

Prevention OR Rehabilitation: The Flooding in Pakistan

"Pakistan is going through its eighth cycle of monsoon while normally the country has only three to four cycles of rain... the percentages of super flood torrents are shocking... The floods (have been) "unprecedented" and "the worst humanitarian disaster of this decade... "Pakistan's priority, at the moment, is this climate-induced humanitarian disaster of epic proportions" Statement made by Sherry Rehman the minister for climate change. ([CNN](#))

The politicians are trying to blame the entire situation on climate change. But while climate change may have exacerbated the issue, it doesn't remove their government's responsibility for the thousands of people who are suffering or have been fatally wounded by the flooding.

We cannot forget that Pakistan has been affected by floods (and monsoon rains) since 2011. And we cannot ignore the fact that the impact of these floods could have been reduced, if not entirely prevented, had the government paid attention to these provinces and ensured that they were developed to withstand the floods, and that there were procedures in place for an immediate response.

Why weren't we ready?

The floods have destroyed the infrastructure in the affected areas; washing away roads and bridges, destroying businesses and cutting off access routes. Those impacted by the disaster have lost everything – their homes, their livelihoods, and in some cases their lives.

According to a report, the disaster relief operations face delays as the Pakistan Army or the interior ministry have to first seek an approval for relief efforts and full-fledged evacuation plans. And the District Disaster Management Authority, which was set up to control flood damage in districts across the country, is understaffed, underfunded and ill-equipped.

"The relief activities hit snags especially in the northern areas where helicopters cannot be deployed due to the obfuscating mountains... and the heavy machinery required for carrying out rescue operations and removing landslides during natural calamities was not available in the hilly areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir." ([Express Tribune](#))

And despite knowing that the monsoon rains are an annual occurrence, they haven't developed an effective warning system.

"In the absence of an appropriate telemetry system, administrations are incapable to flash early warnings about floods in the hilly areas of the country, in case of an overwhelming deluge causing landslides... and the country's forecast system can only run out to seven to 15 days for accurate weather predicting, which only accounts for only 65% to 70% accuracy rate, dealing a blow to precautionary measures to hold firm in natural disasters."

The telemetry and early warning systems were not available in several regions of the country such as south Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan for issuance of flood warnings... And Pakistan did not always have an aviation system on the go for adequate disaster management." ([Express Tribune](#))

Prevention should be a priority... not an afterthought

The current focus is on rescue and rehabilitation. But in order to prevent this yearly catastrophe, the Pakistani government needs to pay attention to prevention- developing the provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan to enable them to withstand the annual monsoon rains.

"Karachi's infrastructure is highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters... The crisis is exacerbated by poor flood management and ineffective disaster response." ([World Bank](#))

They haven't restored the drain infrastructure or the canal systems that enables cities like Karachi to manage the urban floods. The drains are choked by encroachments. And the Sukkur Barrage, which redirects water to a series of canals, has had to withstand years of neglect and

so it is not capable of dealing with the current volume of rain. Silt has not been removed and the lack of equipment means that the canals hasn't been dredged since 2010; which means that the metres-layers of silt leaves less room for the water to flow, causing a backlog and leading to an overflow that impacts the cities. It can also cause flooding in the Indus river. ([Express Tribune](#))

This neglect is being blamed on a lack of cash flow for funding and reconstruction efforts, as the Pakistani government run after the IMF for yet another conditional loan.

"We will seek revival of the IMF programme, and we will, God willing, do belt tightening, and cut PSDP (Public Sector Development Funds)," said Finance Minister Miftah Ismail ([Business Standard](#))

The responsibility of the rulers is a great one – and it can't be handed over to the people

May Allah reward the Muslim Ummah, who are sending support to the Muslims of Pakistan from across the world. They are aware of the hardships that the people are experiencing and doing their best to organize themselves to send the affected people of Sindh and Balochistan their basic needs.

But the Ummah's goods deeds don't absolve the rulers of their responsibility.

Aisha (ra) narrated, **"I heard The Messenger of Allah say in my house that,**

«اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاشْفُقْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَرَفَقَ بِهِمْ فَارْفُقْ بِهِ» O Allah! Be harsh with the one who is charged with the affairs of the Muslims and is harsh on them, and Allah be gentle with the one who is charged with the affairs of the Muslims and is gentle on them. [Sahih Muslim].

And the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

«مَا مِنْ وَالٍ يَلِي رَعِيَّةً مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَيَمُوتُ وَهُوَ غَاشٌّ لَهُمْ إِلَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ» "There is no governor/wali who takes charge of Muslims and dies cheating them, except that Allah prohibits him paradise." [Bukhari]

The rulers will be held accountable for every one of their actions on the Day of Judgement. They will be asked why they did not take steps to ensure that the people of Pakistan were protected against such horrific catastrophes.

Why they took interest-based loans, which apparently prevented them from developing the country and reducing the risks associated with natural disasters?

Why they sold the resources of the Muslim Ummah to foreign companies instead of using them for the betterment of the people.

And why they continue to beg for the help of our enemies, who exploit the Muslim Ummah and steal our resources, keeping us trapped within the Capitalist System?

Does the thought of this accountability not scare them?

It scared Hazrat Umar (ra), who was known for his bravery, despite doing his best to follow Allah's laws and implement Islam.

Dawud ibn Ali reported: Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "If a lost sheep under my care were to die on the banks of the Euphrates, I would expect Allah the Exalted to question me about it on the Day of Resurrection."

This should make us think. If we as an Ummah run to fulfill a Sunnah (May Allah be pleased with us), how can we accept our rulers to be lax in fulfillment in their Fard (obligation)? We must hold our rulers accountable and work towards the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State. So that we can help our Muslim brothers and sisters now and in the future.

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