

From Aspirations for

## **Climate Action to the Reality of Climate Disasters:**

An Investigation of

## Climate Change- Induced Floods and Post-disaster Reconstruction in Pakistan







From Aspirations for Climate Action to the Reality of Climate Disasters: An Investigation of Climate Change-Induced Floods and Post-disaster Reconstruction in Pakistan

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Research Report on From Aspirations for Climate Action to the Reality of Climate Disasters: An Investigation of Climate-Change-Induced-Floods and Post-disaster Reconstruction in Pakistan

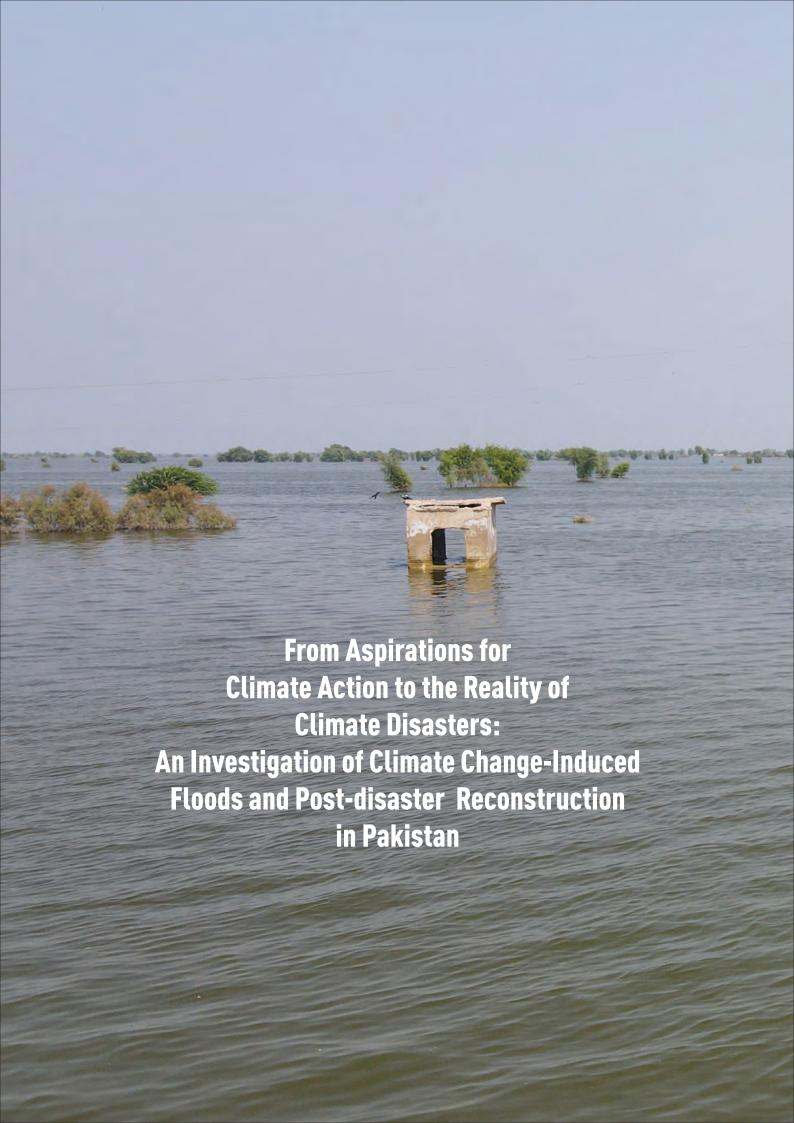
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#### Islamic Relief Pakistan

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## **Executive Summary**

The paper studies the phenomenon of "postdisaster reconstruction in" Pakistan in the wake of climate change-induced floods of 2022 from the "precarity and possibility" lenses as a global emergency with the help of qualitative field data collected from the affected communities, IR donors and partners, relief workers from different organisations and through participant observations in Mirpurkhas region, Sindh. Further, it builds its analysis with secondary data of Islamic Relief Pakistan's (IRP) situation and detailed assessment reports with regularly updated studies from flood affected areas across Pakistan. The paper investigates climate change "precarity" because affected communities in Pakistan, despite their less than 1% contribution to climate change have lost their homes, means of subsistence and critical infrastructure. Moreover, this "precarity" has challenged IRP's perspective of relief work and has made it to question the dynamics of reconstruction for a mega disaster of this scale and magnitude with inadequate resources, slow humanitarian response and lack of media attention. The research findings confirm the chances of rebuilding the affected

communities' vulnerabilities without proper resources and there is a likelihood of food insecurity crisis that will further increase inflation, impact purchase power of people and might transform affected communities in Pakistan into climate change-refugees with redundant skillsets due to increasing the frequency of change in land use after these floods. However, the results also suggest the "possibility" of a post-disaster reconstruction model that recognises the indigenous communities' knowledge systems for living and resource management, promotes "climate justice" and compensates the affected countries enabling them to build back environmentally better.

Keywords: climate change-induced floods, climate disaster precariat, post-disaster reconstruction, indigenous communities, local knowledge systems, resource management



#### 1. Introduction

According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Pakistan is continually listed as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change with its "delicate ecosystem of variety of ecosystems of glaciers, rivers that rely on rains and glacial melt, mangroves, deserts and plains" (qtd. in Patel, 2022). The 2022 climate-changeinduced-floods with 1739 deaths, 33 million affected people and an estimated US \$16 billion losses and damages (4RF, 2022, p.10) proven this climate vulnerability despite the country's less than 1% contribution to climate change. This needs to be read with the understanding that this disaster has happened in a geographic, economic, political and social context with multiple ongoing issues or to put it in terms of precarity this climate precarity has occurred in some already existing precarities of colonial legacies of the River Indus waters management that have continued in the postcolonial Pakistan specifically the loss of healthy River Indus System, obstructions in the natural waterways, poor reform policies and governance, and development programs that have benefitted some but marginalised most and increased their inequalities making them climate vulnerable. The recent climateinduced-floods are the biggest and most devastating in the known history of Pakistan and they are different in nature because these were caused by 8 cycles of monsoon rains instead of the normal 3-4 cycles that further resulted in riverine, flash and urban floods in K.P.K, Balochistan, South Punjab and Sindh. Whereas, up in the North of the country, too, glacial lake outburst flows due to extreme temperatures have resulted in GLOF floods. Hence, the resulting floods with accumulated rainwater that could not drain out, have badly impacted the country's agriculture, livestock,

health, education, livelihood, infrastructure and economy wasting the efforts made towards all of UN's Sustainable Development Goals specifically SDGs 1, 2,3,4,5 &13 and thrashing the hopes of millions of already marginalised poor with precarious existence ever attaining any meaningful achievement in terms of a climate resilient sustainable development on their own. Needless to say, the lost infrastructure of paved roads, railways, bridges to access markets, jobs, health, and education facilities with an uncertainty and perpetual insecurity about earning a livelihood and to live in a degraded environment with hunger and diseases has left the affected communities in trauma and anxiety about their and their children's future.

In addition to that, despite Pakistan's least contribution to climate change, its current uncertain economic situation, political instability and highest ever inflation with all time high fuel and energy prices have increased the cost of all relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts for such a large number of affected people. This climate calamity with a loss of crops, vegetables and fruits, jobs and businesses has further deteriorated the general Pakistanis' ability to live with dignity and has considerably diminished their capacity to support the undergoing rehabilitation efforts as majority are living in survival mode struggling to pay high energy bills, buying expensive food, education, health and paying high taxes without any increase in their source/s of income. Clearly, it is beyound the country's means to undertake this gigantic task of rebuilding 33million lives without global support for reconstruction efforts that needs to be realised as global responsibility towards Pakistanis who are made to live the reality of



an anthropogenic climate catastrophe. This climate reality has long term environmental consequences for the people and country and they need assistance to deal with the new situation. Furthermore, there is a demand for climate adaptation either through technology or nature that cannot be achieved without ample global solidarities, resources and expertise.

Moreover, the question of post-disaster reconstruction for Pakistan with a climate Precarity caused due to GHG emissions of the rich industrialised world, needs to be studied in a new humanitarian context which has emerged to be quite complex due to slow humanitarian response, lack of media attention and inadequate resources. On the one hand, there are Pakistani Climate-Change-Induced-Floods-affected communities whose fundamental right to life has been challenged in such a way that it has robbed them of their, what Sachs calls, "the long-term climatic conditions" (2022) that enabled them to sustain local and global economies and on the other there is a very slow global humanitarian response to build back these lives. This lack of global sense of responsibility towards climate vulnerable despite all the scientific climate attribution evidence has further delayed the much needed immediate assistance for addressing the affected communities' short term and long term needs. Moreover, UN secretary general's and Pakistan P.M's appeals for help at COP 27 and Geneva Donors Conference, in Nov 2022 and Jan 2023 respectively, have materialised as additional burden of loans on already climate marginalised living with multiple failed colonial and postcolonial legacies of fresh water management that have resulted in sea water's intrusion into Indus delta. The framework for Loss and Damage Fund approved at COP 27 has not

been finalised till this date and no funds have been released for meeting the challenges of rehabilitation. Furthermore, the emergence of an "economic nationalism in the west" (Akhter, 2023) has increased the tussle between the urgency of the climate emergency in Pakistan and the reluctance of the world leaders with the power to help, which is seriously exacerbating the situation of the 33 million affected people, including 10 million children who are according to UNICEF "in need of immediate lifesaving support" (Feb. 2023). In addition to that, the global uncertainties caused due to high energy prices, inflation and Russia-Ukraine war have further dwindled the hopes of a restoration and climate resilient reconstruction in Pakistan. Rather there is a fear, that if immediate measures are not taken, the current global situation will force climate-change-induced-floods victims into climate migrants in local and global urban slums/margins to strive for a livelihood with a permanent loss of their indigenous practices, skills with no hope of their engagement in any kind of climate adaptation in the near future. At a time when the world is exposed to climate-change-induced-disasters more than ever, this loss of indigenous practices, can be irreparable. In this situation it has largely been left upon the efforts of the humanitarian organizations including Islamic Relief Worldwide Pakistan office in collaboration with its partners and donors and government, to help those in dire need to get back on their feet without any further delay by pooling their resources, expertise and experience for a climate resilient reconstruction that might protect them from the onslaught of next climate catastrophe that is feared to strike before any meaningful reconstruction.



#### **Research Questions**

Q1. How do 2022 climate-change-induced-floods increase the precarity of affected communities in Pakistan?

Q2. How have 2022 climate-change-induced-floods in Pakistan challenged IRP's understanding of the dynamics of reconstruction with inadequate resources, slow global humanitarian response and lack of media attention?

Q3. What are the possibilities for a global climate resilient post-disaster reconstruction framework?

## 2. Research Methodology

The primary data for this paper has been gathered from affected communities living in temporary shelters built with relief tents, sheets and bamboos erected on road sides and higher grounds, IRP office Mirpur Khas, two IRP managed relief camps, multiple temporary shelters on the Jhuddu Road till Roshan Abad, two temporary learning centres, two medical camps: one for humans and other for animals, one private vet clinic situated in a tent city by Government of Sindh in collaboration with UNHCR. Overall around 200 individual interviews were conducted with the help of a translator fluent in Sindhi. Informal and formal group discussions were conducted with men, women and children from affected population living in camps. Formal group discussions with IRP team in Mirpur Khas and informal discussions with relief workers working for other organizations, doctors, vets, teachers, and local landlords. The data has been augmented with participant observations and visual data in the form of images and videos.

First hand data from IRP donors and partners such as Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) UK, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Swedish government, UNICEF (WASH, Climate and Environment) and National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) was gathered through key persons' online interviews. USAID Paki-stan's response could not be included due to their non-availability.

The secondary data comprises IRP situation, rapid need assessment and detailed need assessment reports, its website, social media pages Twitter and Facebook, Country Director IRP's media interviews to international broadcasting houses and footages from flood affected areas of relief operations. To make the study comprehensive, more data was collected two months after the visit remotely through a questionnaire sent via email to IRP teams working for climate resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with climate induced flood victims across Pakistan and photographs have been obtained from IRP headquarter media cell that reflect the ongoing interventions.

No one has been harmed, abused or forced to participate during the data collection process. The participants expressed themselves of their free will and at each stage they were informed about the purpose of the study. The names of the participants from affected communities have been changed to protect their privacy.





#### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

In order to fill the current research gap in the concept of post-disaster reconstruction in the wake of climate-change-induced-disasters, the term Climate Disaster Precariat (CDP), which is informed through, but not limited to. Rydman's (2022) term "Climate Precariat" and Standing's (2011) "Precariat", will be used to present the flood affected communities in Pakistan. CDP will refer to populations who are: subjected to unjust climate exposure and resulting disasters that challenge their and their children's right to life, livelihood and future with a loss of their climatic conditions despite their least contribution to climate change; forced to rebuild the vulnerabilities due to lack of much needed humanitarian assistance and resources despite appeals for help; made to live in perpetual displacement moving from one precarious work option to another in degraded rural or urban environments while never being able to have enough to adapt for climate change and are knowledgeable with capacities for natural resource management, biodiversity rejuvenation and minimalist living but that knowledge is underappreciated and unrecognised in the global climate debates.

Hence, CDP will mean a doubly marginalised identity in this climate-induced-disaster reconstruction debate that will be understood through a mapping of loss to their livelihood, shelter, health and well-being. This term will

be applied to Pakistan's post-climatechange-induced-floods situation to study Judith Butler's idea that "normative inquiry" must "take on a critical and comparative form so that it does not reproduce the internal schisms and blind spots" because "they become the unjustifiable ground for the unjust judgement that certain lives are worth saving and others" (p.162) not, outside the normative framework of poor/under developed/global south countries and the limitations they pose in an understanding of the impact of climate-induced-disasters on the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people. As the Pakistani CDP have been mired in a violence of climate change amidst the claims of non-violence against the environment, the Precarity in IRP's ability to serve and preserve the dignity of the CDP with slow inadequate global response amidst lack of media attention will be focused through Arendt's concept, invoked by Butler, of "plural cohabitation" of planet Earth outside the existing frames "of recognisability" (36) and on the "recognition of a shared precariousness" (p.43) of humanity specifically in case of climate catastrophes. The study will strive to offer a new frame for CDP that presents them as human beings and the need to understand their loss and pain requires empathy so that humanity can always come forward to save lives beyound the artificial barriers of us vs. them in times of crisis.

Rydman, J. "Labour sector comprising women and children with no formal protections and benefits or income stability." Satnding, G. "Millions of people without anchor of stability, meant to take all the risks."



#### 2.2 Study's Limitations

The study is limited because it is an ongoing situation. It has been carried out to bridge the gap between the academic construct (mostly from rich industrialized countries) of climate change and adaptation with experiences of people who live the reality of climate disasters in climate vulnerable countries such as Pakistan. The primary data was gathered from one of the worst hit province Sindh after two months of floods with the focus on studying the impact on the lives of affected communities with the changed climatic conditions in the specific context of humanitarian sector. It can be enlarged through a more comprehensive systematic research with the inclusion of more key stakeholders. A broader research needs to be undertaken for the documentation of indigenous science in zero carbon construction, natural resource management for its inclusion in a reconstruction global model. The role of women and youth from local and indigenous communities with their energy efficient practices, zero crop waste and minimalist living requires a separate study for making them part of mainstream knowledge system that can help in building back environmentally better after every anthropogenic or natural disaster. Further studies for assessing local farming communities' agency for climate adaptation can be carried out across Pakistan.

#### 3. Literature Review

For this literature review around fifteen articles dealing with the theme of post-disaster reconstruction and its challenges with another ten articles that specifically focused on climate-induced-hydromete-orlogical events such as floods, storms, cyclones were reviewed from both developed and developing countries. The one common finding in all the previous researches is the impossibility of predicting a disaster's scale and magnitude specifically climate-induced disasters, hence hinting at limitations of

effective disaster risk reduction. They, further, agree on the fact that structural defences built for disaster risk reduction might prove inadequate in the time of a disaster. The significance of funds, resources and capacities to deal with post-disaster reconstruction have been identified as some of the most important features of any relief. recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction effort. Development scholars have feared that developing countries will have to rely upon loans to rehabilitate and reconstruct the lives of affected communities because of the vulnerability of their populations who are not only exposed to harm but are also less able to recover from extremes. The importance of light construction as compared to concrete construction has been highlighted with special attention to earthquakes but has not been studied in detail in the context of floods. The previous research shows that for climate-change-induced-disaster affected communities in the poor countries, there is no choice of climate adaptation as for them one climate disaster leads to another vulnerable situation until they are hit by another calamity. The literature also indicates that disaster risk and recovery planning has not been given considerable attention even by the rich nations. However, the previous researches have not looked into slow or lack of global response to assistance calls in case of emergencies. Moreover, they have studied the indigenous practices for rejuvenating natural resources, zero waste skills, zero carbon construction with local materials such as mud, bamboo, leaves, hay and bricks for building climate resilience using renewable energy sources, reducing energy dependence and the role of indigenous trees in climate mitigation. There is a need to study reconstruction as a process of strengthening existing informal, communal safety nets and protections for the most vulnerable by aligning them with international standards so that they can benefit from them in their environs in case of emergencies.





#### 4. Results

The research results confirm affected communities' CDP identity with the loss of their means of subsistence that solely relied upon the climatic conditions of Pakistan, homes and critical infrastructure that had sustained them in a social fabric created through indigenous practices, community safety nets and protections due to lack of strong socioeconomic conditions of the country before the floods. The flood affected communities' climate precarity is discussed under the following headings.

#### 4.1 Livelihood Precarity

In Sindh 4.3 million acre land is under cultivation and 3.6 million acers has been damaged in floods. Most of the land is under water even after two months of last monsoon rains as the water has not drained out naturally. The scenes of devastation and destroyed crops are common. No mechanism

or machinery is observed in the area draining out the water from the fields or villages due to standing water. Boats are used for accessing far off places and villages where mostly one or two men from each family are staying to look after what is left of their homes and belongings. Standing cotton, sugarcane crops have been destroyed and fields are full of water. Multiple vegetable farms and mango orchards are still submerged. Rabi crops such as wheat and mustard sowing, which according to local people takes place around this time is not happening because the fields are looking like large lakes badly impacting the medium to small landholders, haris and labourers who solely rely on agriculture.

Apart from agriculture, other sources of livelihood such as the charcoal and brick kilns where entire families work are also submerged at the moment and people are jobless. Women have not reported embroidery or sowing as their alternate sources of income.





#### According to one affected woman:

"We are forced to sell our livestock to provide for our families' food, health and other needs. We have lost all the stored grain as it could not be saved due to water. Some of that got wasted during emergency evacuations. We belong to working class but now are dependent upon the relief provided by organizations such as IRP. Although, we wish to have homes that do not wash away in rains and even know how to build we do not have resources to build better homes."





This livelihood Precarity will continue, according to affected farmers comprising both men and women, until the fields dry and become ready for sowing. They expect, keeping in view the current water situation, to be around Khareef crop sowing time but they know that the standing water will pose challenges for making the fields arable again and will require considerable amount of resources for buying fertilizers to improve the productivity of the degraded water logged and saline soil, seeds that could withstand the slow and extreme onset of temperatures and other soil nutrients to enhance crop productivity. Sadly, it will result in more debt as due to loss of their two consecutive crops they are not able to clear their previous debts.

According to local women farmers:

These floods have taken away our soil's strength to grow. Due to standing rainwater and changing climatic conditions there will be an increased pressure on us to enhance soil's productivity otherwise we will perish. But we have lost everything and have no money to buy expensive hybrid seeds, fertilizers and chemicals. A disruption of this huge scale has upset our entire system and we do not know how will we support ourselves with no work?

For the small and medium businessmen who rely upon the seasonal food and cash crops such as cotton and sugarcane and vegetables the conditions are quite dismal and it has already resulted in unemployment for their workers.

People are traumatised and feel helpless about their future without a source of income in the absence of socio-economic protection networks. The biggest challenge for them is to get back to some form of stability outside the relief phase. A group of six women who are sisters-in-law, have been observing climate change over the years.

They say: The extreme temperatures have been impacting the crops by damaging their growth over the years leaving them to bear the economic shocks. We have been constantly trying to come up with adjusted work timetables to work in extreme temperatures in the fields but cannot complain about it because if we do not work we do not get paid. Our men and sons have to work out in extreme heat that impacts their health and capacity to work. But they have no right to complain about their working conditions. If they complain they are replaced by new labour.

Moreover, climate change impacts women empowerment because mostly they take up jobs that are near their homes as they have to take care of their household and livestock. There is a strong likelihood of change in land use after these floods because the small landowners might sell their land to clear their debts, leaving no place for these women to work. Shazia Sindhu, one of the girls made jobless due to floods, says,"

We have lost our work as farmers due to these floods as our mujairy (landlord) has decided to sell the land because he does not have enough resources to carry on the agricultural activities on his land with accumulated debts. With entire family out of work, my elder brother has shifted to Karachi to work there and support us. The rest of us are roaming the villages in search of work as farm labour because these are our skills which are quickly losing value and we have to roam from area to area for work.

When she was asked what are their other options.

She replied:

If we could not get hired as farm labour then we will seek work at some brick or charcoal kiln. But they too have strict competition and even getting work there is not easy. We might end up in Karachi to work as domestic help.

This has been confirmed by the participant observations that part of land in Goth Chaudhry Shamshad has been sold to some developer and only part of the land was left for cultivation.





#### 4.2 Shelter Precarity

The displaced communities are encamped on roads and higher ground with left over livestock. Most of the affected communities are living in traditional open tents that are provided by government of Sindh in collaboration with UNHCR, INGOS and local organizations after the complete or partial

destruction of their homes that could not withstand the torrential rains and water that submerged their villages. Shonkoff et al.(2012) call them "vulnerably housed" populations that "lack resources to prepare, respond and recover from climatic events" without support.









Mostly farmers, labourers, people with low paying private jobs and small business holders are living in these camps. Men have to stay with their families comprising women,

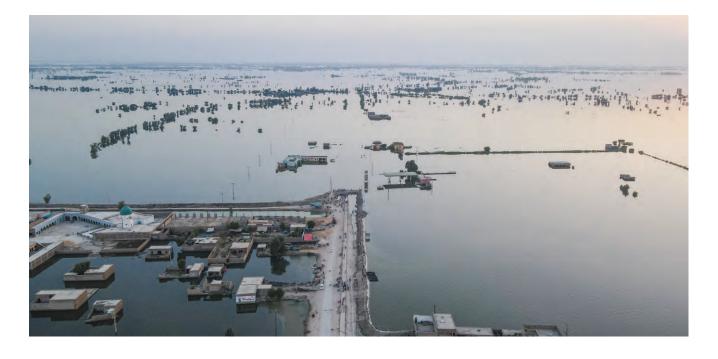
children, persons with disabilities and elderly to protect them from possible harassment and harm until they return to the relative safety of their homes in villages.





According to Mashooq Ali from IR other displaced persons who could evacuate in time are reported to be living with their relatives in nearby areas and are dependent upon them for their food and shelter needs. But neither they nor their hosts are documented and

provided any relief assistance. Some families, specifically the ones who have brick constructed homes have not evacuated despite being submerged in water and are living on roof tops in IR igloo shaped shelter boxes.





#### 4.3 Food and Water Precarity

The affected communities are surviving on the food provided by relief organizations that is clearly not enough due to large family sizes comprising men, women, children and elderly. With no work opportunities for families left without their heads, women and children are facing acute hunger and for survival are eating bread with water. They have been observed rationing their food by reducing their consumption to make the relief last longer.



Children have been observed in catching fish from the stagnant, contaminated waters of a factory drain and selling it on roadside to earn some money for rebuilding their homes. Some fish frying stalls have also been observed where this fish is sold to the passengers travelling on this road. Fishing nets have also been observed in many submerged areas and fields placed by encamped affected communities for catching fish and fulfilling the food requirements of their families.









#### 4.4 Access to Information Precarity for Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities in disaster situations are worst hit as compared to healthy persons because of their physical, mental or psychological challenges. In traditional setup of villages they are part of the family and are dependent upon them. Their dependence makes them more vulnerable and a disaster might push them into more vulnerable situations because there are no structures to build their capacities for looking after themselves. Their

right to access information about climate-induced-disasters and the need to make that "information more accessible, according to Marcie Roth, Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, World Institute on Disability, means "it must be available in multiple formats such as Braille" and it cannot be achieved without funds for capacity building of local groups (2022 Global EJ Conference, 2022)

#### 4.5 Future Precarity for Children

2022 floods shift the focus on children more than ever in climate debates because in the Global North, children are actively fighting for their right to belong to a future that is threatened by climate change unless their governments shift towards clean energy options. However, children in Global South, specifically climate vulnerable regions like Pakistan have been left to deal with hunger, poverty and malnutrition mostly on their own. The research results confirm that for flood affected children food, education and health

are luxuries which they cannot afford and have to engage in child labour with their parents so that they can contribute towards the family's income and survive in hospitable world. According to one respondent:

We prefer our children to work with us instead of going to school and learn some skills such as rearing livestock or farming because they need those skills more than school education that will enable them to earn a living.



Their plight needs to be understood because they belong to regions where precarity is a fundamental part of their existence. Biale at al (2022). call this condition as "almost achievements (prosperity but not for all) and incomplete failures" such as "environmental near catastrophes" (p.640) that disproportionately harm children the most in Global South because they belong to "systematically oppressed groups" (642) who live from day to day in societies where economic stability is never achieved. Holmberg and Alvinus (2022)

term it as a "loss of sustainable future" for the climate precariat children because of their lack of agency and empowerment" (n.p) in climate catastrophes. Their precarity becomes so fundamental and absolute as their right to belong to a future is contested when their humanitarian needs are ignored by the rich industrialised world. For the young Pakistani children, to quote Butler, there is a "destruction of life conditions in a" global "society in which" they are "exposed to insecurity, instability and violence" (2006)

#### 4.6 Relief Precarity

Inflation in the country has increased the costs of relief efforts which will further impact the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases for which more and uninterrupted resources will be required. According to the interviews with the local populations IR is the most popular organization in the area due to its best disaster management strategies that are designed keeping in view the current

emergency situation with short term and long term needs of the affected populations learnt through experience of working in Pakistan. IR camps have been set up away from main road in close vicinity of the villages on less dangerous grounds because affected communities want to stay close to their destroyed homes. The affected communities who have not got IRP shelter boxes say:

With one such box we can focus our attention on rebuilding our lives because shelter boxes are safe, weather resistant and big enough to accommodate our large families with livestock until some climate resilient structural design is approved and implemented for rebuilding our homes. We believe these tents can protect our children, elders and women in upcoming winters and they can be reused in case of another disaster. All we need is assistance in building raised platforms in our villages, where we can erect these tents and participate in rehabilitation efforts.

This is important because people are unofficially returning to their villages for rebuilding their homes using the same materials that could not withstand the continuous rains. Although, it might seem a good attempt at recycling the wasted crops such as destroyed cotton stalks but this

material cannot last long and will collapse soon. People, especially women who have lost their men, are afraid they will lose their place and work with their employer unless they reclaim their pre-disaster homes. They do not want to be displaced with their kids.







After food, the shortage of clean drinking water is resulting in multiple diseases in children and elderly and this is most likely to continue until the underground water table gets to its levels. According to the doctors working in camps there is an increase in the water borne diseases and with the passage of time more and more patients with

gastrointestinal issues are reporting to them. Moreover, affected populations have been observed using the standing water for washing dishes and clothes. One camp resident, who has been benefited by IR relief kit that includes a shelter box, a solar light and water filter feels lucky because he says:

This is the most thoughtful part of the relief and will help in protecting me and my entire family from waterborne diseases. We can use it in our homes as well once we get back and this will allow us to have clean drinking water in the future.



#### 4.7 Challenges and Impediments

In the wake of climate-induced floods and the new humanitarian scenario the following challenges and impediments for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction have emerged in Pakistan.

## 4.7.1 Need for an Informed Response with Inadequate Resources

This research's results show that disaster response for climate disasters is/should be different due to their nature, scale and magnitude. As is evident from this event the disaster's impact is not/might not be, unlike the previous natural or manmade disasters. limited to one particular area of the country and can encompass an entire country or region as almost all the five provinces of Pakistan are fully or partially engaged with rehabilitation of 33 million people with a complete or partial destruction of their lives and livelihoods at the moment. Therefore, it is important to understand that in case of a climate-change-induced-disaster it can mean rehabilitating almost the entire country, its economy and infrastructure.

However, the relief response has been slow initially as no one could foresee what was coming ahead and therefore no relief plan for such a mega scale disaster was designed due to the economic crisis in a post Covid scenario, political instability and inflation in the country. It is a sad reality of the debt-strapped developing countries, such as Pakistan that enough focus has not been placed on DRR. Moreover, the unexpected change, within a matter of months, in the nature of disaster from heatwaves and drought to floods is quite a huge challenge in itself. According to the IR country director Asif Sherazi, "prior to flash floods IR was

responding to drought in parts of Balochistan around May and June" (BBC Interview). Hence, the preparedness of a relief organisation for an informed and appropriate response to climate emergency situation, mobilization of teams with enough relief material according to the immediate needs of the displaced persons requires planning, experience, resources and above all a capable team. Therefore, in Vinod Thomas' words. floods are now "Anthropogenic events" and not "natural disasters" and turning aspiration for climate action and disaster prevention will require considerable resources and political will"(2016, Preface) and needs serious attention worldwide.

According to IR Mirpur Khas and Baluchistan teams without adequate resources there is a fair chance that by the time one cycle of reconstruction finishes without achieving any solid development towards disaster risk management there might be another impact. Lloyd-Jones et al. identify lack of finance for reconstruction as a major failure of any reconstruction effort. They rightly believe that "reconstruction should not lead to greater national debt" (2016, ix) because an affected country is already dealing with many issues and the responsibility to reconstruct should not be its own especially when it is caused due to an anthropogenic event. They further suggest that "funding should be less tied to specific immediate actions by specific agencies, but should be more flexible and aligned with longer-term development goals" (ix). However, according to Haile Gashaw, chief UNICEF WASH in Pakistan, "there has not been new funding for climate resilient infrastructure" despite the fact that "climate change is becoming more and more visible in Pakistan and yet it is ill-prepared to adapt to climate change."





# 4.7.2 Nature of Flood and Damage Distribution & Simultaneous Relief Response in Multiple Areas with Different Geographies and Topographies

The IR team that has been working in Sindh since August in Qambar Shehdadkot, Dadu, Thattha, Karachi, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Sanghar, Badin, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Khairpur term this climate-induced-disaster as a mega disaster which is 4 times bigger in

intensity and damages with 7-8 feet of water after continuous monsoon rains. They also fear that without adequate resources, budgets and a strong political will managing this mega disaster is nearly impossible.

#### 4.7.3 Confirmation of role of climate change

The IRP response teams have confirmed the slow onslaught of climate change on people and agriculture in Sindh and the rest of the country. They say the perpetual uncertainty about the changed climatic conditions is resulting in change in arable land use, specifically its sale for development schemes, which is increasing the number of displaced fishing and farming communities and their effort of relocation primarily on their own for work lands them into areas that sometime result in the obstruction of waterways. According to Zeeshan, IR team member, "there is a gradual growth in floods areas and intensity over a period of 2006, 2010 and 2011. The previous floods were relatively manageable because of this fact. However, in

2022, along with the rest of Pakistan both Northern and Southern Sindh have been Kamran Naeem from WASH affected. UNICEF also believes that "with the current slow humanitarian response there is a fair chance that by the time one cycle of rehabilitation without any solid achievement towards DRM will be achieved there might be another impact." Atif, another IR team member, based on his experience of working in Sindh floods believes "the gap in each successive disaster has shortened over the years and all those vulnerabilities that could not be addressed or managed have contributed towards magnifying the damage in the present climate-induced-floods."

#### 4.7.4 Lack of Capacities and Coordination

On the one hand, if there are inadequate resources, there is also a lack of capacities and expertise to manage climate disasters which are inevitable and require far better management which cannot be achieved without more coordination between all the stakeholders. Moreover, large scale climateinduced disasters' management needs a holistic approach and this cannot be achieved without experienced humanitarian leaders who can plan and execute beyond relief and rehabilitation. Sarah Lumsdon from Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) UK, believes this flood response "would have benefitted from having more experienced staff in place".

Most of the climate vulnerable regions, including Pakistan are not well equipped to deal with climate emergencies. Farida Gilani from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) believes Pakistan is "least resourced and least capacitated" country that requires global support to build its capacities and expertise. Hence, for effective climate disaster risk reduction and management more resources are required to build the country's capacities that can further help in building a better coordinated response in times of emergencies.



## 4.7.5 Lack of agency for Local Communities

Local communities do not have agency in the matters referring to preparedness and prevention that makes them so dearly pay for the disasters. According to Mashoog Ali from IRP, "there is a loss of traditional communal practices for managing the natural waterways and cleaning them." He believes there is strong sentiment in local communities that they are no longer the priority of development projects hence they are not responsible for taking care of the waterways. Moreover, formation of government departments for clearing and cleaning the waterways with machinery, have resulted in an apathy in local communities who are not expected or allowed to take any such responsibility on their own. It is quite

understandable that lack of natural resources based development in the country is making more and more people excluded from ways that can result in nature based climate resilience. The 4 RF by government of Pakistan has also identified this lack of agency and vows to include local communities in building climate resilience. However, according to Addessou Kossivi, regional lead of Africa, Global Network of Civil Society Organization for Disasters Reduction, "knowledge without resources cannot be effective" and for building "autonomy of people at stake" flexible resources availability is a fundamental prerequisite (2022 Global EJ Conference, 2022).







#### 5. Discussion

The above research findings have amply confirmed the human precariousness and in Berlant's terms, "insecurity, uncertainty, debt and humiliation" (qtd in Loizidou, 2013) of the Pakistani CDP and the humanitarian

sector's challenges in addressing it. So, what can be a viable reconstruction model in the wake of calamity of climate-change-induced-floods?

#### 5.1 Recognition of Informal Communal Relief

Inequity in NGO and INGOs protocols which needs to be addressed specifically in case of climate disasters with such long term economic implications because the door to door surveys and mapping of affected people have shown that people with a high sense of self-respect do not come forward to claim assistance due to these protocols. They incur the damages but do not ask for compensation

as they consider it below their dignity. Climate-induced-disasters need making humanitarian assistance more inclusive because an indirect livelihood precarity for the middle classes is not sufficiently covered in the present working model. Moreover, the host families' role during a disaster needs to be further researched for its former inclusion in a reconstruction framework.



#### 5.2 Question of Climate Adaptation for Pakistan

One of the most fundamental question in the current reconstruction framework is that it must on the one hand target "to build Pakistan's capacity to cope with climatechange-related flooding in future" (Zafar) while on the other, according to a leading analyst, "there is no way that future of Pakistan's teeming millions can be secured only through domestic restructuring" (Akhter). Moreover, it requires more than ever a recognition of CDP as humans living in delicate ecologies that are on the brink of extinction because of a failure to address climate change at a global level with no mechanism in place to assist people and countries for climate damage. Globally there is strong sentiment about this apathy as Shannon Osaka writing about 2022 floods notes, "there is one thing that the country almost certainly will not receive compensation from the countries including the United States- that are most responsible for planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions". The CDP's humanitarian needs cannot wait for the funds and this funding precarity can very easily lead to furthering the damage caused by climate precarity because the precariat has been left to manage all the risks on his/her/their own. According to a press briefing by UN team led by Resident Humanitarian Coordinator Julien Harneis. the UN" does not have enough funds to continue the support needed for the already reached people...Three months after the floods, the situation has worsened. Coping mechanism of the floods-affected have been eroded, compounded by increased hardship" (qtd. In Ahmed) Furthermore, according to Ambreen Niazi, Humanitarian Response and Operations advisor of save the Children International, "Between 8.4 million and 9.1 people are feared to be pushed below poverty line by the devastating floods, with more people turning to harmful coping mechanisms in order to survive, including

child labour and child marriage." (qtd. In Ahmed) Hence, the immediate needs of flood-affected communities to be restored to some form of normalcy in the form of a roof over their heads and a means of livelihood requires to be done on priority and must not be lost in debates for climate adaptation. Climate adaptation, according to Natarajan et al.'s (2020) study in Cambodia, in itself requires a considerable level of economic agency whereas for the CDP it is an either bonded labour at farms or bonded labour at brick kilns situation. The climate-changeinduced-floods are expected to result in more unsustainable, high carbon living for the country when food has to be imported from the neighbouring and far off countries contributing towards already high global carbon footprint. Therefore, a reconstruction framework must ensure that it carefully takes into account all the future environmental implications that may very easily result in popularizing the very unsustainable developmental models that have proven to be detrimental for people and their environments.

In addition to that, the cotton Haaris grow clothes millions and ensures the luxury of soft comfortable clothes for all those who are so used to the products their cotton produces. And what will happen to all those who benefit from their cotton growing and picking in the long supply chain of textile? What will these farming communities do? Their farming skills are precious and every effort should be made to rehabilitate them and their degraded environments so that they are not forced to become migrants ending in tragic collapsed ships accidents in seas. Their working conditions need to be improved.

These floods have happened at a time when Pakistan is suffering from the highest inflation with inflated fuel and energy prices. It has increased the cost of relief operations and will further affect the recovery and



reconstruction phases. Although, the level and scale of these floods have clearly shown that there are no distinctive boundaries between these phases because affected communities from North to the South of the country are simultaneously falling in one category or the other and they can be helped if the relief organisations have uninterrupted supply of funds, ample trained staff, experience, and a political government's support. It is a national emergency and can easily become a crisis with looming dangers of food insecurity if not dealt with experienced, coordinated swiftness by all stakeholders.

Moreover, 2022 climate-induced floods have changed the context of humanitarian response and one important area that needs to be focussed in post-disaster reconstruction is to create a space for study of weather and seasonal data and its exchange that can help in coordinating a well prepared emergency response that has the ability to manage not just floods but other climate disasters such as droughts, forest fires, extreme heatwaves, cyclones and storms. Sarah Lumsdon, Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) UK suggests: Given the changing weather patterns humanitarian agencies should meet regularly to discuss weather patterns and discuss the strategies for response actions

In addition to that the political instability has made the situation worse as it has resulted in uncertainty for the government, humanitarian sector and affected communities that will negatively impact the reconstruction process in the country. Although, the current Pakistani government (under PDM) is, perhaps, best of a democratically inclusive government that the country can ever attain and a reconstruction effort through this government can be most effective as almost

and set thresholds with Government of

Pakistan when assistance is needed.

all political parties are part of it and bound to work together. A less conditional global support for Pakistan beyond the "us vs. them" divides will be an opportunity to learn from each other to combat this climate emergency. If it is Pakistan today it can be any other country tomorrow and the pattern of recent disasters point towards it that disasters do not distinguish between rich or poor, developed or developing, global north or global south, first world or third world and better prepared or ill prepared countries. It is the right time, too, to comprehend the fact that no country is without its challenges and as soon as we all work together through our resources, knowledge, technology, expertise to help build lives destroyed through climate crisis it is better because a "healed bone" in Margaret Mead's words is an indication of a civilization. We can let this climate emergency to be an opportunity for us to build an environmentally better Pakistan as a model to be followed for dealing with future calamities anywhere in the world and also a model for taking responsibility for the environmental wrongs by working on inclusive solutions. Moreover, these disasters make us question once again our "ethical obligations" towards the planet that we 'cohabit" with millions others, only this time going beyond the human and including the environmental non-human into it due to two very simple reasons. First, the higher carbon emissions are creating a Precarity for the multitudes of people who are not responsible for the damage and secondly not doing anything for them will be equal to a genocide where they are left to deal with the disasters impacts which are clearly beyond their resources, capacities and strength.

This climate change genocide will be comprehensive in its nature because it will leave millions to die a slow death due to breathing poor quality air, drinking dirty contaminated water and leaving no land to grow



the necessary food for human and animal consumption. A lack of commitment, in completely restoring the lives and livelihoods, on the part of nations responsible for climate induced disasters specifically hydrometerological disasters such as Pakistan 2022 floods is likely to result in a slow genocide. This study considers it slow genocide because the farming and fishing communities are made to lose their right to natural resources due to climate catas-trophes that means there will be eventually no or very few people who will know how to grow food. The results of the primary research for this study indicate this trend and many farmers have affirmed this fear that this climate change land loss will eventually transform them into climate migrants/IDPs or refugees who will either work as cheap labour in factories, or do odd jobs in the cities or abroad through precarious sea voyages in migrant boats to provide for their families. According to IR report on Climate Induced Migration, so far such persons do not fall under the category of refugees to claim rights (Durrani, p.46). They also fear that they will be forced to live in already overcrowded, resource- scarced cities where the competition for living is so money oriented that those who cannot achieve it are unable to survive and are perpetually pushed below poverty line. Bezgrebelna et al (2021). link this forced displacement to "negative health effects of climate change" that will cause "increase in diseases" (n.p) for the climate migrants. This is important because people have been observed to avoid it as they do not desire to move from their villages and they have reported survival mechanisms such as livelihood diversification where one or two male family members move to cities for work. This should not be confused with nomadic seasonal migration. At a time when, in Stern's words, there is a global need to shift "to a low carbon trajectory" (2009) a re-study of village homes in Sindh might be helpful in finding ways to do it.

These village homes are sustainable and provide shelter (for humans and non-humans animals, plants, trees, birds, insects) and material for building the shelters such as wood. mud, straw, leaves, dung even hides and animal hair, means of livelihood, healthy food, space for social, religious, ethnic traditions and gatherings. These homes allow everyone in the family to contribute towards earning a living or being useful in some way. They are run on sustainable energy and built with materials that keep the homes cool in summers and warm in winters. They, with ample open space allow for underground water table recharge as the water is absorbed by the ground and this availability of surface water saves the cost of extracting water through electricity using water pumps. Ground surface water gets recharged easily as compared to deep underground water. They are built with light and renewable construction materials that are safer in case of hazards such as earthquake emergencies but need to be made strong for withstanding torrential and prolonged rain cycles.

As per available data on climate change floods will eventually lead to droughts hence water storage techniques other than big dams, such as traditional baolies and Karez need to be reintroduced because they were more nature-based as compared to current systems in Pakistan.

Affected communities, according to this study observations are still environment friendly and minimalists, two most significant features that need to be protected on high priority in any climate resilient reconstruction effort. Even today they are not a burden on most of the world resources. However, are flood affected communities', to quote Butler, "lives apprehended as living?" (p.1, 2009) and the simple answer by looking at the aid pledges made in the form of loans (Ref) and lack of urgency for climate justice, is NO. According to Carty & Walsh (2022):

Funding requirements for UN humanitarian appeals linked to extreme weather are eight times higher than they were 20 years ago, and over the past 5 years nearly half of appeal requirements have gone unmet. Funding for emergency humanitarian response is piecemeal and painfully inadequate, as is broader support to address loss and damage such as rebuilding homes and vital infrastructure. (2022)



# 5.3 Seeking Climate Justice for addressing the problem of unsustainable living

Climate emergency is without "frames" (Butler, 10) and its media projection of images of destruction, desolation and vulnerability, can "provide the conditions for breaking out of the quotidian acceptance of "climate violence "for a more generalised horror and outrage that will support and impel calls for justice" (Butler, 11) for the CDP. More than ever it is time to make the countries question their global carbon footprint and unsustainable living for understanding the ways it is creating a havoc for people who are not responsible for the carbon emissions mess. Lack of media attention for covering 2022 climate-induced-floods in Pakistan as a climate catastrophe and understanding it through the existing frames of recognizibility is a lost opportunity unless it is situated in a new frame that is then used for understanding the loss of CDP. That will require a lot of work beginning with a shift in understanding climate vulnerability as a shared human condition and its projection from this common human precariousness.

Lack of media attention for this catastrophe that has slowed the global humanitarian response has neglected the fact that human existence is interdependent but this is either not understood or wilfully neglected because witnessing suffering entails responsibility. The responsibility or the "obligation" in Kjellstorm and Mercedo's words is "to respect, protect and fulfil rights" (2008, p.14) without any boundaries and specifically in the current situation when CDP are suffering due to carbon emissions of the industrialised world, media must hold each single individual responsible for not doing their part in alleviating the misery of the affected country and its people.

Lotta Segerstrom, first secretary Embassy of Sweden believes that there is a lack of recognition of affected communities' "right to get back on their lives" because there is an absence of any opportunity to build back better. "She points out to the fact that "without a sense of global responsibility climate induced disasters cannot be managed in climate vulnerable areas as their people have limited ability to take risks."

It is media's lack of the recognition of the people who still depend upon renewable solar, wind energy in their homes and use zero carbon emission construction materials such as mud, bamboo, straw, bricks as essential building materials to keep their homes warm and cold. Their "indigenous science is a science of the way of knowing the land. It's a way of knowing the water, the air...Their knowledge of the weather patterns, their knowledge of how the land works and the way they are interconnected" (CBC News, 2022) still evident in the choice of space utilisation for both human and non-human that supports the biodiversity of the area and ensures a zero waste living model. However, their outreach is shrinking and with every passing day the perpetual uncertainty about their futures like other indigenous communities in the world, such as in Canada, are "at a higher risk from climate changerelated disasters." (CBC News)







# 5.4 IRP's Climate Resilient Reconstruction Efforts

IRP is busy in designing local adaptation solutions targeting zero carbon for shelter and livelihood needs that are informed through its own experience of working with the local communities in Pakistan for the last 30 years in emergencies and with the recent community feedback collected from affected communities across Pakistan. However, this climate-change-induced-disaster is multifaceted and requires more resources to build an autonomous adaptation for the communities because never before they have been hit that badly and the trauma caused by

loss and uncertainty needs special attention. According to Bilal Abbasi, "IR soft interventions in the form of training and awareness sessions for empowering communities with knowledge about the reality of climate change are helping them get out of the trauma of death, loss and pain gradually." It has been observed that IR support is enabling the communities to participate in rebuilding their lives. The study results have shown that the communities managed by IR were busy in de-watering the fields with their own funds.

# 5.5 Rebuilding to Empower Local Communities

Research results confirm the utility and effectiveness of local construction materials as safe, energy efficient, less hazardous and best suited for mitigating impact of climate disasters. As Suarez (2008) points out "strategies that enable the poor to be

designers of the places where they live are more effective than strategies that marginalise them because they do not have the resources to participate as consumers" (p.63).



The study results have further shown that relief Relief should be reconstruction targeted with long term needs of affected communities in mind which can be achieved with expertise in relief work, resources and capacities. IRP's igloo shaped Shelter boxes that are waterproof, spacious and safe can be used until homes are rebuilt and they can be used in case of future emergencies with water filtration pumps, kitchen sets, bedding, quilts and multiple rounds of food distributions so that the affected communities can be cushioned against the current inflation in the country. As Daly et al. (2020) question the isolation of "post-disaster livelihood assistance" from "reconstruction and development" and call it a "practical failure" of the reconstruction research. IR Pakistan country head, Asif Sherazi has also emphasised the fact that "the funds and resources available for development projects in the country should be used for reconstruction" (BBC interview). Keeping in view the current global stance which is termed as "economic nationalism" merging reconstruction with development can be a viable solution to overcome the scarcity of funds for Pakistani CDP.

Dube believes "just restoring communities to the pre-disaster state without improvements made to their wellbeing, would merely reconstitute their vulnerability" (2019, n.p). IR response to rehabilitation is building shelter with the engagement of communities is targeted towards developing their skills and

empowering them to build climate resilient homes with the help of revised design plans, tools, materials and funds. The new shelters, according to the feedback of the affected communities from Balochistan will not wash away in case of next floods due to two main reasons. First, they are built on fortified raised platforms, as has been suggested by the local communities and second they are built away from the natural waterways. Hence, the communities' vulnerability of becoming homeless in case of an emergency has been sufficiently addressed with the available funds.

Suarez et al. believe "[R]revising design goals and methodologies to mitigate the effects of climate change is an urgent challenge in both developed and developing countries" (p.62) there is a need to work towards building more sustainable living models that can survive the onslaught of climate disasters and by bringing changes in everyday living by reducing energy consumption.

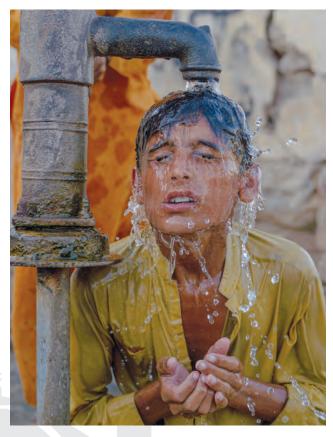
However, the biggest challenge according to IR teams working in Balochistan is of resources as currently they could build only 200 homes which is far less than the actual need. International donors must realise that and as Lloyd-Jones et al.(2016) rightly believe that "There needs to be a paradigm shift in the traditional funding model for emergency relief and reconstruction, in order to avoid disaster affected countries signing up to loan finance (and consequent debt) to meet apparent gigantic reconstruction needs in an inappropriate way" (p.33).





#### 6. Conclusion

In the present wake of climate induced disasters there is a need to rethink our present living both globally and nationally as it has popularised a way of life that is not only energy and consumption hungry but also does not make anyone responsible for the environmental harm beyond lip service with a clear lack of proper management of natural resources by the state departments and officials. This approach has another major drawback because it takes away the community's agency to work towards a problem in a developing country specifically if the populations are landless. The only popular way to discourage public's energy use, at the moment, is by raising the energy prices with the belief that it will make them responsible in cutting down their consumption but without giving them enough alternates. Moreover, the current global climatic conditions specifically the unpredictable temperatures have made it impossible for people to bear the heat or cold without energy or to bring a change in their lifestyles. The assumption that the rich people in developing countries or rich nations of the developed world are responsible enough simply because they are people with money is quite limiting and has harmed the planet earth because of its lack of land-based ethics. Piipsa and Kiiakoski are of the opinion that "moderation and slowing down are a point of departure for societal change" (n.p). Therefore, an inclusion of all those alternate ways of living with local communities' knowledge and practices needs to be strengthened for protecting the most vulnerable from ending in poorly managed urban slums and living a life of perpetual precarity. The farming and fishing communities in Pakistan are forced to migrate to cities around the globe to secure a decent livelihood that ensures food, health and education facilities. Moreover, their present model of living that is still



sustainable, environment friendly, humane and minimalistic needs to be studied further with systematic research.

Therefore, a new reconstruction framework should focus on protecting the indigenous people and their knowledge systems because a global model for prevention of climate change induced disasters will ultimately depend on their practices with the basic principle of living with nature and learning from it with the responsible use of technology and industry without destroying the ecological balance instead of an exploitative use of natural resources that has clearly lead the world to the point where it is today. This will be hard to achieve without raising voice for climate justice and working towards more mechanisms of global solidarity that address the CDP and ensure that their rights are protected because the world needs their knowledge and wisdom for developing sustainable, environment friendly ways of life.



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