Youth Empowerment in Baluchistan: Evaluating Government Strategies and Youth-Driven Initiatives for Peace-building and Prosperity

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Abstract

The Balochistan conflict remains a critical concern for Pakistan's national sovereignty and integrity. This study explores the role of government-led initiatives in empowering the Balochistan youth as a driving force for peace. John Galtung's positive peace theory offers valid arguments to highlight the pivotal role of the state in fostering sustainable peace in the Balochistan region. The study highlights the potential of the youth of Balochistan, their challenges, and opportunities for peace-building initiatives. Utilizing qualitative research, this study relies on the survey method as its primary data source. The findings emphasize the collaborative efforts between the government and the youth to address socio-political challenges in Balochistan. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing youth participation and government engagement to achieve lasting peace in Balochistan, offering insights into the path forward for conflict resolution and development in the province.

Key Words: Baloch Youth, Socio-Political Challenges, Positive Peace, Sustainable Development, Collaborative Efforts, Educational Aspirations, Peace-Building.

Introduction

The importance of youth in peace-building has grown significantly, as they are often the most impacted by conflict and violence, yet also possess the potential to lead transformative change in society. With their openness to innovative approaches and fresh ideas, young people bring a unique and forward-thinking perspective to the process of building peace. In Balochistan, youth face challenges such as missing persons, social, political, and economic marginalization, protests, poor economic opportunities, and high unemployment rates. Balochistan has poor educational opportunities, including a shortage of reputable universities or educational institutions that can provide quality and skills-focused education. Balochi people, other than tribal chiefs or lords, live below the poverty line. According to the Baluchistan Drought Needs Assessment (BDNA) report in 2019, 71% of the population in Balochistan is multidimensionally poor, and the rural population is 85% poor (BDNA, 2019). Moreover, development funds are exploited by tribal lords for their own interests. The absence of industries and commercial activities further impedes the progress of Balochistan. Despite these challenges, the youth are motivated to bring peace in Balochistan through different avenues and "Voice of Balochistan" is a key youth-led social media platform for updates about daily problems and development initiatives. In most countries, the youth can foster dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding between the local community and local

government and the federal government. For instance, youth organizations like the Integrated Education Fund and Youth Action Northern Ireland restored peace in Northern Ireland after a conflict between Catholics and Protestants in the 1990s. Similarly, the African youth movement is another example. In this context, the research explores how the empowerment of Balochistan's youth, through collaborative efforts between the Pakistani government and grassroots initiatives, contributes to sustainable peace in the province. To gain a detailed understanding, this study addresses some key questions: What are the primary concerns and aspirations of Balochistan's youth regarding the socio-political and economic development of their region? In what ways can they actively participate in peace-building initiatives? What challenges do they face in accessing economic and educational opportunities, and how do they perceive these barriers? Lastly, what policy interventions by the Pakistani government can empower Balochistan's youth and enhance their role as agents of sustainable peace in the province?

Problem Statement

Despite being rich in natural resources, Balochistan remains one of the most impoverished and volatile regions in Pakistan. The youth of Balochistan, who constitute a significant portion of the population, face numerous challenges, including unemployment, lack of education and skills training, and limited opportunities for social mobility. Against this backdrop, this research aims to investigate the government's efforts and the youth's initiatives aimed at empowering Balochistan's youth and to identify the challenges and opportunities for promoting peace and stability in the region.

Literature Review

The most recent and authentic documentation of Baloch history from the 19th century can be observed in the era of Colonialism. Scholars like Gulawar Khan and Manzoor Ahmed indicate that the Baloch identity was divided based on language to build disunity between local tribes. The British did that to create cracks and to take strong control over the administration of Balochistan. Moreover, the sovereignty of the state was terminated through British intervention until 1948, which disrupted the traditional tribal structure. The British focused on strategic infrastructure like roads and railways, but in return, the social and economic identity of the local population was disturbed (Ahmed & Khan, 2017).

Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan, is underdeveloped compared to other provinces of Pakistan. According to (Jalal, 2015), Balochistan has been marginalized socially and economically in comparison to other provinces of Pakistan. Moreover, Balochistan does not enjoy the facilities of health and education, unlike other provinces of Pakistan. One of the most important indicators of Balochistan's underdevelopment is the poor quality of education in Balochistan. In public schools, the government of Pakistan adopted a top-down approach for education in Balochistan, which does not consider the ground realities of Balochistan. These are the reasons which lead to conflict in Balochistan (Jalal, 2015).

Pakistan has focused on recruiting a significant number of Baloch youth in Pakistan to address Baloch grievances. This study discusses various positive steps taken by the Pakistani state towards the Balochistan conflict, but it does not focus on the ground realities and the efficacy of the policies adopted by the state. To analyze Balochistan's conflict in the context of human needs theory. When human needs, i.e., self-actualization, self-esteem, belonging or love, personal fulfilment, safety and security, psychological needs, and identity/recognition are not fulfilled, it leads to conflict. In the context of Balochistan, autonomy, consideration, respect, trust, missing person cases, equality in resource distribution, safety, subsistence & support, economic development, and Baloch participation in mega projects are certain Baloch demands that are unmet, due to which the conflict is exacerbating (Bukhari, Roofi, & Bukhari, 2015).

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi analyzes that religious activism and Baloch nationalism have caused unrest in the security dynamics of Balochistan. The author mainly focused on the ethnic conflict and religious activism in Balochistan during the war on terror period in Pakistan. He discusses the sectarian divide in Balochistan and its role in shaping the Balochistan conflict. The roots of the Balochistan conflict can be traced back to the inception of Pakistan in 1947, when the Khan of Kalat did not want annexation with Pakistan. This led to the first insurgency in Balochistan in 1948, which was then followed by other nationalist revolts in 1958, the 1960s, and 1970 (Siddiqi, 2012).

Pakistan tried to suppress this conflict by intimidating the Baloch people. Various events destabilized the security of Balochistan and triggered the Balochistan conflict with Pakistan, such as the rape of a lady doctor in Sui, Balochistan, and the mishandling of this rape case by the then President Parvez Musharraf, the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti Khan and other high-profile nationalist leaders of Baluchistan, the missing persons' case, torture against people and building of new cantonments in Balochistan (Siddiqi, 2012). In response to this, Baloch has also started ethnic killing against non-Baloch people, especially Punjabis. Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), other nationalist organizations, and nationalist political parties speaking for the interests of Balochistan have formed over the years.

Siddiqi identifies that the main grievance of the BLA is the deprivation of the mineral resources that exist in their land, but the Baloch population and the region are deprived of these resources. BLA demands the independence of Balochistan from Pakistan. The Balochistan conflict requires special attention because now the Baloch youth and students are involved in this conflict (Siddiqi, 2012). Pakistan's approach to dealing with this conflict is military; however, this ethnic conflict in Balochistan requires a political solution. Pakistani states tried to resolve the issue through political means in 2004 and 2009. The response of the Pakistani state towards the Balochistan conflict has, however, not been appreciable, as the policies which are aimed at redressing the grievances of Balochistan are not properly implemented.

Tariq views the natural resources in Balochistan as the main factor contributing to the conflict in Balochistan. It is argued that, basically, it is the exploitation of Balochistan's natural resources by the state of Pakistan that aggravates the conflict in Balochistan. It is because, despite being a resource-rich area, Balochistan does not get an advantage in a similar proportion, and it is economically backwards compared to the rest of the provinces in Pakistan (Tariq, 2013). Moreover, less political representation, the presence of the military in Balochistan, and excluding Baloch leaders while taking input regarding development projects and resource distribution also frustrate the Baloch and create resentment against the state, but the main issue causing the Balochistan conflict revolves around natural resources.

Umbreen Javaid studied the concerns of the Baloch people in history and their impacts on them. Baloch people have political, economic, and social grievances due to which they demand autonomy from the state of Pakistan. Moreover, it is argued that Balochistan has been alienated due to the policies that are in favor of Baloch tribal leaders. The tribal leaders do not let any development take place in Balochistan and deprive Baloch people of their basic right to education, because of the fear that if middle-class Baloch become educated, they will become aware of their rights and Sardars will not be able to enjoy power in the region. These grievances have led to the formation of separatist groups like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), etc. In response to this insurgency, there is a high military presence in the region, which further frustrates the Baloch people. Moreover, the missing persons case, the establishment of military cantonments in the region, and the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti Khan have further exacerbated the Balochistan conflict. It is suggested that confidence-building measures and effective implementation of Balochistan packages can mitigate the conflict (Javaid, 2010).

The authors Aman, Akram, and Saud study the perception of university students in Balochistan regarding the socio-political unrest in Balochistan. It is found that the people of Balochistan have a lack of access to education, and there is a poor quality of education in Balochistan. This results in unskilled youth, which is not appropriate for the job force, ultimately leading to unemployment and thus poverty in the province (Aman, Akram, & Saud, 2018). The literacy rate in Balochistan is only 54.5% according to a survey conducted in 2023 by the finance division in Islamabad, and only 36.8% of women are literate in the province of Balochistan. (Khattak, 2024).

Moreover, the health care system in Balochistan lacks proper infrastructure, it lacks sufficient equipment and supplies, and safe water for sanitation. The system is also lacking doctors, nurses, and health professionals. There are also no proper essential medicines and diagnostic tools. Because of a lack of resources, the system is unstable. The management is poor, the supervision is weak, and the people are unable to access basic healthcare services due to geographical and financial problems (Noman, 2023). The reasons for the poor social services problems are also the same. Lack of resource allocation is problematic for Balochistan in every sector.

Research Gap

Despite various studies on Balochistan's socio-political and economic challenges, limited research explores the specific impact of government policies targeting youth empowerment and their effectiveness in fostering socio-economic development and peace. Existing literature highlights the marginalization and underdevelopment of Balochistan; still, it falls short of assessing the concrete realities of youth-oriented initiatives, such as education reforms, vocational training programs and employment schemes. Furthermore, youth-led grassroots movements for peace and development remain underexplored, despite their potential to address local grievances and contribute to conflict resolution. Understanding how young people perceive their role in peace-building and the challenges they encounter while pursuing local initiatives could offer critical insights for fostering sustainable development. Moreover, there is a significant gap in examining the interconnectivity of youth experiences in Balochistan about gender, rural & urban divides, and tribal dynamics. The low literacy rate among women is one of the key indicators of systemic inequalities that impede the broader participation of youth in social and economic spheres. Additionally, the psychological impacts of prolonged conflict, including issues of mental health and identity crises, remain neglected in scholarly discourse. Investigating these dimensions, alongside the potential of education, vocational training and digital platforms to act as tools for peace-building, is significant.

Key Research Question

How can the empowerment of Balochistan's youth, through collaborative efforts between the Pakistani government and grassroots initiatives, contribute to sustainable peace and development in the province?

Theoretical Framework

The issues identified in the increasing conflict in Baluchistan are the limited resources, lack of education, and lack of economic opportunities in the province. These issues don't allow them to work together for a greater cause or the betterment of their society. This increases mistrust, security concerns, and communication gaps between the Baloch communities. There is a sense of inequality present in Balochistan, as they are disproportionately disadvantaged and are harmed by the social structure of the society. This phenomenon comes under the structural violence (Cole, 2023). Galtung further argued that "Peace should be built after the problems caused by structural violence are eliminated, so positive peace should be targeted, not negative peace" (Galtung, 1967). In this context, the Positive Peace theory is used as a theoretical framework in this research as it addresses how cooperation between parties, cultural freedom, and peace movements should be used against

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violence (Galtung, 1967). The youth of Balochistan, when cooperating and using peace movements, will lead them to peacebuilding. According to Galtung, there must be equal cooperation between societal members, men and women, to make the environment achieve sustainable peace (Jondar, 2022). In this context, the state should make sure that the Balochistan community does not face any inequality and disproportionality. The inequality in education and economic opportunities should be addressed. Their security concerns should be eliminated, which they face in peaceful protests and peacebuilding initiatives. Once the issues are addressed properly, the youth of Balochistan on the local level can cooperate in peacebuilding initiatives for sustainable peace, which will be positive. According to Galtung, the goal must be achieving positive peace even in a state of negative peace, which is achieved by integration and cooperation between societies (Galtung, 1967).

Research Methodology
This research uses a multi-strategy framework for getting the best output and investigating social reality. The research is a combination of primary and secondary sources. The data collected was subjected to critical discourse analysis (CDA) to get the context in which respondents and writers were quoted. The CDA delves into the power dynamics, ideologies, and social inequalities embedded in language (Acharya, 2024). It highlights truth, explores the hidden agendas behind language in texts and how language upholds narratives. For this research, the data is collected by analyzing the existing literature, which is a secondary source of knowledge. Books, Journals, documentaries, the Newspaper of Baluchistan, and scholarly research work are thoroughly examined to gather information on this topic. The research is not limited to one method, but to check the validation and authentication of the knowledge, primary knowledge is also gathered. A survey was conducted through Google Forms, which got respondents as Bureaucrats, Baloch Youth, Baloch residents, Military personnel, stakeholders, NGO workers, and professors. The survey is conducted to ensure up-to-date knowledge gathering and to involve the maximum stakeholders' views on this topic to increase the efficiency of the research. The identity of the respondents is kept willingly anonymous.

Discussion & Analysis
A Survey Review of Youth Empowerment in Balochistan: Challenges and Opportunities
This survey review explores various aspects and identifies challenges of Balochistan youth, a region that faces substantial challenges in unlocking the potential of its youth. The objective of this survey is to evaluate the status of youth empowerment initiatives, including educational opportunities, employment scenarios, civil engagements, and socio-economic development programs. It also proposes practical approaches to increase the role of youth in building a sustainable future for Balochistan.
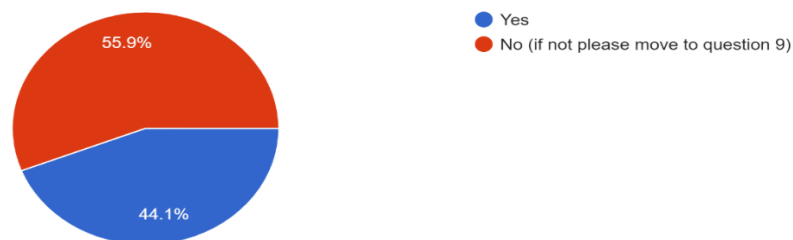
Survey Methodology
The sample population of this survey is residents of Balochistan, the experts who have worked in Balochistan, and the people associated with Balochistan. The major target of this survey is the youth of Balochistan. The survey was circulated through Google Forms, mostly to get the maximum responses. Also, the surveys were filled out physically by people for whom it was feasible. The survey methodology included a questionnaire in the English language with 10 open-ended and 10 closed-ended questions. Questions from 1-5 focused on the demographics of the respondents, 6-11 investigated the personal experience of respondents in peacebuilding initiatives, questions 12-14 explained the observations of youth-led peacebuilding initiatives and the last six questions focused on the opinion on these initiatives. The demographics and occupations of respondents will be presented; however, their identities will be kept anonymous.
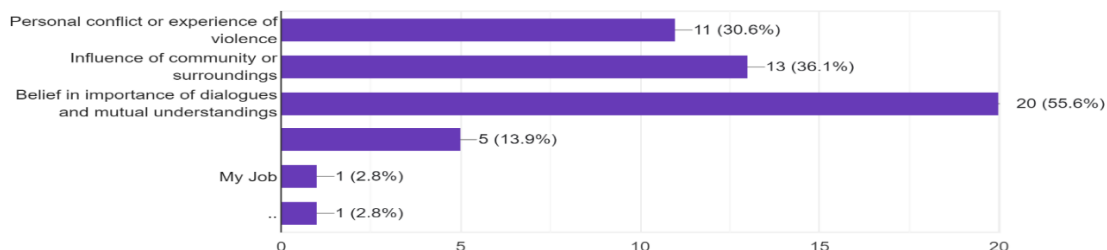
Explanation of Survey Responses

The survey was conducted to get primary and up-to-date knowledge about the topic. A brief description of responses to every question is explained below, along with the charts. Almost 90% of the target population of the survey was the residents of Balochistan, having first-hand and up-to-date knowledge about problems and reality. The other 9% of respondents include experts in different disciplines connected to Baluchistan in different ways. The responses to the question show that more than half of the population has never been involved in any kind of peace-building initiative due to multiple reasons.

Have you been involved in any peacebuilding efforts or initiatives in Baluchistan?
59 responses

- Yes
- No (if not please move to question 9)
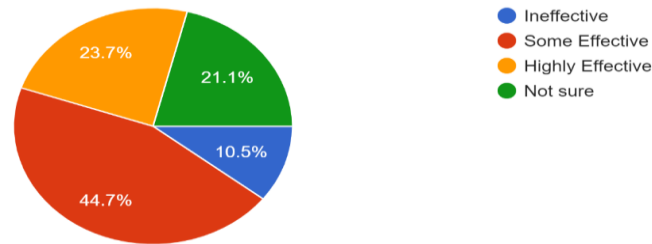
55.9%
44.1%

The next question was to determine the major reasons and problems that led to people joining the peace-building initiatives. 55% of respondents answered that they believed in the importance of dialogues, table talks, and decisions through mutual understanding. This shows a positive aspect leading to sustainable peace in Balochistan. The other 36% responded that they were part of these efforts due to the influence of their surroundings and community. 30% of the people were part of these peacebuilding efforts because they had directly experienced violence or were the direct victims of restlessness in Balochistan.

What made you participate in peacebuilding efforts in Baluchistan? (Select all that apply)
36 responses

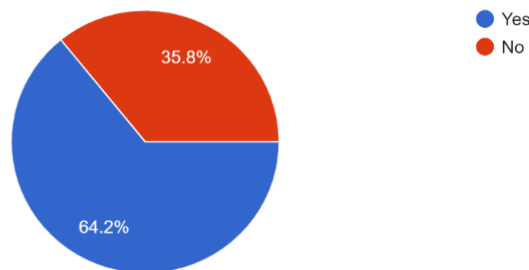|	
Personal conflict or experience of violence	11 (30.6%)
Influence of community or surroundings	13 (36.1%)
Belief in importance of dialogues and mutual understandings	20 (55.6%)
	5 (13.9%)
My Job	1 (2.8%)
..	1 (2.8%)

After that, there was an open-ended survey question which inquired about the peacebuilding initiative participants were part of. Most of these respondents were part of social media campaigns and community work, while some were part of donations, charity campaigns, and peaceful protests for the past many years. A respondent wrote, "Being victims of terrorism for almost 20 years, we as a community and individually have recorded our protest in different platforms, like in procession and social media. We have conducted seminars and workshops to inform people and the world and to initiate the peace-building process." This shows the misfortune of the Balochi people despite their efforts. This question was to determine the impact of the initiative for peace in Balochistan. 45% respondents believed that their initiatives had a limited impact, 11% found it ineffective, while 24% claimed that such initiatives have positive effects. The majority found their efforts ineffective as the problem is large-scale, or the right solutions are not implemented.

How would you rate the impact of peacebuilding activity you are involved in?
38 responses

- Ineffective
- Some Effective
- Highly Effective
- Not sure

23.7% 21.1% 10.5% 44.7%

The next question directly addresses the respondents who were not part of any peacebuilding activity to determine the main factors behind the lack of participation. 29% of respondents showed security concerns as their family and wealth are not secure if they choose to join any peacebuilding efforts. 24% reported a lack of resources to participate in peacebuilding initiatives, as basic necessities of life are an issue for them. 21% of the people completely lack awareness of such initiatives. 2-4% of the people lacked community support, while 1-2% do not believe that youth-driven initiatives can lead to peaceful Balochistan. The next question was the personal experiences of participants in peacebuilding activity in Balochistan. The question was "Have you encountered any obstacles or failures in initiating peacebuilding efforts? If yes, please describe the challenges faced or factors leading to failure." Most of the respondents answered that they faced no challenges. The other respondents reported a lack of communal support and resources as the main obstacles.
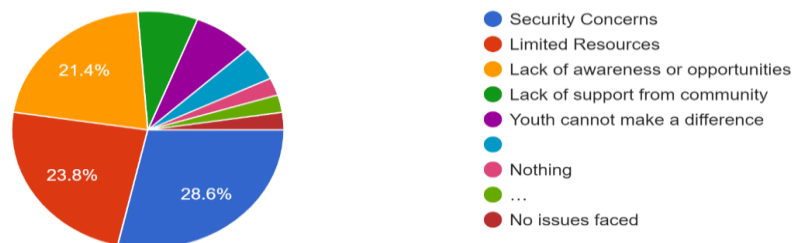
Have you witnessed any Peacebuilding effort or initiative taken by Youth of Baluchistan?
53 responses

- Yes
- No

35.8% 64.2%

The next question aimed to determine the participation of youth in peacebuilding initiatives. A majority of youth have participated in peace-building activities. The respondents wrote that they found youth involved in protests, social media campaigns, and student politics, rather than an official peace-building initiative or part of any organization.

If you have not been involved in any peacebuilding activities, please specify the reason which prevented your participation?
42 responses

- Security Concerns
- Limited Resources
- Lack of awareness or opportunities
- Lack of support from community
- Youth cannot make a difference
-
- Nothing
- …
- No issues faced

21.4% 23.8% 28.6%

This question signifies the challenges faced by youth. Several reasons were identified, and 37% of people had security concerns. People involved in peace-building efforts are threatened, go missing,
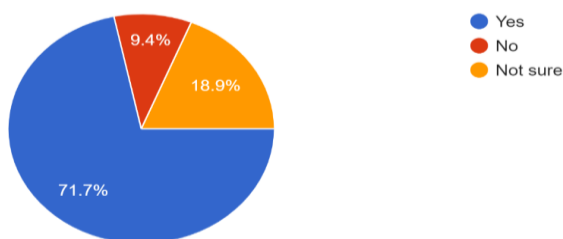
or their families are targeted. The next big problem is the lack of support. A lack of trust, divided opinions, and an inability to accept modern ways to achieve peace are the reasons. A lack of awareness and resources (funds, finances) in Balochistan was reported by 20%.

In your opinion, what are the main challenges faced by youth when it comes to initiating peacebuilding efforts?

52 responses

- Security concerns
- Lack of awareness or resources
- Don't think youth an option for peace…
- Lack of support
- Youth are not free to talk against any c…
- Resources
- People due to negligence of power an…
- …

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The next question analyzed the opinions of people on whether the role of youth is effective or not. 70% of respondents considered youth-led peace initiatives to be the sustainable solution for peace in Balochistan, while less than 10% disagreed with this. A respondent believes that "There should be proper coverage of media and proper security for youth while they are doing peacebuilding efforts." The people from all disciplines advocate for the support of the government for the success of peacebuilding efforts. Another respondent writes, "Youth often face security concerns, govt backed support can be most effective."

Do you believe youth led efforts or peacebuilding initiatives can contribute to sustainable peacebuilding in Baluchistan?

53 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

The succeeding question discusses the role of the youth of Balochistan in bringing sustainable peace. Most respondents believed that young Balochis have an in-depth understanding of internal conflicts, so youth must be educated to enable them to lead the peace-building efforts in Balochistan. Additionally, youth should raise awareness through campaigns and seminars for the long-term peacebuilding of Balochistan. The responses urge the need for quality education and awareness for youth. The youth of Balochistan is open-minded with fewer grievances, and local communities, rather than foreigners, should be included in successful peacebuilding activities. Moreover, the responses focus on community engagement and empowerment of Balochis, dialogue, partnership with NGOs and government, awareness camps, and arranging events that create unity and help understand and respect diversity. The Pakistani government and NGOs should support youth in the peacebuilding process and provide them with economic opportunities and civil engagement. The next question was "What strategies would be more effective for engaging more youth in peacebuilding efforts in Balochistan?" Again, the response emphasized quality education and awareness. The positive aspects of peace-making activities should be highlighted to increase the engagement of youth. Youth should be encouraged through different scholarship programs, student exchange programs, and sports activities to engage in peacebuilding. Moreover, government support, better economic opportunities, and security should be provided to youth. The next question asked by respondents was "In your opinion, what impact can youth-led peacebuilding initiatives bring to Baluchistan?" Most of the respondents believe that education will lead to a peaceful society as it leads to a sense of unity and social cohesion. One of the respondents said, "They can transform communities locally and regionally." Another

respondent is of the view, "Youth can bridge divides and build trust between communities." This indicates that youth can create harmony among people by engaging with them, fostering inclusivity, empowering local communities, and raising awareness for long-term stability in the region.

Key Challenges Faced by the Youth of Balochistan
The tribal system, insecurity due to increased militancy, cultural barriers, and socio-economic marginalization of Balochistan are a few challenges faced by young Balochis, which hamper their contribution to bringing peace to Balochistan.

Political Marginalization and Lack of Representation
The study finds that Baloch people are underrepresented or excluded from the development projects in their province, which creates resentment in them against the Pakistani state. Moreover, the state's promise of compensation for people displaced due to development projects has not been fulfilled (Aman, Junaid; Akram, Muhammad Babar; Saud, Muhammad, 2018).

Security Concerns and Threats from Militancy
The rise in militancy in Balochistan creates security concerns for Balochis, making it very difficult for youth to step out and act to build peace. A 34% increase in terror attacks in Balochistan by BRA, BLA, BLF, and UBA TTP, Baloch militants, and radical Islamist groups has been observed since the formation of the Taliban Government in Afghanistan. They attack railway tracks, development projects, and gas pipelines, and form insurgencies (Acharya, 2024). This shows they despise prosperity and infrastructure development in Balochistan. According to the South Asia Terrorism portal, a total of 365 incidents of killing took place by terrorism in 2022, in which a total of 971 people died. In the year 2023, there were 1502 fatalities in 527 incidents. In the year 2024, 321 incidents have taken place so far, and 782 people have died. From March 2000 to June 2024, a total of 16,842 killing incidents from terrorism took place in which there were a total of 68,204 casualties (SATP, 2024).

Economic and Educational Disparities and Unemployment
Baloch believes that the state marginalizes them by depriving them of major educational and economic opportunities. Poor infrastructure in remote areas is a major reason for the failure of Balochistan's education system (Jalal, Faiz, 2015). Poverty and other social issues in the province worsen the conflict. The absolute control of the state over educational policies is another main grievance of the Baloch people. Jalal argues that human development can be measured through education, so it must not be controlled by the state. An educated nation (developed) is more likely to resolve its conflicts in a better way as compared to less-developed nations.

Social and Cultural Barriers
Balochistan is facing social and cultural barriers to modernization and attaining peace. A lack of support by local communities and religious leaders' opposition to women's education are major barriers. Female education can lead to a promising change in the conditions of the country (Khan, 2016). Support among communities, family members, and locals should be fostered against their common enemy.

Aspirations and Opportunities for Youth of Balochistan
The Youth of Balochistan have leadership aspirations, aim to serve their province and understand the importance of peacemaking. They believe that education and economic opportunities are important for sustainable peace and development.

Educational Aspirations: Leading Towards Peace

Pakistan faces a lot of social issues like poverty, illiteracy, crimes, injustices, unemployment, etc. Lack of access to quality education by youth hinders economic growth, leading to an increase in poverty and crimes in society. Youth in Pakistan can be empowered to bring peace to society, as youth is more passionate and energetic (Hashmi, 2020). The government and civil society need to educate and train the youth and involve them in the decision-making, policymaking, and policy implementation in Pakistan. Other than this, tolerance, mutual respect, and ethics must be inculcated in youth to change their behaviors. According to a report, "Peace Education in UNICEF refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level" (Fountain, 1999). Peace can be promoted when there is a focus on education and human development.

Employment Goals and Economic Participation

In 2024, the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) system was introduced, which equips youth with skills and provides opportunities in administrative, legal, HR (Human Resources), and technical sectors (Ahmed A, 2024). CPEC also provides opportunities as it brings vast development in infrastructure and creates employment and economic opportunities (Aleem, 2024). With these incoming opportunities, youth will be able to participate in the economic development of Balochistan.

Political Engagement and Leadership Aspirations

The educated Baloch Youth has introduced reforms in rural regions by strengthening their community beyond party affiliation and the electoral process. The youth avoid violent political engagements, believe in problem-solving, and oppose conventional political activities. These young people in pursuit have lent their support to PTM (Pashtun Tahafuz Movement) (TAREEN, 2023). The awareness reflects Baloch's aspiration for sustainable peace.

Baloch Youth in Peacebuilding Initiatives

The Baloch youth have much potential to take peace-building initiatives as their community platforms are now active for discussions, debates, disseminating political awareness and questioning elected officials and government departments. They participate in mediation on the local level, conflict resolution in the Jirga system, and collect evidence against corruption to seek transparency (TAREEN, 2023).

Youth-Led Peace-Building Projects in Balochistan

There are several youth-led peace-building initiatives ongoing in Balochistan through social media platforms or the channels of some NGOs, including dialogues and campaigns to address the general problems of Balochistan in their capacity. The youth organizations are working to empower their youth, create awareness and promote peacebuilding initiatives by arranging seminars, workshops, dialogues, and conferences (Organization, 2024). Moreover, it is also working to provide relief to the Baloch people and rehabilitation in post-disaster situations.

Role of Civil Society and NGOs

Several civil societies and NGOs engage the youth of Balochistan and work together to establish peace. There is a local community BYAC, Baloch Youth Action Committee, which engages youth from local communities and is involved in development projects. BYAC equips youth with skills and knowledge and works on empowering youth, as it has trained over 260 volunteers to serve more than seventy villages in Balochistan. Centre for Peace and Development, Balochistan (CPD),

is another non-government and non-profit civil society organization that advocates for human rights, peace education, good governance, and conflict resolution. It collaborates with other youth groups and provides Baloch with social and economic services to promote a culture of peace.

Findings and Recommendations

Enhancing Youth Involvement in Peacebuilding: Exploring Future Directions and Policy Implications

The government of Pakistan should implement policies that counter youth-related issues and raise their spirits in Balochistan. In 2009, the Pakistan People's Party introduced the Balochistan package and Aghaz-e-Haqooq-Balochistan to address Balochistan conflicts through equal resource distribution, political, economic, administrative, and constitutional reforms in Balochistan. Moreover, for missing persons' cases, a judicial commission was established. However, the issue of Balochistan persists and requires the focus of the state on development in Balochistan and ensuring the effective implementation of policies formulated (Javaid, Umbreen, 2010).

Enhancing Educational and Training Programs

Jalal suggests that equal educational opportunities and an inclusive education system that serves not only political purposes are required to resolve the conflict. (Jalal, Faiz, 2015) suggests that Baloch should be taught in the Balochi language, believing it would provide a sense of recognition. But Benedict Anderson claims that the dissemination of literature in a common (local) language contributes to the development of nationalist sentiments (Özkırımlı, 2010). Jalal claims that education can better resolve their conflict with the state through dialogue and stop people from joining militant organizations in Balochistan, so it is most important to focus on the education of Balochistan. (Jalal, Faiz, 2015). It is suggested to provide quality education and skillful training for better economic opportunities in Balochistan. Moreover, conflict is due to the deprivation of human needs, so a human-needs-based approach can resolve it. The Pakistani state must ensure the effective implementation of the NFC Awards, the 18th Constitutional Amendment, and the Aghaz-e-Haqooq Balochistan package. In Pakistan, we must understand that education not only means literacy but also grooming. Peace education can be adopted by balancing 'training in civility' and 'literacy' among the youth. Similarly, the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All focuses on participation in the development process (Fountain, 1999). (Jalal, Faiz, 2015) finds that the people of Balochistan do not get quality education. Thus, to resolve conflict, quality education should be promoted without rigid control of the state.

Strengthening Civil Society and Grassroots Movements

Youth can become peace ambassadors and work at the grassroots level to bring peace to their village or area for development. This will bring tolerance, mutual respect, and avoid violent conflicts. (Hashmi, 2020) focuses on youth development and emphasizes that the approach can lead to sustainable peace.

Leveraging Technology and Social Media

The scholar Hussain identifies the positive role of the media in conflict resolution as a source which raises awareness and showcases the development projects, creating a positive image in the minds of Baloch people (Hussain, 2023). Similarly, Hashmi and Muhammad Umer propose that Pakistan should consider the British Council's Active Citizens Program by maintaining peace at the grassroots level and then expanding its horizon to regional and global levels. Political awareness and training of youth is important to understand the broader political structure of Pakistan and will manifest in policy-making and policy implementation (Hashmi, 2020). The participation of educated youth in the political structure will eliminate corruption, and education, economic opportunities, health, etc., will be ameliorated in Pakistan, leading to peace. To promote

awareness, the use of social media and online portals run by youth will have minimal security concerns.

Long-Term Strategies for Sustainable Peacebuilding
Positive Peace Theory by Johan Galtung is the long-term strategy for sustainable peace, as the power and military of the state can ensure peace temporarily. Colonial rules and Liberia are great examples of when negative peace failed in the end.

Engaging Baloch Youth in National Development Plans
NFC Award and the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan were introduced to address Baloch grievances, but their implementation was ineffective. Since (Tariq, Maliha, 2013) views the Balochistan conflict as naturally resource-based, including youth in the decision-making process and providing equal profit share can resolve the conflict.

Creating Inclusive Political Frameworks
Noor and Ajmal discuss that reconciliation between Balochistan and Pakistan is needed, or the conflict will be worsened as foreign actors can exploit the conflict thus a threat to national interests (Ajmal N. &., 2020) suggest several ways for reconciliation. The exclusion of Baloch from the development projects and human rights violations infuriates them against the state (Ajmal N. , 2020). The Pakistani State should pay attention to the Balochistan conflict by including them in developmental projects and equally sharing the revenue generated by Balochistan resources. To resolve the natural resource-based conflict and bring peace, Baloch leaders should be included in the decision-making process (Tariq, Maliha, 2013).

Monitoring and Evaluation of Peace-Building Efforts
The government must monitor the peace-building initiative, provide proper security, and reframe the policies according to the best interests of Balochistan to resolve the conflict. To bring positive peace to society, deep-rooted structural violence and discrimination at all levels must end. A bottom-up approach by empowering youth and involving them at the grassroots level is very important. Moreover, the judiciary must be strong to end corruption, and the state must be strong enough to implement the policies formulated.

Conclusion
The Youth of Balochistan is the main stakeholder for Balochistan's future and must play the front-line role in peace-making with the collaboration of the government. This study analyzes the steps and channels by the Youth of Balochistan and discusses the policies of the government of Pakistan to bring sustainable peace. To conclude this research, the importance of the accomplishment of positive peace must be highlighted as past policies and traditional measures by the State were ineffective. The Youth of Balochistan should take positive measures, e.g., peaceful protests, initiatives, and dialogues for the betterment of Balochistan. The survey responses show Baloch aspirations for peace. A focus on education as a means to learn modern democratic ways, economic, and social opportunities by the government can lead to harmony between Balochistan and the state. To foster trust, Baloch leaders should be involved in policy-making and implementation, as they are also the stakeholders of Balochistan. The government should address security concerns, lack of resources and community support, and other issues in Balochistan. The youth of Balochistan, the Baloch government, and the Pakistani State should work together to resolve conflicts as their rights and responsibilities are interlinked.

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