

Environmental Change And Internal Displacement In Pakistan: A Vicious Cycle Of Conflict And Migration



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Abstract: *The paper addresses the connection between environmental change, internal displacement, and conflict in Pakistan and specifically how the ecological stress is converted into recurrent mobility, social pressure, and institutional strain. It deals with five objectives, which are as follows: identification of the most strongly driving environmental changes that drive internal displacement; how displacement changes competition over land, water, housing, jobs, and public services; how repeated displacement increases long-term vulnerability and poverty; how mobility alters labor patterns, informal settlement development, and urban pressure; and how institutional gaps between climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, migration governance, and conflict prevention are related. The research design is qualitative research design that is founded on 18 in-depth interviews executed by use of purposive sampling in Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Naseerabad and Jafarabad. The thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results show that floods are the most manifest source of sudden displacement although drought, heat waves, land degradation, and water scarcity are also effective slow-onset causes of mobility. The participants defined displacement as an action that aggravates resource competition, livelihoods, forces households to informal and insecure labor markets and strains on urban settlement and services. The article is based on the thesis that, internal displacement in Pakistan is not merely a humanitarian outcome of environmental pressure, but a governance failure that the disjointed policy frameworks create between climate adaptation, disaster response, migration, and conflict as realities independent of each other.*

Keywords: Environmental change; internal displacement; conflict; migration.

Introduction

Pakistan is one of the countries where the environment change, the exposure to disasters and the internal displacement is becoming more and more mangled. The rural livelihoods including floods, droughts, heat waves, unpredictable rainfall, land degradation, melting glaciers, and water stress are redefining the rural lives and compelling households to resort to

mobility as a survival mechanism. The degree of exposure is high. Floods that happened in 2022 alone impacted nearly 33 million people and displaced almost 8 million, showing the extent of the disruption that climate-related factors cause, as well as the instability of settlement, livelihood, and service infrastructure throughout the nation (Khoso et al., 2025; Ullah & Khan, 2025).

The problem cannot be perceived with the help of the disaster statistics only. In Pakistan, environmental stress is a process via the sudden-onset and slow-onset. Floods can cause instant displacement, drought, water shortage, soil erosion, salt invasion and habitual heat can deplete livelihoods in the long run and lead to situations where mobility is needed, postponed or periodic. Research on migration worldwide is becoming aware that climate and environmental stressors modify migration patterns in complex ways interacting with poverty, employment, quality of governance, and inequality of settlement instead of acting in a simple manner. According to World Bank analysis, climate exposures determine the internal migration in various ways depending on the context, and UNDP foresight project on Pakistan predicts that there will be more mobility because of climate changes and there would be a probable rise in rural to urban migration by 2050 (Kakar et al., 2025; Koubi et al., 2016).

The case of Pakistan is particularly significant since the environment displacement does not take place within the institutional vacuum. Resource stress has the potential of escalating land, water, housing, and job conflicts. Dislocated families moving to towns or peri-urban villages find themselves in already problematic environments with fragile infrastructure, unlawful housing and precarious labor and an uneven distribution of state. Meanwhile, the policy architecture of Pakistan is still disjointed and does not focus on climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, migration management, and social protection. Both the National Climate Change Policy and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy acknowledge resilience-building, however, the overall system has not yet established itself as an integrated displacement governance system (Ahmed et al., 2025).

This research paper aims at discussing the connection between environmental change as a cause of internal displacement in Pakistan and how internal displacement leads to further reproduction of conflict, vulnerability, and institutional pressure in Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Naseerabad, and Jafarabad. Analysis

in the study includes the most powerful environmental changes that compel households to move; how the internal displacement alters competition in the areas of land, water, housing, jobs, and social services; how the recurrence of displacement continues to increase vulnerability in the long term and confines households in poverty and mobility cycles; how the displacement changes the labor patterns, growth of informal settlements, and urban pressures in the areas of settlement; and what institutional support its argument, the paper asserts that it is not a transient side effect of the ecological shocks but a structural reproduced situation which is created through the interaction of ecological stress, livelihood vulnerability, unequal access to resources, and fragmented governance that creates a vicious cycle where environmental change leads to migration, social pressure, and weak institutions to turn both into a consistent state of insecurity in Pakistan.

2. Review of Literature

The environmental change literature and displacement literature are moving away from the idea that climate refugees are mere cause-and-effect relationships and are adopting the idea of multi-causal mobility. Migration is not necessarily an outcome of environmental events. They are in contact with income levels, access to land, livelihood reliance, infrastructure, capacity of governance and exposure to conflicts. The climate and migration research conducted by the World Bank demonstrates that internal migration is conditioned by the variability of the temperature and precipitation in different regions and social groups and that climate exposures may affect migration towards urban destinations in a specific way (Kakar et al., 2025; Kakar et al., 2025).

One of the bodies of literature recognizes disasters as key causes of internal displacement. The relevant global analyses and IDMC display that in the recent periods, disasters have contributed a greater portion of internal displacement than conflict despite the fact that conflict still plays a central role in particular national settings (Ahmed, 2018). The 2022 Pakistan floods emerged as a classic in terms of massive displacement of a disaster, the

remarkable effects on housing, livelihoods, transport, agriculture, and basic services. According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment of Pakistan, the disaster itself was unprecedented and almost 8 million individuals were displaced and extensive destruction of impacted districts occurred (Mumtaz et al., 2025).

In Pakistani-specific literature, floods are constantly noted as the most obvious cause of a mass internal displacement, though drought and water shortage are also highlighted in the literature. According to a policy study on climate induced displacement in Pakistan, prolonged periods of droughts and frequent floods have slowed the productivity of farms, raised the mortality of livestock and made people migrate due to the escalating livelihood insecurity. According to another more recent study, the rising sea level, flooding, melting ice sheets, and rising water shortages are considered some of the main environmental drivers of climate-related displacement in Pakistan (Hassan et al., 2025; Rasool et al., 2025).

The second theme of the literature is the competition over the resources and climate-security dynamics. The change in the environment may weaken the local economies and increase the struggle to share limited resources, particularly in agrarian systems that are already weak. Climate-induced conflict studies in Pakistan hold that the lack of resources associated with environmental stress raises the probability of tension between people, and may enhance insecurity in already insecure areas. Other more current studies of the internal stability in Pakistan also make the connection between displacement, resource competition, and overall security pressures, with the argument that the mass movement due to a disaster causes competition over land, services, and livelihoods.

A third theme has to do with repetitive displacement and continual vulnerability. The displacement literature has been shifted out of the models of movement once and has turned to the repetitive, long-lasting, and circular displacement. The families affected by floods or drought can relocate to the worsened ecological

regions, re-expose themselves to hazards, and re-migrate. This cyclic motion erodes savings, destroys social networks, disrupts education, destroys health and puts households in a downward spiral. Studies in Pakistan and the literature of displacement in the world at large suggest that vulnerable populations fail frequently to recuperate where they are or to find safe destinations in another part of the world, generating a state of transience mobility (Okpaleke & Abraham-Dukuma, 2020).

The fourth theme is the theme of urbanization and informal settlements expansion. The foresight study by UNDP in Pakistan predicts that there will be more rural-urban migration due to climate pressure. Wider urban studies indicate that already, the cities of Pakistan experience huge shortages in the areas of housing, water, sanitation and urban planning and that the informal settlements are growing at a pace beyond imagination. According to a World Bank urban program document, approximately 47 percent of urban households reside in informal settlements that lack adequate infrastructure and services and ADB analysis reports that there is a growing pressure on urban centers due to rapid growth in urban population and lack of sufficient infrastructure. These conclusions are important since in many cases displacement drives directly into these informal urban margins as opposed to planned housing or formal labour markets (Rollosson, 2010; Williams et al., 2022).

One of the themes is institutional fragmentation. The migration associated with environmental change usually falls between the policy sectors in an uncomfortable position. Pakistan has a National Climate Change Policy, National Adaptation Plan and National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, however, prevailing studies indicate that climate mobility is not fully incorporated in the governance structures. The 2025 analysis of climate displacement in Pakistan by ReliefWeb shows that there are policy and legal loopholes in dealing with climate-induced displacement. The advocacy of adaptive, inclusive, and resilient policy responses to climate-related human mobility over sectoral action is also promoted by UNDP in its anticipatory mobility work (De Silva et al.,

2026; Khichi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, there are a number of gaps in the literature despite the increased attention. First, most research concentrates on the national projections or the general policy analysis and gives little qualitative evidence on the district level in Balochistan. Second, the association of environmental stress and internal displacement is frequently characterized by movement per se, yet less consideration is made on how the reproduction of competition, informalization of labor, and long-term vulnerability in the destination regions are created by the displacement. Third, the policy of climate adaptation and disasters adaptation are yet to be analyzed in combination with migration governance and conflict prevention. The paper will fill these gaps by basing the analysis on the perceptions of the participants in four districts in Balochistan and considering displacement as an environmental, social, and governance process simultaneously.

3. Research Methodology

The research design used in the study was a qualitative research to investigate the connection between environmental change and internal displacement in Pakistan with special focus to the ways in which the displaced households face competition of resources, labour insecurity, repetitive mobility, and institutional neglect. The qualitative approach was chosen since the study aimed to measure the perception, lived experience, and meanings that the participants give to displacement, vulnerability and governance. These problems include recollection, doubt, trepidation, and distribution of resources, and perceptions of state reaction that cannot be sufficiently disclosed with the help of figures alone. The research location was Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Naseerabad and Jafarabad, which were chosen based on the fact that they are affected by environmental stress and displacement dynamics in various aspects such as exposure to floods, drought conditions, poor service delivery and weak livelihood systems. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the criterion of having had first hand experience of displacement, environmental shocks, livelihood

disruption, or settlement pressure. The sample consisted of 18 participants. The data were gathered using in-depth interviews, which allowed the participants to explain how floods, droughts, heat, water shortage, destroyed land, loss of jobs, insecure shelter, and poor institutional response influenced their movement choices and post-displacement life. The interviews also gave the researcher the opportunity to understand the perceptions of displaced households in regard to competition with host communities on land, water, housing, work and public services. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The content of interviews was revisited several times to draw on repetitive patterns, contrasts and explanatory themes. The overall analytical framework was then structured around five themes namely the environmental change as a source of internal displacement; competition of resources and social pressure in displacement settings; repeated displacement, persistent vulnerability and poverty traps; displacement, labour conversion, and urban informality; and governance gaps in climate, migration and conflict response. Since the interviewees were sharing their experiences of displacement, insecurity, and loss of the house, confidentiality and anonymity are the main ethical issues in the presentation of the results. The qualitative nature of the research and the localized area restrict the study, as the results cannot be statistically extended to the entire Pakistan, however, it does offer insight into the experience of environmental change as a displacement process at the local level.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Environmental Change as a Driver of Internal Displacement

Participants always referred to environmental change as the main initiator of movement but did not represent all hazardous factors as equal. The most tangible and immediate force in their narrations was flooding. This is the case especially among the participants of Naseerabad and Jafarabad because they associated displacement with destructive monsoon floods, collapsing houses, loss of crops, loss of livestock, and long periods of inundation. Some

participants said that they were not in the planned movement but emergency flight. They mentioned how they had been forced to leave houses within a short span of time at first they thought that they were just going away temporarily but then they found out that they could not go back because land, houses or irrigation facilities were destroyed. Such perceptions are consistent with national evidence on the 2022 floods that struck the country affecting approximately 33 million and displacing nearly 8 million people, as well as destroying settlements and livelihoods on a massive scale never seen before.

Slow-onset changes were also pointed out by the participants. Not only dramatic disaster events were mentioned by the participants of Killa Abdullah and Killa Saifullah; they also kept referring to drought, the decreasing water supply, heat, crop failures, and worsening grazing conditions. Their accounts on the move also tended to postpone the move as the families tried to endure environmental degradation before they could not be displaced. Others talked of animals sold, money borrowed, food cut down or one of their number sent on before the whole household was fully movable. This is in line with the current Pakistan-specific studies that indicate that drought, water scarcity, and deteriorating agricultural productivity are significant mobility pressures even without giving rise to abrupt mass movement as floods do.

Participant accounts of heat waves and land degradation were presented as force multipliers, and not as individual causal factors. Participants associated high heat with crop stress, health stress, and work ability, and poor land was reported to give rise to a gradual demise of agricultural sustainability. Some of the participants observed that in most cases whereby one event did not force them out completely, the recurrent seasonal environmental pressures drove them nearer to departure. This would follow more general findings that climate mobility is seldom monocausal and tends to arise as a result of the combination of environmental hazards and livelihood reliance and poor coping capacity.

One of the most powerful recurrent themes was water shortage. Water stress was not only identified by the participants as an agricultural problem. They related it with the domestic war, the increasing prices, the loss of animals, inadequate hygiene and the worsening social relationships. According to certain reports, availability of water predetermined the settlement of a household or its relocation. The Pakistan foresight report by UNDP also cites water scarcity as a significant predictive issue in the future mobility environment of the nation especially given the intensifying hydrometeorological risks and the variation in the distribution of precipitation.

The participant viewpoint, therefore, indicates that the major causes of internal displacement in Pakistan are not limited to a single category of the environment. Floods, on a large scale, produce sudden displacement, however, drought, water shortage, land degradation, and repetitive heat enhance livelihood erosion and give rise to slower, repeated, or anticipatory movement. The difference between fast and slow drivers is important since policy reaction in Pakistan is still more responsive to the dramatic catastrophe than long term ecological degradation. The testimonies of the participants show that the homes that are displaced by the environmental change are usually weakened, even prior to the movement. In that regard, displacement begins prior to physical displacement.

4.2 Resource Competition and Social Pressure in Displacement Contexts

The participants explained displacement not as the process of sending and receiving people in one place to another but getting into a place of competition that is heightened. Once the movement had taken place, the households struggled over land to get shelter, water, rented houses, daily labor, and basic services. Some of the participants indicated that the arrival of people in host or destination areas created tension since displaced people were seen to create pressure on the already limited resources. The interviewees talked of how they were treated as outsiders who had to bargain water, informal plots, grazing rights or meager jobs.

The land became one of the major concerns. Other participants gave the reason that once they lost their environment in their home places, they were not able to go back to productive lands and they did not have any safe place of claim in the destination places. This gave rise to a state of non tenure settlement. Short-term occupancy, informal renting or reliance on kin networks substituted more permanent solutions. Under this circumstance, small issues about the demarcation, access roads, waterways, or grazing might develop rapidly. This interpretation is justified by the literature on climate-security dynamics in Pakistan, which demonstrates that environmental stress may increase the intensity of conflict over limited resources and add to the overall insecurity.

Participants in particular were particularly harsh on water competition. Both the origin and destination context participants characterized water as something that gives them daily pressure. In areas where droughts occurred or water was becoming scarce, people migrated partially due to lack of dependability of water. But when displaced they usually moved into settlements where water was already rationed, bought or distributed informally. Other participants mentioned that local communities perceived displaced families as augmenting local shortage. This is symptomatic of a larger governance problem, in that the environmental displacement does not simply succeed the shortage of resources; it does not redistribute scarcity in space and time but in a different way.

Competition also came in the housing and public services. The participants indicated that they lived in congested living conditions, had an unstable shelter, increased rent, poor sanitation and that they had a hard time accessing schools or health services. It was found that these pressures existed in formal towns and in the peripheral and informal settlements. Pakistan already records urban infrastructural shortages and housing crises, and growing informal settlements; the accounts of the participants also indicate that the displacement multiplies the shortages by raising the demands without the related growth in the provision of the services.

Competition in employment was also very high.

The participants also tended to believe that displacement had placed them in the lowest level of the labor markets where they had to work daily wages without any assurance and that their wages might be pushed down due to the excessive supply of labor. There were reports of strained relations with host employees who thought that the families that were being displaced were taking low wages and aggravating working conditions. This trend is typical of climate-migration literature which associates displacement with compression of the labor market, and also with downward pressure in informal sectors of low skills.

The subjective experience is obvious: environmental pressure is converted into social one as the vulnerability is transferred into the weak local structures due to an internal displacement. Wars are not necessarily organized violence. Frequently, the participants characterized friction, suspicion, asymmetry in bargaining, and daily competition due to limited resources to survive. These results confirm the argument that displacement is a multiplier of conflicts since it rearranges access to land, water, housing, work, and services without proper governance mechanisms to handle the pressure caused by the same.

4.3 Repeated Displacement, Chronic Vulnerability, and Poverty Traps

One of the key points that were stressed several times by the participants was that displacement did not necessarily occur once. A number of them mentioned being in motion, coming back, and moving. Others referred to partial return, seasonal migration, or household division, in which part of the family stayed behind and the rest of the family migrated to get employment or to escape danger. This constant dislocation undermined savings, destroyed property, disrupted education and lowered recovery hope. To most of the participants, the issue was not movement but the inability to stabilize the movement.

There was a universal trend of accruing losses. The participants said that every set of environmental disturbance compelled them to sell livestock, drain savings, borrow, or

minimize consumption. Families that previously possessed some productive foundation were reduced to the level of survival tactics of day-to-day living. Return was frequent where, instead, it was in degraded circumstances: damaged houses, destroyed crops, changed access to water, or novel exposure to hazard. This did not stop displacement, in fact, return tended to reestablish vulnerability. Through global displacement analysis, it is becoming clear that internal displacement may turn out to be protracted or cyclic in cases where there are no conditions of recovery.

The participants also explained that repetitive movement demeaned dignity and planning. Some of the participants when questioned on future choices said that they no longer anticipated to be stable and instead calculated around the probability of another transfer. This traps them in poverty. In the state of uncertainty of environmental and institutional conditions, investments in housing, farming, livestock, education, or small business become less rational. A perception that was repeated in various forms by one of the participants was that it becomes more difficult to start again at each subsequent time since the household is brought back to a lower base following every episode of displacement.

These descriptions are consistent with literature on Pakistan describing that environmental displacement is directly related to erosion of livelihoods, indebtedness, and decreased coping capacity. Research on climate-induced migration in Pakistan explains the effect of continuous exposure to floods and droughts on pushing the households into unemployment, distress migration and long-term vulnerability.

Participants also reported that subsequent displacement alters the family structure and social networks. Others talked of men going off to work alone, women and children remaining in insecure settlements and the support systems being worn down. The frequent movement also interfered with access to schools, health services and community based support. These are conventional ways in which displacement generates poverty between generations and not just in the short term following a disaster.

The results reveal that repeated displacement in Pakistan is to be perceived as cumulative dispossession process. The stress of the environment depletes households of their assets; displacement disrupts recovery; recovery comes back without strength; and another stress sparks more mobility. What will happen is not a transient suffering but a long-term lack of security. That is why the displacement and poverty in most accounts of the participants seemed to be inseparable. The freedom to move had no exit to exposure. It was a step in its procreation.

4.4 Displacement, Labor Transformation, and Urban Informality

Displacement was always associated by the participants with significant alterations in livelihood patterns. There was a lot of migration of agricultural work, cattle husbandry or localized rural jobs into casual urban or peri-urban jobs. This change was hardly referred to as opportunity. It was referred to as forced adaptation when the conditions were insecure. Those that had earlier depended on land, animals, or seasonal agricultural employment had taken up jobs in the wage labor market that were irregular, low paying, and frequently exploitative.

One of the themes was daily wage labor. The participants mentioned construction jobs, work to do with transport, selling, loading jobs, and informal jobs of this kind. Some of the participants said that displacement weakened the bargaining power since employers were aware that displaced employees were in need of cash money. This changed the labor relations both at home and society. The displaced families were forced to rely on unstable cash employment instead of relying on land or established local exchange systems to earn a living. Similar studies on climate-migration in Pakistan indicate that there is significant movement of people in the environmentally degraded rural regions into urban labor markets where migrants tend to congregate in the precarious segments.

Another area covered by the participants included growth of informal settlements in destination areas. Other families relocated to

katchi abadis, temporary compounds, peri-urban clusters or other unplanned areas where they lacked security in regard to shelter and services. They complained about insufficient water, sanitation, drainage, electricity and garbage disposal. This is in line with the current urban evidence that already indicates that the cities of Pakistan have significant housing deficit as well as informal settlements expansion with a significant proportion of urban population living in settlements with poor infrastructure and services.

The pressure in urban areas was explained by the participants in tangible terms: queues to water are longer, schools are more crowded, rent is more expensive, transportation is more expensive, and participants fight over the daily labor. Other participants did not identify themselves as urban migrants in a traditional sense since they resided in the periphery of towns as opposed to residing in an urban neighborhood. Nonetheless, their reports indicate that displacement is one of the factors that add to peri-urban growth and unplanned settlements. This is important since mobility in Pakistan due to climate changes might not necessarily be directed to the main cities, but rather it tends to concentrate in under-served margins where governance is at its lowest.

The participants also said that the life in the informal settlements exposed them to future risks. They were once again exposed to floods, heat, diseases, and eviction due to low-lying land, shelters that were poorly constructed, lacked proper drainage, and tenure insecurity. That is, the displacement of the environment usually resulted in the environmental perilous destinations. This forms a cycle where the households have to abandon one hazard only to be exposed to another structure of vulnerability. The literature on urban climate adaptation in Pakistan and South Asia justifies this issue by pointing out how informal city settlements are exposed to the high risk of hazards and are underserved.

The larger connotation is to the effect that displacement does not just dislodge population. It changes the systems of labor and settlement. Households are no longer rural producers, but

urban informals, no longer on land, but on uncertain wage labor, no longer in community, but in uncertain occupancy in unplanned neighborhoods. This move adds to the strain in the cities and traps the displaced populations into the low-paying, high-risk survival economies. The participants did not talk of displacement as being included in superior markets. They termed it as being integrated into the farthest end of the market that is the most insecure.

4.5 Governance Gaps in Climate, Migration, and Conflict Response

The general attitude towards state and institutional response was perceived as disjointed, reactive and inadequate by the participants. They outlined governance environment where disaster relief, long-term adaptation, mobility planning and conflict mitigation were not related. The aid was frequently characterized as short-term, disproportionate or targeted at short-term visible harm as opposed to long-term healing or premeditated resettlement. Some of the participants indicated that the institutions act when individuals lose their homes and not before the risks get out of hand.

Such an impression is in line with the broader policy environment. Pakistan has a National Climate Change Policy, a National Adaptation Plan and a National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy which all have identified the importance of resilience and the reduction of risks. The frameworks however do not constitute a coherent climate mobility governance regime. Current analysis on climate displacement in Pakistan reports that there are considerable policy and legal loopholes such as the lack of a well-developed national policy on climate induced displacement and resettlement.

Participants also identified lapses on early warning, recovery planning as well as long-term settlement assistance. Some reported that they were given emergency aid and not livelihood recovery. Others have also reported that relocation was made in an informal manner based on personal networks and not the institutional level. This is important since

uncontrolled mobility may contribute to the increase of exactly these types of competition and urban pressure mentioned above. The arguments presented by UNDP on anticipatory mobility suggest the inclusion and resilient policies that can help solve the mobility-related issues both in the short term and long term. The accounts of the participants show that this anticipation is still not strong in terms of practice.

Another of the governance gaps is related to prevention of conflict. The participants hardly mentioned formal conflict-solving systems in the destinations regions even though there was a consistent tension concerning land, water, housing and labor. The competition over the resources was carried out informally, privately, or without. This is an acute institutional failure since climate adaptation that lacks conflict sensitive governance may make risk to change instead of getting minimized. The research on climatic nexus and security in Pakistan cautions that the stress of the environment along with poor governance and shortage can contribute to more significant instability.

Migration governance also did not feature in the majority of account of the participants. Mobility between households was done without a formal household having the status of internally displaced people with enduring entitlements. Such lack of visibility of governance is what leads to policy invisibility. When the displaced households are merely considered to be temporary victims of the disaster, their future needs in the form of shelter, integration of labor force, access to water and documentation as well as social protection goes unfulfilled.

The results thus lead to institutional disconnect in four areas, which include climate adaptation related to resilience language, disaster reduction related to hazards and response, migration governance has not yet been developed to internal climate mobility, and conflict prevention is seldom reflected in displacement planning. These were not perceived by the participants as abstract policy silos but as practice of absence. They migrated due to environmental conditions breaking down, fell victim to the lack of services and livelihood to

be restored and tension due to the lack of an integrated system of how to proceed after movement. The vicious cycle that has been identified within this paper is hence institutional rather than environmental. Weak government transforms hazard into displacement, displacement into competition and competition into permanent insecurity.

5. Conclusion

The paper has discussed the environmental change and internal displacement in Pakistan on the basis of qualitative evidence provided by Killa Abdullah, Killa Saifullah, Naseerabad, and Jafarabad. The results indicate that sudden-onset and slow-onset environmental pressures are the factors that cause internal displacement. Participants also have found floods to be the most immediate and destructive factor of displacement, although drought, heat waves, land degradation, and water shortage also proved to be strong forces behind forced mobility. The paper also indicates that movement does not terminate displacement. It transforms land, water, housing, work and public service competition in the destination locations, commonly creating a daily tension and insecurity. Repeat displacement further increases vulnerability through the loss of assets, piling up of debt, disruption of social reproduction, and eliminating the chances of recovery that is stable. By so doing, households end up in mobility-poverty cycles instead of progressing to a permanent safety. It is also found that displacement alters the system of labor and settlement. The participants talked about the migration of the agrarian livelihoods into precarious informal jobs and settlements in the unplanned under-serviced urban or peri-urban areas. This increases the pressure in the city and also subjects the displaced households to new environmental and social hazards. This conclusion is supported by available evidence on the growing informal settlement in Pakistan and lack of infrastructure. Above all, the paper concludes that institutional response is still disjointed in Pakistan. The climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, migration governance and conflict prevention are yet to be well combined in a coherent framework that can

predict and control the environmental displacement. The outcome is a gap in governance where the households are displaced by ecological pressures, which are received via the strained informal systems, and left to compete over the scarce resources with minimal state protection. The main conclusion is straight to the point. Humanitarian movement is not an isolated episode occurring in Pakistan as a result of environmental change. It is creating a recursive system where ecological pressures are taking livelihoods, where displacement is increasing competitiveness and poverty and where disjointed governance is creating the conditions of further movement. Any serious response should include integrated policy, which entails climate adaptation, land and water governance, urban planning, livelihood recovery, disaster preparedness and conflict sensitive migration management. In its absence, internal displacement will continue to be a common consequence of the environmental change and a permanent process of social insecurity.

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