

SEVEN

TAKES AT

70



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National milestones can be read as bends in the road or as turning points with the capacity to transform prospective pathways. On the eve of Pakistan's 70th Independence Day, Jinnah Institute asked a select group of thought leaders to share their perspectives on Pakistan's journey so far and the road ahead, as well as targeted policy interventions they would like to see address pressing present-day challenges.

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BUILDING AN ECONOMY FOR THE FUTURE BY LEARNING FROM THE PAST

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In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the term “Asian Tigers” became synonymous with high economic growth based on the achievements of four East Asian countries – South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. All four countries focused heavily on manufacturing and industrialisation, and all four were largely authoritarian and undemocratic, either under military rule or strong civilian leadership. In the 1990s, other countries in the region, notably Malaysia, were also accommodated in this broad category of miracle economies. The biggest tiger of all was, of course, China, followed by other smaller countries, including Vietnam. The term “Asian Tiger” became an aspirational term, connotating an ideal to be replicated by other countries. On many occasions from the 1960s onwards, Pakistani leaders, both elected and otherwise, pledged to make Pakistan an Asian Tiger. As is apparent, not only has Pakistan not become an Asian Tiger, it still lags behind other South Asian countries in key economic and social indicators. Back on 18 January 1965, the New York Times wrote that ‘Pakistan may be on its way towards an economic milestone that so far has been reached by only one other populous country, the United States’, a view which was endorsed by the Times from London a year later, stating that ‘the survival and development of Pakistan is one of the most remarkable examples of state and nation building in the post-war period’. Clearly, things have been rather different since.

One can identify numerous reasons for why the potential and prospects of Pakistan came undone. A reason often cited is the dominance of the military in Pakistan, making it a praetorian state, not allowing economic and social development to take place, but this argument fails to explain why other military-dominated and authoritarian states have developed markedly. Ethnic and regional imbalances, with the freedom of East Pakistan from a largely (then) Muhajir and later Punjabi dominated bureaucracy and military is an explanation which is often given, where the dominance of a Punjabi military-bureaucratic set-up undermined the development aspirations of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa, keeping them underdeveloped. Constant changes in systems of governance, with the military dominating even elected civilian governments, is yet another explanation given, as is the fact that the elite in Pakistan, both military and civilian, have never reached a consensus on how to govern and implement an inclusive economic programme. One cannot also ignore Pakistan’s geostrategic borders and the fact that there have been contentious and often conflictual interchanges on both Pakistan’s borders from as early as 1948, becoming more complex and intense since 1979.

Perhaps all these, and many other reasons, offer a partial explanation of why Pakistan has failed at achieving any fulfillment of its promise. Yet, there has also been progress, albeit clearly insufficient and unacceptably little, in terms of the diversification of its economy, through modernisation, with per capita incomes rising, the buoyant growth of a middle class, with women

becoming increasingly prominent in the economic, social and political sphere, and as other indicators suggest. Still, compared to other countries in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh and India, Pakistan continues to trail. Pakistan seems to be caught in a low equilibrium trap, both economically and socially, compared to many other countries which are fast progressing and in the process of development.

One can give a long prescriptive to-do list for policy makers to look differently at the near and distant future of Pakistan, but such wish lists are often quite simply based on wishes rather than informed by Pakistan's political economy considerations. Only those policies are found to be workable which are contextualised and derive from existing and emerging economic transformations and political settlements. Some, even, partial consensus amongst the elite, despite party affiliations and institutional differences, is a key starting point. How do members of this elite envisage Pakistan's future? Some interventions, even though difficult, must be agreeable to all, such as raising Pakistan's taxation collection based on income and wealth earned, must surely be one such item on anyone's list. Far greater stability and better relations with Pakistan's neighbours, has also to be on the agenda, even of the military. Without greater regional economic integration, Pakistan will continue to remain to be the outlier, continuing to be dependent on aid and politically motivated economic projects. Greater and more substantive democracy is also bound to hold elected representatives more accountable, and with increasing political and democratic competition, perhaps make elected representatives more eager to demonstrate an inclusive development paradigm. The emerging middle classes and women, the latter as a separate economic and social category, also require focused attention, although with growing inequality, numerous social protection measures, including the right to work, a decent and enforceable minimum wage, and more aggressive redistributive measures, from land, to opportunities, must focus on Pakistan's underprivileged. The distributive nature of growth must form part of a revised and appropriate social contract to include regions, gender, individuals, and the excluded.

While a list can be as fertile and endless as one's imagination, real and practical measures will need to work on what can be done, what ought to be done, and how these goals will be achieved.

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BETWEEN NATIONHOOD & IDENTITY: IN SEARCH OF JINNAH'S PAKISTAN

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As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Pakistan's creation, it is important to revisit the key questions that have befuddled the country. What is Pakistan's identity? Can a larger Pakistani identity subsume the other identities of its citizens? Is it a nation-state or a state-nation? These vital quandaries have remained ever-present through the country's history, and perhaps even before. It is critical that these be addressed for future direction.

Seventy years are a sufficient time period to determine the contours of nationhood and build consensus around such issues. Yet, we seem to struggle with some of these quandaries. A key reason for this is divergence from Jinnah's vision – a vision that was neither didactic nor dogmatic and evolved as he argued the case for Pakistan in the 1940s. There is no question that Jinnah invoked religious identity as the marker of a separate nationhood. The political context also demanded this, given that Gandhi had effectively introduced religious idiom in Indian nationalist politics. India was and remains a country where religion is enmeshed with culture and politics. The religious separateness of the Muslim community had wider political and economic issues of minority status in postcolonial India. The Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 with a weak center and strong federating units with autonomy presented a workable way to keep India united and safeguard the interests of Muslim majority provinces. It failed and so did the prospects for a united India.

Once Pakistan was inevitable, Jinnah's vision for the new state began to crystallise: a clear expression of this was his August 11 speech which underscored social justice, minority rights and no religious identity of the state despite its Muslim majority population. In the eleven months he lived, Jinnah also spoke about the neutrality of the civil service and civilian supremacy over the armed forces. The most critical policy direction he articulated pertained to relationship with India citing the US-Canada association as a model. Jinnah kept his Bombay home, inquired about its upkeep and saw it as a post retirement place to visit. Would he have kept that house if India were to be the permanent and all-weather enemy of Pakistan?

He objected to the cover of TIME magazine sent by its editor for an autograph. The cover showed Jinnah as a Muslim tiger eating the Hindu cow. He returned the copies of the magazine, writing: "As I think the description 'Mohamed Ali Jinnah, His Muslim tiger wants to eat the Hindu cow' is offensive to the sentiments of the Hindu community, I cannot put my autograph on the cover page of the TIME magazine as requested by you."

The story of Pakistan tells a different story: officialdom such as the powerful civil-military establishment, opportunistic politicians and a rudderless intelligentsia, took the country into an altogether different direction. The debates of the Constituent Assembly, which ended in

1956, are hauntingly relevant even today. By the time the country was a decade old, it was under a martial law, had waged war with India, adopted a semi-theocratic objectives resolution; and appointed historians to write a new history denying Pakistan's pre-1947 past.

Jinnah had expressly stated: "Do not forget that the armed forces are the servants of the people. You do not make national policy; it is we, the civilians, who decide these issues and it is your duty to carry out these tasks with which you are entrusted." The 1958, 1988 and 1999 coups narrate a different story.

Thus the ideal Pakistani imagined by the state had to be delinked from the past, a caricature of a South Asian and upholder of the security state which had come into being. This is why we ended up as a State-Nation. Fatima Jinnah, a founder of the country, who challenged this security-centric and autocratic idea of nationhood, was termed an Indian agent.

Ethnic identities were also undermined at the expense of a broader national identity. The most tragic example of this phenomenon was the treatment of Bengalis culminating in the 1971 war and creation of Bangladesh. We endlessly complain about Indian interference, which was certainly there, but overlook that Pakistan reduced multiple identities of its citizens and groups.

Jinnah's struggle was centered on India's minority question – a question that uncannily persists in 2017 too. Pakistan was meant to be the solution. But the idea of a nationalism anchored in religion as it evolved over decades has left minorities marginalized and at times hapless victims of violence. This includes minority Muslim sects too. Non-Muslims are barred from holding the office of President or Prime Minister, even though Pakistan's first cabinet had Hindu and Ahmadi members; and Jinnah himself was a Shia-Isma'ili. In 2017, the constitutional equality of citizenship is negated by the same document, and associated legislation.

Yet, the picture is not all bleak. Pakistanis have participated in three major popular movements for democracy; and never given in to authoritarianism. Most political parties want to change the security paradigm and move to an altered set of relationships in the neighbourhood. The 2010 amendments to the Constitution resulted in historic devolution of powers to the provinces for the first time in the country's history. More importantly, even rightwing political parties have realized the perils of nurturing extremist ideas and improving the status of minorities. Legislative work by two Parliaments since 2008 has been momentous. Social transformation in terms of women and minority rights, decentralisation and federalism will be more pronounced in decades to come. But this will require staying the course by the democratic forces in the country.

Pakistan of 2017 is a different polity than before. The country has never been so young and bursting with creative energies; and never has been there a more noticeable consensus on democratic governance. At the same time, the unfortunate legacy of past decades haunts the country; and threatens the march forward. Pakistan's youth will have to seize the moment and complete the stalled project of nation-building. A nation that respects diversity, celebrates its past, and locates itself in South Asia. A nation-state that ensures citizen equality, socio-economic justice and securing regional peace. This will be Jinnah's Pakistan, once it has been retrieved from the debris of autocracy, conflict and bigotry.

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DARKEST BEFORE DAWN: STEERING PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

Amb. Salman Bashir is a former Foreign Secretary & former High Commissioner to New Delhi

Global interdependence warrants multilateral cooperation. A high moral ground and a policy framework predicated on principles remain two guiding features that must inform Pakistan's foreign policy worldview going forward. But on Pakistan's 70th anniversary, both the neighborhood and region at large stand at a perilous crossroad, their all-pervasiveness restless a sign of the times. The spirit before the mind registers the inquietude of the turning of an era in global affairs. Such is the state of the world today, with a new world order waiting to be born. The intellectual constructs of the previous century and the post-Cold War years are fast becoming redundant. Technology, demographics and the fading away of that generation of baby boomers that shaped our world are just some aspects of impending international change. A generational shift is certainly in the offing, and changes in the global order are of a civilizational scale. Old foreign policy recipes sadly will not work, and for Pakistan challenges abound.

To Pakistan's west, Afghanistan is broken and torn by civil strife. India boils with hate and intolerance. Iran still sanctioned for no good reason. In the Middle East, the notion of the Islamic Ummah has been rent asunder by the latest diplomatic standoff in the Gulf. Western liberalism stands in disarray. Closer to home multilateralism has been rendered ineffective, the clearest sign of which is SAARC, perhaps beyond resuscitation. Political turmoil at home adds to the difficulties of maintaining policy coherence in these uncertain times. Yet, despite the doom and gloom, Pakistan in the emerging scenario remains well placed to make its indispensable contribution to regional peace, stability and development.

For Islamabad, China is a safe anchor that will hold through the gathering storm. Along with China, Russia, Turkey and Iran, Pakistan can reverse the tide of spreading anarchy in this part of the world. Despite its self-inflicted policy disasters, Pakistan could help shore up the United States from its difficulties in our region. A new vision of progress, prosperity and stability must become the starting point for working of the policies at home and abroad. The Foreign Office will once again be tested. Our leadership and the nation must continue to repose their trust in the sincerity, competence and resilience of the men and women of the Foreign Service of Pakistan. And there should be reason to remain confident: Pakistan has a long list of distinguished luminaries that have conscientiously steered Pakistan's foreign policy through decades of turbulence in our region and the world; a veritable stamp of distinction that made Pakistan proud runs all through the founding years of the Pakistan Foreign Service. The Foreign Service some 400 officers, who certainly outshine many in the public service domain with capabilities and resolve to deliver Pakistan's national interests, on all counts, anywhere in the world. Going forward, the foreign policy establishment must continue to lead policy formulation. From emphasis mainly on security, we need to work the concept of comprehensive aggregation of national strength. This requires factoring in the immense economic opportunities that regional

cooperation offers. The Foreign Office must also continue to play its leading role in inter-agency and inter-ministerial coordination. Pakistan should also enable the foreign policy establishment unimpeded access to requisite resources commensurate with its enhanced responsibilities and move the markers from the usual to performance audit.

4

BATTLING EXTREMISM: RECLAIMING A CONTESTED PUBLIC SPACE

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A generation of Pakistanis has come to age seeing Pakistan at war with itself. To keep repeating that the nation has sacrificed 60,000 lives over ten years in fighting terrorism is now a clichéd, useless exercise. The fact is that Pakistanis have killed Pakistanis in the name of religion. The casualties of this civil war are many times more than in all the wars fought against India. Pakistan suffers from self-inflicted wounds, not some foreign invasion. There can be no hope that the bloodletting will ever stop until this point is fully accepted and understood.

What after that? Simply nodding our heads will do no good unless we actually plan to act. Here's where the hard part begins because it calls for a change of paradigm. More specifically it will require changing our current self-perception of being a nation under siege; educating our children in a very different way; changing public attitudes towards creating a culture of accommodation; and addressing the issue of Baluchistan in an open and constructive way.

Self-Perception: Pakistan sees itself as an embattled nation surrounded by enemies. Western nations are assumed to be antagonistic towards Islam, and hence Pakistan. India is considered an enemy in perpetuity, and now is also seen as having persuaded Iran and Afghanistan to close ranks against Pakistan. Bangladesh, although it was once Pakistan, is seen as too filled with grudges to ever be a friend. Such thinking is unhealthy, and leads towards militarism in external affairs. This necessarily impacts the internal situation by justifying the presence of outwardly directed militant groups.

Education: No one doubts that Pakistan's universities are unfree, bigoted, and often violent. Local newspapers have carried many stories of young killers, including several from affluent middle-class families. University graduates have planned and executed murders as well as gruesome massacres such as those at Safoora Goth and Parade Lane mosque. Islamic groups such as Daesh and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT) successfully recruit young fanatics.

Intolerance and bigotry on Pakistan's campuses are symptoms of a deeper malaise – disrespect for knowledge, disdain for free thought and inquiry, and authoritarianism. Universities are but a microcosm of society at large. Intolerance on our campuses will decrease only if the rest of society moves towards valuing the intrinsic equality of men and women from all races and religions, abandons the notion of Muslim supremacy, and agrees that political and civil liberties are inviolable rights.

For this to happen, the curriculum, textbooks, and examinations for all public and private schools should emphasize the virtues of democracy, pluralism, and equality of all citizens of Pakistan. All school materials that create hatred and a militant mindset must be banned. Those

provisions enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan safeguarding the interests of all peoples of Pakistan, irrespective of religion or ethnicity, must be emphasized from the primary level upwards. Officially banned organizations are presently running their own private schools and polluting the minds of children. This must be stopped.

As for madrassas, the government should recognize madrassas without acknowledging their particular sect or making special categories; close down those madrassas providing military training and possessing weapons; and insist that the madrassa curriculum should include all those subjects that are taught up to the matriculation level be taught by qualified teachers.

National Culture: Every culture can be made to change, albeit slowly, over time. For peace to prevail, using different means, Pakistan's state and society must be made to recognize that Pakistanis have several different identities that are built upon diverse religions, sects, languages, ethnicities, and regions. All Pakistani languages need promotion through federal and provincial institutions that teach and develop them. A cultural policy reflecting the diversity of Pakistan's different peoples needs to be formulated and approved on an urgent basis. So far there is none.

A feeling of citizenship can arise only if all Pakistanis have identical rights and responsibilities. This requires several actions on part of the state including removal of religious identification in the matter of issuing passports, national identification cards, and other official documents. The state should be pro-active in promoting religious and cultural pluralism. We have yet to see this happen.

Balochistan: Regionalism exists everywhere in the world. For example many Scots and Irish have wanted to secede from Britain, and still do. It is a fact that feelings of alienation, whether justified or otherwise, occur in sub-dominant regions over distribution of resources and power. These need to be understood and their concerns addressed. The iron fist – as is used presently by the establishment in Baluchistan – fans separatist extremism and cannot ever bring peace. Public space should be made available for expression of all views and dialogue, not force, should be used.

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EDUCATING PAKISTAN'S NEXT GENERATION

Mosharraf Zaidi is an analyst and commentator

There is little to debate about the state of education in Pakistan. At every level, and in almost every way, Pakistan's children have been failed by their elders, both within the state and across society. There is a robust debate about the value of education, but one of the widely accepted theories about the public sector delivery of education is that it offers among the clearest paths to establishing a level playing ground between society's haves and have-nots.

On Pakistan's 70th founding anniversary, we can choose to look back at the failures of public sector education, or we can establish a consensus on what is required to change the trajectory. I believe it is as important to look forward as it is to look back. In seventy short years, Pakistan has become one of the most populated and youngest countries on the planet. This poses a challenge of scale. Over the next three decades, before Pakistan turns one hundred years old, it will need to provide young Pakistanis with the opportunities and incomes that enable them to explore their potential and live with dignity. While the demographic dividend or youth bulge that Pakistan enjoys can be seen as an opportunity or a threat, it is primarily a responsibility. Pakistani decision-makers do not have the luxury of putting this issue on hold – the matter of opportunity and dignity for young Pakistanis is a question facing over 100 million people below the age of 25. Any debate about Pakistan's future that does not place these young people at the centre of the conversation is an incomplete one.

Traditional solutions to the question of opportunity for young people can help move the needle a little bit, but they cannot offer the transformational changes needed to adequately address the great responsibility on our shoulders. Low enrolment rates are already improving at the primary school level, but middle and secondary school enrolment still lags far behind. The classroom experience for any child not born to wealthy parents is nightmarishly bad – and poor learning outcomes in government schools and an unregulated private sector are proof of the nightmare. Vocational training, a red-hot trend for several years, represents an endorsement of unequal and separate tracks for the children of rich and poor, and should be reconsidered and reconfigured.

The future for the unskilled is bleak. Every forecast and projection suggests that many vocations currently offering gainful employment will be obsolete before 2030. Children for whom the only option is in a low-skilled profession are being cheated of a bright future, because low-skilled professions will witness an en masse obsolescence. Self-driving cars will make taxi drivers a novelty, whilst robotic arms and basic algorithms will render tens of millions of factory workers redundant.

The idea of Pakistan was rooted in avoiding a future of unequal and skewed opportunities.

Cultivating a society where a level-playing field is a distant dream is a violation of Jinnah's Pakistan. In order to adequately address a bright future for all Pakistanis, regardless of how wealthy or poor their parents are, both Pakistani state and society need to reimagine the provision of education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's warning for the Muslims of South Asia continues to ring true today, over 125 years since he first propagated mathematics, science and rationality as critical instruments for both the spiritual and material uplift of individuals and communities.

The daunting challenge of a wholly transformed public sector education system is not insurmountable. Smaller countries like Finland and Singapore have identified the importance of level playing fields through government schools, and successfully demonstrated a way forward. High quality teachers is a vital first step, and since 2013, starting with the Punjab, every province has now adopted standardised testing as a litmus test for recruiting teachers. Today over 125,000 teachers in all four provinces' public sector are fresh recruits hired through the NTS testing mechanism. This trend needs to become standard practise, and the testing rigour of NTS must continue to be challenged and improved.

A focus on regurgitating facts needs to be supplemented, and eventually replaced by a relentless effort to equip children with cognitive skills and creative problem solving. This is not going to be possible in a top-driven, machine bureaucracy. Individual school leaders and teachers need financial autonomy to create classrooms that offer bespoke learning opportunities for children. This is not achievable in a short period of time and requires cross-party political consensus on the importance of cognitive skills and creativity, over and above narrow political interests.

Ultimately, the idea of Pakistan can be actualised only when all Pakistanis, from all religions, all genders, all ethnicities and all parts of the country feel like their children have a reasonable chance to fulfil their potential as human beings. That can only happen when every child goes to school, stays in school, and learns to apply her or his mind with confidence and dexterity. That ultimately is the surest path to the Pakistan of Jinnah's dream. On Pakistan's 70th birthday, that is a dream worth keeping alive.



SMASHING STEREOTYPES: THE PAKISTANI WOMAN

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If you happen to be born a woman in Pakistan, the odds will be against you. There is a 70 to 90 per cent chance that you will face some form of violence and abuse in your life. There's a 46 per cent chance that you will never attend school and an 81 per cent chance that you will never participate in the formal workforce and earn an income for yourself. Yet in the seventy years since its inception, Pakistani women have been succeeding despite these odds.

Pakistani women have brought home the Nobel Peace Prize and Oscars. A woman has been Head of State and despite constituting only 22 per cent of the total membership of the National Assembly, women have been responsible for nearly half of all parliamentary business conducted at the national and provincial levels in the last four years. Women are CEOs of major banks and run some of the most successful businesses in the country. Women are flying fighter jets and are combat ready in Pakistan's Air and Armed Forces. They write award-winning books and produce some of South Asia's most powerful literature. They have scaled the highest peaks in the country and hold their own against global competitors in the workforce, on the sports field and in classrooms and laboratories.

The resilience of the Pakistani woman despite all odds has been one of the most powerful yet underappreciated trends of recent decades. Critics have dismissed this as the story of a few urban centers and the result of the privileges enjoyed by the few. While there is no denying that class privilege helps many women overcome cultural barriers, there is also no denying the fact that women have been contributing silently to Pakistan's economy, politics and culture since 1947. But there is a deeper change afoot. Since 1980, the fertility rates have been on a steady decline and have now almost halved. Between 2000 and 2015, school enrollment for girls went up by 20 per cent, and the literacy rate for young women (those between the ages of 15 to 24) has risen almost 24 per cent. (Enrollment for boys has increased by 9.5 per cent and the literacy rate for young men increased at 13 per cent during the same period). Women's labour force participation has been on a slow but steady increase since 2001 as well. As women gain greater agency over their bodies and health and are given access to education and technology, they are working to transform their own lives and their communities. The positive impact of increasing female education and financial independence are globally established facts. And Pakistan is no different. We are already seeing signs of this. In major urban centers, we see women joining the workforce in not just larger numbers but also in more diverse sectors. Gone are the days when being a teacher, doctor or nurse was the clichéd profession of choice for women. You can now see girls standing confidently behind service counters at major retail outlets, working the fryers at fast food chains, managing stock and inventory at stores, running departments at corporations, managing their own businesses from home providing a range of services and now even taking up careers traditionally thought to be meant only for men or

could only be dared to be done by women in the elite segments of society.

As Pakistani women step out into the world and excel at what they do, they blaze a trail for those looking up to them to follow. The ripple effect of one girl going to work in the nearest city and support her family financially is substantial for other girls in the community. As economic growth, education and technology open up new possibilities, the Pakistani woman is not afraid to take them and make the most of them despite the challenges they entail. Despite being beaten, burnt, threatened with acid, or murder in the name of honor, women continue to go about the business of improving their own lives and the lives of their communities. The Pakistani woman has proven her mettle in the last 70 years as a formidable power and agent of change at home and abroad. If Pakistan is the world's bravest and most resilient nation, its women are the epitome of that courage and grace. And if Pakistan wants to accelerate the pace of its development and growth, investing in the protection, education and financial empowerment of its most resilient and capable citizens will be its wisest investment.

7

BRACING PAKISTAN FOR CLIMATE STRESS

Syed Hassan Akbar is Director at the Jinnah Institute

From among the multitude of challenges that confront Pakistan, perhaps none remains as elusive as our ability to grasp the very real consequences of climate change on our present and future. Rapid population growth, widespread poverty, massive dependence on agriculture and natural resource ecosystems for economic growth and livelihoods make Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate change.

Today, almost 3 million people in Pakistan are affected by natural catastrophes each year. Despite public investments in disaster management since the 2005, Pakistan ranks seventh globally in countries at risk from climate change. Flooding alone, which accounts for 77 percent of all natural disasters in Pakistan costs the economy \$1.6 billion every year, shredding 0.8 percent off the annual growth rate.

Continuing governance bottlenecks coupled with fiscal and technical constraints have inhibited our capacity to develop and deploy new technologies for the mitigation of and adaptation to the adverse impact of climate change. This lack of attention to a global challenge that is likely to become Pakistan's foremost source of instability and insecurity has amplified existing water, food and energy deficiencies.

On its 70th anniversary, Pakistan remains critically dependent on the Indus basin as its primary source of water, with scant addition to water storage capacity since the 1960's and even less investment in water management. Even after 70 years, irrigation accounts for 97 percent of water withdrawals and absentee landlord-ism continues to result in the employment of obsolete irrigation methods that waste scarce water resources and promote water logging. Faced with this lack of modernization, the threat posed by climate change is exacerbated by declining average rainfall and receding catchment areas in the Himalayas. This has resulted in average water flows declining from 1,500 cubic meters in 2009 to 1,017 cubic meters in 2017, making Pakistan the third most water-stressed country in the world.

Equally worrisome is the impact climate change is having on Pakistan's growing cities. Unplanned growth under migration stress has resulted in a steady decline in public service delivery in urban centers as the governance deficit has widened. 'Urban heat islands' resulting in soaring pre-monsoon temperatures in large cities like Karachi have resulted in loss of life and livelihood. Inadequate drainage in Pakistan's large cities is now unable to absorb heavy rainfalls that are a consequence of our changing climate. Urban flash floods have caused irreparable loss to the economy and have impacted social activity. High incidence of water borne diseases such as Dengue and gastroenteritis poses serious health risks for population centers.

Despite the government's recent uptake in national mitigation and adaptation policies on climate change such as the National Climate Change Policy 2030 in 2013 or the establishment of the Climate Change Council, Pakistan Climate Change Authority and the Pakistan Climate Change Fund in 2017, action on ground remains stymied. In the face of alarming declines in water flows, no serious efforts have been made to re-prioritize water management. Improving irrigation methods by promoting drip irrigation have largely failed. Similarly, no serious thought has been given to improving the pricing model for water to discourage obsolete methods and inflict prohibitive costs on water mismanagement. While some progress has been made in drought management through non-government organizations and investments in alternate community level storage methods, attempts to better regulate water flows through increased storage capacity continue to face political bottlenecks.

One area where the government has failed completely is information. The fact remains that the vast majority of Pakistanis have no information on how climate change is impacting lives. This has meant that communities and citizens continue to be ill prepared to meet disaster challenges and even more indifferent towards disaster preparedness. Perhaps as we begin our journey for another 70 years, we can begin to invest in educating our citizens about the risks of climate change and the need for our citizens to re-calibrate their consumption habits to meet this very real challenge ahead.

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