**Climate change and deforestation in Pakistan**

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Gone are the days when one used to hear the word “climate change” from conservationists and climate activists, now the word has been heard widely and creates an appalling and destructive image in one’s mind while listening to the word. As climate change has wracked havoc across the world, particularly in Pakistan. This country has remained a larger sufferer of the term climate change. Its apparent suffering is recent destructive and fearing floods and torrential rains. Despite being less than 1% of the world’s greenhouse gas emitters, Pakistan is the most vulnerable to climate change threats.

According to a UN report issued last week, people in 35 flooded districts will suffer the most as a result of the country’s harsh winter. Sadly, stagnant flood water and washed-away shelters have added salt to the injury of people in the flood-affected districts. One more report supplemental to the post-disaster needs assessment underlines the food shortage and increases in diseases due to insufficient safe drinking water and sanitation. The report stresses that the children will be impacted by stunting and malnutrition. These reports are alarming highly devastating looming crises ahead. If these highlighted problems have not been mitigated early then we will have to sustain the burden a lot, amidst feeble economic health and hovering clouds of default.

As confidently as the minister for climate change Sherry Rahman, with other participants across the world, presented the worst calamitous flood crisis in Pakistan, it was laudable at the Conference of the Parties (COP27) conference in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. Though developed nations’ attitude was allegedly evasive and for compensation for the developing nations which are hit by climate change and global warming even though they contribute less in polluting the environment. The minister of state, Sherry Rahman, with her other counterparts from the developing countries, brings them around with their persuasive and reputedly valid arguments on the “loss and damage fund” for climate-hit countries.

Geographically, Pakistan is a blessed country. With its fertile land, it enjoys four seasons and harvests all seasonal crops, including vegetables and fruits. But due to lack of attention and awareness, it has not been able to utilize its rich natural resources.

However, given the high scale of calamitous floods, alleged deforestation has also caused many distressing situations for us. One report suggests that 2.5%- or about 1,902,000 hectares- of Pakistan is forested. Worryingly, between 1990 and 2000, the country lost an average of 41,100 hectares of forest per year. The average annual deforestation rate was reported at 1.63%. further, one more figure reportedly showed of 1990 to 2005 Pakistan lost 14.7% of its forest. Moreover, according to the Global Forest Watch Organization, from 2001 to 2005; Pakistan lost 9.75 percent of its trees. Such a fast rate of deforestation portrayed us as a negligent nation when it came to forestation.

As trees are known as the lungs of the earth, and the best source of maintaining the temperature of our planet. They do not only play a fruitful role for the earth’s planet but also for human beings on the planet along with every other living creature on the planet. Besides, trees are known as also one of the strong weapons for fighting against climate change disasters. They provide immense fresh oxygen to living beings and make the planet livable.

The mangrove trees are believed to fortify against sea water, which invades and devours the dry field nearby its shores. The mangrove jungle not only saves the field from the sea’s devouring but also provides food and energy for the lives under the sea. Moreover, they also protect from hurricanes and sea storms. Sadly, we have been witnessing a fast decline in the mangrove jungle for a long time.

Though there are numerous reasons given for chopping down trees, one that is frequently used as an excuse, either officially or privately, is a lack of gas availability. Most of the chunk of the population in the country is living without gas. But cutting trees in high amounts concurrently creates doubts. There are some alleged reports people cut trees and sell them to the market illegally from the official forest pretending of burning for cooking.

Geographically, Pakistan is a blessed country. With its fertile land, it enjoys four seasons and harvests all seasonal crops, including vegetables and fruits. But due to lack of attention and awareness, it has not been able to utilize its rich natural resources. As Sadh Belo (forest) in Sukkur Sindh, Ziarat juniper forest Baluchistan and others have not been maintained properly. If these forests get sufficient attention and maintenance from the government, they can be better recreational places for visitors nationally and internationally. Furthermore, they can be a rich source of revenue for our faltering economy, as well as a source of protection from climate vulnerability.

By wrapping up, climate vulnerability has become dangerous widely specifically for developing nations. Tackling such destructive vulnerabilities need high attention and awareness, though funds from developed nations have their due necessity. Further, the federal government and provincial governments have to realize the potential of forestation and the disadvantages of deforestation. They must take appropriate measures against deforestation. The nation should play its role in an awareness campaign against deforestation and climate vulnerabilities, as with one hand you cannot clap but with two you can.

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