

BIBI ATAR JAN

Village: Bela Schaan
UC: Hangrai
Tehsil: Balakot
District: Mansehra



Mrs. **Atar Jan** (General Councilor Hangrai) portrayed that on 8th Oct 2005, she was looking after a two year old boy of her neighbors on the roof of her house having an eye on her animals grazing in field down. Unexpectedly she felt a dreadful nudge and could not understand for a while what has gone off. After 3 or 4 seconds she realized that it was an earthquake as she was trembling very badly. She tried to get up and run but all in vain as the jolts were quite fast. In the meanwhile, she felt that the roof was slowly going down and gradually the roof lapped her along with baby and they both fell down on ground and her house was entirely destroyed. Unfortunately the baby in her hands got died due to falling off house collapsing material. She saw the clouds of dust and smoke in her surroundings because of which she could not be able to see anyone. Almost all the houses were completely smashed and the painful voices of few human beings and animals were coming to her ears. Keeping herself in her senses with a lot of courage and patience she put the dead-baby aside when shaking stopped.

She was crying and looking for her husband but could not find as he was outside the home. It was Qayamat-e-Sughra because all the houses, Masajid, schools dispensaries were vanished totally. Atar Jan then started search for her other relatives and neighbors by running here & there and calling their names. She listened to feeble sounds of a few individuals. She just went and helped them to come out from the rubble and wreckage. She took out the **18 persons (7 females, 3 males & 8 kids)** of four families from the debris. Almost all the victims were wounded but three of them were severely injured. The one was suffering from backache & the abdominal portions of two kids were affected. After some time her husband came and they both started making a shelter with corn-straws, branches and wood pieces while other were busy in taking out dead bodies. As they completed the shelter they put dead bodies on one side and injured on the other side in it. She found a cooking pot and a lota (water carrier generally used in washrooms) and went for water from a nearby spring. She gave water to injured and prepared soup for them. There was not a single plate or any bowl to eat & drink. After preparing soup she got a dirty small-sized plate, in which poultry used to eat their food. She cleaned the plate by rubbing the soil in it (because of scarcity of water) and served soup to effectees. In the evening by 5.30 snow-fall & ruthless cold started & there was no food, water, blanket/quilt etc.

As all the houses and shops were collapsed so there was no food stuff to cook. She & her husband did wait for two to three hours but snow-fall was on its peak then they went to a place where they guess that it might be a shop they started digging the

place. After half an hour they found the shop and collected some food stuff .i.e. rice, sugar etc in her dupatta (a cloth to cover the head).

Then they came back, prepared the dinner and served to all the members of nine families. Next morning the young & healthy males started digging & taking out the dead bodies and buried them. All means of communication were destroyed so no one could come to help the poor effectees till fifteen days. Bibi Atar jan carried out the care & traditional treatment of all the injured but the three **two kids (Aisha & Mustafa)** and a **man (Liaqat Ali)** could not survive and they died on the fourth day of this devastation. That was the most helpless stage in her life.

It was an awful time but with the help of Almighty Allah they kept in their senses and assist the effectees. Government and other relief associations came very late but even then they did a lot for Bela Schaan.

After this massive destruction in their communities they had a wish to attend such kind of training, making them prepared for any future disaster. Finally one day she received a letter from union council secretary that ERRA was going to organize three days training workshop on CBDRM. She felt happy for being a part of the team. She participated and shared this story from DRM-training platform. It is hoped that this training will mitigate future risks and make their communities safer.