Flooded after the Floods
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The mega floods in 2010, caused destruction across one-fifth of the land area in Pakistan, which is 796,095 Square kilometers of the Indus basin. The disaster affected 20 million people and caused damage to the national economy, equivalent to US$29 Billion. According to the Damage and Need Assessment report, prepared by the World Bank, $10.85 billion was required to rebuild to an extent, where the infrastructure becomes functional in a disaster resistant mode.

Given the scale of the disaster, the World Bank took a quick approach in presenting the DNA, which was accepted by all stakeholders, as the basic framework document, and the government of Pakistan showed its commitment to rebuild and rehabilitate under the adopted umbrella approach. The DNA presented the “Pakistan Floods emergency Response Plan,” with a clear objective “To provide the strategic underpinnings for medium-to-long-term post floods reconstruction, recovery planning, prioritization, and programming.”

Now, one year down the road, the programme has been completely derailed from the agreed design and implementation parameters. There remain pockets left in Sindh and Southern Punjab, where internally displaced persons are dependent on handouts, most of which are given by the community in the form of charity.

It can clearly be implied from the present picture, that sufferings inflicted by the major floods in 2010 have been compounded, by a lack of plan implementation, which could have provided a full, prompt and tailored response from the Government of Pakistan (GOP).

The confusion started right in the beginning, when the United Nations failed to follow policy directions of the government, and tried to block international assistance funneled out without involving the UN. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in its report “Pakistan 2010 Flood Relief: Learning from Experience, Observations and Opportunities,” gave a vivid account of the tug-of-war that started in the early days of relief operations, in August 2010. This was in fact, the starting point, from where the entire programme digressed. A part of the report is quoted below:

“There were several key areas of contention between the GoP and the UN that led to tensions and delays that could have been avoided.

The first was the issue of the NATO air bridge. The Government invited NATO to assist in the transport of relief goods to Pakistan but the UN intervened against the knowledge of the Government and advised NATO that they were not required. Many stakeholders identified this as an area where UN had overstepped their mandate in not respecting the wishes of the Government. The GoP ultimately accepted the NATO flights.

The second was the launch of the Pakistan Floods Relief and
Early Recovery Response Plan (PFRERRP). The appeal was initially launched in New York without the sign-off of the GoP. Further, the UN resisted the wishes of the GoP regarding the usage of terminology standard to GoP documentation and efforts by NDMA and the GoP for greater scrutiny of the projects in the appeal. These issues led to significant delays in the eventual launch of the appeal and the flow of much-needed funds.

Thirdly, there was resistance from the UN to the GoPs direction that the relief phase should close on 31 January and move to the Early Recovery phase. This was the cause of further friction between the GoP and the UN, and created confusion at provincial and district level.”

The report further said, “The government must take the lead in setting the priorities and policy guidelines. The usual argument about UN activities being governed by IASC guidelines is misplaced as the same guidelines time and again mention that these are “guidelines” and must adapt to government priorities and policies.”

At the start, the NDMA was chosen as an umbrella of the GOP and all stakeholders were supposed to perform under its mandate, given by the government. The government subsequently started executing a response programme, in light of the guidelines provided in the DNA.

The reconstruction phase was started throughout the country, with the financial help of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the UN agencies to reconstruct 1.6 million houses, of which 400,000 houses were to be reconstructed according to the hazard risk parameters. After identification, the federal government disbursed Rs 20,000 each to the 1.6 million families, as a first installment for reconstruction of the destroyed house, according to the approved design. The second tranche for the reconstruction was to be disbursed after the inspection certification, guaranteeing criteria compliance. That never happened, and a second tranche of Rs 20,000 was issued, as cash grant to another 1.2 million recipients. The IFIs like the World Bank and the ADB kept them at safe distance from the activity, and did not fulfill their pledge for obvious reasons. The government is looking forward to further disbursements of tranches to but, data reconciliation in ownership issues is proving a hurdle.

As if this was not enough, the government devoid the NDMA of its role as the lead coordination agency. Now the operations have been devolved to the provinces after the 18th constitutional amendment, a Director General, at the Planning Commission of Pakistan is handling coordination. No single agency at this point in time can provide reconstruction data, reconciliation of which is even a step further away. Now provincial planning and development departments are handling the task and there are as many data available on flood response, as one wants. On top of it all the four provinces are at different scale and at different level of compliance, according to capacity, and understanding of reconstruction needs model, available at the provincial level.

Virtually, the government of Pakistan has abandoned the idea ‘building back better,’ borrowed from the 2005 earthquake response programme. “Building Back Better,” which is time bound, designed specific and need oriented. This leaves, at least the reconstruction of damaged and destroyed houses at the individual will of the owners, who have been given Rs 40,000 cash grant. That is all.

A side by side, reconstruction programme of infrastructure is running in the country. The ADB alone has committed US$ 650 million for the programme, of which US$ 400 million will be used for the reconstruction of the damaged road network and US$ 250 million have been committed for the rehabilitation of the irrigation system. The UN has committed US$ 1.6 billion for early recovery. Given
their heavy overhead cost a little above a dollar one billion will actually be provided to the system. The NDMA, in its report referred in the early part of this write-up, has admitted difficulties in executing a policy and planning response resulting in poor progress. The report has recommended that the UN system should work under the government’s institutional arrangement. Some of the recommendations are exclusively written for the UN system, blaming it for creating confusion at the very beginning.

Some of the recommendations are quoted below:

“A single reporting system is critical to properly monitor aid effectiveness and assist planning. The Single Reporting Format, now being implemented by NDMA for Early Recovery must become a feature of all future disaster response. It must be supported by all stakeholders, and the compliance be made compulsory.

The UN system in Pakistan should follow the strategic guidelines and policies set down by the GoP at all levels of UN operations in the country. There should be unity of command between the UN’s humanitarian and development arms to achieve coherence in disaster response. There should be sufficient autonomy of decision-making capacity at the UN country level rather than decisions taking place at UN Headquarters in New York.

Contingency plans for all disasters flood, earthquake, cyclones, landslides, industrial and nuclear must be prepared by NDMA in consultation with key stakeholders, and regularly reviewed and updated. Contingency plans must include an inbuilt provision for surge capacity at federal, provincial and district levels. Disaster risk reduction is an investment in a safer future. Donors must be encouraged to fund programmes that focus on reducing the risk to communities as identified in the Medium Term Plan developed and launched by NDMA.”

Despite giving this advice, the former chairman NDMA, Lt. General (retired) Nadeem Ahmad has resigned. All coordination matters have been shifted to a newly established office set at the sixth floor of the Planning Commission’s building, where a retired civil servant is carrying out the job training, trying to gain knowledge during the reconstruction work done under the supervision of the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority ERRA after the earthquake 2005. The programme had a motto “build bank better,” resulting in integration of social facilities as infrastructure and that too in a hazard resistant mode. All of this left the GoP open to criticism, with donors especially asking questions on the utility of the money, which they might provides for their tax payers kitty, because now there was no executing agency having a credible plan.

The floods 2010 are a much bigger disaster than the earthquake of 2005.

On February 16, 2006 the appeal for $ 5.8 billion was launched to initiate the rebuilding process after the earthquake, and on November 19 $6.3 billion were pledged, and the about was ultimately received and spent according to the agreed programme and plan execution. The government of Pakistan launched a similar appeal of $ 10.85 billion at the Pakistan Development Forum, held last year in Islamabad. This was to undertake a similar programme as a response to the floods, under then DNA. Except for the US and Japan, who together announced $ 550 million, no one from the world community of nations came forward to help. This leaves poor communities at in Pakistan vulnerable to another disaster, including another flood. But this time, it will be more of a man-made disaster, rather than a natural one.
Governments were mainly responsible for the planning and execution of flood protection works. The charter of duties for FFC defined and the organization has given mandate to

- The preparation of National Flood Protection Plans;
- Approval of flood control schemes prepared by Provincial Governments and concerned federal agencies;
- Review of flood damages to public sector infrastructure and review of plans for restoration and reconstruction works;
- Measures for improvements in Flood Forecasting and Warning System;
- Standardization of designs and specifications for Flood Protection Works;
- Evaluation and monitoring relating to progress of implementation of the National Flood Protection Plans (NFPPs);
- Preparation of a research program for Flood Control and Protection; and
- Recommendations regarding principles of regulation of reservoirs for flood control.

Since its establishment, the FFC has spent Rs35.8 - 13824 and $400 million on flood protection projects. But the flood of 2010 has exposed the FFC’s performance and all its projects. It is not clear where all the money has been spent. Most of the projects that were constructed were designed in such a way that they could not even withstand an intensity of floods at a medium level. Had the projects been designed

The latest floods began in late July 2010 following heavy monsoon rains due to the confluence of a twoweather system in the Northern Areas of Pakistan and Ladakh region of Kashmir. According to the Government’s own statistics, the floods directly affected about 20 million people, mostly by destruction to property, livelihood and infrastructure, with a death toll of close to 2,000. The total damage to structures, agriculture and property was estimated at 29 billion USD. While nature has been unkind, it is important to see how the Government of Pakistan has been responsible for lack of preventative measures so that improvements can be put in place to avoid similar disasters in the future.

Generally, major floods in Pakistan occur in late summer (July-September) when the Indus River basin that covers approximately 70% of the country’s area, is subjected to heavy monsoon rains. Since its creation in 1947, the country has faced eighteen major floods in 64 years. The graph also shows total villages affected due to the quantum of water. The flood of 1976 was the most catastrophic flood in the history of Pakistan. The graph shows the occurrence and quantum of the flood that is measured in terms of the village severely affected. The graph also shows that the frequency of floods has decreased due to less rain during monsoons over the years.

**Institutional Setup for Flood Management**

After the devastating floods of 1976, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, had setup a Federal Flood Commission (FFC) that was established in 1977 to integrate flood management planning at a national level and to shift from a crisis-provoked approach adopted by the provinces to a risk management approach for effective flood management. Prior to this, all provincial

![Affected No. of Villages](image-url)
properly the catastrophe before us could have been averted. The most devastating impact of the floods was on the Nowshera and Charsadda districts in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, where as recently as 2007-8 a large amount of money was supposedly 'spent' on flood protection work.

While the FFC remained busy in making fancy projects, little attention was paid to floodplain zoning, the most vital component of modern flood management policy. Moreover an important part of any flood policy is demarcation of floodplain. A floodplain is the area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks. This task needs minimum time and few financial resources. The UN's International Strategy corroborates this explanation for the floods for Disaster Reduction. The scale of flood damage could have been less had there been no human settlements on the river banks. The zoning policy for major rivers was supposed to have been developed and appropriate legislation introduced to implement the policy under the Second Flood Protection Sector Project (2000-2007). Against this project Rs. 3415 million were allocated by the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PC) for the approval of projects for various structures including the construction of embankments. PC also sent a strong note for FFC to complete Flood zoning to avoid the growth of vulnerable developments in flood-hazard areas. It was planned that FFC would update the Flood Manual making by using examples of successes and failures so that the Flood Management Plan is continuously improved. GOP also tasked FFC to review reservoir operational rules to ensure efficient and prudent decisions to control floods. The question is how did FFC used these funds? FFC never prepared any inventory or record of the projects completed against allocation.

Unfortunately, FFC did not carry out this task. When compared to the performance of FCC an Indian flood commission is working under the Central Water Commission (known as Rashtriya Barh Ayog), successfully implemented “Flood Plain Zoning” in most vulnerable areas with the help of all states to minimize human and financial losses.

Non-demarcation of the maximum probable flood route of the Indus river and its tributaries is another cause. International donor agencies had prepared floodplain zones for the Jhelum and the Chenab rivers in the late nineties with the help of satellite imagery and the historic flood record but the FFC failed to implement these plans as well.

The FFC failed in another respect, in Swat, for instance, the first flash was triggered due to the non-zoning of the Swat River and because of uncontrolled construction including hotels and even shopping centers within the course of the river flow. These illegal constructions, within the flood plain of Swat River created bottlenecks and artificial temporary reservoirs. Later on, the continuous water influx caused a dam burst that generated flash floods with enormous energy, coupled with intensive rain fall in the northern part of KPK, which caused immense destruction in downstream areas.
Similarly in Sindh, allotment of land and other settlements in the kachcha areas was something that was allowed. In addition to this, the Pakistan Met Office issued a severe flash flood warning on June 21 but officials of the FFC moved only after the devastating flood caused by the Swat River.

The lesson to learn should be to have in place a system of flood control and management and this should be done by integrating the management of water resources. Solutions include developing much-needed water reservoirs along with reforestation in river catchment areas.

The focus must be on what needs to be done to prevent future flooding calamities: governments and communities should address the vulnerability of human settlements and prevent construction on riverbeds and banks, especially in the rehabilitation process for flood-affected people. But the policy was not formulated because of social and political concerns. It is easier to implement a flood-zoning policy now that we are starting with a clean slate on the flood plains. Without such flood regulations, the best forecasting and warning systems and the strongest flood-proofing barriers and dykes would be of little use in protecting the life and property of millions.

Flooding Zoning should have been the most important task of the FCC. After the flood of 2010, demarcation should have been done within three months, however, yet again FFC has failed terribly in achieving this vital task. Now in their latest report, it was again reiterated that the Flood Plain Zoning should be along the Indus river and its tributaries. The question remains how will this be achieved unless the FCC is committed to this task and when will we realize that as a nation we cannot afford any more loss of life? This country has witnessed the death and suffering of hundreds of thousands of its citizens; let us not bear the burden of any more deaths.

2010 floods in Pakistan: a Perspective from IDP camps
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A large fraction of households in Pakistan (close to 57 percent, by some estimates) are on the poverty line, making the country extremely vulnerable to negative economic shocks. In fact, the percentage of population with “no reasonable threat” of poverty is estimated to be as small as 12.5 percent (Ninno, Vcci & Hussain, WB-2006). In such circumstances, vulnerability to natural disasters is also disproportionately higher for Pakistan’s largely rural and relatively poor population. The region that is of particular interest in this study is rural Sindh, in the south of Pakistan, which is known to be one of the poorest in the country at least partially by virtue of having a larger share of tenant farmers than other provinces. The comprehensive documentation of Pakistan’s rural poverty and agricultural growth indicates that the poor tend to be landless, heavily dependent on livestock and generally less able to diversify production than land-owning, farming households. These factors are of primary importance when examining the political dimensions of migration, mobilization and poverty in the 2010 floods in Pakistan.

The province of Sindh, for its high levels of rural poverty, is also home to Pakistan’s largest and richest urban center, the city of Karachi. With a population of over 16 million people and generating a quarter of the national revenue, Karachi is the site of a vast informal market dedicated to settling migrants from rural areas.
and other parts of the country. The “unplanned” parts of Karachi, are rife with poor sanitation and inadequate water resources, and these areas are still considered to be better-off than the completely neglected low-lying areas of Sindh. The city is therefore a constant attraction for migrants, who find ready access to undeveloped land and entrepreneurs are eager to settle families. Sindh in particular has contributed a steady stream of migrants to Karachi, who often settle on the fringes of the city on unwanted land. The process of migration, settlement and mainstreaming is the historical site of political conflict in Karachi since the time of Partition, when millions of refugees from India moved to the city.

Pakistan has generally suffered “democracy fatigue” during almost every civilian government for a myriad of reasons. Since the election of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) in 2008, the country has witnessed an escalation in suicide attacks on civilian targets, collateral damage due to the operation on the Pak-Afghan border and deepening political and economic instability. Therefore the legitimacy of the government was already at a low point when the floods hit; many cited the lack of trust in the incumbent government as slowing local and international aid responses to the Prime Minister’s appeal for funding. Assessments of IDP camps in Karachi show that not only has the government managed to provide a steady stream of food, shelter and medical assistance but has also successfully reached out to independent and non-profit entities to assist flood victims. However, this effort does not seem to translate into increasing or even sustaining support for the People’s Party. In fact, there is a clear worry about the inability of donors to sustain relief efforts and an overall lack of developmental planning by the incumbent government.

Another unforeseen impact of the flood is that long-standing chronic poverty in rural Pakistan has been exposed in a major way. Although the neglect of rural development is not the responsibility of a single regime, the PPP's stronghold province, Sindh, is also the worst affected by this disaster. However, there does not seem to be clear indication that any one opposition party or group will be able to exploit its dissatisfaction with the incumbent government. This may be due to the early stage of the disaster that this study is taking place: it is anticipated that the migration out of rural areas in Sindh will have long-term impacts on power structures in agricultural areas.

The 2010 floods are believed to be Pakistan’s largest natural disaster in recorded history. Nearly 20 million people across the length of the country were affected, and a region equivalent to a fifth of the country’s total landmass was impacted to varying degrees. The flood started out in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Northern Pakistan in July and made its way down to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa destroying villages and small towns, and at the end of its course in September left several districts in Sindh inundated with water. Additionally, Southern Punjab and several districts in Baluchistan were also badly affected, making this a disaster on a national scale. IDPs from the worst-affected regions made their way to relief camps and dry land in their immediate vicinity, however many also made the long journey to the major cities of Pakistan to stay with relatives. Karachi therefore received migrants from KP and Sindh due to large ethnic populations existing in the city.

The Sindhi IDPs who were settled in camps are generally extremely poor and it is suggested that they were those people who lacked existing networks in the city and access to credit. There is currently no comprehensive household survey of the displaced families, there is also no documentation of the “unregistered” IDPs who did not go to the camps but instead were dependent on host families. For deeply indebted sharecroppers, the flood may be a “way out,” according to economist Kaiser Bengali. Many victims of the flood are gaining access to quality medical care for the first time. As one respondent at the camps put it, “why would we go back to that life?”

For urban political leaders such as Shahi Syed of the ANP, resettling families by force is not an option. He
notes that “rebuilding urban centers in Sindh, creating jobs there, would be an incentive to move back.” Indeed, it would be extremely useful to track IDP groups during the reconstruction phase to discover how social networks and economic well-being change, if at all. There are several guesses as to the livelihood options that the Sindhi IDPs will seek in Karachi in the short-term. Studies on migrant groups suggest a variety of activities depending on education and skill set; these include unskilled manual labor to marginalized activities such as begging and crime. If initial assessments of camp-dwelling IDPs' socio-economic status are correct, then very poor families are most likely to turn to socially marginalized activities. This may have less to do with a skill set and more to do with the lack of networks in the city recall that only those who had no kin in the city were forced to live in the camps.

Finally, there is already evidence that the IDP issues could become very politicized as the government attempts to distribute land, and smaller “Sindhi nationalist” parties use the crisis as leverage for land allocation in the city. According to Arif Hasan, any attempts to distribute prime land to IDPs will necessarily result in conflict, placing flood victims at serious risk.

It is immediately evident that rural Sindh is at very low risk of becoming a support base for the Taliban because of their flood relief efforts, or to “take over” the flooded areas. Muhammad Amir Rana of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies points out that outlawed charitable trusts associated with banned extremists groups are serving pockets of 6,000 to 60,000 in various parts of the country, making up a tiny fraction of the 20 million affected by the disaster; most of these organizations operate in KP, northern Pakistan and southern Punjab. The extent to which extremist organizations will gain legitimacy amongst conservative voters, and particularly the youth, because of their charitable work has yet to be ascertained. Within Karachi, the spread of extremism in recent years has been restricted to certain areas. Flood relief camps per se have not been sites for the many attacks that took place in July-October 2010. The impact of a large number of unregistered migrants to Karachi is, however, difficult to determine at this stage but deserves serious attention.

Both the political parties in Karachi and extremist organizations tend to recruit amongst katchi abadi dwellers of a slightly higher socio-economic status, who are often under threat from rival ethnic groups. In the ubiquitous “target killing” of Pashtun shop owners and transporters, for example, it is likely that these communities may increasingly choose to seek protection services from ANP. The Sindhi IDPs do not fall into this category yet. On the other hand, Burhani and others (2010) note that begging and criminal syndicates choose to organize poorer migrants in the city. Therefore, it is likely that the neglect of IDP camps as philanthropic efforts dry up may result in increased crime, pressure on begging activities and may eventually see the involvement of political parties and extremist groups.