**The perils of climate change**

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22 April as “Earth Day” went unnoticed by many people following the political situation in Pakistan. Scant attention to the health of the earth is indicative of the apathy towards our survival. The Earth is giving us much but we are contributing very little to make it a better place to live in. Climate change is considered one of the unavoidable challenges the earth is going through. To understand climate change, it would be pertinent to define it. Climate change is a “large-scale, long-term shift in the planet’s average temperatures and weather patterns”. Climate change may occur due to natural changes but the role of human activities is massive and unavoidable.
According to BBC, beef consumption generates a large chunk of greenhouse gas emissions including methane. A small booklet titled “Pakistan’s climate crisis: Climate action now!” published by the Sanjh publications Lahore, mentions that in 2013, the world produced 34 billion tons of carbon dioxide by burning fossil fuels and two billion tons were generated by the cement production. In addition to this, cutting forests contributed four billion tons of carbon dioxide in 2013.
Vally Koubi, A professor and Senior Scientist at the Center for comparative and international studies, has analysed climate change as the nexus to conflict. She writes in her research paper “Climate Change and Conflict” that either climate impacts directly or indirectly. In a direct way, it affects human psychology and gives way to interpersonal violence. Climatic change raises temperature and latter, in a corollary, increases hostility or aggressiveness among human beings. In an indirect way, climate change paves the way for the paucity of resources which, as a result, creates intragroup violence. Some researchers argue that climate change produces the circumstances for migration which, in a result, triggers or prolongs the existing conflicts.
John Barnett and W. Neil Adger in their research paper titled “Climate change, human security and violent conflict” analyse the challenges climate change creates to human security. They deduce that climate change can undermine the state’s capacity to provide opportunities and services which are essential to livelihood. Secondly, climate change damages human security by curtailing access to natural resources and marring the quality of natural resources. Third is that climate change affects the state’s capacity to ensure people’s livelihoods.
In the context of Pakistan, climate change can wreak mayhem. Countries having less political stability, ineffective governance, and whimsical decision-making would not be able to avert the perils of climate change. Palpably, agrarian societies may have more challenges than non-agrarian societies. In the Global Hunger Index, Pakistan ranks 92nd out of 116 nations; this could see further exacerbation. Climate Change Knowledge Portal of the World Bank shows that Pakistan is at the level of highest disaster risk in the world as in ‘Inform Risk Index 2019’, Pakistan was ranked 18 out of 191 countries.
Pakistan is already going through troubled and troubling times; climate change would further deteriorate the situation. Unfortunately, we are going back instead of moving forward, as Pakistan is witnessing the highest deforestation rate in the world. According to Dawn, “the country’s deforestation rate has been estimated between 0.2 and 0.5 percent per annum which is the highest in the world”. Given the challenges, a question arises, what is the way out? The answer is given by Mary Meade who is the editor and digital content manager for the NGO “Green America”. He presents ten important ways to grapple with the climate issues such as: Eliminate food waste, eat plant-based, use clean energy, support climate activists, divest (taking money out of those institutions which encourage fossil fuels expansion), improve insulation, use LED lighting, rethink transportation, recycling and last but not the least is buy less.