

CASE
STUDY

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Pakistan: Navigating Peace and Environmental Strife

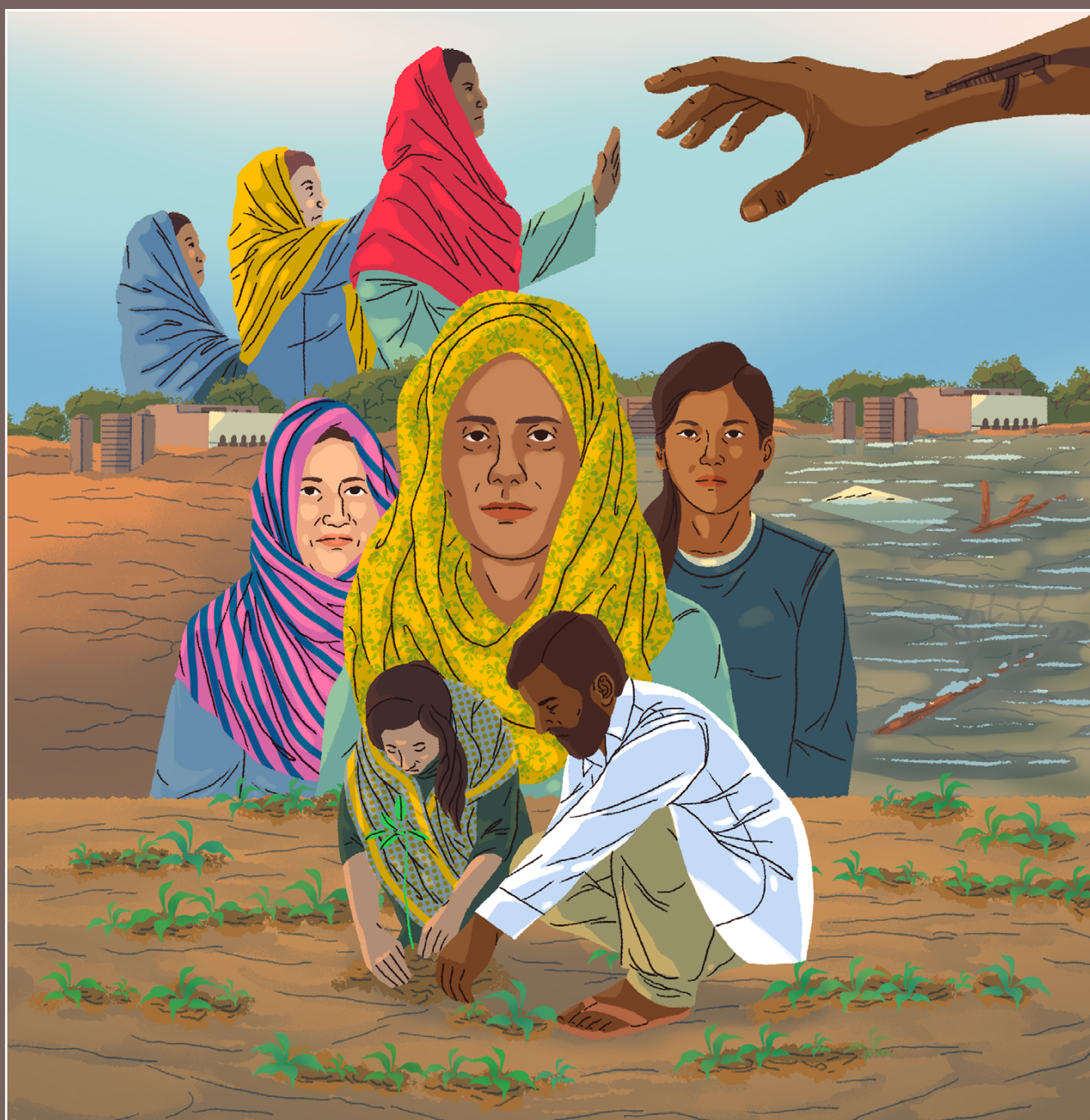
INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE,
CONFLICTS, AND LAND DEGRADATION ON YOUTH OF
THE GREEN BELT OF BALOCHISTAN.

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ACRONYMS & GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRONYMS

AU	Agriculture University
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DHQ	District Head Quarters
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ICRM	International Centre for Refugees and Migration
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JDC	Jafriya Disaster Management Cell Welfare Organization
KII	Informant Interviews
LO	Liaison Officer
MPA	Member Provincial Assembly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMD	Pakistan Meteorological Department
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALKHIDMAT FOUNDATION

A national NGO

MADAD BALOCHISTAN

Help Balochistan

TRIBAL LEADER

Head of tribal communities, especially in South Asia

Executive Summary

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, is facing a severe crisis where climate change, environmental degradation, and persistent conflict intersect. Marginalized youth are bearing the brunt of these interrelated challenges. This report focuses on the impact of these issues on the youth, particularly in the Naseerabad division, Balochistan's green belt, offering a comprehensive analysis and proposing potential solutions.

Balochistan's arid climate, coupled with its dependence on agriculture, makes it especially vulnerable to climate change. The region has experienced a rise in extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves. These events, exacerbated by ongoing socio-political conflicts, have significantly disrupted livelihoods. The combined effects of these crises have led to widespread economic hardship, educational disruption, and health challenges, particularly among the youth. As traditional agriculture becomes increasingly unsustainable, economic instability, poverty, and unemployment have surged. Damage to educational infrastructure has interrupted schooling, and the destruction of medical facilities has increased health risks, exposing communities to greater vulnerability to disease.

As conventional livelihoods collapse, the interplay between climate change and conflict has fuelled the rise of non-traditional, and sometimes illicit, economic activities. Gender-specific impacts are especially pronounced, with young women facing heightened risks of exploitation and marginalization due to entrenched cultural and economic barriers. The social displacement and intensified conflict in the region have further strained already limited resources.

Responses at the local, national, and international levels have been inadequate in addressing these multifaceted challenges. While local youth and community organizations have taken active roles in relief efforts and advocacy, their initiatives are often hampered by political interference and poor management. National and international aid efforts, too, have frequently failed to reach the most vulnerable populations due to inefficiencies and corruption.

This report highlights the urgent need for coordinated, effective interventions to address Balochistan's intertwined crises of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict. It emphasizes the resilience of the region's youth in the face of adversity and calls for a more integrated approach that strengthens youth participation in decision-making, empowers women in sustainable development, and fosters international cooperation to build long-term, sustainable solutions. These efforts are crucial for mitigating the compound challenges faced by Balochistan's marginalized youth and promoting resilience and development in the region.

1. Introduction



Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and most water-scarce province, is at the crossroads of climate change, environmental degradation, and ongoing conflict, presenting a unique set of challenges for its inhabitants. The province's arid landscape and reliance on agriculture make it particularly vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation, with the youth bearing a disproportionate share of the burden. Naseerabad, a green belt region that once sustained livelihoods through agriculture, now facing increasing frequency and intensity of floods, coupled with the degradation of natural resources that exacerbate existing socio-economic vulnerabilities.

This report examines the complex and multifaceted impacts of these crises on marginalized youth in Balochistan, with a specific focus on the Naseerabad division. By analysing the interplay between climate change, conflict, and environmental degradation, the study aims to uncover the cascading effects on the youth's economic opportunities, educational prospects, and health outcomes. Additionally, the report delves into the gendered nature of these challenges, paying particular attention to how young women are impacted by the intersection of cultural norms and environmental adversity.

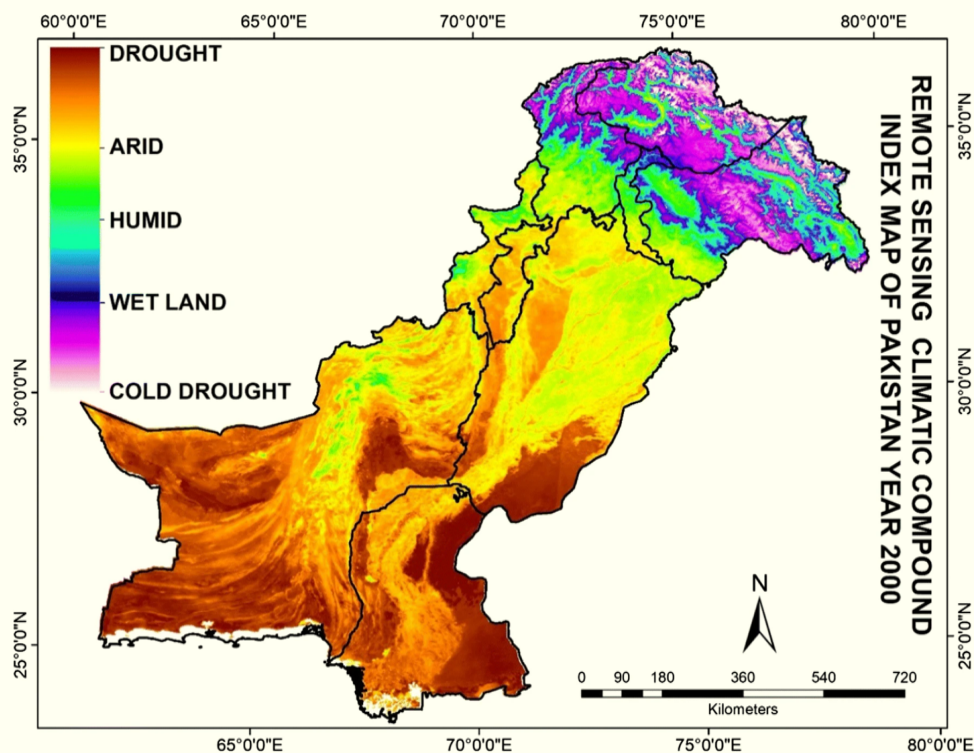
Through a detailed exploration of local, national and international responses, the report assesses the gaps in current interventions and highlights the resilience and activism of local youth organizations. Key findings include economic hardships and increased poverty from damaged

agriculture and infrastructure, disruptions in education due to the destruction of schools and displacement, health challenges compounded by the loss of healthcare facilities and increased disease risks, heightened vulnerability of young women to exploitation and gender-specific impacts, and social displacement and intensified conflicts from migration and resource disputes.

This report highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the complex interplay of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict in Balochistan. It emphasizes the severe socio-economic challenges faced by the region's marginalized youth, it underscores the resilience of these communities despite significant adversities and stress the necessity for effective, coordinated responses to support and mitigate the compounded effects on the vulnerable youth of Balochistan. Ultimately, it calls for a more holistic approach to addressing these crises, proposing strategies for empowering young people, particularly women, to play a central role in building a sustainable future for the region.

1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Pakistan, located in South Asia and bordered by India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China, is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its diverse geography, ranging from arid to temperate regions. The country regularly faces extreme weather events, such as heat waves and heavy monsoon rains, which increase the risk of flooding. Despite contributing less than 1 percent to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan experienced catastrophic floods in 2022, which submerged one-third of the country, displaced 8.2 million people, and caused \$30 billion in damages.¹



MAP 1 | Map of Pakistan Showing its Various Climatic Zones

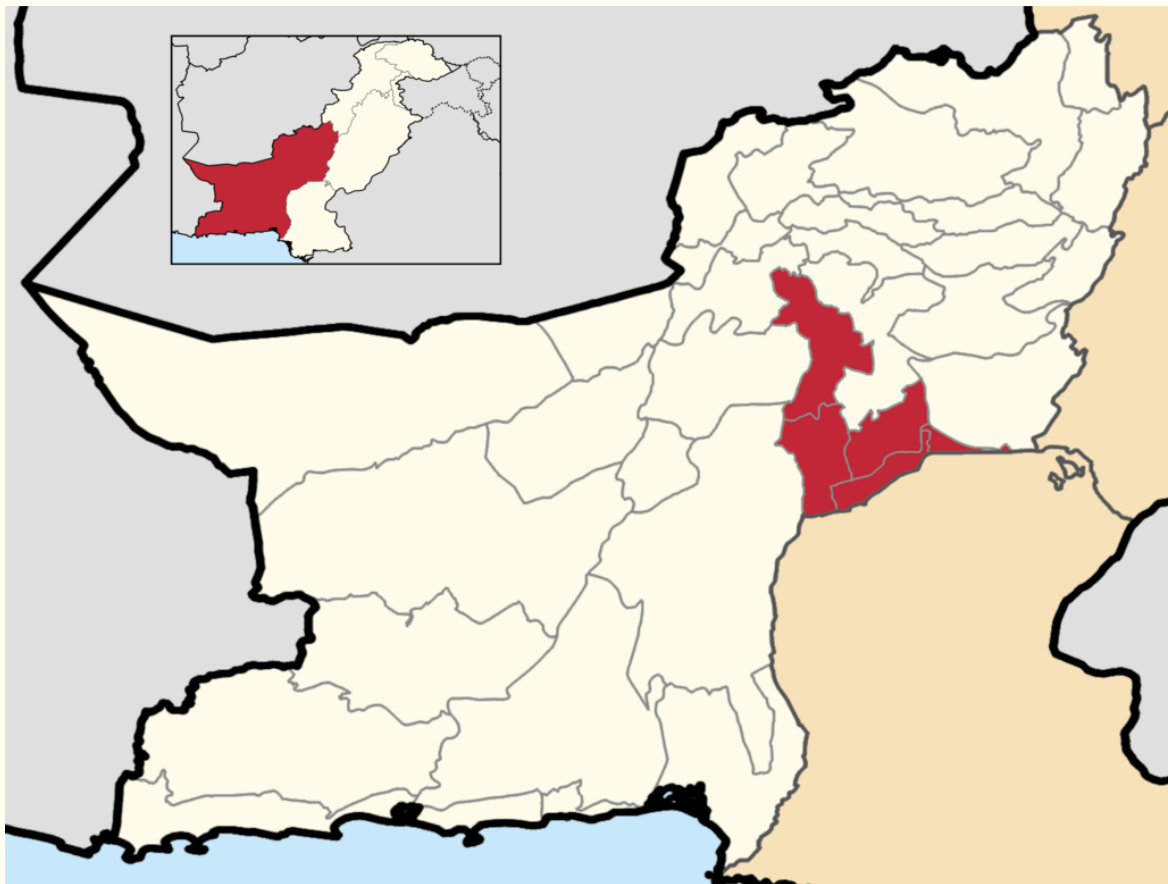
1 BBC. (2022). How Pakistan floods are linked to climate change. BBC. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-62758811>

In addition to its environmental challenges, Pakistan grapples with ongoing security and political instability. The country has experienced internal conflicts, political turbulence, and tensions with India, particularly over the Kashmir dispute. Frequent military coups and shifting civilian leadership have characterized Pakistan's political history, and as of 2024, the political environment remains fragile, with ongoing debates over governance and economic reform.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, is a microcosm of these national challenges. Its vulnerability to climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-political conflict is heightened by its strategic location, sharing borders with Iran and Afghanistan and having a coastline along the Arabian Sea. This geographic positioning makes Balochistan a focal point for regional security dynamics, while also placing it at the crossroads of international trade routes and geopolitical interests, further complicating its socio-political landscape.

1.1.1 AREA SELECTION

This study focuses on Balochistan, a province that covers 44 percent of Pakistan's land area, yet has only 5 percent of its land suitable for agriculture, characterized by an arid climate.² Given Balochistan's significant climatic and conflict-related challenges, it is critical to examine the intersection of environmental change and security issues in the region.



MAP 2 | Map of Balochistan Showing Naseerabad Division

2 Janjua, D. R. (2023, 06 23). The Express Tribune. Retrieved 06 20, 2024, from Balochistan — A Recipe for Development and Security: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2423069/balochistan-a-recipe-for-development-and-security>

The Naseerabad Division³, known as the green belt or breadbasket of Balochistan, has been selected as the research location of this study. This area is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Historically, Naseerabad has faced recurring climate-induced disasters such as flash floods, heavy monsoon rains, torrential downpours, heat waves, and droughts.⁴ Seasonal challenges have been a consistent threat, with the floods of 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2022 being especially devastating. These floods were caused by intense rainfall and flash floods, dramatically increasing the vulnerability of local communities to such disasters.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecasts significant climate changes for Naseerabad, located in Balochistan's hot and arid region. Over the next century, temperatures are expected to rise by an average of 5°C, while precipitation is predicted to range between 150 and 250 mm over the next 50 years, potentially dropping to as low as 50 mm by 2090. The most significant increases in temperature and the frequency of extreme heat waves are projected between 2060 and 2090.⁵

In addition to its climatic challenges, Naseerabad is a conflict hotspot where environmental stress exacerbates resource scarcity and socio-economic disparities, leading to localized violence. The region's strategic importance is amplified by its proximity to Gwadar port, a vital part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Gwadar's economic and geopolitical significance adds complexity to the security situation, attracting both local and international interest.⁶ Many Baloch groups perceive the development of Gwadar and related infrastructure projects as an exploitation of the province's natural resources, benefiting external actors rather than the local population. This perception has fuelled grievances and contributed to the ongoing armed insurgency led by groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which seeks greater autonomy or independence for the province.

The BLA has targeted both Pakistani government forces and Chinese interests in the region, arguing that the exploitation of Balochistan's rich resources—including gold, diamonds, silver, and copper—has not benefited the local population, which remains among the poorest in Pakistan. Recently, there has been an uptick in violent attacks on infrastructure projects and security forces, as insurgents protest their economic marginalization and political exclusion. These dynamics underscore the interplay between environmental stress, resource competition, and socio-political grievances, making Naseerabad a critical area for studying the intersection of environmental and security issues in Balochistan.

3 In Pakistan, a division is an administrative unit that is larger than a district but smaller than a province. Each division comprises several districts and serves as a regional level of administration to manage local governance and development.

4 Aamir, A. (2018, August 26). Naseerabad: Disadvantaged Division. Retrieved April 21, 2024, from Balochistan Voices: <https://www.balochistanvoices.com/2018/08/naseerabad-disadvantaged-division/>

5 Habitat, U. (2021). Jafferabad & Naseerabad: Flood Disaster Vulnerability and Policy Options for Adaptations. Islamabad: UN- Habitat. Retrieved from <https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Flood-Disaster-Vulnerability-Assessment-%E2%80%93-Jafferabad-and-Naseerabad.pdf>

6 Shah, A. Z. (2017). Geopolitical Significance of Balochistan: Interplay of Foreign Actors. Journal of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 37(03), 01. doi:<https://doi.org/10.53532/ss.037.03.00213>

2. Methodology



This section outlines the methods used in the study, including the generation of both primary and secondary data, the research design, sampling methods, and data analysis approaches.

The fieldwork for the study took place over three months, from April to June 2024, and was conducted in three stages. The first stage, in April, involved generating secondary data through an extensive desk study. This stage included a literature review of books, research articles, journal articles, reports, surveys, and long feature articles to build the study's conceptual framework and enhance its analysis.

In the second stage, carried out in May, the focus shifted to collecting primary data from the target population in Balochistan. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was gathered through open-ended, semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with youth activists, local leaders, government officials, and health practitioners aged 35 to 50. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with young women and men aged 18 to 34 to gather insights on local, national, and international responses. Quantitative data was collected via a survey of young men and women aged 18 to 34, all of whom were residing in the Naseerabad division during the research period.

The final stage, conducted in June, focused on analysing the collected data using content analysis techniques. This phase processed and interpreted the information to form the basis of the study's findings.

2.1 DATA COLLECTION FROM YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18 TO 35

The study primarily focused on young women and men aged 18 to 35, with additional insights gathered from experts aged 35 to 50. As illustrated in Figure 1, a total of 190 participants contributed to the data collection process, comprising 83 females and 107 males. The research targeted two main groups of young people in the Naseerabad division: survey participants and focus group discussion (FGD) members.

- **Survey Participants:** The survey involved 164 participants, including 90 males and 74 females.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** A total of 16 participants took part in FGDs, consisting of 10 males and 6 females.

Most of the young participants in both the survey and FGDs were natives of Naseerabad, representing a diverse group that included students, young professionals, researchers, flood-affected individuals, and young farmers. Their perspectives on climate, environmental issues, and peace were carefully documented throughout the study.

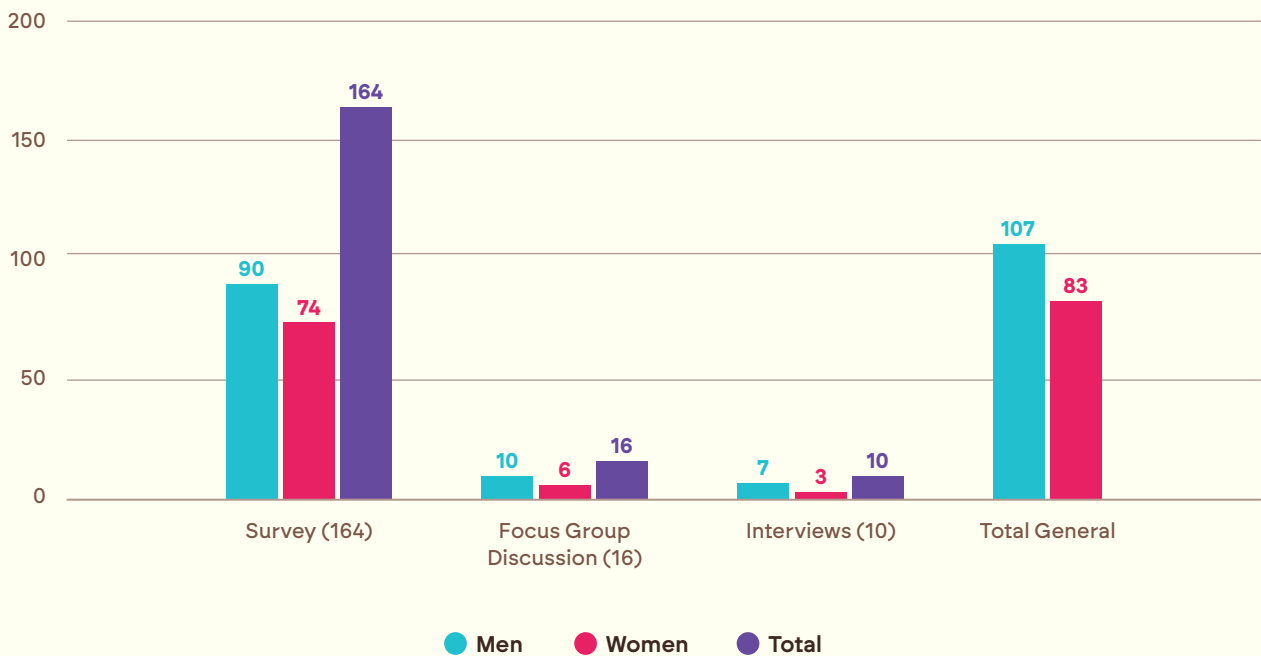


FIGURE 1 | Distribution of Young Respondents
Source: Primary Data Collection in Naseerabad (May 2024)

2.2 DATA COLLECTION FROM EXPERTS AGED 35 TO 50

Figure 1 highlights the ten experts, consisting of seven males and three females, were interviewed to provide additional context and expert opinions on climate, environmental, and peace-related issues. In Naseerabad, three key interviews were conducted with youth activists to gain insights into local perspectives.

Furthermore, four key interviews were held with prominent individuals, including a lecturer from an agriculture university (AU), a local writer, a tribal elder (and former Excise Minister), a sitting Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA), and the Minister for Irrigation. Additionally, three key interviews with female experts were conducted, including a female activist, a gynaecologist, and a Liaison Officer (LO) from the International Centre for Refugees and Migration (ICRM).



3. Data Analysis



This section presents and analyses the primary findings from the research conducted in the Naseerabad division of Balochistan, Pakistan. The findings are organized into four major sections:

- Youth Perspectives on Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict
- Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Conflicts
- Interrelated Impacts of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict
- Local, National, and International Responses to the Interconnected Dynamics of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict

3.1 YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, AND CONFLICT

This section is divided into three sub-sections, each focusing on youth perspectives: Youth's perspectives on climate change, Youth's perspectives on environmental degradation and Youth's perspectives on Conflicts. Each sub-section provides a detailed discussion of these topics based on the insights gathered during the study.

3.1.1 YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Both young men and women in Balochistan generally recognize climate change and environmental degradation as real and pressing issues. Regarding climate change, the most frequently observed phenomenon among young people is the increase in temperature (see Figure 2), followed by floods, heat waves, excessive rainfall, and droughts. Although both genders primarily observe rising temperatures, notable differences exist in their perceptions of other climate-related phenomena. Specifically, young women report a higher frequency of floods, while young men more frequently observe heat waves, excessive rainfall, and droughts.

These gender-based differences can be attributed to the distinct roles and responsibilities that men and women hold within the community. In many rural areas of Balochistan, women primarily manage domestic tasks and household needs, making them more vulnerable to the impacts of floods. For instance, during the 2022 floods, women faced significant challenges due to their limited mobility, which led to malnutrition and even fatalities among pregnant women and newborns due to inadequate access to medical care. The floods also disrupted women's ability to access materials for handicrafts, reducing their income and affecting their children's health. Furthermore, economic strain and limited healthcare resulted in health issues such as hormonal imbalances.

Educational disparities were also exacerbated in flood-affected areas, where a shortage of teachers meant that young women and girls had fewer educational opportunities. These gender-specific challenges help explain why young women perceive floods as a more immediate and significant threat, whereas men, who are often involved in outdoor labour and agriculture, are more concerned with heat waves, excessive rainfall, and droughts.

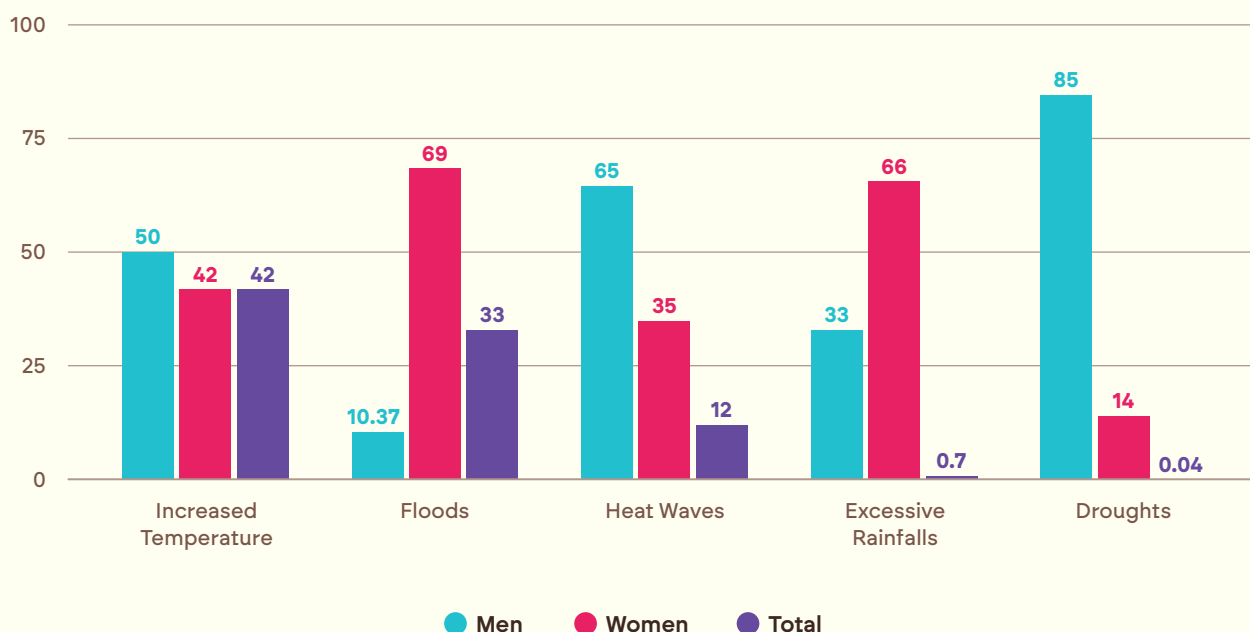


FIGURE 2 | Climate Change Phenomena Observed by Youth in the Survey

Source: Primary Data Collection through Survey in Naseerabad (May 2024)

3.1.2 YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The column chart in Figure 3 illustrates youth perceptions of environmental degradation, highlighting gender differences. Water scarcity is the most observed issue, with 59.25 percent of women and 46.98 percent of men identifying it as significant, totalling 53 percent of young people overall. The lowering of the groundwater table⁷ is the next most frequently noted issue, with 21.95 percent of youth recognizing it—more frequently observed by men (14.81 %) than by women (7.14 %). Soil erosion ranks third, observed by 28.91 percent of men, 18.51 percent of women, and 15.85 percent of the total youth population. Water logging and salinity are the least observed issues, noted by 13.25 percent of men, 7.4 percent of women, and 9.14 percent overall.

The data suggest that young men are more likely to perceive issues such as the lowering of the water table, soil erosion, and water logging and salinity. This difference may be attributed to their more direct involvement in activities like digging wells and working in fields, where these environmental issues are more apparent.

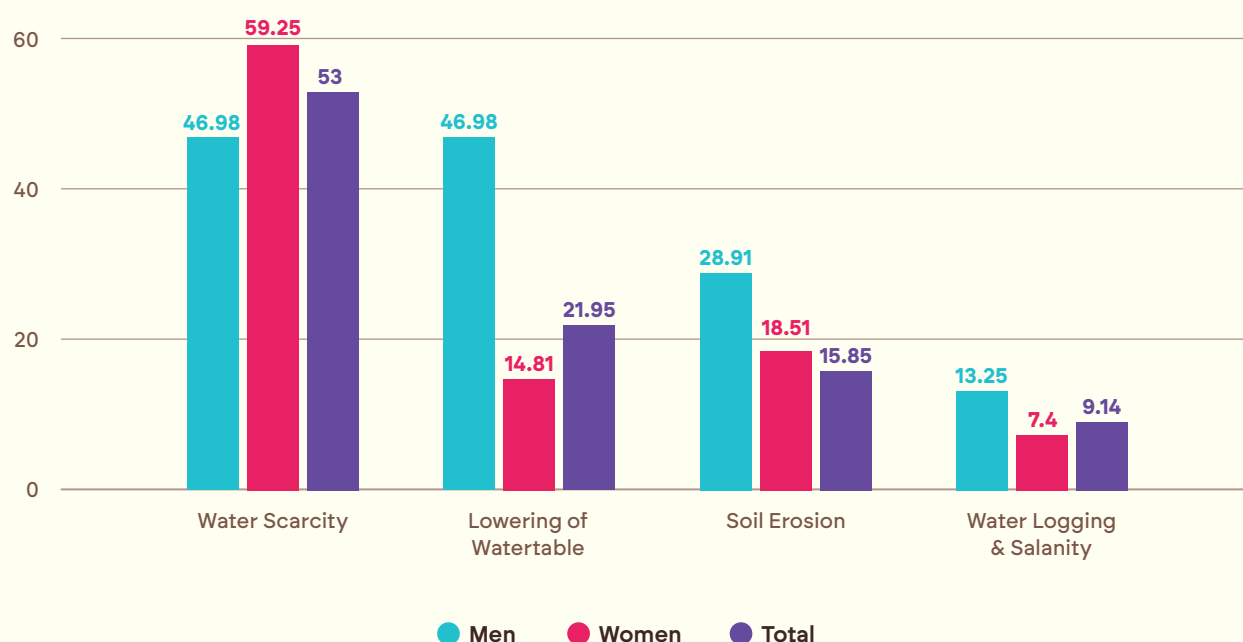


FIGURE 3 | Environmental Degradation Phenomena Observed by Youth in the Survey

Source: Primary Data Collection through Survey in Naseerabad (May 2024)

The phenomena of climate change and environmental degradation are particularly harmful to populations, especially young people. The survey and focus group discussions reveal numerous adverse effects on youth, including health deterioration, displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure such as roads, homes, hospitals, schools, and shops. These issues also lead to disruptions in education, financial crises, food shortages, livestock losses, unemployment, and security concerns.

⁷ The lowering of water tables refers to a decrease in the level of groundwater in an area. This happens when the amount of water being extracted from underground sources, such as through wells or other means, exceeds the rate at which the groundwater is replenished by natural processes like rainfall and seepage. As a result, the water table—the level below the ground where the soil or rock is saturated with water—drops, which can lead to problems such as reduced water availability for drinking, irrigation, and other uses, as well as negative impacts on ecosystems that depend on groundwater.

Moreover, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation appear to differ between young men and women. Figure 4 shows that half of the youth believe that these phenomena affect young men and women differently. Overall, the impact on young men is more pronounced (54.26 %), manifesting in forms such as job losses, displacement burdens, financial crises, disruptions in education, involvement in conflicts, and even loss of life.⁸ On the other hand, young women are affected primarily by reduced mobility during disasters, due to cultural constraints, as well as mental and physical health challenges—especially for pregnant women and menstrual health. Additionally, climate-related disasters negatively impact employment opportunities for women, particularly in domestic farming and handicrafts.⁹

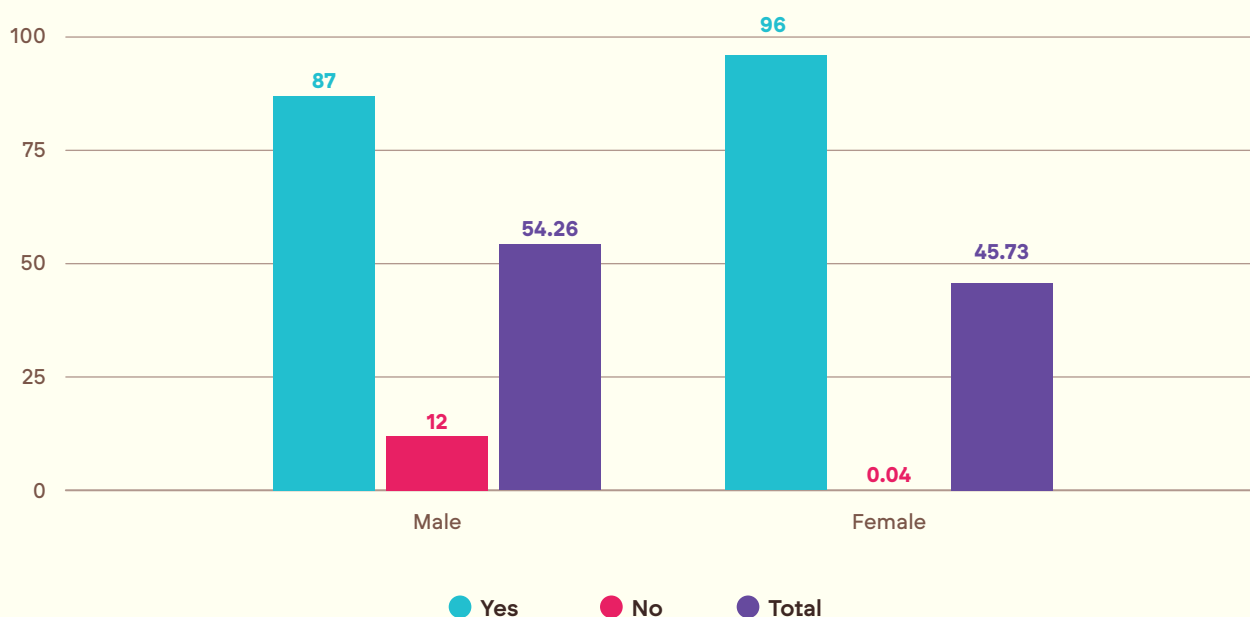


FIGURE 4 | Perceived Gender Differences in the Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Young People

Source: Primary Data Collection through Survey and FGD in Naseerabad (May 2024)

3.1.3 YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICTS

This section explores youth perceptions of various types of conflicts in Naseerabad, with distinctions between men and women. Figure 5 highlights that conflicts over water resources within communities and between families are the most observed, with 35.86 percent of men and 27.7 percent of women identifying them. Overall, 32.31 percent of young people view conflicts over water resources as a significant issue.

Conflicts over agricultural land, particularly among tribes and between landlords and farmers, are the second most frequently noted, with 30.43 percent of men and 25 percent of women reporting them. In total, 28.04 percent of youth observe these conflicts. Conflicts emerging after floods are identified by 31.94 percent of women and 10.86 percent of men, reflecting a notable gender disparity, resulting in an overall perception of 20.12 percent.

8 Baloch, A. (2022, May 14). Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Young Males of Balochistan. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

9 Mahmood, M. (2024, May 4). Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Women of Balochistan. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

Conflicts among displaced communities due to climate-related disasters are observed by 14.13 percent of men and 12.5 percent of women, with a combined total of 13.41 percent. Conflicts over livestock grazing areas are the least observed, with 8.69 percent of men and 2.7 percent of women reporting them, leading to an overall perception of 6.09 percent.

The data suggest that young people perceive conflicts over water resources and agricultural land as the most prevalent. Women report a higher incidence of conflicts following floods, likely because their role in managing households and addressing the aftermath, such as repairing home damage and securing access to clean water, makes them more aware of flood-related disruptions. Their increased responsibilities during crises, including caring for displaced family members, further heighten their awareness of these conflicts. Conversely, men, who are more actively involved in agriculture and livestock management, report higher instances of conflicts over water resources and grazing areas. This involvement likely explains their stronger perception of water-related conflicts, as these resources are vital for both agricultural productivity and livestock health. This variation reflects the differing roles and experiences of young men and women in the communities of Balochistan.

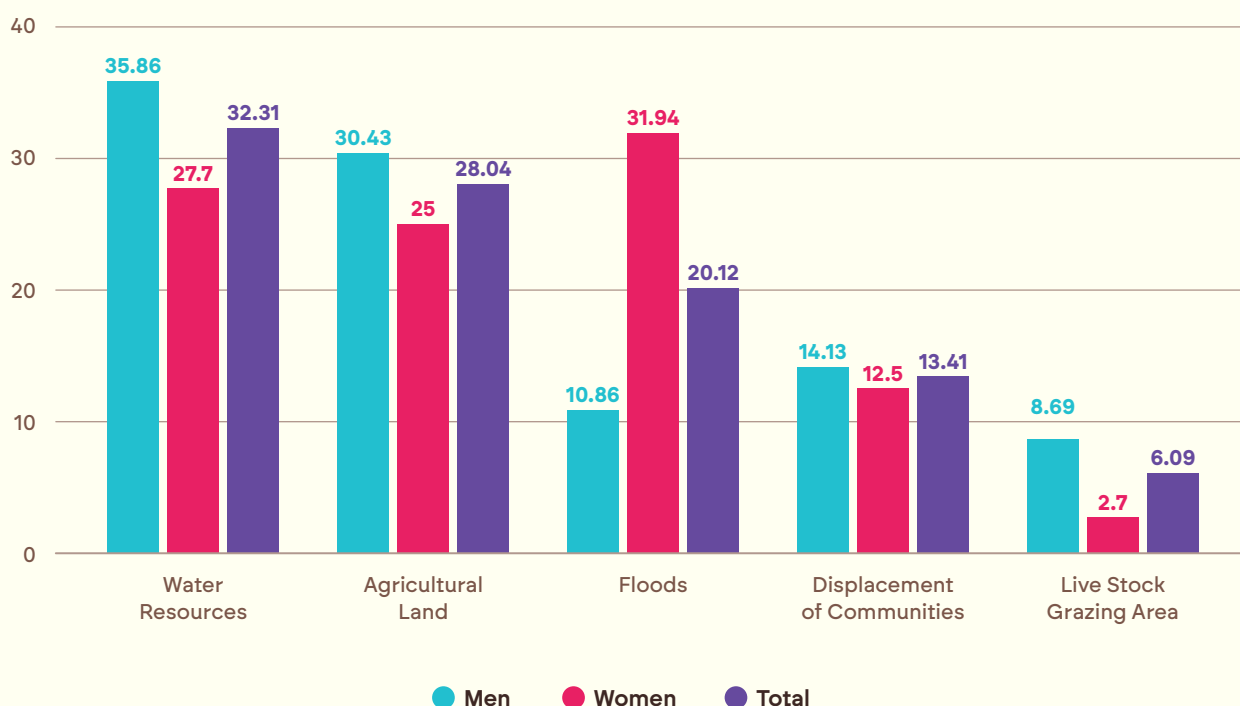


FIGURE 5 | Types of Conflicts According to the Youth Interviewed

Source: Primary Data Collection through Interviews in Naseerabad (May 2024)

Figure 6 illustrates the differentiated impacts of climate change-induced conflicts on young men and women in Balochistan. The data reflects the responses of young individuals regarding how these conflicts affect their lives. Among young women, 31.57 percent believe that the conflicts impact them, while 42.85 percent do not, with the total response rate for women amounting to 34.61 percent. For young men, 68.42 percent report being affected by the conflicts, whereas 57.14 percent say they are not, bringing the total response rate for men to 65.39 percent.

The data reveals a significant gender disparity in how climate change-induced conflicts are perceived and experienced. A higher percentage of young men acknowledge the impact of these conflicts compared to young women. This difference is likely due to the distinct roles and responsibilities that men and women hold within their communities. Men, often more involved in agricultural and external activities, may experience the direct effects of resource-related conflicts more acutely, while women's experiences are shaped by household and caregiving duties, which might lead to different perceptions of the conflicts' impact.

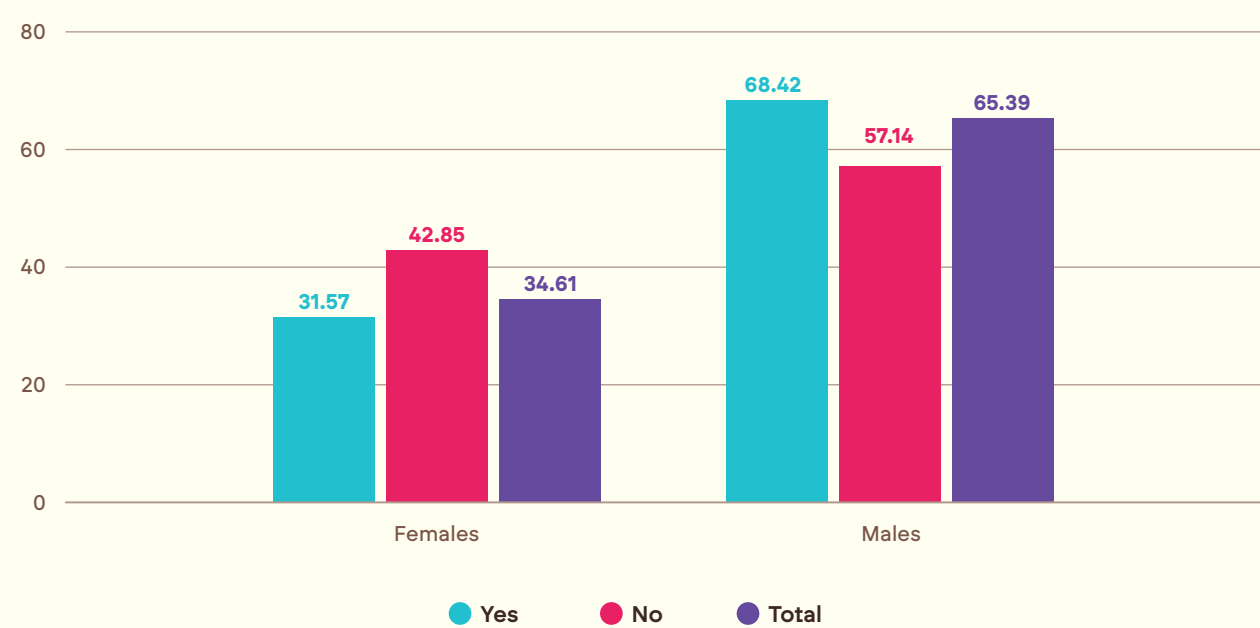


FIGURE 6 | Differentiated Consequences of Conflict on Youth

Source: Primary Data Collection through Interviews in Naseerabad (May 2024)

Young men, particularly those in agricultural roles, face direct consequences from irregular rainfall, floods, excessive temperatures, and water scarcity, leading to crop failures, soil erosion, and food shortages. These challenges sometimes result in violent conflicts over land and water, which severely impact their physical and mental well-being.¹⁰ In contrast, young women, primarily engaged in domestic duties, tend to be less aware of these conflicts but face increased marginalization. Political and environmental conflicts negatively affect their health and education, limiting their personal and professional development opportunities.

Additionally, in the tribal systems prevalent in Pakistan, aid and resources are often misappropriated due to the influence of tribal elites, such as the “*Sardari*” system. This system centralizes the distribution of aid in the hands of a few privileged individuals, typically those in positions of power. As a result, the ones who need aid the most, including women who are already marginalized, often do not receive it. This misallocation worsens the hardships faced by women, limiting their access to crucial resources and support. The failure of the tribal system to equitably distribute aid reinforces existing gender inequalities and deepens women’s vulnerability during crises.¹¹

10 Aazim, M. (2018, Oct 15). The Plight of the Small Farmer. Retrieved April 21, 2024, from Dawn: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1439041>
11 Gul, U. (2024, May 20). Impact of Conflicts on Women of Naseerabad, Balochistan. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

Overall, the chart highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions that address the distinct challenges faced by young men and women as a result of climate change-induced conflicts in Balochistan. Tailored solutions are essential to mitigate the gender-specific impacts and ensure equitable access to resources and support for both groups.

3.2 EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION ON CONFLICTS

This section explores how young men and women in Balochistan, Pakistan, perceive climate change and environmental degradation as catalysts for conflict, illustrating the profound impacts these issues have on their lives. Observations from Naseerabad, Balochistan, reveal distinct concerns between the genders. A significant majority of young men (78.57%) view environmental issues as sources of conflict, compared to only 21.42 percent of young women.

Young men reported that floods led to food insecurity, which in turn sparked conflicts over rising food prices and limited supplies. These disputes often escalated into physical altercations between community groups competing for basic necessities. Additionally, conflicts arose over scarce essentials like plastic sheets and tents, critical for creating temporary shelters in relief camps. Displaced families frequently clashed over these limited supplies, and cultural tensions intensified due to the perceived dishonour of women being exposed in open spaces.¹² Further conflicts involved landlords, particularly between displaced tenants or labourers and the landlords themselves. Landlords were reported to obstruct displaced families' efforts to rescue or shelter relatives, fearing the loss of labour would negatively affect their agricultural productivity and reduce their access to government aid intended for flood victims¹³. These actions fuelled a sense of injustice and exploitation, as landlords prioritized their economic interests over the well-being of their tenants.

In contrast, young women faced internal family conflicts due to the destruction of stored food by rainwater, which led to severe hunger. They also encountered dangerous conditions during aid distribution, resulting in accidents and disputes.¹⁴ Women reported increased insecurity and violence, as wasted aid heightened tensions among those in need. Additionally, conflicts arose over the removal of stagnant water from homes and fields, with disputes emerging between neighbours over water disposal¹⁵.

Both men and women emphasized the severe social and economic disruptions caused by climate change and environmental degradation, underscoring how these issues exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and trigger widespread conflict in the region.

12 Khosa, N. (2024, May 5). Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Conflicts. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

13 Mugheri, J. (2024, May 4). Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Conflicts. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

14 Gul, U. (2024, May 20). Impact of Conflicts on Women of Naseerabad, Balochistan. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

15 Laiba. (2024, May 2). Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Conflicts. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

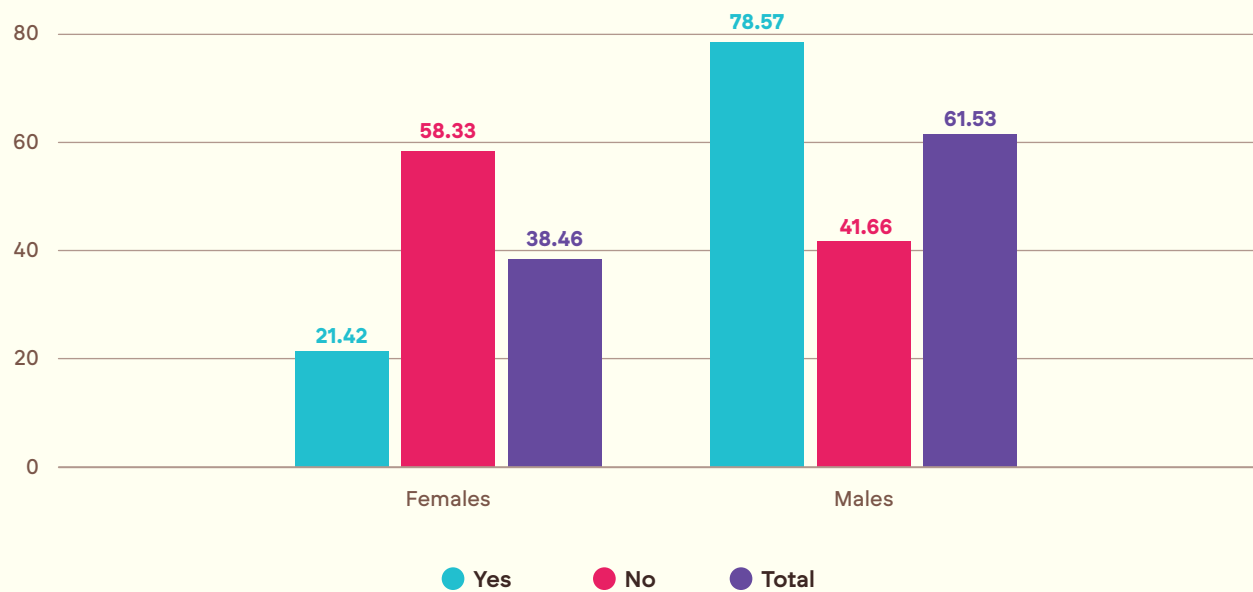


FIGURE 7 | Youth’s Perception of the Link between Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Conflict

Source: Primary Data Collection through Interviews and Surveys in Naseerabad (May 2024)

3.3 INTERRELATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, AND CONFLICT

In Balochistan, the combined effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict have created a complex and escalating crisis, severely affecting the socio-economic conditions of its youth.¹⁶ These intertwined issues reinforce each other, intensifying the challenges faced by the younger generation in the region. The following points illustrate these interconnected impacts:

→ **ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND INCREASED POVERTY**

Climate change and environmental degradation, such as excessive rainfall, droughts, and floods, have had a devastating impact on agriculture and livelihoods in Balochistan. Participants in the study reported that floods have destroyed crops and infrastructure, resulting in significant financial losses. This economic strain has led to rising poverty levels among families, directly affecting the youth, who now face diminished opportunities for economic stability and growth.¹⁷

→ **EDUCATIONAL DISRUPTION AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES**

The destruction of educational infrastructure due to floods and conflicts has caused major disruptions in schooling for young people. Participants noted that schools have been either damaged or repurposed as shelters, while displacement resulting from environmental and conflict-related crises has prevented many students from attending classes.¹⁸ These disruptions hinder educational progress and severely limit future opportunities for the youth in the region.

16 Ali, F., Khan, T. A., Alamgir, A., & Khan, M. A. (2018). Climate Change-Induced Conflicts in Pakistan: From National to Individual Level. Springer, 2, 573-574. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41748-018-0080-8>

17 Sarfarz. (2024, May 3). Interrelated Impacts of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

18 Wafa, R. (2024, May 3). Interrelated Impacts of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

→ HEALTH CHALLENGES AND INCREASED VULNERABILITY

The combined effects of climate-induced disasters and conflict have worsened health challenges in Balochistan. Participants reported that the destruction of roads and medical facilities has severely limited access to healthcare. Moreover, extreme weather events have contributed to a rise in health problems such as respiratory issues and waterborne diseases.¹⁹ The increased responsibility placed on the youth to care for affected family members further underscores the compounded health risks faced by the younger population.

→ HUMAN EXPLOITATION AND GENDER-SPECIFIC IMPACTS

The socio-economic instability resulting from climate change and conflict has significantly increased the vulnerability of young women in Balochistan.²⁰ Participants reported that the scarcity of resources and limited economic opportunities often lead to exploitative situations, such as coercion in exchange for aid or essential resources.²¹ The gender-specific impacts are particularly severe, affecting women's health, safety, and overall well-being.

→ SOCIAL DISPLACEMENT AND CONFLICT

The interplay between climate change, environmental degradation, and ongoing conflicts has intensified displacement and tensions in Balochistan. Environmental migration and disputes over resources have escalated social conflicts, further straining community resources and deepening instability. The youth are particularly affected, as these challenges disrupt their education and daily lives, leaving them more vulnerable to the region's growing instability.

3.4 LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE INTERCONNECTED DYNAMICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, AND CONFLICT

This section is divided into three sub-sections, covering local, national, and international responses to the interconnected dynamics of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict. Each of these responses is discussed in detail below.

→ LOCAL RESPONSES

In Balochistan, local youth have played a crucial role in addressing the interconnected impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict. During the 2022 floods, they were actively involved in relief efforts, collaborating with organizations like the Alkhidmat Foundation and the Jafriya Disaster Management Cell Welfare Organization (JDC) to distribute aid and conduct relief operations. Youth-led social media campaigns, such as "*Madad Balochistan*," ("*Help Balochistan*") successfully garnered international support and essential supplies.

19 Khizar, M. (2024, May 3). Interrelated Impacts of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

20 Thakar, T. (2023, 01 13). Gender and Climate Disaster: A Worsening Situation for Pakistani Women - Women in International Security. Retrieved from Women in International Security: <https://wiisglobal.org/gender-and-climate-disaster-a-worsening-situation-for-pakistani-women/>

21 Subhana. (2024, May 3). Interrelated Impacts of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Amjad, Interviewer)

However, their efforts were undermined by local leaders who obstructed relief activities and manipulated aid distribution. In some cases, these leaders exacerbated the crisis by diverting floodwaters away from their own lands or properties and into poorer, less politically connected areas.²² This deliberate diversion, aimed at protecting their agricultural investments or settlements, resulted in greater devastation for vulnerable communities, leading to further displacement, the destruction of homes, and loss of livelihoods. Despite their significant contributions, local youth faced resistance and lacked support in long-term reconstruction efforts.

→ NATIONAL RESPONSES

National responses to the crisis in Balochistan have been plagued by inefficiencies and political manipulation. Government officials faced criticism for exploiting the situation to gain political favour, projecting a facade of effective relief efforts to international observers while neglecting the real needs of affected communities. Much of the national aid was mismanaged, with relief goods being diverted to black markets or distributed unfairly based on political affiliations.²³ This mismanagement worsened the suffering of flood-affected communities and fuelled a sense of disenfranchisement among the youth, who felt abandoned by national authorities.

The absence of effective government intervention pushed some young people toward desperate measures, including joining protest movements, engaging in civil disobedience, or, in extreme cases, becoming involved with militant groups. These groups often promise to address their grievances and offer a sense of purpose, further complicating the region's instability.

→ INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

International responses to the crisis in Balochistan have also encountered significant challenges. Although organizations like UNICEF and various International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) provided aid, their impact was limited by bureaucratic hurdles and political interference. Local power dynamics often skewed aid distribution, with influential figures politicizing and siphoning off relief efforts. Many INGOs concentrated their activities in more privileged areas, failing to reach the most severely affected communities.²⁴ Corruption by local authorities and favouritism by local leaders further undermined the effectiveness of international assistance, leaving many in need without adequate support.

Despite some positive outcomes, international aid efforts were largely hampered by logistical difficulties, corruption, and a disconnect from the most vulnerable populations. As a result, the overall effectiveness of international responses was diminished, failing to fully address the severity of the crisis in Balochistan.

22 Umrani, Z. (2024, May 2). Local, National, and International Responses to the Interconnected Dynamics of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

23 Umrani, M. S. (2024, May 6). Local, National, and International Responses to the Interconnected Dynamics of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

24 Baloch, E. (2024, May 5). Local, National, and International Responses to the Interconnected Dynamics of Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Conflict. (S. Akhtar, Interviewer)

4. Conclusion



The convergence of climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-political conflict in Balochistan has created a complex crisis with profound implications for the province's youth. This report has shown how these interconnected challenges have deepened economic hardships, disrupted education, heightened health risks, and intensified social conflicts, particularly in the Naseerabad division, which exemplifies these issues.

The evidence highlights the severe impact of extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, on the traditional livelihoods of Balochistan's communities. The destruction of agricultural infrastructure, the loss of educational facilities, and the breakdown of healthcare services have caused significant setbacks for the region's youth. Additionally, the rise of non-traditional economic activities and increased gender-specific vulnerabilities demonstrate the complex interaction between environmental and socio-economic pressures.

Despite these considerable adversities, the resilience of Balochistan's youth remains evident. Local youth have played a vital role in relief efforts, although their impact has often been limited by political interference and mismanagement. National and international responses have similarly fallen short, hindered by inefficiencies, corruption, and poor coordination, failing to meet the needs of the most affected communities.

To tackle these compounded challenges, there is an urgent need for a more integrated and coordinated approach. Key actions include enhancing youth participation in decision-making processes, supporting women in sustainable development initiatives, and fostering stronger international cooperation. Effective interventions must prioritize the needs of marginalized youth, addressing both the immediate effects of climate change and conflict while laying the foundation for sustainable development and long-term peace.

In conclusion, Balochistan's current crisis demands a concerted effort from local, national, and international stakeholders. By addressing the intertwined issues of climate change, environmental degradation, and conflict with targeted and well-coordinated strategies, there is an opportunity to mitigate their impacts and support the region's youth in overcoming these challenges. The path forward must focus on equitable and inclusive solutions that promote a stable and prosperous future for Balochistan and its younger generation.

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