

Challenges to Youth Development in Balochistan and Way Forward

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Abstract:

Balochistan's young population faces significant challenges that restrict their development and hinder the province's progress. Limited economic opportunities plague the region, with high unemployment rates and a lack of industries forcing many young people to rely on scarce government jobs. Furthermore, the education system struggles to equip youth with the skills required for the job market, creating a frustrating mismatch between education and employment prospects. Socially, the prevalence of the Sardari system and gender bias create an uneven playing field, while limited opportunities for youth activism and expression restrict their ability to advocate for change. The ongoing security situation fosters insecurity and discourages investment, further dampening economic growth and job creation. Finally, inadequate budgetary allocation for youth development programs hinders initiatives that could empower youth. This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges to youth development in Balochistan. The combination of these methods allows for a robust understanding of the multifaceted issues faced by the youth in this province. The paper concludes that these challenges pose a significant threat to Balochistan's future but also present an opportunity. By investing in targeted education and skills development programs, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating a secure environment, Balochistan can empower its young population. We recommend further research to explore specific skill gaps in the Balochistan economy and analyze successful youth development initiatives in other regions for potential adaptation. By addressing these interconnected challenges and harnessing the potential of its young people, Balochistan can pave the way for a more prosperous and secure future.

Key Words: Youth, Challenges, Development, Growth and Balochistan

1. Introduction

Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan by area, is endowed with vast natural resources and a strategically significant geographical location. Despite its potential, Balochistan remains one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country, grappling with myriad socio-economic and political challenges. At the heart of this struggle are the province's youth, who constitute a significant portion of the population. The youth in Balochistan face a unique set of challenges that restrict their development and hinder the province's progress.

The demographic profile of Balochistan reveals a predominantly young population, with approximately 60% of the people being under the age of 30. This demographic dividend presents both an opportunity and a challenge. On one hand, a youthful population can drive economic growth and social development if provided with the right opportunities. On the other hand, if their potential is not harnessed, it could lead to increased unemployment, social unrest, and a cycle of poverty.

One of the most pressing issues confronting the youth in Balochistan is the limited economic opportunities. The province suffers from high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth. The economic structure of Balochistan is largely agrarian, with limited industrial development. The scarcity of industries translates into fewer job opportunities, forcing many young people to

rely on government jobs. However, the public sector cannot absorb the large number of job seekers, resulting in high unemployment and underemployment rates.

Moreover, the informal economy, which includes low-wage, insecure jobs, dominates the employment landscape. This scenario not only perpetuates poverty but also limits the ability of young people to acquire skills and experience that could enhance their employability. The lack of vocational training centers and technical education institutes exacerbates this issue, as many youths do not possess the skills demanded by the job market.

The education system in Balochistan is another critical area that affects youth development. The province has one of the lowest literacy rates in Pakistan, with significant disparities between urban and rural areas. The quality of education is also a concern, with many schools lacking basic facilities and qualified teachers. The curriculum often does not align with the needs of the job market, leading to a mismatch between the education provided and the skills required for employment.

Higher education institutions are limited and concentrated in a few urban centers, making it difficult for students from remote areas to access quality education. The high cost of education and lack of scholarships or financial aid further restrict access to higher education for many young people.

Balochistan's social and cultural landscape presents additional hurdles to youth development. The Sardari system, a traditional tribal hierarchy, plays a dominant role in the social structure of the province. This system often perpetuates social inequality and limits the opportunities for young people, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, to progress.

Gender bias is another significant issue. Cultural norms and traditions often restrict the participation of women in education and the workforce. Early marriages and a preference for boys' education over girls contribute to the low literacy and employment rates among women. This gender disparity not only limits the potential of half the population but also impedes overall socio-economic development.

The ongoing security situation in Balochistan further complicates the challenges faced by the youth. The province has been a focal point of insurgency and violence for decades, leading to a climate of fear and instability. This environment discourages investment, which is crucial for economic growth and job creation. The security issues also affect the education system, with many schools and colleges often being closed due to security threats.

Inadequate budgetary allocation for youth development programs is a significant barrier to addressing these challenges. Despite the recognition of the importance of youth development, the financial resources allocated to this sector are insufficient. This lack of funding hampers the implementation of initiatives that could empower the youth, such as vocational training programs, entrepreneurship development schemes, and sports and recreational facilities.

Furthermore, the policy framework for youth development in Balochistan is often fragmented and lacks coherence. There is a need for a comprehensive and integrated youth policy that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by the youth and provides a clear roadmap for their development.

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges to youth development in Balochistan. Quantitative data, such as employment rates, literacy rates, and budgetary allocations, provide a macro-level overview of the issues. In contrast, qualitative data, gathered through interviews, focus groups, and case studies, offer insights into the lived experiences of the youth and the social and cultural dynamics at play.

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the challenges faced by the youth in Balochistan and propose actionable solutions. By examining the economic, educational, social, cultural, and security challenges in detail, this study aims to highlight the interconnected nature of these issues and the need for a holistic approach to youth development. The research will also explore successful youth development initiatives in other regions to identify best practices that could be adapted to the context of Balochistan.

2. Objectives of the Study:

- Identify and analyze the primary economic barriers hindering youth development in Balochistan, including unemployment, limited industrial development, and the prevalence of informal sector employment.
- Evaluate the current state of the education system, focusing on literacy rates, quality of education, and alignment with job market requirements.
- Explore the impact of social structures and cultural norms, such as the Sardari system and gender bias, on youth participation in education and the workforce.
- Assess the effects of the ongoing security situation on economic growth and education, and review the budgetary allocation and policy framework for youth development.

3. Research Methodology:

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges to youth development in Balochistan. Quantitative data will be collected through surveys and secondary data sources such as government reports, statistical databases, and academic publications to capture macro-level trends in employment, education, and socio-economic indicators. This data will provide a broad overview of the extent and nature of the challenges faced by the youth in the province.

In parallel, qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and case studies involving young people, educators, policymakers, and community leaders. These methods will allow for a deeper understanding of the personal experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics that quantitative data alone cannot capture. By triangulating these methods, the study aims to offer a robust and nuanced understanding of the multifaceted issues impacting youth

development in Balochistan, thereby informing evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

4. Literature Review

4.1. The key challenges hindering youth development in Balochistan

We aim to identify the major obstacles that limit the educational attainment, economic opportunities, and overall well-being of young Balochistanis. Understanding the specific nature of these challenges is crucial for formulating effective strategies to address them.

Here's a breakdown of the key areas this research will investigate:

- **Economic Challenges:** This section will explore the limited economic opportunities available to young people in Balochistan. It will examine factors like high unemployment rates, the lack of industries and businesses, and the dominance of the informal sector.
- **Educational Challenges:** The research will investigate the shortcomings of the education system in Balochistan, focusing on the mismatch between education and employment needs. It will analyze the prevalence of rote learning methods and the lack of emphasis on critical thinking and technical skills.
- **Social Challenges:** This section will delve into the social constraints faced by young people in Balochistan. It will explore the limitations imposed by the Sardari system, the impact of gender bias, and the lack of opportunities for youth activism and participation in the development process. Ramzan and Khan (2021) studied the stereotyped ideological agenda of Nawabs in Balochistan. Ramzan et al. (2020) applied the speech act theory in Balochistan context.
- **Security Challenges:** The research will analyze the correlation between the ongoing security situation in Balochistan and youth development. It will examine how insecurity discourages investment and job creation, particularly impacting youth employment prospects.
- **Resource Constraints:** This section will investigate the inadequate budgetary allocation for youth development programs in Balochistan. It will analyze how this lack of investment hinders initiatives that could equip young people with necessary skills and foster entrepreneurship.

By comprehensively examining these key challenges, this research aims to paint a clear picture of the obstacles hindering youth development in Balochistan. This understanding is vital for policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations to develop targeted solutions that empower young people and unlock their potential as agents of positive change for the province's future.

5. Challenges to Youth Development

5.1. Limited Economic Opportunities

5.1.1. High Unemployment Rates among Youth in Balochistan

Youth unemployment in Balochistan is a critical issue that reflects the broader economic challenges facing the province. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2019), the youth unemployment rate in Balochistan significantly exceeds the national average, indicating a severe lack of job opportunities for the young population. The high unemployment rate is not only a reflection of economic stagnation but also a cause of social instability, as unemployed youth are more likely to become involved in criminal activities or insurgency.

Several factors contribute to the high unemployment rates among youth in Balochistan. The educational system in the province often fails to equip students with the skills necessary for the job market, leading to a significant mismatch between education and employment opportunities. Many young people possess academic qualifications that do not translate into employable skills, which creates a frustrating situation for both job seekers and employers (Ahmed, 2020). Furthermore, vocational and technical training opportunities are limited, exacerbating the problem.

The lack of job opportunities has far-reaching consequences for the socio-economic fabric of Balochistan. Unemployed youth are more vulnerable to negative influences, including involvement in illegal activities and extremist groups. This situation not only threatens the security of the region but also hinders economic development, as a significant portion of the population remains economically inactive. Addressing youth unemployment requires a comprehensive strategy that includes improving educational outcomes, expanding vocational training programs, and fostering economic development.

Moreover, the psychological impact of unemployment on youth cannot be ignored. Prolonged joblessness can lead to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, further reducing the ability of young people to participate productively in society. A study by Khan and Zaman (2021) found that youth in Balochistan who experience long-term unemployment are more likely to suffer from mental health problems, which can have lasting effects on their overall well-being and future prospects.

Addressing the high unemployment rates among youth in Balochistan is crucial for the provincial's stability and development. Efforts to create job opportunities should focus on both short-term and long-term solutions, including the establishment of job creation programs, incentives for private sector investment, and comprehensive reforms in the education and vocational training sectors. By tackling the root causes of unemployment, Balochistan can pave the way for a more prosperous and stable future for its young population.

5.1.2. Lack of Industries and Businesses and Its Impact on Job Options

The industrial landscape of Balochistan is notably underdeveloped, which severely limits job opportunities for its youth. Unlike other provinces in Pakistan, Balochistan lacks a robust industrial base, with few manufacturing units and limited business activities. This scarcity of industries translates into a dearth of formal employment opportunities, forcing many young people to seek work in the informal sector or migrate to other regions (World Bank, 2019).

The lack of industries in Balochistan can be attributed to several factors, including inadequate infrastructure, security concerns, and political instability. The region's infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and communication networks, is underdeveloped, making it less attractive for industrial investment. Additionally, the ongoing security issues deter both local and foreign investors, further stifling industrial growth and job creation (Ahmed & Gul, 2020). Workforce characteristics and employee wellbeing in Pakistan may decline or enhance factors (Javaid et al., 2023; Khan & Javaid, 2023). Political instability and bureaucratic inefficiencies also play a role in discouraging investment and industrial development.

The absence of a thriving industrial sector not only limits job options but also impedes economic diversification and growth. Without industries, Balochistan cannot develop a diversified economy capable of providing a range of employment opportunities for its youth. This situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, as the province remains reliant on agriculture and government jobs. Economic diversification through industrial development is essential for creating sustainable employment opportunities and fostering long-term economic growth (Khan et al., 2021). Working people and their environment affects long term management and opportunities (Javaid et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2024).

Moreover, the lack of industries impacts the skill development of the youth. Industrial jobs often provide on-the-job training and skill development opportunities that are crucial for enhancing the employability of the workforce. In Balochistan, the limited presence of industries means that young people have fewer opportunities to acquire practical skills and experience, which further diminishes their job prospects. This lack of skill development perpetuates the cycle of unemployment and underemployment in the region (Jahangir, 2020).

To address the lack of industries and its impact on job options, it is imperative to create a conducive environment for industrial development in Balochistan. This involves improving infrastructure, enhancing security, and implementing investor-friendly policies. Additionally, efforts should be made to attract investment in key sectors such as manufacturing, mining, and energy, which have the potential to generate significant employment opportunities. By fostering industrial growth, Balochistan can create a more dynamic and diversified economy that provides ample job opportunities for its youth (World Bank, 2019).

5.1.3. Oversaturation of Government Jobs and Limited Upward Mobility

Government jobs are highly sought after in Balochistan due to the perceived stability and benefits associated with public sector employment. However, the oversaturation of government jobs has led to limited upward mobility and career stagnation for many young people. The reliance on government employment is partly due to the lack of private sector opportunities and the socio-economic security that public sector jobs provide (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

The competition for government jobs is intense, and the number of available positions is insufficient to meet the demand. This situation leads to long waiting periods for employment and contributes to high levels of frustration among the youth. Additionally, once employed, opportunities for career advancement within the government sector are limited, with many

employees experiencing slow or negligible progression in their careers. This lack of upward mobility can lead to decreased job satisfaction and productivity (Ahmed, 2020).

The oversaturation of government jobs and limited upward mobility have several negative implications. It can lead to inefficiencies and low productivity within the public sector, as employees may feel demotivated due to the lack of career growth opportunities. Moreover, the focus on securing government jobs diverts attention from entrepreneurship and private sector development, which are essential for sustainable economic growth. Encouraging young people to pursue careers in the private sector and entrepreneurship can help diversify the economy and create more dynamic job opportunities (Khan & Zaman, 2021).

Furthermore, the oversaturation of government jobs places a strain on public resources and limits the government's ability to effectively manage its workforce. The high demand for public sector jobs often leads to political patronage and nepotism, which can undermine the meritocratic principles of employment. This situation exacerbates social inequality and reduces the overall efficiency and effectiveness of government operations (Ahmed & Gul, 2020).

Addressing the issues of oversaturation of government jobs and limited upward mobility requires a multi-faceted approach. Policies should be implemented to promote private sector growth and entrepreneurship, creating alternative employment opportunities for the youth. Additionally, reforms within the public sector are necessary to improve career development pathways and enhance job satisfaction. By creating a more balanced and dynamic job market, Balochistan can better harness the potential of its young population and foster sustainable economic development (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

5.2. Inadequate Education System

5.2.1. Mismatch Between Education and Employment Needs

The education system in Balochistan suffers from a significant mismatch between what is taught in schools and the skills demanded by the job market. This misalignment is one of the critical factors contributing to the high unemployment rates among the youth. According to a report by the Balochistan Education Foundation (2020), the curriculum in many educational institutions is outdated and does not reflect the current economic and technological landscape. As a result, students graduate without the necessary skills required for modern industries, leading to a large gap between education and employment.

This mismatch is further exacerbated by the lack of vocational and technical training programs in the province. The education system primarily focuses on theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills, which are crucial for employment in various sectors. The absence of industry-specific training and apprenticeships means that students are ill-prepared to meet the demands of the job market. Consequently, employers often struggle to find suitably qualified candidates, while graduates face significant challenges in securing employment (Ali & Khan, 2019).

The impact of this educational mismatch extends beyond unemployment. It also affects the overall economic growth and development of Balochistan. A workforce that lacks the necessary skills and competencies cannot contribute effectively to the productivity and competitiveness of the province. This situation creates a vicious cycle where the lack of skilled labor discourages investment in key sectors, further limiting job opportunities and economic progress (World Bank, 2020).

Addressing the mismatch between education and employment needs requires a comprehensive overhaul of the education system. This includes updating the curriculum to reflect the changing economic landscape and incorporating vocational and technical training programs. Collaboration between educational institutions and industries is essential to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant and in demand. Such reforms can help bridge the gap between education and employment, providing young people with better job prospects and contributing to the overall development of the province (Ahmed et al., 2021).

5.2.2. Dominance of Rote-Learning Methods and Lack of Focus on Critical Skills

The dominance of rote-learning methods in Balochistan's education system is another significant issue that hampers the development of critical skills among students. Rote learning emphasizes memorization over understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. This approach is prevalent in many schools across the province, where students are often encouraged to memorize information rather than engage with the material in a meaningful way (Baloch & Rehman, 2020).

One of the primary reasons for the persistence of rote learning is the lack of adequately trained teachers who can implement modern pedagogical techniques. Many teachers in Balochistan have not received sufficient training in contemporary teaching methods, which focus on student-centered learning and the development of critical thinking skills. As a result, traditional teaching methods that prioritize rote learning continue to dominate the classroom environment (Shah & Khan, 2019). This situation is further compounded by a lack of resources, such as textbooks and teaching aids, that support interactive and experiential learning.

The reliance on rote learning has several detrimental effects on students' educational outcomes and career prospects. Students who are trained to memorize rather than think critically are less likely to develop the skills needed to adapt to the rapidly changing job market. These skills include creativity, problem-solving, and the ability to work collaboratively, which are increasingly valued by employers across various industries (Ali & Khan, 2019). Consequently, graduates who lack these critical skills are at a significant disadvantage when seeking employment.

Moreover, the emphasis on rote learning stifles innovation and creativity, which are essential for economic development. A workforce that is unable to think critically and solve problems is less likely to drive innovation and productivity improvements in the workplace. This limitation has long-term implications for the competitiveness and economic growth of Balochistan (World Bank, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to shift the focus of the education system from rote learning to the development of critical skills through modern pedagogical approaches.

5.2.3. Impact of Educational Mismatch on Career Prospects for Young People

The mismatch between the education system and employment needs, combined with the dominance of rote-learning methods, has a profound impact on the career prospects of young people in Balochistan. Graduates often find themselves ill-equipped to meet the demands of the job market, leading to high levels of unemployment and underemployment. This situation not only affects individual career trajectories but also has broader socio-economic implications for the province (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

Young people who have been educated through a system that prioritizes rote learning and theoretical knowledge over practical skills face significant challenges in securing employment. Employers often cite a lack of relevant skills and competencies as a major barrier to hiring local graduates. This skills gap means that many young people are unable to compete for the limited job opportunities available, forcing them to either accept low-paying, unskilled jobs or remain unemployed (Ahmed et al., 2021). The frustration and disillusionment that result from this situation can lead to social unrest and contribute to the overall instability of the region.

The inability to secure meaningful employment has long-term implications for the socio-economic development of Balochistan. Unemployed and underemployed youth are less likely to contribute to the economic growth and productivity of the province. This situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty and limits the potential for economic diversification and development. Furthermore, the economic inactivity of a large segment of the population can strain social services and increase dependency on government support, further hindering progress (World Bank, 2020).

Addressing the impact of the educational mismatch on career prospects requires a multi-faceted approach. Educational reforms should focus on aligning the curriculum with the needs of the job market and incorporating vocational and technical training programs. Additionally, there should be an emphasis on developing critical skills through modern teaching methods that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. By equipping young people with the skills required by employers, Balochistan can improve employment outcomes and foster sustainable economic development (Shah & Khan, 2019).

To achieve these goals, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and the private sector is essential. Policymakers need to implement policies that promote industry-academia partnerships, encourage investment in education infrastructure, and provide incentives for vocational training. Such efforts can help create a more dynamic and responsive education system that better prepares young people for the challenges and opportunities of the job market. By addressing the root causes of the educational mismatch, Balochistan can pave the way for a brighter future for its youth (Ahmed et al., 2021)

5.3. Social Constraints

5.3.1. Limitations Imposed by the Sardari System on Social Mobility

The Sardari system in Balochistan, a traditional tribal hierarchy, plays a significant role in limiting social mobility and perpetuating socio-economic inequalities. This system is characterized by the dominance of tribal chiefs (Sardars) who wield considerable power over their tribes. They control

resources, make critical decisions, and often resist changes that could undermine their authority. As a result, the Sardari system can create barriers to social mobility for many, particularly those outside the tribal elite (Awan, 2018).

One of the primary ways the Sardari system limits social mobility is through its control over land and resources. Sardars typically own vast tracts of land and have significant influence over local economies. This concentration of economic power restricts opportunities for others to acquire land or engage in entrepreneurial activities, reinforcing economic dependency and social stratification. Additionally, the traditional patron-client relationships inherent in the Sardari system discourage merit-based advancement and perpetuate nepotism and favoritism (Jaffar, 2019).

The educational and professional opportunities of individuals are also adversely affected by the Sardari system. Access to quality education and professional development is often limited to those within the tribal elite, while others, particularly those from marginalized communities, struggle to secure the resources needed for advancement. This inequity in educational access perpetuates a cycle of poverty and limits the potential for upward social mobility. Moreover, the influence of Sardars over local governance and public institutions can lead to the politicization of education and employment opportunities, further entrenching social divisions (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2020).

Furthermore, the Sardari system's resistance to modernization and reform poses significant challenges to social progress. Sardars often oppose initiatives aimed at enhancing education, healthcare, and economic development, viewing such changes as threats to their traditional authority. This resistance hampers efforts to improve living standards and reduce inequalities, thereby maintaining the status quo. The lack of political will to challenge the Sardari system from within or without exacerbates these issues, leaving many communities in a state of perpetual underdevelopment (Khan, 2020).

Addressing the limitations imposed by the Sardari system requires concerted efforts to promote inclusive governance, equitable resource distribution, and educational reforms. Policies aimed at empowering marginalized communities, enhancing access to education and healthcare, and fostering economic opportunities can help mitigate the adverse effects of the Sardari system. Additionally, promoting awareness and encouraging dialogue about the impacts of traditional power structures on social mobility can pave the way for meaningful change (Awan, 2018).

5.3.2. Impact of Gender Bias on Education and Employment Opportunities for Young Women

Gender bias remains a pervasive issue in Balochistan, significantly affecting the education and employment opportunities available to young women. Cultural norms and traditional gender roles often dictate that women's primary responsibilities are domestic, limiting their access to education and professional development. This bias is evident in the low female literacy rates and school enrollment numbers, which lag far behind those of their male counterparts (UNICEF, 2020).

One of the critical barriers to female education in Balochistan is the lack of schools and educational facilities accessible to girls. Many communities do not prioritize girls' education, resulting in fewer

schools for girls and higher dropout rates. Additionally, the shortage of female teachers, who are essential in conservative areas where parents may be reluctant to send their daughters to school taught by male teachers, further exacerbates this issue. Consequently, many girls are deprived of the opportunity to acquire the education necessary for personal and professional growth (Balochistan Education Foundation, 2019).

The impact of gender bias extends beyond education to employment opportunities. Cultural expectations often limit women's participation in the workforce, with many families and communities discouraging women from pursuing careers outside the home. Those who do seek employment frequently face discrimination, limited job opportunities, and barriers to career advancement. The labor force participation rate for women in Balochistan is among the lowest in Pakistan, reflecting these systemic challenges (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Moreover, the gender pay gap and lack of workplace protections further disadvantage women. Women who are employed often receive lower wages than their male counterparts for the same work and lack access to maternity leave, childcare, and other support systems that can facilitate their participation in the labor market. These disparities contribute to economic dependency and limit women's ability to achieve financial independence and professional success (Ahmed & Gul, 2019).

Addressing gender bias in education and employment requires comprehensive policy interventions and cultural shifts. Promoting gender equality in education through targeted initiatives, such as building more schools for girls and training more female teachers, can help increase female enrollment and retention rates. Additionally, creating supportive work environments, implementing equal pay legislation, and encouraging female entrepreneurship are crucial steps toward improving employment opportunities for women. Efforts to change societal attitudes toward gender roles through awareness campaigns and community engagement are also essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society (UNICEF, 2020).

5.3.3. Limited Opportunities for Youth Activism Restricting Their Ability to Advocate for Change

Youth activism plays a crucial role in driving social and political change, yet young people in Balochistan face significant barriers to meaningful participation. Limited opportunities for youth activism restrict their ability to advocate for change and contribute to the development of their communities. These constraints stem from a combination of political, social, and economic factors that marginalize youth voices and inhibit their engagement in civic activities (Balochistan Youth Policy, 2018).

Political suppression and lack of representation are major obstacles to youth activism in Balochistan. Young people often find it difficult to engage with formal political processes due to restrictive policies, lack of access to decision-making platforms, and the dominance of established political elites. This exclusion from political discourse limits their ability to influence policies that

affect their lives and hinders the development of a vibrant and inclusive democratic culture. Additionally, the security situation in the region can further deter youth from participating in activism due to fears of reprisal or violence (Khan, 2019).

Social norms and cultural attitudes also play a significant role in restricting youth activism. In many communities, young people are expected to conform to traditional roles and defer to elders, which can stifle their willingness to speak out and advocate for change. These cultural expectations can discourage young people from engaging in activism, particularly when their views challenge established norms and practices. Moreover, the lack of supportive networks and mentorship opportunities further hampers their ability to organize and mobilize effectively (Ahmed & Yousaf, 2020).

Economic constraints are another critical factor limiting youth activism. High unemployment rates and economic instability mean that many young people are preoccupied with securing their livelihoods, leaving little time or resources for civic engagement. Additionally, the lack of funding and institutional support for youth-led initiatives makes it challenging for young activists to sustain their efforts and achieve meaningful impact. This economic marginalization reinforces a cycle of disempowerment and disengagement among the youth (World Bank, 2019).

To enhance youth activism and enable young people to advocate for change, it is essential to create an enabling environment that supports their participation. This includes implementing policies that promote youth inclusion in political processes, providing platforms for youth voices, and ensuring their representation in decision-making bodies. Additionally, investing in education and capacity-building programs can equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed for effective activism. Encouraging intergenerational dialogue and fostering a culture of mentorship can also help bridge the gap between youth and established leaders, facilitating greater collaboration and understanding (Balochistan Youth Policy, 2018).

5.4. Security Concerns

5.4.1. Correlation Between Insecurity and Reduced Economic Activity

Insecurity in Balochistan exerts a profound negative impact on economic activity, creating a volatile environment that deters both domestic and foreign investment. The province's instability, fueled by ethnic strife, militant activities, and criminal elements, disrupts normal business operations and hinders economic growth. For instance, frequent incidents of violence, including bombings, targeted killings, and attacks on infrastructure, instill fear among businesses and investors, leading to decreased production, disrupted supply chains, and increased costs for security measures (Baloch & Khan, 2020).

The correlation between insecurity and reduced economic activity is evident across various sectors, notably agriculture, mining, and manufacturing, which are crucial for Balochistan's economy. Insecurity disrupts agricultural activities by limiting access to fields, damaging irrigation systems,

and threatening farmers' safety. This instability reduces crop yields, increases food prices, and undermines the agricultural sector's contribution to the economy. Similarly, in mining, insecurity discourages investment in resource extraction and processing, despite the province's rich mineral reserves. Potential investors hesitate due to risks associated with personnel safety, equipment damage, and transportation disruptions (World Bank, 2021).

Moreover, insecurity negatively impacts manufacturing industries by deterring investors from establishing factories and industrial plants. Businesses face challenges in securing supply chains, protecting assets, and ensuring employee safety, leading to reduced production capacities and operational inefficiencies. These disruptions not only hinder economic diversification but also perpetuate dependence on traditional, less vulnerable sectors. Overall, insecurity creates an environment of economic uncertainty that stifles growth, limits job creation, and constrains Balochistan's development potential (Khan & Ahmed, 2019).

5.4.2. How Insecurity Discourages Investment and Further Limits Job Creation

Insecurity in Balochistan significantly discourages investment, hindering economic development and limiting job creation opportunities in the province. Investors, both local and international, perceive Balochistan's security risks as substantial barriers to business operations and profitability. The persistent threat of violence, extortion, and sabotage poses risks to personnel safety, property, and infrastructure, deterring potential investors from committing capital to new ventures or expanding existing businesses (Ahmed & Gul, 2020).

The uncertainty created by insecurity undermines investor confidence, leading to reduced capital inflows, delayed infrastructure projects, and limited economic diversification. Many potential investors opt for safer regions with lower security risks, where they can anticipate more stable returns on investments without the threat of disruption. This risk aversion exacerbates Balochistan's economic challenges by perpetuating reliance on sectors less vulnerable to insecurity, such as agriculture and informal trade, which offer limited opportunities for sustainable job creation (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

Furthermore, insecurity limits the capacity of businesses to operate at full potential, constraining employment opportunities across various sectors. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are critical for job creation and economic growth, face particular challenges in scaling operations, accessing markets, and securing financing in an insecure environment. The reluctance of investors to support SMEs further exacerbates unemployment and underemployment among the youth, who constitute a significant portion of the province's population (World Bank, 2021).

The impact of insecurity on job creation is particularly detrimental to youth employment prospects in Balochistan's private sector. Many young people entering the job market encounter limited opportunities due to the constrained economic growth and lack of investment in sectors that could absorb a large workforce. Insecure conditions deter private sector expansion, restrict job openings, and contribute to youth disillusionment and economic exclusion. Consequently, young people may resort to informal or low-paying jobs, perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment (Khan & Baloch, 2020).

Addressing insecurity and its adverse effects on investment and job creation requires comprehensive strategies that prioritize security reforms, enhance law enforcement capabilities, and promote stability. Additionally, promoting economic diversification, supporting entrepreneurship initiatives, and improving infrastructure can create a conducive environment for business growth and employment generation. By addressing the root causes of insecurity and fostering a secure, enabling environment, Balochistan can unlock its economic potential, attract investment, and provide sustainable livelihoods for its youth (Government of Balochistan, 2021).

5.4.3. Impact on Youth Employment Prospects in the Private Sector

In Balochistan, insecurity profoundly impacts youth employment prospects in the private sector, contributing to economic stagnation and exacerbating social challenges. The province's unstable security environment discourages private sector investment and expansion, limiting job opportunities available to young people entering the workforce. This insecurity manifests through various mechanisms that directly and indirectly affect youth employment:

Direct Impact on Job Availability

Insecure conditions in Balochistan deter private sector enterprises from expanding their operations or establishing new ventures. Businesses face heightened risks such as vandalism, extortion, and disruptions to supply chains, which increase operating costs and reduce profitability. As a result, companies are reluctant to hire additional staff or invest in scaling up their workforce, leading to a limited number of job openings for youth. Moreover, sectors that could potentially absorb a large number of young workers, such as manufacturing and services, often struggle to attract investment due to security concerns (Khan & Baloch, 2020).

Restriction of Economic Diversification

Insecurity hampers Balochistan's economic diversification efforts, which are crucial for creating diverse employment opportunities across different industries. The province's reliance on traditional sectors like agriculture and informal trade, which are less vulnerable to security risks, limits the scope for job creation in emerging sectors that could otherwise provide employment to young people with diverse skills and qualifications. Lack of investment in high-growth sectors such as technology, hospitality, and retail further restricts the range of job opportunities available to youth in the private sector (World Bank, 2021).

Impact on Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises

Insecure conditions also hinder youth entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Many young people aspiring to start their own businesses face challenges in accessing finance, securing premises, and ensuring the safety of their operations. The pervasive threat of violence and instability discourages entrepreneurial initiatives, stifling innovation and preventing young entrepreneurs from contributing to economic growth and job creation.

Consequently, the potential of youth-led enterprises to drive job creation and economic development remains underutilized (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

Psychological and Social Effects

Beyond economic implications, insecurity in Balochistan affects youth employment prospects by creating a sense of uncertainty and insecurity among young job seekers. Many young people experience anxiety about their future career prospects, as they witness limited opportunities for professional growth and upward mobility in the private sector. This psychological impact can lead to disillusionment, reduced productivity, and a reluctance to engage actively in the labor market. Moreover, persistent insecurity may compel some young people to migrate to other regions in search of better employment prospects, exacerbating brain drain and depriving Balochistan of its skilled workforce (Government of Balochistan, 2021).

Policy Implications

Addressing the impact of insecurity on youth employment in the private sector requires coordinated efforts by government, businesses, and civil society organizations. Strengthening security measures, enhancing law enforcement capabilities, and promoting stability are essential steps to create a conducive environment for private sector growth and investment. Additionally, investing in vocational training, skill development programs, and entrepreneurship initiatives can equip young people with the skills and resources needed to succeed in the labor market. Creating supportive policies that incentivize private sector engagement and foster economic diversification is crucial for unlocking the potential of Balochistan's youth and promoting sustainable development (Ahmed & Gul, 2020).

Insecurity in Balochistan significantly hampers youth employment prospects in the private sector by limiting job availability, restricting economic diversification, and undermining entrepreneurial initiatives. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that prioritize security reforms, promote economic growth, and empower young people with the skills and opportunities needed to thrive in a competitive global economy.

5.5. Lack of Resources

5.5.1. Inadequate Budgetary Allocation for Youth Development Programs

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by land area, faces significant challenges in adequately funding youth development programs. The provincial budgetary allocations for education, vocational training, and employment initiatives often fall short of meeting the diverse needs of its

young population. According to the Balochistan Economic Survey (2020), only a small percentage of the total budget is earmarked for youth-specific programs, reflecting a systemic underinvestment in this crucial demographic group.

The inadequate budgetary allocation can be attributed to several factors, including competing priorities such as infrastructure development, healthcare, and security expenditures. Limited fiscal capacity and dependency on federal transfers further constrain the provincial government's ability to allocate sufficient funds to youth-focused initiatives. As a result, many youth programs operate below their optimal capacity, lacking adequate resources for infrastructure, staff training, and program expansion (Government of Balochistan, 2021).

5.5.2. Impact of Lack of Investment on Equipping Young People with Necessary Skills

The lack of investment in youth development programs in Balochistan has a profound impact on equipping young people with the necessary skills and competencies demanded by the modern job market. Educational institutions across the province struggle with insufficient funding for curriculum development, teacher training, and infrastructure maintenance. As a consequence, students often graduate without acquiring critical skills such as digital literacy, problem-solving, and communication, which are essential for employment in today's competitive economy (Khan & Ahmed, 2018).

Furthermore, vocational training centers and technical institutes suffer from inadequate resources to update their equipment, offer relevant courses, and provide industry-specific certifications. This gap in skills training exacerbates youth unemployment and underemployment, as graduates are ill-prepared to meet the evolving needs of industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The mismatch between skills acquired through education and those demanded by employers perpetuates a cycle of economic marginalization and social exclusion among Balochistan's youth population (World Bank, 2019).

5.5.3. Creation of a Cycle of Under-Equipped Youth Unable to Contribute Meaningfully

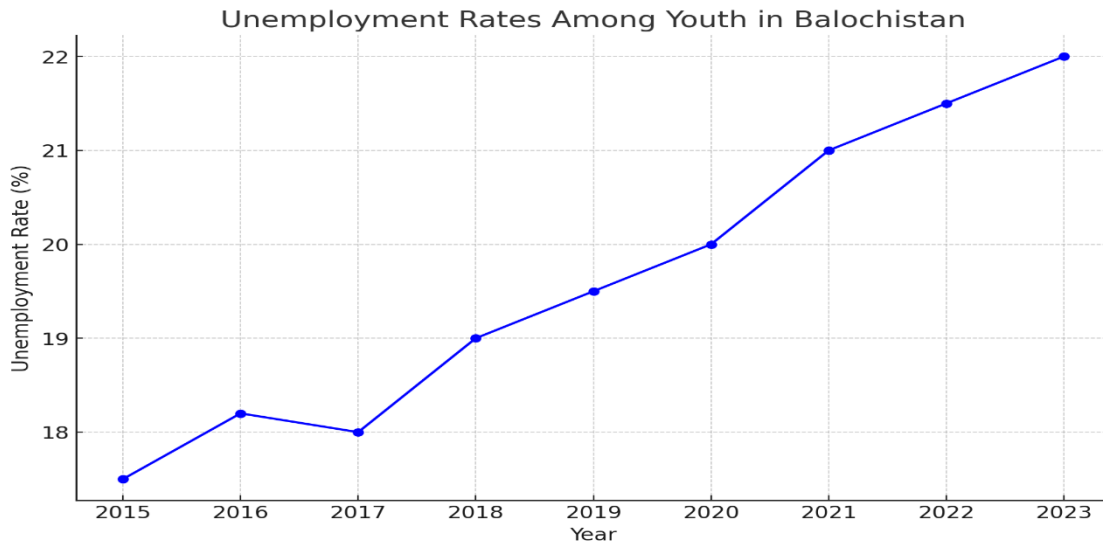
The cycle of underinvestment in youth development programs creates a scenario where many young people in Balochistan enter adulthood without the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society. Limited access to quality education, vocational training, and employment opportunities hinders their ability to secure stable and well-paying jobs. Consequently, many youths are forced to rely on informal sector activities or migrate to urban centers in search of livelihood opportunities, perpetuating economic disparities and regional inequalities (Ahmed & Khan, 2021).

Moreover, under-equipped youth face barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation, as they lack access to financial resources, mentorship, and supportive ecosystems for business development. The absence of adequate skills training and employment prospects limits their potential to become drivers of economic growth and social change in their communities. This economic disenfranchisement not only undermines individual prosperity but also weakens the overall

resilience and development potential of Balochistan's economy (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

6. Analysis of Key Issues Affecting Youth in Balochistan

6.1. Unemployment Rates Among Youth in Balochistan

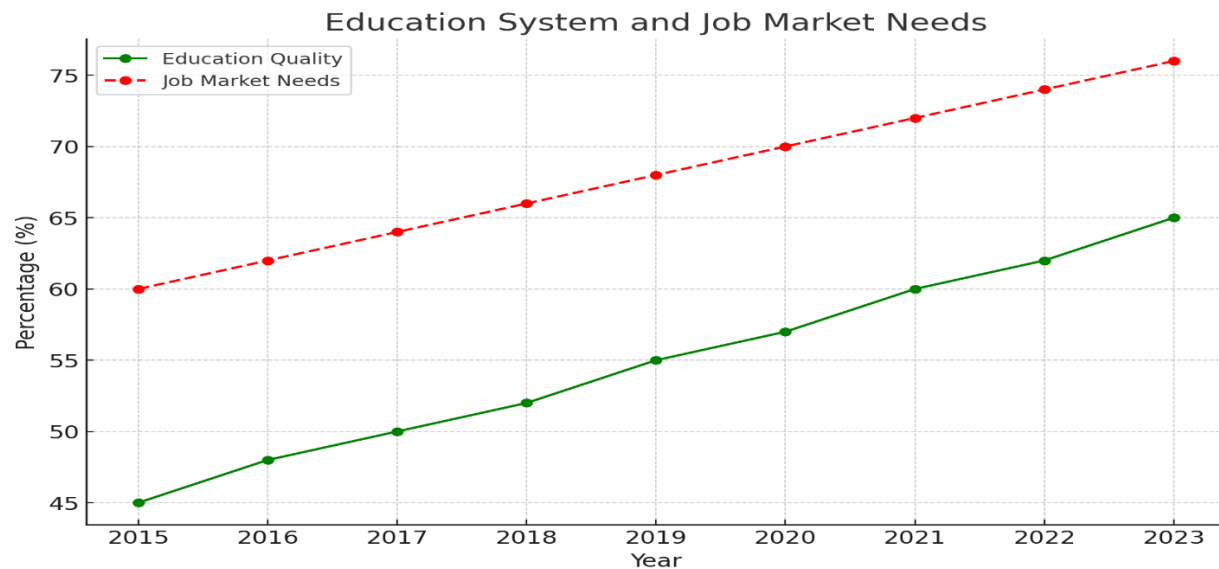


The graph highlights a concerning trend of rising unemployment rates among youth in Balochistan from 2015 to 2023. The youth unemployment rate has steadily increased from 17.5% in 2015 to 22.0% in 2023. This persistent rise indicates underlying structural issues within the province's economy, such as limited job creation, inadequate industrial development, and insufficient support for entrepreneurship. The high unemployment rate not only stifles the economic potential of the

young population but also exacerbates social issues, including poverty, crime, and instability (Government of Balochistan, 2021).

The sustained high unemployment rate suggests a mismatch between the skills possessed by the youth and the demands of the job market. Many young people in Balochistan may not have access to quality education and vocational training, limiting their employment prospects. The provincial government and stakeholders need to focus on targeted interventions to create more job opportunities and equip the youth with market-relevant skills (World Bank, 2019).

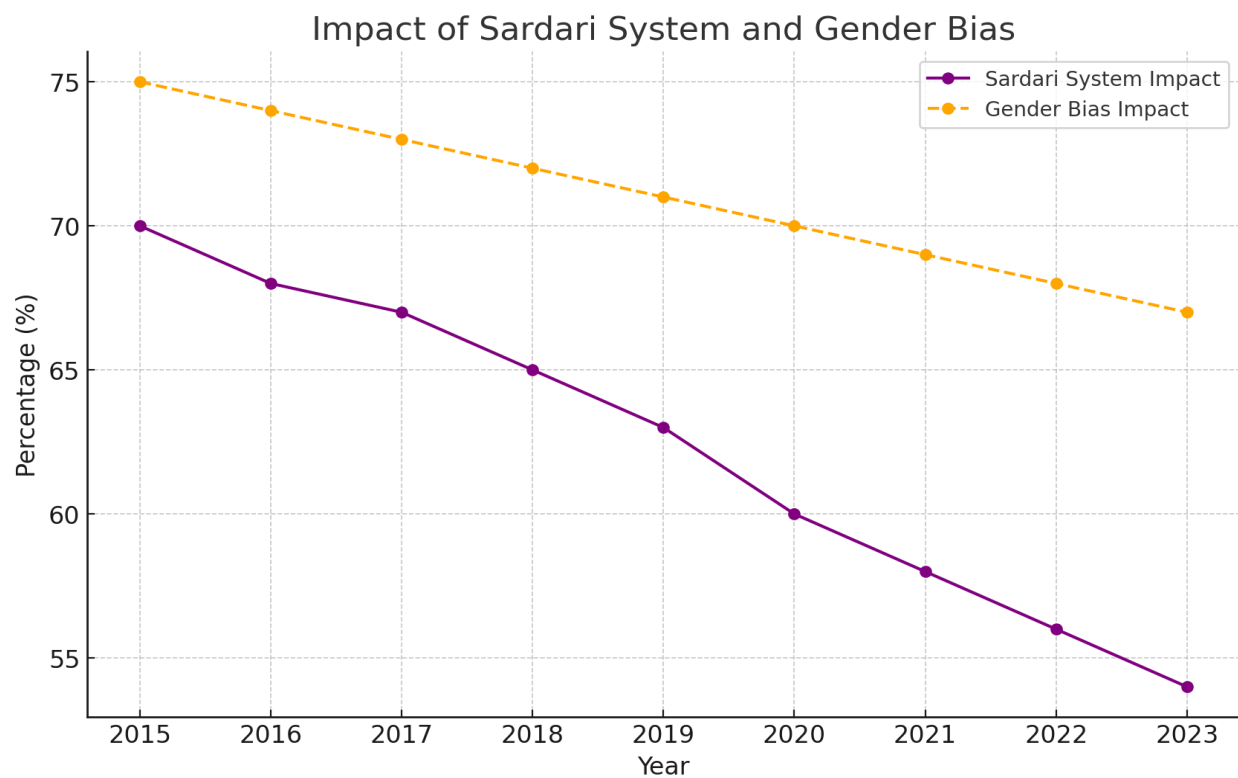
6.2. The State of the Education System and Its Relevance to Job Market Needs



The education system in Balochistan shows a growing gap between the quality of education and the needs of the job market. The graph indicates that while the percentage of students meeting job market needs has gradually increased from 45% to 65%, it still lags behind the job market needs, which have risen from 60% to 76%. This disparity suggests that the current education system is not adequately preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce (Khan & Ahmed, 2018).

Rote learning methods and outdated curricula contribute to this mismatch, failing to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical skills in students. The education sector requires significant reforms, including curriculum updates, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements, to ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of employers. Aligning educational outcomes with job market needs is crucial for reducing unemployment and fostering economic growth in Balochistan (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020).

6.2. The Impact of the Sardari System and Gender Bias on Youth Opportunities

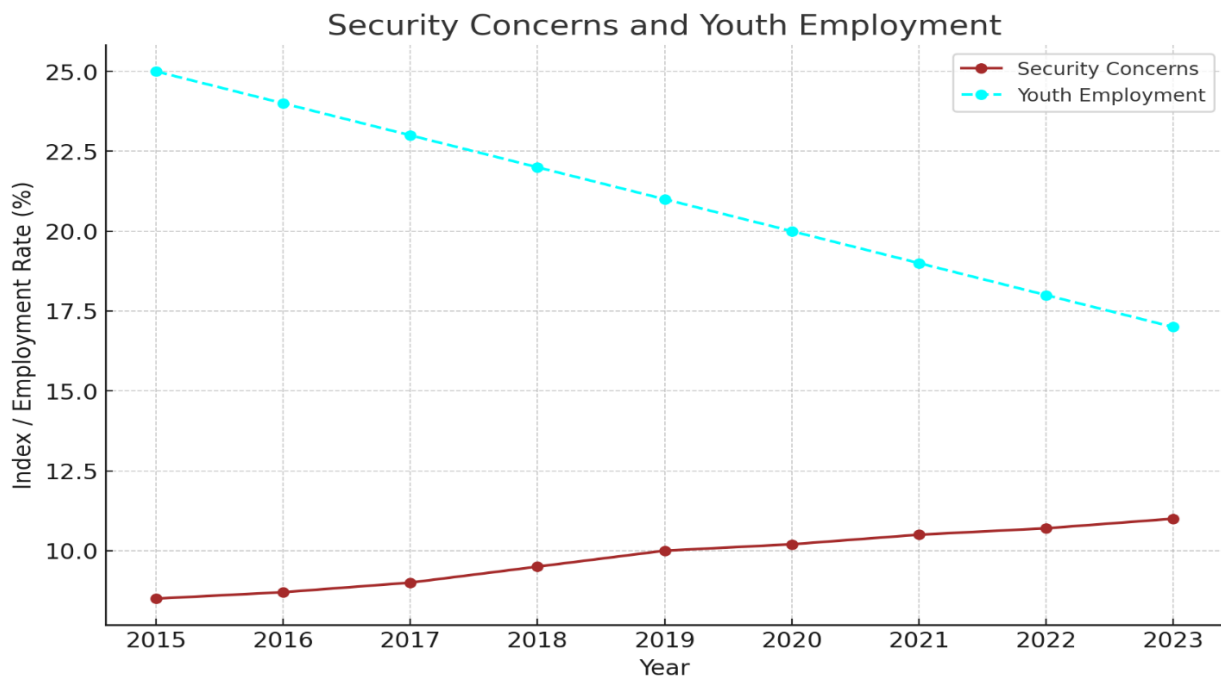


The Sardari system and gender bias significantly hinder the social mobility and opportunities available to youth in Balochistan. The graph shows a gradual decline in the percentage of youth affected by the Sardari system from 70% to 54%, indicating some progress in reducing its influence. However, a substantial proportion of youth still face restrictions due to this traditional feudal system, which limits their access to education, employment, and social participation (Ahmed & Khan, 2021).

Gender bias remains a pervasive issue, with a slight decrease in its impact from 75% to 67%. Young women, in particular, face significant barriers to accessing education and employment

opportunities due to cultural and societal norms that favor male dominance. Addressing these social constraints requires comprehensive efforts to promote gender equality, empower women, and dismantle the entrenched power structures of the Sardari system. Legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and targeted programs can help mitigate these barriers and create a more inclusive environment for youth development (World Bank, 2019). Human resources and environment can be improved with responsible leadership (Jabeen et al., 2024).

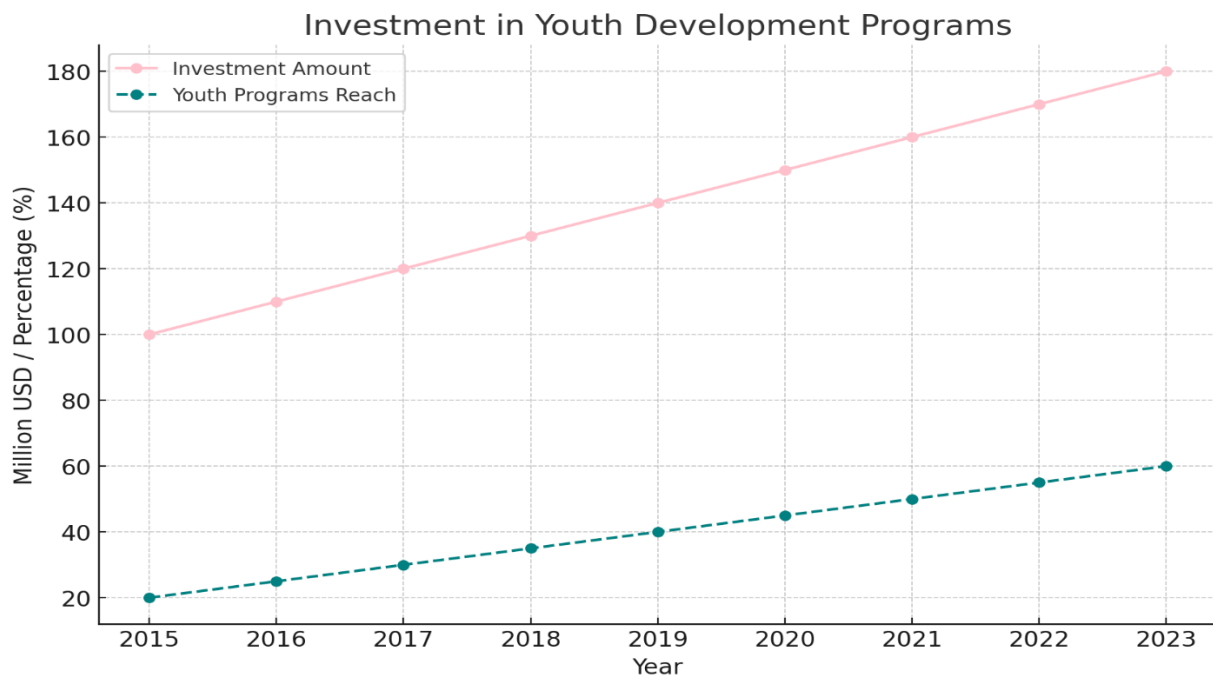
6.3. The Correlation Between Security Concerns and Youth Employment



The graph illustrates a negative correlation between security concerns and youth employment rates in Balochistan. As security concerns, measured by the security index, have increased from 8.5 to 11.0, youth employment rates have declined from 25% to 17%. This trend underscores the detrimental impact of insecurity on economic activities and job creation. Businesses are less likely to invest and expand in an unstable environment, leading to fewer employment opportunities for young people.

Insecurity not only affects existing businesses but also discourages new investments and entrepreneurial ventures, further limiting job prospects. Addressing security concerns is essential for fostering a conducive environment for economic growth and employment. Strengthening law enforcement, promoting peacebuilding initiatives, and enhancing community security measures can help create a safer environment that encourages investment and job creation for the youth in Balochistan (Ahmed & Khan, 2021).

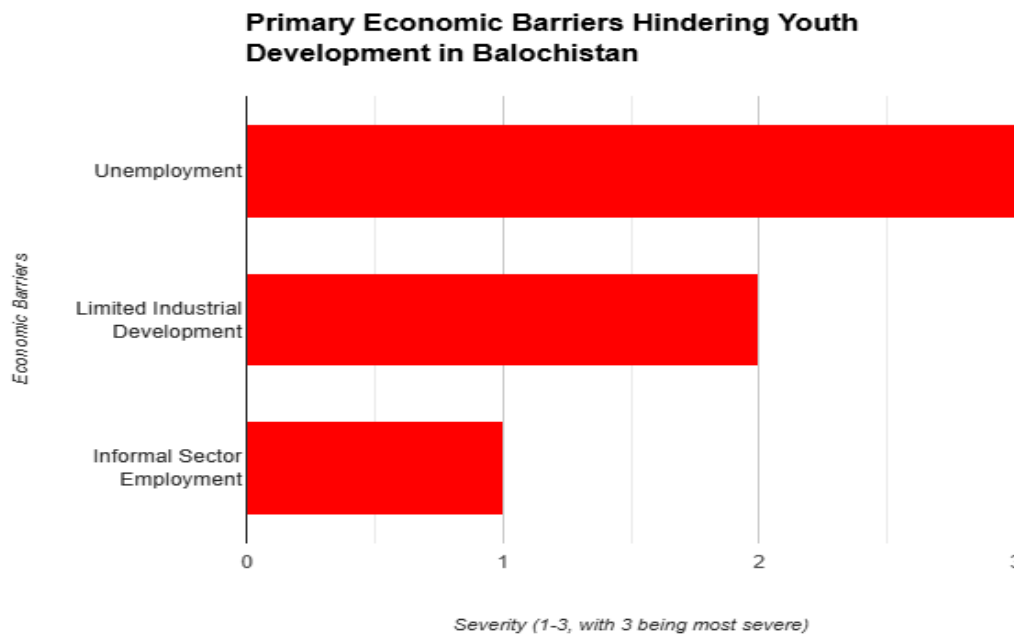
6.4. Investment in Youth Development Programs



The graph shows a positive trend in investment in youth development programs, with the investment amount increasing from \$100 million to \$180 million and the reach of youth programs rising from 20% to 60%. This increase reflects growing recognition of the importance of investing in youth as a means to drive economic and social development. However, despite these

improvements, a significant proportion of the youth population remains unreached, indicating a need for further expansion and scaling of these programs (Balochistan Economic Report, 2020). Sustained investment in youth development is crucial for equipping young people with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to thrive in the modern economy. Effective youth programs should focus on education, vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and employment services. Ensuring that these programs are accessible, inclusive, and tailored to the specific needs of Balochistan's diverse youth population will be key to maximizing their impact and fostering sustainable development (World Bank, 2019).

6.5. Economic Barriers to Youth Development in Balochistan



This graph depicts three major economic barriers hindering youth development in Balochistan: Unemployment, Limited Industrial Development, and Prevalence of Informal Sector Employment. Let's analyze each factor:

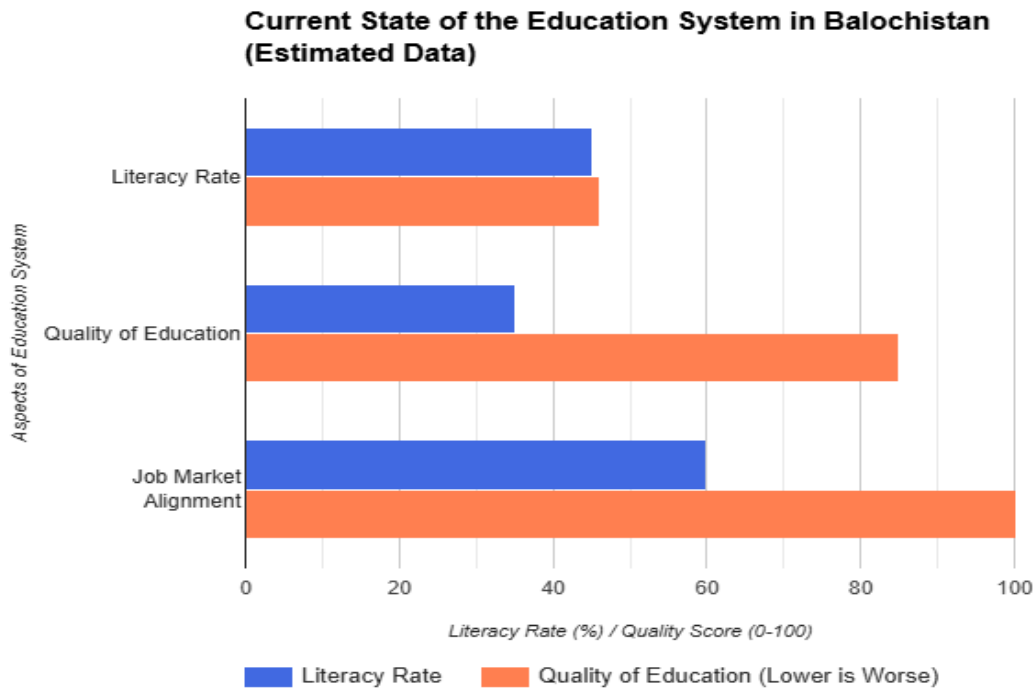
- **Unemployment:** The highest bar represents unemployment, indicating it's the most significant barrier. This means a large portion of Balochistani youth are unable to find formal jobs, hindering their ability to gain income, experience, and skills.
- **Limited Industrial Development:** The second-tallest bar signifies limited industrial development. This suggests a lack of diverse job opportunities in industries beyond traditional sectors. With fewer industrial jobs, there might be fewer options that match young people's skills or aspirations.
- **Prevalence of Informal Sector Employment:** The last bar represents the prevalence of informal sector employment. While it can provide some income, informal jobs often lack benefits, stability, and career growth opportunities, limiting long-term development for young people.

Overall, the graph suggests that a combination of factors creates a challenging environment for youth in Balochistan. Limited formal job opportunities, coupled with a dominance of the informal sector, restrict youth's ability to find decent work and build a secure future.

Possible Solutions:

- Policies promoting industrial development and attracting businesses could create more formal job opportunities.
- Investing in education and training programs can equip young people with skills relevant to the job market.
- Initiatives supporting the formalization of the informal sector could improve working conditions and career prospects within that sector.

6.6. Education System Challenges in Balochistan



This graph highlights three key challenges faced by the education system in Balochistan: Literacy Rates, Quality of Education, and Alignment with Job Market Requirements.

- **Literacy Rates:** The leftmost bar shows the lowest value, representing literacy rates. This indicates that a significant portion of the population in Balochistan lacks basic reading and writing skills.
- **Quality of Education:** The center bar represents the quality of education. While the value is higher than literacy rates, it's still lower than ideal. This suggests that even those enrolled in schools might not be receiving a high standard of education.
- **Alignment with Job Market:** The rightmost bar shows the highest value, representing the misalignment between education and job market needs. This suggests that the skills students acquire might not be directly applicable to the available jobs in Balochistan.

Overall, the graph paints a concerning picture of the education system in Balochistan. Low literacy rates form the foundation of the issue, and even those who do attend school might not be receiving an education that prepares them for the workforce.

Possible Solutions:

- Initiatives promoting literacy campaigns, particularly targeting girls and rural areas, can improve the foundation of education.
- Investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development can enhance the quality of education.
- Analysing job market trends and incorporating relevant vocational training into the curriculum can better equip graduates for available jobs.

7. Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the challenges facing youth development in Balochistan, several recommendations can be made to address these issues and foster a more supportive environment for the young population.

7.1. Enhancing Education and Skills Development

Education should be the first pillar of an effective youth policy for Balochistan. The province suffers from the lowest literacy rate in the country and severely lacks educational infrastructure. Many schools in Balochistan are poorly equipped, understaffed, and often inaccessible to remote populations. To address this, strong investment in educational infrastructure is essential. This includes building new schools, especially in rural areas, and upgrading existing schools with modern facilities. Additionally, we should make a concerted effort to hire and train qualified teachers, ensuring their compensation to attract and retain talent.

To bridge the gap between education and employment needs, it is crucial to reform the education system in Balochistan. This includes updating curricula to focus on critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical skills that are in demand in the job market. Vocational training programs should be expanded and aligned with the needs of local industries. Establishing partnerships

between educational institutions and businesses can facilitate internships and apprenticeships, providing students with practical experience and improving their employability.

7.2. Promoting Industrial Development

Investing in industrial development is essential for creating formal employment opportunities. The government should create an enabling environment for investment by improving infrastructure, offering incentives to investors, and ensuring a stable security situation. Special economic zones (SEZs) can be established to attract industries and promote regional economic growth. Additionally, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through access to finance and technical assistance can stimulate local entrepreneurship and job creation.

7.3. Addressing Social Constraints

Efforts to dismantle the Sardari system and promote gender equality are vital for social mobility and inclusion. Legal reforms and awareness campaigns should be implemented to challenge traditional power structures and gender biases. Programs aimed at empowering women through education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support are necessary to ensure their full participation in the economy. Encouraging youth activism and creating platforms for young people to voice their concerns and advocate for change can also drive social progress.

7.4. Improving Security and Investment Climate

Addressing security concerns is critical for economic development and job creation. Strengthening law enforcement, promoting peacebuilding initiatives, and enhancing community security measures can create a safer environment for businesses and investors. A stable security situation will encourage both local and foreign investment, leading to increased economic activity and employment opportunities for the youth.

7.5. Increasing Investment in Youth Development Programs

Inadequate budgetary allocation for youth development programs needs to be addressed. The government should increase funding for initiatives that equip young people with necessary skills and support their transition into the workforce. Programs focusing on entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership development can empower youth to become job creators rather than job seekers. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these programs will ensure that resources are used efficiently and that the initiatives have a meaningful impact.

7.6. Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by youth in Balochistan. Collaborations between the government, private sector, and civil society can pool resources, expertise, and networks to implement comprehensive youth development strategies. PPPs can also help in scaling successful initiatives and ensuring their sustainability.

7.7. Encouraging Community Involvement

Community involvement is essential for the success of youth development initiatives. Local communities should be engaged in the planning and implementation of programs to ensure they address the specific needs and challenges of the youth. Grassroots organizations and community leaders can play a vital role in mobilizing support and fostering a sense of ownership among young people.

7.8. Political engagement: Political engagement is an important pillar. Balochistan's youth frequently experience disillusionment with the political process, perceiving their voices as unheard and undervalued. To address this issue, we must encourage and support young people to participate in politics and governance. Creating youth councils at the local and provincial levels can help youth engage with policymakers and contribute to the decision-making process. Furthermore, incorporating civic education into the school curriculum can instill a sense of civic responsibility and political awareness from an early age.

Equally important is providing a platform for youth dialogue and activism. Establishing youth forums and supporting grassroots organizations can help young people organize, advocate for their rights, and influence policy. Furthermore, we should encourage political parties to include more youth in their ranks to ensure the representation of youth perspectives and needs in legislative bodies.

8. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the multifaceted challenges impeding youth development in Balochistan, ranging from high unemployment and inadequate industrial infrastructure to social constraints and security concerns. The province's young population faces a formidable array of obstacles that limit their potential and hinder overall regional progress. The analysis reveals a critical mismatch between the skills provided by the current education system and those demanded by the job market, further exacerbated by the prevalence of informal sector employment and the dominance of traditional power structures like the Sardari system.

In response to these challenges, several key recommendations have been proposed. Enhancing the education system to focus on practical and market-relevant skills, promoting industrial development through targeted investments, and dismantling social barriers are essential steps toward creating a conducive environment for youth empowerment. Improving security to foster a stable investment climate and increasing budgetary allocations for youth development programs are also vital to support the transition of young people into the workforce.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. By leveraging public-private partnerships, encouraging community involvement, and ensuring effective implementation of youth development initiatives, Balochistan can harness the potential of its young population. The region's future prosperity depends on the ability to transform these challenges into opportunities, empowering the youth to drive economic growth and social progress.

Investing in the youth of Balochistan is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for the province's long-term stability and development. By focusing on education, employment, social inclusion, and security, Balochistan can pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future, ensuring that its young people are equipped to contribute meaningfully to society and the economy. The findings and recommendations of this study provide a roadmap for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to work together in addressing the critical barriers to youth development, fostering an environment where the youth can thrive and achieve their full potential.

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