

Challenges of environmental governance in Pakistan

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To reduce the **intensity** شدت of a crisis, it is essential to produce some **mechanism** طریقہ کار so that the crisis can be **dealt** نمٹنا with in a better way. The first tool that can be **utilized** against such a scenario is the governance model. The importance of governance can only be **assimilated** by looking at the **plight** حالت زار of public institutions in Pakistan which are almost **dysfunctional** غیر فعال due to **inefficiencies** ناکامیوں in their governance and management model.

The rising wave of environmental crisis in the form of climate-**induced** روز بروز بڑھتی catastrophe, the **rampant** پانی سے پیدا ہونے والے **water-borne** infections and air-borne diseases among **masses** عوام, poor **disposal** ضیاع, **hazardous** سمندر کنارے waste at the **seashore**, increasing level of water **scarcity** کمی affecting the cross-provincial unity, and the current flash-floods of **unprecedented** intensity need immediate attention by the **ruling** حکمران authority. This can be only possible when there is a **prioritization** ترجیح of the environmental governance model and possible removal of **hiccups** مسائل affecting its efficiency over a long period.

By just looking at the current scenario of environmental

governance in Pakistan, one would come across multiple challenges that are pushing the progression ترقی of the country into the absolute abyss کھائی. Having glanced نظر at the current flood crisis, one would observe thousands of loop-holes کمیاں and systematic flaws خامیاں in the environment governance model ranging from the collusion تصادم of authorities to greasing of the palms of higher-ups اعلیٰ for undertaking کرنا illegal projects flouting مذاق اڑانا the clauses of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), use of sub-standard غیر معیاری construction material for infrastructure development while the world is moving towards green-construction and sustainable پائیدار architecture and deforestation of large green cover that can absorb excess زیادہ rainwater and prevent flooding in northern areas.

These were the only concerns خدشات emanating والی from a single flood crisis induced پیدا ہوئے due to prolonged طویل neglect of climate issues in Pakistan; there is a multitude بھیڑ، of others too affecting the environmental governance model of Pakistan and causing aggravation اضافہ of the environmental management crisis.

Environmental governance can be defined as the smooth management of environmental issues by governing and regulating bodies in line with judicious decision-making by experts involved on board. The outcome نتیجہ of such decision-making should have positive trickle-down effects on the masses عوام, especially in the conservation حفاظت of their natural resources and protection of their lives during possible

environmental calamities آفات.

The major challenge concerning environmental governance is the poor demarcation حد بندی of authority between different departments and agencies. This can be further elucidated by looking at the role of disaster management authorities whose sole واحد task is the pre and post-management of disasters. However, one can only observe them issuing threat alerts only, which should be the work of the Pakistan meteorological department. Likewise, in the case of inundation والے زیر آب آنے والے of cities with water, only bureaucratic machinery is usually involved in the de-watering process, which should be the function of the local government department and public-health engineering department. This confused functioning of departments does not coalesce اتحاد into producing solid performance, and the ultimate result is that a colossal بھرم بھاری public exchequer خزانہ is wasted.

Another challenge staring گھورنا in the face of its innocent people is Pakistan's repeated romanticization of economic progression and growth rate without calculating the environmental cost of such a phenomenon. Unfortunately, it has still not focused on the economic benefits that can be accrued حاصل ہونا due to environmental sustainability پائیداری.

Since the inception قیام of the country, every ruling party or leader had neglected the environmental dimension of economic decision-making whether it was Ayub Khan's rapid industrialization policy or PTI's intense شدید proclivity جھکاؤ towards the establishment of the Ravi Urban Development Project, not realizing its devastating impact on the marine ecosystem and riverine communities.

Furthermore, the **flouting** مذاق، خلاف of environmental laws by **capitalistic** دارانہ سرمایہ forces is also a major challenge in the implementation of a **robust** مضبوط environmental governance model. The daily **grim** سنگین stories of **inhabitants** crying for their land **devoured** کرنا due to illegal **encroachment** تجاوزات of **gated housing** societies, the conversion of wildlife parks into a concrete jungle with **unbridled** لگام بے construction activity, the establishment of **skyscrapers** عمارتیں near seashores affecting biological diversity, and illegal construction of **hill-resorts** کسی near **flood-prone** زدہ سیلاب areas are quite enough to justify this **conundrum** پہیلی.

It looks like the regulating agencies approve these activities under **duress** جبر یا دباؤ or get **abundant** وافر resources to **alter** تبدیل کرنے the **coding laws**. Whatever the case, the devastation will **unravel** کھول دے گی its ugly face soon; one of these is what the country is facing right now in the form of flood devastation.

The **critics** ناقدین point out that it is the **absenteeism** غیر رکاوٹ ڈالنا of environmental policy that is **hampering** موجودگی environmental governance. However, this is not the case. The problem does not lie in the absenteeism of **robust** مضبوط environmental policy rather it is the presence of **impracticable** عمل policy not focusing on **indigenous** مقامی solutions. It

needs to be **comprehended** سمجھنا that every country has its environmental concerns. Therefore, the policy should be personalized rather than a generalized one that looks mostly copy-pasted from the official websites of environmental ministries of other states.

Besides this, there is a lack of skilled human resources and decision-makers in various environmental agencies which severely **impedes** رکاوٹ ڈالنا the **efficaciousness** افادیت of their work. The **flouting** ورزی خلاف of the right man for the right job is usually observed across the board. From Solid Waste Management Boards to Environmental Protection Agencies, one can find no MD or chairperson having an **adequate** مناسب background in environmental science or engineering or having some technical know-how of it.

The majority of them are either bureaucrats or civil engineers with very shallow knowledge of the environmental field. Even the provincial disaster management authorities are also not **immune** استثناء to it; they are filled with officers from the District Management Group or Provincial Management Services. This leaves a question mark on the entire governance structure where no expert with technical knowledge is **treading** چل رہا ہے the path of environmental sustainability.

The devastating effects of poor environmental governance in Pakistan would be more intense. First, the intense climate change **deterioration** خرابی will prove to be the original **sin** گناہ caused due to its repeated **negligence** غفلت by higher authorities as it will **devour** کرنا large **swathes** حصہ of the population, cause displacement of extreme proportion and

shatter توڑنا the **normalcy** معمولات of the world gained recently after the **receding** پسپا ہونا of COVID-19. Second, there are more chances of urban flooding. Till now, it has just **wrecked** تباہ کیا the infrastructure. Next time, it will kill a multitude of people with its **gushing** بہتے ہوئے water and **amplified** wave اضافہ کرنا intensity.

Third, there will be the possibility of the **emergence** ظاہر ہونا of **insurgent** سرکش، باغی elements in communities. Remember the book "The Vortex: A true story of History's Deadliest Storm by Scott Gerney and Jason Mikilan in which the role of the **cyclone** طوفان of the 1970s in the **Bay of Bengal** in the Bangladesh Liberation Movement is mentioned. It is written **explicitly** واضح طور پر in that book that **overlooked** نظر انداز کیا by the West Pakistani authorities in managing the disaster increased the Bengali **resentment** نفرت which further **fuelled** ہوا the idea of separatism.

It should be also noted that the **Naxalites** in India are fighting for the protection of their natural reservoirs and resources fearing that they will be **annexed** منسلک by capitalistic forces in **collaboration** اشتراک with state authorities. As the next era is the era of economic war where now war zones lie in the economic fronts. So, environmental governance would be the need of the hour for the protection of such resources and to minimize the **resentment** نفرت یا ناراضگی factor among the masses.

To improve the environmental governance model, it is necessary to reflect on the proper **demarcation** حد بندی of

working authority. The blurred lines should be erased and a clear mandate for each department with objectives should be devised. However, all the departments should work as an **allied** اتحادی force **synergizing** ہم آہنگ کرنا all the efforts for better results rather than lurching لرزنا unsuccessfully in isolation. There should be strong enforcement of environmental regulations. Those flouting it should be responsible for damages and **reparations** تلافی during the emergence of **havoc** تباہی. Any regulating agency supporting capitalistic agenda rather than keeping the national interest first should be simply **disbanded** توڑ دیا جانا.

The principle of the right man for the right job should be honored. The services of professional environmentalists, climatologists, disaster risk management specialists, and activists should be **sought** تلاش کرنا. All the untechnical bosses of environmental allied departments should be replaced by technical ones. Pakistan with its **bulk** زیادہ مقدار youth population is the perfect place for utilizing its potential. A project worthy of environmental protection like the Billion Tree Tsunami can be executed without political support only with these energetic youngsters. To cut it short, it is high time to declare a climate emergency in Pakistan, especially after this **devastating** تباہ کن episode of floods in 2022. All the measures should be taken on a war footing and must be **expedited** تیز for the greater benefit of the upcoming generation at least.

The writer is an environmentalist and an independent researcher. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of Global Village Space.

grease someone's palm

idiom

to secretly give someone money in order to persuade قائل
كربنا them to do something for you

EIA

Environmental Impact assessment is the assessment of the environmental consequences of a plan, policy, program, or actual projects prior to the decision to move forward with the proposed action.

Green building (also known as green construction or sustainable building) refers to both a structure and the application of processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building's life-cycle: from planning to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition

Trickle down

used to refer to a situation in which something that starts in the high parts of a system spreads to the whole of the system

The **Pakistan Meteorological Department**, is an autonomous and independent institution tasked with providing weather

forecasts and public warnings concerning weather for protection, safety and general information

romanticize

verb

deal with or describe in an idealized or unrealistic fashion; make (something) seem better or more appealing than it really is.

gated housing

In its modern form, a gated community (or walled community) is a form of residential community or housing estate containing strictly controlled entrances for pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles, and often characterized by a closed perimeter of walls and fences

Coding laws

A code of law, also called a law code or legal code, is a systematic collection of statutes. It is a type of legislation that purports to exhaustively cover a complete system of laws or a particular area of law as it existed at the time the code was enacted, by a process of codification

The **Bay of Bengal** is the northeastern part of the Indian Ocean, bounded on the west and northwest by India, on the north by Bangladesh, and on the east by Myanmar and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India.

Naxalites are a group of far-left radical communists, supportive of Maoist political sentiment and ideology. Their origin can be traced to the splitting in 1967 of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), leading to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist).

A **greenhouse gas** is a gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range, causing the greenhouse effect. The primary greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.