

Floods & insecurity

Shazia Nizamani | Published October 17, 2022



The writer is a lawyer.

LISTEN TO ARTICLE ▶ 0:00 / 5:38 🔊 1x 1.2x 1.5x

IN 2018, Pakistan introduced its first ever National Food Security Policy. Its goal is to increase food availability, accessibility, and sustainability by making the agriculture sector more productive, modern and climate-resilient. After the passage of the 18th Amendment, providing food security is the obligation of the Pakistani government. But agriculture, livestock and dairy remain under the provinces that must now take the lead.

The flood devastation has affected over 33 million citizens and caused losses in billions of dollars. The magnitude of devastation is so colossal that during an aerial survey UN Secretary General António Guterres said “Unimaginable”. The rains and the ensuing floods have crippled the country’s agriculture-based economy, triggering food insecurity and inflicting huge losses on millions of farmers and agricultural labourers in 23 out of Sindh’s 29 districts.

In Pakistan, 23 per cent of GDP is created by the agricultural sector. Extreme climate patterns had already started posing serious threats to agriculture and livelihoods. Alarm bells were ringing as 40pc of the population faced chronic food insecurity even before the monsoons. Now, more than 660,000 people are living in makeshift camps across the country.

Currently, Pakistan ranks 92nd out of 116 countries on the Global Hunger Index. Even before the floods, 38m people were facing moderate to severe food insecurity, most of them — especially women and children — going to bed hungry. According to the WHO, 18pc of children in Pakistan are clinically malnourished (not simply undernourished). The most affected sections of the population are elderly women and children. They will bear the brunt of this calamity.

There are millions of heartbreaking stories.

The UN has warned that 5.7m flood survivors in Pakistan will face a food crisis within the next three months. Even before the floods, the country was facing a wheat shortage. Before the floods, food inflation was 26pc; in recent days, this has surged to 500pc.

Initial official estimates over 6m acres of standing Kharif crops have been affected, largely in Sindh. There are severe losses to rice, sugarcane, cotton, vegetables and orchards.

Farmers organisations in Sindh such as the Hari Welfare Association and the Sindh Abadgar Board are deeply disturbed at the loss of agricultural land and crop damage. They claim that more than 15m people, including farmers, share-croppers, agricultural labourers and other daily wage earners have been adversely affected by the floods.

According to farmers' organisations, the monsoon rains and flash floods have destroyed almost 70pc of the Kharif crop which was ready to be harvested, with over 90pc of cotton, date, tomato and other vegetable crop washed away.

For farmers and especially women farmers and agricultural labourers, livestock is a profitable investment for future savings and expenditure, and an asset to be sold in times of extreme financial need. But now, this asset has also perished in the floods, and the surviving livestock is suffering due to the unavailability of fodder and the outbreak of disease.

There are millions of heartbreaking stories of small and landless farmers including women whose crops were completely damaged in the rain and floodwater. A local NGO, NGO's Development Society Shahdadkot, shared the story of Zar Bakht a widow with five acres of land in Shahdadkot. She lost her crops and house and is left with debts. She no longer has the means to pay off her debt or to reclaim her land. Receiving compensation is a far cry.

The World Bank has pledged aid of \$323m to farmers in the flood-hit areas to help alleviate their hardship, and reclaim their lands ahead of the Rabi season. The aid will provide subsidies for fertilisers and certified seeds. A transparent mechanism and needs-based criteria should be developed for fair distribution. Aid to women farmers must be ensured, otherwise they may be left out because of their gender and lengthy official processes and requirements.

Unfortunately, in our society, women's role and contribution are neither counted nor given priority in policymaking. Since the floods have destroyed women farm workers' sources of income and livelihood, they should be provided with sufficient assistance for alternative means of sustenance.

In the wake of the floods, there are some short-term actions urgently demanded by farmers — among them the immediate closing of breaches in

different canals, plugging of broken dykes and de-silting of canals.

The government should make the process easy for farmers to get interest-free loans in the flood-hit areas and facilitate them in obtaining machinery and input. They should be provided financial assistance on the BISP pattern to prepare the fields. Dewatering and drainage of water from agricultural lands should be done on a war footing, so that the fields can be prepared for crop cultivation. Livestock farmers should be compensated.

The writer is a lawyer.

Published in Dawn, October 17th, 2022



Read more



Inflation and its discontents



Education: rural futures



Women's mobility

On DawnNews



گانے کو گلے لگا کر ویٹنہان ڈے مٹانیں، بھارتی حکومت سوزوکی نے کاروں کی قیمتیں ساڑھ 3 لاکھ روپے تک دہشت گردی کی حالت لبر کے پیچھے کیا وجوہات ہیں؟ کی توکھی اپیل بیڑھا دیں

DAWN NEWS ENGLISH

Subscribe



'US, Pakistan have a shared interest in fighting terrorists'

IMF: Deal or no deal?

'Pakistani courts will defend constitution, polls will take place'

Does Pakistan's political leadership realise severity of ongoing economic crisis?

Politics over economy: A chance to put house in order? Spotlight

Comments (8) Closed

Oldest

Newest

Popular

M. Emad

Oct 17, 2022 08:50am

Floods, Food, Fuel & Finance insecurity increase ethnic conflict & civil war risks.

Recommend 23

Zack Abdi

Oct 17, 2022 10:16am

Food security and food supply chain are integral part of sustainability. It's amazing to learn from the article that Pakistan first published Food Security paper in 2018. Wake up! Pakistan is agriculture based economy.

Recommend 1

Aragon

Lots of papers were published during IK's miserable rule. The question is what has been done on those papers? Nothing, these papers remain mostly political tools used to fool people. Country's food insecurity isn't actually driven by lack of food but by uncontrolled population explosion and no government has yet published national population policy yet.

Recommend 4

READ ALL COMMENTS

Latest Stories



Iran marks 44th anniversary of revolution as hackers interrupt state TV coverage



Pakistani diaspora in US contributes \$30m to victims in Turkiye-Syria quake



Imran denies money laundering allegation in defamation suit against Khawaja Asif



PML-N's Abbasi says Imran could file treason case against Bajwa



Nankana Sahib DSP, SHO suspended after violent mob lynches man over blasphemy allegations



Miracle rescues as Turkiye-Syria quake toll passes 25,000

IMAGES



The Kashmir conflict has been depicted in film many a time but not nearly enough



Komal Rizvi says her ex-husband hit her head with a frying pan for serving cold food



Renowned writer and poet Amjad Islam Amjad passes away at 78 in Lahore

Most Popular

01 Pakistan agrees to IMF conditions, staff-level accord still pending: Dar

02 Govt, IMF finalise 'prior actions', no word yet on key accord

03 Pakistan will have to enter another IMF programme immediately after this one: Miftah

04 Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves fall below \$3bn

05 Cartoon: 10 February, 2023

06 'Difficult times': PM Shehbaz says Pakistan has established a Rs10bn relief fund for quake-hit Turkiye

07 The red line

08 If Pakistan defaulted...

09 Uproar in Senate over CJP's 'incomplete parliament' remarks

Must Read



Editorial: Things can get a lot more difficult for Pakistan if IMF talks drag on unnecessarily

We don't know exactly what the final agreement with the IMF would entail for the people.



The worst cost-of-living period on record in Pakistan is morphing into a social and public health crisis



How much TV do Pakistanis watch?



Amjad Islam Amjad: The poet of romance



Policy responses to address education-related issues need to be holistic and require a coherent approach

Opinion



Inflation and its discontents

Sakib Sherani
Food inflation in countries such as Pakistan has a direct bearing on poverty outcomes.



Updated 11 Feb, 2023

Education: rural futures

Hina Saleem



11 Feb, 2023

Women's mobility

Zofeen T. Ebrahim



11 Feb, 2023

Regulating pharma

Ayesha Tammy Haq



Updated 10 Feb, 2023

Independent central bank

Riaz Riazuddin

Editorial

Updated 11 Feb, 2023

Final IMF deal?

We don't know exactly what the final agreement with the IMF would entail for the people.

11 Feb, 2023

Moscow boycott

NATURE abhors a vacuum, and if Pakistan does not attend key international meetings, it leaves the field open to...

11 Feb, 2023

Fuel shortages

WE should have seen this coming. As has become the norm over the past 10 months or so, reports of a looming shortage...

Updated 10 Feb, 2023

Ridiculous laws

The criminalisation of defamation will come back to haunt those championing it today.

10 Feb, 2023

Victim-blaming

ONE of the perpetrators of the gang rape in Islamabad's F-9 park had 'advice' for the victim that showed him ...

10 Feb, 2023

Jumbo cabinet

AT a time when the nation is struggling to maintain financial solvency, the federal government is sending all the...

DAWN



[CONTACT](#)

[TERMS OF USE](#)

[REPRODUCTION COPYRIGHTS](#)

[CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES](#)

[PRIVACY](#)

[COMMENT MODERATION](#)

[CODE OF ETHICS](#)

[SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSPAPER](#)

[ADVERTISE ON DAWN.COM](#)

[SPONSORED CONTENT](#)

[CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[OBITUARIES](#)

[PRAYER TIMINGS](#)

[STOCK/FOREX/GOLD](#)

[WEATHER](#)

[DAWN](#)

[HERALD](#)

[AURORA](#)

[PRISM](#)

[DAWN NEWS](#)

[IMAGES](#)

[EOS/ICON/YOUNG WORLD](#)

[CITYFM89](#)

[TEELI](#)

Copyright © 2023, Dawn

Scribe Publishing Platform