

Bridging the gap from destruction to rehabilitation- Balakot town, Pakistan

Muhammad Abrar Ismail

Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority, Pakistan

A 7.6 at the rector earthquake of 2005 in Pakistan destroyed more than 600,000 houses, 5000 schools and 2700 health facilities in the area covering 30,000 square km, equal to the size of New Zealand . Most of the houses were located in the rural areas i.e. on the mountains or inside the deep mountainous valleys. However, the three major urban settlements in the area, the towns of Balakot, Muzafferabad and Bagh were badly affected. The ill-fated town of Balakot with estimated population of 37,000 was destroyed completely. 5000 people died and 95% of the infrastructure facilities were destroyed. The national and international consortium of specialists confirmed that the town is located on two major fault lines, running parallel all along the town. These fault lines originate from central Asia region enters Pakistan from the North West direction and pass through the towns of Balakot, Muzaffarabad and Bagh. To rehabilitate these towns and to provide safe living environments to the affected people living in the world's one of the most remotest areas in Northern Pakistan; Urban Development Strategy was formulated and launched by the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the components of Urban Development Strategy and its implementation methodology.

Key Words: Earthquake, Northern Pakistan, Fault Lines, Balakot Town, Urban Development Strategy, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority.

abrar@erra.gov.pk