

Climate Change Induced Floods in Pakistan 2022: Ineffective Pakistani Governance and The Role of Ingos in Providing Assistance to The Victims

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Abstract

The main aim of this research paper is to analyze the impact of climate change induced floods that wreaked havoc in Pakistan in the year 2022, and the efforts made by developmental and humanitarian organizations to provide relief and rehabilitation to the victims. Climate change is an inevitable reality and is evident in Pakistan through the rising temperatures causing heatwaves and droughts, heavy monsoon seasons resulting in unprecedented rainfall across the country that is affecting not only the rural communities but also the urban lifestyle. Since the government of Pakistan does not have adequate budget to spend towards disaster risk management, mitigation, and resilience, it is the generous donors and humanitarian organizations that support the government to safeguard the citizens of Pakistan especially the flood affected communities. Organizations such as United Nations, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam International, and various others played a vital role in reaching out to those affected by the floods through their effective and efficient flood response and now recovery plans. However, one year later people are still suffering, infrastructure is still damaged and developmental organizations still face challenges that are to be addressed by making effective policies for the future so that these organizations along with the government of Pakistan can contribute towards the betterment of the society.

Keywords: *Climate Change, Floods, Humanitarian Organizations, Relief, Recovery, Rehabilitation, Governance.*

Introduction

United Nations, the largest intergovernmental organization in the world defines climate change as shifts in the temperature and weather patterns that are long term (United Nations, 2023). The impact of climate change gained prominence in Pakistan since the unprecedented floods of 2022 caused massive destruction in various cities, towns, and villages. One year later, researchers across the world, especially in Pakistan are more inclined towards studying about climate change induced disasters such as droughts, heatwaves, and floods, to mitigate the effects of future disasters through resilient and proactive solutions.

From the high mountain ranges of Himalaya and Karakorum and 7000 glaciers in Gilgit Baltistan, forests in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, to the Indus River plain, salt ranges and fertile lands of Punjab, as well as the deserts and coastal areas of Sindh and Baluchistan, in terms of natural bounties, Pakistan is surely blessed with a scenic and resourceful topography. However, all of these come with a threat for example with rising temperatures, the risk of glacial lake outburst floods has increased. Furthermore, every year Pakistan loses millions of trees to accommodate the needs of its rapidly growing population. Deforestation, heatwaves, and droughts also disturb the rainfall patterns as witnessed in the monsoon season of 2022, during which Pakistan received three times more rain than the last three decades combined.

In the case of disaster management, Pakistan has always followed a reactive approach, that is, once one third of the population was under the water in 2022, the government finally declared a national emergency and started its rescue operations. However, being a developing state, and already suffering through political and economic crises, Pakistan required assistance from the developed world in the form of aid to cater to the new humanitarian crises. Thus, many international humanitarian and developmental organizations began rescue and relief efforts, especially in areas which were not easily accessible for the government.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) across the world have played a vital role in providing humanitarian relief to the affected communities. According to Pakistan's Ministry of Interior, there are approximately 112 international nongovernmental organizations that have registered themselves to work in Pakistan via signing a memorandum of understanding (Pakistan, n.d). Two of the most

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prominent organizations; International Rescue Committee and Oxfam were proactively involved in relief efforts and one year later they are on the path to recover and rehabilitate the affected communities.

Research Question

What is the impact of climate change-induced floods on communities in Pakistan, and have the International Nongovernmental Organizations covered up for the lack of effective policies of the Government of Pakistan?

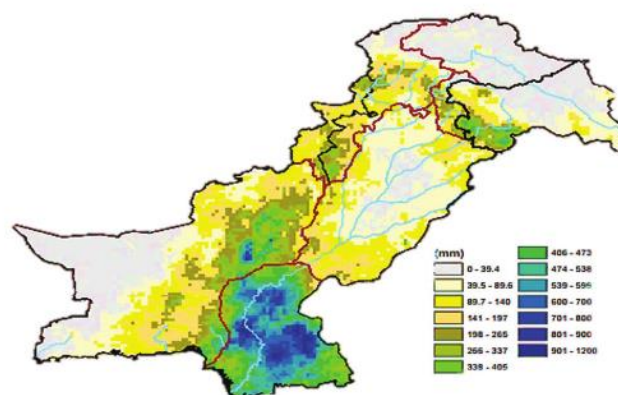
Research Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between climate change and floods that hit Pakistan in 2022.
2. To evaluate the immediate relief efforts undertaken by international nongovernmental organizations in response to climate change-induced floods in Pakistan.
3. To examine the long-term strategies employed by international nongovernmental organizations for the rehabilitation of flood-affected communities.
4. To identify and analyze challenges faced by international nongovernmental organizations in their relief and rehabilitation efforts in the context of climate change-induced floods.

Climate Change Induced Floods in Pakistan

Out of 195 countries in the world, Pakistan is the 7th most vulnerable country to climate change and 8th most affected country by the impacts of climate change, despite contributing less than 1% to the global carbon trajectory (Arif, n.d.). Flash and riverine floods have become a recurring phenomenon in the country. Frequency and severity of floods differ across the different continents of the world. Some regions are highly affected by climate change induced floods. Pakistan, unlike many countries of the world, is not only blessed with a great topography but also has all the five seasons that include summer, winter, autumn, spring, and monsoon. Precipitation patterns observed in Pakistan 's monsoon season last year showcased that some areas received three times more rain, breaking records of decades. Experts of the field pointed out various reasons that caused the floods, linking them to climate change. Firstly, during the heatwaves in May - June 2022 across various areas of the country, there was an intense low-pressure system. The other contributors were heavy rainfall and melting glaciers in the northern region of Pakistan that caused the rivers to overflow (Nanditha et al., 2023).

Figure 1 : Rainfall in August 2022



This figure shows the map of Pakistan highlighting the amount of rainfall Pakistan received in August 2022

According to Pakistan's Meteorological Department, there are three different mechanisms by which monsoonal depressions that are formed in the Bay of Bengal through which Pakistan receives rainfall, reach Pakistan. In the first two mechanisms, the Indian Gangetic plains carry the depressions from the Bay of Bengal which lead to precipitation in Pakistan. The third mechanism consists of convergence of moisture from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea causing rainfall. During the monsoon season of 2022, Baluchistan, Sindh, and South Punjab suffered more than the rest of the country because depressions formed over the Bay of Bengal converged in the south without moving to the northern provinces. Nonetheless, the northern areas were also wrecked by glacial lake outburst floods and the overflows of rivers (Nanditha et al., 2023).

Economic and Social Damages

Monsoon season of 2022 was one of the deadliest periods in the history of Pakistan, causing \$14.9 billion worth of damages, exceeding the losses of the floods of 2010. 33 million people were affected, half of which were children. One third of the country was under water and 94 districts, more than half of the districts in the country were declared calamity-hit. Around a million houses were destroyed while around more than 1.5 million houses were partially damaged. 27000 schools were also damaged, disrupting the education of children aged 6-11 in Pakistan (Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, 2022). Furthermore, with more priorities added to the last such as taking refuge away from home and meeting basic needs, as well as accessibility issues to the schools that were still standing amidst the floodwater, girls' education was completely neglected in many households. Poor families had no option but to focus on the next meal, that to being provided by aid workers. (Hafeez, 2023)

With the destruction of crops as well as livelihoods, starvation and food insecurity spread widely amongst the affected communities. The consumption of contaminated food and water gave birth to health concerns and disease outbreaks such as diarrhea. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the floods further exacerbated the underlying vulnerabilities of the people especially children as around a million children of Pakistan were unvaccinated, which made them more prone to floodwater diseases as well as malaria. With no nutrition, women also suffered and faced many complications. Infant mortality rates also increased as maternal health declined. Furthermore, women also faced the consequences of gender-based violence, as they were more exposed to the cruelties of the world after losing their houses, belongings and loved ones (Entcheva, 2023).

Role of the Government of Pakistan

Climate change is an indisputable reality and does in fact worsen the impact of natural disasters in Pakistan, but it is also the lack of implemented mitigation and flooding policies by the government of Pakistan that intensified the destruction caused by the floods. In 2022, the government had insufficient early warning systems, lack of evacuation plans, and inadequate infrastructure to mitigate flood impacts. Furthermore, failures in communication and coordination between institutions led to delays in response efforts and a lack of efficiency in delivering aid and services. Being a developing country, Pakistan already has limited financial resources, and improper allocation of funds, along with delays in resource mobilization impeded the government's ability to provide timely relief and recovery efforts, which is why international aid organizations were looked upon as saviors of the flood affected communities (Bozerocka, n.d.). The federal government received economic assistance to cater to the needs of the victims of the floods from international institutions, however, due to lack of monitoring and accountability, the distribution of the goods amongst the beneficiaries was not accurate and transparent. Some communities did not receive aid from the government at all while some even got it twice or thrice (Majeed, 2023).

The citizens of Pakistan have been concerned by the lack of serious policies and practical measures put forward by the government of Pakistan since decades, especially during times of crises such as the floods of 2022. There are several reasons for the failure of good governance in the country for example, firstly there is a lack of planning and effective policies. Secondly, a huge number of political parties have emerged, creating further differences in the society, each fighting for their own vested interests rather than of the citizens. Lack of accountability of governmental institutions further intensify the mistrust between the

citizens and the officials as corruption done by even a single person, ruins the reputation and credibility of the entire institution (Majeed, 2023).

Furthermore, Pakistan is a culturally diverse nation, so ethnic clashes are inevitable, thus, inclusivity in policies is essential for them to be implemented across the country. But unfortunately, elected governments only make short term plans that will benefit their five-year tenure, rather than focusing on long term and sustainable goals for the country. Which is why citizens have lost confidence in the government to help them especially during times of crises. The institutional distrust gained further strength after the delay in declaring emergency in the country during the floods of 2022. Citizens preferred donating to international and local non-governmental organizations to provide assistance to the affected communities (Majeed, 2023).

Nonetheless, the government, along with United Nations Agencies and other international organizations led the humanitarian response effectively in some areas. The Government's cash transfer program, the Benazir income Support Program, reached out to around three million affected households, providing Rs25,000. Social protection programs such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) consist of strategically designed conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs that have simultaneously been complemented with large-scale investments in the education and health sectors. Social protection programs aim to assist the members of society with minimal income and people who suffer from shocks such as natural disasters or other natural phenomena such as death, sickness, and disability. Moreover, on January 6th, 2023, the Pakistani government also released the 'Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Framework, that would direct Pakistan towards recovery and reconstruction efforts (2022 Pakistan Floods, 2023).

To mitigate the looming risks of climate change, Pakistani government published a National Climate Change Policy in October 2021 that outlines the country's approach to addressing climate change challenges. The policy focuses on both adaptation and mitigation strategies to reduce the vulnerability of communities and enhance resilience to climate impact, particularly in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and health. Specific measures include the development of resilient infrastructure, water conservation strategies to prevent water scarcity in the long run, and the promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices such as drip irrigation (Pakistan, 2021). The policy also addresses various strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change, which involve promoting renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and sustainable land use practices (Pakistan, 2021). Pakistan has established the National Climate Change Fund aims to support initiatives that enhance the country's resilience to climate impacts and contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts.

Rescue Efforts and Provision of Relief by INGOs

Disasters such as the floods of 2022, tested the humanitarian spirit and capacity of various international nongovernmental organizations that had been working in Pakistan for decades. For example, the International Rescue Committee, a United States based nongovernmental organization is carrying out its operations in Pakistan since the last 40 years, providing assistance to conflict and disaster affected communities. Since, the International Rescue Committee was registered with the Ministry of Interior through a valid memorandum of understanding signed between the organization and the government of Pakistan, it started its flood response plan in mid July, before even the government had declared an official emergency. It began its rescue and relief efforts in several districts such as Jaffarabad, Sanghar, Rajanpur, Dadu, Khairpur etc. (International Rescue Committee, n.d)

According to the Country Director of International Rescue Committee's Pakistan program, the teams in the fields responded to the flood by delivering emergency aid in over twenty districts of the country, especially where the government could not reach due to limited funds and labor. Furthermore, items such as tents that were waterproof were also provided along with cooked meals, health services, clean water, cash, clothes to keep warm and dignity kits for the girls and women. The dignity kits consisted of soaps, toothbrushes, and reusable menstrual hygiene products (Dreifus, 2023). Local nongovernmental organizations as well as various government departments were also part of the flood response plan. As

females were at particular risk of exploitation and violence during the crises, safe spaces were established in various districts in which, later, women were also provided with counselling, as these events have a huge impact on one's mental health.

Furthermore, since International Rescue Committee is operating in more than 40 countries, it already had immense support from international and local donors, and to further highlight the devastation caused by the floods, the organization hosted one of the most renowned global celebrities and a humanitarian, Ms. Angelina Jolie, who visited the relief camps in the flooded areas of Sindh and discussed the problems of the victims. This visit attracted other officials and personalities to raise their voices for the flood affected communities of Pakistan and thus, Pakistan raised hefty amounts of funds to assist the beneficiaries. (Angelina Jolie's Visit to Pakistan Shines Spotlight on Severe Flooding, Climate Change | International Rescue Committee (IRC), 2022)

Another organization, Oxfam, that has been working in Pakistan since 1973 also led a successful flood response plan as along with its local partners, it reached out to more than 375,000 people in six districts of Pakistan. Since nongovernmental organizations have the technical knowledge and awareness, they prepared the required kits, such as winterization kits that included winter clothes, shawls, sweaters etc. Dignity kits were also distributed amongst the affected communities, especially to the females so that they may take care of their menstrual and maternal health. Multipurpose cash assistance was also offered to many households so that they may fulfill their needs and necessities by their own will, as with cash they could buy anything they deemed was more important for them. Distribution centers were set up in the districts where people would travel to get the required items such as tents, food, and clothes, but to further facilitate the elderly, people with disabilities and pregnant women, Oxfam reached out to them exclusively so that they may not be left out (Umama Binte Azhar, 2022).

Oxfam also partnered with the United Kingdom's top fifteen aid organizations that included Age International, CARE International UK, Action Against Hunger, ActionAid UK, British Red Cross, CAFOD, International Rescue Committee UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam GB, Plan International UK, Save the Children UK, Tearfund and World Vision UK. All these organizations together formed the 'Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC)', and the main purpose of this committee was to raise funds efficiently with the mission to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to the flood affected communities of Pakistan (DEC Scotland Launches Pakistan Floods Appeal – Oxfam Scotland, 2022).

Eleven members of the Disaster Emergency Committee that included CAFOD, CARE International, Action Against Hunger, International Rescue Committee UK, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam GB, British Red Cross, Save the Children UK, Age International and Tearfund, were confirmed to have been responding to the floods in Pakistani and raising funds with the collaboration of their local partners as well as the Pakistani Government. The government of the United Kingdom was also involved in the donations through its Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and at the time of the floods around 16.5 million pounds were arranged to carry out relief and recovery projects in the flood hit areas of Pakistan (DEC Scotland Launches Pakistan Floods Appeal – Oxfam Scotland, 2022).

The Road to Rehabilitation

After the unprecedented floods of 2022, and the destructions caused by them especially in Sindh and Baluchistan, a Post Disasters Need Assessment (PDNA) carried out in the flood hit areas, called out for a 'Building Back Better' framework with principles that included inclusivity, transparency, and climate resilience. The Pakistani government's goal to prepare the Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) was a step towards transformational and resilient policies in Pakistan to mitigate the effects of the floods as well as any disasters caused by climate change in the future as well. This framework ensures sustainable development in alignment with sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations to be achieved by 2030. Even though achieving these goals is nearly impossible for countries like Pakistan, it is at least a positive effort to inspire the youth, especially the young policymakers and development studies enthusiasts to take responsibility and contribute towards climate action (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, n.d.).

The framework sets up a short-term recovery and rehabilitation program however, through the framework, efforts have been started to make long term programs and promote sustainable practices and production in the country. Around \$16.6 billion worth of projects have been proposed under the framework, with some being short-term lasting from one to three years while some are long term interventions, lasting for around four to seven years. The interventions will be spread over a variety of thematic areas such as health, nutrition, climate change, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education, as well as counseling so that the affected communities can be educated on the impact of disaster on the country as well as their own mental and psychosocial health (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, n.d.).

The document on resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction also includes the opinions from provincial governments, as after the eighteenth amendment of the constitution of Pakistan, the provinces have the autonomy to make decisions that can best help them instead of the federal government making decisions on their behalf which might not align with their provincial matters or resources. International nongovernmental organizations, donors, academia, the private sector, as well as communities were also involved in the development of the framework. The coordination between the different sectors of Pakistan would definitely lead to a more inclusive approach towards recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The Ministry of Planning and Development has promoted this cooperation at the national level for a more effective and efficient development across the country especially the flood hit areas. (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, n.d.).

Challenges faced by the Government and the INGOs

As discussed earlier, Pakistan, being a developing country has inadequate budget for human and economic development. Thus, in the case of the flood crises case especially for human development, the assistance from international nongovernmental organizations was required in sectors of gender equality, girls' education, health, reproductive health, menstrual hygiene etc. Organizations such as International Rescue Committee and Oxfam did a great job in distributing out kits to the affected communities however, in many cases the districts of many organizations apart from these two were overlapping, thus, many households got assistance even more than once while some districts were not accessible at all, due to security concerns, floodwater, and people who lived in completely remote areas who did not even have signals to connect with the main distribution centers set up by the organizations in the flood hit districts.

As organizations had to hire new staff to keep up with the needs of the beneficiaries and more fieldworkers to reach out to the beneficiaries in the fields, they also had to set up new offices, thus a lot of the funds were spent in the administrative costs and development costs were only minimal thus not all the affected people, 33 million to be exact, could be catered to by the government as well as these organizations. For example, Lasbela was hit by floods and International Rescue Committee did not have an office nearby, so it had to partner with local organizations and pay rents to run an office in the area and give rent to people who were providing their houses for safe spaces for women and children (International Rescue Committee, n.d). Multipurpose cash assistance was also duplicated at times as different members of the families that lived together but had individual identity cards came to collect the cash. Many deserving beneficiaries were sometimes left out due to the huge lines at the centers giving out cash and items.

Furthermore, the international donors released aid in tranches which is why there was sometimes a gap in the provision of relief services and because of that the organizations had to cut down on administrative costs by laying off employees. But as soon as the aid arrived new staff was hired again in the organization and trainings were provided on a roll out basis. Even though the disaster negatively affected the lives of 33 million it also gave the opportunity to people to get hired and provide relief to their brothers and sisters who were suffering. The paid as well as unpaid assistance shifted the interest of many towards the development sector and professionals started questioning the role of the government in effective policymaking, thus the trust issues amongst the government institutions and the citizens of Pakistan became even worse than before. As the government has still not taken any effective and long-term climate action to contribute towards climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation.

Way Forward

Moving forward, both the international nongovernmental organizations and the government of Pakistan should prioritize the principle of "building back better," aiming not only to restore what was lost but to create more resilient and sustainable communities that are better prepared for future disasters. Enhancing coordination among international non-governmental organizations, local organizations, and government agencies is essential moving forward, as well as establishing a centralized platform to share information, avoid overlapping, and ensure comprehensive coverage in affected areas. Collaboration should extend to the pooling of resources, expertise, and best practices (Sobia Rose, Abedullah, 2022).

Regular monitoring and evaluation of interventions being carried out in the disaster affected areas are crucial to assess the effectiveness of interventions and adjust strategies as needed. Additionally, transparency and accountability in the use of resources are essential for building trust amongst the stakeholders. Furthermore, adaptation strategies to tackle the climate change induced disasters, improved water management, and efforts to mitigate climate change are crucial for addressing the challenges posed by increased flood risk in a changing climate.

For International Nongovernmental Organizations specifically it is necessary to conduct thorough and comprehensive assessments to understand the immediate and long-term needs of the affected communities. This includes infrastructure damage, health risks, displacement issues, and socio-economic impacts. Moreover, to prevent the outbreak of waterborne diseases it is necessary to implement healthcare programs to provide and ensure access to proper sanitation facilities and focus on preventive measures and health education. Affected communities also require sustainable livelihoods so organizations should develop programs that may include agricultural support, vocational training, and job placement initiatives (Sobia Rose, Abedullah, 2022).

Education has been one of the most affected sectors by the floods as schools were destroyed so it is the responsibility of the human rights advocates as well as the government of Pakistan to restore and improve educational facilities and also implement child protection measures to ensure the well-being of children affected by the disaster especially the children who have lost everything and are residing in the safe spaces even after a year of the floods. Mental health and psychosocial support services should be provided to help individuals and communities cope with trauma and stress. Investing in the capacity building of local organizations and communities to enhance their ability is required to respond to disasters effectively. This includes training local staff, creating community-based disaster response teams, and establishing early warning systems at the grassroots level.

Technology is the greatest innovation of the world and utilizing it to improve the efficiency of aid distribution and monitoring is essential as well. Innovative solutions such as mobile-based applications for beneficiary registration can be introduced, and electronic fund transfers can be made into the accounts of beneficiaries who have all the valid documents to open a bank account, as well as, with the effective use of technology real-time data collection can be done to enhance the accuracy and speed of response efforts. Organizations such as International Rescue Committee have already designed systems to monitor aid delivery services in the disaster affected areas, and text messaging has been used to interact with many beneficiaries for quick assistance (Torkington, 2023).

Conclusion

The floods of 2022 in Pakistan brought to forefront the devastating impacts of climate change, prompting a global focus on mitigating climate-induced disasters. The unprecedented floods, which affected millions of lives and caused extensive economic and social damages, underscored the urgent need for both governmental and non-governmental entities to adopt proactive and resilient solutions. The paper shed light on the challenges faced by Pakistan, a country highly vulnerable to climate change, and explored the aftermath of the floods, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive and coordinated response. The government's historical reliance on a reactive approach to disaster management, coupled with issues of governance, planning, and accountability, exposed limitations that were exacerbated by the scale of the 2022 floods.

International Non-Governmental Organizations played a crucial role in providing immediate relief to affected communities. Organizations such as the International Rescue Committee and Oxfam

demonstrated agility, responding promptly to the crisis, even before the government declared a national emergency. Their efforts in delivering emergency aid, health services, and sustainable solutions reflected a commitment to alleviating the suffering of those in need. The economic and social damages inflicted by the floods were profound, affecting millions of people, disrupting education, and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The government's relief efforts, including the Benazir Income Support Program and the Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework, aimed at addressing immediate needs and laying the groundwork for long-term recovery. However, challenges persisted, such as administrative costs, duplication of aid, and gaps in service provision. The influx of international aid, while essential, highlighted the need for transparent and accountable resource allocation. The involvement of various stakeholders, including provincial governments, international organizations, and local communities, in the development of recovery frameworks is a positive step toward inclusivity and effective rehabilitation.

To conclude, both the government and international nongovernmental organizations must prioritize the resilient recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction framework to create resilient and sustainable communities in Pakistan. Livelihoods, improved healthcare, and a focus on education and mental health support are essential components of the rehabilitation process. The paper emphasizes the importance of adaptation strategies, improved water management, and collective efforts to mitigate climate change. It calls for ongoing assessments, regular monitoring, and transparent resource utilization to build trust among stakeholders. As Pakistan navigates the way forward, a commitment to climate action, inclusive policies, and sustainable development goals will be crucial for a resilient and prosperous future.

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