can be used in a better way. One of our members somehow knew that there is a small TB hospital named Syed Hussain TB Hospital near Murree and the patients from CMH Murree are being transferred there, but there are no medicines or food supply in that particular hospital. So we decided to distribute things there.

When we were there in Murree, we decided to move around to see the construction work in Murree specially the Lower Topa area where the new road to Murree is under construction.

From our interactions on ESP forum, we knew that the roadwork has been stopped on an order from high court but to our surprise the work is still on, machinery is there which is cutting the forest, which is resulting in deforestation at a mass level. Affects of this deforestation have already been discussed at all forums but still Government is not reacting to it.



On our way back we passed through the famous Mall Road of Murree and some thing that was not just disheartening and disappointing but terrifying as well was the fact the construction work is still going on, and we see sky scrapers which were not

there a month ago. So if such catastrophe hits again, we might have to pay twice.

Recommendations:

The most important thing that we see here is the equal distribution of goods to the effected people.

1-We suggest that army or any other civil authority should have a total control over the distribution of goods. They have started moving people in camps, and from there they can form a total database of people and families living there so that they can distribute things to these families. All the aid that is coming to the areas should be intercepted by army and taken into their custody, so that they can keep a record of goods in there stock.

By having a complete database of people and the goods in stock they can better match demand and supply and further estimate the demand for the future.

By keeping the record of all the people there they can have a check on people coming to that area just for sake of collecting aid, as its mentioned that Afghanis have started coming there.

Record keeping can also help them have a check on human trafficking of small children in particular to Gulf for camel races, and the others looking for earning a livelihood.

2-Locals of the area should be made part of every activity that is going on there such as:

Distribution of goods as locals know each other and their needs,

Rescue operations, teams of the locals should be made to work with foreign teams, volunteers and army, so that they start learning how to carry on the rescue work. They are the only ones who can actually guide the rescue teams in the area in the best possible way.

Medical work, locals should work there with doctors to learn the basics, such as bandaging, dressing, using different medicines etc. so that they start helping the doctors.

3-Government should start devising some reform strategies in the area as soon as possible. Instead of making the locals sit and see things and feel dependent on the aid from out side, government should start some

reform work there on immediate basis such as construction of roads, houses schools, etc. and make the locals work with their teams so that they can get a job and start earning their lively hood from there own area, otherwise there people will start moving towards the cities and work there where it will be even more difficult to accommodate them.

4-Government, NGO's and other social institutes should come up and devise strategies for orphans and their accommodations such as paying schools, one formed by Shezad Roy who pays students from studying in his school. It will also help in avoiding the curse of human trafficking of children in particular. Special allowances and care houses should be formed for those who have been totally handicapped and work opportunities should be provided to those who have been partially handicapped such as teaching, small sewing centers, handicraft centers, fruit related small businesses, tourism guidance etc. otherwise they might have to beg which will raise another social problem.



5-Structural and construction rules should be regulated on immediate basis to stop further construction on current structural configurations to avoid such a havoc. If we look at the earlier structure of building such as old rest houses and youth hostels, we see that they were built using wood logs, which usually don't collapse and even if they collapse they are not disastrously harm full and rescue operations are far easier

in that cases, as well.

In past two decades building have used concrete and a construction structure similar to the one used in lower plain areas. This concrete construction has proved to be the biggest killer in the recent quake, as they say "buildings kill, not the quakes".

Such construction structure should be condemned at every level. Government should regulate laws on the construction of high rises. People need to develop a sense of civic responsibility and stop those who are doing wrong, tourists should also condemn such buildings and avoid staying in them, those who want to buy houses there should condemn such building styles and avoid buying houses/flats.

But for all this, we need to educate people, so in the long run we need to develop a sense of civic responsibility and stop those who are doing wrong.

On immediate basis Government should stop all the construction that is going on in these areas, specially Murree, where commercial building are increasing day by day. There are three or four big projects under construction, which should be stopped right now and redesigned.

Part Two



The massive devastation caused by Saturday's earthquake was not only God's wrath rather there was a strong element of "Man made havoc". Traveling from Muzafarabad to Balakot, one can see that major casualties were reported in buildings that were made against the basic principles of mountain areas construction style that teaches "putting less weight on foundations".

Century and half a century old buildings in Murree, Muzafarabad and Balakot survived and resulted in less damages where old mountain architecture was followed with a canopy roof made of iron sheets. Old barracks of

British Army survived and new building using concrete slabs were erased to the ground and did not allow rescue teams to rescue trapped people inside buildings because concrete slabs were not only heavy to remove rather difficult to cut or break.

The scenes in Muzafarabad indicate that only old building with canopy rooftops have survived while the city including President House and Prime Minister House were damaged. Buildings that have totally caved in were made of hollow block, concrete pillars and concrete rooftops. Double storied buildings were real target of earthquake because sub-

Himalayan soil is prone to earthquake and having gypsum and coal as main components slides easily while lava based component soil starts from Karakoram range where the survival of heavy buildings are better than in Himalayan and sub-Himalayan areas.



Abbotabad can be taken as prime example to understand this issue. Abbotabad Cantonment, which was established during British Era, was constructed on Gothic style mostly with canopy rooftops using wooden pillar. These buildings have survived while new buildings have erased to ground. There are no rules in Pakistan to control architecture of mountain areas and mushroom like growth of buildings followed the structural design similar plain areas played havoc during this earthquake. There is no mountain expert in government departments dealing with construction activities in mountain areas and government has no planning to learn from Nepal and other small mountainous countries in the region. There should be no construction of at Muzafarabad and Balakot as these areas are still trembling and new earthquakes and after shocks may continue to jolt these areas.



Some words about ESP

Ecotourism Society Pakistan (ESP) is a group of professionals, dedicated to the cause of integrated tourism research and poor people living in mountain areas. ESP mainly concentrates on problem-oriented multidisciplinary field research in tourism, distribute literature on tourism and offers consultancy. ESP also offers ecotours all over Pakistan for families, researchers, students and scholars providing them in depth knowledge about culture, heritage and people of mountains. It also promotes small stakeholders in the field of tourism by promoting their products through ESP networking.

ESP is Regional Partner of The International [Ecotourism Society \(TIES\) United States](#) and [Friends of Nature International Austria](#) that have been working for the better future of tourism and Nature world over.

ESP can be considered as an association for the purpose of advancing knowledge and disseminating information about mountain research and mountain development throughout the world. The ESP tries to promote sustainable mountain development through improved communication among institutions and individuals, with a particular focus on mountain eco-regions with Pakistan and abroad. In pursuing this purpose, it collaborates with like-minded institutions. The core duty of ESP can be considered as that ESP is a group working for the "advocacy" for poor people living in remote mountain areas through international networking.

The ESP links people concerned with mountain development and research and is also running On-line Information Sharing Capacity Data Bank. It provides guidelines and information on mountain initiatives and alerts the communities to timely actions, as well as the value of sharing information about mountain environments. It thus plays a direct role in fulfilling the objectives of Chapter 13 of Agenda 21.

The Society has "Full members" and "Half members" while 6 "Core members" are office bearers of the Society. "Full members" are persons who are regularly participating in its activities through their research works, articles and news items while "Half members" are those who are just supporting its cause. "Half membership" is free and Society is not taking any grants, contribution or financial support. Core members are bearing running expenditures. This arrangement has been followed to inform people that if there is a will to do something good for a good cause, there is no need of huge donations or funds.

ESP is devoted to multidisciplinary research having the academic support and expertise of over forty known tourism scholars world-wide, representing various disciplines. It has identified some relevant themes concerning economics, geography, environment and management in connection with integrated tourism activities. One of the objectives of the ESP is to produce and publish worthy research literature on-line on tourism.

ESP conducts researches on environmentally critical areas where tourism has posed a problem or may interface with the sensitive resources. Such projects should be financially supported by funding agencies and research organizations in Pakistan and overseas. Findings of these projects are published for wider dissemination of information, and the results are fed to the decision-making authorities. ESP has full capacity of holding research and events in the field of integrated tourism and regional development. Therefore ESP is essentially a place

of learning where scholars, particularly of tourism, exchange views, opinion and knowledge. Come and join us for helping Mother Nature---
-Our Future.