

Effect of Earthquake on Religious Beliefs and Practices



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Effect of Earthquake on Religious Beliefs and Practices

A thesis presented to the department of Anthropology, faculty of Social Sciences,
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Anthropology

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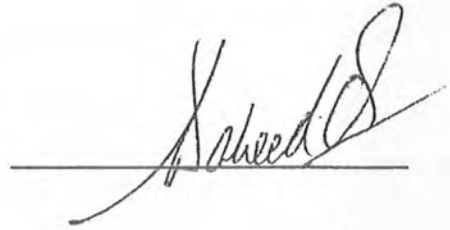
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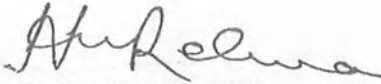
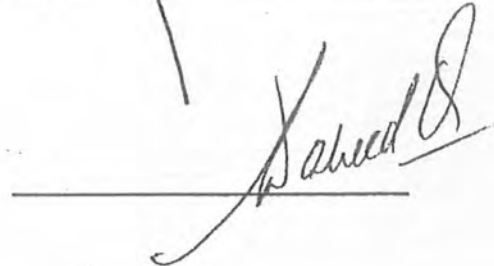
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INTRODUCTION

In recent past the entire world has been frequently subjected to natural disasters of catastrophic nature like earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, floods, volcanic eruptions etc. These disasters bring mass destruction with them including loss of life, shelter, property and physical infrastructure. These losses not only affect social and economic life of people but their religious life as well that brings change in their beliefs, rituals, norms and moral values. A colossal earthquake hit regions of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and AJ&K of Pakistan in 2005. In order to measure the effect of earthquake on religious beliefs and practices of affecties, village Belyani was intentionally selected to conduct a qualitative research study because it lies in union council Balakot that was the most affected area of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa in 2005 earthquake. The research was conducted to document change in religious beliefs and practices of the people with respect to earthquake. The source of knowledge and motivation being the causal agent of change in believes was also worth noticing. To identify the change in religious beliefs and practices of natives, information regarding pre and post earthquake religious life of people was collected and compared to know the magnitude of change and the causes behind this change.

Religion is an imperative and quite intricate phenomenon in a culture or society. It operates as a controlling mechanism and permeates into the life of people by notifying them about do's and don'ts in life. In the time of difficulty, religion not only regulates the sentiments of people by providing them logic behind natural calamities but the religion's theodical crediting of calamities as a supernatural or divine act offers humanity to improve the social and religious values in a society. Boyer (2003) explains the origin of religion in every culture as a human attempt to avoid calamities and to understand the creation of world. It is beyond the thought of people that by whom and how this universe is created and operating. They could not comprehend the events occurring around them, these queries are satisfied in terms of religious explanations.

In recent era the earth is getting more vulnerable to various disasters because of the increasing entropy in topography and geography of nature. Scientists and

environmentalists associate it with the exploitation of natural resources and global warming where as laymen believe that these are divine acts. According to scientists disaster is an incident concerted over time and space, due to which communities suffer physical impairment and social disorder, and vital functions of societies are completely or partially disrupted (Quarantelli, 2005). Whereas modern standpoint in anthropological research about disaster is that, it is an occurrence which contains a combination of naturally and technologically harsh situations and put human population in vulnerable conditions. These two factors cause damages to essential social organization and physical resources of a society to the extent that important systems of society are either destroyed or interrupted and put people or group of people in stressful or disorganized situation (Smith, 1996).

The victims of natural disaster became skeptical about supernatural powers controlling this universe after experiencing mass destruction. Earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and many other natural disasters are tagged as “acts of God” and are perceived as penalty or sentence from God (Steinberg, 2000). According to Texier (2010) people refer to God/s for these calamities by calling it their fate because it is easy and logical way to point out someone or something that is out of people’s reach in a scaffold of daily destitution. By doing so people try to avoid the responsibility of their vulnerability and make someone authoritative, to put the charge of their desolation.

According to Sangasumana (2011) the perception about disaster and its mitigation was analogous in all human populations those have some religious perspective either monotheist or polytheist. It was believed that when people disobey God they became victims of God or Gods anger where as if people obey God the disaster or punishment is avoided. These believes prolonged even today, although such religions connotations help victims to restore their lives but sometime these have negative impact on affecties of disaster by promoting that disasters are divine revenges rather than an event that can be prevented by mitigation and preparedness. After 2005 earthquake of Pakistan, some religious people interpreted the disaster as punishment from God (Lavigne, 2008).

A social scientist is always interested in identifying cause and effect relationship between different factors. Referring to the topic of research, it was focused to find out effect of

earthquake on religious life (beliefs and practices) of people. Although there is no change in their faith, as nobody converted after experiencing natural cataclysm. However an abrupt change in religious practices was noticed just after earthquake. The victims adopted newer beliefs that gave them satisfactory answers to their confusions about what had happened to them. While certain people switched over to other's beliefs about occurrence of earthquake for defending their religious status. They adopt the beliefs which they find more appropriate to justify their situation. Infect the religious ceremonies, rituals, and festivals are not changed but a prominent change in zeal and enthusiasm practicing them was observed. The study is different from other quantitative researches those were focused on human and non-human losses in case of disasters. It is a qualitative study focused on social aspect of disaster by using emic approach being conducted in *Muhalla*¹ Bagh Belyani of village Belyani in Union Council and Tehsil Balakot of District Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province of Pakistan.

1.1 Statement of the problem

On 8th October 2005, a nightmare like earthquake hit regions of Pakistan causing lot of damages to people's lives, infrastructure, livestock, livelihood, personal and national assets and many more. Along with deaths and injuries many survivors of the earthquake fell in traumas and/or other psychological problems. Although the incidents of earthquake and flood have been a recurrent phenomena in this area but the earthquake of 2005 is recognized as the worst disasters in the account of Pakistan. The gigantic earthquake has caused a mass destruction in few minutes and changed human life all of sudden that the affecties could not perceive it anything else but their fate and a decision of God.

In Pakistan the people of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa region are considered religiously richer than other people of country, so as the inhabitants of Balakot. Although they have had strong belief in "what so ever happened to people is will of God". But after earthquake they were inquiring about "why this happened to them". After earthquake different interpretations about reasons of this earthquake became famous among the affecties

¹ Cluster of households established in close vicinity

including many superstitions. The people being in grief and pain were just looking for the justification of this earthquake that had destroyed their lives and rendered them helpless, so they adopted all those reasoning which they felt appropriate to calm their soul. At the time of earthquake many religious entities, especially scholars of Islam took strong positions and provided the affecties with answers within the paradigms of Islam in their sermons. The religious explanations of the earthquake had worked as painkiller to the people at the very moment.

The earthquake affected religious life of people in a slightly different way. We find no standard or yard stick to measure the change in beliefs and practices of people but the change can be noticed at two levels. At first level when people were going through the calamity in its severe form i.e. in the initial days of earthquake. At second level; when the battle of survival was being fought upon the resources during aid distribution of relief goods for rehabilitation activities. Just after experiencing this huge calamity they found themselves helpless in front of nature. They find no one except God for their help in such a situation so they started praying to Allah (God) and asked for His forgiveness and pity on their plight.

1.2 Background of research

I was of a mind to study local perceptions of earthquake in religious context. The area of my research was famous for religiously rich people who perform their religious practices in any case and stick to their beliefs. I have been working in earthquake affected areas, especially in Balakot with different organizations after earthquake but I had never been there before earthquake. I did not find these people as religious as I had heard about them. This instigated me to find out the fact, whether it was really the same as described by the people before earthquake or it's a consequence of earthquake. I deliberately selected Balakot for my research as it was the most destroyed area in earthquake. Just after the earthquake, hundreds of researches arrived there and conducted their research on affects of disaster in the context of social, economic and environmental aspects but not a single study has been conducted on their practices of religion, an attribute this area is famous for.

1.3 Significance of the research

If we look a decade back, many countries of the world had experienced devastating natural and anthropogenic disastrous events that disturbed human social and physical life conditions. Natural disasters are a recurrent phenomenon of contemporary world. I am enough confident that my research will play a significant role while catering the needs of disaster effected people. During disaster mitigation planning it would be given importance that the religious activities of the people would not be interrupted or disturbed, because religion itself contains the elements of relief for affecties. The study would accentuate the role of religious authorities to provide emotional and spiritual support to their people explaining these natural events within the framework of religion. At the times of disaster or stressful situations participation in religious activities introduces certain behaviors and attitudes in people that contribute towards their well-being. The religious authorities could also make people optimistic so that they could hope for the best from God. If we look at Islamic history we could find references of several disasters that paved the beliefs of people about disasters.

The study has explored local interpretations about earthquake and how people developed their understanding regarding earthquake based on their religious beliefs. This would be a study of a disaster and a contribution to the field of anthropological disaster studies in the context of religion, exploring the importance of local perceptions regarding disaster in order to understand processes of change and continuity as a result of disaster.

1.4 Rationale of the research

The primary objective of the research was to investigate local interpretations about earthquake of 2005, because it was so devastating in nature that it has shaken people once. The aim of this research is to provide an insight to the disaster management authorities that how indulgence in religious activities could avoid chaos in situation of mass destruction. This will also provide with the idea that religious explanations of disasters will have more relaxing effect on victims of disasters. The survivors of disaster could develop better coping energies within themselves by understanding the reason of natural catastrophes within the outline of religion, because after this incident people had only one question in

their minds i.e. “why this happened to us?” The religion and superstition has joining boarders with one another. Although people find religious justifications for the disaster but still there were circulation of superstitions.

It was a study of change in religious practices and adopting new beliefs related to earthquake and its preventions that may lead to superstitions. It was important to know the beliefs of people about earthquake before and after its occurrence and their source of knowledge about these beliefs. The beliefs are considered the foundation of human religious practices so it was also worth noticing that either the religious practices of people are in accordance to their beliefs or not. This study has also tried to bring out that how natives make sense of the earthquake according to their religious affiliations and make use of these interpretations in bringing or opposing religious change in the disaster aftermath.

1.5 Hypothesis

On the basis of my observations about the people of the area, I had developed hypothesis which encircles the whole research.

- Earthquake has caused changes in religious beliefs of people, at least those related to the earthquake due to exposure of knowledge.
- The religious practices of the people have changed either in frequency or intensity.

1.6 Objectives

In order to focus the topic of research it is necessary to draw the objectives of research. To conclude my research I had developed following objectives of research for data collection.

- To note the perceptions and interpretations of people about earthquake and their pre and post earthquake religious beliefs about earthquake
- To document general religious beliefs of people before and after earthquake and changes regarding these beliefs
- To identify change in pre and post earthquake religious practices of people
- To investigate spread of superstitions about earthquake and their sources
- To classify levels and sources of religious knowledge of the people about earthquake

1.7 Research proceedings

This section contains rigorous research processes and methodologies that I adopted to carry out field work of the research. Different research and field work methods were applied depending upon the nature of research and its topic. I had followed various anthropological research methods to conduct this qualitative research study which I found relevant and supporting to my work.

1.7.1 Locale of research

Mostly the qualitative research is conducted on small number of people called the key informants preferably from other cultures; to get detailed information. That is why the locale of my research was a *Muhalla* (Bagh Belyani) of the village Belyani. Village Belyani consists of seven *Muhallas* those are Podina Bela, Mughal-abad, Mazar Belyani, Cham/Jazba Belyani, Grid Belyani, Terli/Lower Belyani, and Bagh Belyani. The village Belyani lies in the Revenue village Balakot, and it's Union Council and Tehsil is also Balakot. Balakot Tehsil is located in District Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province. The village Belyani is located on the bank of river Kunhar and due to its location it was named as "Belyani" which means 'a small terrestrial land at the bank of river inhabited by the people'. The village is situated at a distance of about thirty-eight kilometers north-east from District Mansehra. Belyani is bounded by village Berna at North, by village Porri at South, by river Kunhar at East and by Mangli, Rehmat Abad, Shah Ismael Abad villages at West. The prevalent local language of the area is Hindko (dialect of Punjabi language), but some people do speak and understand Gojri and Pushto languages.

Tehsil Balakot was intentionally selected for research on this topic because this was terribly destroyed by earthquake and also the village Belyani that was situated at the foot of mountain. The mountain exploded in earthquake according to the people of Belyani and they were severely affected. The broken pieces of rocks fell down on their village and caused great damages to the village, and the situation got worst due to the after shocks of earthquake. The people of village told they have heard from their old folks about a devastating earthquake in this area, hundred years ago in 1906. It was as destructive as the earthquake of 2005. The people had been experiencing earthquakes of different magnitudes

off and on but these two earthquakes were the most severe in nature. Some highly destructive floods have also hit the land on 8th September 1992, 7th July 2006 and on 30 July 2010.

1.7.2 Research methodology

Like any other discipline of science, research in social sciences requires a set of rules and procedures to be followed. Anthropology is a discipline of social sciences which has multiple instruments to carry out research. The beauty of anthropological research is that it is not conducted in controlled environment as in natural sciences. It is conducted with people living in a social setting where they are influenced by many uncontrollable social factors that affect responses of individual. As individuals respond according to their social environment differently, so the answers of every respondent in the research have great value. For that reason I had explored the context in which the informants had responded. To carry out this anthropological research qualitative research methods are preferably opted. The research methodology consists of various research techniques and is used to collect data from respondents. To achieve the specific objectives of the study, qualitative research techniques and tools were used. The following research methodology has been used to collect data on “Effect of Earthquake on Religious Beliefs and Practices”.

1.7.3 Research access and entry

In anthropological research the way of entry in the field accounts a lot. If I had gone into the field with a getup seeming odd or alien to the natives, then respondents will remain at a distance from me during interview just because they won't accept my presence. So it was important for me to know about dress code of natives and wear it while going for research in the field because it has significant effect on the entire research and its process. Females observe *Perdah*² strictly, keeping this in mind, when I went to the research locale I dressed up like the native people and also wore veil. I had been good in attitude and behavior while interacting with natives. I used to be careful during the entire conversation, by staying neutral especially in religious and political dialogues; I avoided revealing my

² Women cover their head, face and upper body with a big shawl so that their physical features should not be visible or prominent to others especially to the male members.

own viewpoint just to get their perspective about an issue and to make good contacts with the people in a community as well. If someone does not follow this rule in the start of a research work then it could initially create a problem for the researcher (Srivastava, 2005).

If I had entered in the field with reference to some influential or political person of that locality, I should not reduce distance between respondents and me. Similarly if I had been introduced in the field with the reference of a person who do not have good repute in the area, then I would not have good response from community as well. People will treat me according to the repute of the person who had introduced me to the people in the field firstly. Usually the villagers have quite close interaction with each other and any information circulates very quickly across the boundaries. So I tried to create good first impression on the people to run the research work smoothly. The way of talking to the people was appropriate as well so that people do not hesitate in sharing information comfortably. I had developed a friendly relationship with people in field.

1.7.4 Rapport building

In social sciences reliability of data is largely dependent on the nature of relationship established between researcher and community during data collection process. The rapport of researcher helps to overcome field problems (Nader, 1986). I had been very conscious about rapport building because I was conducting research on sensitive topic like religion so I had to develop positive rapport among members of community being researched. Rapport building is very important from an anthropological perspective before starting research in a particular scale. It helped me to become more familiar with the natives and not to be regarded as an outsider any long. The logic behind rapport building is to gain trust and confidence of the natives so that they might share their knowledge in an easy and friendly manner.

The most important component of rapport establishment is to adopt and follow native's culture fully. When I went to my locale I dressed up strictly in the local fashion and observed thorough veil, so that they do not feel and treat me as an alien. The villagers dislike the outsiders who do not follow their norms. They showed a good gesture that they were happy with me as I had adopted their culture. Language is another barrier that keeps

researcher and natives as strangers. Before going to field I took it easy that I'll understand Hindko language, but after interacting with people having pure Hindko dialect and accent I found some difficulty to understand. Especially the elderly and uneducated people, having less interaction with outsiders before were unable to understand me and vice versa. Then I learned their language first so that I could communicate with my respondents effectively which make them more friendly and interactive to me.

1.7.5 Key informants

The key informants of a research play very supportive role to access to wider community. It is very necessary to make a careful selection of key informants. They should have good repute in their community, well connected to all people and have in-depth knowledge of the area and culture (Bernard, 1940). While making initial interactions in the village I was keenly observing and judging people so that key informants could be taken from them. I selected three key informants for my study depending upon their willingness to co-operate and assist me in this research. It was possible only with their help that I could speak and understand Hindko. They helped me out in fixing and conducting meetings and interviews with people of village. They served as reference for me while visiting people and they introduced me well in the area.

The involvement of key informants was also significant to fill the gaps of the interviews and to dig out information that was consciously or unconsciously hidden in the minds of respondents. I collected baseline information of the village through key informants that is data about economy, family and housing patterns, social organization, religious activities, education and other issues. The village Belyani was occupied by 2307 people containing 445 households, whereas in the *Muhalla* Bagh Belyani, which was selected for research, there were 76 households with population of 387 people. The village specific information was obtained from a Community Organization (Rabta Belyani) that was formed after earthquake to keep the record of village losses and interventions.

1.7.6 Convenient sampling technique

To carry out this qualitative research "Convenient Sampling" technique was used to identify respondents for In-depth Interviews. This technique was deliberately used because

qualitative research requires long time on part of respondents as well and they did not get any reward for spending their valued time. After earthquake many qualitative and quantitative researches and surveys had been conducted in this area by different NGOs, INGOs, Government and UN agencies. These researches or surveys were associated with some project implemented for benefits of affecties of the earthquake. This developed a mindset of people of this area that they will be rewarded in any form (e.g. aid) for sharing any information. So it was necessary to have respondents those were willingly available to spend their time and share information on the research topic (Hill, 1997).

During the course of my research work a gender balanced approach was followed at all stages. At first stage I collected information about the village and engaged people in informal discussions on my research topic. By doing so I got an overview of the local concepts and understanding related to my topic as well as I communicated the objective of my study to streamline my research. At second stage, when the local environment became conducive to pursue the objectives of my research, I started conducting In-depth interviews (IDIs) with the community members. In-depth interviews were conducted with thirty one (31) respondents out of which seventeen (17) were females and fourteen (14) were males. These respondents were from different class, caste, and sect. On the basis of information from the community members I set indicators that can be verified through observation.

1.7.7 Participant observation

Participant observation is a good tool for qualitative data collection when going for anthropological fieldwork. It involves living with the natives for extended period of time and trying to know them as much as possible in local context by participating in their everyday activities and events (Dewalt, 2001). I had participated actively in routine life of people as well as in specific events like prayers, recitations, and religious gatherings to get more insight information which allowed me to have a deeper immersion with the people. By doing so I became a part of community, people no more stay reserved and they start behaving casually. When I was living with people and observing them keenly, I had notice the non-verbal expressions and feelings of people, and the way they interact with different people. It was important to notice the facial expressions and body language of people while responding my questions.

It was quite common that my respondents used to quickly switch over to other topics when some other person came during interview. I noticed respondents mostly do this while they were referring to negative aspects of the people of their village. I also observed the routine of people in performing their religious activities. It also helped me to validate the authenticity of information collected from respondents about this topic of research. My participation in the activities of people life was active as well as passive depending upon the situation. I used to stay neutral while conversing with people having unique viewpoints on a certain issue like religion, politics, gender etc in such situation I became passive participant but active observer.

1.7.8: Reflexivity

When an outsider intrudes in the daily life of people in the name of research, some kinds of suspicions emerge among the natives. People create an image of the researcher by discussing with one and other and decide what to share and what not. The researcher influences the natives and in return researcher is also influenced by them (Pauwels, 2006). I was consistently focusing and was about the effect of my presence on the people and its reciprocal effect on my research. The phenomenon of reflexivity is directly linked with my rapport in the field and it was captured and handled by direct and keen participant observation. The impression I had created at the point of entry in the field was reflected by the behavior of respondents towards me. I was quite analytical in ethical consideration and did not have any religious or political standing. I was watchful about the information I was getting from the natives which may be twisted due to their ethical, religious or political opinions, so more in-depth knowledge was needed to understand the culture of natives in their perspective instead of my own.

1.7.9 In-depth interviews (IDIs)

In-depth interviews were conducted with thirty one (31) respondents from both sexes. Different interviewing techniques (formal, informal, structured, unstructured, semi structured) were used to collect data from respondents. At first level to collect qualitative data, an interview guide was prepared containing different sets of questions related to the topic of research. On second level, respondent's profiles were filled by getting information

from respondents. The respondent profile was a structured questionnaire that contained close ended and open ended questions. Respondent profile was filled with the same respondent after completing interview, so that people may not develop any ambiguity concerned with research that led them to distort the information they are providing. The interview guide was containing different set of questions to dig out religious perspective of the respondent.

1.7.10 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

After completing in-depth interviews and collecting basic information of the village two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized to know collective point of view of the people. The FGDs were conducted with two groups; one of males and the other was of females. Each group contained eight (8) participants. In FGDs I had invited participants, with whom I had already conducted In-depth interviews. This was a deliberate effort to validate information taken by those people in in-depth interviews. This was also necessary to distinguish between individual and collected response of the people because group dynamics are different from individual perspective. I wanted to know that what so ever people had told me in isolation, did they have same response in front of other community members. These FGDs were around the general and religious beliefs of people about earthquake.

1.7.11 Photography

I used still camera in my research to capture certain landscapes of the village to be used in my thesis. The people of the area were reluctant to be photographed specially the females did not allowed me to take any pictures of them. However I tried to shoot important features of the area those were relevant to my research to use in my thesis.

1.7.12 Daily diary and field notes

I used daily diary method during my field work to express my own feelings in the field and how I adopted with the social environment of the village. After completing my daily fieldwork I used to write-down my observations and feelings of the whole day. The daily diary was so personal to me and I could not write it openly so I did it in complete isolation. Along with daily dairy I also prepared field notes. While taking interviews I just wrote

main points (jotting) because if I would have started writing in detail, it will interrupt continuity of interview and lack of interest on part of respondent. After completing each interview I write it in descriptive form as soon as possible so that I would not miss any minute detail.

1.7.13 Secondary data

I used secondary data on two stages; at first stage before starting my research work so that I could develop good understanding on my topic and could be clear what to focus. For that matter I had studied several books, journals, article, reports and other documents to get new dimension of my research. At second stage I thoroughly reviewed related literature to strengthen and support my data.

1.7.14 Translation

A very important component of my research was translation, because the spoken language commonly used in Balakot was Hindko and I was not a native speaker of Hindko language. Translation included meanings of words, ideas, expressions, and gestures of one culture within its cultural context. Language barriers became a concern during dictation, translation, data analysis, and interpretation. Although I could understand Hindko to some extent but interpretation of typical Hindko terms were necessary to be explained. The essence of certain Hindko language, expressions might get lost in the process of translation when could not find lexical meanings. Many Hindko expressions had no equivalent words in English so I have tried to provide conceptual equivalence. Moreover, religious terminology could add difficulties with respect to translation as well as data analysis. The translation was done on two levels, first from Hindko to Urdu and second from Urdu to English to avoid loss of non-verbal and local expressions.

1.7.15 Data processing and analysis

Once the data collection from the field was completed, it was entered in an exclusively designed database in quantitative data analysis software package SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). As the data was qualitative and could not be entered directly in database so it was required to develop codes. For coding the data was organized into chunks and each chunk was given a code which contained hint of information or underline

meanings of that chunk. For coding the field notes were reviewed again and again so that nothing would leave un-coded and even minute details should be covered in analysis. By doing so a comprehensive code plan was devised for the data entry. A code book for the demographic variables and in-depth interview inventory was created to be used for further data analysis. When whole data was entered correctly a tabulation plan was developed for data analysis. A univariate analysis was done to get percentages or frequency of responses whereas bivariate analysis was performed to find relationship in different variables. The data was presented in the form of tables and graphs.

1.7.16 Report writing

On the basis of data analysis a draft of thesis was generated, written in confessionist style using holistic expression. Linguistic verbatim are used in writing to accentuate the force of respondent's viewpoint so it was also part of this thesis. The names and photographs were not shared in the thesis due to reservations of respondents. The draft thesis was submitted to the supervisor for the comments and suggestions and finalized after incorporating these.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature review is a description and presentation of secondary data, related to the topic of research for elaborating the context of study. It helps to proceed in research and explore different dimensions of the topic under research. Here I have made an account of previously published work by different scholars and researchers to elaborate the context of my research work. It is necessary to develop relationship between different arguments and to provide historical perspective of the topic. I had organized secondary sources around the ideas and objectives of my research and have used them to reinforce and strengthen my research. It also helps to define key terms, concepts, terminologies and theoretical framework of research.

2.1 Disaster

Quarantelli (2005) an American sociologist elucidate disaster as an incident concerted over time and space, due to which communities endure physical impairment and social disorder. The vital functions of societies are completely or partially disrupted. Where as modern standpoint in anthropological research about disaster is that, it is an occurrence that contains a combination of naturally and technologically harsh situations as well as human population in vulnerable conditions. These two factors cause damages to essential social organization and physical resources of a society to the extent that important systems of society are either destroyed or interrupted that put people or group of people in stressful or disorganized situation (Smith, 1996). An earthquake is a sudden movement of the earth surface due to the release of the energy stored in its crust (Sevgi, 2007).

It has been seen historically that natural disasters cast a lot to human life and property. In recent era, the scale and rate of such natural disasters is increasing rapidly. According to an estimate the number of people died in natural disasters across the world in a year ascends from 23,000 in 1960s to 143,000 in 1970s (Steinberg, 1996). On the other hand the incidents of disasters reported every year also grow speedily, from 368 in 1992 to 712 in 2001. If we look on the number of people affected during disasters within this time period, it has also increased radically, from 78,292,000 to 170,478,000 (Hilhorst, 2004).

2.2 Disaster study a field of anthropology

One major contribution to disaster studies from the field of anthropology is arguably the methodology of ethnographic fieldwork and the sensitivity to local understandings and social dynamics in disaster situations. With its long term field presence and in-depth understanding of both local contexts and wider national and international interconnections, anthropology is well suited to encompass the complexities and multivocality of disasters, vulnerability and reconstruction (Hoffman & Smith, 1999, pp. 10-14). They also take the argument one step further, stating that not only is anthropology ideally suited to study disasters, anthropologists also have an obligation to move from theory and methodology to practice and become actively engaged by mitigating suffering, advise and facilitate culturally appropriate aid distribution and recovery, ensuring communication and understanding between affected populations and aid agencies and prevent rebuilding inequality and vulnerability in reconstruction.

Ensuring dialogue between theory and practice is extraordinarily important in disaster situations, making holistic and in-depth socio-cultural data available to practitioners, not only in disaster aftermaths but also in reducing vulnerabilities to prevent or reduce impact of future disasters (Hoffman & Smith, 1999). Hewitt argues that disaster studies were generally approaching disasters as phenomenon attributed to hazardous agents from the natural or technological realm and cut off from everyday human experience and activity (Hewitt, 1998, p. 78).

2.3 Earthquake a natural phenomena

Earthquake is an important phenomenon in nature happening since time ancient times on earth. Hill-Tout and Maud (1978) recorded a Cowichan tradition about an ancient earthquake at Cowichan Valley that "In the days before the white man there was a great earthquake. It began about the middle of one night, threw down houses and brought great masses of rock down from the mountains. One village was completely buried beneath a landslide." Earthquakes have been observed frequently in the last few centuries.

2.3.1 Plate tectonics theory

The scientists of 21st century have researched on the topic and they explain the mechanism of earthquakes in the light of Plate Tectonic Theory. According to this theory the crust of earth is made up of twelve individual plates upon which we live. These plates 20 to 44 miles thick below the terrestrial land while it 3 to 6 miles thick below sea. Ashtiany (2009) a Muslim scientist also favors plate tectonic theory by referring a holy verse of Quran (Religious book of Muslims). He has got the opinion that the meaning of the Quranic verses can be explained and clarified by the various statements of the Prophet, which are complementary to the Quran and have been declared to be as authoritative as the Quran itself. *"And in the Earth are neighboring piece"* (Al Quran, 13:4). This verse shows that the concepts of earth's plate tectonics and the evolution of earth which has been identified by the earth scientist in recent centuries were mentioned in the Quran more than 1400 years ago.

2.3.2 Balakot earthquake

According to USGS at Balakot these plates are 26 km deep within the earth at the area where the Eurasian and Indo-Pak plates are colliding. As a result of this collision, the Himalayas began uplifting almost 50 million years ago and are continually rising by about 5mm/year. Sella *et al.* (2002) thinks that at present the Indo-Pak plate is penetrating into Asia at a rate of about 45 mm/year and is rotating slowly anticlockwise.

Any obstruction in the movement of plates leads to disastrous earthquakes as it happened on the morning of 8th October 2005, at around 8: 50 AM according to Pakistan Standard Time. An earthquake of high magnitude registered 7.6 on Richter Scales hit mountainous ranges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) and a minute portion of federal capital Islamabad. Most areas of KP and AJ&K were inaccessible for research and rescue teams. It is considered the nastiest earthquake of the century in Pakistan, and claimed the most horrible natural disaster since the nation's birth in 1947. It was estimated that more than 50,000 people died, and 75,000 were injured, as well as 550,000 families were left without shelter under the open sky in such a harsh cold weather.

Over 2.8 million people became homeless and 2.3 million had nothing to eat (Wynbrandt, 2008).

2.3.3 Rescue work

The comparative study sponsored by the National Science Foundation found that people within disaster areas assembled into spontaneous rescue groups that had leaders, roles, rules and standards (Glass, 2001). These groups began search and rescue operations well before outsiders could arrive, and their motivation and effectiveness was increased by the preexisting social bonds that cement family members, friends, and neighbors. Tierney *et al.* (2001) also report that although some victims may be overwhelmed or otherwise incapacitated due to the disaster, most are not helpless. Those affected by disaster generally take care of themselves and others. Linley and Joseph (2004) warned researchers to not focus only on the negative responses to disasters, because it can lead to a biased understanding of posttraumatic reactions.

Bard & Sangrey (1979) discuss the individual responses to disaster in three stages: impact stage; recoil stage; and the reorganization/post-trauma stage. In the impact stage the survivor is hit with the reality of what is happening. The survivor's concern is with immediate present, and experiences an automatic stimulus response that allows the victim to cope with the catastrophe. People often mobilize resources to help self and others and there is often greater community cohesion. Glass (2001) explains that the mistaken belief that area residents are helpless prompts disaster planners and managers to underestimate the importance of local rescue and relief efforts. This miscalculation leads to delay, duplication of efforts, and mutual interference, and mutual frustration. In the United States in particular, professionals tend to regard volunteers as a nuisance and make poor use of local resources.

The empirical literature clearly reports: "most post-disaster search and rescue is carried out not by trained emergency response organizations but by family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and even complete strangers that happen to be at or near the scene at the time of the impact" (Auf der Heide, 2004, p.350). In Pakistan disaster management prior to the 2005 Kashmir earthquake was focused on riverine floods. The 2005 earthquake

served as a severe jolt in terms of the need for preparedness for other natural disasters as well. Following the earthquake, Pakistan formulated an institution named the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) which is now pursuing a concerted programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

2.4 Religion

Durkhiem (1915) defined religion as an integrated set of beliefs and practices those are associated to sacred things, those are forbidden or tabooed. As a result of these combined beliefs and practices single moral community forms whose all members follow these beliefs and practices (Morris, 1987). For Durkhiem religion is nothing but beliefs and practices of people, and it is a collective matter of a community. Majority of the people in the world are religious, especially in the non-Western world, where religion contours societies. Either we admit it or not, religion is a fundamental force behind the way a community interacts with the concept of development or disaster.

Religion is a central part of human race for centuries, both in times of peace and disaster. Bradley Penuel discussed that Primordial Greeks and Romans have firm belief that Gods play constructive and optimistic role in their societies and protect them from disasters. They also pray to Gods for fortification, fecundity, bussiness and agriculture. On the other hand some Gods are feared and considered to bring judgement, punishment and even death. The most prominent feature of human history is the propensity to link worship, spirtuality, prayers and religion with sufferings on one hand and happiness on the other. In current century, a great number of people follow some form of religion, and majority of these people belongs to developing countries those unfortunately are facing more disasters than developed countries (Penuel, 2011).

2.5 General beliefs about earthquake

If we look a decade back many countries of the world had experienced devastating natural and anthropogenic disastrous events that had disturbed human social and physical life conditions. Natural cataclysms such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, tsunamis, tornados, volcanic eruptions, as well as anthropogenic disasters like armed conflicts, terrorism and nuclear or chemical accidents had caused mass destruction and rendered

people helpless. Scientists linked every extreme climatic event to the change in global environment or perhaps more specifically to global warming. But the natives have different perceptions and connotations regarding natural disasters based on their religious beliefs. Historically humans have had beliefs that disasters are caused by supernatural forces those are beyond man's control.

2.5.1 Fatalism

Solihu (2003) comments that although the spiritual elucidation provides the viewpoint about natural disaster that it is a decision of fate to punish delinquent people, but different people have different standpoint upon delinquency. Hutchinson and McMillan (1997) noted that the story of a tsunami is widespread among all the tribes of Pacific Northwest. In this story a great tide over flows the sea in Barkley Sound due to earthquake in the sea (Sproat, 1987; cited by Clague, 1995). The story of Louis Clam house about the destruction of a village Pachena Bay at Vancouver Island in 1964 by tsunami was published in Arima *et. al.* (1991, p. 231), and cited in Hutchinson and McMillan (1997).

As Augustinianism holds the view that sufferings are somewhat related to the freedom granted by God to human beings. Freedom itself has the potential for misuse while suffering reflects human sinfulness, as a person or society may opt to act against God's will (Lewis, 1944; Plantinga, 1974; Davis, 1981). Islam is the religion where cognitive restructuring is seen as a manifestation of their fundamental belief in divine preordainment (Al Qadar), that means when man experiences a misfortune, he should believe that it happened by the order and decree of God. Therefore he should remain patient and seek guidance from God to get a reward that He will compensate him for his material loss (Hanbale, 1995). Therefore a true Muslim does not get upset by any hardship, illness, fatigue or grief because of the hope of compensation from God.

2.5.2 The theodicy of divine retribution

2.5.2.1 Act of God

In the earlier times, people deemed that sources of disasters were some supernatural forces those were beyond human control. Earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and many other natural disasters were tagged as "acts of God" and were perceived as penalty or sentence

from God (Steinberg, 2000). Natural disasters and other “acts of God” are not totally unanticipated and unpreventable. Those who build a beachfront home in a hurricane zone are exposed too much greater risk of hurricane damage than those who live inland (Revkin, 2006). The belief common among the general population that God or some supernatural force drives disaster drives them to appeal for the help and expect direction from God. Many studies have been conducted around the world and across various cultures and that belief was found to be true (Kirkby, 1974; Jackson & Mukerjee, 1974; Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 1999; Schmuck, 2000).

As a result of the spread of modernist thought from the time of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment (Pailin, 1983), a view of disasters as malign ‘Acts of God’ has been progressively replaced by one grounded in notions of human vulnerability and a demoralized nature (Alexander, 2000, pp. 186-7; Steinberg, 2000; Chester, 2005b). One of the strands in post-Leibnitzian theodicy emphasizes the immanence of God within human affairs. Tilley (1991), for instance, argues that the Leibnitzian approach is a means of reducing human responsibility for both natural and human-induced suffering because it focuses responsibility on God rather than people that is on creator than creature.

2.5.2.2 Punishment of sinners

Another key concept has also been addressed in every religion and beliefs that is the concept of sin. In the past in many traditional societies, disasters were viewed as the result of people's sins. Sin means violating God's guidance by ignoring facts and knowledge, being negligent or failing to use knowledge. In the chapter of the Quran entitled Ankaboot (Spider), verse 40, and in the Nisa (women) chapter, verses 78 and 79, and in relation to human actions and responses, sin and bad deeds emphasize that good and evil, blessings and punishment, are from Allah, but no distress afflicts a man unless he earns it by his own mistakes or blunders. In other words, all the adversities that come to people are the consequences of their sins and ill doings. God never intends to harm His people and human beings themselves bring them home with their bad deeds. (Ashtiany, 2009) The geographer David Chester and geologist Angus Duncan historically reviewed the volcanic eruptions across continents, religions and time. They argue that a significant part of people's response to geological disasters comprised of religious interpretations of seismic activity.

They cited a large number of examples both historical and especially recent records of volcanic eruptions. Chester and Duncan argue that the common perception about earthquakes is the cosmologies of divine power, sin and punishment within religious realm, and conclude that "although reactions vary between societies because of the differing theodicies of the particular faith community, there are relatively few eruptions where no religious element in human responses are recorded" (Chester & Duncan, 2007).

2.5.2.3 Wrath of God

According to Sangasumana (2011) the perception about disaster and its mitigation was analogous in all human populations those have some religious perspective either monotheist or polytheist. It was believed that when people disobey God they became victims of God or Gods anger where as if people obey God the disaster or punishment is avoided.

2.5.2.4 Torment of God

Anwar-ul-Haque (2005) suggests that if one reads holy Quran without bias with maximum understanding one finds that in previous eras Allah had punished many nations due to their sins through so called national calamities. According to Solihu (2007) these unsustainable communities had violated moral laws and thus made them vulnerable to disaster. Indeed, their continued persistence in wrong actions precipitated and exacerbated the disasters, which otherwise could have been averted. The torment that almost befell Prophet Yunus' people was lifted due to their repentance. If we use detailed bibliographic studied of the 49 major eruptions, carried out between 1850 and 2002 by various researchers, we can challenge that the reactions of faith communities are frequently omitted from the articles published in learned journals as well as from the reports of eruption that are produced by government agencies (Blong, 1984, pp. 176; Tiedemann, 1992, p. 338).

2.5.2.5 Will of God

To prioritize moral causes while recognizing the disaster's apparent physical causes, Bedi-uz-zaman Nursi states that when God wills an earthquake to occur, He stirs up physical causes. Even if it results from the rock strata's movement, "still this movement and the quake following it occur by Divine command and in accordance with His Wisdom."

(Nursi, The Words/Fourteenth Word-Addendum-p.187. translated by Huseyin Akarsu, 2005)

2.5.2.6 God's work of creation

Austin Farrer, one of the comparatively few twentieth century theologians who have been concerned with natural perils opposes the suffering caused to humans by humans and he says: "It is not, then, that the humanly inconvenient by-products of volcanic fire are cushioned or diverted; it is not that all harms to man are prevented. It is that the creative work of God never ceases, that there is always something His providence does, even for the most tragically stricken" (Farrer, 1966, p. 90).

2.6 Religious perspective of divine religions on earthquakes

In ancient times when science was in its infancy people believed that disasters, especially earthquakes, represented the power of Mother Nature. The ancient Maya people, for example, had a God of thunderstorms called *Hurakan* (the root of the word 'hurricane'); a God of earthquakes (called *Pillan*); a God of thunder, and a chief of all the Gods. Aided by cohorts of evil spirits, *Pillan* caused earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Greek, Roman and Egyptian civilizations all had Gods that killed people who disobeyed them. Also they explained natural disaster in terms of the anger of the Gods. In fact, history is full of evidence that priests, religious leaders and rulers took advantage of people's fears and consequently oppressed them in the name of a God or Gods (Ashtiany, 2009).

2.6.1 Islamic perspective

If we look at Islamic history we could find references of several disasters that paved the beliefs of people about disasters. All Prophets of God has also warned their people that if would not obey God then they may be punished.

2.6.1.1 Torment of God

The Islamic perspective about earthquakes could be understood by the following verses of Quran. As Allah said "*Have you considered, if the chastisement of Allah should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the unjust people*" (Al Quran, 6:47) "*And it did not beseem your Lord to have destroyed the towns tyrannously, while their*

people acted well.” (Al Quran, 11:117) “And (as for) these towns, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction.” (Al Quran, 18:59) “And how many of the generations did We destroy after Nuh! and your Lord is sufficient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to His servants’ faults.” (Al Quran, 17:17; Natural Disasters in Muslim Countries, 2010). The chastisement of Allah usually arrives in the form of natural disaster. The glorious Quran narrates about the prophet Noah PBUH and the flood, hurricanes sent on the tribe of Ad and volcano erupted on the people of Lot.

2.6.1.2 Sign of doom’s day

According to the Biblical and Quranic narration the growing numbers of natural disasters depicts the news of the arrival of the doom’s day as Allah said in holy Quran: “O mankind! Fear your Lord, for the convulsion (earthquake) of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a terrible thing” (Al Quran, 22:1).

2.6.1.3 Trial of God

The believers of God’s existence and His role as Creator face the challenges of their lives optimistically. Their faith gives a coherent account to such destructive natural events within the parameters of their optimistic viewpoint. Within the frame of religion, people find explanation and assign meaning to the traumatic events (Lachman and Bonk, 1960; Dynes and Yutzy, 1965; Lifton and Olson, 1976; Gibbs, 1989; Davis and Wall, 1992). Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu (2007) arguments that in Islamic context everything has been created in due proportion and is created for a certain purpose. God’s providence can be better appreciated with the fact that disasters and chaos are designed intelligently, purposefully and it diligently encodes within the cosmos and fits very well into the Islamic world view.

F. J. Murphy (2005, p. 345) a theologian concludes that, it “would probably be impossible to design any system of nature which did not have the potential to injure unsuspecting humans” and that God’s purpose is to accept disasters and use them to complete a greater good. For the theologian John Hick (1978) suffering is a learning experience and a process of ‘soul-making’, which also involves showing ‘God’s glory’ in compassionate love and self-giving for others (and this) constitutes the highest value of all. Islam is in fact much

more diverse theologically and no typical response is found that is independent of the culture where the disaster occurs (Dhaoudi, 1992, pp. 41; Halliday, 1994, pp. 96; Al-Azmeh, 1996; Degg and Homan, 2005).

2.6.1.4 Warning of God

A Haidith narrated by Anas PBUH states, "I went into the presence of Aishah PBUH (wife of prophet Muhammad) while someone else was seated with her. The person asked, 'O Mother of the believers, relate to us regarding earthquakes (as to their cause)' She turned her face away. I (Anas) asked her, 'Relate to us regarding earthquakes, O Mother of the believers!' She said, "O Anas, if I were to inform you there of, you will live a sorrowful life and you will die in this state of grief and you will be raised on the Day of Judgment whilst this fear is in your heart." I said, "O Mother, relate to me." She then said, "When a woman removes her clothes in a house other than her husbands (an indication towards adultery), she tears the veil between her and Allah. When she applies perfume to please a male other than her husband, this will be a source of fire and a blemish for her. When the people then begin to commit adultery, consume alcohol and use musical instruments, Allah becomes enraged in the heavens and orders the Earth to shake them. If they repent and refrain, then it is good for them, otherwise Allah will cause it to fall upon them." I asked, "Is this their punishment?" She said, "It is rather a mercy, means of blessings and admonishment for the believers, and a punishment, display of anger and torment for the unbelievers."

2.6.1.5 Trail of pious people

Many western commentators emphasize on the fact that the Islamic view about sufferings is strongly 'instrumentalist' with God and in case of disasters they easily bring their adherents back to their prophet's teaching (e.g. Bowker, 1970, p. 113; Bemporad, 1987).

2.6.2 Biblical perspective

Natural disasters also influence history ultimately by putting a slight effect on human culture and beliefs. As Benjamin said that the pessimistic primeval people who started adoring unpredictable and enraged Gods may be an upshot of recurrent disasters.

2.6.2.1 Torment of God

The biblical account of 'Noah and the Ark' in which almost all of mankind died as punishment from God for human disobedience would perhaps have a historical persistence. The roots of ancient Egyptian religion are also linked with the flooding of Nile River (Reilly, 1971).

2.6.2.2 Sign of doom's day

The eschatological imagery not only exists in Quran but in Bible too. In the Bible prophecy God has said that the frequency and intensity of natural disasters will grow at the end of time, the final earthquake will shake people out of their complacency and will lead them to seek the God (Matthew, 24:7). According to Robinson, The Bible narrates, it is not necessary that the people who die in accidents or natural disasters are not greater sinners than those who survive (Luke, 13:1-5).

2.6.2.3 Punishment of sins

David K. Chester support the view that the authors of the Hebrew Bible have also used the incidences of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and other natural disasters to support the dominant theodicy: That disaster symbolizes the punishment of human sinfulness by an often wrathful God. The people who suffer in such punishments are usually wicked and sinful, and God is controlling the fates of those people and nations.

2.7 Impact of earthquake on beliefs of victims

People try to understand these calamities in terms of environmental determinism, but within religion they could interpret meanings of these distressing events differently to explain them (Lachman & Bonk, 1960). David K. Chester have the view that the authors of the Hebrew Bible use the effects of earthquakes, volcanic activity and some other natural calamities to support their dominant theodicy views that disasters represent the punishment of human sins by wrathful God. The people targeted are usually wicked and sinful and that the God controls the fates of people and nations. Reale (2010) argues that religious and divine worldviews of the people not necessarily always have a positive effect on communities hit by disaster. Many religious leaders promote to think of disasters not as

events that can be escaped through mitigation and preparedness, but as an act of God. Same as after of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, many Islamic religious leaders interpreted the disaster as punishment from God. It is important to note, however, that many faith communities identify strongly with their clergy and their views carry great weight. Their views on hazard response are often prominent (Mitchell, 2000) and could carry over to their congregations.

Norwood *et al.* (2000) found that churches and synagogues played an important role in assisting survivors' search to get a meaning from disaster and in assisting in the grief process. Several major meta-analytic reviews have been conducted that demonstrate that individuals who use religious and spiritual coping efforts demonstrate greater physical and emotional well-being (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Gall *et al.*, 2005; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Pargament, 2007). Tirrito and Cascio (2003) reported that religious groups carried out many community services in disaster-affected areas. They told the victims that a collaborative and self-directive prayerful stance has been found to be a more adaptive form of coping (Dyson *et al.*, 1997; Koenig *et al.*, 2001; Miller & Martin, 1988). Commitment to religious beliefs and practices has been found to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviors (Johnson *et al.*, 2001).

The mistaken belief that area residents are helpless prompts disaster planners and managers to underestimate the importance of local rescue and relief efforts. Volunteers and victims themselves help each other in rescue work (Glass, 2001). As Dyer (1999, p. 294) describes "Disaster as a disruption of the normal social and economic patterns of a community". Spirituality has great importance in many people's lives, especially disaster survivors. It has helped survivors find meaning in disaster, death, and answered questions about life-after-death. These have been reported to be significant to the survivors especially for those who have lost their loved ones to the disasters. Regarding spirituality, Koenig *et al.* (2001), authors of the '*Handbook of Religion and Health*', have defined spirituality as "the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent" (as cited in Corley, 2003, p. 79). Cadell *et al.* 2003 affirmed that, "One way individuals who face traumatic events attempt to find meaning is through religion or spirituality" (p. 280).

Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) indicated that religious beliefs can offer a direct means for survivors to perceive benefit evolving from disasters. These diverse interpretations have enormous implications for the belief or disbelief in God's existence. For atheists and pessimists, this might not pose a serious problem; on the contrary, it will be seen as evidence of the disenchantment of nature and the purposelessness of existence (Solihu, 2007).

2.8 The beliefs considered as superstitions about earthquake

The religion and superstition has joining boarders with one another. It is observed that people take up new rituals and beliefs, change their names, and assume lucky and unlucky signs in the framework of superstitions. Religion is reliant on sacred symbols or rituals, from washing in the Ganges to participating in the Hajj. These religious practices and rituals bind their believers together; some rituals are founded in the belief system whereas some evolve over time (Streich, 2009). Boyer, (2003) considers the religious notions as a product of the supernatural imaginations. He thinks that they owe their salience (likelihood of activation) to some extent. They also has potential of being transmitted further and has a share with other supernatural concepts too, for instance those found in dreams, fantasy and even in folktales and legends. This might be why we find the more or less similar repeated templates in religion, despite many variations also exist between cultures on misleading philosophies because of the slight similarities and differences among the culture. While Boyer & Ramble (2001) further have the view point that many misleading philosophies are obtained regardless of exposure of people to a particular kind of supernatural beliefs. And the same belief has been replicated in different cultures of Africa and Asia with slight differences.

2.8.1 Geomythology

Mayor (2004) comments, on the account of natural disasters many descriptions were transmitted over generations within the living human history but they often accrued supernatural details. And due to the mythological language of the oral folklore the historians and scientists often fail to notice the kernels of truth and rational concepts embedded in geo-mythological narratives. Chester (2005a) explains that typically, our

thinking about disasters reflects some mixture of evidence and imagination. We are influenced not only by the results of scientific research, but also by personal experience, what our friends say, and media portrayals. Ancients, who lacked scientific insight, attributed disasters to imaginary Gods and today a field known as *geomythology* analyzes the role of myth in people's beliefs about volcanoes and Earthquakes.

2. 8.2 The belief that earth lies on a bull's horn

Kashmiri Muslims believed that the earthquakes were caused when a bull that holds the earth on its horns is irritated by a celestial mosquito. Similarly In Sylhet, Bangladesh the ordinary Muslims are said to believe that the earth rests on the horns of the bull which has a mosquito at its side (Razdan, 2010). The Islamic, Buddhist, and Turkish cultures carry the tradition that bulls carry the world on their horns or upon their backs. But in some other cultures for instance Hinduism, Greece and even Jewish cultures the world is perched upon the horns of a celestial bull (Horemheb, 2009). Elwin (1949), an early authority on Indian tribal people wrote in his book *Myths of Middle* that the traditional Hindu views the earthquakes as *Varaha*, which is the boar incarnation of Vishnu. As Vishnu supports the earth on his tusk, earthquake occurs when he shifts the burden of the world from one horn to another. In Egypt a sacred black colored bull called *Apis* was displayed in the city. This sculpture was believed to be the personification of the fertility God *Ptah*, along with the sky God *Amon* and God of dead Osiris. The *Amon* itself was known as the 'Celestial Bull'.

2. 8.3 The belief that animals and birds can predict earthquake

The concept that animals can sense earthquake is dated back to 373 BC in Helices Greece. Ancient Greeks were the first who noted that dogs howled the night before earthquake while rats, weasels, snakes and centipedes left the city before earthquake strikes to a safer place. This led the belief that animals can predict earthquakes (Quammen, 1985). From ancient times to now people believe that animals are reliable in forecasting weather and have the ability to predict earthquakes. Many examples are found in literature and books that their behavior watched to forecast rain, storm, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and earthquakes. Even in 21st century, Navy uses dolphins to detect the undersea mines due to their sonar ability. Police uses dogs to chase the thieves and rescue teams use dogs to find

missing people in avalanches because dogs possess a higher sense of smelling than humans (Kirschvink, 2000). Morris reported that olfactory senses of dogs are 10,000 to 100,000 times stronger than man. This makes them able to detect natural signals of storm and earthquake (Catalina Bixler-harris).

Many scientists are convinced on the fact that these signals are also detected by some animals and they react to them. It is now a scientific fact that animals possess a perceptual range that exceeds humans. Perhaps this gives them the ability to sense earthquake precursory signals. Earthquake is one of the most destructive natural phenomena for every living being as well as for the environment. But nature gives clues of an impending disaster to man via change in animal behavior. The people, who listen to them and analyze their behavior, saved their lives by getting alerted of upcoming disaster (Tiwari, 2001). Armono *et al.* (2005) called it a low cost and low technology warning of nature through signs like abnormal animal behavior.

2.8.4 Earthquake lights

Anecdotal accounts of bizarre lights emitted before or during earthquakes have been noticed by many since centuries but those stories are being given a second look in recent years. They are now taken as valid experiences during earthquakes. Many consider it possible precursor of earthquake which can carries an early warning system in it before a quake strikes. There are many theories regarding the mechanism of occurrence of earthquake lights. According to Takaki and Ikeya (1998) explain that intense electric field is created piezo-electrically by the tectonic movements of rocks that contain quartz. While Bluck (2001) suggest that it may be due to the local disruption of the magnetic field of earth or ionosphere at the area under tectonic stress that gives glowing effects. Ouzounov (2006) experimentally placed the models of rocks under increasing amounts of stress that showed a proportional increase the charge that culminated in a pulse generation just before the critical failure. This theory can be used by satellite observations of temperature changes in fault zones in the area with the chances of an imminent quake. It would explain the increase in infrared radiance near fault zones that can lead to large quakes. This phenomenon was considered a myth earlier. The interest in quake lights regained the attention in the mid-1960s when the Matsushiro earthquake swarm of Nagano, Japan

showed unusual luminescent phenomena photographed by many people around the country that forced the seismologist to acknowledge the occurrence of quake lights. A study of earthquake luminescent phenomena in 1931 revealed that approximately 1,500 reports of quake lights were listed after the 1930 Idu quake in Japan (Musya, 1931).

2.9 Reason behind origin of superstitions

Chester D. K. (2005) explains the reason behind the spread of superstitions in a community. According to him our thinking about disasters typically reflects some mixture of evidences as well as our imagination. We are not only influenced by the results of scientific research, but also by our personal experience, what our friends say, and media portrayals. That makes us not only to accept the superstitions but to pass it on. In this context Palmer (1989) also argues that firstly such kinds of beliefs flourish due to their success in peer groups where those beliefs are prevalent. Secondly, the beliefs compete with other more successful beliefs that induce us to spread them further. Our awareness of actual facts is very important because such beliefs and practices are not more than the opinions held by fruit flies and by propagating and communicating these superstitions further we merely show our willingness to accept the other people's authority.

This rigorous literature review had organized to explain the context of my research in larger context. It would provide an overview of my research to the reader so that they will be clear enough about the text of forthcoming chapters and could better comprehend my results and discussion. It will provide an up to date information and knowledge regarding my topic and how different researchers and scholars had constructed their researches around such topics. As all the arguments are taken from different books, journals, articles and other secondary data sources it will provide all relevant material under one roof. This not only contains literature that accentuates the importance of my findings but also views of those scholars that contradict it. It will work to fill the gap in previous studies and also will open new areas for research. No research could cover all of a topic so it should highlight dimensions to be researched.

VILLAGE PROFILE

Balakot is the largest Union Council of Tehsil Balakot which administers many villages and small towns in its surroundings. Union Council Balakot consists of four Revenue villages: Balakot, Khanda Mittikot, Shohal Najaf Khan and Tarana. Union Council Balakot lies in 11 Km of area, it consists of 28 villages, and has population of 26545 and 4969 household. Village Belyani is found in Revenue village Balakot, which is the city centre of Tehsil Balakot. This Tehsil consists of 16 Union Councils naming Atter Shisha, Balakot, Garhi Habibullah, Garlat, Ghanool, Hangrai, Kaghan, Karnol, Kewal, LaberKot, Mohandri, Pairan, Sandasar, Satbani, Shohal Mazullah and Talhata. Balakot Tehsil is the largest Tehsil of Mansehra District and is commonly famed as Balakot. The chief city of the Tehsil is Balakot in which Village Belyani is located that further consists of seven *Muhallas* that are Podina Bela, Mazar Belyani, Cham/Jazba Belyani, Grid Belyani, Terli/Lower Belyani, Bagh Belyani and Mughal-abad.

The whole research was carried out at *Muhalla* Bagh Belyani of Belyani village. The village Balakot was intentionally selected for research work because this place was terribly destroyed by earthquake and also the village Belyani was situated at the base of mountain that blasted in the earthquake and the people of *Muhalla* Bagh Belyani were severely affected. As the broken pieces of rocks fall down on their village. Balakot was a well developed village with multi story buildings of lavish hotels, beautiful houses and crowded markets but the earthquake ruined all in a moment. After earthquake initially people were rehabilitated in tent houses and now almost all are living in shelters. The village lies at the fault line of seismic zone, any type of building construction is not allowed and people have to live in shelters.

3.1 History

It is worth mentioning the history of village and its people, because it provides an overview of the area as well as its culture.

3.1.1 Village name and its meaning

Village Belyani is situated at the shores of River Kunhar, before it enters in Kashmir Valley since one and a half century. The records of existence of Belyani are not found before last two centuries. The name Belyani is derived from the word '*Bela*' of Urdu, which means a piece of land near river. Belyani means a small terrestrial land at the bank of river inhabited by people. That gave the name Belyani to the village. Very few people know the meanings of "Belyani" those are village elders. The village is setting away from the bank of river gradually due to the floods in 2006 and 2010.

3.1.2 History of village

This village was there in the settlement of 1872; later the village is also documented in the settlement of 1904-05 and 1945-46 when Pakistan came into existence. All three of these were British settlements. The history of Belyani before that is not known. Belyani is a part of Balakot Village, with the passage of time, the roads to Kaghan converted Balakot into a commercial hub, later it turned into the gate way of Kaghan and was called 'The City Centre'. Belyani is a residential area just next to the commercial hub. Being the chief city of the area, village Balakot is called the heart of Balakot and is surrounded by many smaller towns and villages. Before earthquake this was one of the most established areas of Balakot, although life is faster here than before and people are much more engaged in material life but it is not as beautiful as it was before earthquake due to broken infrastructure.

3.1.3 History of Balakot

In 1818, The Sikhs invaded Mansehra after hard resistance from its inhabitants and it fell under Sikh control. From here they planned to take control of Punjab. At this time the Mughal rule was virtually ceased in India. The dominant power of the time was The British Empire. Most of the Northern India was under the control of East India Company. Marhatta had their empire in the south and Sikh Empire was at north-west and Kashmir, while hundreds of minor kings, *Maharajas* (rulers) and *Nawabs* (rulers) were ruling various parts of the country (Mehr, G. R. 1981). Syed Ahmad Bareilly (1786–1831) and Shah Ismail (1779–1831) were two Islamic warriors of South Asian. They fought a battle

against Sikhs on 6 May 1831 with the help of the *Mujahadeen*³. This battle was fought to establish the supremacy of the Islamic faith in the area that is why it is considered the only real *Jihad*⁴ ever fought in the subcontinent. However the battle ended in a dismal failure due to the treachery of few Pathan (an ethnic group) tribesmen. (Khan, M. K. 1983). At last Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed and hundreds of their followers were killed on 6th May 1831 in a fierce battle. Their devotees think that he achieved the spiritual goal of martyrdom although his ambition was shattered by the fellow Muslims. In the memory of Syed Ahmed Shaheed, the central mosque of Balakot is named after him “*Markazi (central) Jamia⁵ Masjid (mosque) Syed Ahmad Shaheed*” (Mehr, G. R. 1981).

After almost 175 years of this historic battle of Balakot, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitudes on the Richter scale shook the land on October 8, 2005. The mountainous town was flattened in a flash but miraculously the graves of Syed Ahmed Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed were spared from the disaster. The native people say that the victims of natural disasters like earthquakes are considered *Shaheed*⁶ (martyrs) in the Islamic tradition. That is why this earthquake added thousands of martyrs to the *Mujahadeens* of Islam that martyred in the history of subcontinent. People are well aware about the history of these two *Shaheeds*. Their *Mazars*⁷ (shrines) are also situated in Balakot. People go to these *Mazars* for *Fateha Khawani*⁸ and both have adjacent mosques where people come to offer their daily prayers.

3.2 Physical features of area

3.2.1 Geography

Balakot is situated in north-east, at a distance of almost thirty eight kilometers from District Mansehra, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Balakot is located at coordinates: 34°33'N and 73°21'E according to Google earth. The Belyani village has a total area of 90500 *Kanals*⁹ carrying seven *Muhallas* with population of 2307 and 455 households. Belyani is bounded

³ Muslim fighting in the name of Allah with non-believers

⁴ Fight of Muslims with non-believers of Islam, it is considered sixth pillar of Islam

⁵ The mosque where “Jumma” (Friday) prayer is organized

⁶ Muslim who died in fight for Islam with non-Muslims

⁷ Grave of person considered highly religious and pious and people go there for offerings

⁸ Recitation of holy verses of Quran for the forgiveness of dead ones

⁹ Unit of measurement of land area

by village Berna at North, by village Porrihi at South, by river Kunhar at East and by Mangli, Rehmat Abad and Shah Ismael Abad villages at West. All these villages are included in revenue village Balakot. The River Kunhar originating from Lulusar Lake, passes through this city and unites with Jhelum River just outside Muzaffarabad in Pakistan administered Kashmir.

3.2.2 Topography

The area has been blessed with scenic beauty. It has rich and harmonious combination of high mountains, plains, beautiful valleys with tall and stately pine trees, and lakes that make it a piece of heaven. The mountains are blanketed with dark green forests at higher altitudes. Balakot lies at an average elevation of 971 meters that is 3188 feet above sea level. Balakot has exemplary natural beauty. Belyani lies on hilly terraces covered by green terraced fields and forests. The beauty of the area is also destroyed in earthquake. Landslides damaged the tresses on the mountains. The infrastructure could not be rebuilt, relief and rehabilitation activities caused pollution and natural environment was disturbed. The Kunhar passes by the village Belyani. The banks of rivers are good agriculture lands. The village has agricultural terraces of river shores and steep slopes of barren mountains that indulge in frequent land sliding. After earthquake the frequency of landslides has increased because the mountains are brittle now and could not bear seasonal changes which are not suitable for cultivation and forestation. The earthquake also destroyed many trees and less effort is put in their re-growing it added to the erosion of land and mountains.

3.2.3 Climate

Belyani lies under tropical area. The weather is cold in winter season during the months of October to March with temperatures 14°C to 2°C. While weather is pleasantly warm in summers during the months of April to September with temperatures 21°C to 35°C. The villagers told that after earthquake the climatic changes took place and now there is slight difference in the months of changing seasons. After earthquake due to various interventions environment is getting warmer and now summers are longer and warmer than ever before, where as in winter thunder storms are frequent.

3.3 History of disasters

People relate that they have heard from their old folks about a devastating earthquake in Balakot, hundred years ago in 1906. It was as destructive as the earthquake of 2005. Also destructive floods hit Balakot in 8th September 1992, 7th July 2006 and then on 30th July 2010. The central Syed Ahmed Shahed mosque Balakot is destroyed second time by the natural disaster. It was destroyed by a 1992 flood in Balakot and was reconstructed soon afterwards. They said after earthquake the area is more exposed to disasters. There was only one flood in historical account but after earthquake within few years we had faced two floods of destructive nature. The threat of earthquake is all the time hanging over us because people said that Balakot is in red zone and could be hit by such earthquake again.

3.3.1 Extent of damages in 2005 earthquake

Almost 90% infrastructure, 85% household and 70% assets were destroyed in village Belyani. PTCL telephonic system and mobile communication system destroyed completely. Water pipelines were badly smashed. *Markazi Jamia Masjid Ahmed Shah Shaheed*, *Jamia Masjid Ahel-e-Hadith*, *Jamia Masjid Hanfia*, and *Jamia Masjid Um-al-qura* were martyred in this earthquake. International Public High School, Balakot Public School, *Jamia Shaheedia Madrissa* were destroyed completely. Only Madni plaza and some of the markets were saved. Due to the destruction of mosques people developed a view that mostly pious and good people are died in this earthquake.

While in Balakot 6926 out of 7296 housing units were destroyed and 39 were damaged. 95% were affected by the deadly earthquake. District Headquarter hospital was damaged badly. The bridge over Kunhar River was fallen down and roads were broken due to which access to earthquake effectees was difficult and delayed. The only Girls High Secondary School of the area was engulfed by the mountain it was situated on. No water, electricity and telecommunication system survived.

3.3.2 Total deaths in Belyani

In village Belyani 506 casualties were recorded including outsiders and visitors. 150 were dead at govt. high secondary school for girls Balakot in Gran Dhairi, 102 at boys high school Belyani and 15 (14 children, 1 teacher) at Jinnah Muslim public school, 12 at

Islamia modern high school. A total of 209 were injured in Belyani, 9 people turned disabled and one was traumatic. While 22 large animals, 70 small animals (goats) and 100 poultry was found dead. This information was collected and recorded by a community organization named 'Rabta Belyani'.

3.4 Social organization

3.4.1 Housing pattern

Almost 95% of the houses in village Belyani were cemented before earthquake. People were well established, well off, and were enjoying good life style. People had almost every facility in their homes. Their houses were big, with double or triple stories and wide verandas for family gathering and guests. Due to joint family system, people had to construct huge houses for living. Villagers use to visit each other homes frequently as well. But in earthquake almost all the houses were destroyed and people started living in tents and canopies for more than a years. Then the government provided them shelters, in which they are still living. Only 5% people reconstructed their houses, while rests of them are residing in shelters after the declaration of area as 'Red Zone'. Now they could not construct multi stories building for living and are living in shelters.

3.4.2 Family patterns

People of Belyani were living a prosperous life before earthquake. Almost 90% of them were living in joint family systems. That means all the brothers live together in their parents house even after marriages along with their families. They loved each other and were living a happy life. Even if any brother is living abroad or in any other city for job, his family resides together with in parental house. His brothers took care of his family, provide them safety and other facilities. And the daughters went to their husbands homes after marriage. But after earthquake, people had to live in small tents. They could not live jointly in a single camp that is why they started living with their own children and trend of nuclear families spread. Also the aid was provided to them on family bases. And if four brothers live together in one tent they were consider one household. And aid was not sufficient to run the family. So all the brother and even their parents started living separately for the sake of aid. Shelters were distributed on family basis and also the

cheques for rehabilitation from Government were given to head of household. Now the scenario is entirely opposite. Almost 99% of the families are living in nuclear family system. The aid of NGOs made them to live separately; the greed of acquisition of more and more aid had separated people even from hearts.

3.4.3 Marriage patterns

People of Balakot preferred to marry in their own villages or those in close vicinity. Almost all the marriages were arranged in nature and people prefer to marry with the people of their own family or caste. But it was not a hard and fast rule to consider cast for getting married. The concept of love marriage was very rare whereas court marriages were considered a stigma for the whole family. Many girls and women were left alone after losing their entire family in earthquake. So their social protection was a big issue. Their relatives wed them hastily without considering caste, class and even age so that they could be secured. The second reason was off course aid, as the aid was distributing on family basis so people try to marry their young boys so that they could get their independent share.

After earthquake people get exposed to each other due to destruction of homes. Every family member was busy in getting aid so girls were no more remained bounded in homes and their interaction with outside world increased. After earthquake boys and girls started getting married on their own choice and court marriages are common now. Natives put this blame on the outsiders who came here for rescue and relief activities. They believe that the aliens had spoiled the environment and introduced these trends here. After earthquake communication and entertainment media flourished here quickly and spoiled young generation. The friendship on cellular phones between males and female is in fashion which results in love marriages or court marriage. The outsiders who came with the NGOs also get married here.

3.4.4 Ethnic groups and their composition

Balakot is resided by a large number of tribes. Some of them are the oldest inhabitants of Balakot while other arrived here in different periods of time. The indigenous people of Balakot are mainly Hindko: 85%, where as 15 % Pushtoon are also living here. Within

these two major groups there is further ethnic distribution. The largest ethnic group of the area is Gujjer 35%, then Awan 30%, Mughal 10%, Sadaat 5%, and Swati tribes 20%. Swatis are basically Pushtoon people; they are rich then other groups and acquired huge lands. All most all Awans are politically sound and have powerful status. Swatis and Syeds also enjoy superior economic status but other tribes have weak economic standing. Gujjers are considered of lowest social and economic status. But this earthquake removed these economic differences because all the people lost what they had and became dependent on aid, but still Swatis and Syeds are proud on belonging to a superior ethnic group.

As aid was distributed across the board and similar items were given every one, which created a sense of envy among the people who were financially strong before earthquake, for those who were from lower economic status. These groups also put the charge of this destruction on each other. Poor people think that the rich people were not good. They were indulged in worldly enjoyment and did not help the poor that is why this earthquake hit. Whereas rich people blame poor people who run their families by any fair or unfair means. They were said to be involved in immoral and illicit activities to earn money that lead to evoke earthquake in this area.

3.4.5 Languages

The most spoken language of the area is Hindko whereas Pushtoo and Gojri languages are also spoken and understood. Urdu is the national language of country hence it is also spoken and understood by the people of almost every village of the district. Urdu is used as official language otherwise people speak native languages in social interactions. The people of the village having less interaction with the outsiders, uneducated, domestic females and/or elderly people were less able to speak and understand Urdu and communicate in their native language only. After earthquake the people had greater access and exposure to the outsiders so their understanding of Urdu increased but still many elderly people could not. After earthquake many organizations came in the area from different parts of the country that could not speak the native language so they mostly communicate in Urdu so it started prevailing here further. Almost 40% people of the village understand English as well.

3.5 Religions

3.5.1 Religions and sects

The people are Muslim and 100% of them practicing Islam. There is no Hindu, Christian, or Sikh living in the village. Their major sect is *Sunni*¹⁰ while 10 to 12% are *Ahl-e-Hadith*¹¹. Although after earthquake in and out migration happened but still there is no non-Muslim in this area.

3.5.2 Religious events

Eid-ul-Fitr is a festivity of Muslim celebrated all over the world. *Eid* is celebrated after keeping 29 or 30 dawn-to-sunset fasts during the month of *Ramadan*¹². Muslims celebrate *Eid* on the first day of the month of *Shawwal* (10th month of the lunar Islamic calendar)

Eid al-Azha is the festival of sacrificing cattle, also known as "*Greater Eid*". Muslims all over the world celebrate it annually on the 10th day of *Dhual-Hajj* the last month of the lunar Islamic calendar in commemoration of the willingness of Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Hazrat Ishmael as an act of obedience to God and God sacrificed a sheep instead of Ishmael. *Eid al-Azha* celebrations start all over the world after the annual pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca in Saudi Arabia by Muslims descends from Mount Arafat.

Eid Milad-ul-Nabi PBUH the twelfth *Rabi-ul-Awal* (3rd month of Lunar Islamic Calender), the birthday of holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), is celebrated in the village with great zeal. They cook sweets on that day, recite verses of holy Quran and food is disturbed among the poor and orphans.

Shab-i-Miraj (The Night of Ascent) is the blessed night when the holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH was spiritually transported to heaven and he reached a high stage of nearness to God Almighty which is beyond ordinary human comprehension. The Ascent took place on 27th day of seventh month *Rajab* of the Islamic lunar calendar.

¹⁰ Followers of the practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

¹¹ The follower of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

¹² Ninth month of Lunar Islamic calendar, it is month of fasting for Muslims

Shab-e-Qadr or *Lailatul Qadr* means the night of destiny, night of power, night of value, the night of decree or night of measures, is the anniversary of the night Muslims believe the first verses of the Quran were revealed to the prophet Muhammad PBUH on 27th day of month of *Ramadan* of the Islamic lunar calendar.

Shab-e-Barat means the night of records, the night of assignment and the night of deliverance, and the observance involves a festive nightlong vigil with prayers on 14th day of the eighth month *Shaban* of the Islamic year.

Muharam It is first month of Lunar Islamic calendar; it is month of mourning in which fight is prohibited, because grandsons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were martyred in this month while fighting with enemies of Islam. Specially 9th and 10th of this month are of highest morning because they were died on these dates.

3.5.3 Religious activities

The people of every sect were practicing Islam to their best. All of them use to offer daily prayers, recitation of holy Quran, and keep fasts of holy month of *Ramadan*. People pray on every Friday with especial preparation. All the shops in the village are closed on Friday at time of *Jumah* (Friday prayer) and everybody goes to offer prayer. The shops re-open after the prayer. The *Imam-e-Masjid*¹³ also gives formal education of Quran and of *Namaz* (prayer) to the children of the village. For this they have established four *Maktabas* (schools) in the village. All the Mosques have the facility of loud speakers so call for prayers (*Azan*) enchants the entire village.

People (*Sunni*) offered special prayers at *Shab-e-Miraj* (The Night of Ascent), *Shab-e-Qader* (Night of Destiny), and *Shab-e-Barat* (The Night of Records) with religious zest. Special *Mehfil-e-Naat* (Party of praising Prophet PBUH in verses) and *Khatam-e-Quran* (a gathering to recite whole Quran) were held at these nights in mosques while women recited Quran at home whole night. Especially *Darood Tunjeena* (Quranic verses) and *Surah Yaseen* (Quranic verses) were recited in such gatherings. Islam was flourishing with efforts of *Tablighi Jamat* (Party of preachers of Islam). They arranged huge congregations for preaching Islam. They held gatherings of *Darood-o-Salam* (Greetings & Peace on Prophet

¹³ The prayer leader of Muslims in a mosque

PBUH) on every Fridays after *Esha*¹⁴ Prayer.

Some people arranged *Konday*¹⁵ and relate *Saat Bibion ki Kahani*¹⁶ (the story of seven wives) in vow. *Konday* is a social and cultural gathering arranged by the people on the fulfillment of their vows. They prepare some sweets and set them up in a clay pot (*Konday*) dedicate it to good men of Islam and then pray to God through their *Waseela* (Reference) to remove their difficulty. *Khatam-e-Ghayarwenh Sharif* is carried on the 11th of every lunar month. Especially sweet is cooked in the name of Allah and Hazrat Qader Gilani an Iraqi saint and is distributed among orphans or given to the *Imam-e-Masjid*. *Khatam-e-Ghayarwenh Sharif* and *Khatam-e-Jumerat*¹⁷ arranged to send *Thawab* (Reward) to the souls of dead.

Muharam celebrations were performed religiously All these extended religious practices are performed by people of *Sunni* sect only. People told that they were very regular in performing all religious ceremonies and rituals with devotion but after earthquake not only the frequency of religious activities are reduced but also the devotion. People were strict about their religious activities before earthquake. But people take it easy and for granted now. People are turned into man of the world and have turned away from religion.

Eid-ul-Fitr and *Eid-al-Azha* were celebrated with religious enthusiasm by all sects. Village folks visit each others houses on *Eids* and people sacrificed their animal in the way of God on *Eid-al-Azha*. People offer *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and pay *Zakat*¹⁸ according to their financial capacities. Everybody helped poor that is why no beggars were found in the village. During the holy month of *Ramadan*, everybody indulge in *Traweh*¹⁹ prayers enthusiastically. The effectees said that although we celebrate *Eids* as our religious event but we are not happy from inside because on every happy event the memories of our

¹⁴ Last of the five daily obligatory prayers offered by Muslims at night

¹⁵ A religious practice organized by females of family on fulfillment of a vow on eleventh of lunar month. In this regard sweet is prepared and females from surrounding homes are invited to eat it.

¹⁶ It is read in a gathering of women by woman to shed the misfortune or difficulty of a person or family. After reading whole story sweets are distributed

¹⁷ Every week on Thursday some people cook sweet and recite holy verses of Quran on it and distributed among people

¹⁸ Giving a portion of wealth in charity by Muslims in the month of Ramadan

¹⁹ Prayers offered by Muslims at night in the month of Ramadan after Esha prayer

family members and relatives dead in earthquake make us sad and depress so we cannot enjoy it.

It is worth mentioning here that people of *Ahl-e-Hadith* do not celebrate *Eid Milad-al-Nabi*, *Mehfil-e-Naat*, *Shab-e-Miraj*, *Shab-e-Qader*, *Shab-e-Barat*, *Khatam-e-Quran*, *Khatam-e-Ghayarwenh Sharif*, *Khatam-e-Jumerat*, *Muharram*, and *Konday*. Only *Sunni* carry out these festivities faithfully.

There are two tombs of important Islamic personalities that are Shah Ismael Shaheed and Syed Ahmed Shaheed. People (*Sunni*) respectfully go to their *Mazars* for prayers and take offering to their *Mazars* for their supplications to be fulfilled. Women do not go to graveyard and mosques and stay at home to offer their prayers. The villagers have firm believe in *Taweez* (amulets) frequently. They find cure of their diseases, bad sight (*Nazaer-e-bad*) on their children, and evil spirits (*Saya*). They go to the *Peers* (people who are master of amulets) and they are considered very religious and virtuous in the area. The belief in supernatural pervades in the minds of the villagers. Persistent family troubles, loss of health, loss of property, crop failure, ailing animal, economic reversal, disease and sterility are attributed to supernatural beings ultimately.

The villagers consult these *Peers* for dispelling. He diagnoses the problems and gives amulets to the ailing person for treatment. He further suggests them to approach the saint's shrine where vows and offerings are paid to achieve success and to get rid of troubles in life. It was told that after earthquake this trend increase as many people are occupied by spirits (*Saya*), because those days dead bodies were spread everywhere and they could not maintain sanctity. Many people were buried under debris and villagers walked on them without knowing the dead were under their feet. They say in such situation often people are occupied by souls. This problem could not be treated by any medicine and only *peer* could cure it.

3.5.4 Mosques

There were four mosques in the region before earthquake. Those were *Jamia Masjid Hanfia*, *Jamia Masjid Ahel-e-Hadith* and *Jamia Masjid Um-al-Qura*, and *Jamia Muhammadia shaheedia*. All were destroyed completely in earthquake and were

reconstructed afterwards. Later on a new mosque Jamia Masjid Jammāt-ud-Dawah was built. There are also 4 to 5 small mosques in *Muhallas* with the name Masjid Tahir Yaad Shahed, Masjid Abu-baker Siddique and Masjid Ahel-e-Hadith etc. Before earthquake there were only four main mosques in the village but after earthquake few more mosques were constructed. These mosques were made for temporary purpose shortly after earthquake because all four main mosques were martyred and were closed. But after words when main mosques were reconstructed, these *Muhalla* mosques still remained there and even people established them. The people had developed a concept that only virtuous and pious people were martyred in this earthquake and they associate this with the martyr of Mosques.

3.5.5 Graveyard

Belyani village did not have its own cemetery before earthquake. Their dead bodies were buried in a nearby cemetery of Mangli village. It was a main graveyard of the area. But after so many deaths in earthquake people buried their relative near their own houses in emergency. That led the creation of various small graveyards in the village. The people those have land holdings they wished to bury their loved ones in their own land so they made personal graveyards and wrote on the epitaphs "*Shohda-e-Zalzala*"²⁰. Before earthquake, there was no trend of cementing the graves. The graves were just bordered with line of bricks. For recognition of graves, just an epitaph was erected. But people considered their dead family members as martyrs of earthquake and pay more respect to them. They paved their graves with heightened structures and beautified it with marble tiles in commemoration of martyrs of earthquake. As the graves are near their houses, they frequently visit and clean them, burn incense and offer *Fateha Khawnt*.

3.6 Economic organization

Belyani village was located in a commercial area that is why 60% villagers were running their own businesses. The main business was hotels and tourism. Balakot is famous tourist resort for its scenic beauty. The natural scenery and cold climate in summers attract the

²⁰ People martyred in earthquake

tourists from various parts of Pakistan and all over the world. The visitors find peace here and feel tranquility in the air of Balakot. Some of the villagers do trade and keep shops. 5% do agriculture and farming while 8% keep livestock. Teaching is another profession adopted by many people.

3.6.1 Formal sector

3.6.1.1 Government

10% villagers are government employees. In this area a lesser trend of government employment was seen and people preferred to run family businesses but after earthquake the government announced benefits to government employees that tempted others towards government jobs.

3.6.1.2 Non-Government

10 % people are non-government employees. After earthquake many NGOs and INGOs approached this area for relief and rehabilitation of the effectees. They hired many local people so that the villagers could earn for their families, and also because they knew the area well. They were given handsome salary packages and more people tried to be engaged with some organization that culminated in arising conflicts with project staff from outside. Eventually local people were hired to run projects.

3.6.2 Informal sector

3.6.2.1 Agriculture

The area has fertile soils but the lack of irrigation facilities badly affects the productivity of the soil. That is why the land is not much productive here and mostly the cultivation depends on seasonal rainfall that is why only 5 % people are engaged in agriculture sector. Cropping seasons include *Kharif* and *Rabi*. *Kharif* crops are sown during summer during the months of April to September. *Kharif* crops are harvested in winter season that include maize, rice, sugarcane and seasonal vegetables. While Second is called '*Rabi*' which ranges from the month of October to March. *Rabi* crops include wheat, peas, barley potato, onions, and other seasonal vegetables. Many fruit orchards are well established here and are a good source of income. The land at the shores of river is little leveled but the river

water is not used for irrigation purposes. The total annual rainfall of the district is 72 inches according to 1972 census report. In earthquake the cultivable land was also destroyed which affected people's livelihood.

3.6.2.2 Livestock

Major livestock includes cattle, such as buffalo, sheep, goat, horse, mule, ass and poultry. Trout fishery is also abundant in the Kunhar River. Buffaloes, cows, goats and sheep are the main source of milk and meat etc. only 8% people are involved in this sector. Bullocks and cows are used to plough the fields. Many poultry farms have also established in the area. Gujjars and other nomads migrate to the mountains grasslands in summer to graze their sheep, goats and other cattle. Various organizations had initiated project for livestock restoration in this area, which gave chance to those who were not already in this sector. These organizations organized trainings on poultry, big and small cattle farming. They provided the villagers with funds for animal sheds as well. Before earthquake when people had large houses they used to keep buffalo, cows, goats and poultry for domestic needs of milk and eggs respectively but now they are living in shelters and there is not enough space to keep livestock along with them.

3.6.2.3 Business

The area is famous for its natural beauty and every year in summer season a lot of national and international tourists came to visit the area. The major livelihood of the area is business hotel management. During summer season in June to October, they earn enough for the rest of year because in winter usually no tourists come here. Entertainment and accommodation of tourist is the main business of most of the people here. In other months of the year these people engage in other professions for earning. Tourist of domestic and international land visited these areas which became livelihood for local people. Balakot is a gate way to the Kaghan valley. Trading is also famous here; people have shops on which things are sold at high prices to the tourists. Almost 40% people of the area are involved in some form of business. After earthquake the beauty of the area damaged, roads were broken and huge hotels were collapsed so tourism was reduced but after words it is restored. The natives also put the charge of this earthquake on hotel business and tourists

because they said that tourist have been doing illicit activities during their stay in hotels that is why earthquake hit this area.

3.6.2.4 Foreign

Only 7% people work abroad or in other cities of the country. After earthquake many people returned to their homeland permanently to support their families financially. Contrary to that many people working in informal sector in other areas of the country left their jobs and started living here on aid as the aid was distributed abundantly and they need not to work anymore.

3.6.2.5 Skilled and un-skilled labourer

About 20% people are involved in labour of various kinds for instance automobile, transport, hotel, construction, forming, and agriculture etc. These labourers were getting very less wages before earthquake, but after words when there was a lot of work for rehabilitation they demanded very high labour cost whereas when non-government organizations came here for rehabilitation they paid them high wages. But they did not reduce it later when situation got better here and still they are getting high labor cost specially the skilled labourers.

3.7 Modern amenities

3.7.1 Education facility

Belyani has following schools in the village that are Government high school for boys, Government girl's primary school, Jinnah Muslim public high school, Balakot public school, Islamia modern public school, International public school, Iqra Madina-tul-Atfaal, Dar-e-Arqam English medium school, Jamia Sheehedia Madrassa, Ghazali education trust school, Madrassa Khulfa Rashideen and government middle school for boys.

Government high secondary school for girls is found in Mangli. It offers intermediate level of education for girls which was engulfed in the earthquake and reconstructed. Women go to Mansehra to acquire higher education. Few decades ago people did not educate their girls, but the trend is different now. Mostly people educate their girls at least to the Metric or intermediate level. However they can't send them alone to other cities for higher

education as they can't compromise on security issues and they can't afford their expenses too. But if there was a college in their own town, they will happily educate their daughters further. However boys go to other cities for acquiring knowledge and there is a college in village Hassa as well. After earthquake, more awareness was brought to the common villagers. They familiarized with the value of education and started educating their daughter more than before. They have realized that the educated girls can better take care of their families like their sons in such a situation of catastrophe.

3.7.2 Mass media

Belyani village lies at a commercial area and is considered the city centre that is why they are enjoying most of the facilities like television, radio, dish antenna, newspaper, telephone, mobile phones etc. Television, mobile phones and radio is in almost every house. Some people have also dish antenna at their homes. Young boys are very fond of dish antenna, computers and internet but girls are not permitted to use these facilities. That is why some of the girls seldom watch dish channels by hiding from their family. Mobile phones are popular here but villagers don't have interest in newspaper and magazines at their homes. However men read the newspaper at offices, shops and markets. They share news with other men and women of their own house. Women watch drama serials with more interest than watching news and sports channels. They hear news and gossips from their surroundings or by the males of their families. It was told that before earthquake mobile phones, dish antennas, computers, internet were not prevalent in the area and these are considered curse by elderly people as these are spoiling youth.

3.7.3 Medical facility

There is a Tehsil Headquarter Hospital in the town, especially renowned for tuberculosis sanatorium facility. Mother and child health care centre, some private clinics and homeopaths and hakims are also available. In case of minor diseases people get medicines from medical stores directly by compounders. If someone is suffering seriously then they take the patients to Abbottabad hospital. Many villagers still believe in spiritual healing and amulets for curing their diseases. The Tehsil Headquarter Hospital was destroyed in the earthquake and reconstructed. People said that after earthquake they were given

English medicines (Allopathic) for cure and now they are not recovered with *Desi* (indigenous) medicines. Now people are more inclined to spiritual healing, although they went to doctor but they believe that ultimately they are recovered by *Peers*.

3.7.4 Banks

There are five banks in the village that are Allied bank Ltd, Habib bank Ltd, United bank Ltd, National bank of Pakistan and Zarai Tarqiati bank. Saholat Ghar of Paktel is also available here. Before earthquake people were not interested to save their money or jewelry in banks but now they do that. Along with males now females also have their bank accounts because cash transfer by different projects is usually done through banks.

3.7.5 Transportation

The main bus stand of Balakot has the facility of busses, coasters, jeeps, vans and coaches that have access to every part of the country. In earthquake transport services were disrupted for many days due to road blocks and destruction.

3.7.6 Electricity

Electricity reached Balakot in 1965 and Belyani was the first village to receive this facility. After earthquake the electric supply was blocked for many weeks and could not be restored completely for months after earthquake because it did not have proper system as compared to previous.

3.7.7 Water

Water tank and pipeline system was available before earthquake to each house and damaged pipelines were restored after earthquake. Every house has its own water tanks and associated taps for household washing and bathing. These water tanks get filled by water through pipelines because water comes only for few hours a day. This water is not clean and is not drinkable. They bring drinking water from spring (*Chashma*). The water tank of the area remained safe during earthquake but the pipelines were heavily damaged.

3.7.8 Community center

A government Community Centre, Woman Vocational Centre “Hunar-kada” and Community Based Training Centre (CBTC) are established in the village after earthquake.

The basic purpose of these centers is to impart skill training to male and female members of community. These centres were established by government and different non government organizations to train villagers for improving their livelihood.

3.8 Others

3.8.1 Food pattern

Seasonal fruits and vegetables are available in the markets of Belyani. Villagers eat vegetables, meat, cereals, chicken and wheat bread (*Gandum ki Roti*). Beef, boiled rice, wheat bread and curry are the favorite meals of villager. The favorite dish of people here is maize bread (*Maki ki roti*) and mustard leafs (*Sarsoon ka sag*). Although people were well established before earthquake but their food was very simple and traditional. After earthquake people from different cultures and social settings visited and lived in this area and they were influenced by various food patterns as well.

3.8.2 Dress pattern

The traditional dress is *Shalwar* (trouser) *Qameez* (shirt) for male and female but it's designing and stitching is different. Male were plain stuff whereas females like colorful and printed dresses. Handmade embroidery is also famous in male and female dresses. Females wear *Chaddar* (Shawl) for veil. Veiling is very strict in this area, girls started covering their heads with *Dopatta* (Shawl) in very early age that is about 10 years and begin to observe veil after fifteen onwards. People believe that females had become modern and fashionable after earthquake due to exposure to outer world and having interaction with outsiders. Now they do not want to observe veil and to dress up like the women of other cities that is Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi etc.

3.8.3 Flora

The flora of Balakot is rich of herbs shrubs and trees. The common vegetation consists of shrubs and herbs of sanatha, phulah, neel (wild indigo), billi loten (valerian), zaitoon (oleaster), sumblo (barberry), khat mith (sorrel), timar, phitni, kataili (hawthorn), grund, bamble, kamila and others. Important flower species consist of Sunflower, Rose, Jasmine,

Nargis (Narcissus), tulip, Iris, lily, dog violet and damask Rose. Some fruit trees like apple, apricot, fig, wild pear, olives, litchi, plum, pear, and persimmon also grow here.

Due to favorable climatic conditions, the area is rich in vegetables like cabbage, carrot, reddish, potato, and tomato. A variety of herbs is found throughout the area. Most of them are used medicinally by local people. These include Gulkhaira, Khtmi, MusliSufead, Kadpai, Thandibotti, Sumal, Kakul, Ispaghol, Patris, Manira, Chora, Banafsha, Bantol, Chau, KuthiRaisha Khatmi and Nera. In earthquake the flora of the area was also affected due to destruction and continuous landsliding. Fruit trees were broken; habitat of many natural growing herbs and shrubs was disturbed. When people have had large houses they used to grow fruit trees and seasonal vegetables in kitchen gardens now this trend is also reduced.

3.3.4 Fauna

The fauna of Balakot is rich of birds, reptiles, mammals and fish. The fresh water of Kunhar River has large number of trout fish. Recreational fishing is abundant in the area. After earthquake the river water is much polluted that has reduced the amount of fish that were in abundance in fresh water. The important animals of Balakot include wolf, jackal, leopard, musk deer, red fox, Himalayan lynx, black and brown bears, leopard cat, mongoose, grey goral and ibex. The cattle commonly kept are buffalo, cow, horse, donkey, mule, sheep and goat. As people are living in shelters now so domestication of these useful animals is also reduced.

Reptiles include lizards and snakes and among mammals a large number of rhesus monkeys and lungur are dwelling the area. Among the carnivores, lions and cheetahs are becoming extinct in the area while the leopard and especially snow leopard are endangered species. In avian fauna consists of several species of herons, bee eaters, wood peckers, larks, shrikes, teals, doves, wagtails, cuckoos, finches and nightingales widely inhabit the gardens, fields and hill slopes. Swallows, parrots, crows, pigeon, sparrows, shikra, sparrow hawk, owl, hoopoe, kingfishers and several species of vulture are also found in the area. The mountainous area is occupied by western horned tragopan, imperial monal pheasant, and kokla pheasant. However quails, black and grey partridges are also common.

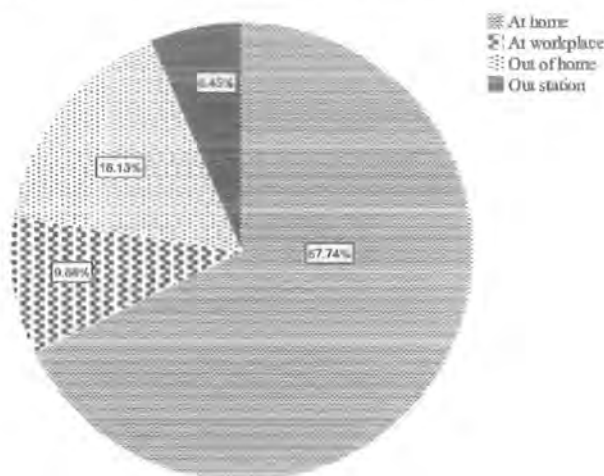
RESULTS

This section put a hem on the findings of thirty one (31) in-depth interviews of inhabitants of *Muhalla* Bagh Belyani, village Belyani by using ‘Convenient Sampling Method’. The questions directly address the objectives of the study. Several meandering and connecting questions were made part of interview to maintain the continuity and pace in discussion. All the responses were denoted in the form of percentages or frequencies of the total sample size of 31 respondents.

4.1 Earthquake scenario

Initiating the conversation, respondents were asked regarding their location at the time of earthquake. Location of the respondents was directly linked with magnitude of losses and injuries, intensity of jerks they felt, initial response to earthquake and their interpretations about earthquake. In response to this 67.74% people reported they were at homes. As it was the morning time, when earthquake hit and people were planning their routine tasks. While 9.68% said that they were at their work places (school, office, shop etc).

Figure 1: Location of respondent at the time of earthquake



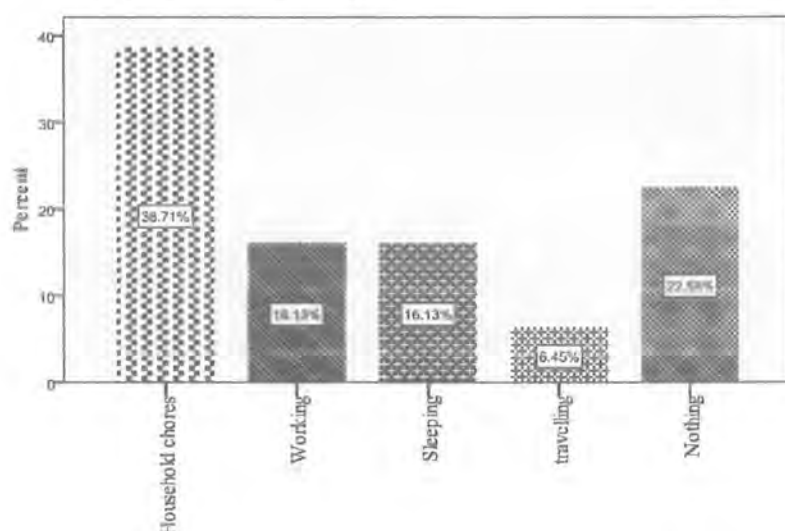
Source: Field Data

A male Physical Education Teacher at a boy's high school in Balakot told he was in his school that morning. He assembled the students at playground for exercise quite earlier

than usual. When earthquake hit, many of them were safe and sound just because they were in open place. But some boys, who got scared of tremors, dispersed and face problems. The students in the classrooms got buried under rubbles. Some of them were caught in the gaps of smashed buildings. He believed, God intended to keep them safe, that is why they were sent to the playground that very moment. Some respondents (6.45%) told they were out of city at the time of earthquake. They were completely unaware of the situation of Balakot and their families as well. Some respondents (16.13%) were out of their homes, such as in fields, market, and street or to the neighbors.

The earthquake struck in the month of *Ramadan*, the victims were asked about their activities at the time of earthquake to get an insight of their daily religious activities in the month of *Ramadan*. The people of Balakot are religious renowned that is why they were asked this question to know whether they were worshiping, performing any religious activity or their routine tasks.

Figure 2: Situation of respondents at the time of earthquake



Source: Field Data

When respondents were asked about their activities at the time of earthquake, 38.71% were busy in their household chores, while 16.13% were working (work place, fields). Other (22.58%) said they were doing nothing rather sitting idle here and there or in sun light. Some people (6.45%) were travelling, whereas (16.13%) said that they were sleeping at the

time of earthquake because they got up early in the morning for *Sehri*²¹, and went asleep again after offering *Fajr*²² prayer and recitation of Holy Quran. A respondent said that it was such a execrable day that after *Sehri*, I tried my best to keep myself awake for offering *Fajr* prayer and recitation of Holy Quran but I was overtaken by sleep and fell asleep till the earthquake struck. Another respondent told that he was feeling uneasy that morning, "I got up and get ready to go for work but decided not to go and slept again.

The respondents were asked about their feelings when earthquake started to know whether it was comprehended by everyone as earthquake or differently. They explained that the earthquake was so sudden and stern that 16.1% were even unable to understand, what happened. They told that suddenly everything collapsed in front of them and they could not even protect themselves. Whereas 19.4% respondents told that they did not feel any tremor. Instead they thought that a vigorous blast had dispersed all of them and their material possessions in no time. A respondent told that He was on his way to office when heard a loud blast on earth and then it started jerking severely and "I was unable to stand on my feet". Another respondent told that she thought doom's day have arrived (*Qayamat a gai hy*). But a large number of respondents (64.5%) claimed that they knew it was a worst kind of earthquake and its intensity was beyond there expectations.

Table1: Feeling at first tremor

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Earthquake	20	64.5%
Blast	6	19.4%
Unable to understand	5	16.1%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

The respondents were asked about their immediate reaction to earthquake to know how many of them were in their senses to act accordingly. In response to this 22.6% told that instead of self defense they rushed for their family members to evacuate them. A female

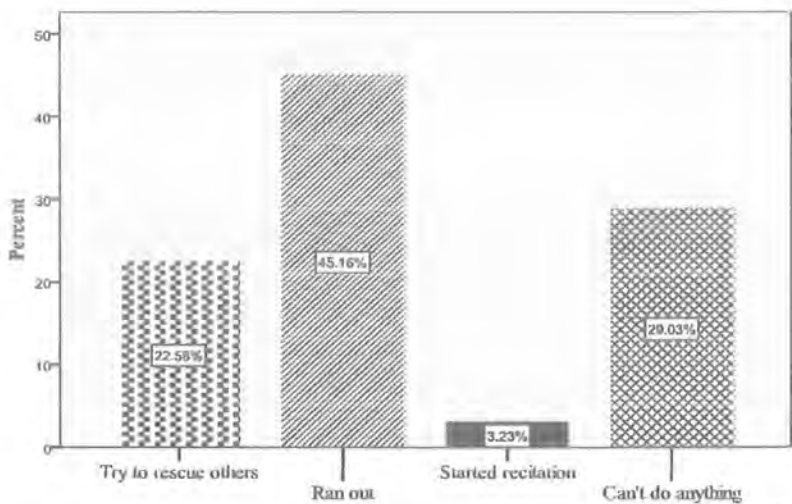
²¹ Pre-dawn meals during month of Ramadan for keeping fast

²² First of the five daily obligatory prayers offered by Muslims before dawn

respondent told that she was feeling vacillated that very moment. She ran towards her children to evacuate them from home but the earth was moving up and down at a fast pace, then the ceiling crumple and she; with her children buried under it. There were people (29%), who said that the earthquake was so sudden that they could not help to rescue themselves and others. Earthquake was so ruthless. It was throwing people up and down violently. They just can't take a step with their own will.

Some people (45.2%) rushed out of buildings to open places for their personal safety. A respondent said that when I felt earthquake I tried to rush out but the door of my room jammed and I could not open it. There was terrifying sounds in the air. At the moment I thought, it is happening only in my house because five years back my son fall in water tank of my house and died there. I thought his soul is angry and came to kill me but in the next few seconds, door opened widely and I ran out. There I saw that the whole village is collapsed in earthquake.

Figure 3: Immediate reaction to tremors



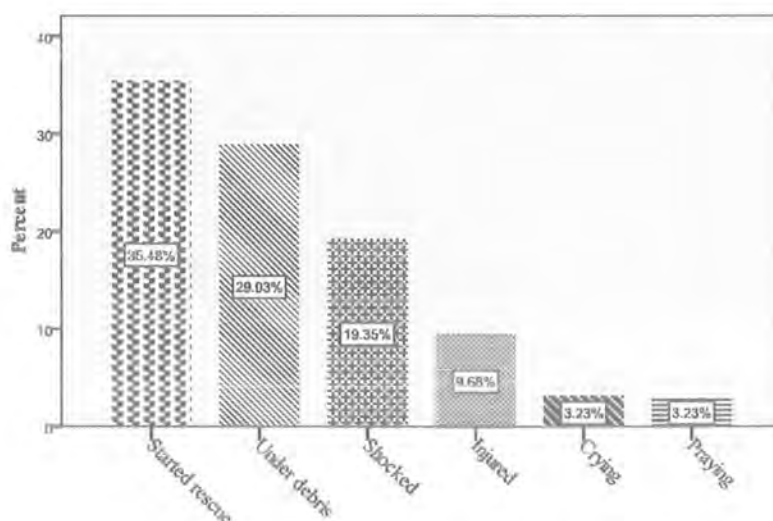
Source: Field data

All these respondents (96.77%) told, at that time they forgot any prayers or verses to recite or to seek help from Allah and felt a short term memory loss on the part of religion. Only few (3.2%) replied that upon experiencing this highly destructive earthquake. They started reciting these holy verses of Quran (*alqariyahtu mulqariyahtu wa ma adraka mulqariyahtu*) “The (Day) of Noise and Clamor: What is the (Day) of Noise and Clamor?

And what will explain to thee what the (Day) of Noise and Clamor is?” to seek divine help and advised others to recite it as well because we believed that nothing else but only Allah could help us to escape out of this merciless calamity.

It was important to know about the plight of people just after earthquake because it could impact their thoughts and perceptions about earthquake. When people were asked about their condition just after experiencing earthquake we came to know that various respondents found themselves under different circumstances. Some (29.03%) reported they were lying under debris. A woman told that when she was under material of her own home she was praying to Allah for the safety of her children and other family members.

Figure 4: Circumstances of respondents just after earthquake



Source: Field data

Some (12.9%) said it was a great shock for them. For a time they remain senseless and were unable to comprehend what had happened to them. A male respondent told that “my relatives were under material of a four story house and were crying for help but I was in a shock. I could not meet the courage to help them even I was absolutely safe. It took 6 to 7 hours to recover my senses”. Another respondent said that earthquake was halted but till he was in a strange mental condition. “I could not comprehend what had happened to me. I was totally out of my senses”. Unbelievably, instead of helping I was laughing at injured people. As if I was watching some comedy movie.

While 35.48% started rescue work immediately after earthquake. A female told me that she belongs to a very religious family where seclusion is strict but on that day she joined hands with males to rescue her family members because she was not injured. A respondent told that he was running towards the school of his daughters to search and rescue them. On his way he found a person who was crushed under a huge stone but was still alive. "When I was passing by him he caught my leg and asked for help but I was so selfish in love of my children that I caused to set free my leg by force and left him unattended in search of my daughters."

Some (3.23%) said, they were crying and shouting in pain. A woman told, her daughter was buried under debris in front of her eyes, she was crying and shouting for help but nobody paid attention because everyone was concerned to their own relatives. Only (3.23%) said they were praying to God for safety of every one. A female told that she was loudly saying *Istaghfirullah* (O' God forgive us) and also asked others around to pray to Allah because only He could help us. Few of them (9.68%) were injured. A man told he himself was injured. But he was desperately searching his family members. He forgot his own pain. Some (6.45%) were out of station at the time of earthquake and were unaware of the situation.

4.2 Pre and post religious beliefs and opinion about earthquake

It was necessary to note general opinion of people about earthquake to know that is it somehow different from their religious connotations or it is also within the paradigm of religion. When people were asked to provide their general views about earthquake, all of them tended to explain earthquake within the realm of Islam because Islam is the predominant religion of village Belyani. There were many people (51.6%) with the view that earthquake is a kind of punishment from God to the sinful people. They claim that the sins of humans enrage God and earth trembles with His anger. A female respondent told that "we used to observe *Perdah* (seclusion) strictly but when earthquake hit we went out bare headed and bare footed. Our clothes were cleaved and we were exposed to *Namehrums*²³. I believe that it was retribution of our likeness and urge for fashion.

²³ Who are not blood relatives and to whom can get married.

Table 2: General views of respondents about earthquake

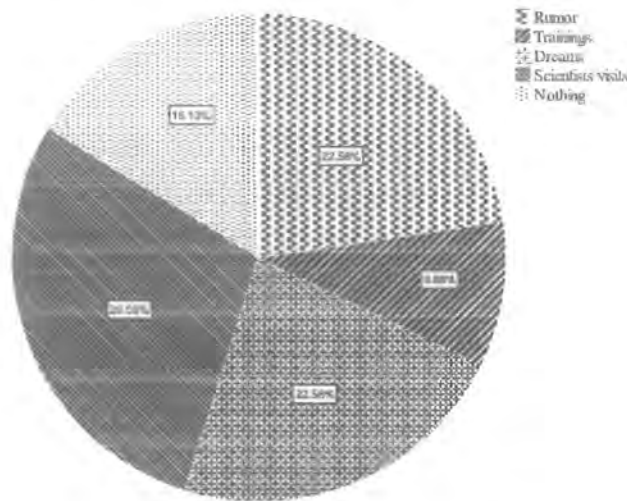
Responses	Frequency	Percent
Punishment of sins	16	51.6%
Natural phenomena	2	6.5%
Trial from God	9	29.0%
Wrath of God	4	12.9%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

Whereas 12.9% people said that earthquake is *Azab-e-elahi* (wrath of God). When the God becomes dejected with His people He shows His anger in form of earthquake. So that people can get a lesson from it and do not get astray. A respondent told that “Allah has promised His last Profit Muhammad (PBUH) that He will never send torments to His *Ummah* (adherents) that are Muslims”. But now I believe that earthquake must be a torment of God. A very few respondents (6.5%) told that earthquake is a natural phenomena proved by science. Due to plate tectonics and compression of rocks gasses are produced by melted magma that exert pressure on earth’s crust to burst out or when volcanoes erupt, earthquake happens. Whereas 29% people believe that God tests His virtuous people by appending some *Azmaish* (trial) so that they become more subservient and devoted to him. God assesses His people by two trials; one is by endowing them, and other is by depriving them. If people meet the norm of God’s trial they become closer to Him. And He forgives them whereas those who don’t suffer ignominy and torment.

It was important to know that whether people have any prior information about this earthquake and developed some coping strategies or not. When people were asked about their pre-earthquake information or gossips related to it, 22.58% people told that within a year before earthquake; often the rumor spread that “today or tonight earthquake will struck” but it did not. A respondent told that about one month before earthquake it was seriously circulated in Balakot that “tonight a massive earthquake will hit Balakot”. People left their homes due to fear and spent whole night of winters in open air. But there was not a single vibration at that night. But the day when this disaster smacked us we were ignorant.

Figure 5: Gossips about earthquake before it struck



Source: Field data

Some people (9.68%) told earthquake trainings were conducted in schools for students and teachers as well as for community members two weeks before seismic activity. The contents of training were included safety measures during earthquake. A respondent who had taken these trainings told that the earthquake was so sudden and intense that no training could work in such a situation. Some respondents (22.58%) told, we did not know the time and day of earthquake but it was announced by various *Imam-e-masjid* that *Imam-e-Kaba*²⁴ has dreamt that Balakot is destroyed in an earthquake.

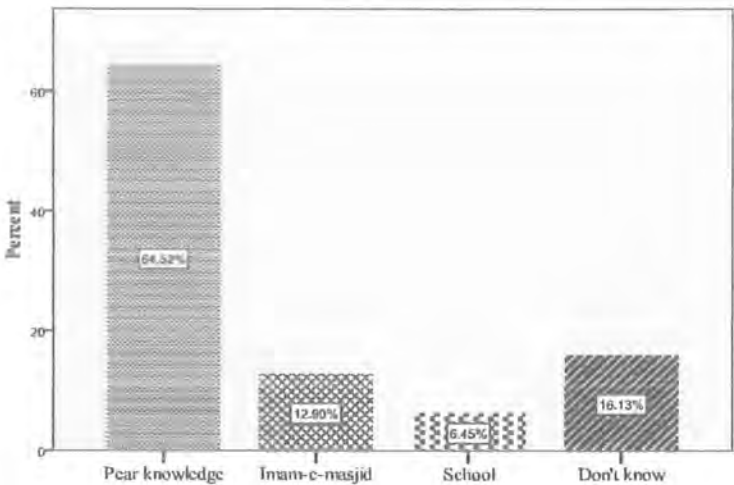
Announcements were made from *Masjid* (mosques) warning the people to reform themselves according to Islam and ask forgiveness of God. *Imam-e-Masjid* gave sermons on the topic and advised people to say *Istaghfirullah* (O' God forgive us) as many times as possible. He also recommended offering *Navafil* (supererogatory prayers) to avoid an imminent earthquake. He told God is angry with us. Some people (16.13%) said they didn't hear anything good or bad about earthquake before it happened. A respondent said lament fully "if we were aware about this earthquake, we would have left this place and had not lost our loved ones.

²⁴ The prayer leader of the most prestigious mosque (Kaba) of Muslims in Saudi Arabia

A few respondents (29.03%) reported that teams of scientists were visiting this area frequently before earthquake. They were observing the mountains. Some how information circulated in the area that scientists had noticed that the plates of earth are moving and sliding beneath their village and could burst at any time. They were afraid as it will bring mass destruction on earth. A respondent said that what so ever progress science had made but they could not tell us exact date and time of earthquake because these are divine verdicts and human beings could not reach there.

When people were asked about their source of information most of the villagers (64.52%) told they heard some gossips of an imminent earthquake from their pear group in village. But they have not witnessed it themselves. Only 6.45% respondents told, they came to know about earthquake when trainings were organized in schools to tell people how to safeguard themselves in case of earthquake. While 12.90% people said, they heard about earthquake in sermons of *Imam-e-Masjid*, they were warning people upon their deeds, and advising to reform themselves and practice Islamic ways of life. This news were circulating on different forums that a gigantic earthquake is expected in Balakot. Whereas 16.13% respondent said that they had not heard anything about earthquake before it struck.

Figure 6: Source of information about these gossips

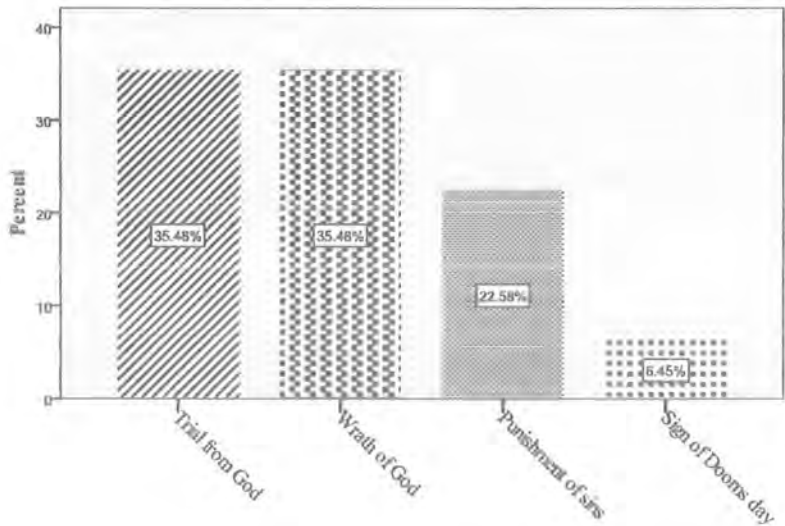


Source: Field data

When people were asked about their beliefs of natural disasters to know how they interpret disasters and is there any difference in interpreting earthquake and other natural calamities,

22.58% people told that they believe natural disasters are chastisement sent from God on human societies as a result of their sins. According to a respondent; it is not a new phenomenon. Natural disasters are as old as this universe. God has been sending natural disasters on nations since ever to punish them. Also 35.48% pointed it as trial from God. The people of this school of thought believe that God has promised to His last prophet hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) that He will never send torments on his *Ummah* (nation) that is Muslims. So these natural disasters are tests not punishment or wrath from God rather it is to bring people closer to Allah, to seek His blessing and to beg forgiveness for their mistakes. The obedient and virtuous people endure God's trial and remain to His subservient whereas sinful people astray more than before and their eventual destiny will be *Jahannam* (hell).

Figure 7: General beliefs of respondents about natural disasters



Source: Field data

Many villagers (35.48%) consider natural disasters as torment of God, because when human nations forget to obey obligations of God. He punishes them with natural disasters in which many of them die and the survivors get admonition. The proponents of this school of thought believe that when people mistake they are punished so that they regress to the right path. But when they commit sins they are subjected to the curse of God in the form of natural disasters. Because it becomes too late to repent now and all the doors of repentance

are closed for the sinners (*taubah ky durwazy bund ho chuky hoty hain*) and God sends His *Azab* (torment) in the form of sudden death on them so that they could not adjure. A respondent said that God does not harm innocent people so I believe that it is torment of God which comes upon sinful people. A respondent said that to err is human (*insan khata ka putla hy*), but if we seek forgiveness from God these disasters would not occur.

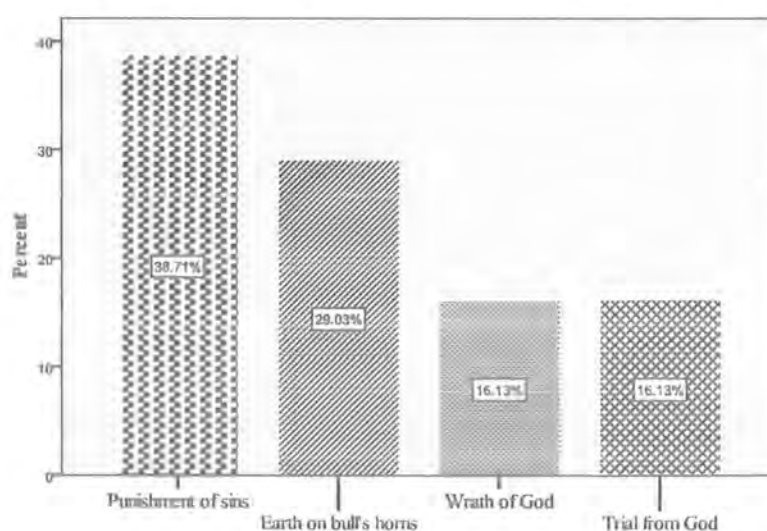
Some respondents (6.45%) mentioned that natural disasters are signs of dooms day and reflect the ultimate authority of God. A female respondent told that it is mentioned in Holy Quran that in the proximity of *Qayyamat* (the Day of Judgment) calamities would tumble down from havens on earth like falling beads of a broken rosary (*jaisy tasbeeh sy dany toot k girty hain*) and in every natural disaster there will be a large number of deaths. When the Day of Judgment will arrive every human would have died. Because the sins of people will increase enormously and God will send His ultimate disaster that will wipe up every sinful people on the surface of earth.

It was worth documenting the pre-earthquake religious beliefs of people about earthquake so that these could be compared with the lateral to find differences. When people were asked their religious beliefs about earthquake before 8th October 2005, most of the respondents (38.71%) told that they religiously believe that earth quake is punishment of our sins. A respondent said that what so ever science and scientists say, I belief it is punish of our own sins. When we forget our God, He forgets us because he gets angry and we face snag. According to one respondent, it is simply called as we sow, so shall we reap (*jo bowain gy wohi katain gy*). Allah will reward us for good deeds and will punish on sins.

Some respondent (29.03%) told that before earthquake they believed that earth stays on bull's horn. Whereas different people associate different connotations of earthquake related to this belief. One subtext mentioned by is that; earth is carried on a bull's horn. When the bull gets tired he shifts the earth to his other horn. That very moment people on earth experience tremors which might be disastrous. Those who belief that earth is on bull's horn, 11.11% of them provided afore mentioned reason of earthquake. Another undertone is the weight of earth increases with the sins of its inhabitants that increases the burden on the celestial bull carrying earth on his horn. It makes him to transfer earth to another horn that leads to earthquake. This reason was given by 33.33% respondents.

There are (55.55%) people who give this myth a religious touch. They say that due to increase in transgressions of human beings, earth gains much more weight and it become difficult for the bull to keep it stable. The bull requests to God that earth is getting heavier and I cannot maintain it on my horns any more. Then God shakes earth and all human sins shed down, as a result earth became light weight and bull can easily maintain it on his horns once again. While some people also believe that the weight of earth increases with the excess of peccadilloes and could not hold burden of human sins and crimes. Then the earth itself requests to God “O God, please shed my weight” and God shakes it to fell sin down. A respondent said that their religious belief about earthquake before 8th October 2005 was akin to Hindu mythology.

Figure 8: Religious beliefs about earthquake before 8th October 2005



Source: Field data

Few of the villagers (16.13%) also believe that earthquake is “*Azab-e-elahi*” (torment of God). Another respondent said that this type of earthquakes do not occur as a result of individual fault rather when whole tribe is indulged in wrongdoings. God send *Azab* (calamity) to finish their race on earth. A respondent said it is coated in Quran that “when Allah caught sinful people, it is not possible for them to escape from His wrath”. A few people (16.13%) believe that earthquake is a trial from Allah. A respondent said that when we get off track, God shake us by putting some trial to bring us back to the right way and

those who are not given severe punishments, so that they learn a lesson. Another respondent said that Allah doesn't send His torments on Muslims. He only tests them by putting them in trails (*musalmano per Allah azzab nai bhejta sirf unhain azmata hy*) because Muslims are His favorite nation.

They were asked about the sources of these beliefs to check their authenticity. When villagers were asked about the source of information about their religious beliefs before earthquake, 51.6% respondents told that these beliefs were transferred to them through oral tradition. A respondent told that when we were not mature enough to understand phenomena like earthquake. Our grand parents or parents tend to explain us this way and we believe in now. A respondent said that our elders have more religious knowledge and exposure then us. That is why our forefathers were the main agency to mend our thoughts. We could not contradict these beliefs as they are part of our religion. We can't evaluate these narrations as we don't have any religious knowledge. We believe blindly on them as we were strictly told that we should not argue on religious connotations without having full knowledge of religion.

Table 3: Source of religious beliefs about earthquake before 8th October 2005

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Oral tradition	16	51.6%
Read in Quran	10	32.3%
Peer knowledge	2	6.5%
Ulema/Imam	3	9.7%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

Some respondents (32.3%) told that they had read these concepts in Holy Quran. A respondent said these beliefs are part of our religious teachings. When we read the translation of Quran we understand Allah has mentioned reasons of earthquakes many times in Quran. That's why we believe on it. Very few respondents (6.5 %) said that our previous beliefs about earthquake were based on peer knowledge. A respondent admitted that villagers start believing on what they hear from their surrounding people because they

have limited knowledge. However there were also some people (9.7%) who claim that their beliefs about earthquake have origins from the religious teachings and sermons of *Ulema*²⁵ and/or *Imam-e-Masjid*. These people are considered religious elites of our society. So we trust their knowledge and believe on their teachings. A respondent said that *Ulema*'s have more religious knowledge than common people because they have thoroughly gone through Quran and *Hadith*²⁶ and other religious books, that's why we belief on their preaching.

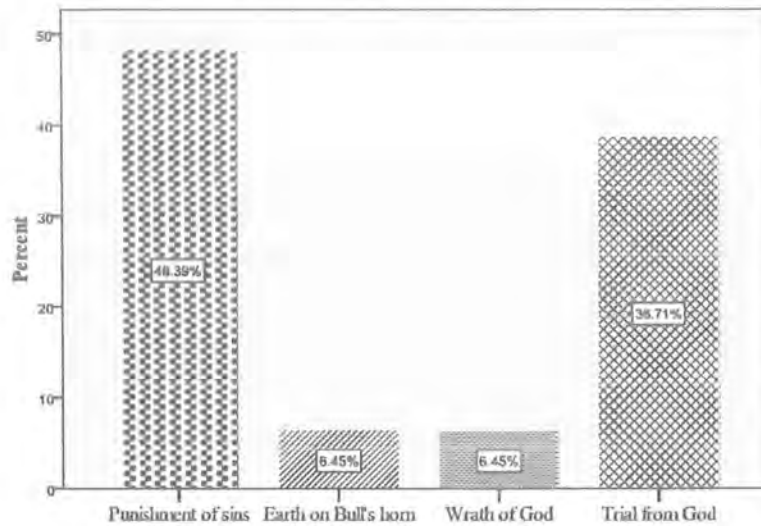
The main focus of research was to identify change in beliefs of people after earthquake so their recent religious beliefs about earthquake were asked to find changes. When we asked about their religious beliefs about earthquake after 8th October 2005, most of the villagers (48.39%) call it punishment of their sins. A respondent said that after experiencing earthquake I came to believe that we were off tracked from our religious teachings and indulged more in worldly matters. We were committing crimes and sins hidden from the people but were visible to God. So He punished us in the form of this earthquake. Another respondent said that after earthquake I realized that we must have committed some sins for which we had heavily paid (*hum sy zaroor koi gunah hoa ho ga jis ki saza mili hy*).

A few people (6.45%) call it torment of God. A respondent said that I still believe that when our sins increase, the earth start trembling with the wrath of God. A respondent said that Allah send His *Azab* in the form of earthquakes to the people who are deviant from religion. Many (38.71%) say it was a trail from God because God has promised with his last messenger that He will never send *Azab* to Muslims as they are nation of His beloved prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). A respondent told that after earthquake we got the information about scientific causes of earthquake but I believe that in any case it is trail (*Azmaish*) from God. A respondent said, before earthquake I used to believe that earthquake is *Azab* of God but now I believe that it is not *Azab* rather a trail from God because I came to know that Allah does not send *Azab* to His pious people. According to him the people of Balakot were very pious than the people of other areas. They were strictly practicing religion here.

²⁵ The people who had good knowledge of religion

²⁶ Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

Figure 9: Religious beliefs about earthquake after 8th October 2005



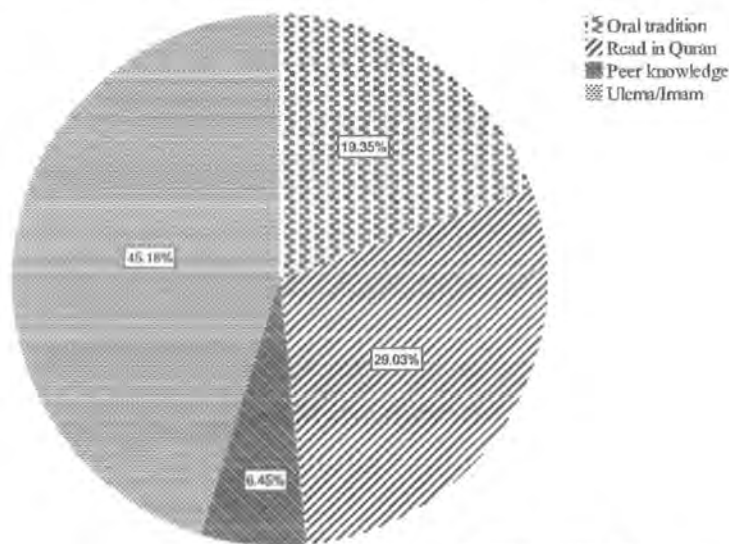
Source: Field data

Another respondent said that there is a paradigm shift in my belief about earthquake from *Azab* to *Azmaish* (trial). I am acquainted with the fact that if people practice religion more after disaster/earthquake. They reform themselves and go back to Allah and ask for His apology on their mistakes then it is trial and if they get worst than before then they are destroyed by *Azab* of Allah. A respondent said that God had sent a trial to us and after passing through it our sins are washed away and we have become innocent again (Allah *ny humain azmaya hy or hamary gunah dhul gy hain*). A respondent said that the people of Balakot were living very prosperous and blessed life. They were rigid on their religious beliefs and they all were virtuous people. God has tested us by sending this earthquake on us. So that He may check us whether we remain obedient to Him in such a situation or we start complaining Him when we are in pain and agony.

Very few respondents (6.45%) remained consistent in their religious belief about earthquake that earth is on Bull's horns. When it became heavy due to the sins of people it weeps in front of God and requests to shed its burdens. Then Allah shakes it to throw its sins away as a result earthquake is felt by the people on it and earth became light once again. They said they believe in because their forefathers use to believe like this.

It was important to know the sources of new beliefs to know that either people have authentic information and had adopted it after verification or they just heard and started believing because they felt it appropriate. When people were asked about their source of beliefs about earthquake after 8th October 2005, some of the villagers (19.35%) were still fused to their oral tradition. A respondent said that we had heard it from our ancestors before but when we ourselves experienced it we became firm believers. Many people (29.03%) said, they had read it in Quran. A respondent said that after experiencing earthquake I'm more inclined to religion and religious teachings now. I have started reading Quran with translation and other religious book. I have come across new concepts about earthquake and started believing on them because I found them more rationale. A respondent said that I had read it in *Bukhari Sharief* (book of sayings of Holy Prophet) as well.

Figure 10: Source of religious beliefs about earthquake after 8th October 2005



Source: Field data

Most of the respondents (45.16%) said, after this calamity, earthquake was the hottest topic of discussion by *Ulema/Imam* and we being the direct affectees were also very keen to know it. Especially why it happened to us? A respondent said that after earthquake, *Imam-e-Masjid* and *Ulema* kept on discussing various reasons of earthquake in their sermons. They told that the spread of *Be-haye* (impudence) and *Be-pardagi* (unveiling) in a society

enrages God and He punishes His people. Their remarks were quite appealing to me. So I adopted these beliefs. A respondent said that after every prayer *Molana sahib* (religious leaders) made a speech and told us that we were off tracked from right way that is why we faced God's wrath. Another respondent said that many outsiders started charging various allegations to the people of Balakot after earthquake. Some of them said people of Balakot were very sinful that's why they had experienced this disaster. But in response to this statement Molana Tariq Jamil²⁷ said in his speech on behalf of the people of Balakot, that "people of Balakot were more pious and virtuous than people of other areas and that's why God has tested them".

A respondent said that before earthquake I believed that it is Azab of God, but when it happens to us then I started thinking that we were virtuous people, why this happen to us, then Molana Tariq Jamil satisfied us with his statement and that's what our belief is. Very few people (6.45 %) believed, what so ever they have heard about earthquake is our peer knowledge. A respondent said that after earthquake we started living together in camps. There we heard various reasons and beliefs about earthquake quite different to our previous beliefs. Another respondent told that I already believed it is punishment of our sins but after earthquake when I got a chance to interact with people, they were also saying the same thing so my beliefs strengthen even more.

To be acquitted about the motivation behind the change, when people were asked about the reason of change in their belief regarding earthquake, most of the people (54.8%) said they are still stick to their previous religious beliefs as before. A respondent said that I had already read in Quran that earthquake is *Azab* of God and when undergone through this earthquake and situation my belief has become stronger. Another respondent said that I had heard this from my elders that earth is on Bull's horns and when it turns heavy due to our sins it requests to God to shed its weight then God shakes it and we feel earthquake and I still believe on it. Another respondent said that I still believe that earthquake is *Azab* of God and earth trembles when God gets angry with us. A respondent said that I already

²⁷ An Islamic scholar and religious leader of Tabighi Jamat, which is a party of preachers of Islam belonging to Ahl-e-Hadith group of Muslims.

had this belief that it is a trail from God and Molana Tariq Jamil’s speech has strengthen my belief. A respondent said that he had read this in Quran himself and belief that it is *Azab* of God. A respondent said that I had heard this from my elders that earthquakes are punishment of human sins and now after listening to contemporary scholars and religious leaders my belief on it became more firm. A respondent said it is our religious belief and how could I change my belief as it is not a choice of flavor for us.

Some respondents (16.1%) said that their religious beliefs were changed after earthquake because of acquisition of more knowledge about it. A respondent said that before we had experienced this earthquake, we never tried to study or listen about it, although we might have heard in religious sermons, discussions and also have read it in Quran or other religious books/Scriptures. We never paid attention to it as we never encountered it before. But after going through these circumstances we have become more conscious. Wherever we read or hear anything about the world “earthquake” we involuntarily pay keen attention to it. That’s why we have come across new concepts and beliefs about it. Now we have realized that our previous beliefs were not correct so we refuted them and adopted new ones.

Table 4: Reason of change in religious beliefs after earthquake

Responses	Frequency	Percent
More knowledge	5	16.1%
Ulema/Imam	5	16.1%
Self realization	4	12.9%
No change	17	54.8%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

A respondent said that their religious belief about earthquake was changed afterwards when they were clarified about the difference between *Azab* and *Azmaish*. Some of them (16.1%) reported that their beliefs changed after listening to the conversation of *Ulema/Imam* about earthquake that was full of religious information. A respondent said, I had heard in the speech of *Imam-e-Masjid* that the belief ‘earth is on bull’s horns’ is a non-

muslims ideology. In fact it is a Hindu mythology so I discarded it from my beliefs and adopted the one mentioned in Quran that it is punishment of our sins.

Very few (12.9%) of them said, after facing earthquake they realized, we must have committed some mistakes for those God has punished us. A respondent said that I was fascinated by fashion and had the urge to be modern but my family was rigid in observing seclusion. On that day when I left my home in nervousness to save my life I could not take my *Chaddar* (shawl) in haste, my clothes were torn and we had to stay in open air with mixed male and females gathering. That time I really felt embarrassed. I was continuously thinking if I had my shawl with me I would have covered myself. Then I realized that God has punished me.

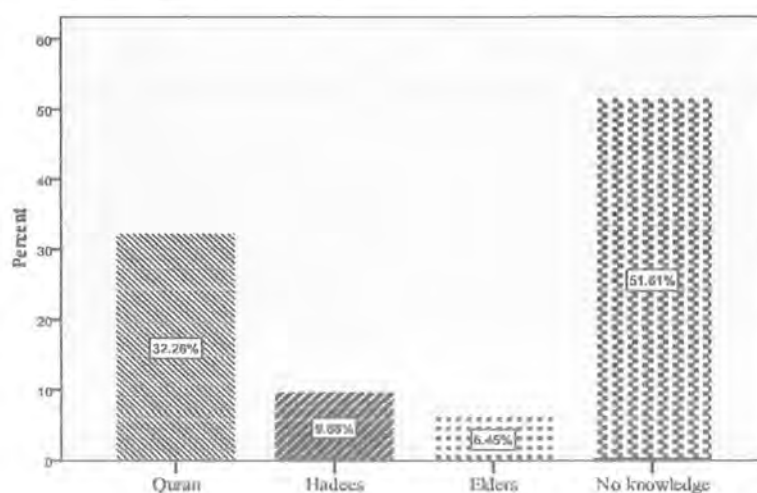
4.3 Before and after religious knowledge about earthquake

To know the difference in religious knowledge of people about earthquake they were asked their previous religious knowledge first. When people were asked about their previous religious knowledge about earthquake, most of the people (51.61%) said that they had no religious knowledge about earthquake before it struck. A respondent said that I was very fond of reading religious books and also have read Quran with translation. I have read many verses in holy Quran about earthquake too but I ignored to remember these verses. But when we ourselves faced the earthquake then we paid attention to that information.

There were some people (32.26%) that gave reference of Quran in answering their previous religious knowledge about earthquake. A respondent said that thanks to God I had read Quran with translation, although not in minute detail but even before earthquake I knew that Allah had mentioned about such earthquakes in *Surah-e-Rehman* (chapter 55 of Quran), by exclaiming that it is due to His anger. Another respondent told that her mother listen *Surah-e-Rehman* with translation so she remembered that she had heard about earthquake in it. Another respondent told that he had read in *Surah-e-Zalzala* (chapter 99 of Quran) where Allah has mentioned that “when the earthquake of the Hour of Judgment will come earth will explode and seem like flying cotton flakes and everything will be destroyed”. Another respondent told that in *Surah-e-Rehman* Allah had sketched similar scene of earthquake that we had experienced. A respondent said that in *Surah-e-Qariya*

(chapter 101 of Quran) I had read that near dooms day people will become errant and they will experience disastrous earthquakes and whole world will come to an end in these earthquakes. A respondent said that I had read in Quran that “what so ever happens to a person is his fate, and there lies a lesson in it for those who had wisdom”. Very few respondents (9.6%) referred some *Hadith* regarding their religious knowledge about earthquake before it happened. A respondent said that I had read somewhere that Holy Prophet said “earthquakes are consequence of wrongdoings and insubordination” and I had also read that “when cruelty, injustice and immodesty increases on earth, God send *Azab* in form of natural disaster”.

Figure 11: Religious knowledge about earthquake before 8th October 2005



Source: Field data

Another respondent told, he had interest in religion even before earthquake and he keenly read religious books. He mentioned a *Hadith* quoted by Hazrat Aysha (*PBUH*) in which she had indicated major signs of dooms day, one of which is earthquake. She had mentioned that near the time of dooms day earthquakes will be frequent and she also pointed out fifteen major reasons of earthquake in which most important was cruelty and injustice. Very few respondents (6.45%) told they had heard religious view point of their elders before earthquake. A respondent said I had heard that “earthquake hit due to transgression and disobedience of people”. These people had heard from their elders about narrations of earthquakes in Quran and *Hadith* but they have not read themselves.

When asked from where you get this knowledge, we came to know that most of the respondents (51.6 %) were those who had no religious knowledge (Quran and *Hadith*) about earthquake before it struck. Some respondents (32.3%) told that it was their self interest in acquiring the knowledge of earthquake by reading Quran and its translation and other religious books. A respondent told I had read this in book "*Fazail-e-Amal*"²⁸. Others said that they had read it in Quran where as some did not remember the name of book but they told that they had this knowledge before. Very few (6.5%) told they had this knowledge passed on through oral tradition. Whereas 9.6% people told before earthquake they were used to watch religious programs on television and they had got this knowledge from there.

Table 5: Source of religious knowledge about earthquake before 8th October 2005

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Self learning	10	32.3%
Oral tradition	2	6.5%
Television	3	9.6%
No knowledge	16	51.6%
Total	31	100%

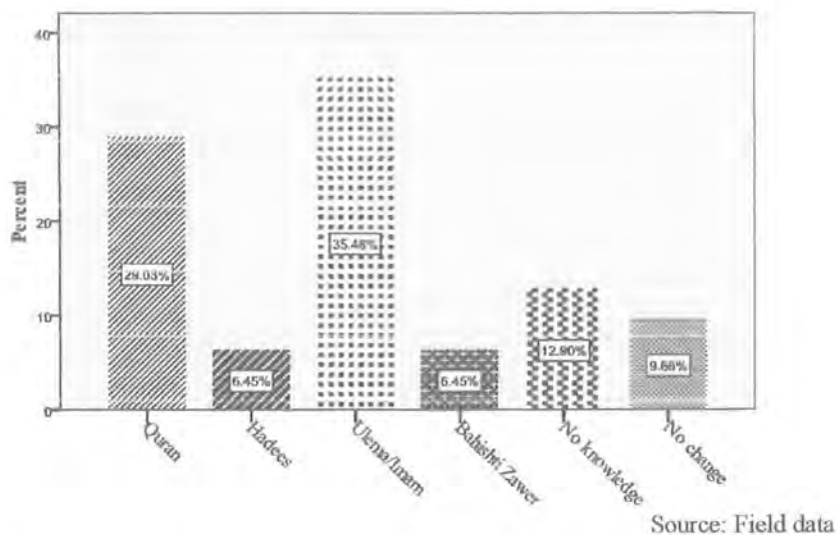
Source: Field data

People were asked did they get religious knowledge about earthquake after earthquake to know whether their interest in acquisition of religious knowledge about earthquake enhanced or not. Some people (12.90%) said that they did not get any religious knowledge about earthquake even after experiencing it. A respondent said after earthquake it turned the hot topic in the country. Everyone was discussing it. *Ulema* and *Imam-e-Masjid* were giving sermons in mosques. Another respondent told I came across the scientific reasons of earthquake after it happened to us. I am sticking to it and don't listen what other things are circulating. Another respondent said that after earthquake we were in such a bad plight that we didn't care to find the reasons behind it. Afterwards we indulge in aid collection and

²⁸ An Islamic religious book that contains interpretation of selected *Haith* and verses of Quran

rehabilitation so we could not read or heard any such thing. Some villagers (29.03%) told that after earthquake they started getting religious knowledge about earthquake by reading translation of Quran. A respondent said that after earthquake his interest to get religious knowledge about earthquake was increased.

Figure 12: Religious knowledge about cartquake after 8th October 2005



He started reading Quran with translation, there he read about causes and consequences of earthquake. A respondent told that after earthquake she was keener to get religious connotations of earthquake. She read in Quran that Allah has mentioned in *Surah-al-Baqra* (Chapter 2 of Quran) and *Surah-ar-Room* (Chapter 30 of Quran) about earthquakes. A respondent told that one day she was reading translation of Quran, *Surah-e-Zalzalah* (Chapter 99 of Quran). She read that “earthquakes are consequences of God’s anger”. A respondent said that it is mentioned in Quran that “When the earth will be shaken with its final earthquake near the Day of Judgment. That Day the earth will declare its information about all that happened over it of good or evil. Because your Lord will inspire it” A respondent said that I had read in Quran that “when God enrages, he has the power to pull up mountains and throw them, and these will suspend in air like a cloud”. Another respondent said that I came across to this information that the people who die naturally in *Ramadan* will not be asked for their deeds in grave; either they were Muslims or non-

muslims. So the people who died in this calamity are martyrs (*Shaheed*) and will be directly sent to heaven (*Jannat*).

A few people (6.45%) told they were acquainted with many *Hadith* about earthquake. A respondent told, after earthquake he read in a *Hadith* that “earthquakes are result of our bad deeds”. Another respondent said that earthquakes are signs of Day of Judgment. Some respondent (35.48%) said they got religious knowledge about earthquake afterwards from *Ulema/Imams*. A respondent told that after earthquake *Ulemas* and *Imam-e-Masjid* keep on sharing religious information about earthquake as well as some groups of preachers came here and they preached that earthquake is a trail on us from God so that we could improve our religious life. A respondent said one day he heard this thing in the speech of *Imam-e-Masjid* that earthquake hit in first “*Ashra of Ramadan*” (first 10 days of the month of *Ramadan*) which is called “*Ashra-e-rehmat*” (10 days of blessing), in these days God can not punish anyone so this was a trail to purify us by washing our sins.

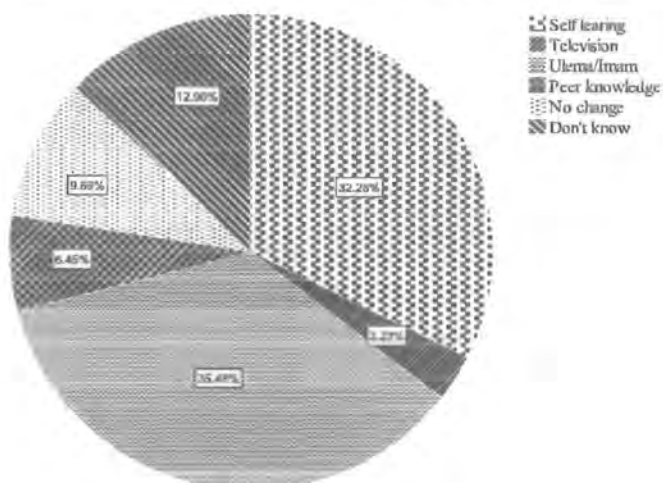
A few number of people (9.68%) said that their religious knowledge about earthquakes is still the same as they previously had. There is no change in their beliefs. A respondent said that this disaster has made us dumb and deaf (*iss azzab ny humain goonga, behra ker dia hy*) with agony so we did not get any new knowledge. Another respondent told that after earthquake we lost our senses. We were severely injured and poignant. How could we focus on these things when we were even unaware of our lost loved ones? Very few (6.45%) said they got more religious knowledge about earthquake from the book *Bahishti Zaiwar*²⁹. A respondent told that I had read in *Bahishti Zaiwar* that “when price of one kilogram flour will rise than fifteen rupees, earth will start trembling with the vehemence of God”. Another respondent narrated the same view as “When the inflation, revolt and tumult will spread on earth, it will lead to earthquake”.

When asked how you come across this religious knowledge, some respondents (12.90%) said that they did not have any religious knowledge of earthquake before it happened. Even after earthquake they did not get anything new because the situation was so adverse. We had left everything. We did not even notice what was happening around us. There were

²⁹ A book of *Fiqh* (Islamic Law) especially for female education on *Islam*

respondent (32.26%) who told that they had received this religious knowledge by self learning of Quran, *Hadith* and other religious books after earthquake. They said after earthquake we were eager to get religious point of view and narrations about earthquake. Hence we paid more attention to it while reading Quran or any other religious book. While 3.23% respondent told that they got this information from religious programs shown on television.

Figure 13: Source of religious knowledge about earthquake after 8th October 2005



Source: Field data

Some (35.48%) said that after earthquake *Ulema/Imam* focused earthquake in their speeches and other religious teachings. So we got this knowledge. A respondent said that I got this religious knowledge from sermons of mosques. Another respondent told that she had heard it from Molana Tariq Jamil. The speech of Molana Tariq Jamil is most popular and adaptive in people of Balakot. While 9.68% told there is no change/increase in their previous religious knowledge after earthquake. Very few villagers (6.45%) told they heard some *Hadith* new to them and also some verses of Quran circulated by peer group. A respondent said that after earthquake we were living in camps where many families were accommodated together. Here we got this knowledge.

4.4 Recitation of holy verses to prevent earthquake

When respondents were asked did they belief on recitation of holy verses of Quran to prevents earthquake, 100% respondents replied, they blindly believe that recitation of holy verses from Quran prevents earthquake. A respondent told that I believe that when we beg help and support from God He always help us. A respondent said there are abundant of *Ayats* (verses) in *Kalam Allah* (Holy Quran) that has the power to prevent disasters. A respondent said that “*Dua*” (pray to God) can change our fate. A respondent said that each word of holy Quran is so dynamic that it has the power to cure diseases and control things. Here he quoted an incident of a *Sahabi* (companion of holy prophet PBUH) hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed (*PBUH*), that once he went to the palace of a king to preach him the teachings of Islam. The king gave him a bottle of fatalist poison to drink. He prayed to God and drank whole bottle of poison and remained safe. The king inspired and embraced Islam. It is a common Muslim belief that recitations of holy verses are best for the prevention of disaster, cure and safety.

When asked which verse of Quran you recite to prevent earthquake some (32.3%) said they don’t know any verse of Quran that helps avoiding earthquake. A woman told she used to recite *Darood Sharief* (Greetings & salutation on Prophet PBUH) frequently because she had heard that Allah listen prayers by means of His Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Table 6: Know and recite holy verses to prevent earthquake

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Ayat-e-kareema	7	22.6%
Loh-e-Qurani	3	9.7%
Istaghfar	6	19.4%
Surah-ar-Rehman	5	16.1%
Don't know	10	32.3%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

Some (22.6%) said they recited *Ayat-e-kareema* (verse 87 of chapter 21 of Quran) to save themselves during earthquake. A respondent told that *Ayat-e-kareema* is a very effective

verse to be safe in afflictions. We were told to recite it as many times as possible to be safe from earthquake. She narrated an event of Hazrat Younas (PBUH) that once he was gulped by a huge fish. When he was in its stomach he prayed to God (his prayer is called *Ayat-e-Kareema*) and immediately fish spew him out safe and sound near shore.

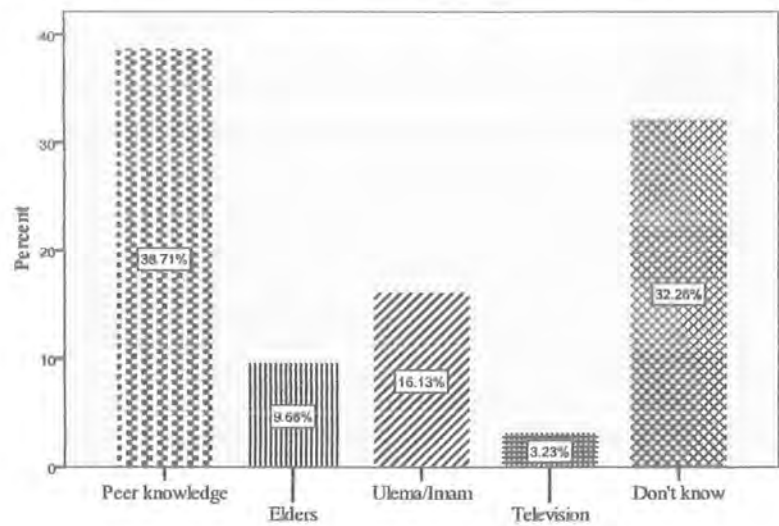
A few people (99.7%) told they had hanged *Loh-e-Qurani* (special words in Quran) in their homes and work places and they look at it every morning to be safe from earthquake. A respondent told that a look at *Loh-e-Qurani* in morning protects us from earthquake. A respondent said that no disaster can come where *Loh-e-Qurani* are hanging (*jis jaga Loh-e-Qurani ho wahan koi aafat nai a sakti*). Some (19.4%) recalled they started saying *Istaghfar* repeatedly after earthquake to stop aftershocks. A respondent said we were reciting *Istaghfar* frequently because this earthquake was a trial on us. We were begging mercy from God to pass through this trial safely. While 16.1% said they recite *Surah-ar-Rehman* (chapter 55 of Quran) every morning to stay safe from earthquake. A respondent said that I and my family daily listen to the *Surah-ar-Rehman* in loud volume early in the morning to keep us safe and our home from earthquake.

Respondents were asked about when they came to know about these holy verses that prevent earthquake. In response to this 32.3% persons replied they did not know any such verse, whereas 67.7% told that after earthquake they came to know that these holy verses can prevent earthquake. They also told they were familiar to these holy verses even before earthquake but their efficacy to prevent earthquake was revealed to them afterwards. None of the respondent claimed that he/she knew this before earthquake.

When asked about their source of information of verses that prevent earthquake, some respondents (32.26%) said they do not know any holy verse whose recitation can prevent earthquake. Whereas 9.68% people told our elders advised to recite these verses to protect ourselves from earthquake. Our elders are more devoted to religion than us. They better knew it. Some respondents (38.71%) told that after earthquake they came to know about these verses from their peer group. A respondent mentioned that some people advised me to keep on reciting these verses to prevent earthquake when they were living together in camps. While 16.13% respondents told that after earthquake *Ulema* were telling in their sermons as well as *Imam-e-Masjid* were making announcements that people should recite

these verse to prevent further earthquake. Very few of them (3.23%) said they have heard in a television program that these verses can be recited to prevent earthquake.

Figure 14: source of information about holy verses to prevent earthquake



Source: Field data

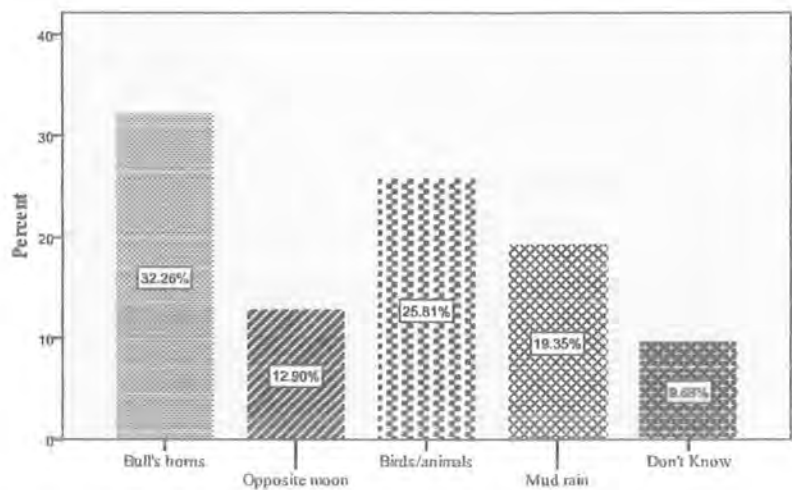
4.5 Pre and post superstitions about earthquake

This area had a history of earthquakes of various intensities so it was needed to inquire about prevailing superstitions before earthquake. When asked did they hear any superstition about earthquake before it happened, few respondents (9.68%) told that before earthquake they have not heard any superstition regarding earthquake. A respondent said I don't believe on superstition, that's why if I have ever found someone spreading superstitions I did not pounder over it. Many respondents (32.26%) told before earthquake they had heard that earth is carried on bull's horns. When bull becomes tired he shifts the world from one horn to another and in this process people on earth experience earthquake. While 12.90% respondents said, when the moon rises from opposite direction, there are chances of an earthquake during that month.

Some (25.81%) said we had heard from our forefathers that late at night crying and noise of birds (sparrow, crow) and animals (dogs, cats, foxes, wolves) is inauspicious and indicate earthquake. A respondent told for a month before earthquake, we heard that birds

and animals make lot of noise like they were crying every day. We were told that there must be something bad going to happen in Balakot. The day when earthquake hit us, human were shouting and crying in the same manner as these bird and animals did. Some people (19.35%) recalled that a week before the earthquake heavy rain was observed one night, when we wake up in the morning everything was covered with mud. We were told that it was a mud rain last night. We have heard from our forefathers that mud rain is a dangerous sign of earthquake.

Figure 15: Superstitions related to earthquake before 8th October 2005



Source: Field data

When people were asked do you believe on these superstitions, many respondents (45.2%) said they believe on the authenticity and functioning of these superstitions. A respondent told that we believe on these symptoms because we ourselves had seen mud rain, and the noise of birds and animal. A respondent said we were confused, why these birds and animals are making much noise at this time of night, and our elders provided us with the justification that it is an indication that some calamity will hit us. That time we didn't take it serious but when this earthquake hit us, I started believing it. A respondent told that our elder and wise people understand these symptoms of disaster but new generations deny them. I believe it is true because those people are more religious and pious then new ones and have life experiences. There were many respondents (45.2%) who do not believe on superstitions because these are self created thoughts of people and we consider it *Biddat*

(innovation in religion) in religion. Another respondent said although I do not believe on superstition but it is fact that few days before earthquake there was heavy mud rain in the village but I don't think it has any connection with earthquake. A respondent said we are Muslims and we believe that what so ever happens to us is from God and we do not believe on these stories. Whereas 9.7% respondents told that they had not heard any superstition about earthquake.

Table 7: do you belief on these superstitions

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	45.2%
No	14	45.2%
Don't know	3	9.7%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

When asked about their source of information of these superstations, a few people (9.68 %) told that they had not heard any superstition about earthquake where as remaining 90.32% respondents told that these superstitions are passing through oral tradition. There were two groups of people; believers and non-believers; both had got knowledge of these superstitions from their elders. One group said that as people of older generations do not have much knowledge about disasters that is why they relate them with natural events. Whereas other group said that because older people have more wisdom and experience and they are more pious than us that is why they had the ability to understand and interpret signs shown by Allah. But before earthquake there was no other source of information in the area other that oral tradition.

It was considered that when people hit by calamities they relate it with other things happenings around them. For that reason it was asked that what incidents and occurring were related to this earthquake. It will also highlight new superstitions those were evolved after 2005 earthquake. When people were inquired about superstitions associated with earthquake after 8th October 2005, only 5.6% respondents negated that they have heard any such irrational story. They associated this repudiation with the potency of their conviction;

and claimed that they are firm believers of God. They consider their lives are subject to the verdicts of God. Everything happens to them with His will, so omens never bothered them at all.

Table 8: Superstations about earthquake spread after 8th October 2005

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Percent of cases
Fraud in elections	5	9.3%	16.1%
Celebration party of elections	12	22.2%	38.7%
Mendicant was telling	9	16.7%	29.0%
Angels were discussing	8	14.8%	25.8%
Dream of Qari Awais	7	13.0%	22.6%
Cracked moon risen from opposite direction	4	7.4%	12.9%
Prayer mat was laying inverted in Mosque	1	1.9%	3.2%
Mud rain	2	3.7%	6.5%
Crying of birds/animals late night	3	5.6%	9.7%
Nothing	3	5.6%	9.7%
Total	54	100%	174.2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source: Field data

Whereas 9.3% respondent were of the view that few days before earthquake bi-elections took place, for that contestants from all political parties tried to tempt their voters to get their votes. The voters being over smart double crossed them. They took compensations from all parties and gave an oath over holy Quran to every contestant that they will vote him. The followers of this myth are determined that the earthquake was a corollary of this false promise of holy Quran, upon which God enraged and punished them.

A hefty number of respondents (22.2%) associate another superstition with these bi-elections; they crafted their view around the festivity of the winning contender. They argue that it was third night of *Ramadan* when the victorious candidate organized a lavish get-together to celebrate his triumph. The party went over night including such activities those are considered *Haram* (taboos). On the very next morning the gigantic earthquake hit, and all those people buried under the building of that hotel in which party was organized, because God did not like their act that instead of adulating Him for their success they

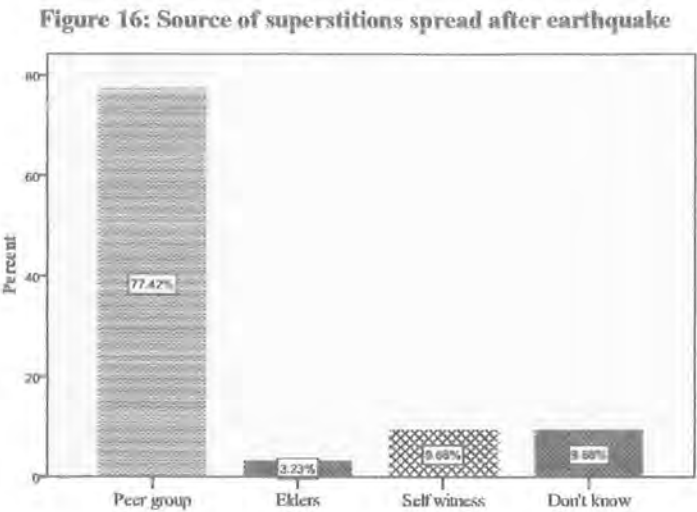
indulged in peccadillo. Some respondents (16.7%) said after earthquake several people were discussing about a mendicant (*Darwaish*) that was roaming around the streets of Balakot before *Jumma* (Friday) prayer and advising people to reform themselves and try to be virtuous because *Qayamat* (dooms day) is about to reach. But no one took him seriously and mocked at him that he is a barmy and the very next day earthquake hit. People think in a way that God had sent some angel in mendicant's disguise to make us vigilant of our deeds but we could not comprehend.

Some respondents (14.8%) asserted that they had heard from people that the day before earthquake two angels appeared on the mountains wearing white gowns; they were too heightened that could be seen at distance. They were gossiping with each other about these mountains on which they were standing. One of the angels asked, "What if I turn upside down this mountain", the other said "no there are also pious people and innocent children in this village they will die". After that they both smiled and vanished, and next day earthquake smacked. There was a religious person in this village named Qari Awais. Villagers say, one day before earthquake it was Friday. After Friday prayer Qari Awais informed people that last night he dreamt that a gargantuan earthquake had hit the area, the whole village was smashed causing deaths and injuries to a lot of people and his own family and himself died in it. While 13.0% people belief that such dreams should not be shared, otherwise they come true. Qari Awais has shared it with us so we became victim of his dream and he also died.

Inhabitants of Balakot also revealed, they have heard it from their fellows that during that month the new moon arose from opposite to its usual direction and there was a visible fissure in it. While 7.4% people believe that when a cracked moon rises from opposite side, earthquake walloped. Whereas only one respondent (1.9 %) of my research told me that the very day at morning time people saw prayer mats lying inverted in the mosque. She said this is the sign of God's resentment, so shortly after that incidence on the same day earthquake destroyed us. In all the myths described above, there was one thing common, neither any of my respondents, nor by who they were told are the self witness of any occurrence.

But 3.7% respondents told that a week before to the earthquake there was *Lusberi* (mud rain) at night, and in the morning everywhere was sludge. They had heard this from their elders that whenever there is mud rain, earthquake knocks. When I asked other people about mud rain, they also assure that it really happened but they did not associate it with earthquake. Another superstition that was observed not only by the believers but by the other community as well was about crying of animals/birds late at night. Vey few respondents (5.6 %) told that they had been hearing for a month before earthquake that cats, dogs and foxes kept on crying all the night. Sparrows and crows were also mournfully chirping whole night. They said that their elders have told them that crying of animals and squeaking of birds late at night is inauspicious and indicate occurrence of earthquake.

When people were asked about their belief regarding these superstitions, 12.90% said that they had not heard or notice any superstition regarding earthquake or they were skeptical about these belief. Whereas 9.68% said that they believe that these are signs and reasons of earthquake. The proponent of this school of thought also claim that they themselves had seen mud rain and heard noise of birds and animals that is why we strongly believe that it must have some hidden truth. Most of the respondent (77.42%) said that they do not believe on these superstitions. A respondent told that after earthquake science had provided us reasons of earthquake that is why I don't belief on these superstitions any more and it was favorite time pass of people after earthquake to create and circulate such stories.



Source: Field data

When asked about their source of information for the superstitions spread after earthquake, few respondents (9.68%) said that they did not hear any superstition after earthquake. While 9.68% respondents claim that they are self witness of these symptoms of earthquake like mud rain, birds/animal noise and destruction of Park hotel. But most of the people (77.42%) have heard these superstitions from surrounding people because these days this topic was discussed frequently. Only few respondents (3.23%) said that we had heard it from our elders.

4.6 General religious beliefs after earthquake

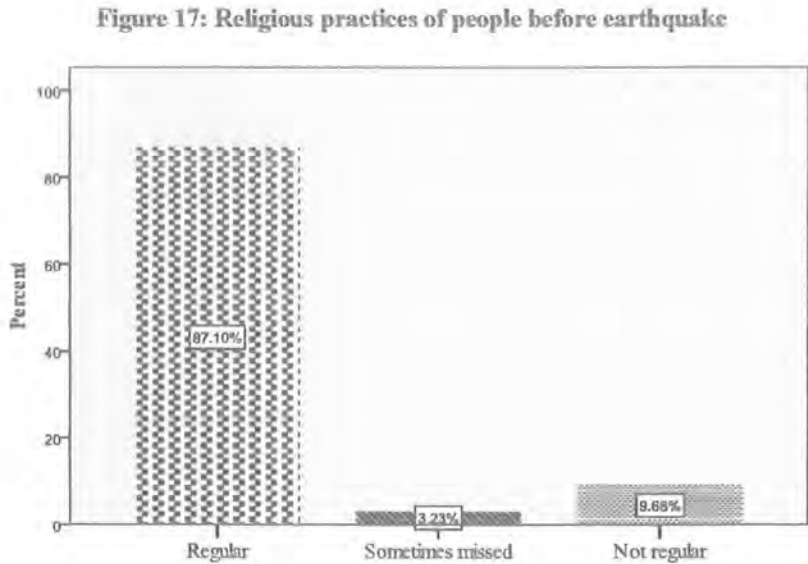
When people were asked about their religious beliefs before and after earthquake they told their beliefs are same as these were before earthquake. There is no difference in it and their beliefs will remain same till death. They told that they had firm belief on greatness and oneness of God. He is the creator of whole universe and He is capable of doing anything. He can punish us as well as reward us. What so ever happens in this world is by His will, without His permission nothing could happen and what so ever He does there is logic in it that we could not understand but He knows it. They said we are followers of His last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and we believe that Muhammad PBUH was the last prophet of Allah and after him no other prophet will come. Quran-e-Pak was the book sent to Hazrat Muhammad PBUH from Allah and Quran is a complete code of conduct for Muslims. If we follow teachings of Quran and Prophet Mohammad we will be never lost and will remain close to Allah.

They said we belief that the life in this world is temporary and everybody has to die and will be waked up again on the Day of Judgment. That day we will be given reward and punishments for our good and bad deeds. They said we believe on all prophets of Allah (124000) and their books, although we do not read them but we believe that those are also books of Allah (Torah, Zaboor, Anjeel). We also believe on existence of angels, fate, life after death, heaven and hell. We believe that life on earth is temporary and life after death is eternal. They said we only worship Allah and seek His help and support because no one else could help us. Our life and death is in control of Allah and He is owner of our fate. A respondent said the one who disobeys orders of Allah and His Prophet Mohammad PBUH undergoes strict punishment.

When asked how your religious beliefs before and after earthquake were, all the respondents said that their religious beliefs were firm as these were before earthquake. There is no difference in our faith and belief (*Eman and Yaqeen*) we are still true believers of God and Islam. Although we are indulged in worldly activities and do not fulfill our religious duties the way we used to perform before earthquake but it has not changed or weaken our beliefs. When asked about the basis of their religious beliefs before and after earthquake, all the respondents said that we are Muslims and the base of our beliefs is teaching of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It was passed on to us through our elders in the form of Quran and *Hadith*. A respondent said that although now Muslims are divided in different sect but all are believers of Allah and Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his teachings.

4.7 Religious practices before and after earthquake

To know the difference in religious life of people their routine of religious practices was asked to find out change. Although people explain it in detail but the focus is on their punctuality in daily prayers, keeping fasts in the month of *Ramadan* and Recitation of Quran. The percentage of responses is based on these three religious activities because these duties are considered performance of whole Islam.



Source: Field data

When people were asked about their religious practices before earthquake 87.10% respondents told that they were very strict and regular in performing their religious duties. A respondent said before earthquake people of Balakot were religiously bigoted, not only me but every villager. Every family was punctual in offering religious performances. She said I myself have been regularly offering daily prayers, recitation of Quran and fast in *Ramadan*. A respondent said that since my childhood I never missed any *Namaz ba Jamaat*³⁰, fast and daily recitation of holy Quran in the morning. A respondent said in their family waking up late in the morning is not liked. We were very strict in punctuality and regularity of our prayers, recitation of Quran, fasting, *Tasbihat and Wazaiif*³¹. A respondent said that before earthquake I was strictly following religious practices. I went to mosque for each prayer, listen to *Khutba, Ders and Tableegh* (preaching of Islam). I whole heartedly joined religious gatherings. In every *Ramadan* I sit in "*Aitakaf*"³².

Very few respondents (3.23%) said that although they were good in religious practices and tried to practice all but they sometimes missed due *Ebadat*. A respondent said that I always tried to offer my religious obligations and duties, but if sometimes I could not, I pray to God that He forgive me. Some respondents (9.68%) said that they were not very punctual or regular in offering *Namaz* and following other religious practices. A respondent said I am a laborer and whole day I work hard to earn for my children so could not carry out religious practices very regularly but I wish that God forgive me for this negligence.

When asked did their religious practices changed just after the earthquake, some respondents (25.81 %) said they improved themselves in performing their religious practices just after earthquake. They said that along with daily prayers and fast, they also offer *Nawafil*, reciting holy verses of Quran. A respondent said after earthquake we were continuously praying to God. We started more recitation and begged forgiveness of God. Some respondents (22.58%) told that they maintained their religious practices even in early days of earthquake. A respondent said that he could not perform his religious practices

³⁰ Offering prayer in mosque with gathering of other Muslims

³¹ Repeatedly reciting a verse or Surah of Quran for praying to God

³² In the holy month of Ramadan many people willingly seclude from the material world and keep on worshipping God. Mostly it is practiced in last ten days of Ramadan but it could be for whole month.

only for two days after earthquake because there was no food and water but after wards again he started punctually. A respondent said that earthquake came in the holy month of *Ramadan*, our home was broken and all family members were injured but still I did not left a single fast or prayer. All the day we remained busy in rescue and rehabilitation of people with fast. Although in initial days there was nothing to eat and drink but still I kept all fasts.

Table 9: Religious practices just after earthquake

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Improved	8	25.8%
Same as earlier	7	22.6%
Reduced	2	6.5%
Discontinue	14	45.2%
Total	31	100%

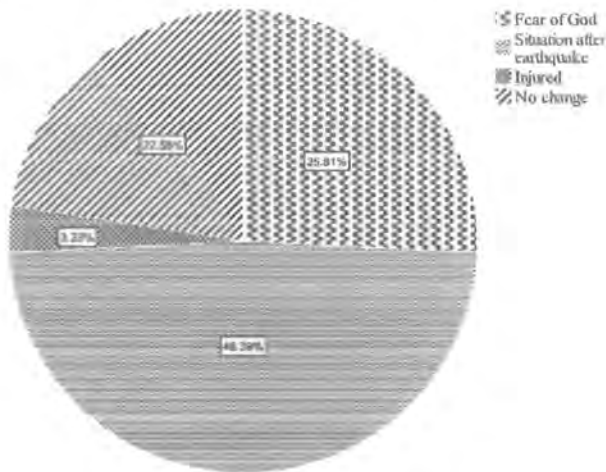
Source: Field data

Many people (45.16%) told after earthquake they discontinued their religious practices. A respondent said definitely a change came in our daily religious practices because we had been hit by a deadly disaster. Even we forgot God and religion in that distress. A respondent said that after earthquake it was announced that people should stop offering religious activities because they could not maintain *Wadu* (Ablution) while helping to dig out and bury corpses to avoid epidemics. So we discontinued our religious performances. A few people (6.45%) said after earthquake situation became so adverse that we were unable to manage our religious activities. So these were reduced.

When inquired about the reason of change in religious practices just after earthquake some respondents (22.58%) said we did not left our religious practices in any condition and circumstances because we were in a trail from Allah and we had to prove our self. A respondent said that it was only support of Allah and our affiliation to Him that we survived in that disaster. Otherwise all of us would have gone insane. Some people (25.81%) told in those days they were more feared to God so their religious practices improved. A respondent told that those days they were only concentrating on Allah (*un dino tu Khuda k stwa kuch nazar nai ata tha*) for their help and safety. So they indulged

themselves more in religious activities. A respondent said that they were so scared of death (*mout ka khof itna tha*) that their religious practices improved.

Figure 18: Reason of change in religious practices just after earthquake

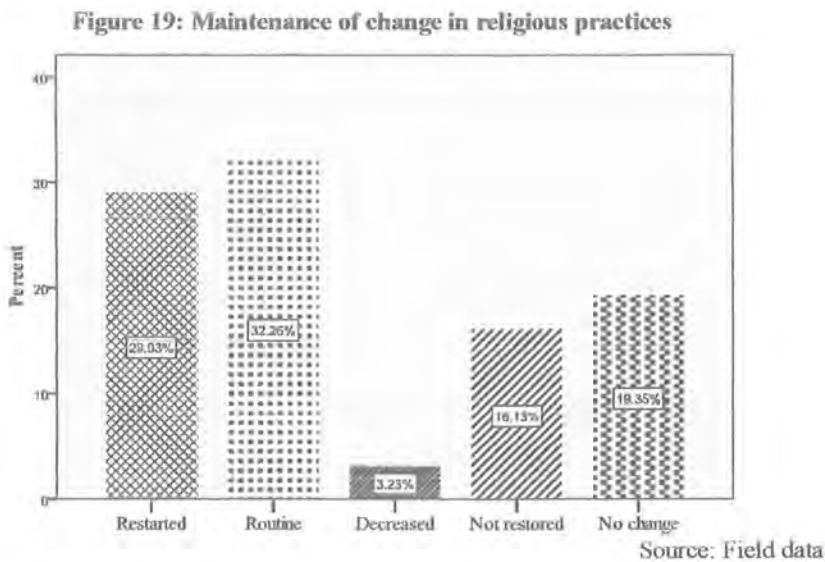


Source: Field data

Many respondents (48.39%) said that their religious practices discontinued because of the situation after earthquake. A respondent said that we had lost everything. We were in pain and grief then how could we maintain our religious practices. Another respondent said there was left nothing to eat and drink no water for *Wadu* (ablution) and *Gussal* (bath) so it was not possible to continue our religious practices. A respondent said that in those days we were in shocks and even unaware of ourselves then how could we maintain our religious practices. Another respondent said that after earthquake abundant of aid arrived the village and we started running after it so we forget God and our prayers. A respondent said that I thought that Allah has sent such an *Azab* on us then why should we offer His prayers and keep fasts. Very few (3.23%) of them said that they were severely injured in this earthquake so were unable to perform any religious activity.

When asked did the change in their religious practices maintained we came to know that some people (29.03%) who had discontinued their religious practices due to miserable situation and circumstances after earthquake restarted their religious life as they used to live before earthquake, after the situation settled down. Out of 32.26 respondents, 25.8% were improved and 6.5% reduced their religious activities during earthquake. They said

when situation became normal they reformed themselves and started practicing Islam in their routine life. A respondent said that just after earthquake I was so fearful to God that I became more religious but slowly the effect went away and I return to normal routine religious life.



Some respondent (19.35%) said there was no change in their religious practices during and after earthquake. A respondent said that we remain attached to God and keep on begging from him in all situations and He always helped us. A respondent said that in stressful situations, we only get relief in prayers to Allah. Very few respondents (3.23%) said they were practicing Islam before earthquake but their practice decreased prominently after earthquake and it is further decreased now. Few respondents (16.13%) discontinued their religious activities just after earthquake but restored it afterwards. A respondent said that we are disheartened (*dil uth gaya hy*), that is why we do not perform our religious activities.

To know change in religious practices of people after earthquake their recent routine of the performance of religious activities were asked. When asked how your religious practices are now, some (12.9%) said their religious practiced are now improved than before earthquake. A respondent said that now my attentions towards worldly matters are reduced and all the time I wish to be in worship. It gives satisfaction to my heart and calms my soul. A respondent said when people go through some disaster there are two type of effects

on their religious life; one is they become more religious and other is they leave religious practices at all and there are chances of deviation as well. But thanks to God that He kept all of us on right path and we became better than previous. Most of the people (61.3%) have same religious practices as they did before earthquake. A respondent said there can be no change in our religious practices in any circumstances because we are true Muslims and give priority to *Ebadat* (worship) over every other thing.

Few people (12.9%) have reduced their religious practices now. A respondent said our spirits were also damaged in the earthquake. We do not perform religious activities happily rather do it forcefully that is why it is reduced now. A respondent said we got new technology (TV, computer, mobile). These things grasped our attention more that is why we are less considerate to religion. A respondent said now we are less fearful to God in our hearts that is why our religious inclination is reduced. A respondent said that after earthquake situation became worst so could not perform religious practices and afterwards we indulged in worldly activities. We were afflicted by bad luck that is why we reduced religious activities.

Table 10: Religious practices of respondents now

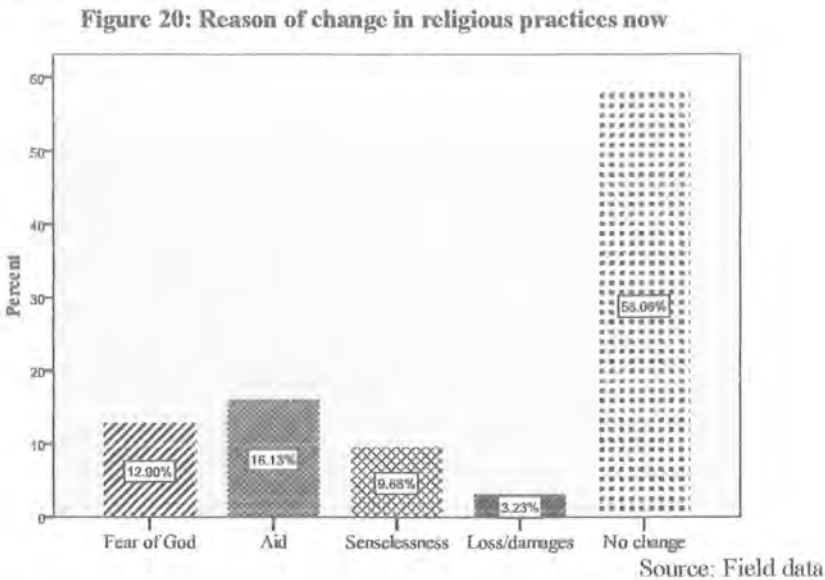
Responses	Frequency	Percent
Improved than before earthquake	4	12.9%
Same as before earthquake	19	61.3%
Less than before earthquake	4	12.9%
Very less than before earthquake	3	9.7%
Discontinue	1	3.2%
Total	31	100%

Source: Field data

Very few (3.2%) discontinued their religious practice. A respondent said we lost everything, our homes were destroyed in front of us, our family members and relatives were buried under debris. They were shouting for help but we were helpless. Our people were dying in our hands. We were hungry, thirsty, sitting in cold under open skies. Our children were weeping and we could not give them food, shelter then a time came when we

were not weeping and crying for help our heart became hard with such agony and we started facing the situation. I think it is the fear of death and *Qayamat* that kept us performing religious activities before earthquake. But in this earthquake we faced both and that made us fearless. That is why we left religious practices. Some people (9.7%) practices religion less than before earthquake. Another respondent said now struggle of life is increased because we had to rebuild ourselves that is why we can't manage our religious activities most of the time.

When inquired about the reason of change in religious practices, some people (12.90%) said due to fear of God their religious practices improved. A respondent said we have seen death very closely that made us extremely scared and we started efforts to please Allah so that we don't experience such a disaster again. A respondent said if we had not established a connection with God we would have turned insane that time (*ager us waqt hum khuda sy lo na lagaty tu pagal ho jaty*). Most of the people (58.06%) agreed on no change in religious life. A respondent said that our religious performances were disturbed just after earthquake but when situation settled we continued our religious practices with same zeal as was before earthquake.



Some (16.13%) said due to aid their religious practices were disrupted. A respondent said that we remained busy in collection of aid so greedily that we forget our prayers and

gradually left our practices. A respondent said I don't know of what type of flour of aid we had eaten that led us astray from religion (*pata nai aid ka kaisa ata khaya hy k deen sy door ho gy hain*). Another respondent told that we had lost everything in this earthquake, when aid distribution started we tried to get as much as possible and get asylum in this effort we forget to carry out our religious practices. Few people (9.68%) felt senselessness towards religious life. A respondent said that after going through this calamity we became senseless towards life and religion so we could not perform them with interest and regularly. Another respondent said that our hearts are dead now (*hamary dil he mur gy hain*). We think what benefit we got for our previous *ebadat*.

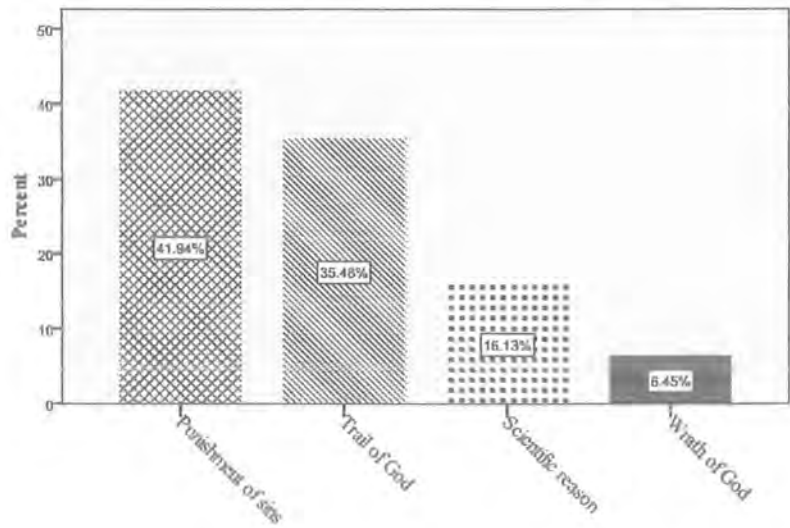
Very few villagers (3.23%) said God snatched everything from us, our family members, homes, and livelihood. It was month of *Ramadan* and we were with fast when this earthquake struck us. Allah had sent such an *Azab* on us that we became beggars and dependent on others. We were those who use to give and help poor people and needy. But now we are dependent on aid. We were pious and religious people but Allah sent this disaster on us. Then why should we keep on praying to him. That is why we discontinued our religious practices and we do not celebrate *Eid* even.

4.8 Reasons of earthquake in this area

When asked about their opinion about the reason behind this earthquake, many people (41.94%) said this earthquake was punishment of our sins. A respondent said, definitely we had made mistakes for which Allah has punished us. Another said until the people of Balakot were fearful to God, there was no earthquake but when they left His path this earthquake hit us. A respondent said that we were very sinful. We were doing wrong deeds openly and nobody bothered to stop others and that's why this earthquake came here. A respondent said what happened in elections and in the celebration party of elections was enough to enrage God and earthquake was send as punishment of our sins. Another respondent said everyone in the village knew what so ever was happening in the hotels but nobody dared to raise an objection. Especially those who are involved in this business deliberately overlook such matters to make their money. They were punished for their silence over transgression and greed of money.

Some people (35.48%) said it was trail from God (Allah *ny humain azmaya hy*). A respondent said there is always a hidden betterment in every trail of God. He must have thought something better for us and that's why this earthquake came. A respondent said that Allah sends disaster on people to test either they will remain His servant or disobey Him. If people remain connected to Allah and try to improve their moral and religious life then it is *Azmaish*, but if people became worse and start denying Allah then it is *Azab* on them. So it was trail from God. A respondent said that our *Molana sahib* told us that it was *Azmaish* on us not *Azab* because Allah did not send *Azab* on Muslims and good people.

Figure 21: Opinion of respondents about reason of this earthquake

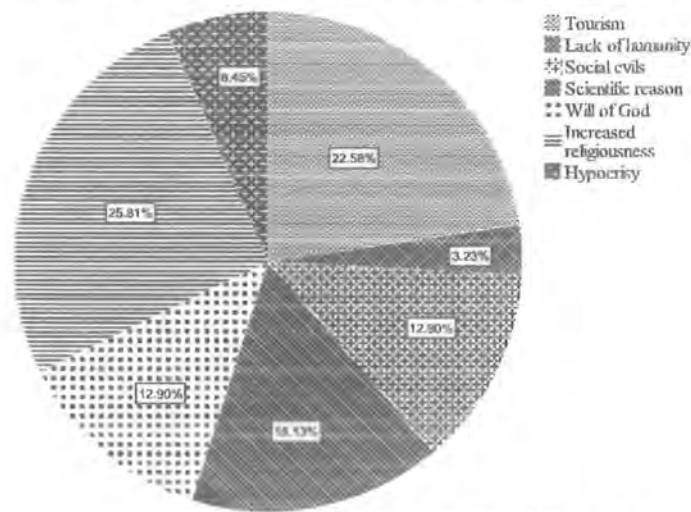


Source: Field data

Some (16.13%) give scientific reason of earthquake. A respondent said there were some plates under mountains that moved and caused earthquake. Another respondent said earth exploded due to the slipping of plates under it. Very few (6.45%) called it *Azab* of God. A respondent said people had crossed the limits of bad deeds and cruelty that is why God sent *Azab* on us. Another respondent said our consciousness didn't bother us to raise a voice against oppression. We let the people do whatever they want either unlawful or unethical. Due to our silence and selfishness we were struck by *Azab* and we were deserved it.

When people were asked why earthquake hit this area, 22.58% said this region was famous for natural beauty and sceneries. It was center of tourism. There are many luxurious hotels in the village. When people from different areas came here for picnic and tourism, they bring their girl friends and licker and do illicit activities in these hotels. The owners and workers of hotel do not stop these people or forbid any illicit activity in the hotels for the sake of their money. There are few months of summer in which people come for tourism. In this season they keep high rents and visitors pay them

Figure 22: Opinion about reason of earthquake in this area



Source: Field data

Very few people (3.23%) said we remained Muslims by name only but not by heart. We perform *Ebadat* but we didn't pay *Zakat* and alms as these religious activities involve spending money on the poor. People of Balakot were so rich but they did not take care of poor people due to lack of humanity. The people do not give share in inheritance to their daughters. That's why earthquake hit this area. Some respondents (12.90%) said that social evils increased in this area. People were committing sins openly and boldly. Nobody stopped each other rather people felt proud on their wrong deeds. That's why earthquake hit us. Girls were following fashion, children were disobedient to elders, dish, TV, and VCR has spoiled young generation. People were rich so they were indulged in worldly life and had forgotten God and His way. While 16.13% respondent gave scientific reason that it is a hilly area. The plates under the mountains moved and it caused earthquake.

Few respondents (12.90%) said it was will of God, because nothing happens without his order. He might have some plan behind this and we are helpless in front of him. Some villagers (25.81%) said the people of Balakot were religiously better than people of other areas. Religion was flourishing here. In other regions of Pakistan people are so corrupt and sinful. They have forgotten Islam and Allah. That is why Allah sent trial on these people so that other people can get lesson from it. Very few respondents (6.45%) said hypocrisy was increased here. People offer prayers and perform other religious activities to show off. A respondent said that what sin would be greater than cheating God (*iss sy bada kia dhoka ho ga k hum khuda sy dhoka kerty thy*) by offering prayers to hide their sins.

4.9 Link between earthquake and social evils

When people were asked is there any link between earthquake and social evils, 74.2% said yes, when people of an area exceed the limits and social evils (immodesty, debauchery, fashion, unveiling, hypocrisy, cheating, greed and theft) increase in society, God sends disasters like earthquake. A respondent said just like the tribe of Hazrat Loot, Hazrat Nooh and Hazrat Salaih (PBUH), God sent disasters because they were indulged in unforgiveable social evils. A respondent said that God has mentioned in Surah-e-Hood (chapter of Quran) that He will destroy His disobedient people. Some (25.8%) said that no there is no link between the two because if that will be the case then earthquake would have not hit Balakot rather other areas of Pakistan. Natural disasters are a scientific phenomenon occurring in all the regions of world. I think it is related to climate and geographical conditions of an area rather than social evils.

The reason to ask this question was to know that either social evils increased after earthquake or reduced. When people were asked about social evils prevailing in Balakot before earthquake 33.3% respondents said there were no social evils in our society rather we were very religious and virtuous people. While 18.8% people said the only social evil of the area was unethical business of hotel and tourism in this region of natural scenic beauty. And 6.3% people said injustice was there. Rich people were so selfish that they do not take care of poor and needy. They exploited the needs of poor. A few (6.3%) said people are hypocrites. They don't love each other by heart like the way they pretend. But internally they keep malice and grudges for each other. Very few (2.1%) said people were

becoming greedy and materialistic because most people of Balakot were rich and everybody was in a race to cross each other in material things. In this competition they were doing anything to be richer either right or wrong.

Table 11: Social evils in this area before earthquake

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Percent of cases
Hoteling/tourism	9	18.8%	29.0%
Injustice /selfishness	3	6.3%	9.7%
Malice/grudge	3	6.3%	9.7%
Avarice/materialistic	1	2.1%	3.2%
Hypocrisy	4	8.3%	12.9%
Back-biting	2	4.2%	6.5%
Irreligiousness	4	8.3%	12.9%
Falsehood/deception	2	4.2%	6.5%
Fashion/unveiling	4	8.3%	12.9%
Nothing	16	33.3%	51.6%
Total	48	100%	154.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source: Field data

While 8.3% said people were hypocrite, they were apparently religious but internally doing all bad works. They were showing sincerity on face but internally they were having enmity for each other. They were not religious by heart but just show to others. Some of them (4.2%) said they were habitual of backbiting. On face they appreciate each other but in his absence discuss his bad qualities while 8.3% said people were going away from Islam and its teaching. They were no more regular in religious activities and more indulged in bad deeds. And 4.2% said people were liars. They cheat and deceive each other for self interest. Few people (8.3%) said that fashion was flourishing here and females started going out without veil.

When people were asked about social evils after earthquake they gave multiple answers. Some respondents (19.0%) said after earthquake fashion and unveiling has increased in the area. Girls are becoming modern and they don't observe seclusion now. They said that

women are roaming in markets purposelessly without veil. There is no difference of *Mehram* (blood relative or to whom marriage is tabooed) and *Namehram* now. Women are exposed to everyone now.

Table 12: Social evils in the area after earthquake

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
Injustice/selfishness	8	8.0%	25.8%
Malice/grudge	8	8.0%	25.8%
Avarice/materialistic	13	13.0%	41.9%
Hypocrisy	5	5.0%	16.1%
Back-biting	2	2.0%	6.5%
Irreligiousness	9	9.0%	29.0%
Falsehood/deception	15	15.0%	48.4%
Fashion/unveiling	19	19.0%	61.3%
Nothing	5	5.0%	16.1%
Love marriages	4	4.0%	12.9%
Illegitimate relations	5	5.0%	16.1%
Communication media	5	5.0%	16.1%
Destroyed social/moral values	2	2.0%	6.5%
Total	100	100%	322.6%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source: Field data

While 5.0% people labeled the mediums of entertainment and communication as social evils. They said that the moral values of young generation are destroying due to exposure to the entertainment and communication technology like television, dish antenna, computer, internet and mobile phone etc. They do not respect their elders any more. They had access to foreign channels. On internet they watch immoral programs and boys and girls friendship on phone. Few of them (8.0%) said people had malice and grudges in their hearts and are not well wisher for each other. Apparently they express love and affection but internally they dislike and want to harm one another. People had lost everything, when they got aid everyone wanted to get more than others. Now every man in the village had grudges in their heart for others for aid.

Another social evil mentioned by 15.0% was lies. People tell a lie with each other for their interest and to deceive others. After earthquake every one cheated and deceived each other to get aid and they have been telling lie to get more aid and now they are used to it. Even son tells a lie to father and father to his son for their interest. There were 13.0% responses for the avarice and scrambling in people. They told that people were so greedy that no one was sincere even to his brother. Everyone wanted to snatch from others. People had become so greedy in acquisition of aid that they snatched the rights of others and started theft and scrambling. A respondent said that now people have become apathetic (*ub tu logon ka khoon safaid ho gaya hy*).

While 9.0% people told after earthquake people became less religious and they were averting from the path of religion. Now they are no more rigid and regular in their religious performances. They had no fear of God. They do all bad things boldly and openly. Very few people (4.0%) indicated a social evil that spread after earthquake was amour and love marriages. They said that after earthquake a trend of love marriages emerged because of the freedom, girls and boys started interacting with each other and then forced their families to marry them where they want. They said it was not happening previously and this incident has spoiled social environment as well as moral values, while 5.0% respondents were of the opinion that no social evil was found in this area, neither before nor after earthquake. The people of this area were peaceful and religious before earthquake and still they are better than people of other areas.

Other 8.0% respondents said people were selfish, everyone was running for his own benefits and they do not bother to help and support the needy. They only consider their interests. They became so cruel and don't justice with others. While 5.0% respondents told after earthquake people got the freedom. They were modernized due to which they are indulged in illegitimate relations and 5.0% said that people had crossed the limit of hypocrisy, because they even cheat God. They do religious activities and help others not for sake of God but to show off to other people. They are internally corrupt but by showing their religious practices they try to cover up their illicit activities. They are very good, virtuous and pious apparently but in actual they are devils. A respondent said that people even offer their prayers to show off (*log namaz b dikhaway ki perhaty hain*).

Some (2.0%) said people were habitual of back-biting, they praise each other on face but in absence, discuss weak points. Everyone has complains with others but they do not show it in front of him rather they discuss it with others when he is not present. They claim, look I am so good I am bearing his all badness but do not tell him. While 2.0% respondents said that after earthquake social and moral values had destroyed. People do not pay regard to each other. They do not help and support each other. The respect for elders has vanished. Before earthquake every relation had its value and a due respect but now people do not bother any relation.

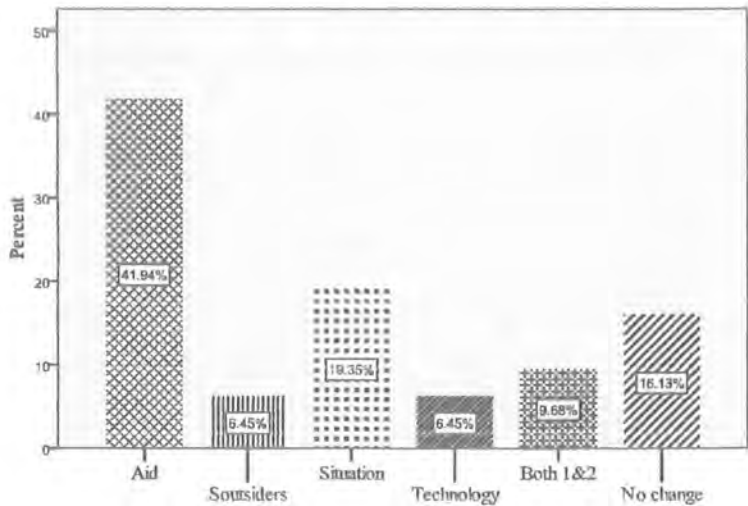
When people were asked, is there any change in social evils after, the maximum number of respondents (83.9%) said yes, after earthquake situation was getting worst in the area. After facing this ruthless calamity the people have become fearless to God, death and *Qayamat*. They say few evils were prevailing in the society in past and they were hidden and neither common nor at extreme. But now when they are exposed and their hidden evils are reveled to others, they have started doing wrong openly and fearlessly. Whereas 16.1% respondent said that there are no social evils in this area people are as good as they were before earthquake.

When people were asked about the reasons of spread and increase in social evils 41.94% respondent said after earthquake many NGOs and INGOs came in this area from different parts of the countries. They spoiled the social environment of our village. They introduced fashion and unveiling there. They also gave abundant of aid and unnecessary money to people that made the people more puerile. They indulged in luxuries and that is why they had forgotten God. A respondent said that the people who came from NGOs/INGOs exploited our young generation specially girls for the sake of aid. When aid was distributed for females, the girls got the chance to go out and interact with unknown males. Women started obliging aid distributors to get undue favors that led to corruption. Even Girls ran away with NGO staff or did court marriage with them.

While 6.45% respondents said after earthquake villagers had exposure to outsiders. They adopted many bad habits from them. A respondent said that by looking at modern people coming from outside our own children got spoiled too (*bahir sy any waly modern lerky lerkian dykh ker hamary bachy bhi khrab ho gy*). While 9.68% respondent has the opinion

that the root of social evils after earthquake is both; effect of aid/NGOs/INGOs as well as influence of outsiders, because outsiders came through NGOs/INGOs to give us aid. Whereas 16.13% said that there is no change in our social environment everything is as good as before.

Figure 23: Reason of change in social evils after earthquake



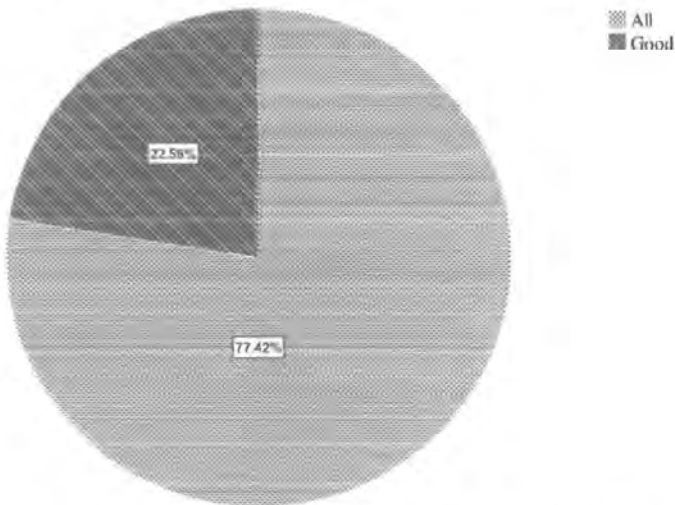
Source: Field data

Some (19.35%) said the reason of increase and spread of social evils was hunger and bad plight of people after earthquake because all the people were hand to mouth after earthquake. Those who were living very luxurious life and had abundance of wealth became dependent on aid. While 6.45% said after earthquake, exposure to latest technologies like mobile, internet, computer and dish became common here. Mobile is a curse because it spoiled the people too much and now children watch movies and songs on computer and internet due to which their moral values are destroying.

When people were asked which type of people affected more in this earthquake, 77.42% said that all types of people were victims of this earthquake. A respondent said that Allah had not differentiated between good or bad, rich or poor, male or female, young or old, virtuous or sinful. All are destroyed by this earthquake. Whereas 22.58% respondents said that good and pious people are affected by earthquake. They said that most of the martyrs of earthquake were innocent children who were not sinful yet and other were also virtuous people. They justify their views by saying that even mosques have been martyred in this

earthquake. Then how we can say the affecties were bad people. Where as a plaza in commercial center was not even touched by earthquake. A respondent said that mostly rich people were affected in this earthquake because they had large homes and have their own businesses which were destroyed and they came to footpath. The rich people were more religious than poor. Where as poor people were already not very good in character and they were less affected.

Figure 24: Type of people more affected in this earthquake



Source: Field data

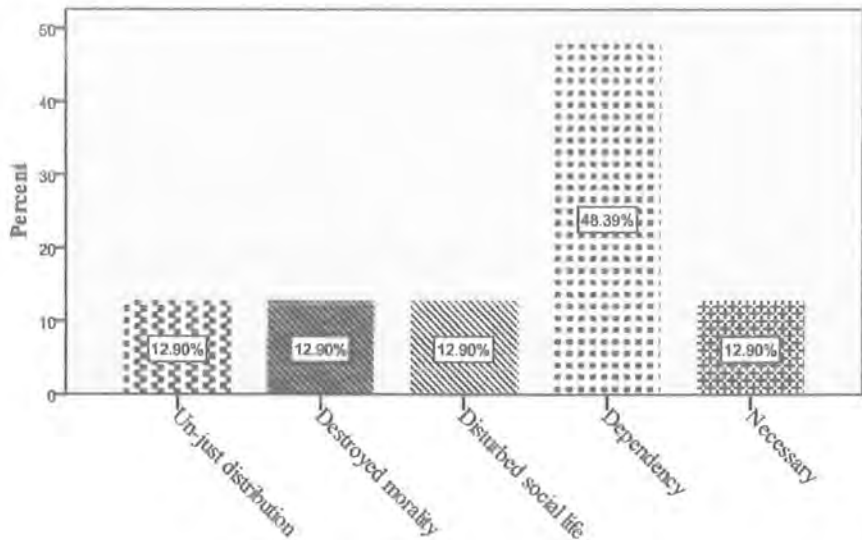
4.10 Views about aid

When people were asked about their acquisition of aid, 100% respondents accept that they were getting aid but everyone was complaining about its unequal and unjust distribution. All the respondents were of the view that they are given very less aid where as others had obtained much more than them. A respondent said the wicked and clever people got aid repeatedly while simple and gentle people were not even given their right. A respondent said that a significant portion of aid has been wasted in conflicts among people and it did not reached to the deserving people adequately. A respondent said the native people associated with any organization stored many things in their homes during distribution process or they were repeatedly giving aid to their relatives. Also the people having access stored the goods beyond their needs and afterwards sold them in markets. Many goods were rotten. They threw it and wasted lots of aid.

When people were asked about their ethical consideration and behavior in the acquisition of aid, again all respondents said they had very sensible attitude towards attainment of aid but other people had not been following manners. A respondent told, I said to my family that we will not go to collect aid but if someone came to help us at home we will get it. Because our self respect did not allowed us to stand in queue and wait to get aid like beggars. A respondent said that we were needy so whenever they announce for distribution of any goods/services/cash we went there with all required documents of verification and whole day stay there in lines to wait for our turn and then get aid.

When people were asked their views about aid the people gave their different views, 12.90% said that its distribution was unequal and unjust which caused many internal issues among people of village and also introduce ill behaviors amongst us. A respondent said unjust distribution is a major cause of all other evils in our village because it motivated people to adopt wrong path. While 12.90% people said it destroyed their morality because people crossed their limits to get more and more aid. A respondent said that I don't know what type of flour that we eaten was which had taken us away from religion (*peta nai kaisa ata tha jo hum ny kahaya or deen sy door ho gay*). A responded said that the aid proved to be a bad omen for us and we all are afflicted by it (*hum per aid ki manhoosat per gai hy*).

Figure 25: Views of respondents about aid



Source: Field data

While 12.90% people said it had disturbed our social life by changing our norms and values. The greed to get more and more aid separated people from their families. Before earthquake people were living together with peace and love but now even brother is enemy of his brother. It has demolished joint family system, love and care for each other by rendering people in the race of acquiring material goods. Many people (48.39%) said it created greed and made people dependent on it. A respondent said that abundance of aid was sent here from different countries and almost all type of necessities was provided. When people look those goods, they started running behind aid all the time and tried to collect it as much as possible. At that time no one desired to work because everything was being provided by different organizations. It made people idle, even those who were working in other areas left their jobs and came back here and started living on aid.

A respondent said that I think there should be no aid; it was the cause of many bad things. If we were left on our own, we would have restored our life, but now all are living a dependent life because they had forgotten their habit of hard work. While 2.90% people said it was good and necessary at that time because people left everything and would not have survived if timely aid and rescue would have not reached them. A respondent said we are obliged to all those who had send this aid and supported us and felt our pain at the time of difficulty. A respondent said that aid was very necessary at that time but if it would be for few days it will be better.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Balakot earthquake

On 8th October 2005, at around 8: 50 AM when people of Balakot were just starting their daily chores or were sleeping in their homes after taking *Sehri* of *Ramadan* an earthquake of 7.6 magnitudes hit the mountainous ranges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Many of them were trapped in their homes and killed while sleeping. According to Ashtiany (2009) the holy Quran also describes the sudden nature of disasters like earthquake very well. This earthquake affected almost every household in the village. Physical and economic losses were huge for the people of every status and it will not be an exaggeration to state that people lost what so ever they had in terms of their material possessions.

On the other hand the loss of lives was not less as well due to the unexpected nature of earthquake. It was so sudden and immense that nobody found a way to escape. The people of Balakot generally believed that the one who survived in this earthquake was just by luck or by will of God. A large number of people (74.2%) now believe that people martyred in this earthquake were very fortunate as they achieved the rank of *Shaheed*, while the survivors are left behind to face miseries in this sinful world. It was documented that all the female respondents (54.83%) gave above mentioned statement where as this expression was found less (19.37%) among male respondents.

5.2 Feelings & reaction to earthquake

According to the witnesses, earthquake was so sudden that they were unable to understand or do anything for their own and family members. It was found during interviews that on different places earthquake was felt differently. The people residing on the mountain describe earthquake as a loud explosion and they thought somewhere earth had burst. Villagers (19.4%) express their feelings as the earthquake was like an unexpectedly terrible explosion. After earthquake they were unable to see around because dust has darkened the sky and it seems like night in the day (*aisa luga jaisy din main rat ho gai hy*). When dust

settled down, the people came to know that the mountain near Belyani exploded with a huge blast and its stones dropped on the village.

A large number of people (64.5%) told that the earthquake was easily identifiable. Upon research we came to know that even the people standing at open places felt visible jerks of quake and the intensity of shocks gradually increased that led to the massive destruction. Whereas according to few responses (16.1%) the quake was so sudden that they were unable to comprehend it and that is why they remained indifferent. They told that neither had they heard any sound of blast nor they witnessed any movement of earth but suddenly they saw all the houses started falling down. It was a blast or earthquake people have nothing to do with it, they only know and lament on one thing that they had lost everything they had and top of all their loved ones. They thought that *Qayamat* has been sent on them and there was no way to escape.

At that time the people of Balakot took earthquake as punishment of God even though they were unaware for what they are punished because everyone claim of being true Muslims and obedient servant of God. The earthquake had destroyed the foundations of their homes. The roofs fall down upon them from above causing great destruction. The earth cracked into pieces and then joined again. The rifting portion swallowed many inhabitants on it. They were able to do anything to save themselves from the catastrophes. The villagers got frightened with the terrible situation and started running out of their homes in fear, those who could manage their sense tried to save their family members as well.

It is believed that in case of calamities people usually start praying to God. According to US Government Printing Office (1970) when an earthquake hit people get frightened with the shaking of earth. They curse their sins and pray to God that they will reform themselves. Some try to help others in such situation while others stand still like goofs or behave like zombies. But when villagers were asked about praying to God only 3.23% could remember to do this, rest of the respondents said that we even forgot that there is a God who can help us. Even when earthquake halted and they tried to reconcile their senses and they wanted to pray to God but found themselves in short term memory loss. They say, we could not recall verses of Quran completely and properly. It took us time to recover our senses; then we started praying to God for help and safety of our families.

5.3 Victims' plight and scenario

According to the respondents it was dark all around them and they could not see anything after earthquake. It took around 20 minutes to restore visibility then they found themselves in different situations. Those who were severely injured and under debris were crying and shouting for help, where as those who were less injured or survived started searching their family members. There were people (19.35%) whom were shocked upon what had happened to them. This mass destruction had made people selfish about their own families and they started behaving inhumane manner. None of the respondent told if she/he had even think about anyone else than own family. A male respondent told that we were running to search for our family members those were out of home at that time and they did not bother to help those we found on our way.

Disaster affects different people differently as a result their behavior and response towards it also varies. According to Oliver Smith (1999, p. 163) "Disaster is the phase in which people experience a vast spectrum of extreme emotions like anxiety, grief, anger, fear, loss, frustration, terror, gratitude, relief, and resignation in all their shadings and intensities". Very few people stay indifferent even after experiencing such great catastrophes. Luthar (2000) and Norman (2000) proclaimed that such kind of behaviorally resilient individuals could be emotionally disturbed. After few hours, people realized that they are making a mistake. They should save at least those who seek help in their way instead of searching missing people. A respondent said that I was searching for my sisters those were in school at that time but could not find them even after hours of earthquake then I decided to help others and wish Allah to save and return my sisters to home as a reward of this.

This day was worst for the people of Balakot. They had noting to eat and drink; even the water in river Kunhar dried that day. Their homes were destroyed. Due to severe after shocks they were sitting in small groups in open fields barefooted, bareheaded with ripped clothes. They were helpless under the open sky in harsh winter season. It rained heavily with hail and thunder storm that night. The villagers of Balakot memorize this day as chastisement (*Azab*) of Allah. It seemed that God was so angry with them and He punished them severely for their sins but they were skeptical about for whom sins they are being punished. They spent whole night in storm and rain in open air. They started thinking that

whole world is destroyed and doom's day has arrived. They were continuously thinking about their deeds. Now they were disappointed and thought, "We will all die of cold, hunger and thirst till morning". However generally it is believed that the almighty Allah does not punish those who are just and the one who follows the right course. He saves those who are righteous from the natural disasters. As the Quran says: "*It is incumbent upon Us to save believers*" (Al Quran, 10:103). Therefore it is the evil that has crossed the extreme conditions that come under the influence of such natural disasters.

5.4 Rescue work and search operations

As a result of earthquake the roads leading to the village were blocked and bridges were broken in a way that no outsider could approach them. All communication media were disconnected and outer world remain unaware about what had happen with the people of Balakot for a long time. Perhaps the building "Margalla Towers" collapsed in the federal capital Islamabad grasped center of attention and rural areas were left behind the sight. Initially people started rescue work with self help later on volunteer groups, Pak Army and rescue team from all over the world came and started rescue and relief operation thoroughly.

5.4.1 Rescue work conducted by local people

The respondents (35.48%) said that they started rescue work immediately after earthquake although they were in a worst plight themselves. They were less injured or safe physically but agonized emotionally and psychologically. At first they were unable to help their loved ones under rubble and who were crying for help. There were no tools to rescue them or provide them first aid. Also they were not skilled enough to meet such gigantic disaster. Somehow they forgot their own pain and injuries and started rescuing their relatives by making small rescue groups. They themselves managed to lend a hand to their people to start rescue work immediately after earthquake. Even women joined hands with males to rescue their family members and their native villagers. Ursano *et al.* (1995) affirmed that the community can serve as a physical and emotional support system for disaster survivors. Moreover, Echterling (2001) found that many disaster survivors established social support networks among themselves to facilitate the recovery process.

The villagers were crying and shouting in pain. Their family members were buried under debris in front of their eyes. The fact that the survivors had completely lost their belongings left them deprived of tools and skills to provide first aid and rescue people. This added to the injuries of people and casualties even more. They were confused to whom should they help first because everyone was crying and shouting with pain and asking for help. At first everybody was trying to find and evacuate their own family members but after four to five hours they realized that instead of searching for the missing people they should at least try to save those asking for help there. They stopped searching for their family members and started rescuing those asking for help. In the same context an extensive literature is available that witnesses a high degree of self-sacrifice, social support and helping behavior after natural disasters (Bolin & Stanford, 1998; Fischer, 1998; Form, Nosow, Stone & Westie, 1958). These researchers found that survivors were able to take care of themselves without the predicted panic and disorganization. Survivors often initiated the rescue and relief efforts, searched for the injured and the dead, and began cleanup activities.

5.4.2 Rescue work conducted by Pak army

Initially people were helping themselves. The very next day Relief operation by Pakistan Army started. They threw food, medicines, blankets, tents by helicopters. When packets of aid were dropped by helicopter people started running after it. People quarreled upon the goods of aid because everyone was hungry and feeling cold. In this scramble much aid wasted. The earthquake turned many white collared people into beggars. After three days of earthquake rescue teams from all over the country and from other countries also reached there. But now the smell of corpse was spread all around and causing epidemics. All the ways leading to village were blocked with rubble. The rescue teams had to reach the village by foot so it took longer to reach the victims of earthquake and provide goods and chattels to the affecties. Still many organizations managed to come here to help and rescue them. They evacuated the people covered under debris, buried the corpses, treated the injured, took them to hospitals; provided them with food, shelter and medicine.

When rescue teams arrived they provided food, medicine, first aid, tent, bedding etc. to the victims. They also started search operations to evacuate people still under debris with the

identification of villagers. They transported injured to the hospitals of Mansehra, Abbottabad, Peshawar and Islamabad. Initially they were digging out only those places where people were alive and seeking for help. Later extensive search operation started that excavated all the injured people as well as dead ones. Still there were many missing people in the village.

The earthquake ruined Balakot completely leaving no mark of identification. The joint family system, the collectivist cultures of the Balakot and frequent gatherings of village folks bonded them together in the time of difficulty. It helped the survivors to cope with the grief of people who were left alone. Diener *et al.* (1997) have suggested that people from individualist cultures have less social support during troubled periods whereas people from collectivist cultures have a safer structure that produces fewer people who are isolated and depressed. But this disaster has destroyed the collectivist social culture of Balakot by rendering people dependent on aid. The lust for acquisition of more and more aid had made people enemy to each other.

5.5 Religion

The focus of the research was on the effect of earthquake on religious life and activities of people. The people of Balakot were renowned as they were religiously rich and strict. When they were asked about their beliefs about earthquake, almost all of them explained their beliefs in the light of religion. According to Davis and Wall (1992) people assign meaning of traumatic events in terms of religion. The religious beliefs strongly influence the philosophy of a community and their culture. Infect religious beliefs occupy a central position in the life of many people around the globe. These beliefs provide them the natural codes by which they live in a specific culture. The religion is mainly defined as a relationship between human being and the supernatural.

5.5.1 Faith or basic beliefs of Muslims

The people of Belyani were Muslim by religion. No other religion in minority was dwelling the village. The faith and basic belief of the people of Balakot was similar to the Muslims of any other area. Every man who recites the *Shahada*; "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad PBUH is His Prophet" is considered to be Muslim. The Muslim

doctrine consists of "Six Articles of Faith." Every Muslim should adhere to these six articles of Islam. They believe in oneness of God, Who has neither progeny nor any partner and no one else has the right to be worshipped but Him alone. They believe in the prophets as messengers of God, and the final messenger was Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

They believe in the existence of the angels who obey Him, and act according to His commands. They also believe on divine books revealed to His prophets that provide guidance to the mankind. Among these books, Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Muslims believe in the 'Day of Judgment' when every human being will be resurrected and Allah will judge the deeds of people according to their faith and will award them heaven or hell. They also believe in predestination that Allah knows everything that happens, what has happened and what will happen in future in the universe and He records everything what man do.

5.5.2 Religious practices

There are two groups of Muslims in Balakot; the majority is of *Sunni* where as *Ahl-e-hadith* are in minority. The people of Balakot claimed that they were practicing Islam to their best. They were offering daily prayers, reciting holy Quran, going for *Jumma* prayer, and keeping fasts of holy month *Ramadan*. The performance of these three religious activities was considered the whole Islam. The people who were regular in the performance of these activities and their women were observing *perdah* were considered true and obedient Muslims. All the Mosques have loud speakers and *Azan* (call for prayers) enchants the entire village. During the holy month of Ramadan people indulge in *Traweh* prayers enthusiastically and those who could sit on *Aitakaf*. People are also aware about other religious activities like *Hajj*, *Zakat*, *Eid-ul-Fitr*, *Eid-al-Adha*, *Eid Milad-al-Nabi*, *Muharam*, *Shab-e-Miraj*, *Shab-e-Qader*, and *Shab-e- Barat* and celebrate these events with varying religious zest according to their family traditions.

5.5.3 Source of knowledge about religious beliefs and practices

The basic source of religious information for Muslims is Quran and *Haidith* that is teachings of God and sayings of His prophet Muhammad PBUH. But there are very few people who got this knowledge on their own. The most prevalent sources of religious

knowledge are *Ulema* and *Imam-e-masjid*. These people are considered authority on religion and people consult them for clarification on religious matters. Only 9.77% of my respondents had in-depth knowledge of religious beliefs and practices because all of them were belonging to the families of religious authority. The rest of the people (90.33%) had got religious knowledge through oral traditions and belief on what so ever their elders had told them. The religious authorities also have influence on the knowledge of people and it was increased after earthquake. The various parties of preachers of Islam also arrange huge congregations in the village for *Dars* and *Tabligh* of Islam. In the mosques *Khutba* (sermons) were delivered by *Ulema* and *Imam-e-Masjid* after Friday prayer.

5.6 General and religious beliefs about earthquake

When people were asked about their general beliefs about earthquake, almost all of them (96.5%) explained their beliefs in the light of religion regardless of their age, education, sect, sex and economic status. Some of them (32.3%) also quoted references of Quran and *Haidith*. It is commonly seen that most of the people when try to understand calamity are led towards the supernatural powers. Within the frame of religion, they find explanation and assign meaning to the traumatic events (Davis and Wall, 1992). The power of religious ideology can even be observed among the individuals who reject the most organized religions. They also apply religious and supernatural ideas while thinking about their purpose of life and/or what would happen to them after death (Bering, 2011).

5.6.1 Earthquake a natural scientific phenomenon

Only 6.5% respondents were of the view that the earthquakes are a natural scientific phenomenon, and none of them was female. They were highly qualified (Masters) persons and said that it is caused due to the movements of plates under earth. According to the disaster theory "Natural disasters are created by an ever changing Earth, and are not criminal in nature, they are merely changes in the Earth's rotation, and its environment." Birkland (1996) also points out there is a human "dread" of disaster; otherwise it's a natural phenomenon. They said that although scientists can scientifically understand the mechanisms by which earthquakes take place and measure their intensities and magnitudes but still we cannot predict their exact time of arrival. They said that even if it is a scientific

phenomenon but it could not happen without the order of God because He has control over everything. If He wanted He could have stopped the movement of plates.

Within the scientific view point they had religious interpretation as well that it is will of God and the only way to avoid earthquake and other disasters is heeding the Creator and living according to His guidance. According to Ashtiany (2009), in both ancient and modern times, people try to find the reason behind natural events in terms of myths, religion and psychology. There is a persistent belief that science has failed to protect people adequately and as a result people search for alternative interpretations of natural events. Natural disasters for instance earthquake is not in the control of mankind. The 21st century science has the latest technologies and intelligence to solve the most complicated equations of various natural phenomena. The intensity and magnitude of every earthquake is different every time and it takes toll of life along with severe economic losses.

5.6.2 Sign of doom's day

When people were asked about their general views about earthquake and other natural disasters 6.45% said these are signs of doom's day. They claimed it is mentioned in the Quran that when the Day of Judgment will reach the frequency of natural disasters and earthquakes will increase in which whole world will be destroyed. This eschatological imagery is found in Quran and is well described in the chapter 99: "The Earthquake". Bauckham has also argued that texts in some of the Old Testament *pseudeptgrapha* points towards the cataclysmic earthquake at the end of time when the God will manifest Himself finally. This event is termed as *eschatological theophany*. The growing numbers of natural disasters in the last few decades give a picture of the arrival of the doom's day. In Islamic point of view, the earthquakes will increase as the time approaches near to the end of world. God has also said in the Bible prophecy that natural calamities would grow in frequency and intensity as the end of the age would approach to shake the people out of their complacency and will lead them to seek Him (Matthew, 24:7).

5.6.3 Act of God

All the respondents have firm belief that earthquakes are acts of God and are not in the control of human beings what so ever scientific advancements could be done. Although

they had referred to different religious connotations of earthquake but behind all of them one belief is common that these are acts of God. It is the part of the faith of Muslims that God can do anything and nothing could be happened without his order. Both historic and contemporary references knot the important cultural aspects of religion to disaster in which events are described as “acts of God” and sometimes “bolts from the blue” (Dynes and Yutzey, 1965; Hewitt, 1997). Natural disasters and other “acts of God” are not totally unanticipated and unpreventable. The belief common among the general population that God or some supernatural force drives disaster drives them to appeal for the help and expect direction from God. Many studies have been conducted around the world and across various cultures and that belief was found to be true (Murton and Shimabukuro, 1974). Alam (1990) demonstrate that the belief that God is the cause of disaster is not restricted to the Islamic theology only rather it exists in other religions as well like in some of the Christian communities.

5.6.3.1 Punishment of sinners

Interpretations of the earthquake as a punishment from God were expressed by many of the informants before and after earthquake and it had also been a key theme in media debates in the earthquake aftermath. It could be noticed from table that the percentage of people who had this belief increased 38.71% to 48.39% after earthquake.

Table 13: Comparison of pre and post religious beliefs about earthquake

Responses	Before earthquake	Before earthquake	After earthquake	After earthquake
Punishment of sins	12	38.71%	15	48.39%
Trial from God	5	16.13%	12	38.71%
Wrath of God	5	16.13%	2	6.45%
Earth on Bull's horns	9	29.03%	2	6.45%
Total	31	100%	31	100%

Source: Field data

They told that before earthquake there was a general concept that people of our village are very pious and religious but after earthquake we came to know about reality. They were

cursing the business of hotels in this area. They said it was the root of all sins in Balakot but nobody ever took stand against it. The people were so hypocrites and senseless that inspite of knowing all these things they remained silent. Some of my informants (29.03%) were explicitly Quranic when referring to the earthquake as a punishment, comparing it to the torments sent by Allah on some of the nations to wipe out their sins from earth as described in Quran. "(The apostles were sent) thus, for thy Lord would not destroy for their wrong-doing men's habitations whilst their occupants were unwarned" (Al Quran, 6:131). "And how many of the generations did We destroy after Nuh! and your Lord is sufficient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to His servants' faults" (Al Quran, 17:17).

5.6.3.2 Divine retribution or revenge

The people who still consider (48.39%) that earthquake is punishment of sins they have concept of divine retribution or revenge in their minds which supports their belief. When I asked them there are other areas in Pakistan where people seem more sinful than people of Balakot. They said God knows better about His people. We think our sins had crossed the limits even though they were not visible to others. Apparently we were very true and strong Muslims but infact we pretend to be to hide our wrong doings. God must had disliked this act and send this earthquake to us. Many passages of the holy Bible strongly support the retributive model especially those in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. Under this theodicy disasters are credited as an expression of divine wrath broke on sinful people. The clerical writers of Italy often used the term "flegelli" that is 'scourges of God' in their writings to describe all modes of disasters that are supposed to be visited on sinful people (Logan, 2002, pp. 99).

5.6.3.3 Torment of God

The respondents who relate earthquake with the punishment of sins they ascribe disasters to the human violation of divine law suggests that these disasters are not natural *per se*, but are human-driven disasters. They believed that there must be our mistakes or sins for what we are punished. A respondent said that Allah did not punish innocent people (*Allah begunahoon ko saza nahi deta*). Umm Salmah, one of the Prophet's wives, said: I heard the Prophet say: "When sin becomes rampant among my *Ummah*, they will be subject to

an inclusive punishment from Almighty Allah.” They believe that when we disobey Allah, He becomes angry and send punishment to us. A respondent said it is true and we believe that Allah has promised with His last messenger Muhammad that He will not send torment on his *Ummah*. But it does not mean that Muslims could do any crime and sins. Another respondent said that when Allah found us exaggerating in sins He caught us unaware that we could not escape to save ourselves.

5.6.3.4 Wrath of God

A new approach is needed in order to change the mentality of traditional communities regarding the concepts that disasters are God’s will or expressions of His wrath. In research 16.13% respondents said that before being effected by earthquake they had believed that it is the wrath of God. When Allah enrages on sins of people He sends *Azab* on them. As people of Balakot claim that they were very religious and obedient to God before earthquake, this reason of earthquake make them uncomfortable. Also the people came for rescue and relief they reproach local people. A respondent told that these people were came here for our help but they started teasing us by saying that you people were not good that is why Allah had sent *Azab* on you. These charges made people dishearten and they started search for the justification of their situation.

Mean while many *Ulema* and renowned religious scholars came in the front and they interpreted the arrival of earthquake in terms of religion. Molana Tariq Jamil was one of the scholars who came in village and gave sermons on this topic. After being influenced by the preaching of *Ulema* out of 16.13% respondents 9.63% changed their belief and adopted those were more appropriate to them. But 6.45% still belief that it was wrath of God because we had not returned to Allah after earthquake rather we are astray even more. They explain their view point with the sayings of Hazrat Ali (PBUH) that if people became pious after disaster, it will be a trail for them but if they became more sinful than its chastisement of God on them.

It is necessary to clarify misconceptions such as those relating to fatalism and God’s will about whether individuals will be saved or sacrificed to disaster, and that mosques and holy places are immune to damage, as was believed during the Izmit earthquake in Turkey

in 1999 and the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. But in 2005 earthquake in Balakot all the four main mosques were martyred. For that people developed a belief that mostly pious and innocent people are died in this earthquake because mosques are also destructed. In seeking guidance from the Holy Quran we find more references to God's kindness than to His wrath. However an Iranian seismologist Ashtiany (2009) points that no statement of Prophet Mohammad PBUH (*Hadith*) declares that earthquakes or other disasters are expressions of divine wrath or the consequence of disobedience to Allah or infidelity. Instead some of his *Hadith* show the need for disasters preparedness to prevent their happening.

5.6.3.5 Warning of God

The people who believed that earthquakes are punishment of human sins they also believe that this earthquake was a warning for the bad folk to repent on their sins. As such kind of natural disasters teach the saved individuals the lesson of their lives. Unless we take it in this context, the human beings will never learn a lesson from their mistakes or from the mistakes of others. According to the holy Quran natural disasters are punishments for the evils and unjust people and to set up the examples for the rest of mankind. People said our belief even strengthen after earthquake when we saw that people had not improved and learnt lesson from this earthquake. Instead of seeking forgiveness from Allah we show our anger to Him on what had happened to us. For that reason the believers of this group increased after earthquake. A respondent said Allah did right to us we deserve for it (*Allah ny hamary sath sahi kia hy, hum isi qabil th*).

Many Muslim scholars highlighted that we the Muslims have heard so many times about the unlawfulness of these things, but our ears are gradually turning deaf. Our hearts are not ready to accept Islamic advices. Our turning away from Allah results in awaking Allah's anger and this is reason Muslims countries are suffering from various calamities now a day. One must remember that Allah always warns His people first and then gives His servants enough time to repent on their sins. If they still don't pay attention to it then Allah shows only a little spark of His anger that results into cities and countries left into rubbles. So the natural calamities should not be labeled as punishments sent by Allah; instead these are warning to test the Muslims of rest of world, to wake them up and to face the reality. It

is worth remembering that Allah punishes the disbelievers only and He tests only His believers by warning them.

5.6.4 Will of God

When people were asked about their views about earthquake their initial statements were either it is an “act of God” or “will of God” because cognitive restructuring can be seen in Islam as one of their fundamental beliefs that is the belief in divine preordainment (*Qadar*). According to this belief when people experience some kind of misfortune, it occurs by the order and decree of Allah. Therefore they should try to remain patient and seek guidance from God as He will compensate them for their material loss (Hanbale, 1995). This furnishes that a true Muslim therefore does not get upset by any hardship, illness, fatigue, or grief because of the hope of compensation from God.

A few respondents (22.58%) said that we believe that there must be some hidden logic of God behind this earthquake. A respondent said that although there were huge loss of lives in this earthquake but they had got more than they had in the form of aid and relief. Lots of luxurious items were brought in aid for the rural areas of Balakot where people were unaware of their use because they had never seen such utilities before because they had no access to city where such things are sold as they were living in traditional cultures. After earthquake they got access to all the facilities of life. New roads were constructed in the village. Another respondent told that after earthquake I witnessed some people saying, we pray to God for another earthquake so that we should get more aid (*Allah ker ek hor vari zalzla ay ta k sano roti milly*). He further said that the indigenous people of Belyani were ultra poor having nothing for their survival but after earthquake they had got shelters, food, clothes and many other facilities. The sacred Quran emphasizes on the fact that there is nothing that happens in the universe without the will, knowledge and wisdom of the Creator. Like many other natural disasters, earthquakes are part and parcel of the Divine plan to punish the ill doers, to try the pious ones and to warn the bad ones.

5.6.4.1 Fate/ Fatalism

It is also common that people relate unfortunate incidents of their life with their fate (*qismat/naseeb*). Some groups had a fatalistic or religious attitude towards a potential

event. They tend to believe that they had little control; it was chance, fate or God that would determine its effect on them (Dibben, 1999). In this research I found that 16.12% of my respondents were considering this earthquake as their fate because this explanation provided relief to their minds. It was also noticed that these all respondents were female which means that women are more believer of fate. Within these respondents one said that we were fortunate that Allah had sent this earthquake to test us (*yeh hamari khushnasibi thi k Allah ny humain azmaya hy*). She said that we were already religious and virtuous people but after passing through this earthquake our minor sins are also forgiven by God and our ranks are enhanced in front of Allah. Our people were blessed the honor of martyrdom (*Shahadat*).

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, fatalism is defined as "belief that people cannot change the way events happen, especially bad events cannot be avoided". Scott A. (2001) gives a similar definition that it is "a belief that events are determined by fate. Fatalism is a belief that refers us to accept the outcome of natural events because we cannot do anything to change this outcome, as these are determined by something over which we have no control". Simon Blackburn has defined fatalism as 'the doctrine that human action has no influence on events. Similarly people of Balakot had accepted this earthquake as part of their fate either good or bad. This religious point helped them out to accept earthquake and provided them courage to revamp their lives. They knew that they will not die until Allah want so they have to put efforts to live and face hardships.

5.6.4.2 Trial of pious people

Most of the villagers (16.13%) also believe that earthquakes are a trial for the pious people. The number of believers of this group increased after earthquake (38.71%) They said the people of Balakot were very pious that is why Allah had sent this earthquake to test us. They were all practicing Islam in their daily life. Islam was flourishing here vastly. They say trials are sent to the pious people of God to test them. According to the beliefs of Muslims, man was sent to the world to be tested and Allah does not burden anybody more than he can bear. Allah tests His people in different manners or by changing the circumstances he is living. The geological and climactic changes are a part of Allah's plan.

The world would come to an end with huge entropy and mankind would be gathered for the judgment day.

The number of followers of this belief increased due to the circumstances after earthquake. The people were confused about different religious connotations of earthquake specially “punishment of sins and wrath of God”. They believe themselves very pious. That is why they were unable to confess that God had sent punishment or wrath on them. Their confusion was resolved when Molana Tariq Jamil declared in his sermon that the earthquake in Balakot was neither punishment nor wrath rather a trail from God. People found this explanation more appropriate because it was fully justifying their situation before outsiders and for themselves.

5.6.5 Earth trembles with fear of God

Many people (54.84%) believe that when transgression and human sins pile up on earth, it trembles with fear of God and results in bringing earthquakes. Down the road they have belief that earthquakes are punishment of wrathful Allah. A respondent said that when Allah gets angry on human beings, He enrages and earth start shaking with His terror (*jub Khuda ko insanon per gussa ata hy to us k ghazab sy zameen kanp uthti hy*). Richard Bauckham (1977, p. 224) also highlights some authors of the Old Testament, who frequently employ the earthquake imagery to highlight the *theophanies* in which God is made manifest to His people.

These local perspectives in terms of religion gave people a framework of an often rudimentary knowledge of natural processes. The topic of geomythology studies the ways in which religious explanations and actions are used to make sense of the phenomena that give rise to disasters, and also as a mean of coping with undeserved and apparently inexplicable human suffering (Blong, 1984, pp. 175-179; Fisher *et al.*, 1997, pp. 179-198).

5.6.6 Earth cry in front of God to shed the sins

Several people (35.48%) believe that the weight of earth increases with the excess of peccadilloes (*gunah bhari ho jaty hain*) and could not hold burden of human sins and crimes. Then the earth cry in front of God and itself requests “O God, please shed my weight” and God shakes it to fell sin down. This view was by people those were illiterate

or have basic education. They could not quote any reference to support their argument except oral tradition and simply converted their argument that earthquakes are punishment of human sins. The glorious *Quran* in many places addressed the subject of earthquakes and one chapter with the title earthquake tells that, "*When the earth is shaken to her utmost convulsion (earthquake) and the earth throws her burden (weights) from within*" (*Al Quran*, 99:1-2).

5.6.7 Earth lies on bull horn

The people (29.03%) of Balakot explained earthquakes by saying that the world is balanced on the horns of a bull. Until recently, the cause of earthquake was an unsolved mystery to the folks of Balakot. And that's why; it was the subject of fanciful folklore. Legends are traditional narratives explanations of natural phenomena, which prevail when scientific explanation is not available. From ancient times, legends (myths) were established to explain what we did not understand. Even after earthquake when many other religious as well as scientific explanations has been given to this earthquake still 6.45% people are stick to this belief.

Among Muslims this belief has originated from the Tafsir of first verse of Quranic Surah al-Qalm (The Pen), Chapter 68: In Tafsir Ibn'Kathir (p.564) it is mentioned that, "Ibn Abu Nujaih stated that Ibrahim Ibn Abu Bakir was informed by Mujahid who said, "It was said that *Q* (Nun) is the great whale who is underneath the seven Earths." Furthermore, Al-Baghawiy and a group of commentators stated that "on the back of this whale there is a great rock whose thickness is greater than the width of the heavens and the earth and above this rock is a bull that has forty thousand horns. On the body of this bull are placed the seven earths and all that they contain, and *Allah* knows best."

The rest of the people (22.58%) had refuted this belief because they came to know that it is derived from Hindu mythology. The religious beliefs and practices are found in almost every human group and culture that makes the religion so natural. An excitement to search for the origin of religion is commonly found among the general human, for example people wish to escape misfortune and mortality, and they desire to understand the universe. However, these accounts are often based on incorrect views about religion and the

psychological urges are often merely postulated (Lawson E. T. and McCauley R. N., 1990) (Saler B., 1993). Recent findings in psychology, anthropology and neuroscience offer a more empirical approach, focused on the mental machinery activated in acquiring and representing religious concepts (Lawson E. T. and McCauley R. N., 1990) (Guthrie S. E., 1993) (Atran S., 2002). I was provided with three different subtexts of this belief. I discovered that before earthquake this belief was prevailing among masses regardless of sex, education and sect difference. But after earthquake (6.45%) people who still have this belief are totally illiterate women. Perhaps they have lack of access to knowledge and information and still stagnant to an oral tradition.

5.6.7.1 Bull shift earth to other horn when tired

Some villagers (11.11%) still believed that earth stays on bull's horn. Whereas different people associate different connotations of earthquake related to this belief. One subtext is that; earth is carried on a bull's horn. When the bull gets tired he shifts the earth to his other horn. That very moment people on earth experience tremors which might be disastrous. The same belief is also found among the people in North Africa and whenever the bull shakes his horns this brings about an earthquake.

5.6.7.2 Bull shifts earth to other horn when weight of earth increases with human sins

The people of Balakot (33.33%) also mentioned another undertone of this belief that when earth gets heavier with the sins of its inhabitants, the bull gets tired and shift the earth from one tusk to another that leads to earthquake. This Muslim belief finds its origins in Judaism. Howard Schwartz (2007) discussed a Moroccan myth about bull horn cult. Unless the people obey God and fulfill His commandments the world would stand quietly on the bull's horn. Infact there is an under lying belief that earthquakes are results of sins which is indirectly addressed by people before they were having enough knowledge about the occurrence of earthquake either religious or scientific.

5.6.7.3 Bull request God to shed the sins of earth

There are people (55.5%) who give this myth a religious touch. They say that due to increase in transgressions of human beings, earth gains much more weight and it become difficult for the bull to keep it stable. The bull requests to God that earth is getting heavier

and I cannot maintain it on my horns any more. Then God shakes earth and all human sins shed down, as a result earth became light weight and bull can easily maintain it on his horns once again. Chester (2005a) propose that the religious references are mostly quoted either for the examples of eruption maintained archaeologically and historically or they are applied on the societies relatively untouched by modernism where they represent the last redoubts of superstition and backwardness.

Many pre-industrial societies (White, 1973) are to be found across a range of religious traditions and cultures, and an extensive literature has developed on what is termed 'geomythology' (Harris, 2000). In the context of an often rudimentary knowledge of natural processes, geomythology studies the ways in which religious explanations and actions are used, not only to make sense of the phenomena that give rise to disasters, but also as means of coping with undeserved and apparently inexplicable human suffering (Blong, 1984, pp. 175-179; Fisher *et al.*, 1997, pp. 179-198). Still there are people (6.45%) who possess same belief about happening of earthquake.

5.7 Gossips about earthquake

In Balakot gossips about a severe earthquake were roaming around and everyone was aware of them but its time and date was not known. These gossips were spread among people across the board through different indirect channels.

5.7.1 Scientist teams visited the mountains frequently

Some teams of geologist were observed carrying out their research in the mountains of Balakot. The frequent visits of these scientists led the rumor in the village of an upcoming earthquake. So 29.03% respondents told that it was circulated that the mountains or plates under mountains are moving and scientists were predicting huge earthquake in Balakot. An illiterate female respondent said, I have heard these scientists had put some explosion material (bombs) under the mountains that has blasted and earthquake came.

5.7.2 Dream of Imam-e-Kaba

Some 22.58% people said, they heard the news about dream of *Imam-e-kaba*, who saw a worst earthquake will hit Balakot this year. And he sent his message to the people to

reform themselves. *Imam-e-Masjid* told about the dream of *Imam-e-Kaba* in their *Jumma Khutba* (sermons of *Jumma* Prayer) and warned people to reform themselves and ask for *Tawbah* before God's torments destroy them. It was told that people listen this sermon of *Imam-e-Masjid* because it was very famous those days. Its effect remained only for few days after that it was forgotten. But when a real earthquake hit, people recalled the sermon of *Imam-e-Masjid* because not much time has been passed between the two things.

5.7.3 Earthquake training spread rumor of earthquake

Few people 9.68% told, earthquake trainings were conducted in schools for students and teachers and they were extended for community members as well two weeks before seismic activity. The contents of training included safety measures during earthquake. Recently, the world has started focusing again on the public education as a source to mitigate disaster both at national and global level. The Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction i.e. 1990s emphasized the government for education and training of citizens for their awareness of disaster mitigation (Press, 1989). Respondents told with regret that, earthquake was so immense and sudden that no training could protect us but Allah.

Rosenfeld *et al.* (2005) suggest that disaster education is necessary for preparedness of community. The main aim is to increase public awareness about what can happen to them and to enhance their readiness to act according to the proposed disaster plan. Despite of the fact that the toll from disasters is increasing in terms of physical damage, human suffering and death, and their personal measures for example loss of family, income and psychological trauma (Palm, 1990), a dominant view exist within western societies, and also among the disaster managers, that humanity still has the capacity to some extent to defeat nature and harness technology by providing individual safety (Cutter, 1993).

5.7.4 Rumor of an impending earthquake

As gossips of earthquake were frequently circulating in the village, so some people used it as fun to irritate others. People of the village 22.58% told that within six months before earthquake; often the rumor spread that "today or tonight earthquake will struck" people left their homes and came in open places but it did not. One of my informant told that about one month before earthquake it was seriously circulated in Balakot that "tonight a

massive earthquake will hit Balakot". People left their homes due to fear and spent whole night of winters in open air. But there was not a single vibration at that night. Rather it provided chance to thieves to break in their homes while they were out. But the day when earthquake arrive everyone was ignorant.

5.8 Superstitions about earthquake

Superstitions are a very prominent phenomenon in every culture or society that has joining borders to the religion. Superstitions are there in peace time but at the time of disaster their production and circulation increases.

5.8.1 Superstitions heard before earthquake

When the villagers of Belyani were asked about the myths or superstitions they had heard about the earthquake before it struck. They mentioned some important superstitions they have heard from their fore fathers or the peer group in the village. They said that if animals make noise at night, or moon arises from opposite side or bird cry and abandon their nests that signs for an impending earthquake. They also said that mud rain (*Lusberi*) was a sign of angry God, and that something wrong is going to happen here. Many students of disaster study carry the view that the disastrous nature of calamities has also led to the evolution of folklore and mythology about disaster since ancient times. Except 9.7% of respondents all told what they have heard as superstitions before earthquake regardless they believe it or not.

A significant number of people 32.26% referred to the superstition that earth is on bull's horn. When the bull gets tiered he shifts earth on the other horn and as a result people on earth feel tremors. But when they were asked about their belief on this superstition they all negated it. They said we had heard it from our fore fathers, at that time people were not aware about the reasons of earthquake so they used to believe on that. But now we knew religious and scientific reasons of earthquake so we do not believe on it. While on the other hand 45.21% respondents those have referred to the superstition of mud rain and noise of birds/animals late at night said that we have believe on it because our elders have much experiences than us and on the basis of their experiences they told that.

Table 14: Comparison of pre and post superstitions about earthquake

Responses	Before earthquake	Before earthquake	After earthquake	After earthquake
Mud rain	6	19.4%	2	3.7%
Crying of birds/animals late night	8	25.81%	3	5.6%
Cracked moon risen from opposite direction	4	12.90%	4	7.4%
Earth on Bull horn	10	32.26%		
Nothing	3	9.7%	3	5.6%
Fraud in elections			5	9.3%
Celebration party of elections			12	22.2%
Mendicant was telling			9	16.7%
Angels were discussing			8	14.8%
Dream of Qari Awais			7	13.0%
Prayer mat was laying inverted in Mosque			1	1.9%
Total	31	100%	54	100%

Source: Field data

5.8.1.1 Moon arose from opposite side

Some people (12.9% before earthquake and 7.4% after earthquake) told that they have heard that here were seen two moons and they further relate that one moon arose from the opposite directions a night during the month of *Ramadan*. And they further relate a proverb from their forefathers, that “when the moon arises from opposite side in the sky, that means an earthquake is coming to Balakot this year”. Some of them said that night moon was looking a bit different and we could notice a cracked like in the moon. They also relate a proverb about this unusual phenomenon that the year, when two moons are seen, earthquake hits the land.

Planetary alignment configurations arises earthquake when any planet come aligned to sun moon at 0° or 180° with the earth. The gravitational stress changes the speed of earth’s rotation in its orbits that affects the movement of tectonic plates as well. This triggers an earthquake at fault zones by releasing the stress in the form of energy at the edges of the plates (Venkatanathan *et al.*, 2005). The possibility lies that this planet is confused with the

sight of two moons by the villagers and that led the myth that the moon arising from opposite direction brings sign of upcoming earthquakes with it. However during such cases of planetary alignment, most of the earthquakes occur on preexisting faults. Epicenters of earthquake are boundaries of the tectonic plates. Because their margins are at biggest strain that resist motion of plates on earth other (Stark, 1985). And as the Balakot was situated above such faults that is why they recall the earthquake arrived here a century ago when their forefathers witnessed the same unique moon that arose from opposite direction.

Although people were referring to this superstition but none of the respondents had seen this personally. They have heard that somebody has seen such an event in the village; but there was no identification or recognition of that "someone". Adrienne Mayor (2004) discusses that some geo-myths are simply fanciful stories based on imagination or popular misconceptions while many geo-myths, however, contain surprisingly accurate insights into geological processes and even the important eyewitness data of distant past. Modern scientific research have revealed that many of the ancient folklore about earth was not only based on rational speculation and understandings based on careful observations of some genuine but extraordinary physical evidence on earth over time.

5.8.1.2 Animal made noise at night

Many respondents 25.81% said that they have heard from their elders that crying of animals late at night is not a good omen and indicate severe earthquake. 31.41% respondents reported they themselves heard dogs, cats, wolves, and foxes howling mournfully at midnight. They relate this event with the signs of an upcoming earthquake. Wild animals and birds made so much noise before earthquake in the tress and outskirts of village. The respondents said we had strong belief that it was an indication from God that we did not follow. They said that Allah has given this sense to few animals that they could foresee earthquakes. According to Richa Tiwari (2011), the most consistent unusual behavior has been reported about the dogs among all the animals that are said to have ability to detect earthquake. Ikeya (2004), Miller (1996) postulated that dogs have higher auditory sensitivity which help them to listen higher frequency sound waves that is one of the precursory signal of earthquake by breaking of rocks underneath the earth (Vanderwall, 1993; Tributsch, 1982).

Nature warns them of an upcoming disaster that they vacate their habitats just before an earth temblor strikes. Many pet owners describe their cats and dogs displaying antisocial behavior prior to earthquake that initiates the thought that a nature biological earthquake warning exists (Krischvink, 2000). Their survival instinct motivate them to pick up their offspring in mouth and carried them outdoors while other were barking, whining, showing nervousness and restlessness. Cats also carried litters of their kittens to safer places before storm and earthquake. Many animals have developed an instinctive response to the stimulus of escaping the predators that is called the “early warning system”. This ability can be seen in animals escaping natural disaster by low natural warning stimuli of an impending disaster (USGS, Earthquake Program).

5.8.1.3: Bird cried at night

The same respondents 31.41% also pointed out that the noise of birds late at night as a symptom of forth coming earthquakes. Most of the people remember that few days back, they heard huge noise of birds at night, and they were frightened. It seemed as if they were screaming and mourning. In the morning there were silence and they hardly seen any birds in the neighborhood. Many folk people of the Balakot mentioned that birds were making noise few days before the earthquake hit the city. Later on dead silence prevailed to the whole city. Ikeya, (2004) postulated that, this strange behavior of birds was simply because of their sense to detect low frequency electromagnetic signals of the impending earthquake. Ancient people use to predict rains by observing bird’s behavior e.g. on a cloudy day birds return to their homes before sunset that gives a clue for rain (Tiwari *et al* 2001). Whenever birds predict rain, storm, earthquake or volcanic eruption, they leave their nests in flocks (Tiwari *et al* 2001). Silence prevail the land in their absence. People of Balakot also relate, that their forefathers say, the year when a strange looking bird, “a sparrow that resembles crow” is seen, that signs an earthquake. It’s an oral tradition and no scientific research related to such species of bird is documented yet.

5.8.1.4 Mud rain/Lusberi before earthquake

According to Critelli and Garzanti (1994), “The foreland basin sediments that formed Balakot are located in the Hazara-Kashmir Syntaxis in Nothern Pakistan. These sediments

consist of a more than 8 kilometers thick sandstone, mudstone, and caliche red bed succession of mixed metamorphic and igneous provenance."People of Balakot also witnessed a mud rain few days before the earthquake. They say at mid night it rained, and when they got up in the morning they saw mud everywhere. Everything was covered with mud drops that were quite big. They perceived from this unusual phenomenon that God is angry with them that's why mud rained on them. They were fearful of an impending disaster by this act of nature. They also relate a proverb about this unusual phenomenon that the year, when mud rain comes, it means an earthquake will come. Although only 23.1% respondents had indicated it as superstition but the whole village has witnessed this event. And people said that they believe on this super station that whenever there is mud rain, earthquake must hit.

Balakot is situated in mountainous range of Himalayans. The mountains of Balakot are not solid that is why the area is highly vulnerable for land sliding. Land sliding is common hazard in the Himalaya because its mountains are seismicity active as well and heavy monsoon rains speed up the erosion due to deforestation and construction. Whenever it occurs near residential area and infrastructures, for example roads, towns, and bridges it has devastating effects. (Ulrich Kamp *et al.*, 2008) If heavy monsoon rains occur before or after an earthquake, it acts as a catalyst to further destructive landslides. It seems that mud rain was actually the sliding mud from the mountain due to heavy rain that fall on the village situated at the foot of mountain and the laymen thought that mud rain happened last night.

5.8.2 Superstitions heard after earthquake

After earthquake everyone was talking about it. Along with religious and scientific knowledge new superstitions also evolved. As superstitions are interesting and storytelling is one of the skills of village folk, so people share them with each other and they spread in the village like fire.

5.8.2.1 Fraud in elections tantalized earthquake

Few days prior to earthquake, bi-elections were held at the villages of Balakot. People 9.3% said that the nominated personal being corrupt cheated in elections. They gave

money in the form of bribe to the villagers and taken an oath from them to ensure that they will cast their vote for them. In their turn, villagers were also corrupt; they took money from all the nominated persons for elections, and gave them oath on holy Quran, that they will cast their vote only to them. The cheating in elections involved the false oaths on holy Quran, and was a big disrespect to Quran, which is the word of almighty Allah, as a result God enraged and earthquake hit. But the respondents who shared these superstitions did not believe on and said that these are just stories that people have created. A respondent said that after earthquake people were having nothing to do. They were provided with every necessity in their camps by relief workers. So while sitting idle they used to create and circulate such baseless stories.

Present day earthquakes are mentioned in the Glorious Quran as forces that destroy foundations of buildings and hence cause their destruction, or cause rifting of the earth and swallowing the rifted part with its inhabitants. The Quran reads: *"Those before them indeed plotted, but Allah struck at the foundation of their building, and then the roof fell down upon them, from above them, and the torment overtook them from directions they did not perceive"* (Al Quran, 16:26). This verse precisely describes earthquakes and it clearly points out that contriving and plotting against the will and the way of the Creator is the main reason behind earthquakes. In the same context holy Quran emphasis as: *"Do then those who devise evil plots feel secure that Allah will not sink them into the earth, or that the torment will not seize them from directions they perceive not?"* (Al Quran 16:45). The last two verses clearly describe the reason behind punishing earthquakes is the evil plotting against the way of Allah and devising wicked plans against some people or against entire humanity.

5.8.2.2 Unethical celebration of election was the cause of earthquake

Some people (22.2%) also relate that the night before earthquake, the winners of the elections were celebrating their triumph in a local hotel at Balakot in an unethical way. They were drinking wines and dancing in dalliance at Friday night of holy month of *Ramadan*. Their violation of religion was an extreme disrespect to the holy day of the holy month. That awoke the wrath of God to punish them in the worst manner. In a research people said that the El-Asnam earthquake in Algeria (10th October, 1980) happened

because people were taking wine with their national meal (couscous) Allah punished them for their deed.

While people also believe that Balakot is a famous tourist resort of Pakistan. Traveler from all over the world visit the area, they obviously belong to various religions of the world. Hotels and restaurants management is the livelihood of many people out there. They serve the tourist in an un-Islamic way like serving wines etc. That is why Balakot was punished with this torment. Benouar D. (1999) said, still there are some people including the government officials who believe that earthquake is an act of Gods.

5.8.2.3 Dream of Qari Owais

Some people (13%) tell the dream of Qari Owais of *Jamia Masjid* in Balakot. He dreamt on Thursday night that people of Balakot are hit by an earthquake and caused a lot of destruction including life losses including himself and the people of his own house died. He described his dream to the villagers on Friday after *Jumma* prayer. and the next morning earthquake hit. He and his family died the way he saw in dream. The villagers quote about the Haidith of Prophet regarding the dream interpretation by Narrated Abu Salama. That a bad dream should not be told to anybody otherwise it happen in reality. (Haidith - Bukhari 9:168) The dream of Qari Owais came true and he died because he described his bad dream to the villagers. In some Muslim areas people favor religious interpretations of Earthquakes but they generally oppose predicting natural catastrophes, as this violates religious prohibitions against fortune-telling (Paradise, 2005).

5.8.2.4 Fish left river Kunhar few day before earthquake

Village Belyani is located at the bank of River Kunhar which is a famous trout fishery resort. While generally discussing people other than my respondents, people also reported that they remember that trout fish had gone somewhere few days before earthquake. Dr. Motoji Ikeya tested the theory that marine animals can sense the earthquake by their ability to detect minor "electro-magnetic currents" that are produced by the emission of electrons from quartz under pressure before earthquake. This electrical current is sensed by sea creatures that help them escaping the disaster. Hatai and Abe (1930) experimented on these electric signals on cat fish in water tanks and gave positive correlations.

Terada (1932) reported abundant fishes were caught by fishermen near shores before earthquake. As fish were trying to swim away from the epicenter of quake to escape disaster by recognizing the nature's signals of electrical current & magnetic field distortions and chemical change in the water. Suyehiro (1934) reported that Sardine fish came in large number to the surface waters at evening before earthquake and they ate up more diatoms that night. According to Klinowska (1985) large fish like whales and dolphins get distracted by magnetic field disruptions and they are trapped in shallow waters of coast. In 921 earthquake of Taiwan, deep sea fish *Trachipterus ishikawa* were caught at shores. Its local name is "earthquake fish" (Ikeya and Ulusoy, 2000). Ikeya 1996a, b reported that fish and silkworm's movement in odd directions was in response to the change in electromagnetic waves, which aligned perpendicular to the electric field pulses in a simulation experiment. Due to the fluctuations in electric field near epicenter at Kobe interfered the magnetic field and fish were distracted from their routine way (Ikeya *et al.*, 1997).

5.8.2.5 Mendicant seen in streets warning about earthquake

Some people (16.7%) told they have heard that the day before earthquake when people were going for *Jumma* Prayer they saw a *Darwaish*, an old man who was shouting in streets that, "O people of Balakot repent on your sins and ask for *Tawbah* (Divine forgiveness), an earthquake is on its way, that will kill you all. Before that, ask for *Tawbah*". But people thought him some mad old man and did not listen to him. After *Jumma* prayer he was not seen again and the very next morning earthquake hit. In the history of earthquakes, we also found some instances of people that claim of having seismic foresight and they warned others few hours before it happened. Daigo (1985) reported that there are popular proverbs about some people who sense the precursors of earthquake. For example they suffer from headaches or hysteria, restlessness, dizziness, loss of balance and fatigue prior to earthquake that intuitively tells them of the forthcoming disaster. Ikeya (2004), states that in Ansei Chronicle, a story of a man warning people of an upcoming earthquake is told. After two hours the earthquake provoked.

There are some elderly people in Japan and China who claim of being sensitive to earthquake and they tell their feelings similar to those told in proverbs (Ikeya, 2004).

Clarke (1996) reported that some human in North California absurdly claimed that they had an intuition about the earthquake in Nicaragua by the restlessness and headache. K. Sieh (1978) also commented that primary seismic waves are also detected by some human beings occasionally, while the damaging secondary waves are felt by every human in the seismic area (Buskirk *et al.*, 1981).

5.8.2.6 Angels were seen on mountains

Some people (14.8%) quoted, they have heard from people that few days before earthquake two lights emitting from the mountains of Balakot were seen that were reaching high up the sky. The villagers said they were angles of God that are made up of light. Some were terrified with these huge luminescent rays and they said these big angles must be sent to collapse the mountains of Balakot with each other. Then the rumor of "Two angles talking about their plans of destroying Balakot, by putting the mountain upside down was spread in the village". Earthquake light is an unusual phenomenon of aerial luminescence that appears in the sky at or near the place of tectonic stress, volcanic eruptions or seismic activity. The quake luminosity is visible for several seconds to as long as ten minutes. Krischvink (2000) reported that the sky luminescence or the 'Earthquake lights' is an anomalous aerial luminosity due to the seismic activity which is also detected by several birds and animals along with human beings.

There are many reports of lights emitted before or after earthquakes, for example the 1975 Kalapana earthquake. It is reported that these lights similar to auroras in shape and are of white to pale or of bluish hue. Display of light in the sky resembling auroral activity was also reported before the Tangshan earthquake of China in 1970s. After few years, during the Kobe earthquake in Japan, some people witnessed a mysterious glowing object while some other reported a fire that gave the impression to run on the ground and expanded to the sky (Karnogawa, 2004). The autokinesis is a phenomenon of human visual perception in which a small stationary point of light appear to move in a dark or featureless environment. Chester (2005) explains that typically, our thinking about disasters reflects some mixture of evidence and imagination. We are influenced not only by the results of scientific research, but also by personal experience, what our friends say, and media portrayals.

5.9 Source of religious beliefs, knowledge and superstition about earthquake

There is not a single source of information for the villagers rather they are influenced by a number of ways. The main source of information in villages is peer group and elders but religious knowledge is also influenced by *Ulema*. Information circulates in villages very quickly and villagers are not dependent on communication media to spread it. Social bonds are very strong in village communities and they share things with each other frequently.

5.9.1 Sources of gossips

The source of spreading gossips about an impending quake was peer groups (64.5%) in the village. It is noticed that in any category of people their main source of information was observed to be peer group. Prior to the earthquake, some (12.9%) heard it in the sermons of *Imam-e-Masjid* who advised the people to reform themselves and warned them of a gigantic earthquake coming in Balakot while other suspected it due to frequent trainings organized by government on earthquake safety measures in their village.

5.9.2 Sources of religious beliefs about earthquake

Their main source (51.6%) of information about religious beliefs prior to earthquake was oral tradition. It was observed in the village that religious knowledge either it was of beliefs or practices is passed on through oral tradition from generation to generation.

Table 15: Comparison of source of pre and post religious beliefs about earthquake

Responses	Before earthquake	Before earthquake	After earthquake	After earthquake
Oral tradition	16	51.6%	6	19.4%
Read in Quran	10	32.3%	9	29.0%
Peer knowledge	2	6.5%	2	6.5%
Ulema/Imam	3	9.7%	14	45.2%
Total	31	100%	31	100%

Source: Field data

But after earthquake there was a shift in source of information of people (45.2%). They said that they had heard new information from *Ulema/Imam-e-masjid*. Whereas 29.0% said that they got information through holy Quran, Islamic books, *Haidith* in *Bukhari Sharief*

(book of sayings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) about earthquake related religious knowledge. They said after earthquake their interest was developed and they were keen to acquire religious knowledge about earthquakes.

Many sociologists of religion have also discussed that religious rituals and symbols are the collective representations of social groups. These are the means by which individual participants learn, renew and reaffirm shared meanings (Durkheim, 1915). Their beliefs about earthquake have also been originated from the religious teachings and sermons of *Ulema* and/or *Imam-e-Masjid* especially *Molana Tariq Jamil* a renowned religious scholar. After earthquake they started living in camps where they used to hear various news's from peer group. Usually the simple villagers start believing on what they hear from their surrounding as they have limited knowledge.

5.9.3 Sources of information about Quranic verses that prevent earthquake

The source of information of verses whose recitation can prevent earthquake were advised by their elders, listened in peer groups, *Ulema & Imam-e-Masjid's* sermons that were making announcements that people should recite these verse to prevent further earthquake. Again the main source of information of these Quranic verses to prevent earthquake was peer learning (38.7%) and the other was (16.1%) from *Ulema /Imam-e-masjid*. According to Philo and Berry (2006) television news is one of the most important sources of public knowledge these days. Approximately 80% of populations rely on television as their main source of information. But for people of Balakot television is just a source of entertainment (especially for women) and they rarely use it for information. Male members bring news to the women at home and then it is circulated among neighboring women and so on. They did not go for the validity or authenticity of any information and they circulate it without confirmation.

5.9.4 Sources of superstitions

About the source of information of the above mentioned superstitions, a few (9.7%) people denied hearing any superstitions, while all other (90.3%) admitted that these superstitions are passing through oral tradition. There were two groups of people; believers and non-believers; both had got knowledge of these superstitions from their elders. One

group said that as people of older generations do not have much knowledge about disasters that is why they relate them with natural events. Whereas other group said that their older people have more wisdom and experience; they are more pious than us that is why they had the ability to understand and interpret signs shown by Allah. But before earthquake there was no other source of information in the area other than oral tradition.

But after earthquake the predominant source of earthquake that was referred by 77.4% respondents was peer group. Palmer (1989) arguments, firstly such kinds of beliefs flourish due to their success in peer groups where those beliefs are prevalent. Secondly, the beliefs compete with other more successful beliefs that induce us to spread them further. Our awareness of actual facts is important because such beliefs and practices are not more than the opinions held by fruit flies. And by propagating and communicating these superstitions further we merely show our willingness to accept the other people's authority. Many superstitions lead their way to the village through peer group just after the quake.

The spread of superstitions is a common phenomenon after such happenings. Usually paranormal, superstitious and magical beliefs have been found in miscellaneous cultures since thousands of years (Jahoda, 1969), and polls have shown that such beliefs continue to thrive in modern times (Newport & Strausberg, 2001). Researchers have extensively speculated about the origins and functions of such beliefs as well (Frazer, 1922; Malinowski, 1948; Vyse, 1997).

5.10 Change in beliefs

Although there is no change in faith and general religious beliefs of people, but data collected from field clearly indicates that there is a shift in earthquake related beliefs of people. Before earthquake 29.03% respondents have belief that earth is on bull's horn and due to which earthquake hit. They had provided three different subtexts of this those ranges from a superficial myth to a religious mythology. But when they got new knowledge about the occurrence of earthquake they refuted their old beliefs and adopted new one those are fairly falling in the domain of religion. Although 6.45% are still having the same belief but they already had modified this mythology in the parameters of religion. McBride (1998) told that there are at least five major routes that can be taken when persons

are confronted by challenges to their beliefs that are development of new beliefs, integration of the old and new beliefs, total rejection of old beliefs, maintaining or adapting the old beliefs, and becoming more rigid in the old beliefs. Similar situation occur in Balakot after earthquake. Many trauma studies suggest that problem-focused coping styles have a tendency to promote positive outcomes where as the emotion-focused coping styles usually bring negative outcomes (Jameson, 2002; Paton & Johnston, 2001).

Table 16: Comparison of change in beliefs about earthquake

Responses	Before earthquake	Before earthquake	After earthquake	After earthquake
Punishment of sins	12	38.71%	15	48.39%
Trial from God	5	16.13%	12	38.71%
Wrath of God	5	16.13%	2	6.45%
Earth on Bull's horns	9	29.03%	2	6.45%
Total	31	100%	31	100%

Source: Field data

However, Linley and Joseph (2004) have found that emotion-focused coping styles can foster adversarial growth as well. Throughout the Old & New Testaments and Quran, one finds a message of how a damaged world continues to experience loss and pain, and how God's salvation offers healing. This cosmic cycle of gain, loss, restoration and the accompanying trauma and grief is repeated in the personal lives of the characters of the Bible (Lawrenz & Green, 1995).

5.10.1 Negative change

Before earthquake 38.71% people believed that earthquakes are results of human sins. When people exceeds in transgression God became angry and send punish to people. After earthquake the believers of this notion increased by 48.39% because they were told by outsiders that people of Balakot were very corrupt for that Allah had punished them. On the other hand they came across various other social evils among people which were hidden before earthquake that caused a change in their belief. The traditional Taiwanese belief of natural disaster as punishment from heaven, the survivors are told to be ashamed

of themselves, because their sufferings are a curse from heaven and result from their previous life. Such a negative connotation of natural disaster adds great stress to the survivors' post-disaster life.

5.10.2 Crisis of belief

A Crisis of Faith occurs when a person senses a contradiction between what they believed to be true and what they are currently living or feeling. Before earthquake 16.13% respondent has belief that earthquake are trail of God on pious people, He tests His people by appending some hardship. And after earthquake even more people adopted this belief (38.71%). The explanation of this belief is a saying of Hazrat Ali (PBUH), according to which God tests His pious people. If they become more virtuous then it is a trail but if they left right path then it is a chastisement on them. On one had these people said it a trail from Allah but on the other hand they loudly say that social evils has rapidly increased in this area.

Traumatic events may strongly serve to undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and throw the victim into a state of existential crisis (Herman, 1997). Traumatic events have strong potential to destroy or significantly alter the victim's fundamental assumptions about the safety of the world, the positive value of the self, and the meaningful order of creation (Sebold, 1990). These events, may also serve as powerful catalysts for promoting people to reexamine their faith which may be strengthened and sustain them through unimaginable pain and trauma. When one is not prepared for this questioning, it can become a crisis of faith. A Crisis in Faith occurs when a person senses a contradiction between what they believed to be true and what they are currently living or feeling.

5.10.3 No change in beliefs

There is a group of earthquake victims at Balakot in each category that show *continuous religious affiliation*, which means that the participants reported same religious affiliation both before and after the earthquake. Such as 6.45% respondents still believe that this earthquake was a wrath of God on People of Balakot, similarly out of those who believe it a punishment of sins or trail of God there are people (25.85%) and (9.67%) respectively

those are still continuing their previous belief.

5.10.4 Positive change

It is noticed after earthquake 22.58% respondent switched over their belief from other categories to belief that earthquake is trail of God, because this belief was most soothing for their burning minds and was defending their prestige as well. This belief created peace with their consciousness to overcome the stress of disaster and encouraged them to restore their lives. Watts (2007, p.507) observed, "Severe stress can push people to extremes in their view of religion as a way of coping. Some people who are not normally religious turn to religion under severe stress to cope. Other people, under severe stress may abandon or turn against religious beliefs and forsake their spirituality. This is especially possible if their religious beliefs were never strong to begin with." At Balakot it was discovered that people who take earthquake as a will of God and accepted this cataclysm as a trail of God, try to become more religious so that they could please God and pass through this calamity safely. Nathanson (2003) asserts that "spirituality is an important force in recovery" (p. 63), because it helps the survivors identify inner strengths and find meaning in suffering.

But on the other hand those who considered that it is a wrath of God they leave their religious activities because they were unable to understand why this has happened to them. From a secular perspective, Herman (1997) suggests that trauma challenges a person to become a theologian. The survivor confronts two equally incomprehensible questions: "Why did this happen?" and "Why did this happen to me?" Sometimes people struggle with the fact that they survived while others died. Saleebey (2002) has asserted that although traumatic events may be damaging, they may be sources of new opportunities that would not have been otherwise. Cadell *et al.* (2003) conclude that the reconstruction of meaning is necessary because disasters often distort survivors' perception of self and the world, and provide some evidence that posttraumatic growth increases as spirituality grows.

5.10.5 Faith remains constant but beliefs change

During my research I did not find any person who had converted is faith. There are shift in beliefs related to earthquake, but the faith and the fundamental religious beliefs of people

are same. One may ask why people tend to hold powerfully to these beliefs. Howe (1990) indicates that the intimate relationship which exists between the beliefs we hold and other persons who are significant in our lives contributes to the powerful investments we make in our beliefs and our believing. McBride (1998) states, "Belief usually does not stand still. It grows and develops regresses, stagnates, and changes (p. 63.)." While one's theological understanding is in constant development through the life cycle, crisis has a way of uprooting both shallow and deeply held beliefs for which people are usually unprepared. This is true that with age and experience one tends to re-evaluate those assumptions held earlier in one's life in the light of maturity and experience. Similarly after earthquake people changed their religious beliefs about earthquake according to situation or after having more knowledge.

5.11 Change in religious practices after earthquake

The religious practices of people were changed after earthquake in two levels, firstly when earthquake hit and secondly when they had restored their lives.

5.11.1 Improved

The people having the belief that it is a punishment of their sins from God or a trial from God (25.8%), try to reform themselves after the incident. They believe in God firmly now. They are trying to practice Islam to the fullest after this incident. They have heard that if someone recites *Surah Rehman* (Chapter 55 of Quran) in daily life, is saved from the earthquake. That's why they try to recite it daily; through this they are trying to develop a spiritual relationship with the God. Some said the same about *Ayat-e-Karimah* that it will take them out from this hardship safely. While others belief that by repeating *Astaghfar*, Allah will forgive their sins and will prevents people from natural disasters.

They also told that at this time affiliation to God provide comfort and courage. A respondent said that if we had not returned to religion, we all would have died due to anxiety. Gall *et al.* (2005, pp. 95- 96) observe: "If a higher power is perceived to be at work in a stressful event, then the event may be viewed as an opportunity to learn something that this higher power is trying to teach. The event may also serve as a 'wake-up call' to take stock of life and rearrange priorities". In such circumstances the victims try to

practice their religion more than before as a result of fear of God. But when we saw their religious practices in longer run only 12.9% said that their religious practices are improved than before earthquake. This indicates that the fear of God and realization was more in early days of earthquake but with the passage of time people could not maintain their religious practices.

Table 17: Comparison of religious practices just after earthquake and now

Responses	Just after earthquake	Just after earthquake	Now	Now
Improved than before earthquake	8	25.8%	4	12.9%
Same as before earthquake	7	22.6%	19	61.3%
Reduced than before earthquake	2	6.5%	4	12.9%
Discontinue	14	45.2%	4	12.9%
Total	31	100%	31	100%

Source: Field data

Saleebey (2002) claims that spirituality is one of cultural factor that is expected to have positive association with resilience. In the eyes of survivors, spirituality can offer answers to questions about the meaning of disaster, death, and the prospect of an after-life. It also directs the survivors` coping styles in the face of disaster and their daily life. In addition, Ursano *et al.* (1995) found that for some survivors, trauma and loss facilitated a move toward health. The traumatic experience helped survivors to recognize a previously disorganized life and re-evaluate their values and goals. Commitment to religious beliefs and practices has been found to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviors (Johnson *et al.*, 2001). In addition to studies of the mediation of coping styles, some writers have also suggested that there are “trigger” events that occur after the experience of disaster that seem to lead to periods of transformation and growth, such as personality type e.g., optimists, extraverts, independence, and a sense of control (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Milam, Ritt-Olson and Unger, 2004; Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995 & 1996).

5.11.2 Continuous

Many victims explained that they had continuous affiliation with religious practices due to their spiritual bonding with Islam. Some 22.6% respondents told that even in that situation

when there was nothing to eat and drink and we were in grief of our losses we continued our religious practices. There are 61.3% respondents told that they are strictly following Islam as they used to before earthquake. Although their religious practices were hampered in early days of earthquake but they recovered them soon. However few of them explained, that due to injuries they had to left their practice for some time, but as soon they got healthy they came back to their previous routine. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) have pointed out that religions carry significant symbolic meaning, such that believers view suffering as having beneficial effects and this is, consequently it incorporates positively in the 'Posttraumatic Growth Inventory'.

5.11.3 Reduced or discontinued

After earthquake 6.5% respondents told that their religious practices were reduced due to the situation after earthquake, where as 45.5% said that they totally discontinued their religious practices, because everything was destroyed and people were facing ablution problem. It was difficult for them to maintain their sanctification as they were disposing corpses and rescuing injured bleeding heavily so their religious practices were reduced while rest of the people remained busy in search of aid and they forgot to perform their religious practices entirely. However some of the pious people that survived in Balakot earthquake describe their feeling as they have turned senseless after witnessing the cruelty of nature. And now they are practicing the religion with less enthusiasm.

Some 22.6% respondents said that their religious practices are reduced than before earthquake. They said that aid has wasted much of our time and we could not regulate our religious practices as these were before. Whereas 3.2% said that they had discontinued their religious practices after earthquake and have not restored them yet. They said that we were very religious people and were regular in our religious practices then why Allah sent such *Azab* on us. They have seen so many deaths in few seconds that turned them fearless that they are no more afraid of death. They also think nothing could be more disastrous than the tremor of God they experienced. They faced it bravely that's why they are less fearful to God now. According to the holy Quran earthquakes and other natural disasters are a threat to those who persistently commit evil deeds even after facing such situation they violate the divine guidance. Many researchers have found that such irrational beliefs

and thoughts mainly are the main cause of depression (Rowe, 1996). Apparently this thought is supported by Zain and Varma (1996), who infer that religious psychotherapy and cognitive behavior therapy seems to have better results in the depressed patients and anxious patient's respectively. The people who do not behave according to their values and religious beliefs may become weak, and are likely to suffer from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. This argument was supported by Propst (1996) who claimed that people suffering from depression are generally those who don't have strong faith in God.

5.12 Role of religion in coping disaster

Religion can play a significant role in helping people to cope with stress or to protect against stress. For many, if not most, when disaster or trauma strikes, it is religion, ritual and faith/spirituality that embraced as a central means of coping (Bergin, 1983; Gartner *et al.*, 1991; Meichenbaum, 1994). The religious explanations of earthquake had given people support to compete with this disastrous situation. Spirituality also influences how survivors perceive their sufferings. Some of the research focuses on the role of religion in coping disaster and counseling efficiency (Chinnici 1985; Bradfield *et al.* 1989). People indulged themselves in religious activities to calm themselves. To encounter such incident of disaster where communities become sufferer of such misfortune, religion plays a very imperative role specially to provide psycho-social support to the effectees of disaster to bring them back in their normal lives. The whole world is becoming vulnerable to disasters specifically those are of catastrophic nature due to several reasons.

Chan (2009) suggests that at the times of disaster or stressful situations participation in religious activities introduces certain behaviors and attitudes in people those contribute towards their well-being rather than non-religious people. As Chan noticed that religious involvement encourages people to be more socially active and supportive to other members of community that help them to overcome their own grief. The religious associations also make people optimistic and they hope for the better from their God/s that raises their level of well-being and satisfaction. It is also predictable that survivors of the disaster those have been more participating in religious activities even before disaster will be less depressed and stressed after disaster.

In handling with agonizing circumstances, religious practices could become a suitable approach. For that matter religious leaders could play a distinctive role. Lindberg-Falk note down and explained this perspective while she was working in Thailand after 2004 tsunami on the role of Buddhist monks and nuns in coping with tsunami. She told that religious beliefs and practices are ways to manage with pain after a massive disaster. She also explained that resorting to religious practices in a time of pain and grief is also a source of satisfaction, rather than feeling the guilt of sinfulness or helplessness (Lindberg-Falk, 2010). During his research in Haitian Mooney found that religious beliefs and participation in religious practices enable people to face hardships with strength. Religious practices and beliefs evoke thought processes of self-efficacy and optimism by that even the nastiest disaster can be bear if one has firm belief that justice and progress are not an illusion. (Mooney, 2009)

5.12.1 Role of *Ulema* and *Imams*

In this critical time, *Ulema* and *Imams* came in front and they tried to meet the spiritual needs of survivors and disaster workers. Disasters can have a profound impact upon the faith development of those who experience disaster. In Balakot when people were facing this disasters and every one had questions in their mind that why this happened to them. In this situation religious leaders play a very strong role by providing people with religious justification of this earthquake. In this respect name of Molana Tariq Jamil is on top. It is important to note, however, that many faith communities identify strongly with their clergy and their views carry great weight. Their views on hazard response are often prominent (Mitchell, 2000) and could carry over to their congregations.

Some relevant cognitive restructuring techniques that are helpful within a religious context in the Islamic example include reciting the Holy Quran and performing both compulsory and optional prayers. This is confirmed by the finding of Probst *et al.* (1992) who found that religious clients receiving religious cognitive therapy reported have greater reduction in depression. In the counseling process, the most important thing is to make an open agreement between disaster victim and therapist regarding the significance and value of religious issues because there is a high possibility that the values of counselor influence those of the client (Corey, 1996).

This apparently agrees with Mcleod (1998) claim that it is possible that the client becomes converted in to the counselor's set of values. For this reason, a problem may arise when the counselor has different values and cultural beliefs from those of the clients, since the forces of persuasion are most obvious in cognitive-behavior therapy (Beutler *et al.* 1991). Many major meta-analytic reviews were conducted which revealed that the individuals using religious and spiritual coping efforts show greater physical and emotional well-being (Gall *et al.*, 2005; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Pargament, 2007). Tirrito and Cascio (2003) reported that religious groups carried out many community services in disaster-affected areas.

5.12.2 Role of prayers and recitation of holy verses

For many religions the use of prayer is the communication link between the believer and the deity's on whom they believe. They believe that everything in the world around them is under the control of their deity. That is why, at the time of disaster the use of this facet of religion is witnessed and it is not surprising, in fact it is well documented. People told that after earthquake when they recovered their senses they started praying to God. What so ever verses they recalled they kept on reciting so that Allah may forgive them and keep them safe. Prayer plays an important role for perseverance as well. Scripture and prayer provide direction to help others (clearly seen through the very active relief activities) and strength to try to understand God's plan through the disaster event.

This particular role for prayer is not only important for the Christian denominations investigated here, but also for followers of other religions (Schmuck, 2000). People said that Allah gave us patience to bear the loss of our family members. They muster up courage to initiate rescue work by themselves. They were unaware about reset of the world but they had assumed that whole world would have destroyed in this earthquake and no one will come for their help. The survivors forgot their pain and seek help from God so that they could help others. There is certain type of 'spiritual struggles' that boosts the levels of distress especially when God is viewed as punitive, withholding and vengeful being. Personal distress can rise when people use prayer in the form of pleading, or they wait for God to intercede. It results in arousing avoidant and delay seeking behaviors. The attribution of stressful events to some forms of demonization for instance the devil is found

to be associated with high levels of distress. In contrast a collaborative and self-directive prayerful attitude has been found to be a more adaptive form of coping (Dyson *et al.*, 1997; Koenig *et al.*, 2001; Miller & Martin, 1988).

Randles points out that the affirmation of religious beliefs may be just one of many “cultural tools” that have evolved in order for humans to quell anxiety. We agree that many other systems can reduce anxiety through the creation of order, explanation, and perceived control, and have said as much in our past work (Inzlicht, McGregor, Hirsh, & Nash, 2009; Inzlicht & Tullett, 2010). While religion can reduce the fear of death, it is unlikely that non-religious ideologies can offer relief in this domain. Using a terror management paradigm, for example, Jonas and Fischer (2006) demonstrated that individuals whose religious orientation was characterized by a sincere and deeply internalized belief system reacted to primes of their own mortality with less worldview defense and lower death-thought accessibility, suggesting that religion buffers the experience of terror associated with death.

5.13 Types of people affected or died in quake

On 8th October 2005 people of Balakot stood helpless in front of devastating natural calamities; earthquake. All their wealth and power cannot help them to avoid the consequences of such natural catastrophe. Earthquake does not differentiate between poor or rich, powerful or modest, or sick or healthy, all people were equal for it. A violent earthquake was a terrible experience in its suddenness as well as in its power of destruction to shake the strongest buildings. Most of respondents (77.4%) have the opinion that all types of people were victims of this earthquake. This area was declared red zone that is why earthquake ruined all without distinction of caste and class, good or bad, rich or poor, male or female, young or old. Both good and bad people were living there, so Allah tested the virtuous people and punished the bad people. The bad people were left to suffer on earth. As in the opinion of Robinson, the Bible narrates, it is not necessary that the people who die in accidents or natural disasters are not greater sinners than those who survive (Luke, 13:1-5).

While talking about the type of people dead in natural catastrophes generally the people have the view that they were deemed to the punishment of God for their sins. But few

(22.6%) earthquake victims of Balakot oppose this view. They say only good people died in earthquake while sinners are living a cursed life. They justify their answers by referring to the martyrdom of mosques in the area. All the four main mosques martyred in this earthquake. They further relate that God has awarded the rank of *Shaheed* to His virtuous people and let those alive for testing the little sinners. Most of the martyrs of earthquake were innocent children who were not sinful yet and other were also virtuous people.

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes on the fact that the natural disasters such as earthquakes were and still are expression of wrath of the Creator against sinners among His creation. If innocent people are caught in the way of punishment, they will be resurrected by Allah according to their intentions and He will amply reward them. Anwar-ul-Haque (2005) points out the Muslims' point of view and argues that we cannot say that all the people killed in the earthquake were ill-doers and all those who survived are saints. He further explains that all the innocent people especially children would go to paradise because it was a test of their parents. They argue that how we can say the affecties were bad people as even mosques have been martyred in this earthquake. Where as a plaza in commercial center was not even touched by earthquake in which all the day dishonest shopkeepers told lies and cheated customers remained untouched because Allah tested only pious people. It was month of *Ramadan* and God martyred His pious and virtuous people. God must know that the situation would worsen after earthquake that's why he finished His pious people from the area so that they should not indulge in sins again.

On 1st November, 1755, a devastating earthquake followed by a tsunami ruined nearly two thirds of Lisbon, despite its reputation as an extremely pious town. All of those people in church were buried within its ruins. (Kohlrausch, 2003) Also the occurrence of the 1382 earthquake encouraged some bishops to believe that God disapproved of the institutional church and its planned actions against Lollardy, but Archbishop Courtenay stood firm and draw the opposite conclusion, that the earthquake was a sign which supported the status quo. "Know you not that the noxious vapors which catch fire in the bosom of the earth and give rise to these phenomena which alarm you, lose all their force when burst forth? In like manner, by rejecting the wicked from our community we shall put an end to the convulsions of the church". (De Boer & Sanders, 2005, p. 68)

5.14 Why earthquake hit Balakot

The question that why Balakot particularly was hit by earthquake made people to confess that many social evils was prevailing here. The natives committed sins openly, boldly and proudly but nobody forbids others for instance the luxuries hotels indulged in offering licker and allowing illicit activities to the tourists at their place. Some respondents (33.3%) told that there were no social evils in this area, people were very pious and virtuous but this percentage reduced to 5% after earthquake which indicates that evils are increased in Balakot after earthquake. Paradise (2005) said that mostly survivors recommended that others may have died because they were hypocrites. They believed that the Muslim did not follow the five articles of Islam and have forgotten its teachings. They eat pork and drink liquor as examples. In Agadir earthquake, people identified these two sins among the nation. Many well educated Muslims believed that God determined who lived and who died through this criterion.

People were hypocrites; they pretended to be religious to hide their wrong deeds. They admitted that when people of an area exceed the limits and social evils (immodesty, debauchery, fashion, unveiling, hypocrisy, cheating, greed and theft) increase in society, God sends disasters like earthquake. They also pointed out that the people did not give share in inheritance to their daughters. Girls were following fashion; children were disobedient to elders; dish, TV, and VCR had spoiled young generation. Some think that they were Muslims by name only but not by heart. They have been divided into various sects and every sect hates the people of other sect. Still many claim that the people of Balakot were religiously better than people of other areas and Allah has sent trail on these people so that other people can learn a lesson from them. Some called it a natural scientific phenomenon and relate plate tectonic theory. As scientists had declared it red zone and it was obvious that earthquake will hit it.

5.15 Social evils in Balakot society

All the people of Balakot consider themselves extremely religious and virtuous that gives an impression there is no social evils prevailed in Balakot before earthquake. But people put charges on each other for indicating social evils in the area before and after earthquake.

Table 18: Comparison of pre and post earthquake social evils in Balakot

Responses	Before	Before	After	After
Hotels/tourism	9	18.8%		
Injustice /selfishness	3	6.3%	8	8.0%
Malice/grudge	3	6.3%	8	8.0%
Avarice/materialistic	1	2.1%	13	13.0%
Hypocrisy	4	8.3%	5	5.0%
Back-biting	2	4.2%	2	2.0%
Irreligiousness	4	8.3%	9	9.0%
Falsehood/deception	2	4.2%	15	15.0%
Fashion/unveiling	4	8.3%	19	19.0%
Nothing	16	33.3%	5	5.0%
Love marriages			4	4.0%
Illegitimate relations			5	5.0%
Communication media			5	5.0%
Destroyed social/moral values			2	2.0%
Total	48	100%	100	100%

Source: Field data

Many social evils were prevailing in the societies that paved the way for arrival of torment of God, as mentioned in the holy Quran. *"And (as for) these towns, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction"* (Al Quran, 18:59). People were rich but being greedy and materialistic they didn't take care of the poor even they don't have sympathies in their hearts for the poor. Everybody was in a race to cross each other in material things. They were so proud of their wealth and they were so much indulged in their worldly life that they had forgotten God and His way. They didn't pay alms to the poor due to their conceit and lack of humanity. About such people the holy Quran mentions, *"And walk not on earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height"* (Al Quran. 17:37).

Moral evils like hypocrisy, lie, avarice, envy, and backbiting were observed in Balakot. As Swinburne (2004) defines moral evils are those brought about intentionally by human choice, or deliberately allowed to occur by humans, along with the evils of their deliberate

bad actions or negligence.” Hotels and tourism was found major (18.8%) social evils in the village. They were apparently religious but internally do all evils. They were not religious by heart but just show to others. They aren’t sincere. They show affection on face but internally they keep jealousy, malice and grudges for each other. They pretend as their well wisher but inside want to harm one another all the time, whereas after earthquake fashion and unveiling is considered the mothers of evils (19.0%).

According to Dyer (1999, p.294) “Disaster represents a disruption in the normal, social and economic patterns of a community.” Earthquakes not only destroy the assets but often destroy the morality of survivors due to their greed for aid. As in the case of Balakot people had lost everything in the quake but when they started getting aid everyone wanted to get more than others. Avarice and greed for aid made them insincere even to their brothers. Everyone wanted to snatch from others. People had become so greedy in acquisition of aid that they snatched the rights of others. They scrambled upon goods of aid and started stealing goods as well. Now every man in the village had grudges in their heart for others that they had got more aid than me. People tell a lie with each other for their interest and to deceive others.

After earthquake every one cheated, told a lie to get more aid and now they are habitual of telling lies. Even son tells a lie to father and father to his son for their interest. They are habitual of backbiting that is praising each other on face but in his absence discussing weak points of others. Everyone has complains to their fellows but they don’t show it in front of him rather they discuss it with others when he is not present. Some of the scholars of Islam are worried about the growing numbers of natural disasters in Muslim countries.

As said in the Quran: *“And he not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments had come to them, and these it is that shall have a dreadful chastisement”* (Al Quran, 3:105). Quran further stress on the fact that: *“If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) unbelievers.”* (Al Quran, 5:44). It is the deeds of Muslims and non-Muslims that make come fall under the devastation of natural disasters. They further suggest that until or unless we help ourselves, there would be no one helping us out of these problems as holy Quran says: *“Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition”* (Al Quran, 13:11). An

important example of guilt being collective rather than personal emerges from John Wesley's reflections on the Lisbon earthquake. For Wesley the earthquake represented divine retribution for the sins of the Inquisition, but this idea of human sinfulness - institutional rather than individual and ecclesiological, and stripped of its retributive and sectarian overtones - may be a more important insight than was recognized.

5.16 Reason behind spread of social evils in the society

One of the reason of increase and spread of social evils was hunger and bad plight of people after earthquake. The people who kept on doing crimes became senseless from inside and they became habitual of it. People also label the mediums of entertainment and communication like television, dish antenna, computer, internet and mobile phone etc. as social evils developing among young generation. Fashion, unveiling, modernism resulted in lack of seclusion for *Namehram*. Women roam in markets purposelessly without veil and are exposed to everyone now. Due to modernization, they are indulged in illegitimate relations and a trend of love marriages has emerged.

They think that the outsiders brought social evils along with them. They target the NGOs and INGOs for spoiling the social environment of the village. They gave abundant aid and unnecessary money to people that made the people lazy. Dependence on aid made people idle, greedy, cheater and selfish, they sold their ego and keep on attempting to get as much aid as possible. They also characterize aid as mother of social evils. For aid people had cheated, told lies, they have been cruel, unjust and deceived others to get more aid. Aid filled the heart of villagers with greed and hatred. The misled people ran behind aid and NGOs but don't seek help and support from God that's why God has lost them in their desire to get money.

5.17 Rehabilitation issues

The national and international humanitarian response was huge to meet the crisis. In the initial phases of response Army aviation, Corps of Engineers, Pakistan Medical corps and enormous infantry units played their important role in relief work. People of Balakot complain that although a large amount of the money was delivered by international NGOs but the distribution was not just and fair. A lot of the collected money was given to the

Pakistani Government for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the area by reconstruction authority called ERRA. However this authority was highly criticized for luxurious non-developmental spending and their false statistics but practical reconstruction of shelters was carried out by Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Japan and UAE. The basic infrastructure including homes, health, education, water supply, road networks, waste management and other basic facilities are still underdeveloped.

After earthquake many NGOs and INGOs that came in the area from different parts of the countries gave abundant of aid and money to the people and even introduced the luxuries to the simple villagers they were unaware off. Their social support was really helpful for the unfortunate people. The findings of some researchers reveal that the social support networks have a noteworthy effect on human response to natural disasters (Carr *et al.*, 1995; Karanci, *et al.*, 1999; Kato *et al.*, 1996). Other studies have suggested that social support networks can foster resilience or posttraumatic growth (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Tedeschi *et al.* 1998). Many religious scholars also came along with NGOs and washed the brains of victims and relaxed the suffering people. Their role was need of the hour. Although Satel (2005, March 29) reported an article in The New York Times entitled, "Bread and Shelter, Yes. Psychiatrists, No." but the depressed people need spiritual food to feed the guilty consciousness. Rosenfeld *et al.* (2005) emphasize that the focus of psychological first aid should be on the immediate needs of the survivors.

These NGOs started relief work along with the search operations for missing people. Rosenfeld *et al.* (2005) indicated, "Reuniting family members and verifying information about losses are the most immediate and urgent needs" (p. 261). They also buried the corpse. The people of Belyani were living in combine or joint family system in multiple story homes. That is why in earthquake most of the members of a family were buried under the rubble of huge houses. Shoaf *et al.* (1998) found that cultural factors such as family structure could even contribute to the injury rate or death toll in disasters because of the living arrangements. People were really sad upon deaths of their family members and for leaving their broken houses. Gerrity and Steinglass (1994) indicated that just the thought of losing a home could cause deep emotional pain. They affirmed, "Home represents an extension of the self and a symbol of the future" (p. 245). Hence, the loss of a home to a

disaster could have a lasting impact on survivors. In a 1988 Armenia earthquake study, Pynoos *et al.* (1993) also found that the break up and displacement of families and the disruption of community life worsened posttraumatic stress symptoms as well as interfering with recovery. Likewise, Najarian *et al.* (2001) and Granot (1995) found that relocation after a disaster delayed the survivors' recovery process because of the disruption of their social support networks.

The stay in camps was temporary but was a hard experience for the villagers. Later the NGOs constructed earthquake proof shelters for the survivors in plain land in which they are still living. They had to move once again with heavy hearts. In case of an involuntary relocation as a consequence of disaster, Miller, Turner, and Kimball (1981) found that the possibility of a family's return to their community became a critical factor in recovery. Many villagers are still not satisfied in shelters and they demand the government for rehabilitation and reconstruction of their homes at their own land although this area is declared as red zone by the seismologist. Speare (1974) introduced residential satisfaction as an intervening variable in one's decision to migrate and looked at the strength of bonds and attachments as they are related to one's general level of satisfaction versus their dissatisfaction. He found that residential satisfaction is indeed a key determinant of whether a person moves or stays at the current location.

DeJong *et al.* (1998) echoed Spears finding that social bonds create a significant mobility-inhibiting factor. Many researches on the issue of relocation followed by a natural disaster highlight the importance of community integration in making decisions to move. The people who are most likely to resist relocation are possibly those who have the strongest affiliation to the community's cultural roots (Mileti and Passerini, 1996). In the research done by Kirshenbaum (1996), evaluations of relations of respondent with neighbors showed significant impact on their decision to relocate following the disaster event.

5.18 Aid issues

The earthquake brought the people to footpath without discrimination of rich or poor. All the people turned hand to mouth in such situation. According to Lu, Sato and Zhang (2008) the likely reason behind household failing to help each other is because almost all the

households in the village are affected by the natural disaster. However after earthquake many organizations came here to help and rescue the victims. They evacuated the people covered under debris, buried the corpses, treated the injured, took them to hospitals; provided them with food, shelter and medicine. They helped in restarting their normal life and gave them safe and secure homes. They supplied aid adequately as it was necessary for the people who had lost everything. They would have not survived if timely aid and rescue would have not reached them. Blaikie *et al.* (1994) pointed out that people who have access to resources such as social support and financial aid did better than their counterparts. Langer (2003) commented, "In the real world, private charities have made the most significant changes in people's lives" (p. 148).

Everyone admit that they acquired aid, but they complain about its unequal and unjust distribution which caused many internal issues and fights among villagers. The strong and influential and greedy people snatched share of poor, weak and needy people. They got the aid repeatedly while many white collared people were left deprived. Morris *et al.* (2002) also discusses that usually after natural disaster, few of the lower strata households fall into perpetual poverty traps and they don't have a little hope of escaping it. Such poorer households are less prepared to deal with the shock of natural disaster. Wealthy household can rebuild their lost houses and assets rapidly as compared to the other households in the same locality (Skoufias, 2003; Carter *et al.*, 2007).

During conflicts a significant portion of aid was wasted. Abundant of aid was brought for the victims. Some people stored goods of aid and afterwards sold them in markets. Many goods were rotten. They threw it and wasted lots of aid. Neal (1994) highlights that in many disasters; there is an overabundance of aid. Such aid may create additional problems because it has to be disposed of or sorted. According to Harrison (2007) a common stereotype is that disasters strip people of their civility, encouraging sprees of self-indulgent behavior including looting, wanton destruction of property, and violence. Research shows that disasters often lead to heightened interest in other people's welfare and encourage behavior that is considerate, even altruistic.

People also complain that the aid was disgracefully given to them. They had to go again and again and stand in lines all the day long to wait for their turn for acquisition of aid.

Everybody said, they had sensible attitude towards attainment of aid but other people were not following manners. The unjust distribution of aid motivated the people to adopt wrong paths. The people were religious sound before earthquake but when aid distribution started, whole day they remained in lines to get aid and forget their religious practices.

Seven years have been passed after this tragedy. People have learned to live alone and with few of their families survived in earthquake. The people from the other parts of country think that the circumstances have been normalized now. But this is a fact that victims of earthquake are not striving for their lives and are just killing their time on earth without their love ones. It is a fact that the construction and the basic facilities available in the area have not been recovered yet. Shrivastava (1987) describes that a view that makes defining disaster even difficult is the differences in the views of responders, victims, and the onlooker. While looking at a tragic industrial accident in Bhopal he points out that the perception of the “disaster” was drastically different from the victims and the responders who were trying to control the spread of damage, and keep the problem from spreading into the community any further. Hoffman (1999) explained that to an onlooker’s eye the “disaster” can be viewed with things that may appear to be normal or returning to normal following a disaster because he is not impacted by disaster. They usually fail to see victims who are still suffering from the impacts of the disaster. The government abandons further projects, causing the outside viewers to think that everything is fine now.

SUMMARY

Balakot is famous for its magnificent natural beauty that creates a center of attention for the tourists from the country and all over the world. People were living a prosperous life here and were blessed with almost every basic facility of life. Its inhabitants are renowned for having strong bonds with their religious beliefs and for their punctuality in performing religious activities. They were considered complete Muslims due to their enthusiasm and zeal for rituals and steadfastness of their faith. The earthquake of 8th October 2005 changed the lives of people all in sudden that not only their social and economic standing changed but their religious organization was also badly effected in the area.

A detailed qualitative study was conducted in village Belyani of Balakot to document the effect of earthquake on religious beliefs and practices of people because Balakot was most destructed area in earthquake. The study extracted that there was no change in faith of the victims after quake. Their fundamental religious beliefs were same as before earthquake. The sects *Sunni* or *Ahl-e-haidith* are dwelling in majority here. Bothe the sects still has faith in *Allah* as the only God and *Muhammad (PBUH)* is His last prophet, to whom He revealed "*Quran*". They believe in the teachings of *Islam* and *Muhammad PBUH* in the form of *Quran* and *Haidith*. Thus their general religious beliefs remained in accordance to *Islam*. The only change appeared in the beliefs related to disaster or more specifically about earthquake. These beliefs associated with natural calamities already existed within the knowledge of *Islam*, but the people were unaware of them until they experienced the earthquake.

The sufferers were curious to know why they were the victims of this earthquake, so they started keenly listening to the discussions about this topic to find the reason that may satisfy their burning consciousness. This region was primarily famous for their richness in religion. Due to this reason most of the details about earthquake were explained from religious point of view. Before earthquake people generally believed that earthquakes are the consequences of exceeding human sins and a punishment due to wrath from God. After earthquake when outsiders pointed their fingers towards the character of Balakot folk,

crediting them as sinful and as a nation cursed by enraged God. The people of Balakot got furious on such questioning and they claimed that they were and are true and complete Muslims. After earthquake religious scholars kept on preaching the victims of earthquake and they gave them religious justification of this earthquake to console their souls.

Several religious groups carried out many community services in disaster-affected areas but an Islamic religious leader Molana Tariq Jamil played the most important role of calmer in assisting survivors' search to get a meaning from disaster. He assisted them in the grief process by telling them that the earthquake of Balakot was not punishment of sins but was a trial from God because they were very good Muslims. He further elaborated that *Allah* sends trial to test His virtuous people only. Now if they get closer to Him then they will succeed in His trail but if they get astray it would be a punishment for them. The guilty hearts of people were calmed by the explanation of Molana Tariq Jamil as he defended them from the charge of evil deeds; so many people adopted his viewpoint. But still there are a significant numbers of people who still believe that it was the punishment from God for our offense. These beliefs got spread across the board among the people through peer learning or via scholars' speeches and people of every caste, class, age, sex, sect and education followed their viewpoint without any objection. The grieved people were in stressful situation after this huge destruction. They rose above their sufferings by indulging in religious activities and by getting religious explanations of earthquake.

People had firm belief that praying to God avoids misfortune and misery. Many elderly people and religious entities advised them to recite certain holy verses of *Quran* to prevent earthquake in future and to keep them safe. Many people didn't know the efficacy of these holy verses for preventing earthquake but when they were told they started believing it undoubtedly. Although not an exactly single verse was circulating among the people rather different people advised to recite different verses. And the miserable people recited everything they were told to prevent aftershocks of earthquake. The victims' obstinate faith made them recite any verse of *Quran* referred by multiple sources across the channel.

Commonly superstitions spread after incidents of disasters or accidents. The number of superstitions generally increases in the case of collective misfortunes. This earthquake also resulted in laying various superstitions that circulated across the village through horse's

mouth. Two of the superstitions were witnessed by every villager; those were mud rain and noise of birds and animals late at night before earthquake. Rest of the superstitions lack witnesses and evidences but still were quite famous among village folks. The main source of these superstitions was peer group in the camps they were dwelling after earthquake. The affecties use to share these gossips with great interests with one and other to reduce their ache.

These people were religiously famous before earthquake but just after earthquake trends in religious practices changed. People started praying to *Allah* with more feelings than ever because they could not find anyone else to support them. Although many of the people stopped performing their religious activities due to lack of arrangements to retain sanctity whereas there were also people who managed to continue them in any case. Also people were injured and survivors were busy in the rescue work so they could not continue their religious practices. When rescue teams reached the area, relief activities and search operations were started. The local people started their regular religious life once again. Still there were many who did not restore their previous routine.

The earthquake effected religious life of different people differently, those who were less regular before earthquake became strict in their religious practices. Some those were punctual before earthquake reduced or discontinue their religious practices after earthquake. There were some people who practiced their religion in the same way and were not interrupted by the quake. The people also said, although they are performing their rituals and religious activities now but they do not do it with the same feelings and intensity of emotions they used to, before earthquake. After experiencing earthquake their hearts and souls have turned dead. And now, either it is social or religious, but they do not perform it with interest.

Several people believe that social evils and earthquake are interconnected and they also highlighted some of the social evils in the area. They confess that they were responsible for this earthquake. However many believed that the social evils have increased after earthquake and now these are spreading speedily in the area. They put the charge of these social evils on 'aid' itself and aid distributors the outsiders. They said, although aid was necessary for the survival of earthquake victims at that particular time but its abundance

and unjust distribution has introduced more social evils in the society and it has made the people so much dependent on it.

Conclusion

The earthquake of 8th October 2005 was too colossal in nature that none of the villager could have escaped from its destruction. There was not a single family who had not lost a member. Their homes were collapsed in front of their eyes and buried many people under it. Those who were trapped under debris were crying in pain and asking for help. But it was more painful for the survivors who could not manage to help them. The earthquake was so sudden and immense that people were shocked and could not comprehend what had happened to them and what should they do now. When some of them restored their senses they started searching their family members and tried to evacuate their own family members first. The haste to rescue their own family first made the people selfish and insensitive as everyone was concerned with their own people and nobody bothered to help others. The magnitude of the destruction was immense and it led to hustle and bustle among people.

At the very day of earthquake people were terribly feared from God that He had sent “*Qayamat*” on them so they were praying to God for help even if they could not perform daily religious duties. But when they came to know that rest of the world is safe and sound and it was an earthquake just hit to some areas and is not the Day of Judgment. They put many question marks on their faces, “why on us?” as the people of the area considered themselves very pious and virtuous because they were very regular and strict in *Namaz*, *Roza*, *Talawate-Quran*. They had heard before that such disasters are sent only to sinful people. That justification annoyed them and they were confused about these matters, religion and *Allah*. They wanted to know the logic and justification for what had happened to them. Their consciousnesses were not satisfied with the notion that “it’s a natural incident”. They knew the religious connotation of earthquakes but those were not acceptable to them. Then different religious scholars came on front to address the concerns of people within the realm of *Islam* which consoled the grieved people to accept the situation and to cope with disaster. The shaken beliefs led the people to fabricate and

circulate superstitions regarding earthquake so that they could somehow manage to absorb this shock.

Although people got religious explanations by the religious leaders that pacified their grief but as they had lost everything in the quake, so their belief dazed them again and again because they were facing adversity to rehabilitate and re-establish themselves. This state of mind effected their religious practices in different ways, either they became more religious or they left their religious practices at all or remain on same pace as they were before. The intensity of emotion, feelings and enthusiasm attached to the religious performances was also changed and reduced. Even after finding justification of the earthquake by scholars, they are unable to absorb it completely and it is still making them deviant. This attitude has lead to the introduction of various social evils in the area, because people had lost everything and they wanted to restore their previous status as soon as possible.

Along with pain and agony, earthquake had developed certain positive attitudes among people regarding disaster. The area due to its geographical location is prone to earthquakes for centuries and people have been experiencing tremours of various frequencies. After facing mass destruction in this earthquake people were very emotional about what has happened with them but with the passage of time they got reasons for this disaster ranging from religious to scientific. They have become more rational after getting knowledge about the area and reasons of earthquake. Now they are less fear full rather more prepared to face such disaster in future.

Almost every person of the village had got training on disaster mitigation and management and they believe that if such disaster struck again they will not be facing that much human and financial loss. This kind of disaster preparedness had made them able to face challenges and they had developed acceptance regarding natural disasters. People are living in shelters since their rehabilitation although they want to have homes as they were having before earthquake but they know that they are living in the red zone where construction is not allowed and they are safer in shelters. This adoption of construction patterns had made them resilient to earthquake. People have logical way of thinking about disasters instead of indulging in the superstitions. Although after earthquake many

superstitions evolved but people do not believe them and are more inclined to give logical reasons of earthquake.

The outsiders invaded the area to help victims of the earthquake and to provide them aid. But instead of helping people it created a chaos in the area. Although the aid was sent in abundance but its distribution mechanism was not appropriate which frustrated the people. The rescue and relief activities generated long queues of needy to get aid took the people away from performing their religious practices as they were struggling to acquire it and could not spare time to perform religious duties. Also the attitude of outsiders and manners in which aid was distributed hurt the self respect of people and they started complaining to God for their pathetic plight and dependence on others. But unfortunately they did not have any other option. They had to get it for their survival. So they left their ego aside and strived for restoring their lives. The rescue and relief operations are necessary in the cases of disaster but they should be carried out in a certain way that people don't need to run behind things so that instead of being frustrated and adopting unfair means to get aid they should abide by the rules of their religion and should play a positive role in resilience and rehabilitation.

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Rev, 16:21	(Holy Bible: The Book of Revelations, Chapter 16, Verse 21)



A Bird Eye View of Village Belyani



River Kunhar Flowing Near Belyani



Balakot Land Sliding on Mountains



Earthquake Destruction in Village Belyani



Masjid Syed Ahmed Shaheed, Balakot



Earthquake Destruction