

# Pakistan Affairs

Q. Climate Change has emerged as a major non-traditional security threat to Pakistan. Analyze its socio-economic and political implications, and evaluate Pakistan's institutional response to climate-induced challenges.

Answer:-

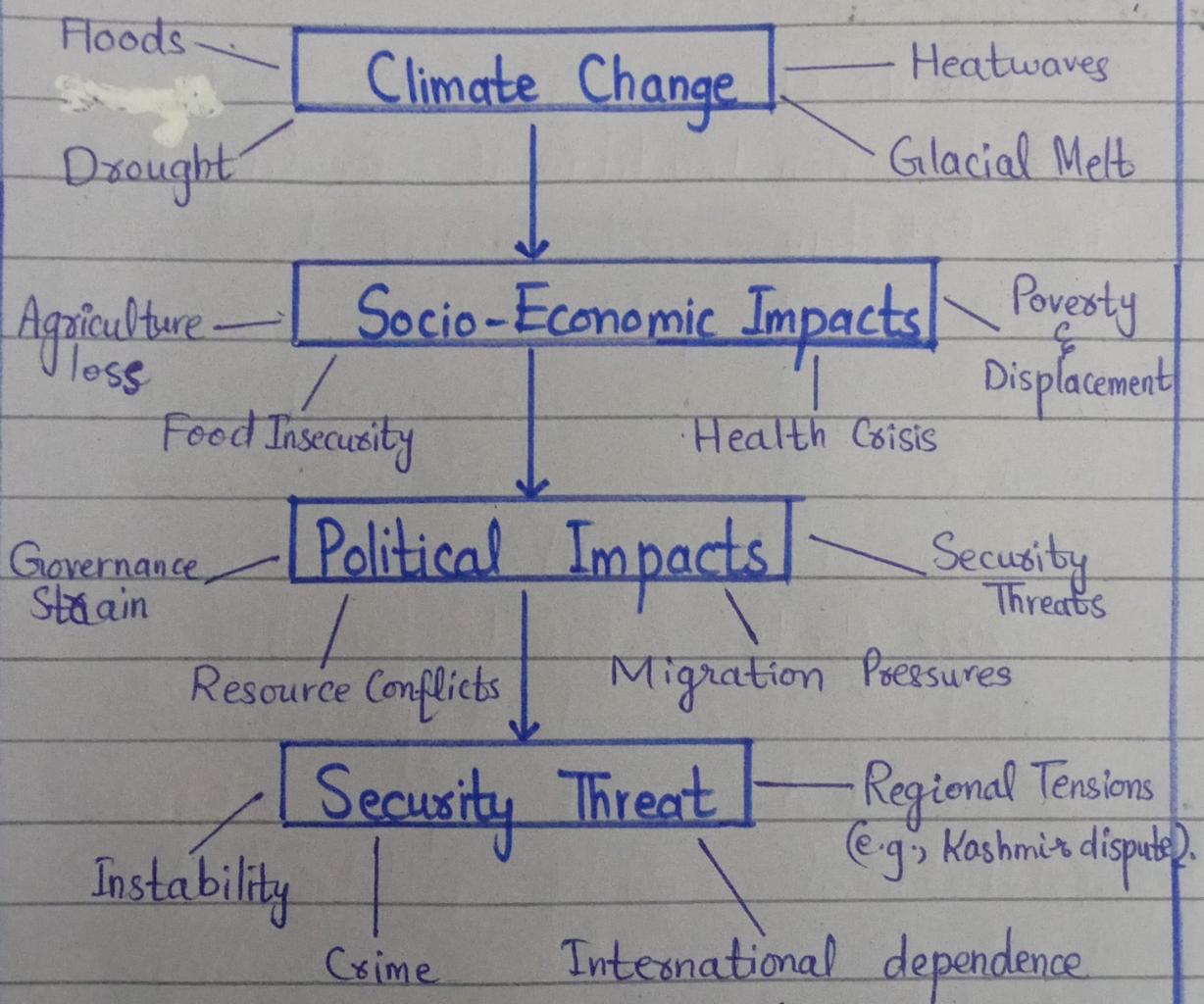
## → Introduction

Climate Change poses one of the gravest non-traditional security threats to Pakistan, undermining its economy, society and politics. With recurring floods, heatwaves and glacial melt, Pakistan faces existential risks to food security, livelihoods and governance.

The 2022 floods exposed fragility of Pakistan's climate governance.

Despite institutional responses, weak institutional capacity, political short-termism and reliance on high-emission sectors compound the challenge.

The Dawn article "Weather & Terrorism" highlights how extreme weather and climate change in Pakistan create socio-economic vulnerabilities that militants exploit, linking climate-induced disasters to radicalization, displacement and governance challenges. This directly connects to Pakistan climate change security threat narrative.



→ Socio-Economic Implications

Climate change has profound and far-reaching socio-economic impacts

on Pakistan's development and livelihoods

(i) Agriculture Vulnerability

Pakistan's economy is agrarian, with 19% of GDP and 42% of labor force tied to agriculture. Erratic monsoons, floods and rising temperatures reduce crop yields, causing \$30 billion in losses, threatening food security.

(ii) Food Insecurity

Climate-induced droughts and floods reduce wheat and rice yields, threatening food supply for 240 million people.

(iii) Water Scarcity

Glacial melt and altered river flows intensify water stress. Pakistan is among the top 10 countries facing acute water scarcity.

(iv) Health Impacts

Heat-waves, floods and poor air quality increase water-borne diseases burden (malaria, dengue, respiratory illnesses, cholera and diarrhea) and heat related mortality.

WHO notes Pakistan is among top 10

countries vulnerable to climate-health crises.

### (v) Economic Losses

Extreme weather events such as 2022 floods caused \$30 billion in damages, with GDP growth dropping from 6% to 2%.

### (vi) Poverty & Displacement

Climate disasters like floods and droughts push millions below the poverty line, creating climate refugees and urban slum expansion. Infrastructure damage from floods (roads, bridges, housing) drains fiscal resources. The 2022 floods displaced 33 million people, creating long-term poverty gaps. Militants exploit this vacuum by offering food, protection, or revenge, amplifying recruitment in IDP camps.

### (vii) Urban Challenges

Haphazard urban growth is vulnerable to new rainfall patterns, leading to severe urban flooding and overwhelming inadequate drainage systems in major cities.

• Migration Pressures: Seasonal migration

(e.g., Nomads moving in winter for work/shelter) increases vulnerability to militant recruitment. Registration and monitoring of such groups is suggested to curb exploitation.

- **Livelihood Loss:** Drought fuels migration and alienation, creating fertile ground for extremist narratives. Militants use deprivation to instill radical ideas.

## → Political Implications

The political dimension of climate change in Pakistan is characterized by governance challenges and potential instability:

### (i) Governance Challenges

Climate disasters strain state capacity, exposing weak disaster management, fueling public discontent and corruption in relief distribution.

### (ii) Political Instability

The challenges posed to state capacity by climate change, coupled with weak governance and fragile

political structures, can deepen the country's fragility and contribute to law and order issues.

### (iii) Resource Conflicts

Resource scarcity fuels provincial tensions, especially between Sindh and Punjab over Indus water rights.

### (iv) Regional Disputes

Fluctuations in river flows and shared environmental issues like air quality have emerged as non-traditional security threats in South Asia, necessitating regional cooperation, which is often hampered by existing political conflicts e.g., Kashmir dispute and Tensions over Indus Water Treaty cause unrest both in India and Pakistan.

### (v) International diplomacy

Pakistan positions itself as a "climate victim" at COP summits. It advocates for "climate justice" highlighting its <1% global emissions yet extreme vulnerability. At COP 27, Pakistan secured a "Loss and Damage Fund" commitment.

UN Secretary-General Antonio

Gutteses called Pakistan "A victim of climate chaos" during his 2022 visit.

### (vi) Security Threat Recognition

While the National Security Policy (NSP) acknowledges non-traditional threats, it has been slow to integrate climate security systematically into national planning, often focusing more on conventional military threats.

## → Institutional Response

### • National Climate Change Policy

(2012, revised 2021) is a framework for adaptation and mitigation, but weak implementation shows inefficiency.

• NDMA & PDMA: Disaster management authorities exist but suffer from poor coordination and limited resources.

\* Provincial initiatives: Punjab's climate change policy and Sindh's flood management programmes show decentralization efforts.

### • Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Project:

A flagship afforestation and carbon sequestration project, praised

internationally but criticized for transparency issues.

- International engagement: Pakistan engages with UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, and COP Summits, advocating for climate finance. Pakistan secured \$9 billion pledges at the Geneva Conference (2023) for flood recovery.

- Weak Institutional Capacity: Sustainable development policy institute (SDPI) notes Pakistan's climate institutions lack technical expertise, funding, and enforcement power.

### → Conclusion:-

Climate Change is not just an environmental issue but a comprehensive national security threat for Pakistan, destabilizing its economy, society and politics. Despite policy frameworks and international advocacy, institutional weaknesses and lack of resources hinder effective response. Unless Pakistan strengthens climate governance, climate shocks will continue to erode its stability.