



Humanitarian Response or Human Rights Gap? A Critical Analysis of Post-Flood Relief and Resettlement in Khairpur Mirs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically examine the post-2022 flood relief and resettlement efforts in Khairpur Mirs, Sindh using the intersecting lens of humanitarian response and human rights. Climate induced disasters are increasingly recognized as global justice issues, the case of Khairpur reveals significant disparities between short term humanitarian interventions and long term-based recovery. Using the lens of climate justice theory and international legal frameworks such as ICESCR, UN guiding principles on international displacement and Sendai framework, this research aims to investigate if the fundamental rights to housing, health, food, education and participation were upheld in the aftermath of floods. The findings reveal a critical gap in governance, community inclusion and participation and legal accountability. Relief efforts and distribution was marred by political interference, gendered exclusions and limited engagement of the affected community. This article suggests a paradigm change in models of emergency relief models of disaster governance that focus on giving voice and rights to vulnerable populations. The case of Khairpur serves as indicator of the human cost of the lack of attention to the problem of climate change and as warning against underscoring the extreme necessity of integrating human rights into the process of disaster management and policy formulation.

Keywords: Climate Resilience, Climate Change, Climate Adaptation, Urban Climate Resilience, Local Government, Community Resilience.

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1. Introduction

Indeed, it is a fact that the issue of climate change has taken a dangerous turn. The world today is facing the unpredictability of climate in the shape of natural disasters that are causing damages at scale that humans can even imagine. Pakistan experienced floods that affected one-third of its land, causing damages that were difficult to recover from. All four provinces and mostly rural populations were affected by the flood that was induced by climate change. The main reason behind these floods were the 190% (Zhang, Zeke. 2020) above normal monsoon rains in the country. These unprecedented levels of rain triggered flash floods in the country which caused 1,739 people (World Bank.2022) losing their lives and displaced 8 million people. However, Sindh was the province that was severely affected by the monsoon triggered floods where over 30 districts were submerged thus causing a humanitarian crisis in the province. Among these thirty districts Khairpur Mirs was the worst hit district where 93 deaths and 63 injuries were reported. Moreover 8 lac people were displaced and the loss of 3,027 homes was also registered. Furthermore, the district faced massive losses to its economic and social wellbeing as a massive cultivable area got submerged under water which is a major source of earning for farming communities of the district. Simultaneously these floods triggered a humanitarian crisis in the district which ranged from health, food, housing and gender related issues. Now that post flood relief and resettlement has mostly taken place in the district, it is important to critically understand how humanitarian response and human rights were upheld during the process of flood relief and resettlement. The research critically analyzes the aspects of post-flood relief and resettlement in district Khairpur Mirs of Sindh and if there was a gap in humanitarian response or human rights in post flood relief.

Problem Statement

Despite significant humanitarian interventions, there remains limited understanding of whether these responses upheld the basic human rights of flood-affected populations in Khairpur Mirs Sindh.

Research Question

1. *Did the humanitarian response in Khairpur Mirs post- floods of 2022 uphold the fundamental human rights of displaced and affected populations?*
2. *How effective was the post-flood relief and resettlement process in Khairpur Mirs in answering the long-term needs of affected communities?*
3. *Does the post-flood response in Khairpur Mirs follow a humanitarian framework or had systemic human rights gaps in disaster management?*

Objectives

This study aims to analyze humanitarian intervention in Khairpur Mirs in terms of human rights approach with key issues being food, shelter, health, education, and protection. Also, the study aims to critically assess the question of whether the relief and resettlement activities were performed in line with the human rights principles. Lastly, the paper tries to examine the wider implications of climate justice, state responsibility, and international humanitarian norms with references to disasters caused by changes in climate, and this is based on the case of Khairpur Mirs, Sindh.

Significance of the Study

This paper contributes to the knowledge on disasters, which are climate-driven, in the context of humanitarian discourse. It also sheds light on the fundamental role of the government in giving equal participation, justice and rights to the affected individuals.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Climate change is no longer a future threat. It has emerged as a human rights issue significantly affecting the vulnerable communities across the world, especially the Global South, further widening the gaps and inequalities. Scholars and global advocacy networks argue that climate change undermines a range of rights including the right to life, adequate housing, water, health, and food, particularly in marginalized regions (OHCHR. 2015).

Climate justice offers a normative framework that

focuses on the fairness in the distribution of climate impacts and resources. It challenges the traditional approach of structural inequalities that render certain populations, like those of rural residents of Khairpur, more exposed to climate risks. This approach stresses that those least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions often bear the greatest burdens of climate-induced disasters, and thus deserve prioritized protection and safety.

Within this paradigm, climate-induced displacement must be addressed not merely through emergency relief but a human rights imperative. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights advocates for the right to an adequate standard of living, that includes food, shelter and water- all which are directly threatened by the climate disasters (United Nations. 1976). Furthermore, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement also emphasize that internally displaced persons (IDP's) must not be deprived of the basic human rights before, after and during displacement. Besides their access to humanitarian aid, protection and safety must be upheld (United Nations. 2025).

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 emphasizes a rights-based approach and outlines seven specific targets along with four key priorities aimed at minimizing both new and existing disaster risks. These priorities include: (i) improving the understanding of disaster risk; (ii) enhancing disaster risk governance for more effective risk management; (iii) promoting investment in disaster risk

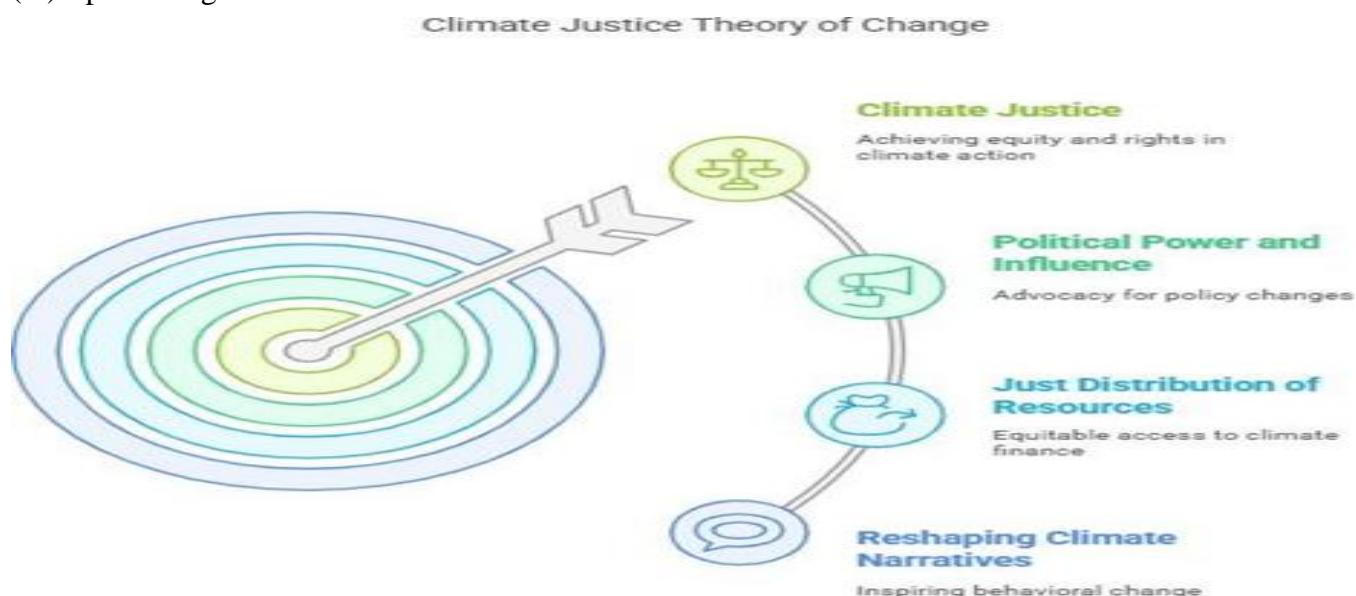
reduction to strengthen resilience; and (iv) advancing preparedness for timely and effective response, while supporting recovery and reconstruction efforts through the principle of "Build Back Better (United Nations. 2015).

Climate Justice Theory

Climate justice has become a vital global issue, that is falling unevenly on the world's most vulnerable communities. According to the World Bank, by 2050, over 216 million people could be displaced within their own countries due to slow-onset climate impacts such as droughts and rising sea levels (World Economic Forum. 2021). In Pakistan, the 2022 floods displaced over

8 million people, exposing deep structural inequities in humanitarian response and resource distribution (Government of Pakistan. 2022). Climate justice theory finds a different way to understand environmental degradation not as an ecological and technical problem, but as an issue of rights, equity, and historical responsibility.

It is based on environmental justice theory, which requires consideration of inequalities in exposure to environmental risks that are often racially, class- or geographically determined and demand responsibility in terms of inclusive, community-focused systems. At its core, climate justice argues that those least responsible for climate change typically low-income, Indigenous, or marginalized communities face its gravest consequences, often without voice or recourse. This necessitates a paradigmatic shift in policy and humanitarian action: from temporary relief to systemic, rights-based resilience rooted in



international legal instruments like the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the ICESCR, and guided by principles of participation, non-discrimination, and accountability.

The case of Khairpur, a rural undeveloped district of Sindh, exhibits that environmental risks significantly affect them and, combined with deep-rooted social and political marginalization, strengthen structural disparities and injustices. A case study conducted on the claim of Climate Justice shows that the humanitarian intervention did not respect the fundamental rights. Theory of Climate Justice sheds light on the fact that climate change intensifies the already existing social injustices, particularly to the least responsible and least resilient communities. In Sindh, particularly in Khairpur, there are statistics of how climate disasters amplify the structural inequalities. Over 800,000 individuals were displaced, 130,000 tons of farmland were destroyed and 120,000 houses were damaged. It was also a year in which diseases such as malaria, typhoid and diarrhea increased with figures going as high as 1 million (Solangi, Tahmeena, Nangraj, and Menghwar. 2024).

Climate Change is inherently unequal in its impact:

The difference between who has caused climate change and who is the victim of climate change is very clear. The essentially affected populations are people in the Global South even though they have low carbon footprints. Indeed, the richest 1% were responsible for 16% of global emissions, which equates to the emissions of the poorest 66% in 2019 (Triponel. 2023). This validates the assumption that climate change exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, with **93 human deaths, 34,373 animal deaths**, and severe loss of livelihood across **380 villages** (Solangi, T., Nangraj, A. N., & Menghwar, G. 2024).

Climate Action must be Rooted in Human Rights

Khairpur saw the systematic violation of rights to housing, rights to health as well as to food. Hygiene in temporary camps was inadequate, medical facilities were overloaded and the food situation worsened with 500,000 instances of diarrhea and 5,000 hepatitis infections documented. Climate justice suggests that

humanitarian responses should be provided through the prism of international rights documents, such as the ICESCR and Sendai Framework but in Khairpur the rights were not ensured.

Vulnerable Groups must be Central to the Decision-Making

Climate justice calls for an inclusive decision-making process where vulnerable groups are central. The flood affectees often have a little say in implementation or decision making reflecting the traditional top to bottom approach. Climate justice calls for an inclusive mechanism of governance that empowers those at risk to co-create the solution. The exclusion of the local voices from the design of flood management responses undermines this core principle.

Historical Responsibility and Polluter Pays Principle Must Guide Resource Allocation

Pakistan ranks at the lowest per capita emitters of carbon globally but ranks among the highest in terms of climate vulnerability (Abubakar, Syed Muhammad. 2024). Furthermore, the international climate finance reaching Khairpur remains opaque and insufficient. No structured compensation mechanism or recovery financing framework was directed to displaced populations. The justice demands that the wealthy nation and companies also contribute loss and damage funds in proportion to losses and damages, which has not been practically fulfilled in this regard.

Climate Narratives Must Be Decolonized and Decentralized

Emergency relief and resilience were usually the main topics in mainstream discourse. It is usually not addressed by the systemic deprivation and underinvestment's in the flood-affected locals such as Khairpur. The inhabited communities that were exposed to water logging, poor drainage and crumbling of basic health systems were mostly ignored. Climate justice concentrates on community wisdom and leadership on a local level as it develops strategies of adaptation.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative case study design to critically examine the post-2022 flood humanitarian response in Khairpur Mirs, Sindh, using climate justice theory and international

human rights frameworks. The research aims to investigate if the relief and resettlement efforts uphold the fundamental rights of flood-affected populations or revealed systemic governance and justice deficits.

Data Sources

In this study secondary data is used to investigate the humanitarian response in Sindh and uses sources mentioned below:

- Government reports (e.g., NDMA, PDMA Sindh, Health Department)
- UN and INGO situation briefs
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Media coverage from national dailies such as *DAWN*
- Flood impact assessments (e.g., CRED, World Bank, i-Care Foundation)

These documents were selected for their relevance to post-disaster response, public health, infrastructure damage, displacement statistics, and policy-level interventions in Khairpur.

Analytical Framework

Data was analyzed using thematic content analysis, guided by:

- **International human rights standards** (e.g., ICESCR, UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement)
- **Climate justice assumptions**, including inequality of impact, rights-based relief obligations, and the need for inclusive governance

Emerging themes—such as access to housing, health, food, education, and public participation—were mapped against these normative benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness, equity, and rights-compatibility of the response.

4. Khairpur: A Context of Vulnerability-

Geographic Overview

Khairpur District is located in Pakistan's Sindh province in its north, between latitudes 26°09' and 27°42' North and longitudes 68°10' and 70°10' East. Having India to its east, it is bordered to the north by Shikarpur and Sukkur districts, to the south by Sanghar and Nawabshah districts, and to its west is Nawabshah and Larkana districts. The

Kot Diji civilization, one of the oldest civilizations of the area which began in the district near 3300 BC, giving it great historical importance. The district consists of eight administrative tehsils: Khairpur, Kot Diji, Kingri, Mirwah, Faiz Gunj, Nara, Sobho Dero, and Gambat, with a total of 76 union councils.

Climate of Khairpur District

The scorching heat of Khairpur District is typical of upper Sindh. With frequent highs of 45°C (113°F) in May and June, the summers are scorching and dry as the district contains a desert on its east. In contrast to this, winters are mild with occasional lower temperatures of 5°C (41°F) in December and January. Less than 100 mm of rain falls there on average each year, mostly during the monsoon season (July to September). The environment is hot due to high rates of evaporation and low precipitation, and the main sources of water for agriculture are the Indus River and canal systems such as the Nara Canal.

Topography:

The Indus River's flow and deposits over ages have made the district of Khairpur's mostly flat and alluvial terrain. As a result, a fertile floodplain has been developed, supporting a wide range of agricultural activities. In accordance with the natural drainage pattern toward the Arabian Sea, the ground is sloped gently from north to south.

The district's geography changes to semi-arid and desert regions in the east, where it occasionally borders the Thar Desert. In contrast to the lush, irrigated western zones, this area is characterized by sand dunes and limited vegetation. Low depressions can make natural lakes or wetlands in some places, particularly during the rainy season. Khairpur is an important area for agriculture in Sindh because of its overall topography, which blends elements of arid desert regions, canal-irrigated areas, and lush plains.

Socioeconomic Overview

Khairpur district has an approximate population of 2.4 million, which is 5% of Sindh's total population. Its area spans 15,925 sq. km, which is 11.3% of Sindh's total area, with a population density of 151 people per sq. km. About 68% of its population lives in rural areas, and the average household size ranges from 5.82 according to the 2017 census to 7.6 (MICS 2018-19). The gender

distribution is 51.6% male and 48.4% female.

Health Sector

District Khairpur has 3,193 patients per bed, 3,881 patients per doctor, and 36,275 patients per nurse, all significantly higher than Sindh's averages. The district has 1,151 governments medical staff, 52 semi-governments, and 91 local bodies staff out of Sindh's total. Additionally, there are 173 private/missionary medical staff in Khairpur (Government of Sindh. 2022). Male literacy rate between the age of 15-49 years in Khairpur is 60.0% compared to 59% in Sindh while the female literacy rate is 35.5% in comparison to 40.9% in Sindh. The headcount of households that are under poverty in Khairpur is 46.1% compared to the headcount of 47% in Sindh. 20.1% of household members in District Khairpur are vulnerable to poverty as well.

Overview of Khairpur Rural

Agrarian context

The total cultivated area for major crops in Khairpur District amounts to 213,962 hectares, accounting for 7.1% of Sindh's total cultivated area of 3,028,496 hectares. Among the leading crops in the district, wheat, cotton, and sugarcane dominate with cultivated areas of 103,850 hectares, 80,647 hectares, and 22,762 hectares respectively. The production figures for these crops stand at 385,607 million tons for wheat, 478,782 million tons for cotton, and 1,417,429 million tons for sugarcane.

The district's livestock amounts to 3,546,697, representing 7.7% of Sindh's total livestock count of 46,279,313. This consists of 493,427 cattle, 527,875 buffaloes, 900,463 goats, and 1,449,101 poultry and this plays a major role in supporting the livelihoods of the local communities.

Also, fish production in Khairpur stands at 1,989 million tons that represents 1.5 percent of the total 133,150 million tons that are produced in Sindh. There are also 441 fishermen in the district, constituting 1.0 of the number in the province, which is 45,013

Impact of the 2022 Floods

Scale of destruction: displacement, infrastructure damage, loss of livelihoods

The 2022 floods in Khairpur district had a

devastating effect of about 3,700 houses, which were impacted by the monsoon. Of these, 270 families, most of whom were largely reliant on livestock as their main source of livelihood, were relocated against their will and took temporary shelter on the side of embankments or with their extended families. Statistics obtained through local governments and field surveys showed that 36 villages with 28,969 people (11,060 men, 13,700 women and 4,209 children) were right out on the end of the disaster.

The repercussions of the flooding have resulted in a massive increase of climate sensitive and water related diseases like malaria, diarrhea, scabies and gastroenteritis. Pregnant women and their babies were in a very vulnerable situation mostly because of food insecurity, inadequacy of medical supplies, and access to medical facilities. Damaged roads and interruption of communication systems further compromised the delivery of maternal health services which led to late and unsafe births at conditions that were not hygienic. Meanwhile, livestock, which is one of the major economic assets of most of the affected families, was also subjected to the same disease outbreaks with the added problem of a severe fodder crisis.

In addition to the human and animal health crisis, the floods crippled the agricultural base and physical infrastructure of the area. Acres of farmlands were flooded and the crops that were standing like cotton, dates, bananas, sorghum, and other vegetables were destroyed. The education sector was also hard hit with over a quarter of the primary; elementary and secondary schools being damaged to some extent. This has hindered the process of opening of learning institutions and the learning process, interfered with the classroom resources, which were to be provided to the schools in the wake of new academic sessions.

6. Human Rights Assessment of the Response

The humanitarian interventions to the 2022 floods in Khairpur, though addressed immediate survival needs including food, shelter and health, fell significantly short when assessed through a human rights framework. The first measures like emergency shelters, food rationing, medical supplies, mobile health teams were deployed, but those were not consistent, equally accessible and sustainable. The district had registered 222 deaths

and 60 injuries but more than 1.2 million people became displaced. (NDMA. 2022). These numbers demonstrate how huge the crisis was and how urgent it was to consider whether the response was sufficient to maintain the fundamental human rights.

Right to Adequate Housing

The right to adequate housing, as highlighted in Article 11(1) of the ICESCR, includes legal security of tenure, availability of services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, and cultural adequacy (United Nations. 1966). In Khairpur, affected populations were housed in temporary tents and makeshift shelters, many of which were located on flood-prone embankments or roadside camps with no security and safety. There were no durable resettlement frameworks, and many displaced families remained in uncertain conditions months after the disaster (CRED. 2022).

Right to Food and Water

Adequate drinking water and adequate food are fundamental principles of the right to an adequate standard of living. The post flood evaluation revealed serious shortcoming in the distribution of aid, particularly in geographically isolated regions or politically marginalized regions.

Contaminated water sources, including stagnant floodwater and damaged wells, led to widespread outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, hepatitis, and malaria (WHO, 2023). There was also a skewed distribution of food rations which in most cases were determined by local patronage networks which was against the principle of non-discrimination in the delivery of aid.

Right to Health

The right to health includes both access to emergency medical services and continuity of care for vulnerable populations. Healthcare infrastructure in Khairpur was destroyed and overpressure after the floods. Government facilities struggled to manage patients, particularly women, newborns, and the elderly. Mobile clinics were under-resourced, and essential medicines were in short supply. (Health Department Sindh. 2022).

Right to Education

Education, as a protected right under both

Pakistan's Constitution (Article 25-A) and international law (ICESCR, Article 13), was hampered severely. Over 25 schools in Khairpur were reported partially or fully damaged, and many functional buildings were converted into temporary relief shelters. With no alternate arrangements or mobile education services, thousands of children missed months of schooling, exacerbating existing educational inequalities (UNICEF. 2023).

Right to Protection and Participation

What was particularly disturbing being the lack of specific protection to vulnerable populations. Women and girls were subjected to risks on their safety and self-esteem because of the congested camps that did not have gender-sensitive infrastructures such as safe sanitation systems.

Persons with disabilities, the elderly, and pregnant women were excluded from both relief planning and access to essential services (Bhutto, Shahnaz, Kainat Vighio, and Naushad Bhutto. 2025). Additionally, the lack of community engagement in planning and decision-making processes violated the principle of participatory and inclusive governance. There was no set of effective grievance redressal or complaint systems which were availed to persons who felt excluded or aggrieved during the response process. In short, the state and humanitarian actors have managed to receive some basic relief, but the response was not done in accordance with the minimum basic requirements of the international human rights standards. As seen with Khairpur, disaster responses that fail to incorporate human rights concepts at the initial stage are likely to reinforce structural conditions and create new vulnerabilities.

Challenges and Gaps

Absence of a Legal Framework for Climate-Induced Internal Displacement

Looking closely at the post-flood situation in Khairpur Mirs it was visible that both federal and provincial governments lack laws that deal with the rights and protection needs of people affected by climate-induced disasters such as floods. Populations affected by climate-induced migrations that are seen as internally displaced persons (IDP) are not having the legal protection that refugees have hence they fall in an

unaddressed area legally. Moreover, absence of legal policy framework which addresses directly to climate-induced internal migration is a major issue. Currently law that deals with natural disasters in the country such as National Disaster Management Act (2010) lacks post-disaster related rehabilitation, protection and resettlement rights for affected people. This poor form of recognition in the legal framework provides no obligations, accountability and entitlements related to IDPs.

Fragmented Disaster governance

Pakistan's disaster management governance architecture is multi-tiered, divided among three different authorities ranging from federal, provincial and local authorities. However, these various bodies lack in coordination among each other for example NDMA's, PDMA's and district authorities. Simultaneously, roles of these various organizations overlap each other hence ambiguity during the operations hamper's capacities of these agencies. Moreover, legally mechanism that deals with rights related to land, housing and aid are weak that makes service delivery a challenge that further pushes legal protection to a failure for affected populations

Equity and Access Issues

Equity faces a lot of problems during disaster relief work and discrimination in aid provision can be tilted towards some groups. Gender discrimination also remains an issue during the relief work which impacts social, economic and political well-being of the marginalized gender of the society. Geographic and political exclusion for people living in rural areas as road connectivity and service provision hamper the relief work operations. Present laws do not have transparent, equitable operational procedures for providing relief based on demand.

Lack of Community Voice and Transparency

Response in post flood in Sindh's Khairpur district showed that the state's disaster relief response lacked elements of participation, transparency, and accountability, which are essential parts of both good governance and human rights law.

Limited Engagement with Affected Populations

There was lack of engagement with the communities that were affected by the flood in the district whereas laws also had no provisions regarding it as well e.g. National Disaster Management Act (2010). Moreover, poor participatory procedures also make inactive recipients going against the Sendai framework of disaster risk reduction.

Unclear Entitlements

The lack of clarity on policy landscape does not visibly define standards for shelter, access to food, clean water, health care, or compensation. It leads to confusion and exclusion of affectees and frustrates others. Exclusion also impacts accountability and administrative procedures.

Due to the inability to outline the clarity on the policy landscape, there is no visible definition on the standards of shelter, food accessibility, clean water, health care, or compensation. It causes bewilderment and marginalization of sufferers as well as frustration. Thus, this sort of exclusion affects accountability and administrative procedures.

Donor-Driven Priorities

Lack of a legal framework of rights, gives too much discretion to the donors and the affected population has no legal means by which to influence or challenge the decisions on aid.

8. Implications for Climate Justice and State Responsibility

Climate Displacement as an issue of Justice

The destruction that happened due to the 2022 floods in Khairpur does not highlight the importance of climate-induced displacement merely as a humanitarian disaster, but as an issue of structural justice. The communities most impacted are primarily rural, economically challenged, and peripheral regions faced the brunt of climate change effects, despite their contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions being minimal. Over 800,000 people were displaced in Khairpur district alone while housing, agricultural livelihoods, and access to basic services were severely affected (UN-SPIDER. 2024). This disproportionate suffering reflects a deeper systemic inequity. The concept of climate justice focuses upon environmental degradation which must be understood in relation to historical

emissions and responsibilities, power asymmetries, and differentiated resilience capacities (Schlosberg, David, and Lisette B. Collins. 2014). Providing emergency relief alone cannot address these injustices. Instead, climate displacement must be seen as a matter of human rights and state accountability in the long term.

Domestic and International Law Obligations for a State

Pakistan's constitutional duties mention to protect the rights of its citizens during disaster and post-disasters. Article 9 of the Constitution provides the right to life and security; Article 25 states equality before the law; and Article 38 provides for the state to promote the social and economic well-being of all citizens (Government of Pakistan. 1973). Globally, Pakistan is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which upholds the right to basic housing, food, water, and health rights often not provided during post-flood recovery in Khairpur (United Nations 1966). Pakistan has constitutional obligations to protect the rights of its citizens during and after disasters. Article 9 of the Constitution ensures the right to life and security; Article 25 provides for equality before the law; and Article 38 obligates the state to advance the social and economic well-being of all citizens (UNHCR. 2004). Internationally, Pakistan is a signatory to the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**, which upholds the right to necessary housing, food, water, and health rights that are often denied during post-flood recovery in districts like Khairpur. The **UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** lay down that internally displaced persons must be given, in full equality, the similar rights and freedoms as other persons in their country, including inclusion in public affairs and rights to essential services (United Nations 1966). The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)** furthermore calls on states to implement inclusive, rights-based, and obstructive approaches to disaster risk and recovery (UNDRR. 2015). Despite these commitments, the response in Khairpur lacked a legal and institutional framework to protect the rights of climate-induced IDPs. Pakistan's **National Disaster Management Act (2010)** does not provide specific entitlements for post-disaster

rehabilitation, land rights, or long-term resettlement, leaving displaced populations in a legal vacuum (Government of Pakistan. 2010).

Bridging Humanitarianism and Human Rights

The flood relief response in Khairpur mainly focused on short-term relief, such as emergency food, shelter, and medical aid. However, significant shortfalls emerged in sustaining these services and making sure that equitable access. Relief efforts were often politically carried out, poor transparency and unable to reach all affected populations equally. Vulnerable groups which had women, children, elderly, and persons with disabilities specifically were overlooked in planning and service delivery (DAWN. 2022). A rights-based approach requires that post-disaster carries three essential principles: **participation, access to information, and non-discrimination**. Participation makes the inclusion of affected communities, majorly marginalized groups, in the design, implementation, and monitoring of disaster response strategies (OHCHR. 2006). Transparency makes sure that communities receive timely, adequate, and correct information about their rights, aid entitlements, and complaint mechanisms. Non-discrimination requires that relief and reconstruction efforts give importance to those historically excluded from political, economic, or social power.

Towards a Justice-Based Disaster Governance Framework

The case of Khairpur district in Sindh shows the importance of reforming Pakistan's disaster governance model. Without legally acknowledging climate-induced displacement and equating recovery with international human rights standards, future relief work repeating the same line of exclusions. Climate justice demands that national frameworks move away from emergency response and adopt obligations for long-term rehabilitation, land rights, compensation, and accessibility to public services. Equally, international donors must equate the funding framework with principles of justice, accountability, and inclusion of local. Only by rearranging the crisis within a justice framework rather than seeing it as a technical or logistical issue can states fulfill their duties to protect affected populations from the remerging threats of climate change.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The humanitarian response to the 2022 floods in Khairpur resolved essential survival needs but exposed serious gaps in readiness, equity, and accountability. The scale of the disaster was massive for communities and government institutions, with slow evacuation efforts and inefficient coordinated early-stage relief. Distribution of aid was reportedly motivated by political affiliations, resulting in many affectees relying on INGOs, NGOs, and philanthropists for crucial support. Relief efforts majorly failed to prioritize persons with special needs, elderly individuals, pregnant women, and children. Women, in particular, faced massive hardships due to insufficient sanitation facilities and a lack of privacy during the period of menstruation or pregnancy.

Most of the mud and thatch houses were destroyed, and tent availability was insufficient to meet the needs of shelter less populations. Although communities acknowledged rebuilding of brick houses, many deserving families were not included from the reconstruction surveys and thus were denied essential compensation. Essential drinking water faced the threat of contamination due to stagnant water that led to increased cases of malaria and stomach illnesses. Health services provided by the Health Department and PPHI were inadequate and lacked vital data tracking, especially related to mother and newborn health in camps. Educational services were severely disrupted, with schools either damaged or used as relief shelters. Rehabilitation work of schools later achieved momentum mainly due to the 2024 general elections, which required polling stations

to be established in school buildings.

The affected population reported mistreatment at banks while collecting rehabilitation funds, with complaints of corruption and red tapes. No functional complaint mechanisms were available to resolve such issues. Poor drainage systems and the encroachment of natural waterways, both of which added to the flooding and slow water recession. Economic activity in rural areas was hampered by the loss of crops and livestock. However, government subsidies and advantageous post-flood soil conditions added to a strong wheat harvest the following year. Damage to connectivity and road infrastructure significantly added to travel time and costs for residents. Many flood victims also misplaced their CNICs, and NADRA's poor capacity delayed reissuance, curtailed access to aid and public services.

In a nutshell, while quick humanitarian needs were partially met however sufficient response fell short of human rights standards, particularly those related to participation, transparency, and non-discrimination. Structural weaknesses in disaster governance, political biases, and the lack of a rights-based framework led to inequitable results and increased community vulnerabilities. Sustainable recovery will require legal and institutional overhaul, including safeguards for climate-induced IDPs, inclusive decision-making processes, and effective accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders of the community.

Conflict of Interest

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