

Securitizing Climate Change in Pakistan: Discourse, Policy, and the Implementation Gap

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ABSTRACT

*Climate change has increasingly been framed as a critical security concern in global policy discourse, yet the translation of this framing into actionable policy remains uneven, particularly in developing countries. This article examines the securitization of climate change in Pakistan by analyzing the evolution of discourse, institutional responses, and the persistent gap between rhetorical recognition and practical implementation. Drawing on securitization theory, the study explores how climate change has been constructed as an existential threat within Pakistan's policy landscape, particularly in the National Security Policy (2022–2026). Using qualitative methods, including document analysis and case study examination of major climatic events such as the 2010 and 2022 floods, the article identifies a significant disconnect between discourse and governance outcomes. While climate change is increasingly recognized as a “threat multiplier,” institutional fragmentation, civil-military imbalances, limited technical capacity, and competing traditional security priorities hinder effective integration into national security planning. The article argues that Pakistan's securitization of climate change remains largely symbolic and incomplete, lacking the structural transformation required for operational effectiveness. It concludes by proposing a shift toward institutional coherence, policy integration, and governance reform to enable meaningful climate-security integration. This study contributes to broader debates on environmental security by highlighting the challenges of translating securitization into practice in a Global South context.*

**Keywords:** Climate securitization, Pakistan, national security, environmental security, policy implementation, governance

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is no longer confined to the realm of environmental science; it has emerged as a central concern within global security discourse. The increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related events—ranging from floods and droughts to heatwaves and glacial melting—have underscored the complex ways in which environmental changes intersect with political stability, economic resilience, and social cohesion. In recent years, policymakers and scholars have increasingly conceptualized climate

change as a “threat multiplier,” a phenomenon that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and amplifies risks across multiple sectors.

Pakistan provides a particularly compelling case for examining the securitization of climate change. As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries globally, Pakistan faces a wide array of environmental challenges, including erratic monsoon patterns, rising temperatures, glacial retreat in the Himalayas, and recurrent flooding. These environmental stressors have far-reaching implications for the country’s economy, particularly its agriculture-dependent sectors, as well as for its social stability and political order.

Historically, Pakistan’s national security framework has been dominated by traditional concerns, including territorial disputes, military threats, and internal security challenges such as terrorism. However, the release of the National Security Policy (2022–2026) marked a notable shift in strategic thinking. For the first time, climate change was explicitly recognized as a critical component of national security, signaling an attempt to broaden the scope of security beyond conventional military considerations.

Despite this rhetorical shift, significant questions remain regarding the extent to which climate change has been effectively integrated into Pakistan’s security framework. While policy documents increasingly acknowledge the importance of environmental risks, the implementation of climate-security strategies appears fragmented and inconsistent. This raises a central puzzle: to what extent has climate change been genuinely securitized in Pakistan, and why does a gap persist between discourse and practice?

This article addresses this question by applying securitization theory to the Pakistani context. It argues that while climate change has been discursively securitized—meaning it is framed as an existential threat in official narratives—the process remains incomplete due to institutional, political, and structural constraints. The article further contends that this partial securitization results in a symbolic acknowledgment of climate risks without the corresponding policy transformation required to address them effectively.

The structure of the article is as follows. The next section outlines the theoretical framework of securitization theory, followed by a review of relevant literature on climate security. Subsequent sections examine the evolution of climate-security discourse in Pakistan, analyze the gap between discourse and implementation, and explore case studies that illustrate the practical implications of this gap. The article concludes with policy recommendations and reflections on the broader implications of climate securitization in developing countries.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SECURITIZATION THEORY**

Securitization theory, developed by the Copenhagen School of security studies, provides a conceptual framework for understanding how issues are constructed as matters of security. Rather than treating security threats as objective realities, securitization theory emphasizes the role of discourse and political agency in defining what constitutes a security issue.

According to Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998), securitization occurs when a political actor successfully frames an issue as an existential threat to a valued referent object, thereby justifying the adoption of extraordinary measures to address it. This process involves three key components: the securitizing actor, the referent object, and the audience whose acceptance is necessary for the securitization move to succeed.

The securitizing actor is typically a political leader, government institution, or influential organization that articulates the threat. The referent object is the entity perceived to be under threat, which may include the state, society, economy, or environment. The audience, meanwhile, plays a crucial role in legitimizing the securitization process, as the framing of an issue as a security threat must be accepted in order to enable policy action.

In the context of climate change, securitization involves framing environmental degradation as a threat to national stability, economic development, and human security. This framing has the potential to elevate climate change on the policy agenda, mobilize resources, and justify urgent action. However, securitization also carries risks, including the potential for militarized responses and the marginalization of democratic processes.

An important distinction within securitization theory is between discursive and operational securitization. Discursive securitization refers to the framing of an issue as a security threat in rhetoric and policy documents, while operational securitization involves the translation of this framing into concrete actions, institutional reforms, and resource allocation. In many cases, including Pakistan, securitization may remain at the discursive level without leading to substantive policy changes.

This distinction is central to the present study. While Pakistan's policy discourse increasingly recognizes climate change as a security issue, the extent to which this recognition has translated into operational measures remains limited. By applying securitization theory, this article seeks to unpack this discrepancy and identify the factors that hinder the transition from discourse to practice.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The relationship between climate change and security has been the subject of extensive academic debate. Early studies on environmental security focused on the role of resource scarcity in triggering conflict, with scholars such as Homer-Dixon (1999) arguing that environmental degradation could lead to violence by intensifying competition over limited resources. This perspective laid the foundation for subsequent research on climate security.

More recent scholarship has expanded this framework by introducing the concept of climate change as a "threat multiplier." This concept suggests that climate change does not directly cause conflict but exacerbates existing socio-economic and political vulnerabilities, thereby increasing the likelihood of instability (Busby, 2021). For example, droughts may reduce agricultural productivity, leading to economic hardship and social unrest, which in turn can create conditions conducive to conflict.

At the same time, critics have cautioned against the securitization of climate change, arguing that framing environmental issues as security threats may lead to militarized responses and undermine democratic governance (Barnett, 2007). These critiques highlight the need for a balanced approach that recognizes the security implications of climate change without reducing it to a purely military concern.

The debate between human security and state-centric security is particularly relevant to the study of climate change. Traditional security frameworks prioritize the protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, often focusing on military threats. In contrast, the human security paradigm emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities, encompassing a broader range of threats, including economic, environmental, and social risks.

Climate change challenges the adequacy of state-centric security frameworks by introducing non-traditional threats that transcend national borders and affect multiple dimensions of human well-being. As

a result, many scholars argue for the adoption of a human security approach that prioritizes resilience, adaptation, and social equity.

In Pakistan, this tension is evident in the coexistence of traditional and non-traditional security priorities. While the National Security Policy acknowledges the importance of human security, the allocation of resources and institutional focus continues to favor conventional military concerns. This imbalance contributes to the gap between climate-security discourse and implementation.

Developing countries face unique challenges in integrating climate change into national security frameworks. These challenges include limited financial resources, weak institutional capacity, and competing development priorities. In many cases, climate governance is characterized by fragmentation, with multiple agencies operating in silos and lacking effective coordination mechanisms.

Pakistan exemplifies these challenges. The country's climate governance architecture involves a complex network of federal and provincial institutions, often with overlapping mandates and limited coordination. This fragmentation undermines the effectiveness of policy implementation and contributes to delays in response to climate-related crises.

While existing literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between climate change and security, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of how securitization unfolds in specific national contexts, particularly in developing countries. In the case of Pakistan, most studies focus either on environmental impacts or policy analysis, without systematically examining the interplay between discourse, securitization, and implementation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the securitization of climate change in Pakistan, with a particular focus on the relationship between discourse, policy formulation, and implementation practices. Given the complex and interpretive nature of securitization theory, a qualitative approach is most appropriate for analyzing how climate change is framed as a security issue and how this framing translates—or fails to translate—into governance outcomes.

The research is primarily based on document analysis and case study methodology. This approach allows for a detailed examination of official policy narratives, institutional responses, and real-world events that illustrate the practical implications of climate securitization.

## **EVOLUTION OF CLIMATE SECURITY DISCOURSE IN PAKISTAN**

Understanding the securitization of climate change in Pakistan requires a historical analysis of how environmental issues have been framed within policy and security discourse over time. This evolution can be divided into four key phases.

### **Pre-2000: Environmental Issues Outside Security Framework**

Before the 2000s, environmental concerns in Pakistan were largely treated as technical or developmental issues rather than matters of national security. Policy discussions focused on:

- Deforestation
- Water management

- Pollution control

Climate change, as a global issue, had limited visibility in domestic discourse. This was partly due to:

- Limited scientific data
- Low public awareness
- Dominance of traditional security concerns

During this period, Pakistan's security agenda was overwhelmingly shaped by geopolitical tensions, particularly its rivalry with India, as well as internal political instability. As a result, environmental issues remained peripheral to national security thinking.

### **2000–2010: Emergence of Climate Awareness**

The early 2000s marked the beginning of Pakistan's engagement with global climate governance frameworks. Participation in international agreements and the submission of national communications under the UNFCCC contributed to a gradual increase in awareness of climate-related risks.

However, climate change continued to be framed primarily as:

- A development challenge
- An environmental issue
- A matter of economic vulnerability

The absence of a security framing during this period reflects the persistence of traditional security paradigms. Climate change was acknowledged, but it was not yet perceived as an existential threat requiring urgent policy intervention.

### **2010–2020: Crisis-Driven Shift Toward Security Framing**

The devastating floods of 2010 marked a turning point in Pakistan's climate discourse. Affecting millions of people and causing widespread economic damage, the floods exposed the country's vulnerability to extreme weather events.

This period saw several important developments:

- Increased recognition of climate risks in policy discussions
- Introduction of the National Climate Change Policy (2012)
- Expansion of disaster management institutions

Despite these advancements, the integration of climate change into national security discourse remained limited. Climate change was still largely treated as a humanitarian and developmental issue rather than a strategic security concern.

However, repeated climate shocks—including droughts, heatwaves, and floods—gradually shifted perceptions. Policymakers began to recognize the broader implications of climate change, particularly its impact on:

- Food security
- Water availability
- Internal stability

This period can be understood as a transitional phase, where the foundations for securitization were being laid but had not yet fully materialized.

### **Post-2020: Formal Entry into National Security Discourse**

The release of the National Security Policy (2022–2026) represents a significant milestone in the securitization of climate change in Pakistan. For the first time, climate change was explicitly identified as a critical component of national security.

The policy characterizes climate change as a:

- “Threat multiplier”
- Driver of socio-economic instability
- Source of resource conflicts

This shift reflects an expanded understanding of security that includes non-traditional threats. It also aligns Pakistan’s policy discourse with global trends, where climate change is increasingly recognized as a security issue.

### **Discursive Securitization: A Critical Assessment**

While the inclusion of climate change in the National Security Policy marks an important step, it is essential to critically assess the nature of this securitization.

At the discursive level, several indicators suggest that climate change has been successfully framed as a security threat:

- Use of security-oriented language in policy documents
- Recognition of climate risks as systemic and interconnected
- Linkage of environmental issues with national stability

However, discursive securitization does not automatically translate into effective policy action. The persistence of implementation gaps suggests that securitization in Pakistan remains incomplete and largely symbolic.

### **Drivers of Securitization in Pakistan**

The securitization of climate change in Pakistan has been driven by several factors:

#### ***1. Climate Disasters***

Major events such as floods and heatwaves have highlighted the tangible impacts of climate change, making it more difficult to ignore.

#### ***2. International Pressure***

Global climate discourse and international frameworks have influenced domestic policy narratives.

#### ***3. Economic Vulnerability***

The impact of climate change on agriculture and infrastructure has underscored its economic implications.

#### ***4. Security Spillovers***

The link between environmental stress and issues such as migration, urbanization, and extremism has reinforced the security framing.

### **Structural Constraints on Securitization**

Despite these drivers, several structural constraints limit the effectiveness of securitization:

- Dominance of traditional security priorities
- Institutional fragmentation
- Limited technical and financial capacity
- Weak coordination mechanisms

### **FROM DISCOURSE TO PRACTICE: THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP**

The preceding sections have established that climate change has increasingly been framed as a national security issue in Pakistan, particularly in recent policy discourse. However, the central argument of this article lies in identifying and explaining the persistent gap between discursive securitization and operational implementation. While climate change is now recognized rhetorically as a “threat multiplier,” this recognition has not been matched by corresponding institutional transformation or policy effectiveness.

### **Institutional Fragmentation and Governance Challenges**

One of the most significant barriers to effective climate securitization in Pakistan is the fragmentation of institutional responsibilities. Climate governance in Pakistan involves a complex network of actors, including:

- Federal ministries (e.g., Climate Change, Water Resources)

- Provincial governments
- Disaster management authorities
- Military institutions

While this multiplicity of actors reflects the cross-cutting nature of climate change, it also creates coordination challenges. Responsibilities are often overlapping, leading to:

- Policy inconsistencies
- Delays in decision-making
- Inefficient allocation of resources

The devolution of environmental responsibilities to provinces following the 18th Constitutional Amendment has further complicated governance structures. While decentralization has the potential to enhance local responsiveness, it has also resulted in uneven institutional capacity across provinces. Some regions lack the technical expertise and financial resources required to implement climate adaptation measures effectively.

Moreover, coordination mechanisms between federal and provincial institutions remain weak. Policy frameworks often exist on paper but lack the operational structures necessary for implementation. This disconnect underscores a broader issue: securitization at the discursive level has not been accompanied by institutional integration.

### **Policy Coherence and Strategic Disconnect**

A second major factor contributing to the implementation gap is the lack of coherence between policy frameworks. Pakistan has developed several policies related to climate change and security, including:

- National Climate Change Policy
- National Security Policy
- Disaster Management Frameworks

While these policies acknowledge the importance of climate risks, they often operate in silos. There is limited integration between climate policy and national security planning, resulting in fragmented responses.

For example, the National Security Policy identifies climate change as a key threat, yet it does not provide detailed mechanisms for:

- Inter-agency coordination
- Resource allocation
- Monitoring and evaluation

Similarly, climate policies focus on adaptation and mitigation but do not explicitly incorporate security considerations into their frameworks. This lack of alignment creates a strategic disconnect, where climate change is recognized as a security issue in theory but treated as a separate domain in practice.

The absence of a unified national strategy for climate security further exacerbates this problem. Without clear guidelines and institutional linkages, policy implementation remains ad hoc and reactive rather than proactive and coordinated.

### **Resource Constraints and Capacity Limitations**

Resource limitations represent another critical barrier to operational securitization. Effective climate adaptation and mitigation require substantial financial investment, technological capacity, and human resources. However, Pakistan faces significant economic constraints that limit its ability to allocate sufficient resources to climate-related initiatives.

Budgetary priorities often favor traditional security sectors, particularly defense, reflecting the enduring influence of conventional security concerns. As a result:

- Climate programs are underfunded
- Infrastructure remains vulnerable
- Long-term planning is neglected

In addition to financial constraints, there are significant gaps in technical capacity. Many institutions lack:

- Expertise in climate modeling and risk assessment
- Data collection and monitoring systems
- Skilled personnel for policy implementation

These limitations hinder the ability of policymakers to design and execute effective climate-security strategies. Even when policies exist, their implementation is often constrained by a lack of operational capacity.

### **Civil-Military Dynamics and Security Priorities**

The role of the military in Pakistan's governance structure adds another layer of complexity to the securitization of climate change. Historically, the military has played a dominant role in national security and crisis response, including disaster management.

In the context of climate-related disasters, the military often serves as the primary responder, providing logistical support, rescue operations, and relief distribution. While this involvement is crucial in emergency situations, it also reflects the relative of civilian institutions.

This dynamic has several implications:

1. **Short-Term-Focus**

Military-led responses are often reactive, focusing on immediate relief rather than long-term resilience.

2. **Institutional-Imbalance**

Civilian agencies remain underdeveloped, limiting their ability to take a leading role in climate governance.

3. **Limited-Policy-Integration**

Climate change is not fully integrated into strategic defense planning, despite its recognition as a security threat.

The dominance of traditional security priorities further reinforces this imbalance. Issues such as territorial defense and counterterrorism continue to receive greater attention and resources, leaving climate security under-prioritized.

### **Climate Change as a “Soft” Security Issue**

Despite its formal recognition in policy documents, climate change is often treated as a secondary or “soft” security issue. This perception affects both political will and resource allocation.

Several factors contribute to this dynamic:

- The gradual and long-term nature of climate impacts
- Difficulty in establishing direct causal links between climate change and conflict
- Competing immediate security concerns

As a result, climate change is acknowledged rhetorically but does not command the same urgency as traditional threats. This discrepancy highlights a key limitation of securitization: framing an issue as a security threat does not guarantee that it will be prioritized in practice.

### **Implementation Deficits in Disaster Governance**

Disaster governance provides a critical lens through which to examine the implementation gap. Pakistan has developed institutional mechanisms for disaster management, including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs).

However, several challenges persist:

- Limited coordination between agencies
- Delays in response and resource mobilization
- Inadequate preparedness and early warning systems

These challenges were evident in major climate events, where institutional responses often fell short of expectations. While disaster response has improved over time, it remains largely reactive rather than preventive.

The lack of integration between disaster management and long-term climate planning further underscores the gap between discourse and practice.

### **Political Economy of Climate Policy**

The implementation gap cannot be fully understood without considering the broader political economy. Climate policy in Pakistan is shaped by competing interests, power dynamics, and governance constraints.

Key issues include:

- Influence of elite interests in resource allocation
- Weak accountability mechanisms
- Short-term political incentives

Policymakers often prioritize visible, short-term projects over long-term climate resilience measures. This tendency undermines sustained efforts to address climate risks and reinforces the gap between policy commitments and actual outcomes.

### **Symbolic vs Operational Securitization**

The analysis above suggests that climate change in Pakistan has undergone symbolic securitization rather than operational securitization.

- **Symbolic-Securitization:**  
Climate change is recognized as a security threat in discourse and policy documents.
- **Operational-Securitization:**  
Requires concrete actions, including institutional reform, resource allocation, and policy integration.

In Pakistan's case, securitization has largely remained at the symbolic level. While the language of security is increasingly used, it has not been accompanied by the structural changes necessary for effective implementation.

### **Consequences of the Implementation Gap**

The gap between discourse and practice has significant implications:

1. **Increased-Vulnerability**  
Failure to implement effective policies leaves communities exposed to climate risks.
2. **Economic-Losses**  
Repeated climate disasters impose heavy financial burdens on the state.
3. **Social-Instability**  
Displacement, resource scarcity, and inequality can contribute to unrest.

**4. Erosion-of-Policy-Credibility**

The disconnect between rhetoric and action undermines public trust in institutions.

**Synthesis: Why Securitization Falls Short**

The failure of securitization to translate into effective policy in Pakistan can be attributed to a combination of factors:

- Institutional fragmentation
- Policy incoherence
- Resource constraints
- Civil-military imbalance
- Political economy dynamics

**CASE STUDIES: CLIMATE CRISES AND SECURITY RESPONSES**

To better understand the gap between discourse and implementation, this section examines two major climate-induced disasters in Pakistan: the 2010 floods and the 2022 floods. These events serve as critical empirical moments that reveal how climate securitization operates in practice.

**The 2010 Floods: A Turning Point in Climate Awareness**

The floods of 2010 were among the most devastating natural disasters in Pakistan's history. Triggered by unprecedented monsoon rains, the floods affected approximately 20 million people, destroyed infrastructure, and caused significant economic losses.

**Institutional Response**

The response to the 2010 floods exposed serious weaknesses in Pakistan's disaster management system. At the time:

- Coordination between federal and provincial authorities was limited
- Early warning systems were underdeveloped
- Relief efforts were delayed and uneven

The military played a central role in rescue and relief operations, highlighting its capacity relative to civilian institutions. While this intervention was critical in mitigating immediate suffering, it also underscored the weakness of civilian disaster management structures.

**Policy Outcomes**

In the aftermath of the floods, Pakistan undertook several policy initiatives:

- Strengthening of disaster management institutions

- Development of the National Climate Change Policy (2012)
- Increased engagement with international climate frameworks

Despite these developments, the integration of climate change into national security discourse remained limited. The floods were primarily framed as a humanitarian and developmental crisis rather than a security issue.

### **Implications for Securitization**

The 2010 floods can be understood as a catalytic event that raised awareness of climate vulnerability but did not fully trigger securitization. While the scale of the disaster highlighted systemic risks, the absence of a security framing limited its impact on strategic policy transformation.

### **The 2022 Floods: Crisis in an Era of Securitization**

More than a decade later, the 2022 floods presented an even more severe crisis. Affecting over 30 million people and submerging large parts of the country, the floods were widely described as a manifestation of climate change.

### **Institutional and Policy Response**

Unlike in 2010, the 2022 floods occurred in a context where climate change had already been recognized as a security concern in policy discourse. This was reflected in:

- Official statements linking the floods to climate change
- Increased international advocacy for climate justice
- Greater visibility of climate issues in national debates

However, despite this discursive shift, many of the same challenges persisted:

- Delays in relief and rehabilitation efforts
- Insufficient coordination among institutions
- Continued reliance on the military for disaster response

### **The Persistence of Structural Weaknesses**

The 2022 floods revealed that, despite policy advancements, structural weaknesses in governance had not been adequately addressed. Key issues included:

- Lack of long-term planning for climate resilience
- Inadequate infrastructure to withstand extreme weather
- Limited investment in adaptation strategies

These shortcomings highlight the gap between recognizing climate change as a security threat and developing the institutional capacity to respond effectively.

### **Securitization in Practice**

The 2022 floods illustrate the limitations of securitization in Pakistan. While climate change was clearly framed as a national security issue, this framing did not translate into a fundamentally different response compared to 2010.

This suggests that securitization, in this case, has not led to the adoption of “extraordinary measures” in the sense envisioned by securitization theory. Instead, responses remain largely within the realm of conventional governance practices.

### **DISCUSSION: EXPLAINING THE SECURITIZATION GAP**

The case studies reinforce the central argument of this article: that climate change in Pakistan has been discursively securitized but not operationally integrated into policy and governance.

### **Crisis Without Transformation**

Both the 2010 and 2022 floods demonstrate that even large-scale crises do not automatically lead to structural change. While such events can raise awareness and prompt policy discussions, they do not necessarily result in sustained institutional reform.

### **The Limits of Discourse**

The findings highlight an important limitation of securitization theory: discourse alone is insufficient to drive policy transformation. In Pakistan’s case, the framing of climate change as a security threat has not overcome entrenched institutional and political constraints.

### **Competing Security Priorities**

Traditional security concerns continue to dominate Pakistan’s strategic landscape. Issues such as military threats and internal security challenges receive greater attention and resources, limiting the space for climate security to emerge as a central priority.

### **Governance and Capacity Deficits**

Weak governance structures and limited institutional capacity further constrain the implementation of climate-security policies. Without addressing these underlying issues, securitization is unlikely to produce meaningful outcomes.

### **Implications for Theory**

The Pakistani case suggests that securitization should be understood as a gradual and uneven process, rather than a binary shift from non-security to security status. It also highlights the importance of distinguishing between symbolic and operational dimensions of securitization.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Bridging the gap between discourse and implementation requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. The following recommendations are proposed:

### **Institutional Integration**

- Establish a centralized coordination mechanism for climate-security policy
- Strengthen linkages between federal and provincial institutions
- Clarify roles and responsibilities to reduce overlap

### **Policy Coherence**

- Align climate policies with national security strategies
- Develop a unified climate-security framework
- Introduce monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

### **Capacity Building**

- Invest in technical expertise and data systems
- Enhance early warning and risk assessment capabilities
- Provide training for policymakers and practitioners

### **Resource Allocation**

- Increase funding for climate adaptation and resilience
- Integrate climate considerations into budget planning
- Leverage international climate finance

### **Civilian Institutional Strengthening**

- Reduce over-reliance on military institutions in disaster management
- Build the capacity of civilian agencies
- Promote community-based resilience initiatives

### **Long-Term Planning**

- Shift from reactive disaster response to proactive risk management
- Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure

- Incorporate climate risks into development planning

## CONCLUSION

This article has examined the securitization of climate change in Pakistan, focusing on the relationship between discourse, policy, and implementation. It finds that while climate change has been increasingly framed as a national security issue, this securitization remains largely symbolic. The gap between discourse and practice reflects deeper structural challenges, including institutional fragmentation, resource constraints, and competing security priorities. As a result, climate change has not been fully integrated into Pakistan's security framework in a meaningful way. Addressing this gap requires more than rhetorical recognition. It demands a fundamental shift toward operational securitization, characterized by institutional reform, policy coherence, and sustained investment in climate resilience. The findings of this study have broader implications for other developing countries facing similar challenges. They underscore the importance of moving beyond discourse to achieve effective and sustainable climate-security integration.

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