Disturbed Landscape in Fragile Ecologies

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Abstract

Kashmir Valley is an extremely fragile ecological vulnerable region. It is prone to repeated floods of varying intensity, due to its peculiar bowl-shaped geography. The valley floor is relatively flat with very steep rising mountains and only a single outlet for the entire watershed to drain. Over the last few decades, the direct impact of rising global temperature can be witnessed in the glacial melt, abrupt seasonal changes and changing character of each season in Kashmir Valley.

The wetland maps of over 100 years and particularly last three decades show sharp decline in its size. Severe fragmentation of the network of wetlands has made the situation extremely vulnerable to flooding. This is off course become more alarming due to the high siltation in the lakes, rivers and spill channel of the river Jhelum. Over the years many of the water bodies have turned in marshes, later into plantation and eventually reclaimed as landmass for construction.