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BIS 456

Psychological Effects on Pakistani's due to the Climate Crisis

We will explore the deadly heat exposures and climate change that've led to power outages and lack of resources in Pakistan resulting in the citizens of Pakistan falling into depression and losing hope. Unfortunately, with temperatures hitting over 100 degrees, people don't have water and air conditioning for up to 12 hours a day. Experiencing flash/ coastal flooding, landslides in the northern mountainous areas, tropical cyclones, erosion in the southern coastal areas, desertification, and droughts. Floods bringing heavy psychological tolls and creating several water-borne diseases. All leading to protests and violence, poor access to food supply, education, healthcare, and most importantly giving citizens emotional and mental health damage. The power and economic crisis is responsible for taking the lives of thousands each year. The extreme heat tests the limits of human's survivability.

Food shortage

Climate change hits poor and underprivileged communities and people disproportionately given their lack of capacity and resources to adapt and recover from recurring climate change-induced shocks. 30% of the population in Pakistan is below the poverty line. Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change is further aggravated due to a heavy dependency on a climate sensitive agriculture sector. Almost 80% of the poor population living in the rural areas depends on agriculture using water irrigation (ADPC & UNDRR 2019). Although Pakistan is a food surplus country, its overall food security is poor due to high levels of poverty and high food prices. Consequently, Pakistan has significant rates of malnutrition, undernourishment, and

childhood stunting, especially in rural areas (UNICEF ROSA 2020). Pakistan ranks 14 out of 163 countries based on children's exposure to climate change and environmental hazards, shocks, and stresses. 34% of children in Pakistan are already experiencing high or extremely high-water vulnerability. In 2019, Pakistan had their largest natural disaster, Flooding affected 18 million people and 3,741 institutions were fully destroyed and 6,666 were partially damaged. Due to the flooding schools were used as emergency shelters for flood victims resulting in students having no access to education or being taught in open places without shelter.

Having food insecurity puts children and adults for developing physical and mental health issues. A study examined the association between food insecurity and health outcomes. Unfortunately, showing a negative impact within citizens. Children are twice as likely to report being in fair or poor health conditions and at least 1.4 times more likely to have asthma, compared to food-secure children. This results in children feeling insecure and adults having anxiety if they would be able to provide food for their families. Adults believe that they feel they've disappointed their children. Due to children not taking enough food they develop cognitive problems and aggression risking being hospitalized. Unfortunately, parents don't have money to pay for hospital bills which is why there is high infant mortality rate in Pakistan. Developed countries households struggle with earning enough household income, let alone underdeveloped countries.

Government Role

Pakistan must deal with a plethora of issues ranging from corruption to social reform and infrastructural hindrances. Pakistan is known to sell its electricity to neighboring countries which in turn affects its citizens. Not having reliable access to bare necessities like electricity fills the already deep pockets of the rich and forces its citizens to suffer. Of course, leading to citizens

feeling stressed and helpless. "...they're the result of a vicious cycle of unpaid debts of more than \$10 billion and breakdowns in critical transmission and other infrastructure." (Hashim 2019). With blackouts lasting over 6 hours a day, it makes it hard for businesses and people to thrive and be productive.

Currently the mental health legislative picture in Pakistan is fragmented and unsatisfactory. Only the provinces of Sindh and Punjab have a mental health act in place and there is an urgent need for similar legislative frameworks in other provinces to protect the rights of those with mental illness.

When Pakistan was created by the division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the newly created state continued with the Lunacy Act of 1912, which had been in place in British India. The focus of the act was more on detention than on treatment and with advances in treatment, especially the introduction of psychotropic medication, updated legislation was needed. In the 1970s and onwards, advocates for reform of this legislation were active. The government of Pakistan proposed a new mental health act in 1992 and circulated a draft among psychiatrists for their comments (Rehman, 1994) but it was not until 2001 that the Lunacy Act of 1912 was replaced by the Mental Health Ordinance of 2001.

A draft document was presented at the biennial conference of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society in Islamabad in 2001, attended by a number of UK psychiatrists, who, together with Pakistani psychiatrists, further shaped the draft. Many psychiatrists from Pakistan have been trained in the UK and the UK currently has a large number of British Pakistani psychiatrists who maintain strong links with psychiatry in Pakistan. Unsurprisingly, therefore, given these historical and ongoing links, the ordinance had significant similarities to the UK's Mental Health Act of 1983.

The Mental Health Ordinance 2001 was in the form of a presidential order and set out to *'amend the law relating to the treatment and care of mentally disordered persons, to make better provision for their care, treatment, management of properties and affairs and to encourage community care and further to provide for promotion of mental health and prevention of mental disorder.'* (Government of Pakistan, 2001).

The ordinance dealt with access to mental healthcare and voluntary and involuntary treatment. The duration of involuntary admission varied under different clauses. The ordinance limited the period of forced detention by police and magistrates to a maximum of 72 hours. Prior to this it was 10 days, extendable to 30 days with a magistrate's order, which was of course prone to abuse.

Following the 18th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan, health was made a provincial subject rather than a federal one. On April 8, 2010, the Federal Mental Health Authority was dissolved, and responsibilities were devolved to the provinces, and it became their task to pass appropriate mental health legislation through their respective assemblies. Although attempts have been made to put laws and regulations into place, the biggest problem that psychiatrists in Pakistan face continues to be implementation (Mufti, 2010). There is no recognized or identified authority either in policing or law or social welfare which psychiatrists can approach in cases of emergency.

The same problem is faced by the relatives of patients. Where a patient is very disturbed or aggressive there is no identified agency to which relatives can turn for help or assistance. Currently, families are the mainstay of support for people with mental disorders. In recent times

there have been efforts from psychiatrists, other mental health professionals, and voluntary sector organizations to create awareness among the public regarding the need for proper treatment of patients with mental illness. Emphasizing patient rights, responsibilities of the family, and the overall responsibility of the government and society. Unfortunately, for decades the Pakistani government has failed to take mental health seriously. Resulting in loved ones having to take care of their family members struggling, just to fall into the same mental state. Mental health in Pakistani culture is understood to be a sign of weakness and the government punishes those that are ill.

Unfortunately, recently the Pakistani government overthrew Imran Khan, former 22nd Prime Minister of Pakistan from his position. He promised citizens he would end the corruption and deep military influence in Pakistan. Along with providing citizens better healthcare, funding schools, and overall clean up Pakistan. His resistance towards his own government upset other leaders. Resulting in the citizens of Pakistan protesting because their only hope to a healthy future was being taken away from them.

Internet Access and Education

Many countries still lack the infrastructure and support to facilitate normal internet usage. Even within developed countries, access is still sometimes limited. Novak (2015) conducted a study and found that income and education levels are primary factors that affect people's access to the internet. Developing countries such as Pakistan are still faced with greater issues they must overcome before developing such infrastructures to support regular internet usage. Some of these challenges include poverty, corruption, and access to clean water and food, among other pressing issues.

The education system is a broken, yet promising source of potential for future generations in Pakistan. Although Pakistan is faced with several other issues, reliable internet access to its citizens should be a main priority. Kids are forced to stay home due to the lack of funding and resources to keep schools opened and maintained. Fluctuating climate temperatures in Pakistan forces schools to shut down. Unfortunately, resulting in children picking up poor habits from their family members that are working tirelessly to make a living for everyone. Many kids are forced to begin labor work at a young age and deal with extreme heat on the streets of Pakistan. When household food and income insecurity elevated due to the floods, child protection risks rose making children more vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and abuses (UNICEF Pakistan 2011).

Changing climate is also negatively impacting student motivation to go to school and learn. For instance, a male student in the Peshawar FGD says, ‘the summer season is getting much hotter. I cannot walk more than 10 minutes consecutively as I feel too dizzy... While studying at school, I don’t feel good.’ He goes on to ask, ‘Why would anybody go to school again when such huge obstacles are in the way?’ ‘The weather,’ he continues, ‘is too hot and pollution is everywhere.’ Pakistan is the fifth most populated country in the world. The youth bulge in Pakistan can either be a positive or negative force depending on whether youth potential is harnessed, and whether the productive employment opportunities are available to youth people.

The emotional health and wellbeing of students and teachers constitutes one of the most serious concerns expressed by the FGD participants in both provinces. Combined with underlying security issues (e.g., terrorism) and earthquake risk, extreme weather events make students and teachers ‘psychologically more depressed’ in the words of one participant in the

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial stakeholder FGD. Another participant from the same FGD explains that although flash floods used to occur in July, they have now become unpredictable and can happen anytime. This situation increases fears and anxieties among students who express concern about their own safety, especially during their travel between home and to school.

Students were asked to draw how they feel, what they've noticed, and how climate change has impacted Pakistan...

Farwa, Grade 9, Peshawar states *"The global temperature is rising... The water level in reservoirs is getting low due to fewer glaciers. This is the main reason why trees are getting dry. Diseases are increasing day by day.*

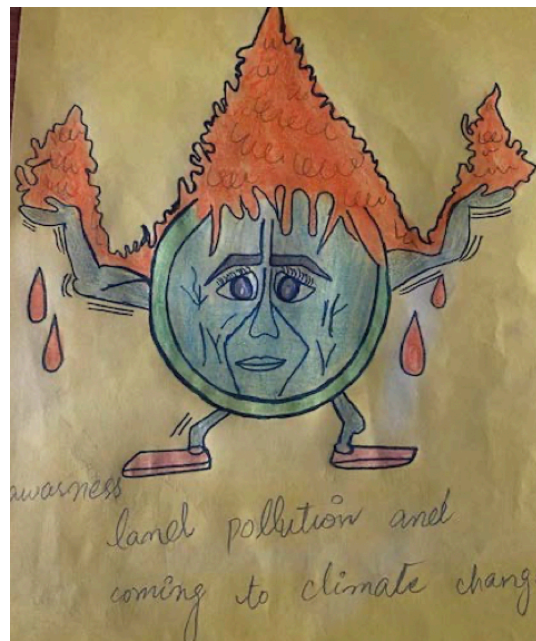
Due to deforestation, flooding is increasing, and oxygen levels are decreasing. Birds are migrating to other hilly areas. I want to plant more trees to combat this situation!"



Aamir, Grade 10, Peshawar states *"We are facing a big problem in the world. The earth is crying. Due to climate change the weather and seasons have changed. It is not normal anymore... The hot season is getting much hotter and the cold season is getting much colder than in previous years. Everyone here is feeling and observing these changes... Everyone's life has been affected dramatically. In summer we used to use only ceiling fans but it is not possible to live without air conditioning systems now."*



Warisha, Grade 10, Lahore states “The earth carries a lot of burdens and pollutions due to human activities and factories... Children inhale polluted air and drink polluted water. Pollutions have to be combatted! In my area due to climate change, people have more breathing problems. I suffer from asthma. In summer, there is lots of dust. I suffer more during the summer, and I miss my school.”



Education sector financing in Pakistan faces multiple challenges: the very low level of education budget allocation¹⁷ compared with enormous needs; the lack of equitable resource allocation across the provinces and districts; chronic underspending of the allocated funds; weak governance of financial management; lack of stakeholder engagement in the budget making process, to name a few. An education budget predominantly goes to recurrent heads (e.g., salaries), allowing less than 10 percent of the total education budget for maintenance and development of the education system (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2017). This brings anxiety to parents knowing if they were to work tirelessly for their children to attend school their hard-earned money wouldn't give them adequate education.

Personal statement

Growing up as a Pakistani-American I have heard from my parents and their families back home about the struggles growing in Pakistan with climate change. Resulting in food and resource shortages making it hard to survive. Over the years, the corrupt government has had heavy influence on the economy. If there was leadership that wanted to better Pakistan and encouraged citizens; Pakistan has great potential. Being raised in a brown household mental health is overlooked and not considered to be real. Many conversations with people from third-world countries end with "if you think this is bad, you should go back home". Yet, many choose to stay quite since these issues have been presented for decades.

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