

Nurture

Issue No. IX September, 2010

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development

Children & Global Issues

Poverty
Global Violence
Child Rights Violations
Natural Disasters
Pandemic Diseases
Lack of Healthcare
Threats to Food Security

Nurture

Issue No. IX September, 2010

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development

Write to us:

Nurture Magazine



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Write for us:

We invite you to send us your stories, anecdotes and experiences related to children's growth and development at the above address.

For more information on ECD practices, issues, programs and tools log on to www.ecd pak.com

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

We appreciate your constant appreciation and admiration for our efforts in bringing out Nuture. All your emails and phone calls asking about our upcoming issues really keep us going. Like the previous time, we have tried to bring out an issue that is relevant in today's time, informative and suited for parents, teachers and caregivers. The Issue 9 of Nuture focuses on the how the global issues are affecting the children in this time and age. We felt this issue was important, as there is a general lack of awareness about the steps one should take when faced with a situation.

In this issue, you will find a lot of useful articles written by professionals in the field as we felt that an experts' perspective will lend authenticity to the topics and ensure that the information imparted is not based on preconceived notions and ill founded ideas. Through the various articles we have tried to cover as many aspects and sub themes as we could to give you a broad perspective of the issue.

The articles cover a broad array of topics, from Global Issues that impact children to Stress Management and from Disaster Response to Secure School Structures. Action plan and recommendations for parents and teachers have been outlined as well to complement the information provided with easy tips for handling emergency situations. A very important issue of Climate Change has been taken up detailing the steps to be taken by the pre-primary school teachers in educating the children about the global phenomenon, so that appropriate and collective steps can be adopted to mitigate the effects of environmental natural disasters.

Many of our global problems that are increasing at an alarming rate are stemming from one root cause – a lack of education. Be it poverty, terrorism, unemployment, child labour, global warming or emergency response situation. Had the level of education been better in the country, gravity of such issues would have been mitigated to quite a degree. Nowadays, we see people throwing rubbish on the road, misusing resources, and wasting electricity, water etc., not realizing that their seemingly benign actions are contributing to a global phenomenon, called global warming. Through this issue, we have endeavored to highlight the importance of acquiring education and the steps that a responsible government and all of us as a society can take to eradicate illiteracy and poverty from our part of the world.

Like always, we have suggested books and websites you can peruse in your leisure time to gain enhanced knowledge. Also, feel free to write to us about any resources that you come across on ECD and would like to share with Nuture readers. We'd love to include your contributions.

We, the Nuture Team, bid you safe and happy times ahead. Till next time!

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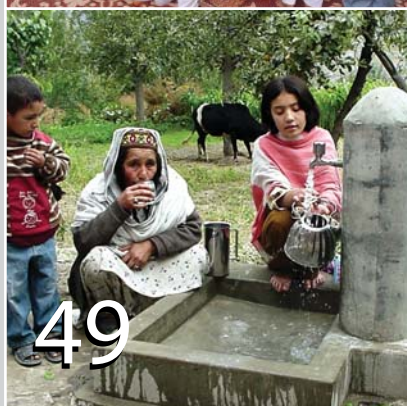
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Kids for Saving Earth: www.kidsforsavingearth.org

Global Dimension – The World in Your Classroom: www.globaldimension.org

Consultative Group on ECCD: www.ecdgroup.com

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies: www.ineesite.org

UNICEF in emergencies: www.unicef.org/emerg

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The Worried Child

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Media Violence and Children

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You can read the articles in this issue
plus those that were featured previously
in Nurture on **www.ecdpak.com**



Nurture is Pakistan's pioneer magazine on Early Childhood Development. The magazine is published bi-annually and captures different themes on Early Childhood Development.

If you have a message, suggestion or any comment contact us directly by sending an e-mail at:
info@ecd pak.com

Letters to the EDITOR

I am a librarian at a local school in Peshawar. I feel immense pleasure in sharing with you that your publication has become an effective resource for the teachers in planning lessons for children and discussions during parent-teacher meetings. The practical suggestions which always accompany the theoretical information, helps our teachers in implementing the knowledge in classrooms. Article on enhancing multiple intelligences in children is useful for dealing with the diverse group of children we have at school and the tips for fostering each type of intelligence in the classroom.

Sajid Zaki, Peshawar

Nurture is an inspirational publication. It is through your magazine that I have become more conscientious about my parenting. I appreciate editor's selection of topics that present a comprehensive overview of the theme. I particularly appreciate the fact that the magazine carries something for every stakeholder in a child's life i.e. parent; grad-parent; teacher who are really the first influencers in a child's life.

Nudrat Arshad, Karachi

I have been reading Nurture for 2 years now and every theme you have selected deserves consideration and has been extremely useful to me as a parent. In the recent issue, the article on inclusive education and speech and language disorders caught my attention in particular. I agree how our environment and education system discriminates against many children who have additional needs for support. Suggestions in the articles will surely help in creating communities that are more accepting of and extend equivalent opportunities for all children regardless.

Saifullah Soomro, Hyderabad



I appreciate the Nurture team for putting together yet another great issue. Indeed your approach towards demonstrating work of organizations, experts and other individuals from the relevant fields will help in creating synergies. The 'Organizational Directory' that accompanied the 8th issue is a valuable resource and will definitely be worthwhile for parents and practitioners alike. There are many more organizations which are also doing good work, but I was happy to see that you have kept geographic and disabilities spectrum in mind when developing the index. I suggest you produce a 2nd issue with more organizations for the online-version on www.ecdpak.com.

Gordhan Das Valasai, Jamshoro

Rayed Afzal's article on 'Inclusive Education' pertinently highlights mainstream schooling as being discriminatory towards children with special needs. I am witness to a real life case where one sibling could not join a school of choice because it did not have provision to accommodate his physical handicap. He is a very smart individual but missed out on a lot of life chances because of external environment which was not accommodating. It was encouraging to read some inspirational local examples from the local scene. Article outlining the signs and symptoms of various learning disorders will also be helpful in timely detection and support. Publications such as Nurture play a huge role in building communities that will collectively strive to create a better world for children.

Faisal Rehman, Quetta

I am a keen reader of your magazine. One of students had learning issues, which was for a long time termed as his unwillingness to study. It took the school and parents a long time to identify the real reason behind this low school performance. I am sure many parents would benefit through this issue. The cover story and the article "Being your Child's Savior – Timely Detection of Warning Signs" deserves special mention for outlining symptoms of disorders very comprehensively and also emphasizing the importance of timely recognition and acceptance if a disorder is suspected in a child. I wish to also suggest "Single Parenting" as a theme for one of your upcoming issues.

Huma Latif, Islamabad

Nurture magazine carries very useful information on children's issues. I must admit that the recent theme, 'Children and Additional Support Needs' is a largely ignored area and little information is accessible to public on this subject. The articles were insightful and will help in creating an understanding and acceptance of children with additional support needs.

Asifa Manzoor, Lahore

Global Issues: How Children Get Affected

“There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children”

(Nelson Mandela, Former President South Africa).



Each year, countless children lose their lives. The silent killers are violence, poverty, easily preventable diseases and illnesses, and other related causes. It is astonishing to note that most of these deaths are avertable and through adept efforts of government and non governmental counterparts the number of deaths each year can be easily minimized. Given below is an overview of major global issues that have made children of today's world vulnerable to adverse situations.

Global Violence

Global violence is a fast growing phenomenon which impacts lives of children worldwide. Evolving through times, violence has always made its presence felt around the world. From the times of wars with swords to today's acts of terrorism, from violence at home to the violent ideas streamlined by media; neither the adults nor the children have been able to free themselves from the negative effects of aggression. Acts of terrorism such as sniper shootings, suicide bombing, bomb explosions, etc. and added to it the graphic display of these on the media,

has contributed to furthering the anxiety and stress for adults as well as young children. In the light of the prevailing situation, our world is in a dire need to join hands and make collective efforts to build a safer world for our children.

Moreover physical abuse is one of the most pervasive human rights challenges of today and is not limited by geography, ethnicity, or status; it is a global

phenomenon. Some of the biggest victims of domestic violence are children who are exposed to domestic violence at home or work place. From a very early age these children not only become a target but even watch one parent violently assaulting another or a sibling. Findings show that children who are exposed to violence in the home may suffer a range of severe and lasting effects. They often have difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behavior, or suffer from depression or severe anxiety.

We have a responsibility to promote a culture of peace and acceptance. Education is a good starting point and through inculcating ethical values we can help make our world a better place. Public education and mass awareness campaigns can highlight the negative impacts of violence on our future generations and accentuate the need for strict enforcement of policies and laws to protect children. Additionally, interventions that support children who are exposed to violence are crucial in minimizing the long-term harm.

Poverty

Poverty is another global issue which is widespread and a large number of children around the world dwell in conditions that are unfavorable to healthy living. Nutritious food, safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, health facilities and education are increasingly becoming a luxury which many cannot afford. According to the findings of a research conducted by UNICEF, 24000 children die each day due to substandard living or poverty. The statistics cited only consider children who were aged 5 or below. Had older children been considered in the study, the figures would have been markedly higher. Deepening poverty is inextricably linked with rising levels of homelessness and food insecurity for many people and children are particularly affected by these conditions.



Child Labour

Poverty together with lack of access to education perpetuates child labour. Many of the children are forced into child labour from a very young age to make ends meet and provide for themselves and their families. What is more alarming is the fact that out of around 172 million children aged between 5-14 years who partake in child labour globally, 126 million regularly engage in hazardous work that can potentially endanger their personal safety, mental and physical health, and harm their development. (Statistical data compiled by the International Labour Organization in 2008)



Child Labour is not new, and neither is the global struggle to get protection for children. Operating machinery intended for adults; being subject to elements when working in fields during harsh weather conditions; exposure to fumes and hazardous waste products and chemicals; child bondage; child soldiers; prostitution; slave labour; and trafficking are all exploitative forms of child labour. The emotional and psychological damage done to children in such forms of labour can be devastating. Education is empowering and creating awareness about their rights is the best protection for children.

Natural Disasters

Given the overwhelming evidence that climate change will lead to more frequent and severe natural disasters, children will be increasingly exposed to floods, droughts, windstorms, and possibly earthquakes and tsunamis. Climate change can further threaten safe drinking water and groundwater pollution could have a particularly harmful effect on children's health.



Poverty, together with lack of access to education, perpetuates child labour. Many children are forced to work from a young age to make ends meet and provide for their families.

Natural disasters can be especially traumatic for children. Experiencing a dangerous or violent earthquake, flood, storm or fire is frightening even for adults, and the devastation to the familiar environment (i.e., home and community) can be long lasting and distressing. Children look to their parents and elders for guidance on how to manage their reactions after the immediate threat is over. Schools can help play an important role in this process by providing a stable, familiar environment.

While many children may cope with disaster better with the help of parents and other caring adults, some may be at risk of more extreme reactions which can vary in degree depending on factors such as exposure to the actual event, personal injury or loss of a loved one, dislocation from home, level of parental support, etc. Children sometimes may also exhibit symptoms over an extended period of time. Immediately following a natural or manmade disaster, it is important to identify children who are at high risk and plan supportive crisis intervention and counseling services accordingly.

Pandemic Diseases & Lack of Healthcare

Children have always been more vulnerable than adults to infection with most contagious diseases and epidemics due to low resistance levels; malnutrition and often lack of healthcare. Effective control requires attention to social and economic conditions, education about improving personal and domestic hygiene, as well as vaccination and immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases and the provision of safe water supplies.

Threats to Food Security and Livelihoods

In developing countries children and their families rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihood. Children's direct or indirect dependence on subsistence farming and agriculture, which is highly vulnerable to climate variability, places them at particular risk to the consequences of climate change. Droughts, floods and periods of very high temperatures are becoming more frequent which would ultimately lead families and children into chronic poverty and destitution.

Media Violence

Owing to increasing commercialism in media, a lot of graphic coverage, violence and inappropriate content are displayed through mass media that is grossly unfit to be seen by adults, let alone children. The content leaves a visual impact on the minds of children and continues to remain with them for a long time, affecting them psychologically. Although it is practically impossible to set aside the stimuli that trigger violence in children, proper monitoring can reduce the risk for the children to be exposed to the media violence.



Creating a "World Fit for Children"

Children need a safe and secure environment, free of violence, and parents that love and protect them. They need to have a sense of stability, so that when things go wrong in the outside world, they have a safety-net of comfort, help and support.

Strengthening the environment in which children are raised, whether by fighting poverty; protecting children from war; stopping the exploitation of children; improving access to adequate health care; reducing the spread of preventable diseases; protecting the environment for future generations; ensuring free basic education for all; or simply bolstering the family, is perhaps the only solution for ensuring children's wellbeing and their hope for the future.

About the Writer:

Ms. Naureen Masood Siddiqui is currently working as an Assistant Manager at Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan. Prior to joining AKES, P, she worked as a Teacher Educator at Children Global Network, Pakistan (formerly known as Children Resources International). She also worked with the Ismailia Youth Services Schools, Karachi as a Professional Development Teacher. Ms Naureen has completed her Master in Education from AKUIED and carries extensive experience of developing and conducting teacher education programs in a variety of settings.

References: www.globalissues.org, issues.tigweb.org

Important Facts

The statistics mentioned on the **UNICEF's** official site present the following facts:

- ☑ There are **2.2 billion** children in the world
- ☑ The total number of Children that live in extreme poverty is 1 billion (1 of every 2 children)
- ☑ **1.9 billion** children dwell in the developing world. For children from the developing world,
 - ☑ **640 million** live without adequate shelter (1 of every 3 children)
 - ☑ **400 million** do not have access to safe water (1 of every 5 children)
 - ☑ **270 million** can not access health services at the time of need (1 of every 7 children)
 - ☑ **2.2 million** Children die each year of preventive diseases; because they are not immunized (1 of every 10)
- ☑ There are **121 million** Children that never attended school (1 of every 18 children)
- ☑ **15 million** Children have so far been orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (1 of every 147)
- ☑ **10.6 million** Children died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5 (1 of every 207 children)
- ☑ **1.4 million** Children die each year due to inaccessibility to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation (1 of every 1571 children)

Source: *State of the World's Children, 2005, UNICEF*, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/index.html>

Trauma and its Impact on Children



What is trauma?

Trauma, a term borrowed from ancient Greek, was at first used in surgery to denote a violent injury from an external cause that breached the body's integrity. Traumatism is used occasionally as a synonym, and occasionally refers to any condition resulting from trauma. The term eventually made its way into common usage, in a psychological sense.

What are traumatic life experiences?

Almost everyone has been through a stressful event in his or her life. When the event, or series of events, causes a lot of stress it is called a traumatic event. Traumatic events may have an impact on people who have directly experienced these events or who may have seen the event either firsthand or on television. A person's normal coping efforts are challenged if they experience trauma in their life. If the traumatic event is very severe i.e. death, injury or bloody scenes children are at a greater risk of developing psychological problems.

For children a traumatic event can be when they witness or experience sexual and physical abuse, loss of a loved one (parent or friend), animal bites, severe burns, natural disasters (e.g. floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.) or medical procedures. Similarly witnessing or experiencing violent crimes either in media or in a real life situation (e.g., kidnapping and school shootings), suicide bombing, physical attack, rape, or murder of a parent or vehicle accidents such as car and plane crashes, can be very traumatic for children.

A stressful event is most likely to be traumatic if:

- ✧ It happened unexpectedly.
- ✧ The child was unprepared for it.
- ✧ The child felt powerless to prevent it.
- ✧ It happened persistently.
- ✧ It happened at an early age.

What are the typical trauma reactions in children?

Every child reacts differently and may not react the way their parents or caregivers expect. Sometimes, negative reactions continue weeks or even months after the event. There is a wide range of responses to catastrophic events. Some children and teenagers experience temporary worries and fears that are forgotten quickly. Others experience long-term problems such as fear, irritability, depression, withdrawal, anger, haunting memories, regressive behavior (acting younger than their actual age) etc.

Traumatic event may have an impact on people who have directly experienced these events or who may have seen the event either firsthand or on television.

Children who have had traumatic experiences may have difficulty in sleeping or are more likely to have nightmares. They may avoid activities, situations, thoughts, or conversations that may be related to the traumatic events. They may not want to be with people as much as before. They may avoid school, have trouble with schoolwork, or feel unable to pay attention. They may not want to play as much, avoid certain kinds of play, or lose interest in things they once enjoyed. They may be sad or seem to have less emotion or feel guilty about things they did or did not do related to the traumatic experience. Here is a list of some common reactions or symptoms that are exhibited in children who have undergone a traumatic event.

- ✧ **Withdrawal** – such as loss of interest in activities, loss of confidence, not wanting to talk or regressing to more 'babyish' ways of behaving.
- ✧ **Preoccupation** – need to relive the experience: for

example, through repetitive play or drawings. The child may be overly concerned about the possibility of future such events or may have nightmares.

- ✧ **Anxiety** – such as problems with concentrating or paying attention, clingy behaviour, separation anxiety, sleep problems and irritable behaviour.
- ✧ **Physical symptoms** – such as headaches, stomach aches, stammering and bed wetting.
- ✧ **Sleep problems** – such as not wanting to go to bed at night or have difficulty going to sleep, staying asleep, staying in their own bed etc.
- ✧ **Behaviour change** – such as becoming more clingy, demanding or difficult, or having temper tantrums.
- ✧ **Changes in their relationships with siblings**, such as becoming more competitive or aggressive.
- ✧ **Deteriorating school performance** – such as drop out, failure or repetition of grades.

What You Can Do for Your Child?

Most children and adolescents, if given support, will recover almost completely from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience within a few weeks. However, some children and adolescents need more help, perhaps over a longer period of time in order to heal. Grief over the loss of a loved one or experience related to trauma may take months to resolve, and may be reawakened by reminders such as media reports or the anniversary of a death etc.

Talk about the event

- ✧ The most important thing to do in such a situation is to listen to your child and to take their concerns and feelings seriously. Children may not be good at expressing their thoughts, so it's important to pay attention to their behavior and whatever they are trying to communicate to you through their actions and attitudes.
- ✧ Let your child know that you would like to hear about how things are for them.
- ✧ Tell your child about what happened in a way that is appropriate to their level of understanding and without going into frightening and lurid detail. Use language they understand. If you keep information from them, they will fill in the blanks using their experience, available information and their imagination which may make them more frightened.
- ✧ Reassure your child that the event is over and they are safe (but only if this is the case). You may have to reassure them over and over again.

- ✧ Make sure your child hasn't jumped to any wrong conclusions. For example, younger children may think that tragedies are their fault because they were naughty or thought bad things about someone.
- ✧ Talk about the event as a family. Allow everyone to have their say, including children. This helps everyone to overcome isolation, to understand each other and to feel supported and heard.
- ✧ Talk to your child about how people may react to distress. Tell them their feelings are normal in these circumstances and reassure them that they will gradually feel better.

Maintain Family Routines

- ✧ Keep to your regular routine as much as possible. The predictability of the family's day-to-day schedule is reassuring for children.
- ✧ Reassure your child that their routine will be back to normal as soon as possible. They may not be able to manage their usual routine for a while, such as attending school or performing household chores. Don't push it.



- ✧ Don't introduce changes such as new routines or stricter standards of behaviour. Leave that for another time.
- ✧ Maintain family roles if you can. For example, don't insist that your child take on more responsibility around the house than usual or be expected to meet the emotional needs of a distressed parent.
- ✧ Don't insist on three main meals if your child's appetite is affected. If they don't feel like eating at mealtimes, offer them regular snacks throughout the day instead.
- ✧ Make sure your child gets enough rest and sleep.
- ✧ Limit stimulants like sugar, colored foods and chocolate.



Involve Kids in Recreational Activities

- ✧ Allow your child plenty of time to play and enjoy recreational activities such as sports, particularly favorite games and activities with 'best' and familiar friends.
- ✧ Allow time for fun. Laughter, good times and shared pleasure can help all family members to feel better.
- ✧ Involve them in some sort of physical exercise – it will help your child to burn off stress chemicals and improve their sleep.
- ✧ Help your child to physically relax; warm baths, massages, story times and lots of cuddles can help relieve muscle tension.
- ✧ Intervene, if an activity makes your child upset or anxious: for example, a television show that reminds the child of the trauma or engages feelings of worry, alarm or fear. Don't be afraid to switch off the television if the program content is disturbing the child.

Your response is important

How the crisis impacts on you, and your reactions to your child's feelings and behavior, will have an enormous impact on your child's ability to cope and recover. Issues to keep in mind include:

- ✧ Be understanding. Recognize that changes in behavior, such as tantrums or bedwetting, may be the way your child reacts to distressing or frightening events.
- ✧ Give your child extra attention, particularly at bedtime and at other times of separation, if this is an issue for them.
- ✧ Children look to their parents or caregivers to

understand the crisis and find ways to respond and deal with it. They need the adults around them to be able to 'tune in' to their fears and distress and to comfort and support them. If you are distressed and having difficulty with your feelings, reactions or relationships, it is important to seek support and help for yourself. If you don't, the child's fear and distress will increase.

- ✧ Talk about your feelings in an appropriate way with your children and allow them to talk about theirs.
- ✧ Remember that everyone is different and may have different emotions. Don't expect your child to feel the same way as you do.
- ✧ Give your child a sense of control over their life. Even minor decisions, such as allowing them to choose between two sandwich fillings at lunch, makes the child feel more in control. This is especially important after the chaos of a crisis. Children who feel helpless tend to experience more severe stress symptoms.
- ✧ Try not to be overly protective of your child. It's natural to want to keep your family members close after a crisis, but you also want them to feel that their world is a safe place to be.

When to seek professional help?

In the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, and in the weeks following, it is important to identify the children and teenagers who are in need of more intensive support and therapy because of profound grief or some other extreme emotion. Recovering from a traumatic event takes time, and everyone heals at their own pace. But if months have passed and the child's symptoms aren't letting up, the child may need professional help from a trauma expert.

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Impact of Disasters: Symptoms & Responses



This article outlines generic steps to take in the aftermath of a disaster. Specifically, it charts out internationally established methods of identifying children and youth experiencing problems and the broad category of responses toward them.

The basic principle communicated in courses and workshops on management of humanitarian crises states that a natural event (e.g. earthquake, flood, rain, volcanic eruption) is not a disaster itself. It becomes a natural disaster because of the human management element i.e. the worse the scale of preparation, protection and caution, the worse the scale of the disaster. Therefore all acts of violence, particularly those on a large scale also qualify as disasters albeit man-made disasters. Strategies for both types of disasters however should not only be pre-emptive but also extend to the aftermath of the event as experiencing a dangerous event has long lasting impact on both adults and children because of changes in a familiar environment. However, children feel it more keenly because of limited understanding of an event as well as displacement from their routine environment.

Symptoms and Analysis

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is an international organization that disseminates knowledge and resources to support teaching professionals and school psychologists in enhancing learning and the mental health of children. NASP notices differences in the way children express distress based on their ages. They identify the following symptoms as a marker of disturbance in children:

1) **Preschoolers** — thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging

to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal from friends and routines.

2) **Elementary School Children** — irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.

3) **Adolescents** — sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.'

The degree of reaction to the event will depend on risk factors such as exposure to the actual event, personal injury or loss of a loved one, dislocation from their home or community, level of parental support, the level of physical destruction, and pre-existing risks, such as a previous traumatic experience or mental illness.

Longer term post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may potentially be observed in children and youth who:

- ✧ Had threats to their physical safety
- ✧ Thought they might die during the disaster
- ✧ Report that they were very upset during the disaster
- ✧ Lost their belongings or house as a result of the disaster
- ✧ Had to relocate in the aftermath
- ✧ Attended schools following the disaster that had multiple schedule changes, double sessions or a lot of disruptions.

Responses

In a situation where children are too young or inexperienced to comprehend and understand how an event that has occurred, they look to adults in their life for a cue on how to react and process the event. Since it is likely that parents will also be affected in such an event, schools or school teams can play an important role in providing a safe, familiar environment. In the eventuality that the case is reversed and the locus of event is the school itself, then adults in the family can take on the role of acclimatizing children to the changes in their environment.

The first step for any disaster management effort is to identify children and youth who are at high risk and plan interventions (individual, group or family based) for them. The second step is to buttress and support all the important actors (e.g. school teachers, family members) in a child's sphere. This can be done by providing information on children's reactions, possible queries and how to handle them. Additionally a move must be made to establish a routine as similar to the child's earlier routine as possible.

Child psychologist Annette Le Greca and her team have developed a pioneering disaster manual on children in natural disasters. This manual was developed after Le Greca worked with children in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in the USA in 1992. The manual is directed at professionals and parents working with elementary school children. The current version of the manual is titled "Interventions for Posttraumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents Following Natural Disasters and Acts of Terrorism" and serves as a foundation point for teams planning interventions to do for children under stress.

The manual shows that certain factors helped children and youngsters cope better over time. These included:

- ✧ Having a wide range of social support from family and friends that helps provide children with suggestions on how to cope.
- ✧ Specific activities could include asking children to work together in groups.
- ✧ Getting back into normal roles and routines and focusing on the children's competency in their usual roles and in times in the past when they have experienced anything frightening and how they have coped.
- ✧ Encouraging children to talk about disaster-related events (e.g. through verbal activities such as stories and other expressions such as drawing and painting). A more direct and helpful method could include talking about other people and children who have

experienced similar natural disasters in history and in contemporary times. The emphasis should be on how these communities and people recovered.

Le Greca's manual and workbooks also highlight strategies and occurrences that would disrupt healing for children and young adults. These include:

- ✧ Low levels of support from family and friends
- ✧ Blaming (oneself or others) as a way of coping (extremely negative)
- ✧ Anger (at oneself or others) as a way of coping (extremely negative)
- ✧ Children who had high levels of anxiety and adjustment difficulties before the event were likely to have greater PTSD symptoms afterward

The central focus of response reactions are based on the realization that children do not often know how to ask for help.

In 2006, UNICEF developed an episode for its popular eight year old cartoon character Meena. The episode 'Life Has Changed' was aimed at helping children cope with the recent tsunami (2004) and earthquake (2005) disasters in the Asian region. In this episode Meena meets a little girl, Neela, who was separated from her family during an earthquake. Meena takes her home, talks to her and plays with her. Meena's family also steps in to play a supportive role.



"We know from our experience in all sorts of disasters, not just the tsunami, that children suffer tremendous psychological damage," said Dr. Esther Guluma, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director in South Asia. "The Meena film and books will help caregivers, teachers, parents, and communities understand how to deal with children as well as help the children understand their feelings after a disaster." (Li, 2006 on the UNICEF website)

Helping children cope with disasters is not a short-term intervention. Children and youth, particularly those with increased risk factors need to be monitored closely for long-term assistance. As with all contingencies, a plan of action should exist before the event rather than an ad hoc post-event assembly. It may seem like a futile effort particularly if there is no foreseeable reason to apprehend a natural or man-made disaster. However, for children the more immediately they are surrounded by adults who have a sense of purpose, the greater the children's sense of security and the quicker their ability to engage and process the event.

About the Writer:

Ms. Moizza Sarwar worked at the Sindh Education Foundation before moving abroad for higher studies. Presently, she is a Ph.D. student at Oxford University, United Kingdom. She regularly writes for various journals and publications.

Pakistan Floods: Planning Ahead to Save Lives



Will the floods happen again?

Some scientists are proposing a theory of 1000 year cycles for the river Indus of high flow and low flow. The Mohenjoh Daro Civilization existed at a time of Indus High flow when the currently flooded banks of the river Indus were incorporated in the river all year round. It is possible that this may be the beginning of a 1000 year cycle of Indus high flow. Are we prepared for this contingency? We have not even started to deal in an organized way with the fallout of this year's floods. The displaced population has been stranded in ill organized camps and many returning to their homes are exposed to standing floodwater and largely rebuilding on their own.

How do we prevent this level of devastation in future?

1. Take immediate measures to reduce greenhouse gases and pollution in Pakistan.
2. Prepare drainage and storage facilities for possible heavy monsoon rains. Every village, town and city close to the Indus needs floodwater spillways that lead away from populated areas, with storage in low lying valleys or in man-made reservoirs.
3. Human settlements and cultivation must be located away from possible flood affected areas. Permanent settlements should not be allowed on riverbeds and in the flood plains. Any temporary settlements should be designed to be disposable and possibly on stilts.
4. Plantation of a mile wide stretch of a *Peepal* forest on both banks of the Indus river. While a slow growing tree, *Peepal* used to flourish in this region during ancient times and protected the areas distant from the river from the force of the floods. Other fast growing local trees will need to be planted between the *Peepals* as well.
5. The breaches created in the Indus to save barrages and dams should be designed as permanent standing alternative spillways for the diversion of water during floods. These spillways should lead away from settled and cultivated land and end in reservoirs or remote valleys.
6. If excess water is released into populated and cultivated land rather than being diverted toward the desert or uncultivated land there should be advance warning with clear communication and time to facilitate an evacuation.
7. Planned evacuation is important. Resources of local ear-marked authorities can be used. Fuel, food and hygiene must be provided as well as health checkup for all evacuees on arrival at the camps. The camps need to be in solid buildings that are mosquito proof and have functioning toilets and a steady water supply. The most easily available structures are government offices, schools and mosques.
8. Corruption. Weed it out. It only works if its from top to bottom.
9. The public must be educated about their rights and there is need to establish the fact that no one is above the rule of law.
10. We must recognize and punish criminal negligence of duty by respective authorities. It is important that concerned functionaries have an emergency

contingency plan, general guidelines for decision making in times of crisis and clear instructions to act in the public interest when action is needed.

11. We need a clearly charted plan of action.

- ✧ Lines of communication: Government departments, armed forces, media, NGOs, affected population.
- ✧ Determine the department of the government which will coordinate and facilitate all efforts at the centre.
- ✧ Determine the people to be evacuated and identify camp locations. Designate responsibility for maintenance of the camps and provisions for the evacuated population. Possible division of responsibility along the lines of: hygiene, nutrition, health, transport, temporary employment, funding, mosquito coils, utensils, boiled drinking water, etc.
- ✧ All evacuees and organizers should have instructions to take with them utensils to boil water, mosquito netting or sheets that can be used to keep out mosquitoes if made into a tent, and bars of soap. These are life saving items.
- ✧ Establish lines of communication between all groups so that people are not left stranded.
- ✧ Designate spillways and breaches to be formed should the need arise. This should be made public well in advance of the actual event. Any conflict of interest has to be prevented.
- ✧ Strict review of water inflow and outflow across all barrages, dams, reservoirs and lakes.

12. Encourage on the spot decision making on moral and ethical grounds through the media and by giving clear instructions to all concerned officials to do so.



13. Establish lines of communication between affected population and aid workers. Use the newspapers, flyers, television and radio. Use the loudspeakers of mosques. The phone numbers of all responsible people should be available in each camp and also

through the print and electronic media.

14. Public Health Education:

- ✧ Hand washing with soap.
- ✧ Drinking water must be filtered, then boiled for 20 minutes with a lid on after the bubbles start

to form and cooled before use.

- ✧ Keep away from mosquitoes. They can be a deadly vector of Malaria and Dengue. Use mosquito netting, mosquito coils and burn cow dung.
- ✧ For emergency toilet, dig a deep ditch, cover with wooden plank or other flat surface with a hole in the middle. Place a tent over it and use as toilet. Keep sand and water nearby in the tent to clean with. Wash hands with soap afterwards.
- ✧ How to avoid:
 - *Respiratory tract infections*: Do not stand too close to coughing people. Wash hands with soap and water before meals. Use of cigarette, paan, *gutka*, *chaliya*, tobacco, is extremely harmful.
 - *Diarrhea*: Wash hands with soap and water, boil drinking water for 20 minutes with a lid on after the bubbles start to form. Cool and then use. Do not eat food more than a day old. Prevent flies from sitting on food. Eat bananas and home made yogurt if available.
 - *Malaria*: Avoid mosquitoes. Eat *Mitthas* (local citrus fruit that has bitterness) if available. Ask a doctor to prescribe prophylactic antimalarial medication.
- ✧ How to treat:
 - *Simple wounds*: Keep clean and dry. Use soap and water to clean, then apply antiseptic. Keep covered with clean dry bandage. Prevent flies from sitting on the wound. If the wound is on a limb, elevate limb to keep swelling down. If it is a large wound the edges can be pulled together with a single stitch. Change bandage if it gets dirty. If the surrounding area is red and painful and if the patient is running a fever, then s(he) needs urgent medical attention.
 - *Respiratory tract infections*: Steam inhalation. Wash hands with soap and water. Do not wipe nose with the same dirty cloth repeatedly. It is better to spit or blow out onto the ground and then cover with dirt. If fever is accompanying cough then alert the organizers to call for a doctor.
 - *Diarrhea*: Keep the body well hydrated with fluids available. Make oral rehydration fluid with one glass boiled and cooled water, one tea spoon sugar and 2 pinches of salt. Give the patient banana, soft rice based foods or yogurt. If fever, persistent vomiting or pain continues then call for a doctor.
 - *Malaria*: Medication for fever and virus need to be given. It is important keep the body hydrated. Sweet things to eat and drink will help heal faster.

About the Writer:

Ms. Veerta Ali Ujan is a doctor by profession. She volunteers her time for spreading health awareness in poor communities and also writes on social issues for various publications.



Why is Child Labour Detrimental for Children?

All children, regardless of race or social and economic status, are entitled to enjoy their childhood years and to grow up fully and naturally. All have the right to love, education and protection.

International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, 1998

Introduction

There has been a long history of injustices and exploitation of children. Economic exploitation of children and child labour are one of the worst forms of child abuse and neglect in the world. In order to protect and promote children's rights, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) in 1989 to facilitate the optimum growth and development of the child. Pakistan is a signatory to the CRC. Thus, through its Constitution, Pakistan has ensured child protection, yet the efforts to protect children's right are questionable. Article 11 (1) forbids slavery and states that no law shall permit or facilitate its introduction into Pakistan in any form. Article 11 (2) prohibits all forms of forced labour and traffic in human beings, similarly, article 11 (3) prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment. Despite a recent series of laws prohibiting child labour and indentured servitude, children make up a quarter of the unskilled work force, and can be found in virtually every factory, every workshop and every field. They earn on average a third of the adult wage. Child labour is a result of different economic and social factors. It has its roots in poverty, lack of educational and economic opportunities, high rate of population growth, unemployment, uneven distribution of wealth and social customs and disregard for child rights.

This article discusses the prevalence of child labour in our society, provides an understanding of child labour, its causes and its effects on children and society and

suggests possible recommendations to bring an end to child labour.

Prevalence of child labour in our society

According to the World Development Indicators Database (2006), Pakistan the sixth most populous country in the world with 155.8 million people, is ranked as a low income country. According to a study conducted by National Council for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) cited in Akhtar and Razzaq (2005) in 6 major cities of Pakistan, eight percent of the total working children are engaged as domestic servants. Thus, this number is consistent with the ILO and UNICEF studies as a Federal Bureau of Statistics (1996) study estimated 3 million child workers in Pakistan. At least half these children are under the age of ten. Certain industries, notably carpet making and brick making, cannot survive without them, while a large proportion of children are working invisibly in the informal sector.

Child labour is spread all over Pakistan but has the greatest impact in the north-west of Punjab especially Sialkot. Pakistan has a population of approximately 1 million and is an important centre for the production of goods for export to international markets, particularly sporting goods. Sialkot is one of the world's most important centres for production of sporting goods.

Child labour exists in Sialkot both in the export sector and the domestic sector. This fact has been well

documented and reported by the international media for several years but nothing has been done about it. In Pakistan, though it is clearly documented that child labour is against the law, the government is reluctant to do anything about it. Provision for education is very limited, due to the fact that very low priority is given to education in the national budgets. Education receives around 3% of the total gross domestic product. Gender and other forms of discrimination add to the lack of political will, gives a clear picture of the existence of child labour in Pakistan.

What is Child Labour?

Not all work done by children is considered as child labour. Children's participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays.

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The term "child labour" is often defined as work that is done by children which restricts or damages their physical, emotional, intellectual, social or spiritual growth as children, and which denies them their right to develop, play or go to school. It refers to work that:

- ✧ is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- ✧ interferes with their schooling:
 - ◆ by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - ◆ by requiring them to work excessive hours and do heavy work.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves— often at a very early age. (Adapted from: Inter-parliamentary Union/International Labour Office, 2002)

Causes of Child Labour

Children start work when they are too young, or take on work that is hazardous, for many reasons. Children in developing countries, especially Pakistan, start working because their families need the extra income. Many end up working unpaid for their employers in exchange for food and boarding. In order to combat child labour, it is important to understand the forces that give rise to it.

Poverty

Poverty is one of the main reasons of child labour. Due to economic crises, adult workers are not paid enough



to support their families, and sometimes even the wages from both parents' incomes are insufficient to keep their family housed, clothed and fed. Life consequently becomes a day to day struggle for survival of the poor. As a result, children start work instead of attending school, or leave school before completing their primary education to assist their families who are poor and cannot pay the basic costs of food and housing.

In some cases, it is also common to find families in which one or both parents are not earning anything, maybe because a parent has died or left home, or because adults are unable to get work.

Cultural Context and Beliefs

In Pakistan, it is believed that children should share family responsibilities by assisting their parents with household chores or included in the family business or occupations such as farming and trading at an early age. Most of the children are also expected to assist their parents' financially. Gender is also a crucial factor as girls are mainly expected to look after their siblings and take care of the



house. This traditional attitude regarding work contributes to high incidences of child labour and places children in exploitative labour from which it is difficult to escape.

Discrimination between girls

In most parts of Pakistan, gender is also a crucial factor: girls are discouraged from staying at school beyond puberty. They are pushed into adulthood much younger than boys, either into work or an early marriage before that have outgrown their childhood with caregivers not realizing the importance of playing and learning time.

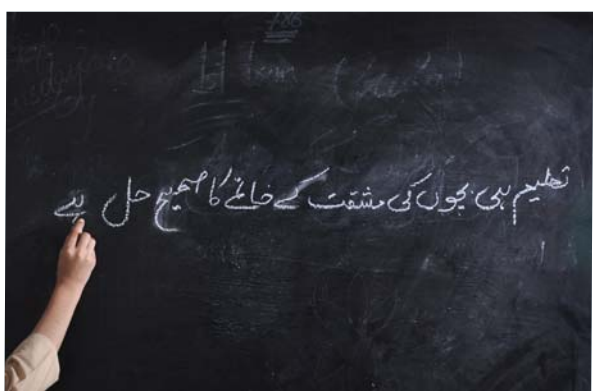
Cheap Labour

Child labour is cheap and easily available in developing

countries like Pakistan. Poverty driven children are an easy prey for those who seek to make a profit by exploiting this vulnerability. Employers find children more obedient and easy to control as they are unable to defend their rights and are easily convinced to do menial jobs for a much lower wage than adults.

Inadequate Educational Facilities

Pakistan's literacy rate is the lowest in the South Asian regions. The Government of Pakistan, through the Education for All (EFA), provides free education and books in primary schools. Despite these efforts, the government has failed to reach out to the rural communities where this problem exists. In addition, weak infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, teachers' absenteeism, corporal punishment and lack of learning materials push children out of school. Thus, children in the rural areas are left with little or no alternatives than to work at an early age. As a result, hard-pressed parents do not feel that the long-



term returns of education outweigh the short-term economic gain and skills acquired through child work. Therefore, many parents prefer not to send their children to school and believe it is better for their child to work as on the job training provides them the skills and experiences which is better than the education that does not guarantee employment.

Inadequate Laws

In Pakistan, child labour persists because the laws that do exist are not strictly enforced and because social and political commitment is weak. Though the minimum age of child labourers is 14 years, children less than eight years old are found in labour all over the country.

Worst Forms of Child Labour

Child labour prevails in many forms in Pakistan. Millions of children are found doing work that is hazardous, abusive and exploitative. The "worst forms" include children involved in slavery and forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution or pornography), illicit activities (particularly the production or trafficking of drugs), and hazardous work that jeopardizes their lives, health or morals. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has set out the criteria for identifying them, as work that might expose children to:

- ✧ Physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- ✧ Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;

- ✧ Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; and
- ✧ Work in an unhealthy environment which exposes children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations which might damage their health.



Impact of Child labour

Childhood is a stage that provides children with an opportunity to explore, learn and develop skills in order to understand and relate to the world around. However, children engaged in work at an early age miss out on this opportunity. Child labour is an obstacle to children's development and future prospects. In all circumstances, child labour impacts negatively on a child leaving a lifelong mark on their physical, emotional and social development.

Physical Development

Child labourers are far more vulnerable than adults because their bodies are still growing and are not yet fully formed. Most of the children are engaged in work that is heavy and intense and also because their is exposure to toxic and dangerous chemicals and objects. They experience poor physical health. These effects can be both immediate, like a burn or a cut, or can have consequences that last a lifetime, like suffering from a respiratory disease, endemic and parasitic diseases and accidents.

Child labour impacts negatively on a child leaving a lifelong mark on their physical, emotional and social development.

Emotional Development

Child labourers frequently work in environments that are exploitative, dangerous, degrading and isolating. They often suffer ill-treatment, abuse and neglect at the hands of their employers. They are thus unable to interact and cooperate with others and to attain a real sense of identity and belonging. They often lack confidence and experience feelings of low self-esteem.

Social development

Children who work do not have the opportunity to participate in activities that are a crucial part of growing



up, such as playing, going to school and socializing with their peers. They have difficulty interacting with others and actively participating in and enjoying life. Children are consequently pushed into adulthood before they are ready.

Recommendations

In order to combat the phenomenon of child labour and eliminate it from our society, it is important we address some of the major causes that are giving rise to this issue. Thus, the following is recommended:

- ✧ Propagating and developing strategies for reducing poverty levels by practical and local interventions.
- ✧ Knowing and understanding the rights and policies (Convention on the Rights of a Child, Constitution of Pakistan, International Labour Organization Conventions, Labour Policy 2002 etc) is the first step in preventing child labour and providing children with education so that their future can be a better one.
- ✧ All countries should set a legal minimum age for entry into employment. A precise and concise law is needed to regularize this. Proper implementing and monitoring mechanisms need to be established at the district, provincial and national level.
- ✧ The quantity and quality of formal and informal

education opportunities should be strengthened in order to reach out to children at high risk of child labour. Education must be flexible and broad in scope. It should be relevant and useful to the lives of the people. Alternative education programmes should be adopted for children who have little or no access

Children who work do not have the opportunity to participate in activities that are a crucial part of growing up, such as playing, going to school and socializing with their peers.

to schooling.

- ✧ Design community-based social support systems and programmes to educate families about the alternative and safer employment options.
- ✧ A range of activities to protect children who are already at work, in some cases to support them and, in others, to withdraw them from work that is causing them harm.
- ✧ Challenging popular attitudes and prejudices that result in abuse, and encouraging the media and general public to confront exploitation, abuse and violence.

About the Writer:

Ms. Cassandra Fernandes Faria is currently working as an instructor and a team member of Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities Project (CRRP) Team at Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development. She writes on social issues for various publications.

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Eradicating Child Labour in Pakistan



No child below the age of fourteen shall be engaged in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous employment." and, "All forms of forced labor and traffic in human beings are prohibited.

The Constitution of
Islamic Republic
of Pakistan (1973)

Child Labour is a serious and important global issue and is very common in Latin America, Africa and Asia. According to some reports, in several Asian countries one tenth of the labour force consists of children. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) the daily income of 65.5% people of Pakistan is below 2 U.S. dollars a day. According to Asian Development Bank (ADB) Report, 47 million people in Pakistan are leading lives below the line of poverty, whereas the Social Policy Development Centre (SDPC) Karachi has stated in one of its reports that the percentage of people living in poverty in Pakistan was 33% during 1999 that increased in 38% within two years.

The Federal Bureau of Statistics released the results of its recent survey funded by the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPECL, ILO). The findings revealed 3.8 million children between the age group of 5-14 years are working in Pakistan out of a total of 40 million children in this age group; fifty percent of these economically active children are in ages 5 to 9 years. Even out of these 3.8 million economically active children, 2.7 million were claimed to be working in the agriculture sector. Two million and four hundred thousand (73%) of them were said to be boys.

This is an alarming situation for any country. Poverty, lack of education, unemployment, larger households and uneven distribution of wealth and resources have contributed greatly to the increase in child labour. Following are some suggestions and recommendations, we as individuals can pursue, individually or collectively

to eradicate the presence of child labour from our society:

- ✧ Create mass awareness among parents about the detrimental effects of child labour; If circumstances mandate children to work, it is important to advocate that they are employed in safer vocations;
- ✧ Encourage sustainable employment/vocation options for those who need to generate income to support a family;
- ✧ Assist domestic helpers in making their ends meet by offering clothes, food, and medicines;
- ✧ Equality in the workplace and social justice must be ensured;
- ✧ Factory owners and industrialists must ensure that children are employed in processes and working environments which comply with health and safety regulations;
- ✧ The Government should integrate basic education and skill development in order to ensure an educated work force in the future;
- ✧ Ensure that child labour laws are strictly observed.

Child labour is one of the major examples where human rights of children are exploited. It is therefore important for every member of the society to play a pro-active role in preventing children from entering exploitative forms of child labor and empowering them through education and skill enhancement.

About the Writers:

- ☆ Dr. Nilofar Vazir is currently an Associate Professor and Coordinator of ECED Programmes at AKU-IED. She is associated with the field of education for more than 30 years. She has vast experience in teacher education, curriculum studies and qualitative research methods, particularly childhood research.
- ☆ Ms. Yasmeen Mehboob Meghani is a faculty member at AKU-IED. She has been working for Early Childhood Development Programmes for the last 14 years.

Getting the Facts about Human Trafficking



As educators and parents, we have an inherent responsibility to be aware of the dangers lurking in our world. The safety of our children depends on it. It seems strange, then, that many individuals know little of major global issues, such as human trafficking. What do you know about human trafficking? The facts below, derived from the recent “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons” may surprise you.

- ✧ Human trafficking is a multi-faceted offense and includes child slaves, forced laborers, bonded laborers, sex slaves, labor camps, domestic servants and more. Men, women, and children of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds and origins are included. The United Nations has concluded that every country is presumed to have been affected by the rapidly growing industry. Julia Ormond, the UN goodwill ambassador on human trafficking said, “The reality, sadly, comes not just closer to home but right into my home....Slavery globally touches not only my heart, but quite probably my table, my car, my clothing.” Trafficking is an inter-national and intra-national crime that often includes, but does not require, the movement of people for illegal purposes.
- ✧ The United Nations estimates that 12.3 million people are affected by human trafficking. However, many experts claim this number is conservative and offer numbers as high as 27 million. The economic depression and victims’ inability to report are potentials for discrepancy. One conclusion is shared among experts, however; the numbers are increasing rapidly.
- ✧ The World Health Organization estimates that 7,000 transplanted kidneys are sold on the black market each year. Individuals are often rendered helpless by drugs so that harvesters may remove and sell organs without permission.
- ✧ The “Global Report on Trafficking in Humans” says that sexual exploitation affects 79% of trafficking victims, while 18% is attributed to forced labor. The remaining 3% is attributed to other types of activity. Although these numbers are persuasive, it is important to remember the ambiguous nature of the crime. True numbers are impossible to calculate, as is the tremendous amount of victim suffering.
- ✧ The US Department of Health and Human Services says that human trafficking is tied with the arms trade as the world’s 2nd largest criminal industry. The drug trade is currently ranked in first place, while human trafficking is growing so rapidly that it is expected to take over the first spot in several years.

About the Writer:

Ms. Adrienne Lorton is a writer, mother and spouse from the United States. She has a keen interest in human-rights issues.

Learning about our Environment: What Role can Parents Play?

Most people – especially those living in large cities – have a fragmentary understanding of the term ‘environment’. For some it only refers to pristine lakes, mountains and forests, i.e. the natural habitats that support ecosystems. Some people refer to the environment strictly in the litter and trash sense, i.e. for them, concern for the environment has largely to do with keeping our cities pollution free.

The ‘environment’ is much more than these concerns. It is everything and anything that we as physical, biological and chemical beings are part of. It constitutes the natural and the man-made environment. It encompasses all living and non-living things and their interaction with each other. In fact, for many it also includes the philosophies, policies and practices that shape people’s status and relationship with their surroundings on the planet and with the universe.

According to our understanding today, England’s Industrial Revolution in the 18th century was a turning point in humanity’s impact on the environment. New machines that functioned on new sources of energy radically changed the manufacturing and agriculture process. But while more goods and food could be produced for human consumption, the Revolution also resulted in large-scale exploitation of natural resources (such as forests, coal, oil, cattle etc.) and increased emission of pollutants into the water, air and soil. This Revolution did not only pose a threat to the natural environment, it also cautioned us of humanity’s dependence and strong relationship with the environment, i.e. any damage to the environment would directly impact our health and our lives.

It is exactly this relationship that influences many activists, organizations and governments to fight for a better and cleaner environment, where factories pollute less, people consume carefully, animals, birds and plants all have well-preserved habitats, natural resources are used sustainably, cities and buildings are built efficiently and our environmental footprint is kept at a minimum.

Today, there is overwhelming scientific evidence available that prove the urgent and complex problems affecting the environment. Our ecological systems are significantly out of balance mainly because we are utilizing resources at an alarming rate such that resources are not being replenished steadily enough. Our consumption and activities are unsustainable and unjust. Unjust, not only because we have largely failed in our responsibility to be good caretakers of the planet, but also because our lifestyles are taking away the right of our future generations to enjoy fascinating examples of nature such as the Himalayan glaciers, the Bengal tiger, the Indus river or the Minke whale – many of which may well be as extinct as dinosaurs a few generations from now.



But, there is much we can do and teach our children so that we all become responsible stewards of nature. Changes in our lifestyles - such as using fewer plastic bags, eating less red meat, conserving electricity and water, avoiding wastage of food, using public transport etc. - are all ways by which we can contribute towards a better planet.

Why do we need environmental education?

Pakistan’s physical environment and natural resources are among its greatest assets and the basis for much of its economic development. These natural resources support industries that create employment and wealth.

The key challenge we face is to raise the level of environmental literacy and respect so that our beautiful land, water and air do not become a human wasteland. Pakistan faces a number of complex environmental challenges, most of which cannot be solved by the government and NGOs alone. These environmental issues require the support and contribution of well-informed citizens who are willing to translate environmental knowledge into useful action.

As responsible parents we must encourage our children to reflect on their behaviours that impact the environment and, if necessary, suggest useful and practical changes. Children may continually question if small changes matter or not – our responsibility should be to convey the message that even small actions add up to protect our precious resources and build a better future for everyone and everything.

Key terms to explain to children

Sustainable development

The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future



generations to meet their own needs." To easily explain this concept to children, talk to them about a certain natural resource, say a small village lake that has fish in it. The villagers regularly fish in the lake to feed their families; and the fish

give birth to new fish every year balancing the fish population in the lake. However, as the population of the village grows, the fishing increases, meaning that more fish is taken out of the lake than are born. Ask children what will happen to the lake and the fish population. Also ask them how it will affect the village and their future generations.

Climate change

Climate change refers to the change in distribution of weather over periods of time and across the planet. There is strong scientific evidence that suggests that human activities – such as burning fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal – are directly responsible for bringing about climate change at a much faster rate than we have experienced before.



Children need to know about this global issue as they may be the ones who will have to find solutions to adapt to increasing climate change when they

grow up. Parents can start off by explaining to children the primary cause of climate change, i.e. the greenhouse effect and how it is affected by the way we live.

Greenhouse effect

Perhaps the best way to teach children the greenhouse effect is to take them to an actual greenhouse. Explain to them that greenhouses are hot inside because they allow heat to enter but then trap some of it inside. Inform them that this is how earth's system works, i.e. by trapping some heat inside our atmosphere. By emitting gases such as carbon dioxide (by using petrol, coal or by deforestation, i.e. cutting down forests), methane (from animal waste and landfills) and nitrogen & sulphur oxides (through trash and waste) we are increasing the layer that traps heat inside, consequently warming the planet more than we can tolerate.

The direct effect of the greenhouse effect is that ice melts faster, meaning that penguins and polar bears will have little place left to survive; floods and tsunamis will increase, meaning that more lives will be lost to natural hazards; places will become warmer, meaning more insects such as mosquitoes taking over our cities and towns. In short, the effects are too many and too harsh!

Built environment

The environment is not just about wildlife and ecosystems that exist on the planet, it also includes the man-made environment, i.e. our cities, homes, schools, roads, bridges, dams etc. The built environment, therefore, refers to our man-made surroundings, all of which are very important for a good quality of life. However, if this built environment is not adequately managed or constructed it can adversely affect our health and our lives. For e.g. if our water systems

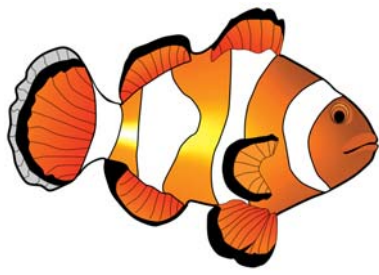
are unhygienic they can cause widespread disease; if our homes are not strong we can lose our lives to the slightest of earthquakes; if our roads are not well planned we can be victims of accidents. These are just some of the examples of how an inadequate built environment can impact our lives.



Biodiversity & Conservation

Simply put, biodiversity means the millions of biological species that we have on our planet, ranging from the fascinating Bird of Paradise to the extraordinary insect-eating Venus flytrap plant, from the dense rainforests to the colorful coral reefs in our seas. Everything and anything that lives on the planet or provides habitat for life is part of the natural biodiversity.

Awareness of biodiversity is perhaps the most important knowledge parents can give to their children for them to become better caretakers of the environment. Watching



wildlife documentaries on TV or taking children to the zoo or a protected area can help instill a love of nature amongst children who can grow up to better

understand their role in protecting animals, birds, plants and their habitats. Conservation directly refers to ways in which humans can help protect and restore populations of animals, fishes, birds, plants and their living environment. It can also include conservation of water, air, energy, soil, seas – in short protecting Mother Nature. Help children learn about conservation at a young age by educating them to respect their natural environment and gain a genuine interest in all things living, even if it requires them to get their hands dirty and bringing home injured birds or weird bugs!

Extinction

One of the biggest impact mankind has had on humanity is reducing populations of wildlife by hunting, trading, climate change or converting forests and wilderness to farms etc. We have been responsible for making a number of species endangered. An interesting species to talk to

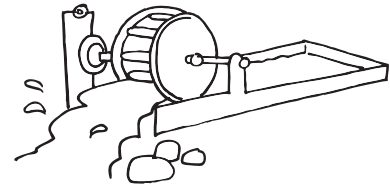


children about is the *Mitho*, a parrot found in Pakistan. The *mitho* lived peacefully and did not fear humans. However,

due to large-scale hunting and cutting down forests (where the *mithos* lived) the bird soon began to drop in number till there were none left. Explain to children that today many beautiful animals such as snow leopards, pandas, blue whales and many others are threatened by our greed and may become as extinct if we do not change our ways.

Renewable energy

We get most of our energy and electricity from fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal. They are called fossil fuels because they were formed over millions of years by the action of the Earth's internal heat and pressure on the fossils of plants and animals. This energy source is non-renewable because we cannot re-grow, regenerate or reuse it at the rate at which we are consuming it. This means that we may soon run out of petrol to run our cars, or gas to heat our homes, or coal to electrify our lights, TVs and air-conditioners.



Educate children about renewable energy sources such as energy from the sun and wind, which can be turned into electricity; geothermal energy from heat inside the earth; biomass and biodiesel from plants; hydropower from running water and more. Who knows? It could be your child that grows up to discover a new source of energy that can save the planet!

Environmentally friendly practices to suggest to children:

- ✧ Understand how we affect the environment and inform others about it.
- ✧ Take quick showers instead of filling an entire bath tub with water.
- ✧ Turn down the heating in winter. If you're cold, wear more layers.
- ✧ Turn the air conditioning down in summer or use a fan.
- ✧ If you can't find a dustbin to throw your litter in, hold on to it till you get home.
- ✧ Share transport with someone to school so that there are fewer vehicles on the road.
- ✧ Reduce wastefulness: Why buy things that we hardly use? Why use things that damage the environment?
- ✧ Turn the tap off while brushing your teeth to save water.
- ✧ Reuse whatever you can, such as plastic bags, old cartons and boxes etc. If you can't reuse something, recycle it.

About the Writer:

Mr. Youshey Zakiuddin works at the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan, an agency that helps improve the built environment in rural areas, particularly by building houses that are energy-efficient & earthquake resistant; providing safe water supply & sanitation infrastructure; and by educating people how to improve their living conditions. AKPBS, P is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).



Value of Playing Our Part

An inspirational story to explain to children the value of playing their part – no matter how small or large – is the one about the hummingbird and the forest fire. This story was once told by Dr. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Prize laureate for peace.

Once upon a time, an evil man decided on burning down a beautiful and ancient forest so that he could build a big city with huge buildings and wide roads. This man wanted to earn lots of money and did not care if the fire killed all the animals, plants and trees in the forest.

So he set the forest on fire. At first, the fire burnt small bushes and plants. But soon the fire spread all over and was raging out of control. The forest animals began running to safety frightened by the sight and sound of the flames. The animals ran to the edge of the forest. The birds flew into the air and escaped. The burrowing animals scurried into their holes.

All the animals stood on the edge of the forest and gazed hopelessly at their forest home being destroyed by the fire. None of them was brave enough to take any action. The elephants stepped forward saying that they would suck water from their trunks and spray the fire till it died down. But they did not do it as they were lazy and did not feel like going to the river. The lions said that they would roar till the fire was put out, but that did not help either. The hyenas were happy as they knew that the fire would kill some animals and then they could feast on their dead bodies. The snakes were not bothered, they said that they would just crawl under the rocks and wait till the fire died down. The tigers looked gloomy and advised everyone to leave as their forest home was no more.

The evil man who started the fire was pleased as he saw the animals doing nothing. He wanted the fire to destroy the homes of every animal so that he could build his own huge palace.

All of a sudden, the animals saw a small hummingbird flying furiously back and forth to the river carrying drops of water in her beak. The animals laughed at what the hummingbird was doing. They told her that she was foolish to think that she would put out the fire by small drops of water.

“You may think I am foolish, but I am doing all that I can do,” replied the hummingbird. The other animals replied: “You can gather a thousand hummingbirds like yourself, and you would still not be able to put out this fire.”

The hummingbird replied: “This forest is my home. This is where I was born. This forest has been good to all of the animals who made their homes in it. None of the previous fires succeeded in destroying our forest because our ancestors fought the fire with everything they had.” “And may be if we all did what we could do, instead of standing around and talking about what needs to be done, then we may be able to put out the fire!,” said the hummingbird as she flew back once more to collect water from the river.

Natural Hazards and Disaster Management



Any potential occurrence, in a specific time period and geographic region, of a natural phenomenon (e.g. flood, heavy rains, earthquake, and landslides) that may adversely affect human life, property, or activity to the extent of causing a total disruption is called “natural hazard”. The impact resulting from these phenomena becomes a disaster when it results in injuries, loss of life and of livelihoods, displacement, and damage to infrastructure; consequently, leaving the society handicapped to use its own resources. Hazards can be classified as major or minor based on cause, speed of onset and nature (natural/man made). Hazards can be anticipated in different regions according to the geographical nature of the area and climate characteristics.

Risk Identification and Disaster Preparedness

Risk is a possibility of exposure associated with any hazard/disaster which can make the area, communities, property, and environment more vulnerable (at risk). The process to identify the possible risk factors is called risk identification. Whereas disaster preparedness is the process of taking appropriate measures in anticipation of disaster and to take the appropriate and effective actions in the aftermath. It is achieved through community-based approaches and activities like mock drills, preparedness trainings, awareness raising sessions, etc. which builds the capacities of people and communities to cope with and minimize the effects of a disaster on their lives.

All planning and implementation of disaster preparedness actions are usually based on an assessment and prioritization of the hazards and risks that people face. This assessment consists of identification of particular geographical areas, their characteristics, potential severity, and frequency of the hazards, and communities most susceptible to specific hazards.

Measures for Disaster Risk Management

The most effective and practical way to raise awareness and change perceptions about potential risks, risk identification and disasters is by engaging individuals and groups in producing local community hazard, risk and capacity maps. These maps can be useful for showing the general pattern of risks threatening a certain population and the capacities they possess for overcoming those risks. Hazard maps assist in the preparation of plans which can reduce the danger in a community and in the identification of evacuation plans

A natural hazard becomes a disaster when it results in injuries, loss of life and of livelihoods, displacement, and damage to infrastructure; consequently, leaving the society handicapped to use its own resources.

for risk areas. Community members, teachers, schoolchildren, social and health care workers, and others

Family Disaster Plan

- ✧ As a family, developing and following a disaster family plan will reduce the damage caused by disasters. Structural changes at home and within home can prevent most of the fatal injuries during any hazardous event. Minor changes can save lives and provide opportunities to support others. To prepare one's family disaster plan, prepare a checklist that consist of and refers to matters of most concern to oneself and to the family.
- ✧ Gather together members of a household and determine hazards that could lead to emergencies or disasters.
- ✧ Find out the kind of disasters that have previously occurred or may occur in the area.
- ✧ Determine safe places in the house / neighborhood for every kind of hazard.
- ✧ Discuss what should be done in case of such accidents.
- ✧ Draw a plan of the house to determine two separate exit routes from every room if possible.
- ✧ Let every member of the household learn how to shut off the electricity, water and gas supplies.
- ✧ Write emergency numbers and keep them handy. Learn when these numbers should be called, and how.
- ✧ Identify two close acquaintances living both within the city and outside the city. Learn the telephone numbers of these people, and ensure that the entire household is aware of them and that they should be called if family members are apart from one another during disasters.
- ✧ If the family members are not together during a disaster, determine two separate Disaster Meeting Points (DMP). Of these, one should be near the house, while the other should be far from the house; in case it is not possible to return home.
- ✧ Get information and train oneself and the family about disaster preparation and first aid courses.
- ✧ Learn and identify evacuation routes from the neighborhood.
- ✧ Find out how one can get special help for elderly, handicapped people and where and how to move incapacitated people because of disaster.
- ✧ During a disaster, the first people to rush to give aid will be the neighbors. Identify neighbors with whom mutual assistance can be exchanged.
- ✧ Place things that may be needed during the first few hours till a few days after a disaster (like a disaster kit of medical first aid, dry food, water, toilet needs, tools and other equipment) in an easily attainable place. Make all the preparations according to the area.
- ✧ The preparations vary as per the local setting, family composition, specific hazard or individual needs, and culture. Some examples are: for flood - life jacket, for rain - plastic sheeting/ face mask, for latrines – shovel, for building marking/messages - markers, paper and for babies - clothing, food, etc.

in a community can create these maps using the simplest of tools: colored pencils and paper. The information that is generated can be used to help plan risk reduction measures and initiatives for disaster preparedness. Separate maps should be created for different entities in the community e.g. schools, hospitals, market areas etc.

Disaster Response

Disaster response is the sum total of actions taken by people and institutions in the face of disaster. These actions commence with the warning of an upcoming threatening event or with the event itself, when it occurs without warning. Disaster response includes the implementation of disaster preparedness plans and procedures. Hence disaster rehabilitation also comes under the disaster response.

Preparation for a Specific Hazard: Earthquake

One of the most frequently occurring natural disasters in South Asia is the earthquake and the article mainly focuses on earthquake precautions since our region has been continuously faced this with them particularly in the last few years.

Earthquakes can lead to loss of lives and property, depending on its intensity and on the geographical region where it hits. Precautions can reduce the harm and minimize the effect of an earthquake. A sudden shaking of ground is the simplest explanation for developing an understanding about the phenomenon of "earthquake". Earthquakes generally cease within less than a minute and can be felt throughout a wide area. It is not known how violent an earthquake will be, its place, date and time of occurrence. Normally an earthquake occurs with light tremors, slight sounds of rumble along with violent tremors. After a major earthquake, slight earthquakes, termed 'after-shocks' may continue to occur. The frequency, intensity and duration of the after shocks are unknown.

Response During Disaster

When you sense an earthquake, keep calm, do not remain standing. Do not run around aimlessly or try to go out onto the balcony if you are not on the ground floor. Do not try to use the stairs or elevator during the shock. Keep away from windows, doors, bookcases, lamps, pictures, plant pots, shelves, cupboards, and tall furniture. To avoid physical injuries duck and if available get near a sturdy object. Turn your back to the window, in particular, take



cover and protect your head and neck from falling objects. If you find any four legged object, under which you can find shelter, try to move together with it, holding onto its leg. If there is no desk or table nearby, duck at the base of the inner walls, take cover by protecting your head and neck with your arms, and protect yourself by waiting for the tremors to subside, staying where you are. If you

Drawing or playing with toys or puppets can help children express their feelings and adjust to stressful experiences.

are outdoors, avoid things that may topple or fall like walls, trees, posts, signs and electric cables.

For individuals with additional support needs: In case of a handicapped or disabled person in a wheelchair, they should not fling themselves out of the chair and onto the floor. They can activate the wheel brakes and hold on to the chair. They should also try to protect their head while covering it. If they are seated, they should remain in the same position until the event is over.

If you are in a vehicle: Ask the driver to stop the car carefully and slowly. The place where you stop should not be near bridges, pedestrian subways, energy plants or traffic lights. When the tremors subside, check yourself and those around you to determine any injury. Without panicking, quickly, go to your family meeting point, as decided in the Family Disaster Plan. In case of a crowded

and public place, do not rush to reach the doors. Instead, find things that could protect you from potential damage.

Response After Disaster

Try to keep calm. This is the only way to help oneself and those around. Be prepared for aftershocks. Aftershocks are dangerous, because they may cause the collapse of buildings that have been damaged in the first earthquake. If at home, you smell gas or hear sounds of explosion, open a window and leave the house immediately. Inform other family members of this situation. If the location of the main source is known, turn off gas and electricity supplies from their switch or valve, or remind others about this. In case of the possibility of any leakage or fire hazard, only use flashlights or searchlights for illumination.

Enjoyable activities help children deal with post traumatic stresses. Opportunities should be created for organized nonviolent play, sports, and other forms of recreation, such as safe play areas in resettlement sites, encouraging communication, and interaction among peers. Drawing or playing with toys or puppets can help children express their feelings and adjust to stressful experiences. Re-enacting stressful situations through play is extremely common and helpful for very young children. This is children's way of trying to master the impact of what happened. Children may feel responsible for the problem which may create a strong sense of guilt. Providing support and attention from a caring adult can reduce the impact of the event on their psychological, social, and cognitive development.

About the Writer:

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Stress Management for Children and Adults

Countless people all over the world are subjected to different kinds of stress. While some worry about losing their jobs or are concerned about unfinished homework, others may fret about a sick relative or feel anxious about the affects of terrorism and global warming in their lives.

What is Stress?

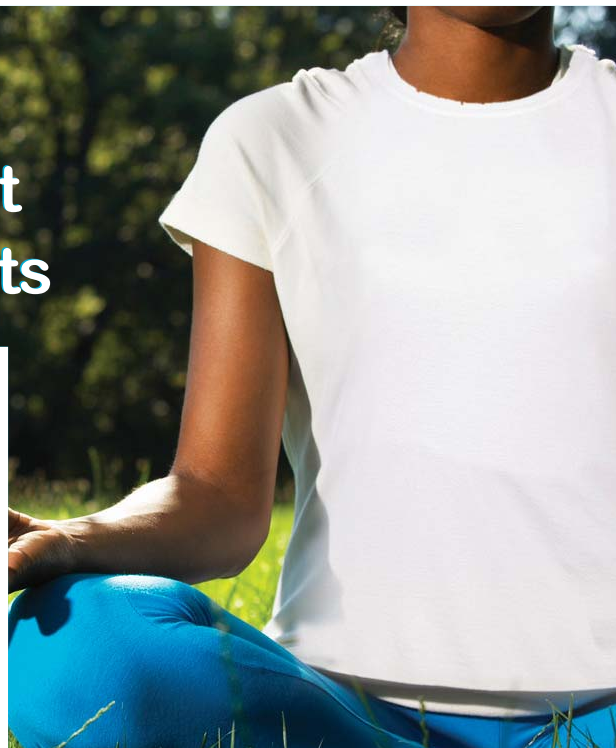
The word stress is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a state of affairs involving demand on physical or mental energy – A condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual. Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness. The events that provoke stress are called stressors, and they cover a whole range of situations — everything from outright physical danger to making a class presentation or surviving a natural disaster. The response to life's challenges is dependent on people's behaviors. Similar events may not induce the same amount of stress in different people.

Pressures that are too intense or last too long, or troubles that are shouldered alone, can cause people to feel stress overload. Here are some of the things that can overwhelm the body's ability to cope if they continue for a long time:

- ✧ Being bullied or exposed to violence or injury
- ✧ Relationship stress, family conflicts, or the heavy emotions that can accompany the death of a loved one or the loss of possessions
- ✧ Ongoing problems with schoolwork related to a learning disability or other problems, such as ADHD
- ✧ Crammed schedules, not having enough time to rest and relax, and always being on the go
- ✧ Uncontrollable factors, like security concerns, inflation, unemployment etc.

How to Identify Stress in Children?

Children are frequent victims of stress because they are often unable to communicate their feelings accurately. They also tend to take things more seriously and their developing minds can get impacted much more easily by stressors. As parents, we should be on the lookout for the following symptoms in children and try to teach the children better coping strategies:



- ✧ Eating disorders
- ✧ Bedwetting, nausea, flu-like symptoms
- ✧ Sleeping disorders
- ✧ Lack of concentration/ attention deficit
- ✧ Unable to complete a single task
- ✧ Irritability, withdrawal or introvert behavior
- ✧ Frequent displays of aggression
- ✧ Frequent headaches, muscle tension, or fatigue for no apparent reason.

Causes of Stress

Some people believe that it is not possible to define what exactly causes the stress. There are many factors that contribute or lead to stress and can be environmental, biological and psychosocial (abuse, financial crisis, competition). Given below are some major factors that are related to stress in children:

- ✧ Parental stress is a particularly powerful source of stress in children. Young children of mothers who are highly stressed (particularly if they are also depressed) tend to be at high risk for developing stress-related problems. This may be especially true if the mothers were stressed during both the child's infancy and early years. Stressed parents may even make their children more likely to develop asthma.
- ✧ Some evidence supports the old idea that stress during pregnancy can have adverse effects on an infant's mood and behavior. Older children with stressed mothers may become aggressive and anti-social.
- ✧ Parent's abusive behavior towards children also leads to long-term social and emotional problems in children.

Stress Management Techniques for Adults

Many people believe that once they know the sources and causes of stressors they can learn to manage stress. Most of the time people use two types of coping mechanisms to reduce stress:

- ✧ Problem-focused-coping that includes taking direct action to solve the problem or seeking information that will be relevant to the solution,
- ✧ Emotional-focused-coping that refers to efforts to reduce the negative emotional reactions to stress, for example, by distracting oneself from the problem, relaxing or seeking comfort from others.

By using these mechanisms for coping with stress, three major categories for stress management for adults and children can be used: Change in thinking; change in behavior and change in lifestyle

Change in thinking

a) Reframing: Reframing is a technique used to change the way we look at things in order to feel better about them. The key to reframing is to recognize that there are many ways to interpret the same situation. Learn to get rid of negative thoughts or feelings that can result in stress. There are three simple things to do.

- ✧ Spend more time focusing on the positive things in your life - Highlight the positive
- ✧ Spend less time thinking negatively - Eliminate the negative
- ✧ Take each moment as it comes, instead of dwelling in the past or worrying about the future.

b) Positive Thinking: Avoid negative thoughts of powerlessness, dejection, failure, and despair. Chronic stress makes us vulnerable to negative suggestion. Learn to focus on positives.

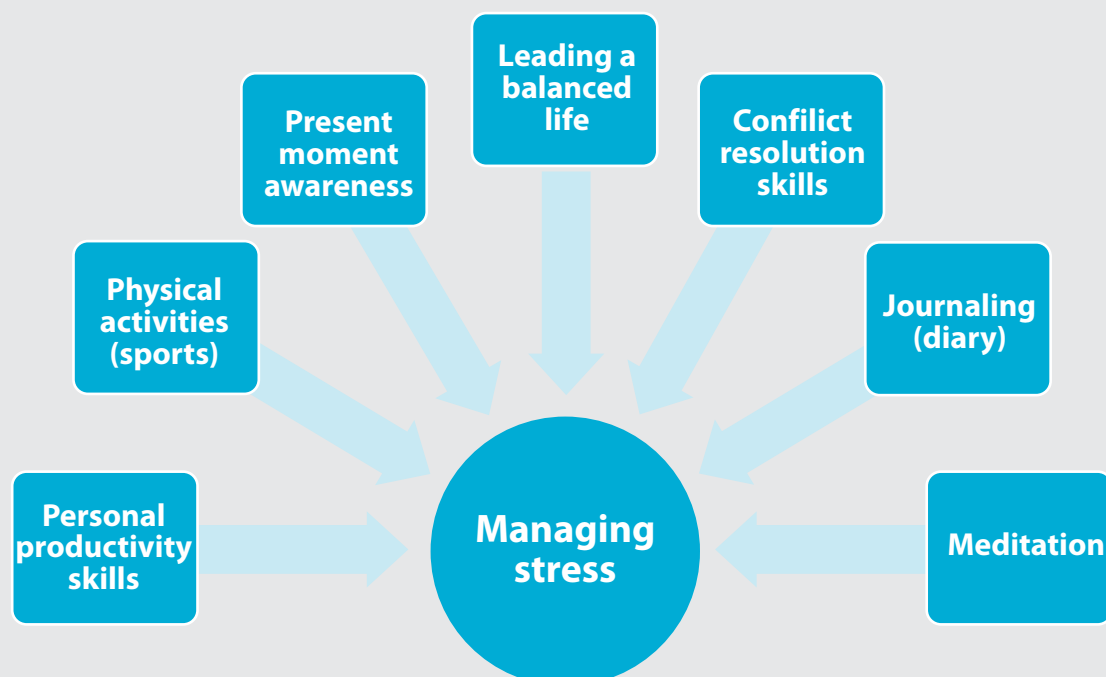
- ✧ Learn to focus on strengths
- ✧ Look for opportunities in stressful situations
- ✧ Make small changes in your life and let go of the all-or-nothing approach

Change in behavior

a) Be assertive: Being assertive means standing up for your personal rights and expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs directly, honestly and spontaneously in ways that don't infringe on the rights of others. Assertive people respect themselves and others. They take responsibility for their actions and choices. In case of failure, they will get disappointed; but their self-confidence remains intact. Expressing negative feelings at the appropriate time avoids the buildup of resentment. This will help you manage your stress more successfully.

b) Ventilation & Social support: People who keep things to themselves without sharing with their friends or loved ones carry a considerable and unnecessary burden. Share your problems and concern with others. Develop a support system of relatives, colleagues, or friends to talk to when you are upset or worried. When you are frustrated write it down. After you have vented the frustration, destroy the writing so that it is forgotten. Studies have shown that close, and positive relationship with others facilitates good health and morale. One reason for this is that support from family and friends serves as a buffer to cushion the impact of stressful events. Talking out problems and expressing tensions can be incredibly helpful.

c) Diversion and Distraction: Take a break away from the situations or tasks that are the source of your stress and frustration. Take a vacation or a short walk. This does not solve the root cause. But, it takes you away from the source of stress so that you can "catch your breath." It also gives you an opportunity to think about the situation more objectively and may even help you to resolve the



situation when looked through a different perspective.

d) Time management: One of the most common causes of stress is being disorganized at work or at home. Here are some tips to get organized:

- ✧ Look at the way you do things. Are you a perfectionist? If so, try to decide which tasks truly require meticulous attention to detail and which can be done casually.
- ✧ Make a realistic list of what you need to accomplish in a given day, with the most important things at the top. Tackle them one at a time.
- ✧ Plan your day to include work breaks which physically or mentally take you away from the office. Try not to bring office work home.
- ✧ When you have several things to accomplish, set priorities and postpone less important tasks. Learn to delegate matters that cannot be put off.
- ✧ Control the timing of stressful events. Try not to make major decisions when you are overtired or anxious.

Change in lifestyle

a) Balanced Diet: A well balanced diet is crucial in preserving health and helping to reduce stress. Certain foods and drinks act as powerful stimulants to the body and hence are a direct cause of stress. Many people use cigarettes as a coping mechanism. In the short term, smoking seems to relieve stress, but in the long term smoking is very harmful. Avoid the consumption of foods rich in saturated fats. Fats cause obesity and put unnecessary stress on the cardiovascular system.

b) Adequate Rest: Keep your body well rested, nourished with nutritious food and water in the best possible health.

c) Gardening is a natural, stress-releasing activity. It gives us work to do where we can see progress from minute to minute. In that sense it works like meditation; and takes mind away from stressful thoughts.

d) Schedule pleasurable activities and engage in them often. Laugh and enjoy life. Don't take most things so seriously.

Stress Management Techniques for Children

Stress management is as important for children as is for adults, because it may have long term implications in the lives of children. There are certain techniques one can adopt to mitigate stress and remember, children learn primarily by example. Show them how to manage stress

effectively and they will be able to cope better with their thoughts and troubles. As we have discussed, the techniques span over three categories: Change in thinking, change in behavior and change in lifestyle.

Change in thinking

- ✧ Share positive experiences that enhance child's positive thinking
- ✧ Appreciate child's achievement that develop child's positive self-image and boost self esteem
- ✧ Encourage beneficial hobbies and interest in children

Change in behavior

- ✧ Try to develop sense of humor in your child and share your pleasant childhood experience with your children
- ✧ Learn to be a good listener. When your child wants to talk about his or her problems, don't criticize. In addition, it isn't always necessary to give advice. Sometimes kids just need to talk. Encourage them with open-ended questions like, "So what happened next?" "How do you feel about that?"
- ✧ Gentle physical touch is a greater healer. Sometimes a hug is worth more than a thousand words.

Change in lifestyle

- ✧ Eat healthy. A healthy body is better able to withstand stress-induced illness. Schedule regular meals and snack times. Don't allow your child to skip meals.
- ✧ Deep breathing is often overlooked as an exercise,

Children who work do not have the opportunity to participate in activities that are a crucial part of growing up.

but it is an excellent stress reducer. Breathe inhaling and exhaling 2-4 times a day release daily stress.

- ✧ Involve your child in physical games, that will help a lot to your child to relieve the symptoms of stress
- ✧ Involve your child in constructive activities e.g. drawing activities, plantation, and in different musical games or in playing some musical instrument
- ✧ Inculcate problem solving skills in your children.

Call for Professional Help

Parents should seek professional advice from a doctor, psychologist or a counselor, whenever their children show persistent symptoms of stress and other behavior problems.

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“Education is the best provision for old age.” Aristotle

It's All Connected to **Ethics!**

Climate change. Population growth. Poverty. Environmental degradation. Conflict. Global health crises. Are they really intractable global problems? How can we as parents and teachers play our role in bringing about a change – a change in attitude, actions and mindsets? The answer: using the transformative power of widespread, systemic education to improve lives and communities, both locally and globally, we can create awareness in children and adults about important global issues facing the world today.

Today's world demands a global outlook in every subject and every classroom. As educators, our task is to help give students the skills, tools, and perspectives to become fulfilled human beings, responsible global citizens, and effective stewards of a sustainable future. A focus on global issues and sustainability isn't about adding another commitment to an already overloaded curriculum. It is about advancing educational objectives by making all subjects more engaging, relevant and solutions-centered.

Many of the global issues can be well articulated and addressed in a classroom through designing narrative-styled lessons, using visual aids, incorporating flash cards, etc. to actively engage the students in the learning process.

One way to equip children with adequate knowledge in their lives is to teach them ethical values. One wonders

how teachers can develop an appreciation in children about global issues by emphasizing upon universal ethics. We will use an example to elaborate the methodology. If a teacher emphasizes upon the principle of unity and harmony, the children will not only learn to share resources among their friends at school but will also apply the concept in their daily lives, thus, reducing the inefficient use of resources practically. The child will be able to appreciate the value of partnership and collaboration, thus playing his/her role in developing a harmonious and peaceful society.

By emphasizing upon unity, the school will do away with the ills of unhealthy competition that is so advocated in schools far and wide. The children will become familiar with the benefits of working in a team and will learn to collaborate and complement each other while, developing their own personalities as strong individuals. This approach will lead to a healthy society – a society that will have little discrimination, and contempt for fellow beings, a society that will revolve around collectivism and partnership.

Moreover, by carrying out various activities in the classroom promoting friendships and partnerships and by talking about various cultures, cross cultural interactions can be encouraged. For instance, if teacher in her lesson respects the different cultures, religions and regions and highlights the importance of interactions

between different individuals regardless of their differences, a teacher will instill in her students a sense of kindness and understanding for their fellow beings, thus paving way for a racism-free society and world.

Likewise, the importance of keeping our environment clean can also be underscored and the children can become aware of the importance of making individual contributions. Practical demonstration and application of lessons by the teachers themselves is also one of the most important ways to educate children about moral values.

Teachers can have a lifelong impact on the lives of children and they can mould their thinking, however they want to. If the teachers resort to teaching ethics and moral values in class, the world can certainly become a better place.

The obstacle to teaching good ethical values in classroom is not the unwillingness of teachers but rather the lack of an effective teaching methodology for teachers to follow.

mathematics" in some cultures links it to religious or cultural values. In some Islamic countries, for example, abstract mathematics is viewed as a manifestation of symbols or signs of God. (Wilson, 1986:101)"

In the general study of mathematics as a school subject certain values may be inherent both in the content used and in the methodology employed. One of the obvious values implicit in mathematics is the value of truthfulness as opposed to falsehood. In mathematical tasks involving fundamental operations or the solution of equations, for example, the only right answer is the one that is correct, and it is usually highly valued by instructors. Wrong answers are generally devalued: only occasionally do we find them genuinely valued by teachers for remedial purposes.

What is the purpose of education? Is it confined merely to economic empowerment and getting a good job? Or is the purpose holistic development of children that allow them to live a quality life? The answer to this question will determine what we raise our future generations to be.

As Encyclopedia of Value and Moral Education also informs:

'A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness? Do you wish to

make him discontented with his cottage or his lot? And even if you want to do that, he will not need such an education.' [Edited by S.R. Sharma (1998), Vol.4 Pg.61-2]

When we talk about the future generation, we mostly talk about their responsibilities but it's time to question whether we as parents and teachers are playing our part effectively? We need to realize the importance of bringing up the children in a manner that is not only beneficial for their own self but also contributes to the development of a better society.



Also, teachers of every subject can impart value-based education to children and it doesn't have to be the teacher of social studies or religious studies who is given the respective task. Even a mathematics teacher can educate children about social values. It is interesting to note that David C. Smith and Terrance R. Carson (1998) stated:

"Of all the subjects in the school curriculum, mathematics is the one that is most often thought of as being "value-free". Even in the sense that the subject of mathematics is a coherent body of abstract knowledge, however, that assertion is only partly true. The very study of "pure

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Secure School Structures: Ensuring Child Safety All the Way

Our society and the environment we live in are very vulnerable to hazards such as earthquakes, flooding, cyclones and more. Pakistan is fairly exposed to natural hazards as it falls in a seismically active zone. Conservative reports claim that more than 75,000 people were killed and around 3.3 million were displaced due to the devastating earthquake in 2005 alone. With more than 50% of the population living in high seismic activity zones, there is a potential threat to approximately 30,000 schools that are located in earthquake prone areas of the country.

Generally speaking, experts are unanimous about the fact that many schools collapse due to an acute lack of knowledge, lack of maintenance and lack of guidelines for school site selection, design, construction, use of construction material, etc. It is an established fact that pre-hazard risk reduction techniques are valuable in reducing the impact of a natural hazard. Preparation of schools to react to hazards - after or while they are occurring - is equally crucial in reducing damage. These strategies include evacuation plans, designated evacuation areas, and safety awareness. Raising awareness about school safety is of strategic importance to overall community safety as activities related to school safety trickle down to the larger community through various means such as training of local workers and technicians, and transfer of information by children to the entire household.

Educating school children on how to make their environment risk-free is a leading strategy towards informing people to work towards their safety and that of others. A few recommendations, as discussed in the 2008 'International Conference on School Safety', for parents, community members, teachers and school managers are listed below, the objective being to increase awareness of the multitude of steps that can be taken to keep schools risk-free and children safe.

Keeping Schools Safe – A Collective Community Effort

Disaster management has usually constituted of strategies that focus on post-disaster support, i.e. relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, this approach is gradually being proved to be insufficient in protecting people, especially those living in very vulnerable and economically disadvantaged regions.



With time governments and organizations are realizing the value of pre-disaster prevention and preparedness. This approach opens up an entire dimension of strategies that can utilize science, technology, indigenous knowledge, public education and other avenues that can be useful for disaster management. Getting people motivated and mobilizing them to use their local knowledge as well as new technologies from experts is not only cost-effective for governments and disaster management NGO's but has proven to be sustainable and effective in disaster preparedness, response and mitigation. The school can play a key role as the nucleus through which life-saving knowledge and awareness can spread across communities, through children reaching out to their parents and school management reaching out to community elders and disaster management experts.

Keeping Schools Safe – Teachers and Caregivers

Adequate and applicable education is a crucial component to ensure successful disaster risk reduction. The integration of both formal and informal education through schools is a very potent way to ensure that important messages reach out to every household/community member and that learning is sustained into future generations. Usually, small children enthusiastically share with their parents and families what they learnt at school, for example, if they have learned a nursery rhyme during a particular class, they will sing it for their parents and indirectly transfer its message to them. It is also assumed that learning in early ages helps information to stay in the children's mind for a long time in order to be used by them later in life (Parsizadeh, 2008).

Education related to disaster risk reduction does not

necessarily have to teach students how to become specialists of disaster management. It should be more focused on helping students think and pay attention to their environmental and societal risks. Past experience has revealed that the children who are aware of the risks they live in and know how to react in emergency situations have resulted in 'better mitigation strategies and information dissemination on the dangers of hazards'. (Tovmasyan, 2008). Experience has also shown a strong correlation between school education and disaster risk reduction. However, disaster preparedness cannot take place overnight. Educating children, their families, and other community members is a long-term goal that may require changes to conventional ways of thinking and behavior. The underlying logic behind disaster risk reduction education is to lead people from taking a reactive stance towards a proactive 'Culture of Prevention' (Tovmasyan, 2008).

Secure, sustainable and well-designed schools with safe and agreeable environments are necessary for successful implementation of educational programs and policies.

Bearing this logic in mind it would be a valuable exercise for teachers to put together a course for environmental risk awareness and preparedness for students at school. In addition to general awareness on natural hazards and

disasters, this course could focus on local risks and locally applicable strategies to avert those risks.

Understanding and accounting for local knowledge and practices can contribute to improving the formulation and implementation of disaster preparedness activities, for e.g. in the western Himalayas of Uttaranchal, an earthquake prone area, people do not build houses and school buildings with bricks or concrete but with wooden structures and stone. During the Uttarkashi earthquake all the brick and cement houses were totally destroyed whereas traditional houses survived with minimal damage. Cases such as this can play a vital role in helping the child understand the value of indigenous knowledge in helping save and improve lives (Mukhopadhyay, 2008)

Keeping Schools Safe – School Management

Secure, sustainable and well-designed schools with safe and agreeable environments are very necessary for the successful implementation of educational programs and policies. School buildings form a very important lifeline, not only for children but the entire community, and can be exposed to a lot of danger if located in areas of high seismic hazard. Therefore, to reduce risks, it is the responsibility of the school management to ensure that the school structure is able to withstand natural and manmade hazards to a significant extent.

School safety must be understood with a multi-disciplinary approach where aspects of construction,

Common problems related to school safety

1. Absence of hazard assessment of the area
2. No consideration of local soil conditions that could be affected by the seismic impact
3. Little thought given to the typology of the buildings
4. Not much consideration given to the vulnerability of school buildings to the probable maximum intensity of an earthquake
5. Lack of risk assessment of aspects such as population density of schools
6. Inadequate legislative measures to ensure proper seating arrangements in classrooms
7. Little or no implementation of building codes and standards
8. Lack of knowledge of local materials that can provide seismic safety
9. No implementation of guidelines that dictate the horizontal or vertical extension of the school building
10. Absence of guideline to achieve good quality construction
11. Little action taken to prevent deterioration of the building due to ageing
12. Lack of safety awareness amongst teachers and students regarding how to act during various phases of an earthquake occurrence
13. Little community involvement in awareness-raising and transfer of vital knowledge
14. Unavailability of funds to help build new schools and retrofit existing unsafe schools
15. Absence of evacuation plan for the occupants of school buildings during or after an earthquake
16. Lack of open access of safe and quick evacuation during an earthquake occurrence

Adapted from the Consultation Report on Field Survey of Natural Disasters, 2002

functioning and maintenance are all considered to provide a safe and conducive environment to learning. According to Kai Weise (2008) the design process of constructing a safe school can be divided into three sections:

1. **Functionality:** This section deals with providing for the basic requirements for the functioning of the school. These can include requirements such as adequate size and location of the school; number and dimensions of the classrooms, corridors etc, proper toilets and sanitation facilities; provision of recreation facilities, furniture etc.
2. **Appropriateness:** Along with being physically appropriate, a school should also blend in with the local environment by being socio-culturally appropriate. Students should be able to relate to the architecture and the space the school provides. The schools should also be built in such a way that it can be used by the community while classes are not being conducted, such as community hall, or a space for sports competitions and seminars.
3. **Safety:** When dealing with the safety of children, schools should be constructed bearing in mind their structural and operative safety. Structural safety is a broad concept which will be elaborated further in this article. It is mainly concerned with the minimum safety features that have to be incorporated during the structural planning and construction phase. Operative safety focuses more on the design of the school building to facilitate disaster preparedness and response, such as open corridors and multiple doors/gates for evacuation etc. In addition, there should also be a strong attention to details such as slippery floors, low-height windows etc to minimize risk to children.



that he presented at the School Safety Conference (Zaidi, 2008) were:

- ✧ The construction material and standards of construction of school buildings should be such that they are seismic resistant. Normally, a concrete frame structure with burnt brick or cement block with cement mortar should be used for construction of schools. The guidelines for construction of school buildings provided by Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) should be followed for construction of schools, particularly in the earthquake zone.
- ✧ No school should be constructed in a low-lying area or an area liable to flooding. More over proper storm water drainage system should be provided in the area where schools are located.

- ✧ No classes should be held under the trees, especially during windstorms season. Provision of proper number of classrooms should be ensured in all schools. Leaking roofs, cracked walls and other dangerous structures should be avoided from use for teaching the children in the schools.
- ✧ Accessibility to schools should be increased by widening the streets or roads along which they are located so that at the time of emergency, the fire-brigade, ambulances and other rescue vehicles can reach the school buildings.
- ✧ Multi-storey schools should be avoided as far as possible so that evacuation of the school buildings is possible at the time of emergency.
- ✧ Fire-fighting equipment should be installed in all schools.

School Safety through Town-planning

In order to safeguard school children from natural and manmade hazards, it is necessary that we plan our schools in such a way that minimum damage is suffered. In this regard, the location and the standard of construction in

School safety must be understood with a multi-disciplinary approach where aspects of construction, functioning and maintenance are all considered to provide a safe and conducive environment to learning.

schools are the chief issues to be considered while planning for safe schools. Dr. Zaidi of UET Lahore takes a town-planning approach to ensure schools reduce their vulnerability to disasters. Some of the recommendations

Construction Principles for Safe and Strong Schools

Structural strength is critical to minimize damage to a school building during an earthquake. Dr. Qaiser Ali, of the NWFP University of Engineering & Technology, claims that major structural deficiencies in buildings; inappropriate material and design along with poor construction practices were the key factors that resulted

in the collapse and destruction of public buildings and homes during the October earthquake in Pakistan. Dr. Ali presents a set of valuable construction-related recommendations in his paper on 'Ensuring school safety using local material and skills in the Himalaya region' (Ali, 2008). These recommendations are absolutely vital for school planners and managers:

- ✧ Schools in mountainous regions should be built in stone masonry with horizontal and vertical confinement of timber, RC or steel elements to

earthquake safe schools. However, such roofs should be properly tied to the bond beams and columns.

- ✧ A foundation 3 feet deep and 2 feet wide is sufficient for a single story school building on normal soil.
- ✧ Collapse cannot be avoided no matter how strong a school building is if land slide occurs at the site. Many buildings collapsed in October 08 earthquake just because of land slide and not because they were weak. Therefore school buildings should be located on firm soil not prone to land sliding.

The Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS,P)

AKPBS,P – an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network – operates in Pakistan with the mandate to improve living conditions in rural and peri-urban regions. While it has a range of development program that address the needs of potable water, adequate sanitation, indoor air pollution and more, one of its flagship programs to reduce structural vulnerability to disaster is the Habitat Risk Management Program (HRMP).

Launched in 2007, HRMP is dedicated to protect houses and public buildings (schools, hospitals etc.) from common natural hazards such as earthquakes. HRMP functions on the ground by understanding the risk, creating public awareness and finding/promoting affordable technologies to construct appropriate buildings and retrofit existing ones to make them less vulnerable.

AKPBS,P also has a well integrated Self-Help program for School Construction. This program has been working in the field since 1980 and has provided local communities with relevant skills, technologies and non-local material to build safe schools for themselves. This very same program pioneered earthquake-resistant construction in the affected region of Kashmir and trained thousands of artisans on modern and locally responsive building construction. Extending this objective of promoting and building safe structures to reduce risks, AKPBS,P co-organized an International Conference on School Safety to share information and understanding about issues related to school safety. The outcome of this Conference was a set of recommendations for action at the national and regional level. The set of recommendations and the presentations/papers that formed its foundation can be read in more detail at: www.akpbsp.org

improve their seismic capacity. The use of flat and dressed stones with rectangular or square shapes to provide proper seating over other stones is vital in ensuring the integrity of stone masonry walls.

- ✧ Stone masonry buildings can also be strengthened by GI wire mesh jacketing on both sides of walls that is anchored through bolts followed by cement sand plaster.
- ✧ A number of tests have revealed that cement sand mortar ratio of not more than 1 part of cement to 6 part of sand should be used in masonry construction. The seismic bands will be of little or no use if very poor mortar has been used in masonry.
- ✧ The mortar should be used within two hours after water is added to cement sand mix. The mortar may have no or very minimal strength after few hours.
- ✧ The size and shape of the school building drastically affects the performance of the structure during an earthquake. A square or rectangular building with length not more than 4 times its width is a good shape to resist earthquakes.
- ✧ Light steel truss or timber roof with corrugated galvanized iron sheets is the best choice for

Using Indigenous Knowledge to Build Safe Schools

Usually, when poor workmanship, inappropriate designs and material and unsafe construction practices are blamed for unsafe structures, the charge is also extended to traditional construction practices as they are also viewed as obsolete and insecure. Modern construction practices and new techniques in planning have definitely been valuable in building safer buildings and homes, but the approach generally overlooks 'old and non-engineered vernacular structures' (Jigyasu, 2008) that may be very capable of withstanding natural hazards in their own traditionally tried and tested way. Therefore, there is a lot of reason why planners should try to incorporate traditional knowledge and traditional designs in their modern planning and construction techniques.

Rohit Jigyasu, an architect from India, presented his findings on the potential of indigenous knowledge for safer schools at the School Safety Conference. He suggests that we can learn a great deal from good quality vernacular structures that survived the earthquakes in Kashmir.

During the Kashmir earthquake, the structures that survived the massive rigor were found to be built using local building techniques of timber laced masonry bearing



wall and timber frames with masonry infill. Although there were cracks in the masonry infill, most of these structures did not collapse, thereby preventing the loss of life.

Similarly, structures such as wooden log houses in which the logs are laid alternatively, with the end joints dovetailed to one another and those employing the use of well laid masonry with through stones, well designed arches, retaining walls or bastions around the corners performed well against the earthquake. In some constructions, extensive use of wood on the upper floor in the form of wall-paneling, balconies, staircases etc. significantly reduced the weight, thereby enhancing the earthquake performance of the structures.

There may be a lot of misconceptions about the strength of local techniques, the workmanship of local craftsmen and traditional material such as adobe and stone. Findings from the field, however, underscore the fact that traditional knowledge of construction has immense potential in providing socio-culturally relevant and cost-effective solutions in building safe schools and public buildings.

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Mr. Youshey Zakiuddin works at the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan, an agency that helps improve the built environment in rural areas, particularly by building houses that are energy-efficient & earthquake resistant; providing safe water supply & sanitation infrastructure; and by educating people how to improve their living conditions. AKPBS, P is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

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Disaster Management and Safety Measures at Schools



Asia is impacted by several disasters e.g. floods, landslides, earthquakes, which threaten life, property and severely impact livelihoods. Exposure to any kind of disaster can be a traumatic experience for children, affecting their future developmental potential. They are often not involved in the disaster response and rehabilitation. Mostly their physical needs are addressed at priority level rather than their cognitive and emotional needs. The disaster may cause life long impact on to the minds of children that may effect their functioning and can shatter their sense of security. The impact of disasters varies according to the nature of the disaster and according to the age at which the child is exposed to it. The distress also become worse if the child was alone at the time of disaster and witnessed terrible deaths.

Effects on Children

The disaster causes a number of emotional problems on survivors especially on children. For them, after the impact of a major disaster, it is extremely difficult to understand what has happened to their home and family. Most children get confused by the sudden interruption in the normality of their lives. While in some children intense feelings and emotional trauma may result directly and immediately after the disaster, while for others it may occur at a later time.

Some typical reactions among young children may be of:

- ❖ Physical reactions include helplessness and passivity that may manifest through a fear of being separated from the parents, immobility or aimless motion, excessive clinging and total withdrawal from any current situation.
- ❖ Emotional reactions may include regressive behavior (children's behaviors seen at earlier age), such as

bedwetting, thumb sucking and fear of darkness. They may also complain of stomach aches or other somatic complaints that appear to have no medical basis. Other emotional reactions are expressed through disobedience, depression, headaches and visual or hearing problems.

Emotional reactions among adolescents may be similar to those of adults, including depression, increased substance use and abuse, nightmares, emotional numbing and avoidance of any reminders of the hazardous event. It also includes problems with peers, suicidal thoughts, school avoidance, and academic performance decline. Most of these behaviors are temporary and usually subside over time.

Safety at Schools for Disaster

There are two broad areas of school safety: structural safety and capacity building of the staff and children at schools. Buildings should be seismically safe and there should be a system in place to handle primary rush in case of an emergency. Secondly, there is need for building capacity and skills of the children, teachers, and school management staff to protect their lives and handle emergency situations effectively.

Comprehensive School Safety Approach

The comprehensive school safety approach is essential for future school safety programme. There are three major purposes of school safety programmes which include reducing injuries, capacity building of students and other staff, recommencement and or continuation of education during and after the disaster. It also consists of information dissemination and raising awareness about potential affects and reduction of hazards or a disaster on

Disaster Risk Management in Schools

- Develop disaster preparedness plan for schools and conduct regular school evacuation drills.
- Develop a plan to have arrangements for running the school during and quickly after a disaster.
- Develop school vulnerability analysis plans which include physical vulnerability of the school buildings (if the building structure requires renovation), checklist of the material used for evacuation sites etc.
- Conduct regular simulation exercises, stockpiling of first aid, search light and secure materials. This also includes increasing the level of awareness among children of different disasters. A list of brainstormed ideas might include:
 - o Presentations in the school by local first aid provider
 - o Inclusion of disaster preparedness topics in teachers' lesson plans
 - o School quiz-game (include special questions about various disasters/hazards and on their possible management and rehabilitation queries)

population, children and schools. Capacity building consists of training in critical areas like medical first aid, leadership, swimming lessons etc.

Responsibility of Teachers towards Students' Preparedness

Children are natural learners and educating them about hazards/disasters from an early age seems promising. Various methods and activities have been designed and used in different parts of the world for educating preschool and school age children for disasters preparedness. Teachers and educators can play a very instrumental role in disaster planning and preparedness because of their position in the community and interaction with children and parents. They can be very effective in educating students about the risk of natural disasters and preparing them on the course of action to take when a particular disaster strikes. At schools level mock drills can help develop an emergency plan of the school including evacuation exercises. Child-to-child approach can be another method that can help children to act out scenarios to their peers who can decide if the scenario they are acting is correct or incorrect in terms of what they should do in the event of any hazard/disaster. Lastly, role playing is also an effective and popular technique for disaster preparedness among school children. In this method, children think of tangible situations and feel them naturally. This method stimulates their interest and makes them feel involved in the assigned roles and helps to bring out correct reactions. This method also makes them able to reach a certain level of self-confidence in confronting natural hazards/disasters.

Rehabilitation and Recovery

Teachers also have a responsibility to address social, emotional and psychological problems that can occur as an aftermath of a disaster. Teachers can assist children in coping with a disaster through the following strategies:

- ✧ Setting of gentle but firm limits for acting-out behavior (aggression, temper tantrum, breaking rules etc).
- ✧ Give additional attention and consideration, listen to their concerns carefully, correct their misconception about the event and try to assure them that they have done everything to the extent

that they could have done during and after the disaster

- ✧ Relax expectation at school and in school performance.
- ✧ Involve and prepare the child for the next emergency.
- ✧ Encourage participation in community rehabilitation work.
- ✧ Avoid all kinds of punishments as this might prolong the emotional reactions of children.
- ✧ Use the child-to-child approach and design activities which aim at rehabilitation of the affected children;
- ✧ Support and encourage students to help their friends and help their school staff too;
- ✧ Develop school emergency preparedness and management plan with the help of students.
- ✧ Develop peer support groups, for the rehabilitation of the children, plan expressive activities (including drawing competition, role playing, story telling and sports), as they understand the reactions, feelings, behavioral and psychological changes better in their peer groups than teachers and parents;
- ✧ Help children in the identification of at risk children as they have more interaction with their peers as compared to any other person. In this way they are able to tell or to identify the group of other children who need more attention (psychological, counseling or require medical support)

It is important for education to facilitate and contribute to preparing children to face and cope with disasters adequately. It then becomes imperative that existing curricula include environmental issues and disaster prevention topics in their materials and the relevant content is part of both students' textbooks as well as teachers training programs since teachers play a pivotal role in the educating and preparing students for natural disaster events that may occur in their environment.

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Teaching Children about Climate Change

"Today we're seeing that climate change is about more than a few unseasonably mild winters or hot summers. It's about the chain of natural catastrophes and devastating weather patterns that global warming is beginning to set off around the world – the frequency and intensity of which are breaking records thousands of years old." Barack Obama, U.S. President

Climate change is one of the biggest global challenges that we as a nation of the world are facing today. Several studies have indicated that much of the change has been man-made and destructive. As the global phenomenon has escalated into a global issue, there has become apparent an ever increasing need to eradicate or at the very least, reduce the disastrous effects of climate change

List of Important Days related to Environment

✧ 22 March	Water Day
✧ 22 April	Earth Day
✧ 05 June	Environment Day
✧ 16 September	Ozone Day
✧ 03 October	Habitat Day

that has been triggered by the actions of the very people that will be harmed by it.

We all share the responsibility for making this world a better place for future generations. How children are educated today will decide the kind of place our world will be in future.

Inculcating positive environmental habits in early years can go a long way in making children attuned to keeping the environment clean in their life as adults later on.

What can Preschool (Katchi) Teachers do?

It can be interesting yet challenging to plan activities for preschoolers about environment and climate change. There is no need to teach ozone layer, global warming, adverse effects of climate change and other complicated issue at this level. Simply communicating what and how children should contribute to keep the environment healthy for plants, animals and humans is sufficient.

Firstly, children should be encouraged to take actions believing that they can actually make a difference with even the smallest action. We need to involve children in to taking care of our environment by some simple and interesting activities. In the beginning they might not



understand what it means, why it is important and what difference does it make, however with continuous efforts and reinforcements children would surely be able to link up these small steps to bigger changes as even a small change counts a lot.

The purpose of this article is to share a collection of activities for preschool (Katchi) teachers to create awareness about preservation of nature. Keeping in view the differences in urban rural environment, the activities are a kind of mix to get maximum benefit. Continuous adult supervision is recommended for all activities.

The beginning could be simple broad themes; the following are a few examples but are not limited to:

- ✧ Plant Trees as well as Save Trees
- ✧ Using water wisely
- ✧ Support and explain the 3 R's Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
- ✧ Energy Conservation and efficient use (you can also connect it to the load shedding to make them understand better)
- ✧ Conservation and Efficient use of all natural resources

for example, walking instead of using cars, using recycled paper etc.

Activities for Preschoolers (Katchi)

Activities outside the classroom

1. Plan exploratory visits to places which provide them ample opportunities to appreciate nature as well as the importance of each living creature, for example, park, zoo, ponds etc.
2. A small plot inside the school can be developed as a school garden. Children can be taught about the plants which are known to thrive there; they themselves should sow the seeds individually or in groups and take care of by watering them regularly.

Exploratory visits outside the classroom create appreciation for the environment. There is a lot of opportunity for this kind of exploration to the children living in rural areas. For schools present in urban areas, exploration outside the school could be a rare possibility but a concerted effort can be done to create an appreciation of natural environments by the availability of plantations in the surrounding areas and the children should be the ones who plant and take care of these plants.

Activities inside the classroom

1. Teachers should make it a habit to switch off the lights and fans when not in use. Make sure children also develop this habit and get a regular feedback on their actions at home.
2. Always remember paper comes from trees. Emphasize an increased use of chalk and blackboard as opposed to papers.
3. Dead leaves shedding from plants and trees can be used for doing art work which can be displayed in classrooms.
4. Providing books and telling stories on environment can create a lot of awareness about the topic and to inform them of the steps that can be taken to reduce further damage.

5. Recycle, Reduce and Reuse old materials, like newspapers, worn out clothes, plastic bottles to make art work and puppets.
6. Encourage the responsible use of water at all times. Teach children to turn off the water when they are brushing their teeth and to use less water when taking bath. Encourage them to pour unfinished drinking water into a plant instead of throwing it down the drain. Teach them to collect water during rains and later use it to water plants. Discourage the use of toys that rely on water such as water balloons, water cannons and guns. Make it a learning opportunity by always asking them why these kinds of acts are important.
7. Other than traditional words for English and Urdu alphabets, teacher can introduce words like 'E for Earth', 'T for Tree', 'W for Water' etc.
8. Put a complete ban on the use of plastic bags in schools.
9. Story time, singing time and role plays should have special themes on environmental issues, for example, a story on menace created by plastic bags. Even children can create their own poems on any of the themes.

10. Teach them not to use trees as fire woods. It's never too early or too late to care about environment. The activities provided above are just some guidelines and with experience and children's interest, teachers can build their knowledge further by developing more advanced themes.

It is important to remember that whatever the children are told at school, especially during the pre-primary stages, they are more likely to replicate the lesson in their real life. Initiating environment friendly activities would not only affect these children individually but also have a ripple effect on their families and neighborhoods and we together would be able to make this world a better place to live.

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Recycle & Play

Empty water bottles are powerful educational tool at your fingertips. Empty bottles can be used to make a variety of craft projects and to demonstrate a wide variety of teaching topics. You can use the bottles as the focus of hands-on activities for your preschool class or to teach about the importance of recycling.

Water bottle Flowers

A popular activity is making a flower and its vase by cutting half of the bottle and then cutting it to the brim which would divide it. The divided pieces would be folded outwards making them the petals of the flower. Paint it with bright colours.

Musical Instruments

Water bottles can make interesting musical instruments for music play area. Children can experiment with adding different types of materials, like coins, marbles or paperclips into the bottles to produce different sounds.

Educating Children about Global Issues



The way we educate the children today will have a far reaching impact on the world in the future as the children of today are the decision makers of tomorrow. It is integral for them to have an understanding of the issues taking place in our world today so that they are able to take decisions maturely and responsibly as adults, later on. Child trafficking, poverty, child labor and media violence are some examples of the issues gripping our world today. How do we, as teachers, develop an understanding in our students of these issues without instilling unnecessary fear in them? This, indeed, is not an easy job. Many argue that the only knowledge and information given to children should be from fictional stories, poems and games etc. so that they can have a carefree childhood.

However, is keeping things from children the right attitude? Will they not have access to information on global issues from their friends, peers or television? In urban societies, the internet has played a huge role in bringing information to everybody's fingertips without the least bit of censorship. Aren't children becoming aware of global issues from there? In this age of communication and technology, it is not easy to draw a line. With this scenario in mind, it becomes essential for teachers to impart knowledge about global issues to children in the classroom, so that the level of information provided is adapted to the developing minds of young children and so that they can be wary of false information provided from other sources, such as from word-of-mouth etc.

However, one can state that the initial responsibility of keeping children aware of global issues lies upon the shoulder of parents as they are the people who decide everything for their children. What does a child do, what sort of company does s/he have, which school the child is admitted to and what are the expectations from children are the decisions determined by the parents. However, the role of teachers is even more important as they are likely to influence the whole life of children as well as the decisions of parents. In order to educate children about global issues, a teacher could play an important role and can design a number of strategies to educate children about important global affairs.

The major role a teacher could play in educating children about global issues is through developing awareness in the community. Most of the global issues which the children face today are the result of parents' lack of awareness. Usually it has been observed that children remain prone to various global issues and parents hardly take notice of them. If we keep on waiting for any other source to develop awareness among parents then we fail to play the role of change agent. A teacher is as much responsible for educating the community as s/he is responsible for educating the children. It could happen when the school teachers have close and constant interaction with the community members. Through constant interaction with parents, a teacher could orient them about various issues affecting their children. Moreover, a teacher could explain the roles of parents in this regard and make them agree to take some necessary measures to keep the children protected from such things as exposure to media violence, child trafficking etc.

Teachers' role should ideally extend beyond the school and school community. Teachers who are committed to play a positive role in this regard may extend their networking to other schools and even to the organizations working for human rights. Moreover, various social and religious gatherings would be good platforms for teachers to convey their voices with regard to the global issues faced by the children. Teachers could also contact and interact with high authorities, highlight the issue and urge them for support in taking necessary measures to protect children against child trafficking, child labour etc. Similarly, teachers could also influence wider communities through publishing papers on print media as well as arranging and leading discussions in electronic media.

The proposed multi-faceted role of a teacher can go a long way in transforming our society to make it more aware, educated and child-friendly.

About the Writer:

Mr. Ali Nawab is currently working as an Assistant Instructor at PDC Chitral. He earned his Masters degree in English Literature from the University of Peshawar and has done his M.Ed in Educational Leadership & Management from IED.

Keeping schools safe

Ideas for Informal Education

According to the concept note on 'Formal and Informal Education for Disaster Risk Reduction' contributed by Risk RED at the School Safety Conference, informal education can take many forms, offering fun and engaging ways to introduce important knowledge, skills and competencies for students of all ages. Strategies for informal education can include:

1. Dissemination of written materials, uses of posters, flyers and other material are important ways to share disaster risk reduction messages.
2. Creative educational materials, whether toys and games, documentary and short videos, storybooks, comic books, puzzles, and computer games also can be creative ways to transmit awareness and knowledge. Small-scale models including, for example, shake table demonstrations are also powerful hands-on tools.
3. Cultural and performing arts, whether music, song, poetry, dance, puppetry, magic, street theatre, improvisation, pantomime, or artwork are appealing, engaging and creative ways to introduce disaster risk reduction messages.
4. Designated 'hazard awareness days' during which students can prepare plays, songs, parades and other extracurricular activities to showcase their classroom learning.
5. After school 'safety clubs', scouting badges, and project activities can develop interest and leadership among children.
6. Projects that bring students into contact with local community and local government and community-service oriented clubs have been shown to be extremely effective for all they touch. These practical efforts help to develop students' analytic and problem-solving skills, as they research and identify hazards, tap into indigenous knowledge, oral history, public information, and scientific research and expertise to assess risks and identify solutions.
7. Competitions, awards and commendations generate parent, community and mass media interest and develop enthusiasm for the messages. Voluntary drawing and writing competitions engage many children. DRR Knowledge Tournaments can involve many schools and radio or television broadcast can be used to share knowledge and competencies more widely. Sports Day activities are an excellent time for drills and demonstrations, as well as for competitive games that introduce cooperative response skills (e.g. water bucket brigade competition, fire extinguisher target practice, injury transport relays, and knowledge games).
8. Involving parents and local community through regular parent, parent-teacher association or school welfare committee meetings, wider community fairs and "open house" are all important opportunities for informal education.
9. Exhibitions and displays of student-created risk and capacity maps, models, art work and essays personalize this interest and make it more powerful. There are community partners eager to assist in these efforts.
10. Disaster drills often form the cornerstone of informal education because they are school-wide rather than single-course events. Simple drills include response to any early warnings, practice for what to do during fire, earthquake, and other hazards faced.

Source: Izadkhah, 2008 & Parsizadeh, 2008

Designing a Course on Environment Risk Awareness & Disaster Risk Reduction



Designing a course on environmental risk awareness (ERA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) would require the concerted effort of local teachers, practitioners, researchers and other professionals involved in education and disaster management. Although this sounds like a lot of time-consuming and bureaucratic collaboration, it will also ensure a course for students that is well-rounded, relevant and useful. This will however, not always guarantee an output that is child-centered, i.e. preserves the child as the key actor in the course. For this, teachers will have to be extra creative and innovative in keeping the spotlight on the child's best interest and wellbeing throughout the entire designing process of the course.

A well-designed educative course on ERA and DRR should ideally include:

1. **Training on concepts and terminologies of ERA and DRR:** It is important for children to be aware of what disasters are and how environmental risks can affect their lives. Children can only play a better role in understanding and promoting societal change if they are taught to develop a sustained interest in the subject. Children need to know why disaster management is so important and what specific role

they can play to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

2. **Lectures by visiting professionals and academics:** The quality of the environment (built and natural) affects children in different ways than it would affect an adult. This is because children are physically more vulnerable to illnesses and injuries and may not always have adequate understanding and knowledge about keeping themselves safe. Therefore, it is the duty of every adult, especially those knowledgeable and skilled in ERA and DRR to help students learn how to stay safe and happy. Teachers can invite professionals such as firefighters, policemen, doctors, climatologists, architects and others to speak to children about topics related to natural and manmade hazards.
3. **Use and interpretation of maps and other visual tools to understand geographical aspects of disasters:** There is little debate on the fact that visual tools such as maps and drawings help better understanding of geographical details of the local environment and a person's surroundings. Teachers can request a group of children to draw an accurate outline while another group can fill in details of buildings and local

landmarks. This map can then be used to teach the class about local risks and safety.

4. **Lessons on identifying risks and mapping local hazards:** Involving children in conducting assessments for identifying risks and hazards is a very empowering activity for students to realize their key role in ERA and DRR. Teachers should therefore be capable enough to inspire children to collect information about their surroundings, the risks it could face, and the vulnerabilities it has and also develop short reports and maps that highlight their findings.
5. **Disaster simulations to promote knowledge and behavior change:** Although these exercises are very helpful in increasing awareness, teachers should always keep in mind the age group of the students they are teaching. For younger children, the teacher could show visual images and pictures of natural and human-influenced hazards such as heavy rains, lightning, weak electricity poles etc and ask the children what they feel the attached risks are. Similarly, for older groups of students, the teachers could conduct exercises on dealing with evacuation, first-aid etc.
6. **Discussion in the classroom:** An important aspect of the formal course on ERA and DRR should be the space provided to students to discuss with their teachers and other elders on what they feel are important issues about keeping their lives safe and free from harm. Children should be encouraged to openly speak in the classroom or outside, give presentations and share ideas with teachers on how to raise more awareness on reducing risks.
7. **Field visits to disaster-affected areas:** Planning and fun-filled yet educational field trip can be a fantastic idea for children to see for themselves what they may have learnt in the classroom. Teachers could plan a trip to a local site where a disaster may have occurred in the past, or to a building that is earthquake resistant, or maybe even to an emergency ward where they are given lessons on first-aid.
8. **Presentations on case studies of disaster management:** Learning about real-life incidents help explain a lot of details about DRR that normal lectures can overlook and skim through. Through visual presentation and in-depth discussions about a particular case, children can identify what procedures they would be required to follow in case they were in a similar emergency situation. Moreover, talking about case studies can also help children realize that DRR is a global effort and that there are resourceful practices being followed by people everywhere.
9. **Lectures on local geography, weather patterns and early warning signs:** There have been cases where children have saved lives by using their classroom lessons on geography to warn people of looming natural hazards. Take the case of Tilly Smith, a 10 year old British girl. She saved nearly a hundred foreign tourists at a beach in Thailand by raising the alarm minutes before the arrival of the tsunami caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake. She had learned about tsunamis in a geography lesson from her teacher and recognized the receding shoreline and frothing bubbles on the surface of the sea. She immediately alerted her parents, who warned others on the beach and the staff at the hotel where they were staying. The beach was evacuated before the tsunami reached shore, and was one of the few beaches on the island with no reported casualties (Tilly Smith, 2008).
10. **Lessons on first-aid, putting out fire-fighting, evacuation, shelter-management and other emergency related activities:** There are plenty of activities that are useful in preparing for disasters. Each of these plays a vital role in dealing with reducing the negative impact of disasters. For better management teachers can divide the classroom into groups, where each group is assigned to learn one specific activity and then teach others in the classroom and at home. For e.g. one specific group could be taught first-aid basics, one could be trained in evacuation and one could specialize in search and rescue strategies.
11. **Instructions on making your own emergency kit at home:** Children should be instructed and encouraged to make a list of what they think they would need if they faced an emergency situation. They should also be guided to prepare survival bags/kits that contain these items e.g. clean water, bandages, snacks, a bottle of antiseptic etc.
12. **A specific emergency response plan:** This plan should contain a set of procedures that specify what should be done in case of a disaster and who would be responsible for doing it. This way children will be sure of their and others responsibilities and will know who to approach for help in an emergency situation. This plan should be shared amongst all students, staff and other community members to ensure sharing of responsibilities.
13. **Child-to-child approach:** Utilizing children as agents and messengers of positive change, teachers can rely on the child-to-child approach to reach out to the students' families and the larger community. The child-to-child approach also has the added benefit of strengthening children's confidence, moral values and their intellectual development.

More information about these topics and others can be collected through various sources such as the internet, and documents prepared by child-centered and disaster management agencies such as Save the Children, UNICEF, Risk RED and more. Local information, which can be collected through community interviews and discussions with local professionals and elders, should also be a necessary component of designing an educative course on ERA and DRR.

AKPBS,P and the RCC Programme

Because a safe and conducive built environment is vital for the healthy growth and development of all children.



AKPBS,P designs schools so that they are not only seismic resistant but also thermally insulated so as to provide a comfortable environment even in the harshest of climates

Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS,P) - formerly Aga Khan Housing Board, Pakistan - was established in 1980 with the mandate to plan and implement infrastructure and technology-related development initiatives, especially with reference to housing and environment.

Today AKPBS,P assists communities in Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly the Northern Areas of Pakistan), Chitral, Sindh and Kashmir in programme areas such as drinking water supply and sanitation, habitat risk reduction, energy-efficient building and construction improvement, rural electrification, as well as capacity building of locals adopting an integrated, community-based approach to sustainable development.

As a partner of the Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC) Programme - the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan's flagship Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiative - AKPBS,P has been given a very vital role in providing an enabling environment for the overall development of children. The interventions seek to ensure that the schools the children attend are safe from natural disasters, comfortable (even in the harshest of winters) and have adequate features and facilities (such as safe drinking water and toilets). Specifically, AKPBS,P has been given the mandate to work on the major components listed below. These components - all of them concerned with improving the built environment - are being implemented in 5 selected villages and 72 schools in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral (GBC) that are part of the RCC-ECD initiative.

1. Hazard Risk Reduction to provide support to GBC villages (in reducing disaster, particularly earthquake related, risks and vulnerabilities).

This activity includes:

- a) Risk and vulnerability mapping and scenario building (such as risk scenario building of likely damage due to the earthquakes and other hazards using GIS, and development of zoning action plans through community consultations),
- b) Demonstrations and promotion of safer building practices for community schools and individual houses including retrofitting,
- c) Mitigation of imminent hazards (such as landslides, mudslides, and avalanches),
- d) Community preparedness, awareness & capacity building of residents

2. Promotion of energy efficient household products and technology as a means towards improving the indoor environment (by reducing indoor air pollution and improving thermal efficiency), reducing household expenditure and illnesses as well as minimizing pressure on natural resources.

This component includes:

- a) Installation of locally relevant and adaptable energy efficient house and home improvement products and technology (such as water warming facilities, fuel efficient stoves, roof hatch windows, floor/wall insulation, light roofs etc),



AKPBS,P's health & hygiene coordinators conduct educational sessions in communities and at schools to facilitate behavioral change with regards to hygiene practices such as hand-washing, use of safe water and more

- b) Entrepreneur, artisan training and supporting enterprise establishment for greater employment generation,
- c) Awareness raising and demand generation, populations to micro-finance.

3. Implementation of community-managed drinking water supply and sanitation (DWSS) schemes to provide safe water and sanitation to local communities as a means towards minimizing water related health illnesses of young children.

This component includes DWSS schemes implementation, some of which will be implemented in partnership with local communities. The component will finance civil works, equipment, feasibility, design and capacity building in supervision of works, operations & maintenance, school health education, community health education, and project monitoring etc.

Interventions in schools and otherwise under the Building and Construction Improvement Programme (BACIP) and Water and Sanitation Extension Programme (WASEP) have been cited as Good Practice Cases in the 2010 UNDG MDG Good Practices publication. This publication – prepared by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) - includes nearly 200 good practice cases covering 75 countries, plus nearly 40 regional and global programmes.

Overall, AKPBS,P envisions to employ several infrastructural and technology related improvements to provide a safe, secure, healthy, comfortable and cost-effective living conditions for young school-going children of the GBC region.

For any Early Childhood Development initiative to have lasting results, it is of the essence that the children's schools and learning centers are secure, pleasant, healthy, welcoming and appreciative of all activities of the child.



AKPBS,P's most significant contribution to improve the health of children is to provide safe drinking water facilities and adequate sanitation

It is this specific reason that forms the basis of AKPBS,P's role in providing opportunities for young children's overall development in the Releasing Confidence and Creativity Programme – making the katchi classes more child-friendly and improving their quality of education.

About the Writer:

Mr. Youshey Zakiuddin works at the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan, an agency that helps improve the built environment in rural areas, particularly by building houses that are energy-efficient & earthquake resistant; providing safe water supply & sanitation infrastructure; and by educating people how to improve their living conditions. AKPBS, P is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

An Interview with Mr. Asif Merchant

Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan



Mr. Merchant is a built-environment consultant on a multi-country assignment for the headoffice of Aga Khan Planning and Building Service. He was associated with the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS,P) for thirteen years from 1996 to 2009 as the CEO. Born and having completed his High School in Karachi, Pakistan, Mr. Asif proceeded to complete his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Ohio State University in the USA. He then specialized in Structural Engineering by completing MS degree from Stanford University, USA, under the guidance of Professor Hareesh Shah, the noted Earthquake Engineering specialist. In 2006, he completed an Executive MBA from the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

Mr. Asif started his career as a Structural Design Engineer at Sargent And Lundy Consulting Engineers, USA. After 2 years at the firm, he returned to Pakistan and worked 10 years for various building design consulting firms. He eventually shifted to the Development sector and took up the position at AKPBS,P.

He was part of the transition of AKPBS,P from being primarily a building agency for other development organizations to undertaking community development work itself. It was during his time that AKPBS,P initiated the Water and Sanitation Extension Programme (WASEP), the Building and Constriction Improvement Programme (BACIP) and the Habitat Risk Management Programme (HRMP). Besides other recognitions, AKPBS,P won the prestigious Alcan Prize for Sustainability in 2005 on the strength of these programmes, as well as the World Habitat Award-2006 given jointly by the UN-Habitat and Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF), UK. Mr. Merchant was also instrumental in positioning AKPBS,P as a unique development agency in Pakistan, which not only works in both the capacity building and implementation arena but is also a very strong proponent of quality built-environment interventions at the community level for sustainable development.

1

What are some of the key natural and built environment related issues that affect us today? Do aspects of the built and natural environments relate to any of the global issues?

The built-environment is physical aspects of the world made by humans for their living. Any aspect of the environment that humans find themselves in today is actually the built environment because humans have changed practically everything. Even a park, for instance, cannot be considered as a natural environment in its true sense, since it contains an obvious element of human deliberation and disturbance.

To answer the question of what are the built-environment issues that affect us today, we simply have to look around us and whatever we see as problems in our environment are actually built-environment issues. Litter everywhere; traffic jams, bad roads, electricity / water shortage; lack of convenient and cheap transportation systems; poor housing land availability; etc. are all built-environment issues. The reason why we are faced with these problems, as opposed

to people in the developed world, are primarily threefold- lack of planning; lack of investment; and lack of enforcement of codes and bylaws. A major underlying element in all of this is lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of the built-environment in our daily lives.

There are strong linkages of the built-environment to all the 8 Millennium Development Goals endorsed by representatives of all the humans on the planet as the objectives they would like to achieve by 2015. These include addressing issues of poverty, diseases, gender dis-balances, etc. One of the biggest threats faced by mankind today is global warming and climate change, and the built-environment significantly contributes to these issues in many different ways. 40% of the total emissions of green house gases are related to making or maintaining buildings that involve material manufacturing, power generation plants and wastes such as sewerage and construction waste. Other major cause of climate change is reduction in carbon absorption by forests and trees, which again have been because of human built-environment encroaching on the natural environment.

Any aspect of the environment that humans find themselves in today is actually the built environment because humans have changed practically everything.

2 How does environment impact health?

Effect of the built-environment on health has been a fairly ignored area. Thoughtless development and unmanaged land-use patterns have created health hazards and a public health concern that rarely figure when development decisions are made. Pollution within buildings due to congestion and poor ventilation, and in cities due to lack of urban planning, results in the second biggest killer disease today in the developing world - Acute Respiratory Infection. Inadequate supply of water or dysfunctional sewerage systems result in the most prevalent health problems in the world i.e. Malaria and Diarrhea. Unless we take steps to manage the built-environment efficiently, we will have to pay a heavy price both in terms of a poor quality of life and a reduced life span for the many unfortunate in our society.

3 How are children impacted by the various environment related issues facing societies locally and globally?

Children are affected by a poor built-environment in at least three major ways. First is the prevalence of water borne and air-pollution related diseases mentioned above, which actually affect children much more than they do adults. It not only results in sickness and death, but also absenteeism from school and a decrease in the ability to learn. The second is the engagement of children in tasks which ideally should be provided by the civic agencies i.e. for collection

An essential element of any child's development is her/his ability to go around freely without any security concerns, traffic hazards, and access to recreational and educational facilities

of drinking water and fuel for cooking and heating. Girls are also made responsible for cleaning and dusting mud houses with poor ventilation. All these factors add to the workload on children from a very young age reducing the time and energy they have to learn, play and interact with others. Thirdly, the freedom of a child to go out and interact with people is dependant on how the surroundings are built. The effects of environment are thus widespread. An essential element of any child's development is her/his ability to go around freely without

any security concerns, traffic hazards, and with access to recreational and educational facilities. Imagine a situation where a child lives in a crowded neighborhood surrounded by busy roads on all sides. He is mostly confined to the house, and if the house is very dark and crowded, the child's mental, physical and social development will be adversely impacted. If the school is far away due to which the child faces transportation problems, pollution and traffic issues, the development will be further influenced negatively.

Evidently such issues stem mainly from poor environmental planning and are a matter of concern for every household. They are also global issues prevalent in most developing countries.

4 What factors may have contributed to the various disasters Pakistan has faced in the past?

Pakistan suffers from a plethora of natural and human induced hazards that threaten to affect the lives and livelihood of the poor people, particularly children from poor households since they are more vulnerable. During the past decades we have increasingly faced natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, landslides, cyclones, and drought and human induced disasters including fires, civil unrest and terrorism, refugees and internally displaced people, health epidemics, transport accidents, industrial accidents, etc.

Natural disasters are recurrent and humans have been able to calculate the probability of occurrences of these disasters and their expected severity. You would normally hear experts talk about floods that were of 10 year recurring cycles,

50 year recurring cycles, etc. This means that the intensity of the given floods was such that it had a probability of happening once in 10 years or 50 years. Human disturbance of natural balances may change the intensities and probabilities a little over a period of the last 50 years, but mind you, nature works on a very large time cycle and natural phenomena change over very long periods of time- millennia and more. So while global phenomena like soil degradation and global warming may have increased the intensity of the disasters, the real damage is really done because we don't learn from the past and don't make investments in our built-environment which can protect us from the natural forces. Hazards don't become disasters if humans can manage their impacts.

The 2005 Earthquake, in which over 70,000 people were killed, also killed more than 25,000 children because around 5,000 government schools fell down. Not a single government engineer or contractor was held responsible, even though earthquake resistant designs have been in practice worldwide for years. Haiti and Chile faced more or less same scale of earthquakes. In Haiti more than 0.2 million, and in Chile not more than 150 people died. This is because Chile built earthquake resistant buildings that would not pose as threats learnt from their 1975 earthquake experience. Importantly, in Pakistan people flout the earthquake resistant codes that have been legislated also. Quetta was flattened in 1935, but the British introduced building techniques and regulations which ensured that future similar earthquakes would not do so much of damage. In the last 10-20 years, we have stopped following those regulations

and techniques in the area and consequences will be grave in case of an eventuality.

The responsibility for creating a healthy environment is as much dependent on the individual act as it is on collective action.

The 2010 floods across the country are yet another example of ill-planning on the part of state; absence of proper land management; illegal encroachments on

the part of people, etc. The devastation from Gilgit down to Thatta has raised many questions. While floods have occurred in Pakistan since time immemorial, have we ever planned for it? Are the embankments made in the right location and with the right strengths? Are our cities and villages located on high grounds and away from the path of the surging river or protected by bunds? We heard so often this time during the floods that bunds of certain area were broken (or not broken) to protect a city or some influential man's estate. If we had done our planning, the water and flood path would have been made in such a way that important assets would have been automatically saved. Unfortunately children will bear the greatest brunt of the disaster induced displacements, in terms of health, education, etc.

An interesting case study is the Ataabad landslide. To most, it will appear as a natural thing which humans could not have avoided. But a major reason for the landslide was the years of unsustainable human extraction from the land in shape of tree cutting for use of timber for house construction and for heating and cooking. A simple fuel-efficient stove, insulation of houses or efficient design of wood sections for house construction would have reduced the need for cutting tree by more than 60%. Our government needs to ensure that deforestation activities in these vulnerable areas are avoided and the society needs to help the government and impose self-restrictions.

While early warning systems and preparedness for relief and rescue are important to reduce the full impact of a disaster, these are reactionary measures and not precautionary. Undoubtedly these steps mitigate disaster influence when the extent of the calamity is truly extraordinary. As for expected and recurring phenomena, planning through timely investments in the environment and strict enforcement and adherence to standards and regulations is a must.

5 Can you elaborate on the individual actions that add to the gravity of issues facing us today?

There are numerous individual actions that contribute to the enormity of prevailing issues. For instance mainly due to non-availability of equally affordable alternatives, a vast majority of households in the pastoral areas cook food using biomass methods which utilizes anything derived from degradable biological methods like wood, charcoal, etc. In the event of this process, a high degree of carbon emissions is created in the form of heavy smoke, which is directly inhaled by the children as they stay in close proximity to their mothers while they cook. Even when the food is cooked in open spaces, the children can't escape the effect of the heavy smoke produced in the process. On the other hand, in cold regions, where cooking in the house is inevitable, the smoke harms the children directly as ventilation systems are not sophisticated and houses are kept tightly closed to keep warm. Invariably the smoke enters the respiratory systems of the children affecting their mental development due to intake of carbon monoxide. Indoor air pollution is a major cause of diseases such as infections, asthma, and lung cancer, besides headaches, dry-eyes, nasal congestion, nausea and fatigue.

Urban settlements contribute massively to water pollution. Human wastes, industrial wastes, urban runoff from the streets and parking lots, pesticides and herbicides from parks, lawns, and gardens—all end up in the water. Most major cities have no arrangement of waste water treatment and it is not uncommon to find that the waste is dumped into lakes and rivers. Number of patients with water borne diseases is on the rise and a significant percentage of these are children who die because of severe diarrhea. Outdoor air pollution in cities comes from industry, electricity generation or heating plants, and from motor vehicles. Particularly in the summer months, nitrogen oxides and volatile

organic carbons from these sources combine to form ground level ozone, while particulate pollutants and acid emissions contribute their share to summer smog or winter haze. The social impacts of a limiting urban environment negatively impact adults and children. Congested living conditions, deserted streets, poor public transportation, gated communities, urban sprawl—these and other aspects of modern cities can contribute to isolation, lack of access for the disadvantaged, and alienation.

Therefore the responsibility for creating a healthy environment is as much dependent on the individual act as it is on collective action. I think the biggest contribution to the overall improvement of our lives that individuals can make is to obey the laws and building and environmental regulations. In Pakistan, many of these laws and regulations contain the wisdom of years of human experiences and scientific research. Each part of it is made to help us, either directly or indirectly. We feel, in our limited understanding, that the laws and regulations are not important. But they are. We should also form pressure groups to ensure that others also don't violate the law and that the law enforcing agencies do their jobs.

6 How can cities lessen environmental impact?

We don't appreciate it but it is the lack of proper built environment which dictates a lot of our life aspects and there is a need for people to look beyond the materialistic fortification of the society. We are still in the development phase so we should make sure we head in the right direction. We face problems of sanitation, sewerage systems etc. in all our big cities. Conditions are relatively better in some localities. DHA in Karachi for example is a good model of neighborhood that caters to the various needs of people who live there. Parks are easily accessible; markets are located at walking distance; there is a ban on commercialization of residential plots, system of waste disposal is organized, etc. However there is need for realization that the area as also the cities can accommodate people up to a limit and there is need for development of rural areas so that people may choose to live there and commute to bigger towns only if need be. If we look at some of the western models, many people in certain European cities deliberately live in small towns and commute to big cities if the need arises. A lot of individuals commute on bicycles. Many of them do not own personal cars and if they need to travel long-distance they use vehicles available through a car-sharing club. This results in energy efficiency and reduced air pollution. So the idea is to make choices that are conducive to the environment. People must understand that owning a car per head in the family is not a symbol of high standard of living. So the more compact we design communities, the less people have to drive. Imagine there being a proper built environment in sub-urban and rural areas, we would be living in a small town for example Thatta instead of living in a big city such as Karachi; our lives would have been so different where we knew everybody and everything was accessible at a walking distance. Nowadays, large housing projects attract us because they have been attempted to be built in a way that the provision of every possible facility is taken care of within close vicinity.

Lack of proper built environment dictates a lot of our life aspects and there is a need for people to look beyond the materialistic fortification of the society.

Also there is more that must be done in redesigning metropolitan areas in addition to building compact communities. Construction of high-rises for example is automatically linked to development. When we see fantastic new buildings coming up we think the country is becoming modern, so it becomes our manifestation of modernity. But what actually happens is that as taller buildings are constructed, the density of people in the area increases. Traffic will go up and will give rise to issues of parking, air and noise pollution, etc. Requirements for water and energy resources will also increase and become an issue for the entire neighborhood. Even though all such development affects our lives we are not much concerned; rather we are happy for the mere fact of a new, much taller building in our locality. This attitude needs to change, i.e. we need to be aware of all that is happening around us.

7 Are there any local initiatives to address the issue of air and water pollution? How receptive or resistant have people been to this change?

The Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan, to which I am presently associated with, has reached 10,000 houses under its 'Building and Construction Improvement Program' that is responsible for reducing carbon emissions and energy efficiency. During the campaign to provide solutions against indoor air pollution and its likely impacts, messages were shared with people through television and radio broadcasting, live demonstrations, etc. Initially, free stoves were given out in villages so that people can spread the word and convince their neighbors about its benefits. The impact was however not very impressive. The reason for failure is simple and understandable. The issue of cooking stoves is a lifestyle issue, which means that the lives of the users are changed by a slight change in the current norm. Therefore, the acceptance for the help put forward is observed to be low. For this reason, we subsequently conducted research to produce innovated designs so the change requisite of acceptance is minimal. The lesson learnt was that designs have to make keeping in mind the cooking needs of different households and according to the different

geographical requirements. The programme has become quite a success now. Unfortunately, the awareness about how to approach the issues is slim to none. The need to reach further with the message still remains. While our government and non-governmental counterparts have other similar initiatives, there is need to understand that the product has to adapt to the people and not vice-versa.

Under AKPBS, P's 'Water and Sanitation Program', (water has been provided to over 200,000 people and 15000 toilets have been setup), facility has been provided to every household at their doorstep in certain target areas. A sewerage system has also been built which connects to every household's toilet. Besides this, hygiene education is given to children and mothers. It is basically an integrated program where there is a soft side of training people on how to handle water and problems with unhygienic water, and then the provision of hardware like water supply and sanitation. Water treatment plants have been made as well and designed in a way that they consume less energy and more gravitational force. The locals are trained to operate the system, and proper accountancy is practiced to collect monthly payments, pay the operator for running and cleaning the system. So a whole system reaches out to the community for capacity building. This is a replicable model and has been implemented in the northern areas as well as the southern province of Sindh. Unfortunately, there are very few programmes in Pakistan that take a holistic approach and ensure that safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation systems are connected to every house in a village / city.

Awareness and activism need to go hand in hand not just for effective disaster response but as a means for better environment management.

8 What do you think are the issues behind the low success rate when it comes to disaster response?

The combination of lack of resources and the need for awareness is quite dreadful, which is encompassed by an even stronger phenomenon of priority. If prioritized properly, investment can be available. Today the various development agencies in the world have realized that investment just in development and not in disaster management systems is an imprudent choice. Haiti (2009) is one such example where billions of dollars were spent on development and the earthquake resulted in destruction on a tremendous scale. Look at Kashmir and the unfortunate disaster damages faced by the region. By and large, a good job has been done reconstructing the region since many houses built in the reconstruction phase are in compliance with the building codes put by government's agency Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority. But sadly the buildings in other parts of Pakistan are not following the regulations for which there is need for the regulatory bodies to play their role.

These instances point to the problem of priority. The attitude to rather buy a bigger house than invest in the technology for safer buildings is what we now need to address. In Kashmir for example where everyone knew what's going to happen, they still failed to act. Similar is the case of 2010 floods. Resources surely are one of the issues but it is as much about giving an issue the right priority as it is about devoting resources for it. Will the post-floods reconstruction cost be less than what would have been required to build proper protection and enforcing regulatory codes? Certainly not! And the floods will come many times again, causing similar or more damage. Strict enforcement by government and regulatory authorities is perhaps the best approach to ensure effective implementation of right priorities.

9 The responsibility for bringing about changes for improving the environment mainly lies with Governments. What role can the community play in this regard?

Awareness and activism need to go hand in hand not just for effective disaster response but as a means for better environment management. While recycling waste, cutting energy and water consumption are actions that are directly linked to the conduct of an individual's everyday life, a good starting point for mass action is the civil society, comprising set of aware individuals (intellectuals, professionals, teachers, media, etc.) taking the lead since they understand these issues and spreading awareness to the masses. An example is a Karachi based civil society organization called 'Shehri' which is run purely by volunteers and is doing quite a lot to resolve issues of built environment. Developments have taken place in this regards to an extent that recently building by-laws were legislated for Karachi, in which both the private as well as the public sectors played their part. So a need for civil society organizations to be active for the resolve is an established fact not only to increase awareness levels but also so that peoples' green attitudes translate into environmentally friendly behavior and concrete actions. Organizations such as The Pakistan Engineering Council and The Architects Society all comprise civil society members and need to proactively take up their role in working towards building a better environment. These organizations can start a self-certifying process to ensure that members of their professions adhere to the necessary standards. Role of the media is inevitable as it possesses the ability to spread the message to the masses about environmental issues and can encourage people to act on their environmental convictions.

Online Resources



Emergency Management

www.fema.gov

The official website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency based in USA aims to build, sustain, and improve capability of citizens as well as all relevant personnel and authorities so they are better prepared for, protected against, can respond to, recover from, and mitigate the various hazards. Hosts of resources are available that can be of assistance in rebuilding and recovery after a disaster strikes. Information on the various types of disasters including flood, fire, thunderstorm, volcano, chemical emergencies, acts of terrorism, etc. will be useful for anyone and everyone from individuals to civil society groups and from public authorities to the private sector institutions as well as emergency managers, personnel and disaster survivors. A special interactive link on the website teaches kids the causes of various disasters, how to be prepared for calamities and ways to prevent disaster damage. This comprehensive website can serve as a good reference for showcasing information locally in order to address gaps and determine solutions for emergency response and disaster preparedness in Pakistan.



Kids for Saving Earth

www.kidsforsavingearth.org

KSE, a US-based nonprofit organization, aims to educate, inspire, and empower children to protect the Earth's environment. The KSE website features environmental education curriculum on topics such as conservation, endangered species, forests, toxic waste sites, health issues, ecological concerns and more as well as activities for children related to the environment. A dedicated section provides action programs, quick and easy eco activities for children and educational links for adults. Special environmental organizations are also featured. KSE Memberships are available and relevant resources, educational materials and information about how to utilize on-line activities can be acquired after signing up. So sign up to turn education into action; for real empowerment comes from action.

Global Dimension – The World in Your Classroom



www.globaldimension.org

Global Dimension features helpful guides, books, videos, and websites which bring a global dimension to teaching. From climate change to poverty, water to fair trade, resources are available according to subjects, topics, age group and price range. Various website features such as teaching ideas and curriculum information will help teachers develop a global dimension within the schools that links can easily be made between local and global issues and young people have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding which enable them to make informed decisions about how they can play an active role in the global community. Also, there are plenty of resources listed on the website that provide advice and information on school links and partnerships. Establishing such partnerships can help develop global perspectives and contribute to enhanced student learning.

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

www.ecdgroup.com

The website serves as a resource for organizations and individuals working in ECCD. The site offers detailed information on particular aspects of ECCD as well as working papers, reports, and on-line and non-electronic resources relating to young children (0-8) and their families. The website also links to regional networks and provides a public forum as well as a conference room for members.

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

www.ineesite.org

The website showcases an array of publications, training materials, good practice guides, lessons learned, case studies, policy briefs, country profiles and other helpful links that will be useful for organizations working in emergencies.

UNICEF in emergencies

www.unicef.org/emerg

UNICEF has responded to more than 800 emergencies worldwide in the past three years, working to protect and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in conflict or natural disaster zones. The website carries a series of useful resources for ECD within emergency situations.

Recommended Readings

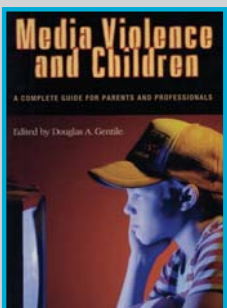


The Worried Child

Recognizing anxiety in children and helping them heal
By: Paul Foxman

Psychologist Foxman has penned a caring yet straightforward book about helping children deal with feelings of anxiety. The author delves into how contemporary global issues such as divorce, war, crime, violence, terrorism and drug abuse as well as personal crises such as divorce, sexual abuse and school-related stress contribute to the rise of anxiety among children and diminishes their intellectual, emotional and social development, as well as their physical health. Dedicated chapters in the book deal with anxiety disorders and the personality of anxious children; role of parents, schools, society, war, and the media and sources of help including psychotherapy, medication, and alternative therapies. Throughout the book readers will find concrete suggestions and guidance for parents. An appendix provides ideas for teachers and school administrators, and a special chapter for young people discusses how they can help themselves.

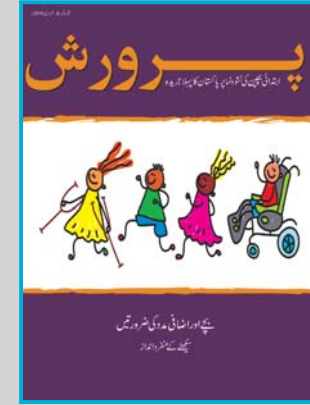
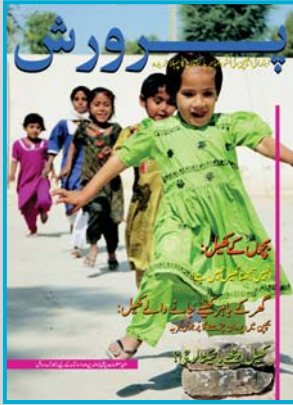
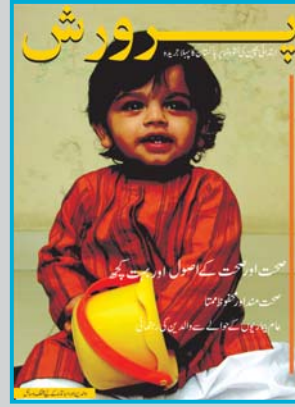
This book is a recommended read for parents and teachers who can play an effective role in preventing / minimizing anxiety in children by raising children's self-confidence, increasing social and self-control skills, and teaching them how to play, relax, and communicate their feelings and needs.



Media Violence & Children

A complete guide for parents and professionals
By: Douglas A. Gentile

The rise in media consumption and increases in violence depicted in the media have real consequences for aggression, fear and desensitization in society. Scientists have been studying the impact of screen violence on children since the 1950s. Hundreds of studies have been completed and this book does an excellent job of synthesizing the results. Dr. Gentile has included works of the top researchers in the field and has presented concise and readable summaries that accentuate the role of parents in enforcing responsible media consumption for children and advise media and policymakers to take responsibility for limiting violence in programming in order to mitigate the negative impact of violent programs and games on children and youth. The book is an excellent resource for parents, policy makers and academics who want to know what the science says about the effects of violence in television, movies, video games, music, and the Internet. Students and researchers will also find the references invaluable for defining particularly the course of future research in media violence.



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Children's Newsletter is published in Sindhi and Urdu languages and is a useful resource aimed at improving the quality of teaching/learning in early years.

The newsletter is available online at www.ecdpak.com & www.sef.org.pk

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