

"We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it."

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THE ESSAY

"The world is warming so fast than at any time in history, shrinking the window to act swiftly," warned Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general at a climate emergency event. Climate change that was once considered to be a future prediction of science has turned into a reality just before our eyes. It is no more a future event. The rise of heatwaves across the

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globe, changing monsoon patterns, increasing number of flood events, rapidly melting glaciers and rising sea levels has caused enough damage. The consequences of climate change have expanded to the economic and social life of the country countries. Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable state to climate change irrespective of the lowest contribution to the climate triggers. Intensive heatwaves, changing weather patterns and increasing number of floods has made climate change the biggest security threat. The most worrisome thing is the shrinking time to act to control the climate change. Scientific predictions are still in favor of human race urging the mankind to act rapidly. In short, climate change is no more a scientific threat but a reality. Only this generation can alter the path of irreversible catastrophe.

To begin with, climate change has turned from scientific prediction to a reality with many observable and undeniable changes. The arctic ice at the pole is melting so rapidly that the a 90-95% decrease in ice level in sea is reported by IPCC. The global

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snow melting, rising temperatures and increasing sea levels are the undeniable facts of the climate change.

The world has crossed the threshold temperature of 1.5°C which is too high than the pre-industrialization level. The Paris Climate Agreement was signed to keep the temperature of earth to 1.5°C as a maximum limit but it has increased upto 2°C as per reported by United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention. This is a clear indication of global warming and climate change is not the same as it was before the industrialization.

The above mentioned rise in temperature has made the current generation the first generation to fully feel the effects of climate change. One of the factors behind this is the intensifying heatwaves. Heatwaves now cause more casualties than the floods or any other disaster. March 2025 was the hottest March ever in the history of Europe, then the June-July a ten day heat wave took lives of 2300 people as reported by Al-Jazeera. All of this was unknown before which has now become a new normal. The heatwaves are intensifying day by day.

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The other factor as an evidence of climate change is the unprecedented rainfall and increasing number of floods across the globe. The year 2025 has witnessed floods in Mali, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and Pakistan as reported by The Guardian. These floods have caused considerable damage to lives and property making the climate change a reality. So, the intense rainfall and floods are non-ignorable facts.

Another evidence of the modern day climate change is rapid melting of glaciers. Due to global rise in temperature, the glaciers are melting rapidly. The mountain ranges of Alps and Himalayas have lost maximum of their snow cover. This rise of melting glaciers is most common in South Asian regions as mentioned in IPCC 2024 report. The glacial melting will further leads to a cascade of events like glacial lake outbursts and avalanches. So, the glacial melting is also an indicator for this generation to feel the impacts of climate change.

In addition to this, there comes the social economic and health impacts of climate change. The most important

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among them is a risk to food security. The climate change events are causing a shortage of food supply by eroding the cultivable land due to floods and heatwaves. Food and agriculture organization (FAO) has predicted 24% decrease in agriculture till 2100 as the lands in Africa, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is getting barren due to extreme heatwaves. So, food and agriculture security is posing a great threat to this generation and also to the coming generations.

Another impact of climate change is internal displacement and mass migration. The migration in the past was mainly done due to internal conflicts and wars but now the mass migration due to climate change and internal displacement is comparable to the migration caused by wars and conflicts. People in low lying areas are most vulnerable to climate change and mostly have to migrate from their places like the people in coastal areas of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives and Japan. So, the mass migration and internal displacement is also making this generation

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to realize the full impacts of climate change.

Moreover, the health is also at risk due to climate change effects. Skin diseases which were rare in past are now common due to the depletion of ozone layer. Rising amount of Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere also leads to the respiratory diseases affecting lungs and heart as well. Water borne diseases due to floods has increased the seriousness of climate change effects. WHO has reported that the vulnerable groups like elderly, children and low income community face disproportionately higher risks from these widespread threats of climate change.

Another impact of climate related events is the disruption in the economic activities. Climate change has enough capability to reverse the economies of the world. As per UNDP, the years 2024-25 has faced a loss ^{equal to} 20% world GDP due to climate change. Floods and rainfall events has even caused damages in the rich country like UAE. The low income and developing countries are already

facing the shocks of climate change.

Pakistan is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change as per United Nation Development Program 2024 report for Pakistan. Despite its less than one percent contribution it is facing the worst effects of climate change. Among these effects, the most common effect now-a-days is intense heatwave. Like the European countries, Pakistan also faced heatwave in May 2024. Sindh recorded a temperature of 49°C and the casualties reported were 685 due to heatwave as reported by many newspapers and institutes across the country. The intensive heatwaves in summer is becoming a new normal of Pakistan.

Another evidence of Pakistan being the worst affected of climate change is the intensified monsoon and rainfall pattern causing floods in the riverine areas. This year, August 2025^{even} alone Islamabad has witnessed cloud burst and a rain of 100mm as per record provided by the Meteorological Department of Pakistan. The other areas like Swat has also witnessed a river flood which caused a loss of 17 lms

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at the spot. All this provides enough evidence to the adverse effects of climate change.

To add further, melting of glaciers and glacial lake outbursts are also becoming common in northern areas of Pakistan. Gilgit Baltistan in the current year has witnessed a rapid melting of glaciers and glacial lake outbursts which also affected tourism there. The rapid melting of these glaciers will further cause a shortage of fresh water supply and an increase in the sea level. All this is enough for Pakistani generation to act now to save the future generations.

All the above presented facts and figures are enough to trigger the seriousness of climate change in the current generation and realize it to take steps as the last generation to save the planet. The time is rapidly shrinking, making the current generation to take responsibility before it is too late. Time is the real player in this matter which can bring any change.

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Barack Obama once said: No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change. But the good thing is that solutions still exist as per scientific study which can assure the safety for future generations.

To conclude, climate change is the biggest reality of the modern age as witnessed fully by this generation in the form of heatwaves, floods, glacial melts and rising sea levels. The world would no more be a liveable place if the current generation does not take step towards the reversal of climate change. Even if the reversal could not be made possible but still it could be stopped at its current position to avoid further damage.