

Realizing The Demographic Opportunity In Balochistan: Prospects Of Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) In Promoting Social Cohesion

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Abstract

Technical and vocational training programs are considered pivotal in achieving development goals. However, Balochistan is becoming a predominantly youthful society with a high rate of unemployment that requires training the youth through TVET to tackle the unemployment that has reached alarming proportions. The disruptive impact of youth unemployment represents a significant threat to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. The dominant explanation for this study has been observed in fragile states where TVET has played a prominent role in mitigating conflicts and promoting social cohesion. Accordingly, this study tried to understand the role of TVET in promoting social cohesion in Balochistan, realizing the potential for a demographic dividend. The study is qualitative in nature, and participants were purposefully selected for it. Data has been collected from key informant interviews (KIIs) and official documents. This study provides and guides local and national policymakers on various emerging issues related to youth unemployment and social disenfranchisement, as well as uses a better approach to addressing demographic opportunity, based on rigorous data analysis. Based on the results obtained from the study, new and

updated policies have been provided to policymakers for theory and practice.

Keywords: Demographic, TVET, Social cohesion, Prospects, Opportunity, Balochistan.

Introduction

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area, and it is almost 44% of Pakistan. In terms of population, it has the lowest population in the country. Balochistan has an economically active and working-age population that is above 60% of the entire population. In Balochistan, the working-age population has almost reached 8.9 million, and the unemployment rate has reached 4.3% (Statistics, 2021). Balochistan is going through a rapid demographic transition. Keeping in view this demographic opportunity, the real problem for the province is how to convert this demographic transition into a demographic dividend, because it requires a lot of investment in human capital, and, in return, will enhance productivity. The demographic dividend is considered an opportunity that, if utilized effectively, could bring prosperity and economic growth. If it does not materialize properly, the same demographic dividend could be a demographic nightmare and disaster for the province. The increase in the working-age population will reap the demographic dividend. The per capita income of the province will be 165% higher than today if there is no decrease in fertility rates; if the fertility rates decline, it will observe a 388% increase in per capita income (Bloom et al., 2015).

Every development strategy strongly emphasizes education since it serves as the center around which many other initiatives are based. TVET is described as "a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life"(UNESCO, 2001). The main goal of TVET is to offer a platform for the development of social skills in addition to employable abilities for the workforce or job creation. To make major contributions to the national economy and reduce their susceptibility to anti-social forces that utilize them for actions against the security and peace of the province, Balochistan's jobless youth population has to be involved in productive

endeavors. To equip the province's youth with the necessary skills for decent work, economic growth, and a fair standard of living, they must have access to high-quality education.

Social cohesion is a dominant theme in TVET. Social cohesion is compatible with, and indeed conducive to, economic growth under certain circumstances, in particular, TVET can contribute towards value formation, institutional integrity, and the reduction of inequality. Using a unique time-series analysis for European countries during 1965–1990, we consider that educational equality can contribute towards the protection of civil and political liberties, suggesting that improving educational equality is positive for social cohesion (Cedefop, 2004). Indeed, social cohesion is another mechanism by which TVET can promote peace and mitigate conflicts within a society. TVET can also play a potential role in reducing educational inequalities. It also enables individuals to benefit in terms of their health, makes them more likely to participate in civic associations, and reduces crime.

Balochistan's long-running struggle with various forms of sectarian violence, insurgencies, insecurity, crime, and other social ills harms the province's image as a haven for investment. These constraints to development, have been linked to persistently high unemployment rates among the youth, and a major cause of unemployment is the lack of adequate skills for employment among job seekers. Given this, it is important to explore the skills and training system (TVET) in Balochistan and identify the contextual challenges and opportunities for TVET in developing relevant skills for employment and job creation needed for provincial as well as national development.

Literature Review

(Sathar et.al. 2013) highlighted the demographic dividend in Pakistan. The report emphasizes the significance of improving skills and sufficient investment in education as a key to achieving a demographic dividend in Pakistan. Skill development institutions are making efforts to enhance youth employability. However, for inclusive and balanced growth, efforts are required to ensure equal opportunities for health, education, and skills for women. (Statistics, 2021) stated that the unemployment rate in Pakistan is 6.3%, with a pervasive higher unemployment rate of 12.2% among 20–24-year-olds in comparison with 11.8% in 2018–2019. The

youth unemployment rate remains high in comparison with the average unemployment rate. In this respect, skill development initiatives can play a critical role in creating employment opportunities in Pakistan.

Numerous studies have concluded that TVET is key to skill development. (Ismail & Mohammed, 2015) stated that TVET is characterized by an emphasis on a particular profession so that people can find jobs relevant to their skills or launch their businesses. (Mustafa et al., 2005) have thoroughly examined the relationship between economic growth and skill development variability and found a firm relationship. (NAVTTTC, 2018) the report highlighted that skills development in Balochistan is the lowest in terms of TVET enrollment, TVET pass-outs, TVET institutions, and the number of TVET skills traders. In Balochistan, most of the TVET skills are conventional and not specifically trained for the needs and requirements of CPEC projects.

(Ahmed & Baloch, 2015) have investigated the links between TVET and living standards, skill development, and economic development. He stated that to improve living standards and skill development, TVET is necessary and needs to be prioritized in Balochistan. (NAVTTTC, 2016) reported that female skills development and labor market participation in Balochistan are at a lower level.

(Khan and Yousaf, 2020) a report by the World Economic Forum stated that Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world, with 64% of the country's population below the age of 30. The youth unemployment rate in Pakistan is 8.5%. 80% of Pakistan's youth labor force has a low level of education and poor skills. Pakistan urgently needs to take initiatives to prepare its youth workforce for technological transformation and skills training.

(OECD, 2009; Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2008; ILO, 2008; World Bank, 2007) have emphasized the significant role of technical and vocational education for sustainable national development. (G. Becker et al., 1975) believe that vocational training and skill development are key factors of human capital that provide lifetime earnings and positive benefits for an individual.

(Yamoah, 2014) argues that vocational training and skills development are critical tools that are necessary for improving the effectiveness of the labor force. Vocational training and skill development are essential factors in the human capital development of a country. (Schultz, 1961) states that an improvement in human activities due to which a person proves himself more productive and more beneficial according to the changes in the economy is called "human capital formation."

(Ahmed, 2005) states that skill development and vocational training impact national products and competitiveness. He concludes that an educated and skilled labor force assists countries in the transformation of their economies from labor-intensive to skill-intensive. (Rufai Audu, Christopher Obeta, 2013) have explored that technical and vocational education plays a significant role in human capital development for sustainable development. (Alam, 2007) states that the human capital theory has a direct influence on labor market analysis. In addition, investment in education and training provides benefits to individuals as well as society. It creates a skilled workforce that leads to global competitiveness and economic growth. It assists a person in increasing his or her earnings and improving his or her standard of living. (Amaehule & Enyekit 2010) believed that the proper implementation of TVE programs would generate the necessary skills and competencies that would lead to the development of human capital in the economy. In addition, it provides individuals with technological and managerial skills and enables them to manage human and material resources for enhanced productivity.

(Melo et al., 2008) examine the contribution of skilled and educated labor to the overall economic growth of a country. (G. S. Becker, 1964) has analyzed the difference between general and specific training and its costs and returns for investment in human capital to underscore the significance of human capital formation for gaining the economic benefits of economic growth and economic development. (UNESCO, n.d.) The report highlights the importance of general schooling and TVET and considers both as keys to human capital formation. A balanced approach to human resource development that prioritizes both general education and skill development, according to the report, aids in economic growth and development.

According to (Knight, 2010), TVET has the potential to play a significant role in improving employability and contributing to addressing the pressing issue of graduate employability. (Yorke, 2005) is of the view that two key aspects of employability can be approached. First, employability refers to graduates' ability to find work after finishing their degrees. The second is related to developing the attributes, qualities, and skills that are deemed essential by employers and helping them get jobs. (Cassidy, 2006) states that employability skills are a set of non-technical essential skills that consist of the development of knowledge, expertise, and mindset that are deemed necessary in the modern-day labor market. believes that employability skills hold great significance for the career success of graduates entering the labor market. (Athiyaman, 2010) states that employability skills allow fresh graduates to get paid employment with more ease and enable them to contribute to organizations.

(Musyimi et al. (2018) state that the value of TVET is determined by how well students can demonstrate their developed skills and employability. (Hodge, 1992) states that TVET strives to give young graduates the necessary work-based learning experience, technical abilities, and theoretical knowledge to prepare them for employment. TVET is a major national political priority in the majority of countries. Jobs are being replaced by new technologies, and skill requirements are changing. Malleable workers are therefore in great demand.

Kazmi (2007) assesses the links between TVET and employability. He argues that TVET has the potential to increase the profitability of producers, create employment opportunities for skilled individuals, and bolster the economic growth of a country.

(Amjad, 2005) suggests that Pakistan needs to address the skill challenges created by the lack of a sufficient number of TVET institutions. The TVET sector's capacity to offer demand-driven training programs to improve the workforce's technical and professional skills is insufficient given the expanding youthful population.

(G. of Balochistan, 2015) The youth policy highlights the need for skill development among the people of Balochistan for CPEC projects. Effective policies are necessary to integrate the people of

the province with the CPEC project and ensure a fair share of socio-economic prospects, and the creation of employment opportunities for them.

(Pompa, 2014) has analyzed the role of TVET in conflict-affected countries. This study concludes that TVET initiatives significantly improve the living standards of individuals and generate employment opportunities. In addition, it plays a key role in changing aggressive behaviors, reducing localized violence, and positively affecting gender relations.

Minaye & Lyer (2022) believe that TVET is key to promoting youth's skills development, strengthening the labor market, creating employment opportunities for youth, and improving relations within communities. TVET has the potential to maintain peace and stability in a society. Gu et al., (2011) believe that TVET can contribute to sustainable development.

Short- and long-term grievances arising from economic and social exclusion, marginalization, and inequality are among the most significant drivers of violence and conflict among the unemployed youth of the province.

Research Methodology

It is a descriptive study and qualitative in nature. The research methodology consists of the following components.

Research Design

The research design is based on KIs from all stakeholders. Questions/Objectives wise research mechanism is followed for further research design.



Collection

A qualitative data collection method has been adopted in the research paper.

Respondents

Respondents from various technical and vocational departments have been selected. The names and designation of respondents are as follows.

S. No	Department	Respondents
1.	Women Technical Training Center (WTTC)	Imran Ahmed:

2.	Balochistan Technical Education Vocational Training Authority (BTEVTA)	Maqbool Ahmed
3.	Colleges Higher and Technical Education Department (CHTED)	Rafique Ghilzai
4.	Women Development Department (WDD)	Shazia Riaz
5.	Technical Training Center (TTC)	Shoaib Shirazi
6.	Commerce and Industry	Asif Nawaz
7.	Home and tribal Department	Faisal Faheem
8.	Labor and Manpower	Fateh Muhammad Marri
9.	Social welfare department	Amjad Lashari
10.	Small industry	Akhtar Muhammad Langove

Tool of Data Collection

The questionnaire has been designed to describe the questionnaire in an objective context. (Appendix-A)

Thematic Analysis Approach

A thematic analysis approach has been used in this study. It is a technique for systematically organizing, identifying, compiling, and providing an understanding of meaning-related patterns (themes) throughout a data set. The researcher can identify and make sense of common or shared meanings and experiences by focusing on meaning across a data set. This technique helps make sense of the similarities and differences in how a topic is discussed or written about. (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It is the most flexible and simple method and is used in almost all types of research. It provides a clear, transparent, and detailed meaning that helps in formulating the results and outcomes. It involves six stages of analysis that are used in the thematic analysis that includes familiarization, forming codes, theme generation, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and report formation (Chawla et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion

TVET and SDGs

Regarding the role of TVET in achieving the SDG's goals nos. 1, 4, and 8, almost all the respondents stated that the TVET sector can play a vital role in achieving these goals. Concerning goal, no. 1, no poverty, all the respondents stated that TVET could help reduce the poverty level in Balochistan. Goal No. 4, which is related to

quality education, is that we should provide them with quality education both in terms of general and technical education. If we provide skills to the youth of the province with modern technical education, the target of quality education will be achieved. But in our province, we are still educating people with bearing skills that are traditional in nature. If the province wants to achieve quality technical education, then the government should provide the latest technological tools in almost all the TVET sectors to meet the needs of the modern world. Regarding goal no. 8, the TVET sector has been providing technical and vocational training to the youth of the province since 1989. A respondent from WTTC stated that we train girls for a period of 6 months to a year. These trained girls are then sent for job placement and internships to gain experience. After doing so, they go further and start entrepreneurship. After gaining skills here, they can earn money from home and become self-employed. They earn a minimum of 25k-30k per month.

Year	Reg:	Placement	Self-Employment	Year	Reg:	Placement	Self-Employment
2007	61	04	07	2014	129	30	21
2008	64	08	23	2015	96	27	43
2009	71	09	19	2016	104	18	41
2010	62	07	16	2017	145	30	56
2011	103	23	28	2018	155	83	65
2012	90	16	27	2019	200	46	20

2013	82	17	30	2020	71	25	30
Total: -					<u>1433</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>426</u>

FIG. No.1: WTTC data

Figure No. 1 clearly shows the data from 2007 to 2020 that, out of a total of 1433 enrollments, 333 have been placed in various departments, while 426 students from WTTC are self-employed.

According to a respondent from TTC, we are providing skills in various trades like auto-mechanic, auto-electric, electrician, civil draftsman, motor winding, machinist, refrigeration, and air-conditioning, welding, woodworking, plumbing, diploma in information technology, computer short courses, and auto-cad and mobile repairing. Now, all these trades are relevant in today's modern world. We can achieve all four of the aforementioned SDGs if we effectively teach all trades to students.

A respondent from BTEVTA stated that in our province, TVET has not been given such importance. TVET has many components; however, in Balochistan, it does not have that capability due to the policies, educational quality, and, above all, a labor market that is not catered to properly. TVET covers particular SDGs, but our TVET institutes do not produce quality graduates, the policies are not implemented, and the pass-out criteria are not up to the mark, so accordingly, we are focusing on how to reform it. Our purpose, according to umbrella management, is to align national and international policies with one another. The fundamental thing is TVET's scope, which is self-employment, entrepreneurship (unfortunately less in Balochistan), and industrial zones (less in Balochistan), which thereafter creates fewer opportunities. TVET can help students develop social cohesion, but where are the opportunities? Except for Hub Chowki, no industrial zones in the rest of the districts could create opportunities for the pass-out students. Education and opportunities are interlinked. Therefore, the stakeholders must come together to counter this aspect. Skills alone are not enough; opportunities should be provided as well. There are gaps in various areas where foreigners are called to

work, for instance, in CPEC, but this opportunity can be availed of by the locals themselves if the industry informs them beforehand that they demand said skills. According to the demand, we could train individuals and fill that gap.

A respondent from the social welfare department stated that he believes that the 4 goals of no poverty, quality education (including both general and technical education), decent work, economic growth, and peace and justice are meeting in parallel. While I believe that in the context of Pakistan, particularly Balochistan, TVET can play an important role in achieving the goals of poverty, hunger, and dignity, Balochistan lacks megaprojects in the development sector. He further stated that a large number of youths are not only unemployed but also deprived of various opportunities. As a result, the TVET sector is the only way to provide them with the opportunity to find skilled-based jobs and initiatives both within the country and abroad. Accordingly, the social welfare department trained 7500 youth in Balochistan in the TVET sector, of whom 50 have moved to foreign states and others are well-settled and working in the province.

After thoroughly studying the responses from various respondents about how TVET can play its role in achieving the SDGs' four goals, their responses are in line with the study by (Legusov et al., 2021) that is carried out in Canada, Chile, China, Taiwan, and the United States that TVET can make a significant contribution and has a unique characteristic that enables these institutions to play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs. The participation of youth in these skilled programs will reduce inequalities and provide a sustained livelihood to the youth of the province. This also suggests that TVET is an effective tool for human, social, and capital development and will contribute to the sustainable development of the province. This is in line with the study by Islam (2021), which found that TVET plays an important role in producing skilled human resources that can lead a nation toward sustainable peace and development.

However, regarding the channel through which skills development provision could achieve the target of SDGs 1, 4, 8, and 16, various sub-targets of these goals were not discussed by any respondent. The reason is that channeling skill development for SDG attainment through the existing institutional framework of the

government of Balochistan has not been developed. As per the respondents' responses, it implies that institutional capacity building is necessary for effective skill development of the youth that could help in achieving SDGs 1, 4, 8, and 16.

Reasons for Youth Unemployment

Regarding the issue of youth unemployment, respondents from almost every department were of the view that a lack of opportunities and resources is the main cause of unemployment in the province. Three respondents from BTEVTA, WTTTC, and small industry focused on the preference of individuals for government jobs over private jobs. Government jobs provide financial security. The private sector is exploiting the youth because they know they pay less and demand more work, taking advantage of their unemployment. A respondent from the social welfare department stated that he believes, the main reason for the bulge in youth unemployment is that we initiate the TVET plan for them, but have no backup plan for its sustainability. For instance, we have trained more than 7,000 workers, but there are no plans and strategies for their job placement. We need a post-training strategy for learners' sustainability and job placement, which includes no-interest loans. One of the respondents from a small industry stated that outdated curriculum, both in general and technical education, is the cause of youth unemployment in the province. A respondent from TTC stated that the primary reason, in my opinion, is the lack of industries in the province that can create job opportunities and the youth's ignorance of the TVET sector. A respondent from CHTED stated that the province has only two sectors for providing jobs to the population, which include the government and private sectors. The reason behind the high rate of unemployed youth is the communication gap between the private and public sectors. Another reason for youth unemployment is that labor skills are not up to the level of the industry's requirements. Lack of awareness among the youth regarding what they want to do in the future and the unavailability of job placement agencies are the reasons behind this huge unemployment rate.

Talking about the reasons for youth unemployment, many of the respondents discussed the issue of resources and opportunities. It defects from their statements that unemployment is at a record high, poverty is at its peak, and the risk of social exclusion has risen.

These responses are in line with the article written in (V. of Balochistan, 2019) (Schlein, 2021). The unemployment rate in Balochistan is 4.13 percent, which is the highest among all other provinces. One of the respondents identifies various provincial and federal departments where positions are vacant and that are enough for the unemployed youth of Balochistan, but due to a lack of government will, these positions are still vacant. The number of these vacant positions is more than 15,000. However, all of the respondents ignored the root causes of the unemployed youth in the province, either because they were intentionally misdiagnosed or neglected. The majority of the respondents ignored the never-reported unemployment among farmers, fisheries, and animal breeders. None of the respondents discuss the ill-advised and flawed policies of successive provincial, federal, and state institutions due to which the province today has the highest rate of unemployment and poverty.

Uncertainty among youth for their future well-being

Most of the respondents are of the view that lack of awareness and quality of education are the major issues that our youth are worried about. The youth are trying to find a white-collar job, and that is the main factor that adds fuel to their already extensive suffering. Many of the respondents argue that the youth of the province has no clear direction or career planning. Some of the respondents discussed how poverty is another big challenge that our youth are worried about. A respondent from a small industry explained that a major portion of our population is still dependent on traditional professions like medicine, engineering, and law. We do not consider their aptitude, potential, and interests, and that is why we recruit the wrong individuals for the wrong job. A respondent from social welfare and commerce and industry stated that the province lacks true leadership and policies that can truly address the grievances and worries of the youth. At the same time, we lack a career counseling mechanism that can surely help the worried youth of the province.

Regarding the issues the youth are worried about, almost all the respondents stated that lack of awareness and quality education are the major issues. They also stated that our youth are still dependent on acquiring traditional professions and that the job-related market in these domains is saturated. Another problem

that was stated was about career counseling, and in our province, there are no such career counseling programs in schools, colleges, or even at the university level. However, none of the respondents discussed the real core issues of the youth that are related to jobs, education, and marriage. This could be best understood from the study (Barahmand, 2017), where the results show that factors like marriage, future jobs, and education are the real worries of the youth. Again, the respondents ignored the fact that the education sector is divided into three parallel systems: madrassah systems, Urdu-medium public education systems, and elite private school systems. This again gives birth to inequality, where most of the youth feel left out. A major portion of our youth live beyond the poverty line and do not have access to the modern education system. So, most of the parents enrolled their children in madrassas or Urdu-medium schools. After completing their education when they entered the market, they did not find any white-collar jobs and, in return, tried to find easy methods to earn bread and butter. Those youth easily become victims of radical elements and start working with rogue elements. This is consistent with the report (Yousaf, 2008) that the country's three parallel education systems are the primary source of radicalization and anxiety among youth.

Engagement of youth for productive purposes to develop society

A respondent from WTTC stated that there are 30 functional training centers all over Balochistan, for both males and females. They are all being trained with skills that can help them earn money on their own. If the government implements a low-interest loan program for skilled youth to help them get started, we may be able to successfully engage this large number of unemployed youth in productive activities. The respondent from BTEVTA expressed his thoughts that we can utilize the youth for productive purposes through collaboration among different stakeholders and advanced technology. A delegation from South Korea and Japan required students from Pakistan, but the hurdle was that we lack soft skills and a language barrier. European countries have an age factor, their youthful population is smaller, which is a great opportunity for us. We should not only provide skills just for our internal demand; instead, this can be used for productive purposes outside Balochistan as well.

Talking about women's empowerment and their potential to utilize working-age women for productive purposes, a respondent from WDD shared her views that if the skills are provided to the women of Balochistan, they can play a vital role in the development process of the country in general and the province in particular. She posed the question, "How can a province or country progress where women make up half of the population?"

A respondent from TTC explained that our goal is to empower youth to become productive members of their communities by providing them with quality and professional skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The fact is that we are deprived of resources, so if we successfully proceed with even 80% of our motto, the issue of unemployment will be resolved to some extent. We have started a program in which we are providing skills that are needed in foreign countries, and many of them are now working in Saudi Arabia. Apart from that, we are establishing a facilitation center in TTC with the help of NAVTTC, which will provide technical education and facilitate the youth in acquiring new skills. We also help them with language learning so they can apply for jobs abroad. The courses include a one-month course in which the skills gap would be addressed and language classes and certification for jobs would be provided.

A respondent from the social welfare department stated that he disagrees, we do not have a bulge of youth. We have a general ratio of around 15,000–20,000 unemployed youth, despite their good qualifications. The province has almost 15,000 vacant jobs in different departments. These vacant jobs must be filled. Additionally, the government of Balochistan, whether in line or out of line, should also give a chance to international donors and agencies because a portion of our youth is engaged in the development sector, having good experience and expertise in that sector. If we start engaging them, this issue of unemployment will be addressed to a great extent, and this youth can be utilized productively.

A respondent from the home and tribal department in this regard stated that TVET can play a major role in providing skills to the inmates for their rehabilitation and engaging them in a way to make them productive individuals in society. However, we are not able to do that efficiently as we do not have enough resources to

do so. We have a single instructor with only 20 machines, which is not enough to accommodate the number of inmates that we have in our jails.

The majority of respondents believe that if youth are given opportunities and resources, they will be more likely to engage in productive activities. Some of them try to give solutions about soft loans, the installation of industrial units, and the involvement of women, who make up half of the population of the province, in the workforce. However, none of the respondents stated anything about the disengagement of youth in our society. Youth who drop out of school or college are more likely to be unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system. Additionally, several empirical studies show that disconnection is the outcome of a protracted process of disengagement rather than an abrupt occurrence. If we reengage society's disconnected youth, we can use them for productive purposes. It may take time, but it will promote social cohesion in the province. This can be observed in the study by (Zaff et al., 2014) which found that among disconnected youth, continuity of support is a powerful predictor of longer-term productive development.

TVET in mitigating conflicts and promoting social cohesion

The respondents from various departments stated that in various parts of the world, mostly in African and Asian countries, the TVET sector is playing a vital role in mitigating conflicts and promoting social inclusion. A respondent from WTTC stated that we have experienced this mechanism where our TVET sector has played its role in mitigating a conflict in SUI during the tenure of Sardar Sanaullah Khan Zehri (Chief Minister of Balochistan from 2015–2017 and Member of the Balochistan Assembly since 2018) when he asked the ones involved in the conflict zones to drop their weapons and suggested they adopt skills, provided loans, and created job opportunities for them. Our training center in Sui helps out those who lay down weapons and starts giving them the potential skills to earn their livelihood. Many respondents believed that if we implemented new strategies and provided them with education and opportunities, they would not seek alternatives. The best way to resolve conflict is to engage the parties and provide them with quality skills.

A respondent from the WDD stated that yes, a financially strong woman cannot be exploited; she would not be subjected to violence. First and foremost, educate the women so that they can find work. If she is not educated, she can learn these skills according to her talents, like embroidery, etc. She would not be subject to inferiority and dominance by the male family members while earning. It is a very technical phenomenon that an earning woman is respected and able to raise her voice for herself.

A respondent from a small industry stated that, to some extent, when pockets are empty, people are compelled towards conflicts and crimes. As we know, poverty breeds crime. Not all crimes are committed to promote evil or create disorder, some are committed out of helplessness. But, if we provide them with the help that they need in such dire circumstances, they will not go for worse alternatives. They would be busy doing stuff that promotes peace and welfare rather than being compelled to do the opposite; engage in conflicts. Another respondent, while addressing the same questions, stated that it is a controversial question. He stated “we do not have a conflict that cannot be resolved; the only issue is that we need to start with good intentions. From the perspective of Balochistan, we do not need huge efforts; we just need to think realistically to achieve our targets. There are 10 technical centers in which we fall into category A.”

Talking about social cohesion, almost all the respondents were hopeful that if soft skills and other skills are integrated along with education and we assure the youth that they are part of this society, then we can promote social cohesion. Although it may be a tough and lengthy process, it is still achievable. We are in coordination with the rest of the centers to exchange ideas and implement them for all. By doing so, we are trying to change the mindsets of the youth and make them united on the same page for the betterment of society.

However, a respondent from WDD stated that social cohesion can never be achieved without giving proper shares to the women of the province. As already mentioned, women represent half of the population of the province, and their share in almost every sector of the province is less than 10%. She further stated that without involving women, the dream of social cohesion can never be achieved.

While addressing the same question about conflict mitigation and social cohesion, a respondent from the home and tribal department stated that the biggest loophole that can be observed is that nobody is willing to accept these inmates. We have abandoned them, which makes them feel unacceptable in society. This feeling of unacceptability makes them vulnerable to dirty politics and propaganda that promote conflicts. Nobody is born a criminal, they are created. We need to take a deep look into these factors to diminish, if not eradicate, these conflicts. We have asked several times for psychoanalysts that can help these inmates become normal citizens, but for several unknown reasons, our request is not being accepted. There's no coordination, which makes it difficult for us to effectively perform our duties.

The respondents responded that TVET is necessary for mitigating conflicts and promoting social cohesion. The results demonstrate that participation in TVET and other employment-related training has a favorable effect on prospects for employment and labor market integration. Because beneficiaries of these skills programs are reported to be able to generate income, find employment, and support themselves and their families. However, they could not provide any alternatives. When the crisis period extends, what should be done to the unemployed youth of that region? The answer is in providing skills to the youth of this fragile area. When the crisis period extends, it is better to give citizens the skills, they need to contribute meaningfully to their communities throughout the restoration phase. Offering livelihood support can prevent conflict because a main driver of violence is the absence of sustainable livelihoods or unequal distribution of resources. This is in line with the study by (Abebaw Minaye Gezie, 2022) which found that giving young people access to education and employability will decrease grievances, decrease vulnerability, improve economic stability, foster constructive peace, and reduce conflict.

According to the KIIs and the available data, the impact of the influence of TVET and employability-related interventions on conflict behavior is multifaceted, but not entirely clear. Although the data demonstrate that the TVET-funded programs were (and are) successful in improving the lives of young people by providing them with chances for employment and income production, their longer-term impact on the overall goals remains unclear. As mentioned above, in addition to the tangible effects on youth

careers and economic prospects, TVET and other employability-related initiatives do have several positive intangible effects. This is in line with the study by Consulting (2019) that identifies five ways that TVET helped to decrease violence, boost economic capabilities, keep youth engaged, reduce grievances, provide opportunities for socialization, and provide conflict management training.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Balochistan has already entered the demographic transition phase, which will result in a significant increase in population. Undoubtedly, the population will have a bulge of the working class, which, if managed and facilitated properly, would contribute to the development of the province as well as the country. Skill development and the TVET sector have a critical role to play in reducing unemployment, mitigating conflicts, and promoting social cohesion. The development of technical and vocational skills among youth will help in achieving the SDG goals of quality education, eradicating hunger and poverty, decent work and unemployment, and promoting peace and justice. In this regard, TVET has a bidirectional role if played properly. The TVET sector generates human capital, which contributes in two ways: first, by reducing poverty through job creation, and second, by increasing the country's GDP. Numerous analyses have demonstrated that comprehensive TVET provisions can considerably enhance people's livelihoods and employment prospects. Along with employment, these benefits also include a rise in self-esteem and social status of an individual in the community, a decrease in aggressive behavior and violence, positive contributions to the community, and improvements in gender relations. However, many flaws in the current TVET system need further development. Reforms in the TVET sector are required to achieve effective skilled human resources for the province's socioeconomic development.

- The government of Balochistan should focus on providing the latest TVET skills instead of traditional skills. The mode of operation should and must be reformed. We are still focusing on traditional training, but as the world has evolved and technological demands have increased, we must shift from traditional technical training towards high-tech base training.

Youth should be provided with hard skills, foundational skills, life skills, or soft skills.

- Coordination among all stakeholders related to TVET is recommended. BTEVTA, NAVTTC, and private TVET institutes will help to solve the existing legal issues, reduce the trust deficit, and administer departmental and administrative issues among allied TVET departments and BTEVTA.
- Workshops, seminars, and counseling sessions should be conducted to make the population aware of TVET skills, their importance, and their benefits.
- Different TVET institutes in both the private and public sectors are dysfunctional due to mismanagement and administrative issues. Their management must be realigned to properly manage TVET skill provision for the working-age population of the province.
- The government should encourage the private sector to establish technical institutes. Public-private partnerships and investment in the TVET sector are highly recommended.
- A significant effort is needed to develop and adopt the latest courses, new curricula, modules, qualified instructors, the latest technological labs, industrial attachments, and other skill-development instruments.
- Linkages between employers and most technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions should be enhanced so that, the responsiveness of TVET to job market demands becomes consistent.
- Instead of focusing on vocational trades, a more balanced TVET distribution is needed. Presently, it is highly skewed in favor of vocational trades as compared to technical trades.
- The gap between academia and industry must be bridged through collaborative sessions.
- Almost every department of the province related to TVET is facing issues related to finance. To get better performance from the existing centers, the government must increase the budget of the TVET sector.
- Encourage industrial partnerships in skill training delivery to develop youth as a skilled workforce to meet the market's needs.

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