

Disaster Management in Pakistan: Challenges and way Forward

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Introduction:

Disaster management functions like heart of the body, which feeds or drains the economic arteries of a country. Developing countries often face the problem of weak institutional structure and effective policy implementation. Pakistan, being a developing state is grappled with multiple issues; however, disaster management drains billions of rupees of country, yet its performance is still under question. Meanwhile, the role of leadership is equally important in the effective implementation of policies. The lack of political will and institutional coordination result in widening the gap between policy and practice. Additionally, weak infrastructure and bureaucratic inertia often impede proactive approach in countering natural disaster. Similarly, lack of pragmatic approach and clarity of policy often result in overlapping role, which in turn, drain the economic resources apart from losing a huge number of productive workforce - Human beings. Nevertheless, political will and reformed technical design is essential to address these challenges while also

ensuring meritocracy and modern innovation through public-private partnership.

Disaster management in Pakistan operate under the institutional domain NDMA with provincial coordination of PDMA. However, this coordination seems weak because of the foundational reason: Lack of resources. Economic resources are the basis of institution that foster its effectiveness. Meanwhile, the foundational principles for management are efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. Under the weak economic basis, the principles remain in theory while never translated into visible welfare. This policy and implementation gap remained visible throughout the years. For instance, during 2022 floods and cloudburst heavily exposed the forecast system. At the same time, it also revealed that economically weak institutions cannot modernize itself. Hence, a strong economic base along with shared responsibility ensure the translation of paper theory into visible actions.

For a country like Pakistan, disaster management carries heavy economic weight. This reveals that the economic burden of natural disaster on government's institutions will increase. The government would provide dual services: repairing infrastructure and paying compensation to victims; and affording the burden of healthcare. Thus, it brings more economic burden. Similarly, the loss of productive workforce weakens human resource management. In this similar vein, agricultural yield shields Pakistan against food insecurity while providing raw materials to textile and other industries. Hence, it reduces the exports of a country, thereby, making the country vulnerable to economic fragility.

However, technologically under-developed institutions use out-dated means to forecast natural disaster and formulate policies for future actions. In Pakistan, NDMA and PDMA could not enable themselves to take preemptive actions. The underlying reasons behind this is inaccuracy in predictability. Similarly, during floods and cloudburst, they

both heavily rely on traditional means to rescue people, while the world has devised drones and modern boats. Similarly, using such outdated means, such as jackets during floods and cranes during earthquake, cost economic overlap of resources. Hence, credits turn to consumption only.

Another important challenge in the realm of disaster management to Pakistan is bureaucratic inertia and red tapism. On the one hand, following complete procedure to take actions reduces ~~institutional~~ capacity to immediate ^{responding} capacity of institution. On the other hand, it diminishes efficiency of the institutions. As a result of different criteria at federal and provincial levels to counter any disaster, this reduces their internal coordination. Besides, the damage and destruction cause more harm to the nation. As a result of bureaucratic inertia, people lose trust and confidence in institutions, which in turn, weakens the roots of shared responsibility. In short, structural hindrances results in the loss of not only tangible resources: infrastructure and

human lives, but also damages the abstract ones: trust and confidence in institutions.

Therefore, adopting a reactive rather than proactive approach can not only preserve the lives of a productive workforce but ~~it~~ also prevent states from rebuilding and reconstruction the same projects. Similarly, when people become self-reliant, ~~in~~ the presence of institutional legitimacy and effectiveness of leadership are brought under question. Because, they lose the grounds of promoting socio-economic welfare of the state. As a result, people see collusion of powerful elites in the top echelons of state. Their negligence and inefficiency erode the trust of taxpayers. Thus, ineffective approach in one institution engulf multiple domains while also weakening the writ of state also.

Similarly, centralized power remain another significant problem. The power of decision-making ~~is~~ rests in the hands of few. This also delays timely response of the top management. Hence, policy implementation and approval for

financial resources take much time beyond the expectation. This add^{ti}on^{al}ness of people.

Similarly, the method of induction promotes people based on favouritism and political affiliation. This not only ignores the principle of meritocracy but also confusion in hierarchical ~~stray~~ structure. Because each government has different approach to a single issue. Politicians' priorities also differ and most frequently based on electoral manifestos. As a result, they modify or sometimes repeal the policies of previous government while at the same time appointing their own officials on the top position. Consequently, changing policies and priorities never bring consistent policy to lower-tail, thus, unskilled labors are promoted while also losing the spirit of democratic principles. Hence, this creates confusion ~~of~~ in the span of command, thus, affecting coordination.

One of the major challenge is unpredictable weather patterns that damages infrastructure and cost huge economic loss. Climate resilience infrastructure requires

balanced and consistent credits while lack of budget promotes only rough infrastructure which can be damaged with the spark of a minor incidents. Thus, developing a climate ~~ret~~ resilient infrastructure prevents not only humans from destruction but their economies from suffering.

Following challenges, Pakistan can reform the structure of the institutions. Restructuring any institutions can be seen in cyclical ways. First is research analysis to find loopholes. Second is to set goals and define objectives. The most important is policy and objectives implementations where the stakeholders should decentralize their powers by ~~gfr~~ authorizing lower-tier of that institutions. This in turn, foster cooperation and democratic principles of inclusive governance. As a result of shared-norms, collective responsibility and sense of solidarity keeps the nation united while the nation also work side by side with institution. Hence, in case of any forecast or disaster a prompt action take place and destruction and damage is averted.

Another prominent feature of the developed states is private-public partnerships. Pakistan has done this so in many enterprises. If the same principles is applied in disaster management, insurances of the properties, lives, government buildings would secure much of the amount of Pakistan's GDP. Similarly, the payment of compensation would be paid by private enterprises, while rebuilding and reconstruction of roads and properties would save economic resource of Pakistan. However, private companies always see their interests thus, insurance culture in Pakistan needs the revival of trust of the people in the institutions and government stakeholders.

Nevertheless, investment through private investors also bring innovation and modernization in public sector. This can be helpful in modernizing the means used by NDMA and PDMA. For example, drones, modern electric boats, and remote controllable jackets can be effective during disaster. Similarly, a sustainable infrastructure can also be developed across the country as the government limited resources

cannot afford too much in rebuilding and maintaining infrastructure, the private companies do this while taking shares. For instance, many medical facilities in American states has been developed by private enterprises. So, cooperation with multinational actors ~~state~~ under the supervision of government is important for modernization and innovation. While government supervision would prevent monopoly of one actor in market and in the society.

Subsequently, there are also many instances that natural disaster cause much harm to encroached areas. For example, in recent floods of 2025, many areas of private societies, which were built on the waterways were badly affected and caused much damages. In this case, the government should free up those areas. Because nature never privatized its ways, rather it owns these ways when challenged by human activities. Therefore, the ~~the~~ affects of both man-made or natural disaster can only be prevented by visible

and effective actions of the government.

Lastly, NDMA and PDMA needs to promote effective system of recruitment. The criteria for ^{an} recruitment inducts skilled labour; and if, they (workers) are not skilled must be trained under introduced programmes. This brings the academicians role into play. Policies are often designed on the basis of specific programs. For ~~the~~ example, workers behaviour is judged under certain program; and then, a task ~~accor~~ or training according to the learning aptitude is provided to that person. This creates the weberian task specialization into being. As a result, the workers at lower levels doesn't ~~a~~ execute policies only but can formulate according to the situation. Thus, promoting meritocracy is upholding ^{the} principles of democracy while making the institution effective, efficient and equitably accessible from all levels.

In conclusion it is important that disaster management's institutions be restructured and reformed because they bring both economic losses and damages to the lives of human

beings. Similarly, Pakistan is ^{among} one of the most affected countries from natural disasters, so, it must diversify its sources of rebuilding the trust because during disasters, Pakistan rely on aids and loans which can partially alienate the suffering while people still wait for another disaster to be expected. Hence, reforms are essential to address these aforementioned challenges.