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I, Khadim Hussain Saleem was born in 1973 in Khaplu a remote village in far north of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. I received my early education from my home town and went to Lahore for higher studies. Having graduated in commerce I supplemented my education by acquiring a master degree in English Literature from Bahauddin Zakriya University Multan. After passing the Gilgit-Baltistan Competitive Examination I joined the Gilgit-Baltistan service as Section Officer in 2003. Before 2003, I spent about three years in Education department as lecturer in English and was posted at Inter College Khaplu.

I started my public service career from forest department as Section Officer. At the Gilgi-Baltistan Secretariat I served in various departments. As Section Officer my job was to examine multiple kinds of cases and present them to the Deputy Secretary for onward submission to the Secretary for decisions. Serving further in Education and Services departments I was promoted to the position of Deputy Secretary.

As Deputy Secretary to the government of Gilgit-Baltistan I was posted as Staff Officer to the Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan. As Staff Officer my responsibilities include assisting the chief Secretary in various issues of policy and administration and coordination among various departments. At this position I had the opportunity to overseeing the workings of the various departments.

During the period I had the opportunity to gain further knowledge and enrich my capacity by participating in trainings of multiple disciplines like planning, administration and financial management etc. In 2010 I was nominated to participate in an International Leadership Training programme organized by GIZ Germany. The training programme was spanned over a period of one year. It included major modules of training on leadership, change management and project development. During the period I had the opportunity to have a bird,s eye view of the workings of e different institutions in Germany as I spent about 04 months of internship there.

After completion of my training abroad I was posted as secretary Forest, wildlife and environment Gilgit-Baltistn. Since January 2012 I have been looking after the department of Forest, Wildlife and Environment Gilgit-Baltistan.

Environmental Impacts, Resource Management and Mitigations Actions

Administrative and Policy Measures

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The Rio conference in 1992 recognized the crucial role played by mountain ecosystems by highlighting that the livelihood of about 10% of the world's population depended directly on mountain resources such as water, forests and agricultural products and minerals (United Nations, 2001). In addition, populations living in valleys and plains depend on the mountains for water as many major rivers originate there. This aspect was also stressed in Agenda 21 that stated that about 40% of the world's population lived in adjacent medium and lower watershed areas. The vulnerability of mountain areas to environmental degradation pressures placed by increasing population growth, tourism and economic development, was also highlighted. Notably, Agenda 21 drew attention to ecological degradation in the Karakorum/Himalayan region resulting from the cultivation of marginal lands due to population growth.

Based on international obligations and the effects of Climate Change Phenomena, National Climate Change Policy of Pakistan approved by the Federal Cabinet on September 2012, focused on

adaptation and mitigation measures due to adverse impacts of climate change and subsequent extreme events. The Policy highlighted Mountain Areas and associated Rangelands and Pastures as one of the Vulnerable Ecosystems and suggested policy measure. At provincial level, for implementation of the National Climate Change Policy, recommended “Provincial Climate Change Implementation Committee” headed by the provincial Minister for Environment.

Gilgit-Baltistan cover an area of 72, 400 square kilometres out of which 1.7 and 1.8% are agricultural and barren lands respectively and rest are mountains. Current population of Gilgit-Baltistan is 1.2 Millions and is increasing at a rate of 2.47% per annum. This growth rate is very high in rural and remote valleys. Population density is 15 people per square kilometre. Climatic variability and extreme weather conditions from +40 to -20 in remote valleys exert pressure on forest and other natural resources for survival of people during extreme winters.

A population of Gilgit-Baltistan is concentrated in seven urban centres and is administratively called District Headquarters and scattered in 871 villages across the region. Pakistan’s contribution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions is low, however the phenomenon is affecting the region. Local triggering factors are deforestation and forest degradation, use of fuel wood in winters for cooking and heating and subsequent carbon emissions, carbon dioxide emissions due to burning of municipal solid waste as no engineering disposal mechanism exist, land use change in urban areas and decreasing tree cover due to expansion of settlements etc.

Apart from the global climate change phenomena, among the local triggering factors are burning of fuel wood and solid waste. As the region lies outside the wind corridor and trapping nature of valleys make the Carbon Dioxide concentrations suspended in atmosphere for longer times and multiplies their effects. An average household in Gilgit-Baltistan burn 60, 000 Kg of wood each year and 0.50 Kg of Solid Waste is being generated per capita per day.

Urban centres in Gilgit-Baltistan have grown without proper land use planning and zoning and new exotic materials like cement and concrete have been used instead of indigenous materials. This practice has increased the quantity of firewood due to its heat conducting nature thus increasing the carbon emissions.

Solid waste has been a problem in urban centres and in a recent survey conducted by Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (GB-EPA) 0.500 kg per capita per day is being generated.

Keywords

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