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Subject : English Essay

Disaster Management and our Preparedness.

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Essay

Disasters are no longer rare or unexpected events in today's world. From devastating floods and earthquakes to droughts, heatwaves, and pandemics, ~~(the disasters)~~ disasters have become frequent and destructive. Every year, thousands of lives are lost, and billions of dollars are wasted due to poor disaster preparedness. Countries that fail to prepare in advance suffer the most when disaster strikes. Pakistan is one such country that repeatedly faces natural disasters but remains inadequately prepared to deal with them. Disaster management refers to the planning, organization, coordination, and implementation of measures aimed at reducing the impact of disasters. In the modern age of climate change, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation, disaster management has become an essential component of national development. Pakistan's

geographical location makes it highly vulnerable to disasters such as floods, earthquakes, landslides, droughts, and cyclones. Despite this vulnerability, the country continues to suffer massive losses due to weak preparedness. Although Pakistan has formulated several national plans, long-term development frameworks, and disaster management institutions, the practical implementation of these plans remains poor. Weak institutions, bad governance, lack of technology, and insufficient funding have prevented the country from achieving effective disaster preparedness.

A disaster is defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a society that causes widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses exceeding the ability of the affected community to cope

Using its own resources. Disasters can be natural, such as floods, earthquake, droughts, and cyclones, or man-made such as industrial accidents, fires, and environmental pollution.

Disaster management is a continuous and systematic process that includes the mitigation, Preparedness, response and recovery. In mitigation process measures taken to reduce disaster risks before they occur, In preparedness process the planning, training, and awareness to face disasters effectively. In response process the immediate actions during and after a disaster. In recovery process the rehabilitation and reconstruction to restore normal life among these phases, preparedness is the most critical because it determines how well a country can minimize losses. The importance of disaster preparedness cannot

be overstated. Effective disaster management saves human lives, protects infrastructure, reduces economic losses, and ensures sustainable development. It also strengthens national resilience and social stability.

Countries that invest in preparedness suffer less damage and recover faster, while those that ignore preparedness face repeated devastation.

Since independence, Pakistan has introduced several five-year development plans to promote economic growth and social development. Over time, disaster risk reduction was gradually incorporated into these plans. The government recognized that disasters could reverse development gains and increase poverty. Therefore, policies emphasized flood control, infrastructure development, and emergency response mechanisms. However, these plans largely

remained theoretical. While they acknowledged disaster risks, they failed to prioritize preparedness and prevention. Most development projects ignored environmental concerns and disaster vulnerability, which increased risks instead of reducing them.

The Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan (2011-2021) was a more comprehensive attempt to integrate disaster management into national development. This plan focused on climate change adaptation, strengthening disaster management institutions, and improving early warning systems. The plan emphasized building resilient infrastructure, enhancing coordination among federal and provincial authorities, and investing in disaster preparedness. It also recognized the role of local governments and communities in disaster management. Despite

its ambitious goals, the plan suffered from poor implementation. Political instability, lack of continuity, and weak monitoring mechanisms prevented its successful execution. As a result, the desired improvements in disaster preparedness were not achieved.

Floods are among the most frequent and destructive disasters in Pakistan. Therefore, water resource management has always been a key component of disaster planning. The Water Resources Development plan focused on flood control through dam construction, river embankments, drainage systems, and watershed management. The plan aimed to regulate river flows, store excess water, and prevent urban flooding. However, poor maintenance of infrastructure, illegal encroachments, and unplanned urbanization weakened

these measures. As a result, floods continue to cause widespread destruction every year.

After the devastating earthquake of 2005, Pakistan realized the urgent need for institutional reforms. Consequently, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was established, followed by Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs). These institutions were created to plan, coordinate, and implement disaster management policies at all levels. On paper, Pakistan now has a complete disaster management framework. However, in practice, these institutions lack capacity, resources, and authority to function effectively.

One of the main reasons for poor disaster preparedness is the ineffective institutional framework. Although

NDMA, PDMA, and DDMA exist, there is weak coordination among them. Overlapping responsibilities and unclear mandates create confusion during emergencies. Moreover, disaster management institutions are often sidelined and activated only after disasters occur. This reactive approach undermines preparedness and prevention efforts.

Pakistan's infrastructure is highly vulnerable to disasters. Poorly constructed buildings collapse during earthquakes, roads and bridges are washed away during floods, and drainage systems fail during heavy rains. Rapid urbanization without proper planning has worsened the situation. Illegal housing schemes, encroachments on natural waterways, and lack of building codes have increased disaster risks, especially in urban areas.

Another major weakness is the lack of trained personnel. Disaster response teams often lack professional training, modern skills, and experience. Emergency services are under-resourced and poorly equipped. Furthermore, disaster management education is almost absent at the school and community levels. People are unaware of basic safety measures, evacuation procedures, and first aid techniques, which increases ~~the~~ casualties during disasters.

Modern disaster management heavily relies on technology such as satellite imaging, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), early warning systems, and advanced rescue equipment. Unfortunately, Pakistan lacks access to such technology. Early warning systems are either outdated or ineffective, leading to delayed responses. Rescue operations often depend on manual

methods due to the absence of modern machinery.

Bad governance is at the heart of Pakistan's disaster management failure. Policies are well-written but poorly implemented. Corruption, political interference, and lack of transparency weaken disaster preparedness. The government's approach is reactive rather than proactive. Resources are allocated after disasters instead of investing in prevention and preparedness beforehand.

Lack of accountability further worsens the situation. Disaster funds are often misused, and there is little monitoring of relief and reconstruction projects. Audit mechanisms are weak, and those responsible for failures are rarely held accountable. This culture of impunity discourages efficiency and innovation in disaster management.

Disaster Preparedness is not a budgetary priority in Pakistan. Funds allocated to disaster management are insufficient and inconsistent. As a result, institutions lack the resources needed for training, equipment, and infrastructure development. Moreover, Pakistan heavily relies on foreign aid after disasters, which delays recovery and undermines national self-reliance.

The consequences of poor disaster preparedness are severe and long-lasting. Human lives are lost, families are displaced, and communities are destroyed. Economic losses run into billions of dollars, pushing millions into poverty. Disasters also damage the environment by causing deforestation, soil erosion, and water contamination. Social instability increases as affected populations migrate to cities, creating pressure on urban resources. Overall, poor preparedness reverses development gains and weakens national stability.

There is a need to strengthen disaster management institutions by clearly defining roles, improving coordination, and enhancing capacity. NDMA and local authorities must be empowered and professionalized.

The government should invest in disaster-resilient infrastructure. Strict enforcement of building codes, planned urban development, and climate-resilient housing can significantly reduce disaster risks.

Disaster management education should be introduced at school and community levels. Regular drills, training programs, and awareness campaigns can prepare citizens to respond effectively during disasters.

Modern technology must be integrated into disaster management. Early warning systems, satellite monitoring, and data-driven risk assessments can improve preparedness and response.

Transparent governance, efficient fund utilization, and strict accountability mechanisms are essential. Independent monitoring bodies should evaluate disaster management projects and hold officials accountable.

In conclusion, disaster management is not merely an emergency response mechanism but a vital component of sustainable development.

Pakistan's vulnerability to disasters demands a strong, proactive, and well-coordinated disaster management system. Although the country has developed policies, plans, and institutions, poor implementation, weak governance, and lack of preparedness have rendered these efforts ineffective. To move forward, Pakistan must shift from a reactive approach to a ~~preventive~~ preventive and preparedness-oriented strategy. Strong institutions, resilient infrastructure, modern

Technology, trained human resources, and accountable governance are the keys to effective disaster management. Only through collective effort, political will, and long-term planning can Pakistan protect its people and secure its future against disasters.