

# Effects of natural disasters | essay



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Disaster can be categorized according to many situations like it can be defined as the state of war that communities react globally against aggression. It can be an expression of vulnerability. We can also say that disaster is a state of uncertainty. Thus the consequences of any kind of disaster are so great that they can't be ignored and the responsibility comes to the government account.

### SAMPLE DISASTERS

The disaster can be of any kind. We can say any unlike activity. It may be according to natural forces for example earthquakes, flooding, extreme temperature, environmental hazards, fires, cyclones. It can be technical failures causing the system pause and also the ongoing activities cease. Disaster can be graded as a human interference like crimes and explosion. Now a day globally we are exposed to all kind of disasters including both geographical and humanly created mess. Like flood that come in Chicago in April 13, 1992 destroyed 230 buildings and all the power supply was damaged badly. If we talk about the World trade Centre explosion in February 26, 1993 the destruction mainly affects the business in the centre and there was no margin to take precaution. The earthquake in San Francisco o 18, October, 1989 damaged the bay bridge which has stressed the business in the city because the bridge is collapsed and all business in the city was stopped. Similarly the hurricanes Andrew that arrived in the south Florida area made destruction to extents that end almost every activity. Thus disaster in any shape proven to be the worst experience no matter where it comes.

## **Impact of Natural disaster on environment**

Natural disaster is any inevitable event that affects the environment. It not only results in mass loss of human lives but also adversely affect the economy of the region. Natural disasters have long history of occurrence which cannot be predicted, nor can it be avoided. Many researchers state that that disaster is interrupted the state in which social fabric is disrupted and becomes dysfunctional to a greater or lesser extent. Many recent disaster e. g. tsunami in Indian ocean in 2004, earth quake in Pakistan in 2005, and Haiti earthquake in 2010 are thoroughly discussed in print and electronic media, yet our understanding of its economic impact and recovery plan is quiet premature. This topic highlights the effects of natural disaster on a region.

For the impacts and its metigation it's very much important that we should know the magnitude of the disaster. The area that is directly affected and indirectly affected. Directly means the place where it actually happens and indirectly refers to the surrounding environment that is near with the disaster place. As in disaster the people move to other safe places for their survival. It stresses the other city in every account like to manage the space, food, and other life facilities to start their normal life again.

### **PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER:**

For all these the government work and try very hard to cope up with situation. In some countries already disaster management cell are functional and in some countries we can see the law and order and they immediately respond to such dilemma. We also have such examples that there are

recovery plans for disasters but the issues are that these plans are outdated. The trained people are less in number. It takes too much time to implement. It's not an easy task. Mostly we see that short term plans are prepared and acted on it. The requirement for the successful disaster management activity is the cooperation by the effected people as well as the rest of the society. So far we see all over the world people generously participate for the disasters and try really hard to help the effecties. They really come up with practical potentials that sort the worst matter. Monitoring is also important after the measures because the effected people settlement may take years. In the disaster area collective stress is being created. Like some places that are easily approachable and some are far enough for the team to reach there for rescue. The government should be clear where to place the emergency cell and how it will work and they must communicate properly to the effectives and rest of the society the methodology. So that the interested people to help the victims and they should know the reality too. All this information can be transmitted by the satellites, good telecommunication system in the area.

## NATURAL DISASTERS IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan is the country that has esthetically beautiful landscapes featuring mountains. River plains, desert track and 960 Kilometer coastal area that exposed it to natural disasters. One of the reasons for disasters is that Pakistan is located in the region that's on the Indian plate that collides with the Eurasian plate and it's not getting mature geographically up till now.

Disaster cycles that are very common in the geographical history are predominantly flood, drought also persist, high intensity rain spell, earthquakes, cyclones and tsunami. Socially vulnerability and also the diseases are also the issues that to be deal with the natural disasters.

Historically if we figure out the disasters and the number of people dead as a result and also the economic stress that Pakistan is facing then we can make analysis that its very usual within every five or ten years a big disaster hit any area and almost everything is destroyed, which can be the factor for its slow development. Due to these natural disasters Pakistani economical condition is very weak. Every year 3-4% of the budget is used for the rehabilitation from all the disasters.

#### EARTHQUAKE:

Like the earthquake in May 31, 1935 dead people reported were 60, 000. After this much big disaster two earthquakes effecting less people struck the area in November 27, 1945 and December 28, 1974. The deaths reported were 4, 000 and 4, 700 respectively. Then up till 2005 no earthquake has strike the region but on October 5 the earthquake shaken the Northern side of Pakistan and has majorly destroyed the north side. More than 82, 000 people were killed; 3. 3 million people were left injured and homeless. All these incidences have place Pakistan in a very difficult situation. Everything was ruined badly and it took almost 5 to 10 years for rehabilitation.

#### FLOOD:

HISTORY: tells us that flood is affecting Pakistan area very frequently. Flood in 1950, 2, 900 people were died, in Aug-1973 4, effected people were 800, 000, flood in 2-Aug-1976 killed 5, 566, 000, in Jun-1977 people effected were 848, next year flood in Jul-1978 effects 2, 246, 000 people, similarly again the next year there was a flood affecting 1, 000, 000 poor people in august, then after 4 years gap flood came in 9-Aug effecting 6, 184, 418people, in Sep dead people were 12, 324, 024. Then again in 22-Jul-1995 flood death rated1, 255, 000 people and in 24-Aug-1996 dead people reported were 1, 186, 131. the history of flood does not end here. 3-Mar-1998 another flood destroys the area making1, 000 people to death. More over the flood destruction has added another year in the list like the flood of 2010 July-August.

#### 2010 FLOOD:

Now a day's heavy monsoon rains have triggered flooding that has left over 1, 500 people dead. The death toll may reach in the thousands as flooding has spread throughout the country and countless are missing due to flash floods and landslides. On top of this, more monsoon rains and flooding are on the way according to Pakistan meteorological department which may continue till end of August. Millions of homes in thousands of villages and towns have been destroyed. According to reports, over 13 Million people have been affected by this disaster – more than the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami, 2005 Pakistan Earthquake, and 2010 Haiti Earthquake combined and destruction is increasing each day. Infrastructure such as dams, power stations, roads, bridges, schools, agriculture wells, and drinking water hand pumps have been severely damaged or destroyed.

## ECONOMICAL STATE OF PAKISTAN AFTER THE FLOOD DISASTER

Economically Pakistan is a poor country and its economic growth faced a serious setback in fiscal year 2009 because of many factors such as the depressed consumer credit market, slow progress of public sector programmers, inflation, reduction in subsidies, threat of security, and instability in the state and energy crisis. Additionally, no attention was given to the agriculture sector. The exports declined by six percent and imports by 10 percent. The only thing that became a silver lining was the increment in remittances by 22%. Apart from ignorance, agriculture sector has shown credible results because of good weather. Major crops, wheat, rice and maize recorded impressive growth i. e. 7. 7% against the target of 4. 5%. Live stock and poultry also add to GDP as there was no viral disease this year. The economic condition is declining although positive efforts are made in this regard but due to the poor electricity condition and also the destruction of the infrastructure by the flood, the loss of many resource personals lives and their settled community now making it difficult for the country to sustain in the foreign market. As the infrastructure is totally destroyed so the import and transport is stopped. Even if there are temporary ways it is still a difficult task. Like helping people is more important in flood rather than import export. Food and living materials required on daily basis by the people, those who lost their everything, they are completely dependent on others for their survivals.

Floods in the northern areas of Pakistan have caused devastating effects. Sindh province has been declared red alert for the upcoming floods. The Indus river flows from Indus to Karachi which has increased the threat to the

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villages and people living beside it. Authorities have evacuated more than half a million people to save their lives.

One of the local said that “ Floods killed our people, they have ruined our homes and even washed away the graves of our loved ones”.

It is considered to be the worst floods in 80 years in the region which have killed at 1, 600 people and affected about 12 million others.

“ The president of Pakistan Mr Asif Ali Zardari who was on a foreign trip refused to take any criticism about the flood situation in Pakistan. He was of the opinion that he was being kept up to date about the relief efforts being made in the affected areas and the cabinet was directing the efforts”. He further assured the assistance from his visiting countries i. e. UAE, France and UK, regarding the relief and rehabilitation of the flood effectiees.

Mr President further said that, “ I’m the one who’s given all the powers from the presidency to the parliament. The parliament is in session – the Senate is in session. It’s the prime minister’s responsibility, and he’s fulfilling his responsibility.”

The point of concern here is that in Sindh two more days of rain are expected by the Pakistan’s meteorological office which could be dangerous and can cause high level of flood thus area is warned as red alert.

Mr Amal Masud, the National Disaster Management Authority added that in the bad weather the relief operations are also effected thus helicopters could not fly to the affected areas for rescue and relief activities.



Prime Minister Gilani declaring the 2010 flood as the worst Flood in Pakistan's 63 year history and thus appealed for help from international organizations and has expected the locals to cooperate with the people helping them in this disaster.

“ I would ask the international community to support and help Pakistan alleviate the sufferings of its flood-affected people,” he said.

Mr Gilani further added “ The next two days are very critical. Our top priority is to rescue people, to save their lives. But we will also provide them all facilities, and we will work for their rehabilitation.”

Much of the area along Indus River is submerged in the flood, still authorities have evacuated the rest of places to help people especially from the low-lying areas. Although some local farmers were reluctant to leave their land and belongings but it was necessary to evacuate those places even by forcing them. The rescue mission is mainly headed by army and navy which will continue throughout the relief activities. In Sindh province more than half a million people have been evacuated.

The Pakistan's food supply will have long term effects due to the present floods as it has overwhelmed vast agricultural areas. Officials said it is the biggest disaster in the country's history affecting 12 million people so far. The maximum level of water has reached in the Tarbela and Mangla dams which is a warning by engineers for the damage.

Due to the breach of dam in northern Sindh's Kashmore district, thousands of residents took shelter on rooftops or in trees, it has also inundated large

parts of the surrounding area with floodwater. “ The authorities are trying to prevent the breach of any other dam downstream”, said by Shoaib Hasan in Karachi. One of the Pakistan’s largest gas field The Qadirpur is also threatened by the breach. Many people refused to leave their land, crops and homes which is a difficult moment even knowing the threat to further deluges.

“ We are compelling them to evacuate because there is massive danger to their lives,” Irrigation Minister Jam Saifullah Dharejo said.

The current measure of the destroyed homes so far is 650, 000, a 1. 4m acre (557, 000 hectares) of agricultural land has been flooded and 10, 000 cows have died, declared by the officials.

In comparison with the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, the present disaster 2010 flood was “ on a par”, which killed almost 73, 000 people badly damaged infrastructure.

The flood affecties have been critical of the government’s response and other relief activities feeling helpless and ignored.

“ Floods killed our people, they have ruined our homes and even washed away the graves of our loved ones,” Mai Sahat told the Associated Press near Sukkur, Sindh. “ Yet we are here without help from the government.”

The administration struggling to contain the Taliban and an economic crisis, is facing more pressure by the victims which bitterly accused the authorities of failing to come to their aid in this devastating disaster. Thus, the authorities and victims both are facing alot of issues along with other

previous crisis. On the other hand, mountainous region of Ladakh was hit by flash floods which has killed 120 people with a ratio of 100 missing, building were also damaged. The authorities of Indian-administered Kashmir are recovering bodies and highly concerned with a fast relief action.

Whole of Pakistan is currently facing the devastating effects of flood. In Punjab hundreds of villages were submerged in flood water. It has destroyed homes, soaked the crops and threatened lives. Aid workers are also finding difficulty for the rescue delivery due to the nonstop raining and as a result more floods are coming out. As most of the affected are poor people thus many organization is trying to help them in this hard time. UN also scrambles to provide food and other assistance to about 3.2 million affected people. This year's monsoon season has caused the worst flood in Pakistan.

Punjab is the richest and most populous province of Pakistan. The destruction in northwest was very volatile and the floodwater has hit Punjab with the even high intensity. The rescue team of army tried to move villagers to higher ground through boats and helicopters. In the south of the province the tracts of Kot Addu and nearby area of Layyah, water was so high that only upper most floors of some buildings and treetops were visible.

During a visit to the flood affected area, the news reporters were briefed by Military spokesman Maj. Gen. Nadir Zeb that at least 30,000 people have been rescued from flood-hit zones in Kot Addu and areas over the previous 72 hours. He warned of more flooding as more rains were forecast in the next few days.

“ People must cooperate with us, and they must leave those areas where floods are going to hit,” he said.

Muhammad Hanif, head of the National Weather Forecasting Center in Islamabad said that monsoon season in Pakistan usually lasts about three months, through mid-September. In a typical year, the country gets an average 137 mm (5. 4 inches) worth of rainfall during the monsoon season. This year, it already has received 160 mm (6. 3 inches). Hanif said the rains are already falling about 25 to 30 percent above normal rates. It was the hardest rain experienced by northwest can be called “ once-in-a-century” rains. The death toll in the northwest region was highest. The significant amount of rain should be expected in Sindh province located at south and Punjab’s at east.

The Pakistan’s National Disaster management authority said that at least 47 people killed, 1, 000 villages have been affected and 25, 000 houses destroyed in Punjab since late July. The stretched crops of Pakistan are mainly grown in Punjab which is the Pakistan’s breadbasket were badly destroyed by the floodwater. Numerous crops have also been lost in the northwest. U. N has warned that due to loss of farm has produced the serious food shortage and thus World Food Program has estimated that over next month 1. 8 million people will need to be fed. Along with the crops, buildings and houses all the communication lines are also destroyed and the roads and bridges are washed out. These all severe conditions are main hurdles in the relief and rescue operations.

Including the United States, many foreign countries have stepped in to help the flood affectees. But still there are complains that aid is not reaching them fast enough or at all. This has disturbed the people more and results in aggressive behavior towards the authorities and helping organizations. The Map of Pakistan showing the area affected by the severe and moderate flood is given below.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/world/10/pakistan\\_floods\\_2/img/pakistan\\_floods\\_01\\_464\\_2.gif](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/world/10/pakistan_floods_2/img/pakistan_floods_01_464_2.gif)

#### FLOOD HANDLING PROCEDURE:

After earthquake relief operation, govt of Pakistan had set up a disaster management cell for fighting out natural disasters like earthquake and floods. However, scale of this flood is much beyond the capacity of that disaster management cell. Likewise in earthquake 2005 Pakistan army has come up once again to help the affected masses. All of army is out of cantonments for carry out flood relief operation throughout the country. It is a big challenge which cannot be met at once. Operation has different phases like rescue operation for evacuation of dead and trapped in flood, arrangement for internally displaced persons to alternate locations, provision of basic living facilities like shelter, food and medication, return of IDPs ( Internally displaced persons) to their home location after flood will be over and finally rehabilitation of these IDPs to restart their normal lives.

First phase to fight out flood is being undertaken by govt of Pakistan and Pakistan army. All resources are brought in to move affected population to

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safe locations. Pakistan army engineer's corps is carrying out rescue operation for water trapped masses, whereas tent villages are established to accommodate IDPs at safer locations.

After rescue comes the relief phase of operation which includes provision of basic living facilities to affected people. It is not easy task for govt of Pakistan to handle such a disaster which has caused more than 15 million IDPs which is over all larger displacement than tsunami and 2005 earthquake collectively. Whole Pakistani nation has come up to help affected population in terms of donation and volunteer relief work. Still it demands help from international community. UNO and other govt and non govt organization are pumping in to help the situation. In relief phase experts for shelter food and medical care have major role to play. There is no economic activity in flood hit areas and is not expected to restart soon. So more than 15 million IDPs are going to have adverse effects on Pakistan economy.

Monsoon is not over yet and few more rain spells are expected in month of august country wide. This situation depicts that rehabilitation phase is not going to start immediately which alternatively mean extended relief phase. And once rehabilitations starts, keeping in view the severity of flood, its not expected to recover the damage and restart normal routine life for min of two to three years.

After complete destruction of routine life and infra structure in flood hit area, there has been acute shortage of day to day usage items. Demand has incredibly increased than supply which is ultimately going to cause price hikes generally in all over the country and particularly flood hit areas.

Inflation of prices and sink of economy is obviously going to create so many living as well as social problems like increase in crime rate, increase of hunger and diseases, lawlessness and exploitation.

All above mentioned problems and issues pose great challenge for govt of Pakistan. It is a very serious issue which needs to be handled with great care. Govt of Pakistan will have to take both short term and long term measures to fight existing challenge and avoid such massive damage in future. As a short time and immediate measure, all efforts must be made to accelerate ongoing relief operation and provide basic needs to all the affected population. All govt machinery and international organization should gear up to work together on same lines with each other's collaboration. All agencies must be on one grid with central monitoring so that wastage and duplication of effort be kept to minimum. There had been an existing structure after earthquake as disaster management cell, if all agency try to work together in order to do capacity building of disaster management cell instead of working in independent capacities, it can really boost the relief work.

## CONCLUSION

Pakistan is a country which is already dependent on foreign aid to cope up with economic situation and also to fight back with the militants' war in the country. So management of the situation and also the right decision are very important to cope up with the disasters.

Its govt responsibility to start media campaign to motivate whole nation to work together , project the relief work being undertaken and reduce

frustration of the affected. At the same time , govt should encourage all volunteer teams , local NGOs, oversea Pakistanis and international community and take them on board to fight this catastrophe. Key factor in fetching the max out of all will be transparency and fairness of the procedure to utilize the aid to benefit IDPs.

It may not be easy for govt to afford rehabilitation of all these IDPs, it will be helpful to give incentives to international agencies for investments in all over the country as payback to their assistance in rehabilitation of IDPs.

Keeping in view the terrain and weather of Pakistan, it is very likely to face flood in future as well. Short terms measure can never be a permanent solution to these catastrophes. There can be no way to avoid floods in future except making dams to store and control excessive waters. Construction of dams in Pakistan had been politicized over few decades. This is the right time for govt of Pakistan to take decision for constructions of dams at various locations throughout the country. This will not only help in avoiding flood but will also solve the biggest energy crises by production of electricity.

All existing dams and canal system is old one and capacity of all rivers, canals and dams has been greatly reduced due to silt. In addition to construction of new dams, expansion and cleaning of existing dam and canal system is also imperative.

There is no question that present flood has caused devastating effects on Pakistan economy which will take years to recover. But such catastrophes are always food of thought for future and prove to be turning points for nations to plan ahead. This is the time for govt of Pakistan to revise their



economic policies and bring reforms. Nothing is more than safety of people, so serious issues relating survival of nations would not be politicized at all. We hope after recovering from this flood, Pakistan gets on to the track leading to benefit of whole of country instead of few.