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## Bahawalnagar Farmers Face Ruin as Rains Destroy Crops

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Relentless rainfall in the Bahawalnagar district has triggered a severe agricultural crisis, devastating crops and endangering farmers' livelihoods, raising urgent human rights concerns.

In July 2025, Bahawalnagar district, a key agricultural hub in Punjab, Pakistan, was hit by a catastrophic wave of continuous heavy rainfall, plunging farmers into a dire crisis that threatens their fundamental right to a secure livelihood. The deluge has inundated over 50,000 hectares of farmland, destroying crops like cotton, rice, and sugarcane, which are vital to the region's economy, according to a preliminary report by the Punjab Agriculture Department. This disaster has left thousands of smallholder farmers facing significant

losses, exacerbating their struggle to survive in an already challenging environment, as reported by The Express Tribune on July 30, 2025.

The excessive rainfall, described as unprecedented by local farmers, has caused waterlogging that has rotted crops ready for harvest. Muhammad Aslam, a farmer from Chishtian tehsil, told Geo.TV, “The fields are like lakes now; our entire cotton crop is gone.” The district, with 971,209.4 acres of agricultural land, relies heavily on monsoon rains, but this year’s erratic patterns, but this year’s erratic patterns have turned a lifeline into a disaster, have turned a lifeline into a disaster, per a 2020 study in the Pakistan Journal of Science. The study noted that while rainfall variability has historically had a limited direct impact on wheat yields in Bahawalnagar, excessive rains disrupt other crops, with losses potentially reaching 10-15% this season, according to agricultural officials.

The Punjab government has responded with emergency measures, including diesel subsidies for water pumps to drain fields, as announced by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). However, farmers like Aslam argue that these efforts are insufficient without immediate financial aid and crop insurance reforms. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) reported that 80% of affected farmers lack access to insurance, violating their right to economic security. The crisis also risks food insecurity, as Bahawalnagar contributes significantly to Pakistan’s cotton and rice production.

Local activists, including farmer leader Naveed Iqbal, have called for long-term solutions like climate-resilient crops and better irrigation infrastructure to protect farmers’ rights. “The government must act swiftly to safeguard our livelihoods,” Iqbal stated, per Dawn.com. As Bahawalnagar grapples with this agricultural tragedy, the urgent need for robust policies to ensure farmers’ human rights and economic stability has never been clearer.