



***BIG DATA ANALYTICS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
MODELING: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
COMPUTATIONAL APPROACH***

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Abstract. *Climate change poses a significant threat to global ecosystems and socioeconomic systems. Traditional modeling techniques are often limited in capturing the complex, nonlinear interactions in climate systems. Big Data Analytics (BDA) presents a transformative framework for enhancing climate change modeling through high-volume data integration, real-time processing, and advanced predictive capabilities. This study explores a multidisciplinary computational approach combining environmental science, machine learning, and cloud computing to refine climate predictions. It further analyzes case studies from Pakistan's vulnerable zones to demonstrate how BDA can improve climate resilience strategies. The findings advocate for a shift from siloed climate models to integrated analytics platforms for real-time and long-term climate forecasting.*

Keywords: *Big Data Analytics, Climate Modeling, Environmental Informatics, Predictive Simulation.*

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing global challenges of the 21st century, manifesting in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, glacial melt, and shifting ecological patterns. These changes are not only environmental but also deeply socioeconomic, affecting agriculture, health, water resources, and national security. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the current pace of global warming and variability is faster and more intense than predicted, warranting urgent intervention and proactive planning [1].

Limitations of Traditional Climate Models

Historically, climate modeling has relied on physics-based numerical simulations such as General Circulation Models (GCMs) and Earth System Models (ESMs). While these models offer valuable

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long-term projections, they often suffer from limitations in spatial and temporal resolution, making them less effective for regional or real-time forecasting [2]. Additionally, the traditional models are computationally intensive and lack the flexibility to assimilate diverse and high-frequency data sources such as IoT sensors, satellite telemetry, and unstructured environmental observations.

The Rise of Big Data in Environmental Research

The advent of Big Data technologies has brought about a paradigm shift in how climate systems are understood, modeled, and predicted. Massive volumes of data from satellites, weather stations, ocean buoys, and ground-based sensors are now available in real-time, offering a rich foundation for enhanced modeling [3]. Big Data Analytics (BDA) allows for the processing of this data at scale, uncovering hidden patterns, correlations, and anomalies that are not readily discernible using traditional techniques.

By integrating machine learning (ML), cloud computing, and geospatial analysis, BDA enables the development of predictive models that are both adaptive and localized. This multidisciplinary approach has shown promise in refining climate forecasts, improving disaster preparedness, and guiding mitigation policies — particularly for vulnerable countries like Pakistan where climate variability is a significant concern [4].

2. Fundamentals of Big Data Analytics in Climate Science

Big Data Analytics (BDA) has become a cornerstone of modern climate science, enabling researchers to process and interpret vast quantities of environmental data at unprecedented speed and scale. Understanding its core principles and technical infrastructure is essential to appreciate its transformative impact on climate change modeling.

2.1 The 5Vs of Big Data in Climate Context

Big data in climate science is often defined through the **5Vs** framework:

- **Volume:** Climate systems generate enormous datasets from satellite imagery, atmospheric readings, oceanic currents, and historical weather logs. For instance, NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS) processes over 30 petabytes of data annually [5].
- **Velocity:** The speed at which data is generated and needs to be processed is crucial. Real-time monitoring systems such as radar networks and buoy arrays transmit updates every few seconds, essential for forecasting rapid-onset events like cyclones and flash floods [6].
- **Variety:** Data sources are diverse — structured (e.g., meteorological logs), semi-structured (e.g., JSON sensor feeds), and unstructured (e.g., satellite images, social media during disasters). Harmonizing these formats is a central challenge in BDA [7].

- **Veracity:** Climate data often contains noise, missing values, and inconsistencies. Ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness of data is fundamental for developing valid climate models [8].
- **Value:** The ultimate goal is to extract actionable insights from raw data. BDA tools help climate scientists generate high-resolution forecasts, risk assessments, and policy recommendations that hold direct societal relevance [9].

2.2 Data Sources for Climate Modeling

Climate big data is sourced from a wide array of technologies and infrastructures:

- **Remote Sensing:** Earth-observing satellites (e.g., MODIS, Landsat, Sentinel) provide continuous global coverage of atmospheric and land surface parameters.
- **Weather Stations:** Ground-based instruments measure local temperature, humidity, pressure, wind speed, and precipitation. These are essential for validating remote data.
- **Ocean Buoys and Drifters:** Deployed in oceans to collect data on sea surface temperature, salinity, and wave dynamics — crucial for understanding phenomena like El Niño and ocean heat uptake [10].
- **IoT and Sensor Networks:** Increasingly deployed in urban and agricultural environments to gather microclimate and environmental quality data. These provide hyper-local information necessary for urban climate modeling [11].

These sources contribute to a dynamic data ecosystem, with billions of records generated daily and requiring advanced analytics for interpretation.

2.3 Role of Data Lakes and Cloud Storage

To manage the complexity and volume of climate data, data lakes have emerged as essential architectures. Unlike traditional databases, data lakes can ingest raw, heterogeneous data in real-time and store it in its native format. They enable scalable storage, indexing, and access to structured and unstructured data alike [12].

Cloud computing platforms such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Earth Engine offer scalable infrastructure for big data storage and computation. Their integration allows climate researchers to:

- Run large-scale simulations without investing in local hardware
- Apply machine learning models to terabytes of climate data
- Collaborate and share models/data in real-time across institutions

Cloud-based solutions also enhance data accessibility and interoperability, two key drivers of scientific innovation in climate analytics.

3. Computational Approaches to Climate Modeling

The complexity and scale of climate systems demand computational approaches that can manage nonlinear relationships, vast datasets, and spatiotemporal variability. Traditional climate models based solely on physical principles are increasingly being augmented or even replaced by data-driven methods that offer improved prediction accuracy and real-time adaptability. This section explores the cutting-edge computational tools transforming climate modeling, including machine learning algorithms, high-performance computing, and GIS integration.

3.1 Machine Learning Algorithms for Climate Prediction

Machine Learning (ML) has gained prominence for its ability to identify hidden patterns and generate accurate forecasts from large and diverse climate datasets. Commonly used algorithms in climate modeling include:

- **Random Forest (RF):**

A robust ensemble learning method used for classification and regression tasks. RF has been employed to predict drought conditions, classify land cover types, and forecast air quality indices with high accuracy [13].

- **Support Vector Machine (SVM):**

Effective in separating complex nonlinear datasets, SVMs are used in rainfall-runoff modeling, cyclonic intensity classification, and regional temperature prediction [14].

- **Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM):**

A type of Recurrent Neural Network (RNN), LSTM is particularly suited for time-series forecasting. It has been applied to multi-step rainfall forecasting, temperature anomaly predictions, and ocean current simulations [15].

These models require extensive feature engineering, but they outperform traditional statistical models in scenarios with high-dimensional and noisy data.

3.2 Parallel Computing and High-Performance Computing (HPC)

The processing of petabyte-scale climate data and execution of large simulations demand parallel processing capabilities and High-Performance Computing (HPC) infrastructure. Key applications include:

- **Global and Regional Climate Modeling (GCMs/RCMs):**

HPC systems enable the simulation of Earth's climate over decades or centuries with fine-grained resolution, facilitating scenario planning for greenhouse gas mitigation [16].

- **Monte Carlo Simulations for Uncertainty Quantification:**

Thousands of parallel simulation runs are used to assess model uncertainty, essential in climate risk management [17].

Real-time Disaster Forecasting:

HPC-driven analytics allow near real-time modeling of floods, cyclones, and wildfires, giving authorities valuable lead time for emergency response [18].

Organizations like the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) are investing in supercomputing facilities to enhance climate model precision and responsiveness.

3.3 Integration with Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) serve as an indispensable tool for visualizing, analyzing, and communicating climate data. When integrated with big data analytics and ML models, GIS enables:

- **Spatiotemporal Mapping:**

Display of climate variables such as rainfall distribution, heatwaves, and sea-level rise over time [19].

- **Risk Assessment and Hotspot Identification:**

Overlaying climate models on population, infrastructure, and land-use maps helps identify vulnerability zones (e.g., flood-prone areas in Karachi or drought zones in Balochistan) [20].

- **Decision Support Systems (DSS):**

GIS-based dashboards are increasingly used by local governments and environmental agencies to guide resource allocation, urban planning, and disaster preparedness.

4. Applications in Climate Prediction and Risk Assessment

The integration of Big Data Analytics (BDA) with climate science has unlocked new possibilities for timely, precise, and region-specific climate predictions. By leveraging real-time data streams and intelligent algorithms, BDA provides crucial support for climate risk assessment, mitigation strategies, and policy-making. This section explores four major applications that illustrate how computational methods are reshaping our ability to anticipate and respond to climate-related hazards.

4.1 Drought Forecasting Using Big Data Analytics

Droughts, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions like Balochistan and southern Punjab, are a major threat to water security, agriculture, and rural livelihoods in Pakistan. Big Data Analytics enables early drought detection by integrating multiple datasets, including:

- Soil moisture and evapotranspiration rates from remote sensing
- Hydrological and meteorological variables (precipitation, temperature anomalies)
- Vegetation health indices like NDVI from satellite imagery

Machine learning models, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Gradient Boosting Trees, trained on these variables can classify drought severity levels and forecast future trends with enhanced accuracy [21]. Real-time dashboards linked to these models support early warning systems for local communities and farmers.

4.2 Rainfall Pattern Analysis with Machine Learning

Rainfall variability in Pakistan's monsoon belt is increasing due to climate change, resulting in both flooding and prolonged dry spells. Traditional statistical methods often fail to capture this erratic behavior. Machine learning algorithms, including:

- Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks
- Random Forest Regressors
- K-means clustering for seasonal patterns

are now used to predict rainfall with better temporal and spatial resolution [22].

These models ingest historical weather station data, satellite precipitation data (e.g., CHIRPS), and atmospheric parameters such as sea surface temperature and wind patterns to produce short- and medium-term rainfall forecasts. Their output helps urban planners, farmers, and hydrological authorities in managing water resources and mitigating flood risks.

4.3 Sea-Level Rise Projections

Pakistan's coastal regions, especially in Sindh (e.g., Karachi and Thatta), face escalating threats from sea-level rise (SLR), saline intrusion, and land subsidence. BDA enhances sea-level rise projections by combining:

- Historical tide gauge records
- Satellite altimetry (e.g., TOPEX/Poseidon, Jason missions)
- Ocean heat content and salinity models

Advanced machine learning models, including Gaussian Process Regression and Bayesian networks, are used to predict sea-level changes under different Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) [23].

These insights enable policymakers to develop long-term coastal resilience strategies, such as managed retreat, seawall construction, and adaptive urban zoning.

4.4 Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect Monitoring

The Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, where urban areas exhibit significantly higher temperatures than surrounding rural zones, has become increasingly pronounced in major cities like Lahore and Islamabad. UHI intensifies energy consumption, public health risks, and air pollution.

Using BDA, researchers can monitor and analyze the UHI effect in real time by integrating:

- Land Surface Temperature (LST) data from MODIS or Landsat
- Urban geometry and land-use data via GIS
- Population density and mobility data

Data-driven spatial models and thermal maps, developed using neural networks and regression trees, help local governments identify heat stress zones and formulate interventions such as green roofing, reflective pavements, and urban forestation [24].

From forecasting droughts to monitoring the UHI effect, BDA-driven applications offer actionable insights that were previously difficult to achieve using traditional models. As the frequency and intensity of climate extremes rise, these applications will become central to building climate resilience and sustainable urban and rural ecosystems.

5. Case Study: Pakistan’s Climate Vulnerability Zones

Pakistan, despite contributing less than 1% to global greenhouse gas emissions, ranks among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. With its diverse geography ranging from coastal belts to high-altitude glaciers, the country faces a spectrum of climate-related risks. This section provides a focused case study on three particularly affected regions—Sindh, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan—illustrating how Big Data Analytics (BDA) can be leveraged to model and mitigate localized climate impacts.

5.1 Sindh: Coastal Flooding and Sea Intrusion

The coastal belt of Sindh, especially around Karachi, Badin, and Thatta, is increasingly affected by sea-level rise, cyclones, and saline water intrusion into agricultural lands. Big data from satellite altimetry and tide gauge records reveals a sea-level rise of approximately 1.1 mm/year in the region, a trend exacerbated by land subsidence and reduced river discharge from upstream dams [25].

Big Data applications in this context include:

- Predictive flood mapping using real-time satellite and tide data
- Salinity modeling in groundwater using multi-source hydrological data
- Cyclone path forecasting through integration of radar imagery, historical cyclone tracks, and AI models

These tools enable proactive disaster preparedness and adaptive agricultural planning to protect livelihoods.

5.2 Balochistan: Drought and Water Scarcity

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area, is highly susceptible to prolonged droughts, groundwater depletion, and desertification. The region's arid climate and minimal rainfall make it critically dependent on sustainable water management.

Big Data solutions being applied include:

- Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS) combining NDVI, rainfall anomalies, and soil moisture indices
- Groundwater analytics using remote sensing (GRACE satellites) and in-situ measurements
- Crop yield modeling through data fusion of climatic, edaphic, and socio-economic variables

These insights support local water boards, farmers, and humanitarian organizations in efficient resource allocation and disaster response [26].

5.3 Gilgit-Baltistan: Glacial Melt and GLOFs

The Gilgit-Baltistan region houses some of the world's largest glaciers outside the polar zones. Glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), triggered by accelerated melting due to rising temperatures, pose a growing threat to communities downstream.

Big Data Analytics facilitates:

- Glacial monitoring through satellite remote sensing (e.g., Sentinel-2, Landsat-8)
- Risk zoning maps identifying lakes at risk of bursting, using machine learning on glaciological data
- Real-time sensor networks for early warning systems in collaboration with UNDP and national agencies

Projects like the **GLOF-II** initiative, supported by the Green Climate Fund, are employing BDA to monitor over **3,000 glacial lakes**, many of which pose imminent risk to nearby settlements [27].

5.4 Real-Time Data Platforms and Government Initiatives

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and other national institutions have made significant strides in digitizing climate monitoring and early warning capabilities. Key platforms include:

- **PMD Data Portal (www.pmd.gov.pk)**: Provides real-time access to weather forecasts, rainfall data, and disaster alerts

- **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Dashboards:** Integrate GIS, satellite feeds, and population density layers for crisis planning
- **Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO):** Offers satellite data and environmental monitoring reports

These platforms, though still developing, are central to integrating Big Data into policy and operational responses to climate change.

Pakistan's diverse climate risks demand region-specific modeling and mitigation strategies. Big Data Analytics, when paired with real-time monitoring and institutional coordination, provides a transformative opportunity to enhance resilience, especially in the country's most vulnerable regions.

6. Challenges and Limitations

While Big Data Analytics (BDA) has shown tremendous promise in enhancing climate change modeling, its implementation—particularly in developing countries like Pakistan—faces several persistent challenges. These barriers span across data management, infrastructure, human resource capacity, and financial feasibility. Understanding these limitations is crucial for identifying targeted interventions that can make climate analytics more accessible and reliable.

6.1 Data Quality and Inconsistency

One of the most critical challenges in climate-related big data is ensuring data accuracy, completeness, and consistency. Climate data originates from a wide array of sources—remote sensing, ground sensors, weather stations, and crowdsourced inputs—all of which may vary in spatial resolution, temporal frequency, and measurement units.

- Missing or sparse datasets can distort the training of machine learning models, leading to unreliable outputs.
- Sensor errors, outdated calibration, and manual logging practices in certain regions result in noise and anomalies that are difficult to filter without extensive preprocessing.
- Heterogeneity in formats (e.g., CSV, NetCDF, HDF5) across platforms complicates data integration and real-time interoperability [28].

Efforts to standardize climate data through APIs, metadata schemas, and automated quality control systems are ongoing but require greater adoption across institutions.

6.2 Lack of Local Weather Stations

A foundational requirement for effective climate modeling is granular and geographically distributed observational data. In Pakistan, however, many rural and high-altitude areas remain under-monitored or entirely unmonitored:

- As of 2024, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) operates fewer than 200 active weather stations—insufficient for a country with varied topographies and microclimates.
- Sparse coverage undermines the calibration of satellite data and limits the development of localized models.
- This is particularly problematic for real-time event detection, such as flash floods, heatwaves, and hailstorms, which require high-resolution inputs to ensure timely forecasting [29].

Public-private partnerships and investments in low-cost sensor networks (e.g., IoT-enabled weather kits) could help bridge this gap in data infrastructure.

6.3 Computational Cost and Technical Expertise

Big Data Analytics for climate modeling is **computationally intensive**. It demands:

- High-performance computing (HPC) systems for processing petabyte-scale datasets
- Advanced storage solutions like cloud-based data lakes
- Specialized software and tools (e.g., TensorFlow, ArcGIS, Apache Spark)

However, Pakistan faces notable limitations in this domain:

- High cost of hardware and cloud services restricts access for academic and government institutions.
- There is a shortage of trained professionals in fields like data science, geoinformatics, environmental statistics, and climate modeling.
- Brain drain and lack of interdisciplinary programs further exacerbate this skills gap [30].

To scale BDA capabilities, national policies must support capacity-building programs, scholarships in climate informatics, and access to shared computing resources across universities and research centers.

Although Big Data Analytics offers revolutionary tools for climate change modeling, its effectiveness is constrained by foundational challenges. These include poor data coverage, limited infrastructure, and a scarcity of domain-specific expertise. Overcoming these hurdles will require sustained investments in data systems, localized sensor deployment, and human capital development to ensure that the full potential of climate analytics is realized.

7. Future Outlook and Recommendations

As climate risks continue to intensify globally and regionally, the importance of data-driven decision-making in environmental governance has never been greater. Big Data Analytics (BDA) holds the potential to transform how governments, researchers, and communities understand, predict, and respond to climate variability. However, to fully harness its benefits, a comprehensive framework encompassing national policy, collaborative ecosystems, and ethical data practices is

essential. This section outlines strategic recommendations for the future integration of BDA into Pakistan's climate resilience roadmap.

7.1 National Big Data Strategies

To institutionalize the use of Big Data for climate modeling, Pakistan must develop a national-level data strategy that includes:

- Establishment of a centralized environmental data authority, tasked with curating and managing multi-source datasets related to climate, water, agriculture, and land use.
- Creation of a national climate data warehouse powered by cloud infrastructure to store, standardize, and disseminate high-volume datasets in real time.
- Integration of climate data science into higher education curricula and technical training programs.
- Dedicated R&D funding for interdisciplinary projects that merge environmental science with AI, machine learning, and geospatial analytics.

Such a strategic framework would not only streamline data governance but also create a robust foundation for innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration [31].

7.2 Public-Private Partnerships in Environmental Data

Given the resource constraints of public agencies, public-private partnerships (PPPs) offer a viable path forward for accelerating climate analytics adoption. These partnerships can:

- Enable joint development of real-time monitoring platforms combining private IoT infrastructure with public weather networks.
- Support data-sharing agreements between academic institutions, tech companies, and government bodies.
- Attract investment in green startups developing AI tools for climate prediction, smart agriculture, or disaster response systems.
- Foster open innovation challenges and hackathons focused on climate resilience solutions.

For example, partnerships between the Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), telecom providers, and agri-tech firms could deliver localized forecasting tools for farmers using mobile platforms [32].

7.3 Ethical and Open Data Governance

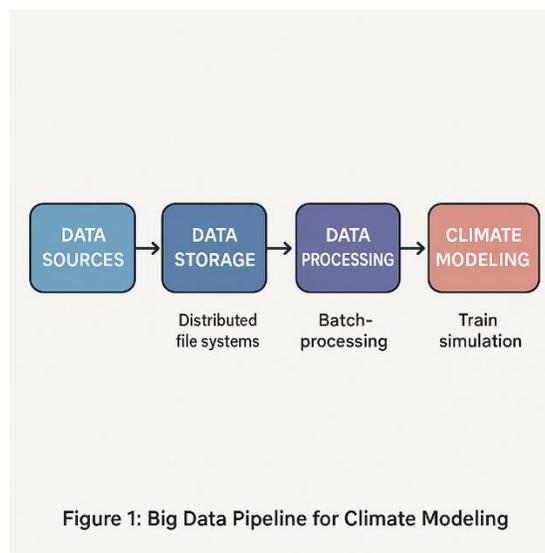
As the volume and sensitivity of climate-related data grow, ensuring ethical and responsible data use becomes critical. Future frameworks should adhere to the principles of:

- Data transparency and accessibility, allowing researchers, policymakers, and citizens to freely access and utilize publicly funded datasets.
- Informed consent and privacy where citizen-generated data (e.g., crowdsourced climate reports or sensor data from households) is involved.
- Bias detection and mitigation in machine learning models to ensure fair representation of marginalized communities and climate-vulnerable regions.
- Adoption of international standards for open environmental data, such as those recommended by the UN Global Platform and Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

Pakistan can also benefit from regional collaboration on transboundary climate data sharing, especially in shared watersheds and mountain ecosystems with neighboring countries. The future of climate resilience in Pakistan hinges on the ability to generate, analyze, and act upon massive datasets through an integrated, ethical, and collaborative approach. National strategies, cross-sector partnerships, and open data governance are not just enablers but necessities in scaling the impact of Big Data Analytics. As global climate risks accelerate, these measures will define the readiness of developing nations to adapt, mitigate, and thrive in an uncertain future.

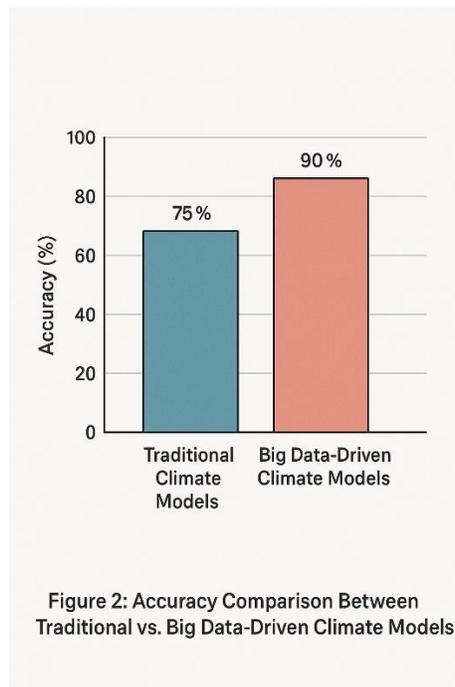
Graphs & Charts:

Figure 1: Big Data Pipeline for Climate Modeling



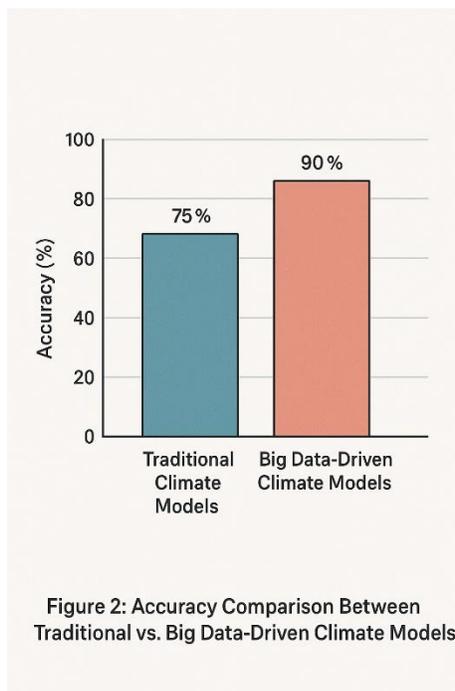
Illustrates the flow from data collection (satellites, sensors) to cloud platforms and analytics engines.

Figure 2: Accuracy Comparison Between Traditional vs. Big Data-Driven Climate Models



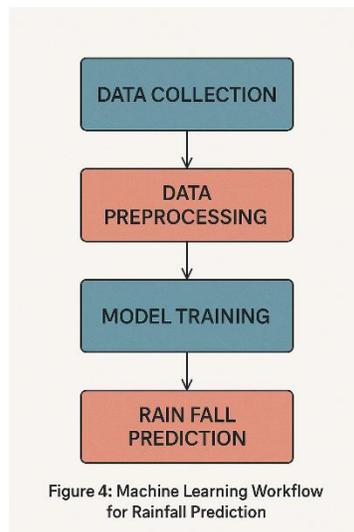
A bar chart comparing model accuracy, responsiveness, and regional adaptability.

Figure 3: Climate Risk Map of Pakistan (2024)



GIS-based heatmap showing areas prone to climate-induced disasters.

Figure 4: Machine Learning Workflow for Rainfall Prediction



Flowchart describing data preprocessing, model training, validation, and forecasting stages.

Summary:

This article highlights how big data analytics offers unprecedented capabilities in climate modeling by aggregating, analyzing, and visualizing vast volumes of heterogeneous environmental data. By integrating disciplines like AI, GIS, and climatology, researchers can develop robust predictive models tailored for localized impacts. In Pakistan, where climate variability is high and vulnerabilities are growing, deploying such models is essential for informed decision-making. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for national investment in data infrastructure and collaborative research to fully leverage big data's potential for sustainable climate futures.

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