

# A hefty injustice

*Mansoor Qaisar*

While the large-scale devastating floods in Pakistan have questioned the country's ability to deal with natural disasters, the authorities cite climate change as the worst-case scenario. While Pakistan's role in increasing the global temperature is minimal, countries like Pakistan are paying the price for the environmental pollution created by the big countries.

To what extent is the government's statement about the impact of climate change on the severity of floods true? And to what extent does a lack of planning contribute to flood prevention and the enormous devastation that ensued? Again, experts have different opinions about this.

According to some experts, three factors indicate the intervention of climate change or global temperature in the current situation of Pakistan. These include the increase in extreme heat in the country, melting of glaciers, and manifold increase in rainfall. Experts have reported that the average rainfall has increased by 400 per cent in areas like Baluchistan and Sindh, causing severe flooding and at least 20 dams breaking due to the rapid flow of water.

An increase in the heat intensity was also observed along with rain. According to the Meteorological Department, the continuous temperature in Pakistan remained above 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit). Scorching temperatures of over 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) were recorded in Jacobabad and Dadu.

Pakistan may receive aid but it will not receive compensation from those most responsible for climate change

Over three million people have been affected by rising river levels in Pakistan over the last three months of rains, over a thousand people, including 300 children, have died, and millions have been displaced. Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has said that damages amount to \$10 billion according to preliminary estimates. Surveys have been started in areas where water has passed, while many regions remain flooded.

According to some experts, owing to the melting of glaciers due to extreme heat and the speed of water flowing from the Himalayan mountains, Pakistan may also be at risk of a dangerous glacial leakage burst flood.

According to a report by the AFP news agency, Pakistan's share in the emission of toxic gases globally is less than 1pc. Still, on the Global Climate Risk Index of the German Watch, Pakistan is continuously included in the ten countries affected by climate change and considered highly insecure.

In 2007, during an invited lecture, "Climate Change and Economic Development," organised by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), John Gowdy, Professor of Economics and Professor of Science and Technology, said that climate change adaptation will depend critically on cooperation among countries,

regions and individuals.

The effects of climate change will be felt first and foremost at the household level. In Pakistan, meeting this challenge will require various policy approaches, including technological innovation, empowering local communities with the tools and information they need to adapt, and setting up a mechanism to relieve the effects of climate change.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a video appeal for aid to Pakistan, saying: “Let’s stop sleepwalking towards the destruction of our planet by climate change.”

“The Pakistani people are facing a monsoon on steroids — the relentless impact of epochal levels of rain and flooding,” said Mr Guterres. “As we continue to see more and more extreme weather events around the world, it is outrageous that climate action is being put on the back burner as global emissions of greenhouse gases are still rising, putting all of us — everywhere — in growing danger.”

But even as Pakistan turns to donors around the world asking for aid, there is one thing that the country will almost certainly not receive: compensation from the countries — including the United States — that are most responsible for planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, the monsoon season has existed in South Asia since ancient times, and it is incorrect to blame nature alone for the floods. In this regard, according to a report, “Road Awakening,” compiled by the Lahore High Court after the floods in 2010, the damage caused by floods can be reduced by building dams at various places and planting forests around rivers.

In the conversation on the Twitter space in the United States, Pakistani and Indian participants, while talking about development and environmental pollution, also propose that the developing South countries of the world, ie, the Global South, should unite and reduce their ecological pollution from the Global North, ie, the developed countries.

Some experts say the climate change narrative should focus on water rather than carbon emissions because it can exacerbate floodwater problems from rising sea levels, intensifying rainfall, and melting glaciers.

According to The Washington Post, the issue has become a flash point in global climate negotiations. In the landmark 2015 Paris agreement on climate change, countries agreed to recognise and “address” the loss and damage caused by dangerous climate impacts. Last year, at the major UN climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, representatives from developing countries hoped that negotiators would finally create a formal institution to funnel cash to the countries most affected by climate disasters.

However, despite being the largest historical emitter of carbon dioxide, the United States has blocked such efforts at every turn. For example, in Glasgow, the Biden administration joined a group of countries in resisting efforts to establish payments to developing countries that have been hit hard by climate change.

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