



NATURAL DISASTERS

& OUR MEDIA

“Let’s Re-Phrase Disaster Reporting”

by

Mohammad Malick

Media Cell

PDMA-PARRSA

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

TRAINING WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop Title:	“Natural Disasters & Our Media”
Sponsor:	UNDP
Date of Training:	July 12, 2011
Auspices:	Muhammad Malick –Editor, “The News” Islamabad
Venue:	Pearl Continental Peshawar
No. of Participants:	50 trainees
Participants:	Print & Electronic Media Journalists of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and representatives from GIZ & Rescue 1122
Motive:	“Journalists being the assets of a country should fulfill their righteous role in leading the masses to the right track”
Workshop Content & Duration:	One day workshop incorporated disaster news reporting approaches, methods and know-how. It also encompassed the participative exercise, work exercises, work activities and individual lesson assessment through other interactive exercises.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Interaction and Communication are the basic tools that not merely eliminate striking ambiguities between the working departments/organizations but also manifold refinement and progress in overall work management. Knowing the urgency of communications of the present time, its incorporation and implementation has gathered strong holdings in every walk of life.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has witnessed that whenever a natural calamity hit, PDMA stood there as a sole entity for emergency relief provision services to its affected masses and ensured the prompt provision of food even to those resided in the far-stretched areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the accessibility means had crumpled. Among its numerous projects, Watan Cards disbursement is one of its prominent projects, under which till now compensations amounting to Rs.518,7860,000 have been allotted to the flood victims. Besides these projects it renders as a prime entity in facilitation of various projects by other local NGOs and many other International Humanitarian Organizations, running in the flood-hit areas.

Keeping in view the immense and tremendous damages incurred at the onset of floods last year, PDMA/PaRRSA reckoned the significance of equipping journalists for authentic reporting; along with efficient communications development between the journalists and PDMA for mutual information dissemination at the onset of a natural calamity.

This frame of mind was sought by PDMA/PaRRSA and it inaugurated a Workshop on Natural Disaster reporting, which was held on 12th July,2011 under UNDP’s sponsorship. The workshop was specifically organized for the journalists in order to rephrase their reporting approach, tools and techniques while citing reports on disasters.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WOKSHOP

The main objectives of this event were to inculcate the following traits in journalists:

- Emphasize the significance of flood disaster awareness at national and international level.
- Assist them to ensure their adherence to well-equipment with all relevant data before reaching the disaster affected areas.
- Inculcate a sense of self-responsibility and discreetness among journalists while citing disaster relating news.
- Guide them for transmission of flood precautionary measures, prudent behaviors and self-preparedness among masses, before calamities strike.
- Motivate them to work for promoting the element of peace among individuals; as well as by reviving trust between masses and Government.
- Encourage them for prompt provision of authentic information, refraining from devising chaos among masses, since they are the first source of information people rely on.
- Promoting self sufficiency among them for accurate formulation of reports.
- Guiding them on report formulation, stressing the content encompassing all aspects pertinent to the incident.
- Ensured them for maintaining the authenticity of the collected news data since they are the first source of information people rely on.

SERIES OF SESSIONS IN THE WORKSHOP

FIRST SESSION

Presentation of the Director General, PDMA-PaRRSA

The workshop's inception took with a brief speech of Director General of PDMA/PaRRSA Mr. Shakeel Qadir, highlighting the advent of flood disaster last year and damages incurred to life, property and estate; rescue, relief and rehabilitation services rendered by the Organization; the current identification of loopholes in the service and its rectification; the innovations and advancements made in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) System in tackling flood disasters in particular.

The amendments made in the Monsoon Contingency plan were enlightened and the funds arrangement by Provincial Disaster Management Authority –PDMA was also discussed. Besides this PDMA's efforts for attaining Radars from China was highlighted, which would assist Meteorological Department Pakistan in weather forecast and thus increase the disaster risk mitigation.

There has been a constant capacity building in PDMA's departmental working and in its associated line departments by; introduction of District Disaster Management units DDMUs, establishment of Flood Control Cells with every department, strengthening the communication between PDMA and other associated line departments (Meteorological department, Irrigation Department), escalation in work expertise and capabilities enhancement via training courses provision.

SECOND SESSION

- i. Presentation of Resource Person**
(Mohammad Malick)
Senior Editor, daily “The News”

Mohammad Malick started his presentation with general reporting style and then brought the minds of journalist to reporting during and after disaster.

ii. Formal training of Journalists

The main session of the workshop “News Reporting Training Session” for journalists was carried out by a prominent contributor of Journalism, Muhammad Malick –Editor, The News, including precautionary tools before the advent of floods, necessary measures taken during the advent of flood and the steps required to be taken in the aftermath of flood. In addition to the promotion of Flood Disaster Awareness, the workshop also aimed to impart a sense of responsibility and discreetness among journalists with regard to professional and authentic news transmission among masses.

Journalists were enlightened about their roles in the society and were motivated to fulfill their obligations to inform the masses in an appropriate manner. Since journalists are the first source of information people rely on, they were made aware of how their words can distort the facts and figures with an eventuality of a riots eruption. These facts were analyzed and manifested through practical approaches and participative exercises.

The authenticity of reporting was chalked out through discussions and visual news reporting. The visual news reporting was then analyzed to identify the exaggeration modes, distorting the facts and figures. This exercise was effective in self-assessment and rectification.

The workshop was accompanied by a number of other activities also which aimed at excelling the reporting skills and improving report content authenticity; including work exercises, work activities and individual lesson assessment through other interactive exercises. Journalists’ participation via queries further cleared the ambiguities and added more flavour to the event.

CERTIFICATE’S DISTRIBUTION

Workshop concluded in high spirits, with greater aims of developing firm consolidated journalism.

“Mohammad Malick” distributed Certificates amongst participants

Output

The workshop bore following implications/achievements in facilitating journalists via this workshop:-

- Encouraged them to rely on authentic information data and avoid from communication tools’ exploitation, in view of getting their reports printed.
- Tempted them to initiative in creating flood disaster awareness among masses.
- Inculcated them with a sense of discreetness in transmission of information among masses, refraining from evoking chaos via exaggerated reporting.

- Motivated journalists to render their services in bringing the masses close to Government via the appropriate use of their medium.
- Strengthened the information dissemination between PDMA and journalists, with an eventuality of accurate reporting.

Recommendations

The audience appreciated the workshop and desired that the same will be continued in future both Provincial and District level.

