**Heatwaves - Harbinger of Climate Crisis**

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May 25, 2024

Pakistan is no stranger to heatwaves and the resulting deadly floods that usually cause countless deaths and widespread damage to millions of people every year. In the year 2022, one-third of the country suffered from flash floods and remained underwater but what possibility of these disastrous situations still persists to the present day? The related extent could be investigated by the ongoing global climate change crisis and heatwaves, especially in Southeast Asia which experiences this harbinger of global climate change phenomenon. Since the advent of the term climate change, heat waves (periods of warm temperatures) have been informally associated with global warming, which is caused by the massive output of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and as a consequence, our planet is now like a burning pot.

According to the IPCC Report 2023, extreme weather is expected to become more often in the future. Undoubtedly, temperatures are reaching 50 degrees Celsius in northern India and Pakistan before the monsoon season. Despite this, Pakistan is not the only country in the world facing catastrophic weather conditions, with Western Europe and Central and Eastern China experiencing record-breaking heat waves and droughts that have led to water restrictions. These heat waves and droughts have also led to crop shortages, contributing to rising food prices around the world. Additionally, record-breaking heat extremes were also recorded in Japan, Central America, and the United Kingdom, alike Karachi, is in the grip of a deadly heatwave that has disrupted not only electricity and water service but also made life nearly unbearable.

It is imperative to note that the early heatwave in May of this year was accompanied by much below-average rainfall and humidity, resulting in a dry heatwave with temperatures as high as 37 to 44 °C. Due to this, humidity had far less of a bearing on health effects than heatwaves that occurred later in the season and in coastal areas. Nevertheless, heatstroke deaths as well as infectious and respiratory diseases are reported, especially among older people, children, those employed outdoors, and others who live in low-income communities. If similar conditions persist in the coming months, officials estimate the heatwave will affect many thousand Pakistanis.

In such circumstances, where the country is already suffering from economic recession, the expected effects of climate change will plunge Pakistan into crisis and there is no time to recover because Pakistan has not yet recovered from the devastation of back year’s concurrent floods. Our agriculture sector is also badly affected as crops didn’t get suitable temperature on their growth time and suffered from a reduction in yield which detriment the net export and production of edibles However, it would take months to assess the entire health and economic consequences, as well as any cascade impacts of the current or future heat wave.

Like all disasters, Karachi’s heatwave is actually a consequence of an intricate mix of natural and man-made factors. This emergency is the result of a perfect storm combined with climatic, political and religious factors that have cut down vast areas of trees and other vegetation covering roads and buildings, limiting shade and aggravating the urban heat island effect. It is crucial to mitigate rising temperatures to prevent the loss of life and livelihood. The risk of death can be decreased by developing an excessive heat tolerance management plan. The Government of Pakistan has refined a Heat Action Plan that includes early warning and action, messaging that can change behavior and raise awareness, as well as supportive public services that can lower mortality. The nationwide rollout of these measures has been impressive and now present in all significant cities and towns.

In fact, the Billion Tree Tsunami and several other sustainable practices projects were started with plantation drives in several cities in Pakistan to prevent the deadly consequences of heat waves, but due to our incompetence, individual uncertainty on these measures often leads to the failure of these projects.

Meanwhile, as part of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, countries around the world make new pledges to meet standards that help reduce the impact of heat and lower emissions by developing new policies. It is a formal commitment by all stakeholders to reduce the carbon output by achieving a net-zero emission target which would help in mitigating heatwave rising, specifically in Southeast Asia whereas our working speed is not enough. Global carbon emissions must be reduced by up to 40 percent by 2030 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Therefore, now is the right time to opt for a collective approach, where each and every member of the community can decarbonize electricity generation through an equitable transition from fossil fuel-based production to renewable sources such as wind and solar power. For this, urgent and concrete steps must be taken to electrification of cars while maximizing energy efficacy in buildings, equipment, and industry to protect people’s lives and livelihoods from such climatic shocks, especially those who have to make even tougher decisions every day.

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