

Challenges and Issues Hindering Internal Peace in Pakistan

Afshan Huma¹

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Abstract

The social fabric of Pakistan is being destroyed due to intolerance and violent extremism. This intolerance is rooted back in the historical realities of monarchy, colonialism, dictatorship and fascism. Today, Pakistan is rated very low on the peace index and listed high in conflict and violence. The article identifies the factors contributing to the current issues and conflicts. Through desktop analysis of legal frameworks, international human rights treaties, and the status of marginalized groups, including children, women, minorities, and persons with disabilities, two online focus group discussions involving university faculty members across the country. This is part of a more extensive study to develop a peace education course. This analysis revealed how Pakistan's internal peace challenges are characterized by unequal power distribution and a persistent prioritization of security concerns over social development and radicalism's social, economic, and cultural aspects. The thematic analysis highlighted critical issues, including geopolitical tensions, the dominance of security state apparatus, impacts of historical dictatorships, unsustainable population growth, economic and social warfare, environmental degradation, problematic social behaviors, and educational deficiencies. A key finding is how low literacy rates and inadequate education systems perpetuate these challenges. The study suggests sustainable internal peace requires a holistic approach that addresses structural inequalities and social development needs while promoting inclusive governance and educational reform.

Keywords: Internal Peace, Social Behaviors, Economic Challenges, Violent Extremism

Introduction

Pakistan is a beautiful country with all kinds of landscapes - mountains, planes, riversides, seashores, jungles, gardens, agricultural lands and deserts. This means a lot regarding the value of multicultural heritage from all these naturally diverse parts of the country. The local wisdom is learned through thousands of years of civilization, and our local products and crafts are valued around the globe. With all other natural resources having one of the largest populations, Pakistan could develop the richest human resources that may build a better and brighter future. Pakistan is ranked as the 5th most populous country globally, with a population of over 200 million people (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This is not simply a number to concern. Instead, it brings many issues and challenges. We all keep listening that Pakistan is no longer a peaceful place. Pakistan is listed at 146th number in the Global Peace Index (IEP, 2023). The possession of nuclear weapons has further accentuated security concerns and shaped Pakistan's defense posture (Raza, 2018).

¹Fulbright Scholar and Assistant Professor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.
Email: afshan.huma@aiou.edu.pk



The country faces multiple security threats, both internal and external. Internally, it grapples with terrorism, militancy, sectarian violence, and separatist movements, particularly in regions such as the tribal areas along the Afghan border on one side and Baluchistan on the other. The internal conflicts are based on ethnic, linguistic, race, religious and sectarian differences. Pakistan has been affected by terrorism and extremism, both domestically and regionally (Cohen, 2011). Militant groups operating within its borders and sectarian outfits have targeted civilians, security forces, and government institutions. The presence of sanctuaries has complicated Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism and support networks across the border in Afghanistan (Siddiqi, 2017). The political parties in past 15 years of democratic governments, one after another, have not been able to reduce the polarization and intolerant behaviors (Mufti et al., 2020).

Colonialism in the subcontinent, like many other parts of the world, was a phenomenon that gave rise to many conflicts as colonial powers often used force to subjugate indigenous structures of governance, leading to violent conflicts between colonizers and native people (Lomba, 2017). They exploited the natural and human resources of colonized territories for the benefit of the colonizers, leading to economic exploitation, dispossession of land, forced labor, extraction of resources, and unequal trade relationships, which fueled resentment and resistance among colonized populations. By favoring certain groups or communities over others, colonial administrations manipulated social divisions to consolidate power and suppress dissent, leading to intercommunal conflicts and violence. The violence and exploitation of colonialism left a lasting legacy of trauma, resentment, and intergenerational conflict in many former colonies.

One after another year of research reveals how colonial governance in the subcontinent, was structured to serve British interests. The insolvency of local populations was intentionally induced through centralized administrative systems that excluded local communities from decision-making processes. Native political institutions and structures which had deeper roots in the cultural heritage, were weakened or co-opted, and the traditional ruling elites were marginalized. The colonial state relied on divide-and-rule tactics, worsening the ethnic and religious divisions for its own ends (Loomba, 2017). The policies during this era were made and implemented to intensify existing social inequalities and to intensify the division among different religious and ethnic communities. British colonial policies in the subcontinent were designed to extract resources and wealth for the benefit of Britain. This exploitation included the drain of wealth, heavy taxation, monopolization of industries, and disruption of traditional economic systems (Majid, 2017).

Looking at the current situation of unrest in Pakistan, this cannot be disregarded that the partition of Subcontinent in 1947, which led to the creation of Pakistan and India, was a direct result of colonial policies of divide and rule. Partition was not peaceful and it included widespread violence, displacement, and communal conflict, leaving lasting scars on the region's social fabric and political landscape. Colonialism had profound and enduring effects on Pakistan, shaping its economy, society, politics, and culture. This background cannot be ignored as the document analysis showed the deep-rooted elements of class warfare, religious and cultural intolerance, political radicalization and gender disparities still making it difficult to achieve internal peace in Pakistan.

Study Objectives

This study is a part of a larger research work to develop a course on peace education for prospective teachers. One major part of the study was based on document analysis to answer one question regarding what is the status of Pakistan with regards to human rights. Second data source were focus group discussions that helped to unpack the issues and challenges as seen by teacher

educators and university teachers of social sciences. Having two focus group discussions helped to get diverse perspectives.

Data Sources

On the basis of the above document analysis a short open-ended questionnaire was designed and shared online with university faculty members across Pakistan; and then two focus group discussions were conducted – one with the university teachers of economics, history, political science, international relations, sociology and psychology; the other with teacher educators of public universities. The participants joined voluntarily and FGDs were conducted online with the participants from Islamabad, Punjab, Sind and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Both groups were provided with a summary of the above document analysis and then asked about the major issues and challenges which they think are hindering the internal peace in Pakistan. Three stage thematic analysis was done through open coding, clustering and reporting.

Background Document Analysis

Every country has its own constitution which gives clear cut framework for further policies and practices. Legal systems reflect and reinforce cultural values, establishing norms around justice, equality, and human rights. These systems help institutionalize the execution of what a culture considers acceptable behavior. The post-World War II period marked the formal beginning of the international human rights movement, but the struggle for human rights has deep historical roots, with various national and grassroots movements advocating for rights and justice long before the mid-20th century (Margret & Alston, 2020). The United Nations (UN) was established with the goal of promoting peace, security, and cooperation among countries. One of its key purposes was to promote and encourage respect for human rights. Adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948, the UDHR was a groundbreaking document that outlined fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

The UN and its member states have worked to ensure these laws are respected and enforced, with violations often leading to war crimes investigations and prosecutions by international bodies such as the International Criminal Court. The international laws and treaties are also enabling all countries to abide by universal values for instance the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) serves as a guiding framework for nations worldwide, though it is not legally binding. Over the decades, various international treaties and conventions were adopted to protect specific rights and groups (Solis, 2016). The adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1966 further codified human rights at the international level. Countries that ratify international human rights treaties are often required to submit regular reports to international bodies, such as the UNHRC or the committee on economic, social, and cultural rights.

These reports outline how the country is implementing the treaty provisions. Non-compliance can lead to international scrutiny and pressure to improve human rights practices. Under the constitution of Pakistan fundamental rights include equality of status, the opportunity before the law, economic and political justice, freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, and association given to all citizens. Article 8 to 28 of the constitution of Pakistan provide protection to rights including equality of status, the opportunity before the law, economic and political justice, freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, and association given to all citizens.

Protection of Child Rights

The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) is mandated to examine and review existing laws, policies, and practices related to children's rights, propose new legislation, inquire into violations of children's rights, and create public awareness about child rights issues. The progress in child protection legislation varies significantly across Pakistan's provinces.

- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) enacted the Child Protection and Welfare Act in 2010 and stated the Child Protection and Welfare Rules in 2013.
- Sindh implemented the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act in 2011 and the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act in 2013.
- Punjab introduced the Destitute and Neglected Children Act in 2004, updated it in 2007, and passed the Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Act in 2014.
- The Baluchistan Child Welfare and Protection Bill has been approved by the cabinet and is pending approval from the Provincial Assembly.

UNICEF and Save the Children, has been working with the Government of Pakistan to address these gaps. The Rights of Child Act, 2017, was a milestone achieved by the government and non-government organizations in Pakistan. The NCRC is actively operating to ensure that children's rights are safeguarded and promoted through various activities, including policy advocacy, monitoring, and research. It addresses issues such as child labor, child marriage, child trafficking, and access to education and healthcare. Legislative measures have been enacted, such as the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection Act and amendments to the Juvenile Justice System Act, which align with international standards to safeguard children's rights. UNICEF has played a significant role in advocating for and assisting with the implementation of child protection laws in various provinces.

Status of Child Rights in Pakistan

- 0.55 million children face direct abuse or violence (Shah et al., 2023).
- 60% of children under 14 years regularly suffer physical punishment (WHO).
- 3.3 million children in Pakistan are involved in child labor, which can deprive them of their education, health, and childhood (UNICEF).
- Pakistan ranks 6th globally in early age marriages (UNICEF).
- 22.8 million children of school going age are out of schools (UNESCO).
- Stunting prevalence is 44%, with wasting at 10.5% and underweight at 31.6% due to malnutrition among children in Pakistan (NIH).

Protection of Women Rights

Women rights are not something beyond human rights, but these are vital for sustainable development, peaceful societies, and realizing the full potential of all individuals instead of only empowering one or the other gender. Gender equality entails that everyone has the same opportunities, rights, and balance of responsibilities across all facets of life. Empowering women is a crucial component of achieving gender parity, which involves ensuring basic rights like food, shelter, health and education as well as enhancing women's self-esteem, decision-making abilities, and access to resources and opportunities (Khan, 2018).

UN Women assists UN Member States in setting global standards for gender equality and collaborates with governments and civil society to create and implement laws, policies, programs, and services that ensure these standards benefit women and girls worldwide. It operates on a global scale to actualize the Sustainable Development Goals for women and girls and supports their equal

participation in almost all areas of life. The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) envisions a democratic, just, peaceful, and tolerant society where all citizens are equal regardless of sex, race, religion, geography, or ethnicity, and where diversity is embraced and celebrated. Its primary goal is to promote gender equality, empower women, and protect their rights by monitoring legal, social, and economic rights. Pakistan has made notable strides in safeguarding women from gender-based violence. The protection against harassment of women at the workplace (Amendment) Bill, 2022, accepted on January 14, broadened the scope of "workplaces" to include both formal and informal settings. This amendment aligns more closely with the definition in the International Labor Organization's (ILO) 2019 Violence and Harassment Convention (C190), though Pakistan had not ratified this convention. The new legislation specifically covers domestic workers, who are often more vulnerable and marginalized, thus at a higher risk of workplace violence and harassment. In 2013, the Sindh Provincial Assembly enacted the domestic violence (prevention and protection) Act. By 2016, the Sindh Terms of Employment (standing orders) Act was passed, prohibiting gender-based workplace discrimination. Recent reforms include the 2018 Sindh Maternity Benefits Act, which extended maternity leave from 84 to 112 days, aligning with the International Labor Organization's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Additionally, in 2021, amendments were made to the Sindh Shops and Commercial Establishment Act. Yet the major challenges and issues of women rights reported in recent reports are:

- 55 per cent of adolescent girls are anemic (UNICEF).
- Adult literacy rate among women is 46.2% (UNESCO).
- 32% of women in Pakistan have experienced gender-based violence of one kind (UNFPA).
- 23% of married women have experienced physical violence, 26% emotional violence, and 5% sexual violence (UN Women).
- Labor force participation rate (LFPR) of women in Pakistan at 21% (UN Women).

Protection of Minority Rights

The United Nations General Assembly expressed its commitment to addressing the plight of minorities, influenced by Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the foremost legally binding provision on minority rights (1948). The primary framework for minority rights in the international community is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/RES/47/135). This Declaration is founded on the principles of non-discrimination, effective participation, and the protection and promotion of minority identities. The declaration includes a list of rights to which persons belonging to minorities are entitled, e.g. to profess and practice their own religion, use their own language and enjoy their own culture.

Pakistan established the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) through the National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012, granting it a broad mandate to uphold human rights as per the Constitution and international treaties. The NCHR operates independently from the government and reports directly to the Parliament of Pakistan, which reviews its financial and performance reports annually. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was created on May 5, 2020, by the federal cabinet rather than through parliamentary action. However, on August 7, 2023, the National Assembly passed a bill to formally establish the NCM. It's noteworthy that religious minorities in Pakistan constitute about 3% of the population, alongside various ethnic and linguistic minorities. Major issues and concerns reported in the reports of Human Rights Watch (2024) regarding minority rights in Pakistan are:

- Stereotyping and social exclusion in neighborhoods and institutions
- Targeted persecution and direct violence at individual and group level
- Structural violence in the form of discrimination and unequal opportunities
- Forced conversions especially in the low socio-economic brackets

Protection of Rights for Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international treaty aimed at safeguarding and advancing the human rights of individuals with disabilities. As the first legally binding international agreement to establish minimum standards for these rights, the CRPD ensures the full and equal enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and promotes respect for the dignity of people with disabilities. Notably, it is also the first human rights convention that the European Union (EU) has joined as a party. Major principles of the convention are-respect for inherent dignity, respect for difference and acceptance, respect for the evolving capacities, Non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, accessibility and inclusion in society (CRPD). In Pakistan the Disabled Persons Ordinance 1981 (employment and rehabilitation), specified that employers with 100 workers or more must ensure that at least 2% of their total workforce consists of persons with disabilities, or pay a levy.

The National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (NCRDP) was then established with the objective to ensure and enhance the work of employment, welfare and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. A ‘National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2002’, was when implement some structural flaws were identified. Therefore, after four years a ‘National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities,’ was introduced in 2006. After many years’ struggle on 16th September 2020 passed a bill through a joint session of parliament, raising hopes that discrimination, especially in the workplace, against millions of Pakistanis could be curbed. The new Disability Rights Act, approved on 10 January 2022, provides a comprehensive legal framework to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities in Pakistan. There are no reliable statistics on disability in Pakistan -reportedly there are 0.48% reported in national census (2017), 6.2% in UNDP and up to 14% persons with disabilities reported in the economist (2014). The reasons for variation in data can be the difference of meaning and identification of persons with disabilities as well as missing data. Major challenges and issues for persons with disabilities in Pakistan reported in the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021) are:

- Social norms and behaviors are yet based on ancient beliefs considering disability is a stigma
- Education for persons with disabilities is largely limited to low quality special education schools which have perpetuated discrimination and enforced sympathy.
- Persons with disabilities are seen sympathetically, in need of charity, instead of enabling them to work independently and participate fully in all fields

Challenges Highlighted in Focus Group Discussion

Geo Politics

University teachers in the first focus group discussion brought up the concerns regarding Pakistan’s geographical position as the country shares borders with several neighbors, including India, Afghanistan, Iran, and China. Tensions with India over the disputed region of Kashmir have been a longstanding issue, leading to periodic military confrontations and diplomatic disputes. Instability in Afghanistan, including the presence of militant groups along the border, also poses security challenges for Pakistan. In their view Pakistan's strategic location, as well as its nuclear

arsenal, make it a key player in regional and global geopolitics. It has historically maintained close ties with China, which sees Pakistan as a strategic partner in countering Indian influence in the region. Professors also mentioned that Pakistan's relationship with the United States were mentioned by the participants to be seen in periods of cooperation and tension, particularly over issues such as counterterrorism efforts, nuclear proliferation, and Afghanistan. A highlighted aspect was that Pakistan faces water scarcity and is heavily reliant on its rivers, particularly the Indus River, for agriculture and livelihoods.

A Security State

The first focus group discussion with the university teachers of social sciences mentioned more of the historical incidents such as the wars of 1965 and then 1971 as well as the later years of Afghan war and the internal as well as external threats. In their opinion these incidents influenced the country's political and social conditions. They maintained that Pakistan is often considered a security state due to several factors that prioritize security concerns in its governance and policymaking. The professors of political science highlighted that Pakistani military has historically played a prominent role in the country's politics and governance. It has directly ruled the country for significant periods, and even during civilian rule, it has retained significant influence over key decision-making processes, particularly in matters related to national security and foreign policy. There was very little elaboration but it was mentioned that Pakistan is one of the world's nuclear-armed states, having developed nuclear weapons as a deterrent against perceived threats, particularly from India. Professors of economics were of the view that Pakistan allocates a significant portion of its budget to defense spending, reflecting its prioritization of security concerns. Defense expenditures often come at the expense of investments in social development sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Dictatorship

Interestingly this theme is mostly mentioned in both of the focus group discussions. Three periods of military rule in Pakistan were mentioned by the participant professors to be characterized by political instability and authoritarian governance. Dictatorships, according to the professors, have had significant and complex effects on the country's political, social, and economic development. Military dictators were mentioned to have concentrated power in the hands of the military establishment, undermining democratic institutions and processes. A common concern was that frequent changes in leadership through coups and martial law have hindered the establishment of stable democratic governance. Deep diving in the discussion of political radicalism the participant professors highlighted that the military interventions have perpetuated a power imbalance between civilian and military institutions in Pakistan. It was mentioned that military has historically wielded considerable influence over political decision-making, even during periods of civilian rule; and that imbalance has hindered the consolidation of democratic norms and institutions. It was agreed by all that the dictatorships in Pakistan have left a complex legacy, characterized by a mixture of authoritarian rule, political instability, and regional conflicts.

Population Growth

One after another discussion point indicated that overpopulation is the major issue that puts a strain on limited resources such as food, water, energy, and land; and that a large number of people are in competition for these resources. The professors were of the view that competition and unequal distribution or access to resources leads to conflicts, both within communities and between

different societal groups. Professors also maintained that high population density places pressure on infrastructure such as transportation, housing, healthcare, and education; and the inadequate infrastructure are exacerbating social inequalities, create disparities in access to essential services, and contributing to social unrest. The professors of sociology and psychology were of the view that scarcity-induced conflicts and radical indoctrination can escalate into violence and threaten peace and stability, not only within the country but beyond. The population growth was mentioned as a reason of many challenges but it was also mentioned that two third of the Pakistani population is under the age of 30 which means that if the children, adolescents, and young adults are educated for peace, they can bring a real change.

Economic and Social Warfare

Not only the professors of economics but others too, mentioned that Pakistan is facing significant economic challenges, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inflation. They related the economic crisis with political instability, corruption, weak governance, and security concerns. The land revenue systems were mentioned to be the same old one, as it favored large landowners and colonial administrators at the expense of peasants and small farmers, while land was often concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy elites, leading to widespread landlessness and tenant exploitation. The professor pointed out the weak labor laws and minimal law enforcement, as well as the industrial laborers and workers being deprived of their legal rights. It was stated many times during discussion that due to the poverty and inflation the social class differences are increasing and becoming huge threat for internal peace. It was mentioned by the professors in their final thoughts that a large and growing population is also causing issues of unemployment and underemployment. It was agreed that social mobility is almost impossible. People in the affluent and elite class are holding up the resources and opportunities. They were of the view that social justice and equal opportunities are mere jargons.

Pollution and Climate Change

This particular challenge was highlighted by one of the professors of education who mentioned environment as one of the key areas to be considered in peace education. Then university teachers then mentioned many issues and problems in urban and rural settings such as improper disposal of solid waste, particularly in urban areas. They pointed out that landfills are often unregulated, and waste is frequently dumped in open areas in smaller cities and towns, causing health hazards. The professors mentioned industries producing hazardous waste that is not properly managed, leading to contamination of soil and groundwater. Another feature discussed was enormous rainfall and melting glaciers cause devastating flooding in Pakistan. Extreme weather like this was mentioned as a result of climate change. The air quality of major cities like Karachi and Lahore, and factors contributing to poor air quality were stated as vehicular emissions, industrial activities, construction dust, and the burning of crop residues. They highlighted that particularly during winter, cities and villages around Lahore suffer from severe smog, which is a combination of smoke and fog. Professors mentioned high levels of noise pollution in cities being caused by traffic, construction activities, and industrial operations. They agreed that any type of pollution contributes to stress and other health problems.

Social Behaviors

Most interesting discussion was around social behaviors and it highlighted different stereotypes and prejudices regarding age, gender, ethnicity and ideologies. The discussion began with positive

attributes like people of Pakistan known for their hospitality and generosity; guests are often treated with great respect and served open heartedly. They maintained that family is the central unit of social organization and extended families often live together, and family ties are strong. They were of the view that elders are respected and play a significant role in decision-making. They agreed that traditional gender roles are prevalent, with men often being the primary breadwinners and women taking care of the home and children, but they were of the opinion that this is changing, especially in urban areas where more women are entering the workforce and gaining education; although it is not much appreciated by the conservative and religious families. The country was mentioned as home to cultural diversity, yet feudalism and strong power structures have ruined the social fabric. It was discussed in detail that religious and cultural celebrations and festivals are celebrated with great enthusiasm but incidents of violent extremism are restricting celebrations of the religious festivals of minority subgroups. Mentioning that attacks on religious minorities in Pakistan have claimed thousands of lives of religious minorities over the years, and incidents of forced conversions are reported, they agreed that the vulnerable subgroups of population are not safe. The professors of sociology and psychology mentioned that social behaviors of the people of Pakistan are influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural traditions, religious beliefs, regional differences, influence of politics, media, wars, and socioeconomic conditions.

Low literacy and Lack of Education

One of the major issues highlighted in the focus group discussion with the professors of education was that after many years of independence, Pakistan is still facing the challenges of low literacy and lack of education. It was highlighted that around fifty percent of the children of school age are yet out of school, while the literacy rate among adults is also around fifty percent. The two dimensions were mentioned as indicating that education has never been valued much and still many people consider this to be a secondary or sometimes last priority. It was pointed out that boys relatively have more opportunities to access education than girls and men have higher literacy rate than women. Lack of education has caused prevalence of ignorance with regards to basic human rights and values. The professors were of the view that power is easily imposed on illiterate and uneducated masses; therefore, the elite social class does not encourage the non-affluent subgroups of population to get education. During this discussion it was highlighted that the poor farmers, labors and domestic servants are living like slaves, having no idea about the oppression and marginalization.; they think it is their luck by virtue and fate. Professors of education were of the view that education is the only way to sustainable peace and development.

Discussion

As mentioned in the document analysis women rights, minority rights, child rights and rights of people with disabilities are reportedly not being protected in Pakistan. If we dig deeper into the issues stated above, we can clearly see that the root causes of global reports such as the World Bank, scores Pakistan 59 out of 100 for gender-based violence (GBV), which is lower than the regional average of 64 across South Asia (World Bank 2023). Women in this region have been restricted and deprived of their basic rights to education and economic empowerment. Pakistan is listed among the countries which have higher gender-based violence, domestic violence and child abuse, therefore children and women are more vulnerable (UN Women, UNODC, UNICEF 2023). All of the above challenges and issues are crucial and we cannot ignore any of these. It was rightly pointed out by the university teachers of social sciences that economic disparities and lack of

opportunities can also fuel frustration and conflict, Pakistan is also facing the consequences of unequal divide of wealth and power between regions and people (Rahman, 2021). . Nonetheless Pakistan ranks 176th of 180 countries in the latest Environmental Performance Index (EPI), 2022. According to the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency the situation of pollution in Pakistan is a significant public concern, with various forms of pollution affecting air, water, and land (Ahsan & Khwaja, 2013).

Water and agriculture are also mentioned as a reason of regional conflict as well as internal conflicts in Pakistan. Disputes over water sharing with India, and concerns about dam construction projects in Indian-administered Kashmir pose challenges to Pakistan's water security (Cohen 2011). These all factors become reasons of conflicts and insecurities If all these factors remain as they are, it is hard for educators and peacebuilders to achieve the goals of sustainable development and to fulfill the dreams of a better tomorrow. Health, safety, happiness and peace go hands in hands. People of Pakistan are looking for improvement but are not being guided to the pathway that leads to these milestones.

Conclusion

The above thematic analysis shows that in university teachers' perspective, Pakistan faces a multitude of interlinked challenges, ranging from gender-based violence and child rights violations to environmental degradation and regional conflicts over resources. These issues as highlighted by the professors not only hinder the nation's progress but also exacerbate societal inequalities and unrest. Addressing the multilayered problem as elaborated by the participant professors, requires a holistic and multi-faceted approach that prioritizes education, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Teachers as peacebuilders and educators have a critical role to play in guiding communities where literacy and education is already low. The discussion with reference to available literature provides direction toward sustainable solutions and fostering a culture of equity and resilience. It is thus concluded that only through concerted efforts of social reconstruction at all levels can make it possible to achieve the aspirations for a healthier, safer, and more peaceful future.

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