

## MOCK - 4 - ENGLISH ESSAY

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN PAKISTAN: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

### Outline

#### 1. Introduction

1.1. Hook

1.2. General Statements

1.3. Thesis: Pakistan's recurring disasters are not merely acts of nature but reflections of human neglect, weak governance, and poor preparedness. Effective disaster management demands a holistic shift from relief and rescue to risk mitigation through institutional reform, technological innovation, community empowerment and environmental sustainability.

#### 2. Historical Overview of Disaster Management in Pakistan

2.1. Pre-2005 earthquake, disaster management

2.2. Establishment of NDMA after 2005 earthquake (PDMA's, DDMA's)

2.3. Major disasters and lessons learned (2005, 2010, 2022, 2025)

#### 3. Challenges in Disaster Management in Pakistan

3.1. Ineffective Institutions

3.2. Poor Infrastructure

3.3. Weak Governance and Corruption

3.4. Absence of Modern Technology



- 3.5. Limited financial capacity and lack of Accountability
- 3.6. Low public awareness and Community participation.

#### 4. Way Forward to Reduce Disaster Risk

- 4.1. Shift from Relief to risk reduction and strengthen the Institutions
- 4.2. Promote climate - resilient infrastructure (For example; Japan)
- 4.3. Improve governance, transparency and coordination
- 4.4. Use of Latest Technology, AI, etc.
- 4.5. Public awareness and cooperation with regional organizations (SAARC)

#### 5. Conclusion

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### THE ESSAY

'Preparedness today, prevents panic tomorrow.'

Pakistan is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world and is facing many disasters. A disaster is a sudden extreme and adverse event that has a potential to cause substantial amount of damage to lives and property of people in a short period of time. A disaster can be natural like hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, etc. or they can be man-made like epidemics, industrial accidents, and terrorism. These disasters have a capability to wreck a havoc and unfortunately



Pakistan is not prepared for disaster management. Pakistan's recurring disasters are not merely acts of nature but reflections of human neglect, weak governance, and poor preparedness. Effective disaster management demands a holistic shift from relief and rescue to proactive risk mitigation through institutional reforms, technological innovation, community empowerment and environmental sustainability. Only by transforming vulnerability into resilience can Pakistan safeguard its people, economy and future.

Pre-2005, Pakistan's disaster management was not formally located in one location; the Emergency Relief Cell (ERC) in the Federal Cabinet Secretariat led coordination efforts and districts independently resourced disaster management equipments to the affected areas. But after the catastrophic earthquake which hit mostly northern Pakistan on **8<sup>th</sup> October, 2005**, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) was created. After this authority, there was a dire need to create a national department that overlooks disaster related matters. However, in 2010, when huge floods washed away most of the areas of KP and almost one fifth of Pakistan's land was deluged, the government established National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). After some years, ~~the~~ <sup>it led to</sup> creation of Provincial Disaster Management Authority and District Disaster Management Authority later



happened which empowered provinces and district to manage disasters efficiently.

The disastrous affects of 2005 earthquake and flash floods of 2010, 2022 and 2025 have caused an extreme damage to people, infrastructure, agriculture and ultimately economy is affected, food security is threatened and spread of diseases are the long term factors which are often neglected. There are several challenges faced by Pakistan till now to counter disasters.

First of all, Pakistan's institutions are ineffective. Institutions are formed to cope post disaster reactive management rather than beforehand risk reduction. Back in 2018, a Pakistan professor named Farakh A. Khan issued a dire warning about Pakistan's public institutions and said, "Pakistan suffers from institutional failure. Failed institutions are unable to correct the problems faced by society, which eventually leads to economic failure." These institutions do not work efficiently and in time to provide assistance to people which results in loss of lives. Similarly, a family of eighteen members came to Swat for tourism purpose. They waited for more than eight hours for help to arrive amid the flash floods in Swat River, but all in vein. Several efforts and multiple calls were made to the local administration but no one came to rescue. Eventually, to the horror of those members, all



were simply washed away by swelling torrents. If there were effective institutions, there would be no loss of eighteen lives of the same family.

Secondly, Pakistan's infrastructure is feeble and poor by international standards. The same old bridges and buildings which are already in a delicate situation, are more prone to disasters. People are facing electricity load-shedding and water scarcity in their daily lives due to infrastructural mismanagement. Recent flashfloods of 2025 have caused more than 850 deaths and millions of people are affected. This has caused loss to agricultural lands as well. It is high time that the government of Pakistan notices the infrastructural flaws and use proper human resource to make climate-resilient buildings. The infrastructure which is lost, takes years of reconstruction. This all ultimately affects in economic loss. In this way, Pakistan goes decades back in progress.

In addition, weak governance has impacted the working of institutions effectively. There is no autonomy of institutions. Many funds are used for personal benefit instead of providing them to the individuals who have lost their property and land. Corruptions is like termite that eats the faith of individuals and make them loose their morality. Irresponsible management without accountability have made people loose their trust in institutions. Lack



of coordination between provincial and federal government have made the governance fragile. People working in these institutions are influenced by corrupt individuals, this makes the situation of institutions worst. These institutions have only the post-disaster policy. They do not work on the risk reduction rather than rescue operations. Natural disasters have no time frame. They can be of varied intensity. It is urgent need of time that these institutions should respond immediately. Delay in service causes life long regret of the lost lives. These institutions are great example of weak and poor governance with no check and balance in every department.

Moreover, the absence of modern technology is the leading cause of inefficiency of institutions. Lack of early warning systems and technological backwardness makes Pakistan susceptible to climate disasters. In a world driven by technology, Pakistan still relies on outdated and manual disaster monitoring system. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) faces resource and infrastructural constraints, while satellite-based forecasting and Geographical Information system (GIS) are scarcely utilized. The technological gap proved fatal during 2022 and 2025 floods when early warnings failed to reach vulnerable communities in far-flung areas. Pakistan's inability to modernize its forecasting system and communication channels, its capacity to predict or mitigate hazards is ineffective.



The absence of real time data sharing among agencies further weakens the response. This technological backwardness is alarming the human lives to the hands of natural calamities.

Effective disaster management demands financial readiness, something that Pakistan chronically lacks. The NDMA and PDMA operate with limited budgets that are often released late or diverted to political projects. The Economic Survey of Pakistan (2023-24) shows that only 0.5% of GDP is allocated to disaster preparedness while losses are in billions. Moreover, relief funds are often mismanaged due to corruption, lack of transparency and without accountability. International donors also show concern over aid distribution to the needy individuals. Lack of accountability has led to the misuse of funds. These funds are vanished to benefit a few and people remain miserable. The poor financial discipline makes Pakistan's disaster management reactive. Also, people have lost faith in these institutions. Many individuals and NGO's are working individually to help people to make up to their loss. They do not even feel to make the government institutions accountable, rather they find alternate ways to accommodate the people in need just for the sake of immediate and quick response which would be impossible if we were to solely rely on these institutions. Natural disasters are not time bound. But in recent years, floods and earthquakes have caused a catastrophic damage.



at a huge level with a lot of land engulfed with damage. The budget or financial constraints make it practically impossible to reconstruct every bit of the ruins.

Lastly, people are not given awareness. The Disaster management should be included in today's curriculum. Students should be given regular drills. Lack of education on disaster management has made public more prone to become the guest of these calamities. Rising temperatures, glacial melts in north, erratic monsoon patterns, flash floods, droughts and heatwaves have made people and infrastructure vulnerable to damage. It is rightly said,

Disasters are inevitable, but destruction is preventable. (proverb)

Most citizens are unaware of evacuation procedures, first aids or early warning signs. The absence of community level committees leaves population solely dependent on government for help - which often arrives late. In 2005 earthquake, thousands of people died because they lacked basic knowledge and necessary training for disaster preparedness. It is inevitable to prevent disaster but one can definitely avoid it by preparedness.

The way forward to these challenges to reduce disaster risk is to start from basic public awareness. Public should be educated about early warning signs, first aid and evacuation plans. Lack of knowledge has costed the



life of many individuals. Schools and other institutions may conduct regular drills to make people aware of the treacherous effects of these calamities. It makes sure that people get at a safer place before the help of government arrives. Sometimes signals get lost due to damage of wires, the help might get delayed. In this way educated individuals can help themselves and the community by lending them a helping hand. k

Secondly, institutions should be trained in a way to act to reduce pre-disaster risks rather than post-destruction relief. The funds needed to rebuild a city are far more than risk reduction beforehand. There is a dire need to reframe policies and make public and state friendly policies. In addition, the infrastructure should be updated. For example, Japan has built earthquake resistant buildings which work on modern advanced principles rather than outdated ones. Bangladesh, once known for a home to cyclones, has effectively managed the natural disaster but building effective infrastructure and efficient communication systems. Pakistan is still lacking advancements of infrastructure. It can collaborate with international organizations to bring early warning systems to Pakistan which can predict the disaster and its possible destruction precisely. These steps would help Pakistan in long term without



depending upon other countries for help and relief.

Along with strengthening the institutions by providing them autonomy in decision making, governance and transparency should be improved. By involving electronic accountability system and public dashboards showing funds utilization, public can restore its faith in these institutions. Corruption should be eradicated by digitalizing the system.

Every institute should be transparent. People allocated in these institutions should be trained for better and next level public service. Accountability of these officials is mandatory for the smooth working of these institutions. In addition, district and provincial institutions should coordinate with federal government for better governance and welfare of the society should be the priority of people working in these institutions.

Use of modern technology in infrastructure and ~~disaster~~ these institutions should be promoted. Use of AI in early warning signals can prevent the huge loss of lives. These disasters affect agriculture sector, the backbone of Pakistan's economy, leading to food security. To prevent the destruction, modern technology would be useful to predict possible damage. In this way farmers's sole



source of earning can be preserved. Using latest technology will be beneficial in the longer term. Economic loss is so dangerous that it can push the country into the darkness of poverty. It is the existential threat which is often overlooked. Also, the projects like Ten Billion Tree Tsunami and reforestation can help to avoid these disasters drastically. As forests absorb water and prevent soil erosion. They also help in reversing the affects of climate change. Trees are the oxygen of our planet Earth. Forests should be grown and preserved to counter the affects of natural and man-made calamities. As Quaid-e-Azam said,

‘with faith, discipline, and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve.’

Despite facing recurrent natural and human induced disasters, Pakistan's disaster management system remains reactive and fragmented. Although Pakistan is emitting less than 1% of  $CO_2$ , it is still one of the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change. To counter the destructive affects of disasters, the government of Pakistan should strengthen the institutions, use the modern technology that can aware people of early signals, people should be given proper training in disaster management services, transparency and eradication



of corruption can improve the progress of the country manifold. Renewable energy and reforestation can help to bring about change in calamity preparedness. These all measures can reduce the risk of a disaster ~~and~~ and Pakistan can progress by leaps and bounds by securing its economy hence future.

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