

INTEGRATING ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS WITH SOCIAL SAFETY PROGRAMS IN PAKISTAN

AUGUST 2024



Integrating Anticipatory Actions with Social Safety Programs in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of anticipatory actions with social safety programs in the context of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in Pakistan. The country has faced various natural disasters, resulting in significant impacts on infrastructure, economy, and the well-being of its population. Anticipatory actions have emerged as innovative approaches to mitigate the adverse effects of potential hazards; and integrating them with social protection programs holds promise in addressing vulnerabilities to climate shocks. The research methodology involved interviews with sector-specific experts, government officials, and academia to gather perspectives on the potential integration. The study aims to provide insights into how Pakistan can effectively converge emergency preparedness and social protection programs to enhance resilience and well-being of vulnerable populations.

1. Background/Introduction

A disaster is an unprecedented event through which the community becomes vulnerable, and its consequences are destructive. Disasters can be natural, and human-made. These include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, tsunamis, avalanches, floods, GLOFs, heat waves, cold waves, wildfires, droughts, cyclones, epidemics and pandemics, technological and biological hazards, and hailstorms, etc. Disasters occur with an uneven frequency and their adverse effects increase for those who don't adopt proper planning and strategy. For better emergency preparedness, the role of information is highly important to reduce the destructive impacts of disasters on people's lives through anticipatory actions.

Since Pakistan has been grappling with various disasters, experiencing multiple natural disasters over the years, including floods, earthquakes, and landslides. These disasters have caused significant impacts, losses, and damage to the country's infrastructure, economy, and people's lives. The assessments say that 33 million people have been impacted by floods in 2022. There were about 12,800 injuries, almost 1,600 fatalities, and 7.9 million internal displacements, and many are now residing in temporary shelters and accommodations.

Numerous public infrastructures, as well as more than 2 million homes, had suffered damages. The reported loss of more than 1.1 million livestock and the flooding of 9.4 million acres of cropland in August 2022 severely affected agricultural output and people's means of subsistence. The provinces of Baluchistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were severely impacted, and 84 districts across the country were declared "calamity hit" by the government. The floods highlighted the human cost of the climate issue and heightened the urgency with which the state must act to meet Pakistan's immediate humanitarian needs as well as the global climate crisis (Khattak, 2022).

The government has implemented several measures to reduce the impacts of natural disasters. These include improving early warning systems, constructing flood protection structures such as embankments and floodwalls, offering emergency relief to affected communities, and establishing disaster management authorities at the provincial and district levels (NDMA, 2013). Furthermore, the government has taken critical steps to develop its long-term policies, including the National Disaster Management Plan and National Flood Protection Plan IV. However, challenges persisted, such as a lack of operationalization and financing for the plans and limited absorptive capacity to utilize risk assessments in infrastructure investments and land use planning. Still, there is a need for more comprehensive planning and implementation of disaster risk reduction measures to prevent or minimize the damage caused by natural disasters. More needs to be done to prepare for and respond to natural disasters in the region.

This highlights the importance of anticipatory actions that have emerged as innovative ways to act ahead of predicted disasters to mitigate humanitarian, infrastructural, and economic losses. Anticipatory action is a unique approach that involves taking timely and informed actions based on credible forecasts or collective risk analysis to mitigate the impacts of potential hazards. It encompasses various terms such as Forecast-based Financing (FbF), Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), Forecast-based Action (FbA), and Anticipatory Humanitarian Action (AHA). Harmonizing these terms will ensure a unified approach to anticipatory action in humanitarian efforts.

Anticipatory actions have been gaining significant importance in managing climate hazards through a rights-based, impactful, scalable, and sustainable way which ultimately reduces the humanitarian need. Anticipatory actions integrated with social protection can address the vulnerability to climate shocks in a timely, cost-effective, and sustainable manner. Social protection has the potential to address the root causes of vulnerabilities by providing additional income to maintain consumption levels, which enable the population at risk to better respond to and recover from the shocks. The integration of social protection and anticipatory actions seems having clear benefits and opportunities but on the practical side, very limited evidence is available in this regard. The present study will attempt to explore how can Pakistan best implement the convergence/integration of emergency preparedness and social protection programs to maximize its effectiveness in building resilience and well-being for vulnerable populations.

2. Methodology

The study used both primary and secondary levels of information to assess the possible integration of anticipatory actions with social safety programs in Pakistan. Interviews have been conducted with sector-specific experts, government officials, and leading voices from academia in the field of DRR, CCA, and Social Safety to understand their perspectives on the potential integration of anticipatory action and social safety Programs. These stakeholders were identified in a stakeholders' mapping exercise which was conducted based on their relevance, influence, and role relating to the subject.

An open-ended questionnaire was used for semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders that allowed respondents to provide a context of initiatives/projects implemented, the policy landscape, and the way forward for integrating anticipatory actions with social safety Programs. The questionnaires were based on the literature review of recent government policies, plans, and Programs around the subject. The secondary sources include reports from development partners and government ministries, interviews, newspaper articles, world food Programs reports, United Nations documents, and journal articles.

3. Anticipatory Actions

Anticipatory actions are defined as interventions in the form of assistance provided to vulnerable households or communities ahead of a predicted/forecasted extreme event to reduce and/or prevent damage to lives, assets, and livelihoods. Anticipatory actions have four essential components; a) a forecast-based trigger point, b) a Pre-defined set of interventions, c) pre-agreed finances, and d) a well-defined communication and coordination plan.

a) Trigger Point: The World Food Program (WFP) guidelines on anticipatory actions suggest two-level trigger points, a readiness trigger point, and an activation trigger point. The readiness trigger point is a set way before a disaster, if the forecast model permits, to provide ample time for the government and other organizations to prepare the assistance required and to timely reach the people. The activation trigger point is a set close to the event of a disaster, this is where the pre-agreed set of interventions are carried out, especially the assistance to households e.g., cash payments and early warning.

b) Pre-defined interventions: A set of context-specific actionable plans for vulnerable communities to be activated when the specific trigger point is achieved. The readiness trigger point provides an opportunity to modify the plans and interventions as per the changing requirements of the current situation. Whereas, when the activation trigger point reaches, action should be taken to reduce the impacts on vulnerable communities.

c) Pre-agreed finances: Financial resources are essential to execute the pre-defined set of interventions at a time when an activation trigger point is reached. The funds should be allocated in advance to facilitate the rapid response and implementation of pre-determined plans and interventions.

d) Communication and coordination: A comprehensive communication and coordination strategy should be developed for the effective dissemination of information among government bodies, humanitarian organizations, and communities ensuring barriers are covered.

4. Social Protection

Social protection (SP) is an important component of a modern welfare state. SP Programs aim to reduce inequality and poverty, as well as enhance human capital and resilience by providing support to individuals who face long-term hardship or sudden emergencies, through targeted resource redistribution. These Programs are wide-ranging and may include assisting individuals in finding employment, improving workers' productivity, investing in the health and education of children, and

safeguarding the elderly population (World Bank Group, 2022). The significance of SP is evident in Target 1.3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for the establishment of "nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including minimum standards, and achieving substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable by 2030" (United Nations, 2022).

Social protection is a set of policies and Programs designed to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of the population by expanding the labor markets, reducing exposure to risks, and strengthening them to absorb the shock of loss of income and interruptions (Jamal and Policy, 2010). Social protection has five major components including social insurance, social assistance, labor markets, and micro- and area-based community and child protection schemes.

Social protection schemes provide basic support and protection to vulnerable individuals and households against social and economic shocks. Social protection schemes have many forms e.g., cash transfers, in-kind transfers, public works Programs, and insurance schemes; direct cash transfer is one of the common schemes used to assist vulnerable families and individuals to meet their basic needs and emergency cash assistance for disaster can also help reduce the vulnerabilities (Paitoonpong, Abe, and Puopongsakorn, 2008).

To deal with disaster and climate change risks the concept of shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) has been introduced. The shock-responsive social protection is an integrated approach that analyses the disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) strategies for informed program decisions to make it more adaptive and resilience-focused (Rana et al., 2022).

4.1) The state of social protection in Pakistan

The issue of social protection in Pakistan is complex and involves various stakeholders, including the government, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations. Social protection is considered crucial for addressing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability in the country. The government has made efforts to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection Programs in recent years.

Key social protection initiatives in Pakistan include Pakistan Baitul-Mal, the Zakat and Ushr Programs, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution, the Workers' Welfare Fund, and provincial Employees' Social Security Institutions. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is a major social protection program in Pakistan, providing financial assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, primarily targeting women to improve their socio-economic status. BISP has successfully reduced poverty, improved food security, and increased school enrollment rates. Other social protection Programs in Pakistan include the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program, the

Waseela-e-Taleem Program, and the Waseela-e-Rozgar Program. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program was launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide emergency cash transfers to affected vulnerable households. The Waseela-e-Taleem Program incentivizes families to send their children to school, while the Waseela-e-Rozgar Program focuses on job placement for unemployed youth.

Similarly, in 2019, Pakistan established the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, as an institutional home of the Ehsaas Strategy. The Punjab Social Protection Authority was created in 2015 to coordinate and consolidate social protection in the province. In 2019, Sindh set up a Social Protection Strategy Unit. In 2012, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa established a Social Protection Reform Unit, which was later renamed as the Public Policy and Social Protection Unit. In 2020, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also established a Gender and Social Protection Section.

In 2021, Punjab launched a pilot project to extend social security coverage to domestic workers and introduced an Amnesty Scheme to promote compliance with social security obligations among employers in the formal economy. Sindh has made progress with amendments to the law governing the Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution in 2019. They also have plans to develop a provincial social registry and to take steps to strengthen governance, and to boost confidence in transparency of the schemes. The Benazir Mazdoor Card, introduced in 2021 in place of the existing manual system, aims to close loopholes and end misappropriation in the system to provide social security for workers and their families. A major new initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 'Sehat Sahulat', a health insurance scheme for all provincial domicile holders. In 2019, Balochistan began the process of setting up a Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Authority to consolidate and expand social protection initiatives.

The provision of social protection schemes in Pakistan is crucial for targeting poverty and achieving sustainable economic development (Khan et al., 2013). However, formal social protection Programs often fail to reach the poorest, who instead rely on informal social networks for support. To address this, the government has implemented the Benazir Income Support Program and skills development initiatives, which have had varying degrees of success in reaching the poor (Nabi, 2013). There has also been a significant increase in fiscal allocations for social protection in Pakistan, particularly in the form of cash transfers, indicating a potential paradigm shift in social protection (Gazdar, 2011).

However, despite these efforts social protection in Pakistan faces challenges in terms of coverage, financing, and targeting. Limited coverage remains a significant challenge, with only a small proportion of the population having access to social protection Programs. Inadequate financing is also an issue, as the government's spending on social protection is relatively low compared to other countries. Inaccurate targeting mechanisms result in non-poor households benefiting from

social protection Programs leading to the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations. There is a need to expand coverage, increase financing, and to improve targeting mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of social protection in Pakistan.

5. Integration of Anticipatory Action with Social Protection

The floods in Pakistan in 2022 surrounded over one-third of the country and impacted 33 million people. The floods resulted in over 1700 deaths and the displacement of nearly 18 million individuals¹. There is a growing momentum to act towards better anticipatory measures in Pakistan, with the introduction of initiatives, frameworks, and potential approaches.

The Anticipatory Actions (AA) and Social Protection (SP) mechanisms can help reduce the impact of risks in a coordinated and cost-effective way. They use existing social protection structures to manage beneficiaries, distribute benefits, and coordinate Programs, resulting in cost savings and efficiency gains. This can be especially beneficial for households in chronic poverty, as they are often the most vulnerable to shocks and can benefit from anticipatory and adaptive actions (O'Brien et al., 2018).

However, there are trade-offs to consider when integrating anticipatory and adaptive approaches into social protection systems. For instance, there may be a need to create a balance between the allocations of limited resources and strengthening the foundational elements of social protection with the incorporation of shock-responsive or anticipatory action elements. Additionally, involving various actors with their objectives and requirements may lead to fragmented and short-term solutions.

International organizations, such as the WFP, support the member countries in integrating anticipatory and adaptive components into their existing social protection programs by assisting them to link or integrate these components (See Annexure 1). This allows for the quick expansion of social protection Programs to reach a large population at risk of climate-related hazards before they occur (Secades and Solorzano, 2022).

The social safety programs in Pakistan have helped support vulnerable people; however, there is now an understanding of the need to integrate anticipatory actions with these programs. Anticipatory actions are taken to reduce the impacts of disasters and crises through early warning, preparation, and risk control measures. Integrating these anticipatory actions with the current

1 Humanitarian Outcomes, SDPI, and the United Kingdom Humanitarian Innovation Hub,. 2022. Floods in Pakistan: Rethinking the Humanitarian Role. Available at: https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/pakistan_floods_1122.pdf

social safety programs in Pakistan can increase resilience and reduce the vulnerability of its population to hazards.

Such integration can be achieved through early warning systems that are connected to social safety programs. These systems can help in warning communities of disasters that are likely to happen so that they can protect themselves and their property. However, integrating risk reduction and preparedness components into social safety programs can contribute to the development of communities' capacity to respond to possible emergencies. Furthermore, the integration of anticipatory actions with social safety programs may also include the use of technology and data-driven approaches to enhance the targeting and delivery of assistance. The use of predictive analytics and other technological tools can help policymakers and program implementers to better anticipate and understand the needs of vulnerable groups before disasters hit. The collaboration among government institutions, humanitarian organizations, and the community is also imperative to integrate social protection with anticipatory actions. Such an approach can help to share knowledge, resources, and skills, and thus improve the assistance provided to the vulnerable groups.

5.1) Leveraging the social protection core components:

The implementation of anticipatory actions leverages components of the social protection architecture by relying on existing architects of a large-scale, long-term, and nationally owned social protection system. For example, coordination platforms, identity management systems, payment and delivery mechanisms, etc. can be utilized to reach the people at risk of imminent climate-related hazards.

5.2) Leveraging the AA core components:

Anticipatory action's core components, such as pre-defined forecast triggers, agreed action plans, and pre-arranged financing, are integrated into social protection systems to enable the rapid scale-up of social protection programs before the onset of forecasted climate-related hazards.

It's important to note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in different ways to meet the specific needs of a country based on the context. While these approaches can significantly reduce the impacts of climate hazards, they do not substitute the need for traditional emergency preparedness and response actions; instead, they should be combined with them.

Recent experience: During the 2022 floods, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was used for cash assistance to 2.8 million families and disbursed 261 million USD (UNICEF, 2022). The BISP manages the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), cash disbursement, and registration systems. On the other hand, the NDMA, PDMA, and DDMA are responsible for planning and executing preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Currently, cash assistance falls outside the NDMA's jurisdiction, and emergency response is not part of BISP's mandate, despite being utilized in previous responses. Learning from recent experiences, it is crucial to establish clear roles and responsibilities among key agencies to enable more systematic use of cash for both response and anticipatory action. This also involves defining the role of the Pakistan Cash Working Group, which coordinates non-government humanitarian actors' cash Programs and provides a platform for sharing information and guidance.

6. Core Components for Integration

6.1) Accurate Forecasting

Accurate forecasting is essential for suggesting trigger points for anticipatory actions to reduce the vulnerability to natural disasters, which pose significant risks to the community as a whole. Advanced technologies such as Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) play a crucial role in disaster management phases, including prevention, preparedness, early warning, response, and rehabilitation. These technologies enable authorities to monitor, forecast, and map various hazards, conduct detailed damage assessments, and implement integrated analysis systems. They facilitate disaster vulnerability assessments for events such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, cyclones, tsunamis, droughts, and heatwaves, aiding in risk modeling and providing essential support for establishing trigger points.

Accuracy is a key for effective forecasting; the main challenge in anticipatory actions is establishing precise trigger points based on reliable data. According to the representative of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), accurate data leads to better forecasts and more effective responses. The accuracy of forecasts varies: nowcasts (short-term forecasts covering the next 2 to 6 hours) can be over 90% accurate, while 24-hour forecasts are around 85% accurate. However, medium-range forecasts (3 to 7 days) typically have about 60% accuracy, with further decreases for longer periods, such as seasonal forecasts. To enhance forecast accuracy, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) analyzes current atmospheric conditions and uses both observational and model data. Expanding the observational network would improve accuracy by filling existing gaps.

Predicting weather more than a few days in advance remains challenging. Long-term forecasts, such as seasonal predictions, are inherently less accurate due to the complexity and variability of atmospheric conditions. Climate change further complicates forecasting by introducing new factors. For instance, even a minor increase in global temperatures can alter weather patterns significantly. To address these challenges, the forecasting capabilities of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) need to be enhanced. Reviewing and upgrading our current models, and incorporating advanced technologies such as machine learning, could improve our forecasting accuracy. However, the diverse geography and topography of Pakistan must be considered in these updates.

Historically, weather forecasts were broad and lacked specificity, such as predicting general rainfall without detailing amounts or timing. Modern forecasting aims to provide more precise and actionable information, such as specific rainfall amounts and their potential impacts within a given timeframe. This detailed forecasting helps in preparing for possible disasters.

6.2) Interventions

A set of context-specific actionable plans for vulnerable communities is required to implement anticipatory actions effectively. The sense of proper visioning and preparation prevails among the key players responsible for disaster management in Pakistan. As one of our respondents said *“Instead of waiting for a disaster to strike and then scrambling for resources, we should have a system in place with a margin of 2-3 years' worth of supplies. Proper preparation and vision are necessary. Officers need to anticipate requirements and to ensure that necessary processes and paperwork are completed in advance. This way, we can manage the situation effectively when a disaster strikes.”*

Setting Action (trigger) points based on reliable data is important. Inaccurate forecasts can affect public trust, as people are forced to take unnecessary actions. The triggering points are assumed to be set based on the information received from PMD. However, many times the weather forecasts by PMD proved ineffective. For example, as one of the disaster management representatives mentioned, *“Around 80,000 people were evacuated ahead of Cyclone Biparjoy and the cyclone changed its path. The evacuation damaged trust in the system.”* Improving the planning and execution of activities is crucial, with regular coordination, especially regarding disaster management. Therefore, PMD must improve its forecasting accuracy to regain public trust, as incorrect forecasts only add to uncertainty.

Therefore, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) needs to upgrade its equipment and adopt modern models for accurate forecasts. Relying on outdated models currently hampers effective disaster management. It is also important to have consensus among stakeholders on forecasting models. Departments need to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to ensure that accurate data and forecasts result in the effective anticipatory actions and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Pre-disaster planning is also essential; convening stakeholders and authorities before seasonal events such as monsoons or cyclones call for comprehensive strategy development and response planning. As conditions continue to change, the importance of this coordination will only increase.

6.3) Finances

The literature related to anticipatory actions identifies two types of costs required to operationalize AA: build cost and fuel cost. The build funding establishes or improves systems and capacities for anticipatory action, such as collecting more data on risks and strengthening early warning processes. Fuel funding is released when a trigger is activated and is used to finance the implementation of pre-agreed actions (REAP, 2022a). Additionally, operational cost is considered as a separate category that includes pre-trigger (readiness and maintenance of AA system) and post-trigger (intervention when AA system is triggered) costs.

The present humanitarian financing system is mostly designed for responding to crises that have already occurred and is often limited by the requirements of donors. This means it is not suitable for funding government-operated social protection Programs (Longhurst et al., 2021). Donors often prefer "build" funding, as it is a more traditional form of programming and ensures that funds are fully utilized each year, rather than being set aside and potentially going unused (REAP, 2022a).

However, disaster risk finance (DRF) can provide immediate funding when a trigger for disbursement is activated. This involves planning and allocating resources for anticipatory or shock-responsive activities before an event occurs or is forecasted (REAP, 2022b). Similarly, climate finance could also be a potential source of funding for anticipatory actions, given the similarities between climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) agendas. However, much of climate finance has not been accessible for anticipatory actions due to a focus on mitigation rather than adaptation, and a reluctance among financing institutions to include pre-positioned anticipatory action funding for social protection purposes (Longhurst et al., 2021).

To finance social protection or anticipatory action for social protection Programs, a combination of pre-emptive financial instruments should be used to match the uncertain timing and amount of financing needs (World Bank Group, 2018). This approach, known as risk layering, aims to select a portfolio of instruments that provides the most reliable and cost-effective combination based on the predicted frequency and magnitude of need (Cummings and Mahul, 2009). While some social protection and anticipatory actions for social protection systems already use multiple risk-finance instruments to fund shock responses, this is not yet a common practice (Longhurst et al., 2021).

Currently, there is no definitive allocation based on anticipatory actions. Some unknown allocations occur when issues arise, and despite attempts to address them, financial constraints persist. Therefore, some innovative measures need to be taken. For example, one of our respondents said: *“Some innovative initiatives, such as auctioning customized vehicle number plates, have been implemented in Sindh. This process allows individuals to bid on special or personalized plate numbers, which can serve as status symbols or carry personal significance. The funds raised through these auctions are allocated to the housing department, supporting various housing and development projects in the province.”*

6.4) Coordination

Improving coordination among departments is necessary for effective disaster management. Often, departments operate in silos, hindering effective coordination. One solution is to bring all relevant parties together under a single team, as practiced in many countries during crises. This collaborative approach ensures better communication and shared responsibility.

Therefore, it is important to establish regular coordination mechanisms during normal development and infrastructure planning. After the 18th constitutional amendment, it is also necessary to balance between centralization and decentralization of powers. While a central authority should oversee overall coordination, local offices, and district-level departments need to be empowered to handle specific tasks independently. This balance ensures efficient disaster management by combining the benefits of central oversight with the flexibility of local execution. The disaster response system should incorporate both centralization and decentralization.

Reflecting on the past events, such as Flood 2022, highlights significant challenges in response times and communication. In districts, Deputy Commissioners were often slow to act, and relief efforts were hindered by delayed communication. Despite available government advertisements and relief measures, communication breakdowns meant that many people were unaware of the assistance available.

Instead of working in isolation, different entities should collaborate to pool resources and make a real impact. The stakeholders should consider merging their teams to reduce staff burden and increase efficiency. By combining human and financial resources, the impact will be more substantial. The current approach of holding a few meetings and distributing recognition awards is not effective. Real change requires grassroots-level engagement and coordinated efforts.

Effective coordination and specialized units within local government departments are also necessary to manage disaster-specific interventions at the district level. Improving

governance models, funding, and infrastructure is important for ensuring the effectiveness of disaster management efforts. Adequate staffing and effective coordination among different departments are essential for efficiently managing disaster situations and ensuring the safety and success of development projects.

6.5) Cash Transfer

Financial assistance through social safety Programs is essential to prepare communities before disasters hit. A strong distribution system at the district level is crucial for effective integration. Most of the existing social safety Programs in Pakistan that provide financial aid have their reach beyond the district level. Maintaining a well-organized database and effective coordination mechanisms significantly enhance the effectiveness of these Programs. Collaborating with local governments and NADRA, social safety networks such as BISP and Ehsaas need to regularly update their data. Accurate and up-to-date data is crucial for the effective and efficient distribution of aid during emergencies.

Decentralization, cash transfers, and social safety nets empower local governments to understand the dynamics, challenges, and issues faced by their communities. A decentralized approach will facilitate a prompt response to emergencies. However, it is important to ensure availability of adequate funding and stocks at the provincial and district levels. Moreover, transferring cash through digital banking systems is more beneficial than providing cash assistance by hand, as it ensures greater transparency. However, many remote areas lack access to internet and cellular services. To address this challenge, social safety nets should establish desks at the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) levels, ensuring that aid reaches all those in need. Distribution of funds through the banking system eliminates corruption because there is no middleperson or third party involved. Beneficiaries receive funds directly into their accounts, withdraw money using biometric verification, buy construction materials and hire masons, that too without intermediaries.

The integration of anticipatory action (AA) schemes into government social protection (SP) programs can play a significant role in the country's framework for mitigating and responding to shocks, in addition to other government and humanitarian channels (WFP, 2019). Despite increasing interest in using AA for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA), efforts have not yet achieved significant scale or impact. Furthermore, while there is a growing body of evidence on the effectiveness and impact of AA, it is still in its early stages of providing demonstrated evidence at scale throughout various phases of disaster and risk management efforts led by different types of institutions. Decisions and financing for AA schemes are inherently political. They are uncertain investments in complex systems with potential future benefits, which makes

them less appealing to risk-averse policymakers who may discount interventions with distant pay-offs. Additionally, behavioral biases may cause both constituents and decision-makers to prefer maintaining the status quo or misjudging the probabilities of low-risk shock events, thus reducing the demand for programs that offer mitigation measures. As a result, policymakers may favor programs that are more visible and provide short-term tangible benefits to their constituents.

7. Conclusion

The literature suggests that the integration of anticipatory actions with social safety Programs holds greater potential for building resilience and well-being for vulnerable and climatic hazards prone populations in Pakistan. The study finds that integrating anticipatory actions with social safety Programs can lead to more effective disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies. To achieve this integration, it is important to address the challenges such as forecasting, financing, coordination and communication, and empowerment of local disaster management authorities (DDMAs) to fully realize the benefits of this integration. As Pakistan is among the top vulnerable countries to climate change, the implementation of the comprehensive planning and disaster risk reduction measures becomes imperative. By leveraging anticipatory actions and integrating them with social protection initiatives, the country can better prepare for and respond to future disasters, thereby reducing humanitarian, infrastructural, and economic losses while saving more lives and infrastructures. Moving forward, relevant stakeholders need to work collaboratively in developing and implementing strategies that maximize the effectiveness of this integration.

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Annexure 1:

The WFP suggested the following essential requirements for integrating anticipatory action with social protection.

Area of work	Essential requirements
policy framework:	The integration requires flexible legal and policy frameworks across Disaster Risk Management (DRM), climate, and social protection sectors. These frameworks should allow for the pre-arranged financing and activation of social protection mechanisms before forecasted hazards, instead of only reacting after events occur.
Governance, Capacity, and Coordination:	Effective integration demands strong governance, with cross-sectoral coordination at both national and sub-national levels. This involves clear roles and responsibilities, as well as the establishment of technical working groups that include forecasting institutions, disaster management, social protection bodies, and gender and inclusion actors. Enhanced coordination.
Platforms and Infrastructure:	Integration necessitates the development of a national early warning system (EWS) connected to social protection systems. There should be an interoperability between systems, and social registries must be flexible enough to adapt to new climate-related needs and vulnerabilities.
Planning and Financing:	For integration to be successful, coherent national plans that incorporate anticipatory action, social protection, and disaster risk financing must be developed. Both ongoing and flexible, pre-arranged funding should be available to activate anticipatory actions when necessary. Prepositioning funds. Flexibility in planning.

Program Features:	<p>Integrated programs should have a clear theory of change, risk assessments, validated triggers, and appropriate coverage, particularly in vulnerable areas. They should also include Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) and Anticipatory Action Plans (AAPs) that are aligned with national DRM plans.</p> <p>Risk mitigation strategies to ensure that cash assistance can be effectively integrated into anticipatory actions when needed.</p>
Registration and Enrolment:	Registration of beneficiaries should be done as part of readiness actions before triggers are reached. Comprehensive data registries need to capture climate vulnerability and be inclusive of gender and social aspects.
Benefit Delivery:	The assistance provided should reach beneficiaries before the shock impacts. Delivery mechanisms must be reliable, convenient, and adaptable to avoid delays.
Accountability, Protection, and Assurance:	Feedback and grievance mechanisms must be in place, and community sensitization is necessary to ensure understanding of anticipatory actions and reduce the risk of misunderstandings.
Knowledge and Learning:	Robust risk and climate vulnerability assessments are essential to inform program designs and to avoid errors that could lead to community or political issues. There should also be a focus on gender equality and social inclusion.
Advocacy:	Advocacy efforts should focus on integrating social protection into climate discourse, promoting a system-wide shift towards anticipatory action, and ensuring a broad understanding of its value.
Engagement and Communication:	Effective communication strategies are needed to support the design and understanding of anticipatory action and social protection integration. Partnerships should also be leveraged to enhance these efforts.
Monitoring and Evaluation:	Tailored M&E frameworks should be developed to track the impact of integrated anticipatory actions and generate evidence on cost-efficiency, value for money, and overall effectiveness.



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