

Topic: Pakistan's Preparedness to meet Natural Disasters.

Outline:

1- Introduction

Thesis statement: Pakistan is experiencing numerous natural disasters. No proper preparedness has been done to mitigate the risk of these natural disasters. However, the country can tackle the consequences of natural disasters by taking effective measures.

2- Natural disasters and Pakistan's preparedness: an overview

3- Shortcomings in Pakistan's preparedness to meet natural disasters:

- (a) Response-centric approach rather than pre-emptive
- (b) Lack of coordination between disaster management authorities
- (c) Inadequate budget allocation to manage natural disasters
- (d) Deficiency of dams to store water
- (e) Absence of local government to maintain sustainable infrastructure at grassroot level
- (f) Restricting role of INGOs in disaster management rehabilitation and relief works
- (g) Lack of knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety

(4) How Pakistan can prepare itself to meet natural disasters:

- (a) Adopt pre-centric planning approach towards disasters management
 - (b) Strengthen NDMA and PDMA's to implement their disaster management policies
 - (c) Allocate the sufficient fund in accordance with the losses incurred
 - (d) Promote disaster-oriented NGOs on the ground
 - (e) Dismantle the illegal encroachment of land
- (5) Conclusion

Essay:

Throughout history, natural disasters have had a significant impact on societies and the environment. They have ~~had~~ caused widespread destruction, displacement of populations, and loss of life. In the recent years, the frequency of natural disasters has been increased significantly. Pakistan, being an underdeveloped country, is prone to various natural disasters. The threat of these natural disasters has prompted increased efforts towards disasters preparedness.

In order to face these challenges, the country has taken significant steps. These includes, legislative measures, signatory to international conventions, and overall coordination of disaster management institutions. Despite of some efforts to improve disasters preparedness and response, Pakistan is facing significant challenges in addressing the impact of these natural disasters. Firstly, the country has response-centric approach rather than pre-emptive approach to control the effects of natural disasters. Following this, inadequate budget allocation and

deficiency of capacity building to store water are hurdles to meet the natural disasters. Furthermore, the absence of local government to maintain sustainable infrastructure at grassroots level, restricting role of INGOs in disaster management rehabilitation and relief works, and lack of knowledge to build a culture of safety are drawbacks in Pakistan. Preparedness to alleviate the risk of natural disasters.

However, the country can prepare itself well enough to meet natural disaster by adopting pre-centric planning approach. Also, it should strengthen the coordination between national disaster management

institutions and ~~allocate~~ the sufficient fund to compensate with the loss.

Subsequently, promotion of disaster-oriented NGOs and dismantling the illegal encroachment of land should be the way forward for the country in order to get ready for the natural disasters. In a nutshell, Pakistan is experiencing numerous natural disasters. No proper preparedness has been done to mitigate the risk of these

natural disasters. However, the country can tackle the consequences of natural disasters by taking effective measures.

Climate change and natural disasters pose a major challenge to Pakistan's development. The country has experienced various natural disasters, particularly floods, droughts and earthquakes. These disasters have affected the country in all aspects. However, the government has taken the possible steps to prepare to the damage of natural disasters. The country is a part of various international conventions which work for disaster risk reduction efforts. Internally, it has passed legislative measures like National Disaster Management Authority 2010 (NDMA). But, after the 18th amendment, it has been working with the overall coordination of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), and District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). Also, the government has established the recovery, response, and preparedness bodies to fight the natural disasters. This shows that Pakistan has taken done efforts to face the

challenges appeared from natural disasters. However, there are some problems in Pakistan's preparedness to meet natural disasters which make it vulnerable to deal with the consequences of various natural hazards.

Starting with the shortcomings that Pakistan has in order to prepare itself to tackle the natural disasters is its approach ~~to~~ which is response centric rather than pre-emptive. The main issue with its management is that it focuses on the response of natural disasters. This response-centric approaches focus on relief and immediate rehabilitation and ignore preventive disaster reduction policies. This approach has contributed to the humanitarian crisis, and has led to extensive losses to the economy and infrastructure which widely affecting the poor. A.R. Mehmood in his article "Disaster Prevention and Management" said that the ~~event~~ of 2015 earthquake in Kashmir was the ~~effect~~ of the policies of Pakistan which heavily relied on attaining short-term goals.

of response rather than long term approach in planning for preparedness.

Following this, lack of coordination between disaster management authorities, PDMA and NDMA, is another case in point. Pakistan has institutional structure to prepare natural disaster. Although they have made improvements to tackle the situation, but their ~~comp~~ competing interests remain a problem at every level. This results in communication and coordination gaps as the role of the authorities (NDMA and PDMA) are identical and overlap with each other. According to World Bank Report "Options to strengthen Disaster Risk Financing in Pakistan", Disaster ~~Risk~~ management management is not included either in the federal or concurrent list which creates more gaps between these institutions. This emphasizes that the country is facing problems to mitigate the risk of the consequences of the natural disasters.

Furthermore, the other challenge faced by the country to prepare

for the natural disasters is the inadequate budget allocation to manage the natural disasters. Being an undeveloped country, Pakistan is vulnerable to meet the losses and economic damage.

Increasing intensity of floods further poses the threat of ^{to} already economic crisis of Pakistan.

Resultantly, the country cannot provide ~~achieve~~ its significant allocation of budget to environmental institutions. According to Asian Development report, Pakistan is spending only 0.9 to 1.9% of its total budget expenditure on disasters which is not sufficient to cater for the disasters. This shows that lack of budget allocation is also the main issue with Pakistan's preparedness to meet natural disasters.

4 Moreover, incapacity of buildings and deficiency of dams to store water pose a challenge to Pakistan prepare Pakistan for natural disasters. Lack of finance allocation and lack of consensus lead to the hurdles in dams construction.

Resultantly, the country suffers from the severe natural disasters in the form of floods. As the natural disasters are the international problem, many countries like China, India, and Bangladesh has overcome the possibilities of floods by building dams and canals. Pakistan can also decrease the threat of these natural disasters as its underconstruction dams can save 20MAF water. Unfortunately, the country is experience multiple challenges to build these dams thus cannot be well prepared itself for natural disasters.

5 Subsequently, absence of local government to maintain sub sustainable infrastructure at grassroots level is a shortcoming for Pakistan. to meet with the natural disasters. Local government is the essential part of the country to build the sustainability at low level. However, many local governments lack the trained staff and the budget to pursue effective policies. "Local government is a focal agency to manage the disasters, but the research

admits that local government authority has less capacity and has poor awareness of disaster management activities." (Managing Disasters: The role of local government). This emphasises that absence of local government responsibility poses a serious threat to Pakistan to overcome the risk of disaster management.

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In addition to this, restricting role of INGOs in disaster management rehabilitation and relief work becomes the hurdle in Pakistan's preparedness to meet natural disasters. INGOs are considered the ~~best~~ resource for disaster relief and rehabilitation works. However, Pakistan has not taken advantage of it because of various security concerns.

In this regard, Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, an umbrella group of 38 registered INGOs working in Pakistan, ~~has been~~ has been denied to work in the country. This shows that the country has restricted the role of INGOs to manage disasters' ~~the~~ consequences.

Lastly, one of the most important problems that Pakistan faces to prepare itself for natural disasters is the lack of knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture safety and healthy environment in the country. The government regularly uses mainstream media to raise awareness about disasters like floods and heatwaves. However, most of those awareness campaigns are reactive in their timing and limited in content. There is also very limited content about disaster preparedness and risk reduction in educational material taught in public and private schools. Resultantly, the government engages with the challenges to reduce the risk of ~~disasters~~ natural disasters.

However, fortunately enough for the country, Pakistan has many options to enhance its capacity building and to manage natural disasters in effectively manner. First and the foremost option for the country's management is to

adopt pre-centric planning approach towards disasters management. The shift from response-centric approach to pre-centric approach acknowledges that essential steps undertaken before disasters could reduce the impact of natural disaster. By adopting the pre-centric approach, Pakistan can get risk assessment, mitigation, and preparedness before a disaster. Ultimately, the country can ~~get~~ reduce the risk of humanitarian and economic loss. This shows that the change in policy approach is the need of the hour for the country to prepare itself well for natural disasters.

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Furthermore, Pakistan should strengthen the PDMA and NDMA to implement their policies of disaster management. Pakistan needs to climb through primary rungs of the ladder before introducing new institutions after every disaster. There is a need to strengthen coordination at the provincial and district levels and to utilize already existing ~~policies~~ institutional

capacity. Rather than introducing this regard, policing, financing, implementation, and regulatory institutions need to be looked into together as a collective.

According to analyst name Arif Jabbar Khan, "The government has laid the foundations for a more disaster resilient country. Now it needs to work in coordination to complete the task."

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Similarly, allocation of sufficient funds in accordance with the losses incurred can reduce the risk of consequences of natural disasters in Pakistan. The country is experiencing a severe economic crisis, and it is highly dependent on foreign aid to meet the challenges and loss occurred from the natural disasters. Pakistan remains one of America's largest recipients of foreign assistance. (USAID Report, 2022). However, the aid coming from the foreign countries should be reached the vulnerable people to ensure their social protection. Moreover, major dams construction projects need high

expenses to be built. This shows that, in order to enhance its capacity building of storing water and to reduce the risk of floods, the country ~~needs~~ ~~to~~ should increase its budget allocation to ~~disaster~~ manage natural disasters.

" Moreover, the country should promote disaster-oriented NGOs on the ground to curb the challenge of natural disasters. Levels of disaster preparedness may be higher with a ~~to~~ stronger civil-society presence in general and with more disaster oriented NGOs on the ground in particular. This can be done with effective measures by local government and NGOs to invest in resilience initiatives with the support of local people. In this regard, the research has showed that the local NGOs and volunteers closely work with community and thus enhance their risk reduction and emergency response capacities. (NGOs and Disaster Risk Reduction in Pakistan). This shows that promotion of disaster-oriented NGOs on the ground level should be the way forward for the government as well as society.

Lastly, in order to reduce the risk of disaster management like floods in the country, the illegal encroachment of land should be dismantled. As the population growth is enhanced, people have started to create informal housing settlements. Construction near the storm water drains has also been done illegally. For instance, the illegal construction of hotels and buildings near banks of River Swat ~~has~~ aggravated the floods in the country. In an article titled "Why floods" by Arif Hassan, it is said that "From now on, no person would be allowed to construct commercial or non-commercial buildings or any other development work within 200 feet of the rivers." This shows that illegal construction and misuse of land should be stopped to save the country from natural disasters.

To conclude, it can be said that natural disasters pose a serious threat to Pakistan's development. The frequency of natural disasters has been increased in recent years. However, the country

has taken various steps to tackle the risk of disasters. In many ways, Pakistan's capacity to deal with disasters has significantly improved in recent years. Despite these improvements, the country has shortcomings in natural disasters preparedness. However, with the eyes on the target and with the collective response of state and the society, Pakistan can deal with the increasing threat of natural disasters.