

Islamic Ecological Ethics and Sustainable Development in Pakistan: A Qur'ānic Perspective on Climate Challenges

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Abstract

Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable nations of climate change that is facing frequent flooding, heat waves, water shortage, deforestation, and environmental degradation. Although there are formal policy tools, such as the Pakistan Climate Change Act (2017) and the National Climate Change Policy (2021), climate governance in Pakistan is highly technocratic, and little focus is directed towards the ethical frameworks that can promote long-term interest in the society and change behaviour. This paper has discussed the moral gap in the environmental management of Pakistan by establishing the possibilities of Quranic ecological ethics as an alternative normative system. The article uses a qualitative thematic analysis of chosen Quranic ideas, The ethical and ecological framework in Islam emphasizes several core principles, the majority of which are: خِلاَفَة (Khilāfah – Stewardship), مِيزَان (Mīzān – Balance), أَمَانَة (Amānah – Trust), إِسْرَاف (Isrāf – Prohibition of Waste), فَسَاد فِي الْأَرْض (Fasād fī al-Arḍ – Ecological Corruption), and رَحْمَة (Raḥmah – Mercy), and critically examines the current climate policy tools of Pakistan. The research is not aimed to replace scientific or technical policy methods; instead, it assesses the possibility of improvements in the policy legitimacy, the population adherence and moral responsibility through ethical foundations that are based on Quran. The results indicate that there is a significant conceptual overlap between the ecological ethics of Quraysh as per the Quran and the main intentions of significant development, especially those formulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ethics of Quran provide normative consistency, culturally instilled moral authority and leverage in terms of behaviour that can empower climate change adaptation and mitigation in Pakistan. With its application to indigenous religious ethics in climate governance, this article can also be used in interdisciplinary research in religion and

sustainability and suggest a policy-consequential ethical framework that enhances climate governance without trespassing into theological matters.

Introduction

Pakistan is among the most climate-sensitive nations on the planet with its unique geographic location, ecological variety, and overwhelming socioeconomic restrictions. It is located in the Indus River Basin and has the Himalayan, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush mountain ranges making it a very sensitive country to climatic variability and change (UNFCCC, 2024). The glaciers of the country are melting fast, which endangers future water flows to the Indus system, and jeopardizes water security of millions of people (Ministry of Climate Change [MoCC], 2021). The legislature in the landmark Pakistan Climate Change Act (2017) acknowledges that there is a relationship between the greenhouse gas emissions, extreme weather events, and long-term environmental risk, and an institutional mechanism is to be established to address these issues via mitigation and adaptation planning (Pakistan Climate Change Act, 2017). The magnitude of hazards that face Pakistan is evidenced empirically by the scale of climate-induced hazards. In 2010, the historic floods ate about a fifth of the country and killed more than 2,000 people, whereas the unprecedented monsoon of 2022 swept away half of the territory, displaced millions and caused tens of billions of dollars of economic damage (PIDE, 2024; MoCC, 2021). According to one analyst, the vulnerability of Pakistan increases due to the regularity and high severity of extreme events like floods, droughts, heatwave, which are getting more unpredictable because of the climate change (PIDE, 2024, p. 3). The cross-sectoral analysis is also applicable to the increased temperatures and unreliable rainfall patterns that increase stress in the heat, negatively affect the productivity of agriculture, and add pressure on water resources, which further increase the fragility of the socioeconomic situation (MoCC, 2021; PIDE, 2024).

Hydrological extremes are not the only climate stressors. The urban centres of Pakistan are developing fast and are becoming more vulnerable to heat waves and air pollution, which exacerbates the threat of human health along with the pressure on infrastructure in high-density metropolitan areas (MoCC, 2021). Pakistan is always ranked by the World Climate Risk Index as one of the countries that are most affected despite the fact that it generates less than 1 % of the global emissions of greenhouse gases, a gap that highlights the disproportionate nature of the exposure of this nation to climate risks (MoCC, 2021). All these climatic strains demonstrate the immediate necessity of good and context-sensitive climate governance not just in national planning but sensitive to society, social behaviour and local adaptive capacity.

2.2 Problem Statement

As part of rising climate risks, Pakistan has come up with official policy tools, the most recent of which include the Pakistan Climate Change Act of 2017 and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of 2021. The Act provides the creation of the Pakistan Climate Change Council and Authority to organize the mitigation and adaptation efforts at the federal and provincial level-requiring comprehensive adaptation planning and integrating climate issues in the decision-making process in development (Pakistan Climate Change Act, 2017; Climate Laws.org, 2025). The NCCP 2021 reaffirms the Pakistani dedication to global climate solutions and defines policy

plans of resilient-development such as institutional alignment, the mitigation and adaptation priorities (MoCC, 2021). Although these are the formal mechanisms, scholars highlight striking inconsistencies between the design and implementation of policies especially in regard to the societal interaction and the culture of environmental governance. As an illustration, studies by Shah (2025) highlight the fact that although the climate policies in Pakistan clearly define the mitigation and adaptation plans, such policies tend to lack the implementation channels and stakeholder engagement pathways, which fail to foster behavioural changes and stakeholder ownership (Shah, 2025). On the same note, Asif (2025) criticizes the dynamics of governance as he believes that limited resources, poor institutional capacity, and limited technocratic prisms lead to deficiencies in implementation to leave grassroots accommodation to supportive (Asif, 2025). This has created a disconnection between the policy frameworks and social compliance such that formal pledges of adaptation and mitigation fail to directly translate to sustainable community practices or sustainable behaviour change. This disconnection asks critical questions about the effectiveness of climate governance in Pakistan in the long term in a culture, religion, and normative society that is highly influential in the collective behaviour of society. It highlights how integrative strategies that bridge the gap between the formal policy tools and the societal values and community participation are necessary in building more profound ownership, resiliency, and malleability in all levels of the society.

2.3 Research Gap

The available literature on the topic of climate change in Pakistan has largely concentrated on the scientific appraisal, policy analysis, and institutional proficiency. In line with this, there is an increasing body of literature on Islamic environmental ethics that examines the Quranic ideas on the concepts of nature, stewardship, and moral responsibility. Nevertheless, these two streams of studies are not much connected. Islamic theological studies usually keep on being normative and abstract whereas policy oriented studies mostly ignore the resources found in religion and ethics that drive the values and behaviour of the populace. No interdisciplinary studies that substantially combine Quranic ecological ethics with the modern climate governance systems are known to be carried out in Pakistan. This lack of exploitation of indigenous ethical sources is a major lapse in the field of scholarship and policy.

2.4 Research Questions

In order to fill this gap, the following research questions will be directing the present study:

What are the most applicable Quran ethical ideas in relation to environmental stewardship and ecological responsibility?

What are the connections between these ethical concepts and the significant climate issues affecting Pakistan such as floods, water shortage, pollution and deforestation?

How can Quranic ecological ethics empower the sustainable development policy in Pakistan without usurping scientific and technical governance systems?

2.5 Structure of the Article

The methodology and the analysis framework that were employed in this study are outlined in the article after this introduction. It subsequently discusses some of the Quranic pillars of ecological ethics by conducting a thematic analysis on some of the concepts. The following sections transfer the ethical principles to the issue of climate problems in Pakistan and discuss how they fit in with sustainable development objectives. The paper ends with an analytical analysis of how climate governance can be reframed using Quran ethics, and the paper contains policy-based conclusions and recommendations.

3. Analytical Framework and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design used in this study is qualitative, normative-analytical research design, which investigates the ethical aspects of climate governance in Pakistan, in terms of the Quranic view. The study is based on conceptual analysis and critical interpretation, unlike either empirical fieldwork or quantitative modelling, which is specifically appropriate to researching normative frameworks, ethical assumptions, and value-based aspects of sustainability that are frequently undervalued in technocratic policy formulations (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In pursuing this design, the research aims at investigating how the ecological ethics on Quran can be used to supplement modern structures of climate governance by improving moral legitimacy, citizen participation and establishment of behavioural orientation. The relevance of the inclusion of moral values and ethical beliefs into the realm of environmental policy, as stated by the previous scholarship, is critical to the way in which values and moral regimes determine the nature of community involvement and adherence (Folke et al., 2021; McKinnon, 2020). Such views are consistent with this research, as it draws attention to the interaction between normative ethics and institutional governance within a society that is culturally and religiously based such as in Pakistan.

3.2 Textual Analysis

The thematic textual analysis of the selected Quranic verses relevant to environmental stewardship and ecological responsibility is the key approach to the analysis. Such fundamental ethical notions as خِلاَفَةٌ (Khilāfah – Stewardship), مِيزَان (Mīzān – Balance), أَمَانَةٌ (Amānah – Trust), إِسْرَاف (Isrāf – Prohibition of Waste), فَسَادٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ (Fasād fī al-Arḍ – Corruption on Earth), and رَحْمَةٌ (Raḥmah – Mercy) are systematically found and explained in their far wider Quranic context (Abdel Haleem, 2004). In order to achieve consistency and accuracy in the text, the English version of M. A. S. Abdel Haleem has been used in this study. Where deemed appropriate we cite classical sources of exegesis, especially the Ibn Kathir with whom we can date ethical ideas in the more traditional traditions of interpretation (Ibn Kathir, 2003). The use of exegetical content is discriminated and demonstrative, and intended to facilitate thematic reading as opposed to indulging in intricate jurisprudential discussion. This methodology is aligned with the normative studies in Islamic environmental ethics that focus on explaining concepts rather than codifying the law (Foltz, 2013).

3.3 Policy Analysis

As an addition to the text-based research, the given research will conduct a critical policy assessment of the climate governance systems in Pakistan, concentrating on the Pakistan Climate Change Act (2017) and the National Climate Change Policy (2021). These reports are reviewed to find the hidden and overt ethical suppositions, normative orientations, and where moral considerations are incorporated or not. The manner in which the policies cover responsibility, equity, accountability and behavioural change is given special care especially where the community compliance and societal involvement are the keys to success in climate action (Shah, 2025; Asif, 2025). In its analysis, the study intentionally omits the technical analysis of performance, but rather the degree to which ethical aspects, particularly those that are appealing to the Quranic values have been enshrined in the policy design and implementation. This duplicity approach will enable an interdisciplinary approach to understand normative religious ethics with the present day governance systems in order to offer an insight into the potentials of the ethical integration to increase legitimacy and social engagement in climate policy.

3.4 Limitations

The research is more normative and interpretive than empirical, and outcomes of policies and behaviour of the people are not quantified. Although the collection of hadiths is occasionally cited in the context where it is applicable, the analysis pays the main attention to the Quran as the main source of ethics. In turn, the results are to be interpreted as providing conceptual and policy-based information, as opposed to making empirical judgments.

4. Ecological Ethics Foundations in Quran

Quran gives the detailed ethical nature of the worldview in terms of human interaction with the natural world. Instead of viewing nature as a morally neutral context of human activity, the Quran places the natural order in the context of a divine purpose, moral responsibility and accountability. Considering a combined system of morality that connects cosmology, human agency, and justice, ecological ethics in the Quran are developed. This section defines six closely interrelated Qur'anic concepts—*خِلاَفَة* (Khilāfah – Stewardship), *مِيزَان* (Mīzān – Balance), *أَمَانَة* (Amānah – Trust), *إِسْرَاف* (Isrāf – Prohibition of Waste), *فَسَاد فِي الْأَرْض* (Fasād fī al-Arḍ – Corruption on Earth), and *رَحْمَة* (Raḥmah – Mercy)—as the foundational principles of Islamic ecological ethics.

4.1 Khilafah (Stewardship)

The Quran refers to the human beings as *خُلَفَاء* (vicegerents or stewards) of the earth and they are given the responsibility of overseeing creation and not ownership of the creation. The stewardship as a delegated and responsibility-based power is created in the verse, which states, *وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ فِي الْأَرْض* It is He who has made you successors upon the earth (Qur'an 6:165). This title does not imply absolute domination; it is a qualified trusteeship which is open to moral responsibility (حساب). It is therefore the human agency that is made to test the ethical behavior in the consumption of natural resources. Being ecologically based, the notion of khilafah sets

certain limitations on the exploitation of the materials and states that the environmental resources have to be preserved, taken care of, and used fairly. The Quranic association between accountability and stewardship limits anthropocentrism overspending and aligns the human activity in keeping with the divine purpose. This concept is against the exploitative resource management practices in the Pakistani setting, which include excessive extraction of the groundwater, unsustainable agricultural development, and deforestation. The environmental governance as khilafah reinstates the state and society as custodians of collective ecological resources, such as rivers, forests, and land, in trust of future generations and not commodities to accomplish short-term profit.

4.2 Mizan (Balance and Measure)

Central place in the Quranic concept of the natural order is taken up by the principle of mizan. According to Quran, وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ. He elevated the sky and established the scale that you may not fall short of the scale (Quran 55: 7-8). The meaning of this verse is both cosmological and moral: creation exists within certain definite boundaries and its behavior has to follow the same boundaries. In turn, the degradation of the environment is not the technical failure but, at the same time, the moral transgression of the overindulgence and imbalance. The notion of mizan offers a moral paradigm of modern sustainability issues with the focus on proportionality, restraint, and balance. The environmental issues in Pakistan including air pollution in the city, too much emission, and dropping water levels are the examples of the outcomes of the breach of ecological balance. The application of mizan to climate governance would mean setting up and implementing ecological limits, not only on emissions, a resource extraction, and land use, but also acknowledging their violation as an ethical failure, and not a merely regulatory violation. Such an approach strengthens the discourse of sustainability by basing environmental limits on the concept of moral responsibility.

4.3 Amanah (Trust)

The Quranic idea of amanah highlights the religious trust that is given to man. Quran 33: 72 states, إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا we gave the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains but they refused to carry it, and man took it upon himself. According to classical exegetes, this trust includes moral responsibility, free will and accountability. Amanah, when used in the ecology context, implies that the natural resources are given to humans to utilize and not to be exploited in a carefree manner. Environmental mismanagement, which can either be pollution, deforestation, or destroying of a habitat is a violation of this trust. Amanah in terms of governance requires transparency, integrity and accountability in environmental policy and governance. In Pakistan, sustainability actions are usually sabotaged by weak enforcement and institutional failures; the concept of environmental governance as a trust enhances ethical accountability both on the part of the states and the society. Amanah-based policies would be not only appealing to the legal obligation but also moral conscience.

4.4 Israf (Prohibition of Waste)

The Quran is against extravagance and wastefulness several times saying, *كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ* eat and drink, but do not waste; indeed He does not love the wasteful (Qur 7:31). It is not only a ban on personal consumption of israf, but also on group trends of production, distribution, and resource consumption. Moderation (اعتدال) is thus made out to be an ethical requirement that is part of sustainable life. Inept use of water through irrigation systems, food waste along the supply chains and high energy usage are some of the wasteful practices within Pakistan. These practices can be understood in terms of israf, which makes them not only be seen as economical failures, but also as moral ones. The Quranic taboo on waste by associating it with sustainability and ethical restraint reinforces behaviour-change agenda and plays well with the modern objective of responsible consumption and production.

4.5 Fasad fi al-Ard (Ecological Corruption)

Quran is categorical about corruption on earth and says, *ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ* Corruption has been stroke on earth and at sea due to the works of their hands (Qur'an 30:41). Conventionally perceived as comprising of social injustice and moral corruption, fasad also comprises environmental annihilation caused by human activities. Ecosystems like pollution, deforestation, desertification and loss of biodiversity may be viewed as the expressions of moral disorder. This moral contextualization brings out the connection between environmental degradation and endemic corruption, greediness and injustice. Poor governance, unlawful resource exploitation, and poor regulations tend to increase ecological damage in Pakistan. The Quranic stance on this way of practice by classifying them as fasad makes their moral value even more severe and creates the necessity of accountability and reform.

4.6 Rahmah (Mercy to All Creation)

Ethic of rahmah in the Quran develops an ethical concern that is not limited to human interests but to all living things. *وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ* Quran 21:107 refers to Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to all worlds which is an indication of an all-inclusive ethic of compassion. Prophetic traditions which are stressing on kindness to animals and respect of life affirm this principle. Ecologically, rahmah offers an ethical basis to the conservation of the biodiversity, the protection of animals and the ecosystem. Pakistan, where habitat destruction and population reduction is a significant issue, the inclusion of the concept of rahmah in the environment policy would welcome the integrated approach that non-human life is an integral element of the moral community. A combination of *خِلاَفَة* (khilāfah), *مِيزَان* (mīzān), *أَمَانَة* (amānah), *إِسْرَاف* (isrāf), *فَسَاد* (fasād), and *رَحْمَة* (rahmah) constitutes an interlaced Qur'anic ethical system. These principles are not accidental; on the contrary, they are all integral to stating a sensible moral vision shaping the environmental stewardship as a question of responsibility, balance, restraint, accountability, and compassion. In turn, this means that Quranic ecological ethics offers a strong normative platform on which sustainability and climate governance can be reconsidered mainly in situations where ethics and culture must be heard to find ethical and sustainable action.

5. Pakistan Climate Problems with an Ethical Perspective of the Quran

The environmental problems in Pakistan are not a few climatic incidents but intricate results of the ecological vulnerability, weaknesses in governance, and a lack of sustainability in development strategies. Solving these issues within the context of a Quranic ethical paradigm does not presuppose theological determinism or ideas of divine punishment; rather, it provides a set of moral terms to explain human responsibility, accountability and corrective action. Qur'anic concepts of مِيزَان (mīzān—balance), عَدْل (‘adl—justice), إِسْرَاف (isrāf—waste), أَمَانَةٌ (amānah—trust), and فَسَاد (fasād—corruption) offer an ethical prism through which Pakistan's climate challenges can be critically examined.

5.1 Floods and Environmental Mismanagement

There have been repeat disastrous floods in Pakistan, the most notorious one in 2010 and 2022 that have led to massive displacement, damage to infrastructure and the loss of the economy in the long term. The World Bank reported (2022) that the floods of 2022 impacted more than 33 point-seven million individuals and resulted in damages worth more than USD 30 billion. Although changes in extreme rainfall patterns due to climate change had a major influence, several studies have highlighted that mismanagement of the environment, such as deforestation, unplanned urbanisation, and intrusion of floodplains, contributed significantly to the effects of floods (Rupp et al., 2022). In terms of Quranic ethics, these results may be conceptualised by using the concept of *fasada fi al-ard*. According to the Quran, corruption has taken places on earth and sea due to the work of the hands of people to earn, so that He may show them a bit of what they have done to repent (Qur'an 30:41; Abdel Haleem, trans.). Classical and more modern scholars warn about taking this verse to mean that divine retribution causes disasters, instead they should emphasize the effects of human behavior that alters the ecological balance (Saniotis, 2012). Pakistan floods are ethically an indication of mizan being brought out-of-place by deforestation, poor land-use control. This reading puts floods in a context of moral responsibility and government ineffectiveness and strengthens the Quranic focus on human responsibility and not fatalism.

5.2 Urban Pollution and Heatwaves.

The extreme heatwaves have come to be a very common and fatal event in Pakistan. The Karachi heatwave in 2015 alone claimed over 1,200 lives with functionalities of low-income groups highly vulnerable to acquiring the disease due to inadequate access to treatment and air conditioning systems (Ratnam et al., 2016). Even more recently, the health risks of people have been increased by the chronic air pollution in cities like Lahore and Karachi. According to Rafique et al. (2022), air pollution is estimated to decrease average life expectancy in Pakistan by almost three years. These facts are an evident ethical breach of mizan and adl. The Quran confirms that God made everything in its right proportion: الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا (Qur'an 25: 2). “He made everything and measured it in exact measure (Qur'an 25: 2). The lack of balance in the environment due to the uncontrolled industrial emissions and traffic jams is a manifestation of human carelessness in this ratio. In addition, environmental injustice occurs when the poor are the ones who are suffering the health effects of

pollution. The Islamic morality focuses on justice as being the right thing to do and in the Quranic order to keep justice without fail (Qur'an 4:58). In this view, the issue of urban pollution in Pakistan can be neither simply a regulatory failure nor, but an ethical dilemma of uneven distribution of risks and non-focus on the good of people. Ethics in the Quran therefore support modern environmental justice models in preempting the ethical obligation to marginalised populations.

5.3 Water Scarcity

The increasing population, climatic changes, and poor water management are reaching the critical point of waterscarcity in Pakistan. Qureshi (2020) cautions that the availability of water per capita has reduced drastically leading to Pakistan being one of the water-stressed nations. More than 90 percent of freshwater resources are used by Agriculture, and a significant portion of it is wasted because of the ineffective flood irrigation process (Ahmad & Farooq, 2021). Quranic israf ban targets such unsustainable practices. The prophet tells in the Quran: Eat and drink, but waste not; indeed, He does not love the wasteful (Qur'an 7:31). According to scholars, this principle applies more to the use of collective resources than to the consumption of individual resources (Khalid, 2019).

5.4 Deforestation and Loss of Biodiversity

Deforestation leads to soil erosion, reduction of biodiversity and the exposure to high chances of floods. Although measures like massive tree-planting programs have been undertaken, researchers warn not to idealise these practices because of the issues of transparency, and survival of plantations, and governance (Rasul, 2016). Within a Qur'anic perspective, deforestation is a violation of the amanah that is the entrustment of humankind to look after the creation. The Qur'an is a description of nature as a sign (ayah) of divine wisdom (Qur'an 6:99), suggesting the presence of intrinsic value in nature other than economic usefulness. Sustainable ecological integrity over the long term is necessary instead of the short-term interventions demanded by ethical stewardship.

The climatic issues in Pakistan can be interpreted through Quranic ethical perspective of a merger between climate imbalance, moral neglect and inefficiencies of governance. Quran ethics cannot substitute scientific explanation or policy processes, but rather enhance the moral-basis of governing climate as it ensures responsibility, justness, moderation and trust. This moral rhetoric enhances the idea of sustainability because the environmental protection is connected with the responsibility in front of society and God.

6. Sustainable Development and Islamic Ecological Ethics

Sustainable development as defined by the global policy frameworks is aimed at striking a balance between environmental security, social justice and economic sustainability. The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development by the United Nations provides that sustainability is a comprehensive process that needs structural transformation, behavioural change, and moral dedication (United Nations, 2015). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a universal

framework of policy but the need to implement contextual legitimacy of the SDGs and moral quality of the goals in particular societies are crucial to their implementation. Islamic ecological ethics are based on the Quran and developed in Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan, provide an alternative ethical framework that only intersects with the SDGs and supports their normative underpinnings. A critical interpretation of the SDGs shows that it has a large conceptual overlap with fundamental Quranic ethical principles. This intersection implies that the Islamic ecological ethics are not the opponent of global sustainability standards but consult them with the help of culturally-based moral values.

SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) are very much comparable to the Quranic teachings of khilafah (stewardship) and mizan (balance). SDG 13 demands a radical move to counter the effects and causes of climate change, whilst SDG 15 focuses on defending and rehabilitating terrestrial ecosystems (United Nations, 2015). In the same manner, the Quran sets a human being in the role of a steward, who has to preserve the ecological balance: It is He who has made you heirs on the earth (Quran 6:165). Researchers claim that khilafah means accountability not only to the current generation, but also to future generations, and this concept is similar to intergenerational equity in the context of sustainability (Kamali, 2016; Rizk, 2014). The term mizan also strengthens the aspect of SDGs on planetary boundaries, as the understanding of environmental extravagance in mizan revolves around moral transgression, and not an accidental breach. The Quranic banning of israf (waste) is very close to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). SDG 12 aims at eliminating the resource inefficiency, food waste and the unsustainable consumption patterns. Qur'an condemns the wastefulness expressly: Eat but drink, but do not waste, Indeed, He is not in love with the wasteful (Qur'an 7:31). The modern Islamic environmental theorists recognize the existence of such an ethical concept as moderation as a fundamental building block of sustainability, connecting environmental protection and social equity (Khalid, 2019; Helfaya et al., 2018). SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) is aligned with the aspect of the Quran of a principle of justice (adl). The marginalised populations are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation, which also contributes to the augmentation of social disparities (World Bank, 2022). In the Quran, the issue of justice is always stressed as a moral norm that requires being just in the government and social affairs (Qur'an 4:58). The implementation of sustainability policy with the inclusion of the term adl provides moral support to the idea of climate justice, especially to vulnerable populations in Pakistan in flood-prone and heat-impacted areas.

SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) is ethically supported in the concept of Quranic amanah (trust). SDG 16 emphasizes the need to have accountable institutions, transparency and rule of law. The Quran defines government as a trust and that has to be given out in a responsible manner (Quran 33:72). The application of the environmental governance concept with the use of amanah can transform the basis of corruption, regulatory failure, and mismanagement into an ethical violation, thus enhancing the accountability of the institutions (Abdelzaher et al., 2019).

6.1 Ethical Added Value

In addition to this conceptual convergence, there is a substantial value addition in the application of Islamic ecological ethics to sustainable development projects to cover areas of concern that

are frequently overlooked in technocratic policy formulations. To begin with, the Quranic ethics provide moral motivation. Ethical obligations based on religious faith can be used to promote voluntary compliance and self-regulation, whereas policy tools are dependent on the use of incentives and regulations. Studies indicate that ethical theories based on faith have a stronger impact on the environmental attitude and behaviour, compared to the purely instrumental ones (Saniotis, 2012).

Secondly, cultural legitimacy is promoted through Islamic ethics. Sustainability policies only based on technical or economic reasons are unlikely to go far in societies of a culturally and religiously oriented nature. With the integration of environmental responsibility with Quranic values, the sustainability efforts will be able to appeal more to the minds of the people, establish social ownership and engagement of people (Foltz, 2006). Third, the ethics in the Quran help to bring long-term behaviour change. Sustainable development entails changes in the consumption pattern, governance, and social norms, which may be long-lasting. The idea of moderation, accountability and compassion, which make up the ethical principles known as *ijtihad*, *hisab* and *Rahmah*, encourage internal moral discipline and not immediate compliance. The internalisation is important in maintaining environmental promises outside the policy cycles and political changes.

6.2 Theocratic Overreach is another mistake to avoid

Although Islamic ecological ethics have significant advantages, their inclusion in sustainable development should not be faced with the danger of theocratic overreach. This paper does not support the substitution of scientific understanding, technical planning, and plural systems of governing by religious dogma. Instead, it puts the Quranic ethics as a complementary normative framework that adds value to the policy discourse. It has to be compatible with plural governance. The constitutional and policy frameworks in operation of Pakistan are founded on a plural legal and administrative system which interacts with the international institutions, science and various stakeholders. Islamic ethics may well exist alongside such plurality operating as a moral guide and not a commanding force. Researchers stress that the most efficient way of applying the Islamic environmental ethics is to shape the values and priorities rather than enforce the Islamic regulations as strict legal laws (Kamali, 2016; Saniotis, 2012).

In addition, evidence-based policymaking should be upheld by ethical integration. Climate science, environmental economics and technical planning are also necessities. Quranic ethics contribute value by providing a framework of the reasons as to why sustainability is important and who should get the sustainability and the science provides the reasons as to how environmental issues arise and how they can be dealt with. This complementary relationship has the benefit of making sure that religious ethics reinforce the effective climate governance rather than weakening it.

Islamic ecological ethics and sustainable development do not require a competitive paradigm but are complementary frameworks. Powerful overlap between the Quranic ethical principles and SDGs proves that sustainability goals may be both globally oriented on the one hand and locally significant on the other. Cultural legitimacy, moral motivation and, ethical depth, Quranic

ecology adds a richness to the discourse on sustainable development, and is consistent with plural governance systems based on science.

7. Reframing Climate Governance in Pakistan

The concept of climate governance in Pakistan has changed a lot over the last decade, especially with the implementation of the Pakistan Climate Change Act (2017) and development of a National Climate Change Policy (2021). These frameworks are demonstrating increasing awareness of climate risks and institutional obligations. Nevertheless, being technically advanced, the continued decline of nature and the inability of people to adhere to them show that structural and moral weaknesses remain unaddressed. This part is a critical analysis of these inadequacies and it contends that the Quranic ecological ethics can serve as a remedial normative system that enhances governance without having to supplant scientific or policy-based methods.

7.1 Ethical Blind Spots of Existing Policy

One aspect that is leading in the climate governance in Pakistan is its focus on infrastructure-based approaches to adaptation and mitigation. Flood control structures, agriculture that is resilient to climate, early warning systems, and development of urban infrastructure are the primary priorities of policy documents (Government of Pakistan, 2021). In as much as these are necessary, this paradigm can be seen as a largely technocratic one that views climate change as an engineering and administrative issue, as opposed to a very ethical and behavioural issue. Environmental governance scholars warn that infrastructure-oriented solutions usually fail when they are not supported by behavioural change in the society and ethical responsibility (Ostrom, 2010). There are problems of unlawful construction of floodplains, excessive use of ground waters, and the wastage of resources in Pakistan even though regulatory structures are in place. These practices imply that there is a high underemphasis on consumption behaviour, public responsibility, as well as moral accountability during the creation of the policies. Lack of ethical dialogue at official structures constrain public ownership of sustainability objectives and their implementation through compliance. Moreover, the policy of climate does not pay much attention to the ethical aspect of the unequal vulnerability. The documents recognise the poverty due to climate but seldom do they mention environmental injustice as a moral issue that needs remedial governance. Such exclusion represents a wider inattention in which the effectiveness of policy is evaluated in terms of outputs and not ethical accomplishments.

7.2 Quranic Ethics as a Remedial Framework

The Quran ecological ethics would provide a corrective normative by establishing a balance between the rights and responsibilities in the management of climate. Modern sustainability rhetoric often highlights environmental rights, i.e. the right to clean water and air, but minimally defines parallel responsibilities. Quran, regularly places entitlement in case of responsibility, and human agency is the accountable stewardship, which is liable to moral assessment (Qur'an 6:165). Amanah (trust) is also a concept that is relevant especially when dealing with transparency and corruption in environmental governance. In Pakistan, corruption has been cited as a major obstacle to optimal climate policy, thus sabotaging the regulation of the environment

and management of resources (Transparency International, 2023). The Quranic concept of trust as a moral duty (Quran 33:72) to repackage failures in governance not only as failures of administrative efficiency but also as an failure of moral duty, and enhances anti-corruption efforts by appealing to the moral sense in addition to imposing legal penalties (Abdelzaher et al., 2019). Moreover, the values of moderation (i'tidal) and waste ban (israf) also present a restraint as a self-governing policy. The current systems of economic planning tend to focus on growth measures and pay little attention to ecological benchmarks. Quranic ethics argue with this paradigm by making restraint the norm and excess a drawback of an individual (Quran 7:31). Moderation can ensure sustainable consumption and efficiency in the consumption of resources without the exclusion of economic development.

7.3 Religious institutions have a role to play in this matter

The sphere of religious institutions in Pakistan holds the key role in the sociocultural context and has significant opportunities of becoming the ethical enhancers of climate governance. Mosques, religious seminaries and community based religious networks access parts of the society which are often not reachable via the formal policy channels. Empirical studies in the field of public health have shown that faith-like institutions can be instrumental in terms of influence on behaviour, development of trust and propagation of normative messages (Clarke and Jennings, 2008). Experience during vaccination drives and disaster response exercises show how a religious leader can help to resist misinformation, by engaging with religious leaders well, and encouraging socially responsible behaviour. Equally, environmental ethics expressed in sermons (khutbahs), school curriculums, and community activities, can be used to strengthen stewardship, moderation, and responsibility values without the politicization of religion. Researchers stress that this should be an ethically oriented and not a doctrinally coercive involvement to maintain inclusiveness and pluralism (Khalid, 2019). Notably, religious institutions should be supportive and not dictatorial. Their work is in the area of ethical persuasion, moral education, and value formation- but not in policy making or enforcement. Religious institutions can maximize the compliance and change of behaviour in the long term when they are congruent with both the state policy and scientific messaging.

7.4 Tension Development -Ecology

There is a longstanding debate in the policy debate in Pakistan between the economic growth and the ecological sustainability. The strategies of development tend to focus on industrial growth, development of infrastructure, and urbanisation often at the cost of the integrity of the environment. This trade-off can be seen as the embodiment of the parsimonious understanding of development that identifies progress with material growth. The mizan as understood in the Quran offers an ethical perspective on how to deal with this tension. Balance does not imply stagnation or anti-development feeling, it requires proportionality, restraint and long view perspective. The Quran cautions against transgression balance (طغیان) (Quran 55:8), which is similar to modern sustainability theories that attract a planetary boundaries development (Rockström et al., 2009). The application of mizan to development planning promotes the development of policies that combine economic goals with the ecological boundaries, social justice, and concerns about the future generation. This moralist approach justifies the revision of the concept of development as

qualitative enhancement (instead of quantitative wastefulness). A way forward in reframing climate governance in Pakistan is to shift the focus on technocratic solutions to ethically-based ones, which focus on behaviour, accountability and justice. Ecological ethics of the Quran present an effective normative approach that can address the policy blind spots and increase institutional integrity to align development with sustainability. When implemented as supplementary moral prism instead of a normative legal framework, these principles may be empowering to climate regulation in terms of cultural appeal as well as practical efficiency.

8. Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

8.1 Key Findings

This paper has attempted to analyze the climate governance in Pakistan in terms of Quranic ecological ethics in order to fill the ethical gap that continues to exist regardless of the existence of formal climate policies in Pakistan. It has been shown that Quranic ethics can offer a consistent moral system that can supplement technocratic methods of sustainability. The basic ideologies like khilafah (stewardship), mizan (balance), amanah (trust), israf (prohibition of waste), adl (justice), and rahmah (mercy) are elements that define a comprehensive ecological ethic that centers on responsibility, restraint, accountability and mercy. The results also indicate that there is a high conceptual correspondence between ethics in Quran and international standards of climate regulation, especially those reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). Instead of providing an alternative or oppositional model, Islamic ecological ethics strengthen the principles of sustainability by entrenching them in culturally evocative moral values. This congruence increases the normative legitimacy of action regarding climate in Pakistan and encompasses behavioural and moral aspects that are not yet developed and integrated into current regulations (Khalid, 2019; Kamali, 2016). Notably, the paper does not use deterministic or punitive theological understanding of environmental disasters. Rather, it portrays climate issues as the result of man-made action, state malfunction and moral negligence, which would be in accordance with the Quran and modern environmental studies (Saniotis, 2012; Ostrom, 2010).

8.2 Policy Recommendations

The study will recommend the following policy-relevant results based on these findings:

Moralizing the National Climate Policy

The policies on climate of Pakistan must use an explicit language that can only be described as a language of responsibility, moderation, and intergenerational justice. By incorporating both moral standards and technical goals, it is possible to achieve policy coherence and enrich the level of public involvement without interfering with scientific principles (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Public Enlightenment by means of Religious Bodies

Ethical environmental awareness should be employed as mosques, religious schools of education, and community networks. Sustainability values, including stewardship and moderation, can be reinforced through carefully framed sermons, educational materials, and community programs that can be based on the experience of the successful interventions in the area of public health (Clarke and Jennings, 2008).

Moral Trust Moral Accountability Environment

Accountability must be a key priority in environmental governance mechanisms because it is both a legal and a moral responsibility. By positioning transparency, anti-corruption and compliance with the rules as manifestations of amanah, institutional integrity and trust in the authorities can be enhanced (Abdelzaher et al., 2019).

Education Reform Inclusion of Islamic environmental Ethics

In Islamic ethics, both Islamic and scientific materials in school and university education should be included in the environmental education curriculum. This can bring about ethical awareness, critical thinking and behaviour change that can be long lasting especially in religiously based societies (Foltz, 2006). This does not mean that these suggestions are propagating the overthrow of the current governance structures or scientific knowledge. Instead, they advocate ethical integration as a supportive measure that can improve the efficacy and suitability of climate governance.

8.3 Academic Contribution

This article enhances the expanding area of Islamic environmental ethics by shifting the conversation from theoretical theological contemplation to practical governance evaluation. The study connects Qur'ānic ethics with Pakistan's climate issues and international sustainability frameworks, addressing an important gap between religious morals and public policy. It provides a culturally rooted sustainability framework that is significant at a local level while being compatible on a global scale, enhancing interdisciplinary research in religion, ethics, and climate governance.

8.4 Upcoming Research

Future studies need to empirically evaluate how religious-ethical interventions affect environmental behavior and adherence to policies in Pakistan. Comparative research in Muslim-majority nations could examine how Islamic ecological ethics engage with various political, institutional, and cultural environments. This research would enhance comprehension of the functional importance of ethics in promoting sustainable development and climate resilience.

No Conflict of Interest

The author(s) affirm that the research, analysis, and conclusions detailed in this article were carried out independently, free from any commercial or financial relationships that might be seen as a potential conflict of interest.

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