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Critical Analysis of Environmental Legislations in Pakistan: Exploring the Inclusion and Application of Environmental Ethics and Islamic Injunctions

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Abstract



The summary of the environment is air, soil and water which contains the ingredients of biology, chemistry, physics and botany in it. The term environment is used for all the objects which are present in the universe. The creator has created this universe with perfect balance which reflects through the punctuality and dutifulness of the created objects like the sun, moon, stars, sky, and earth. Human beings have been given the highest rank among the creatures, and thus he made the custodians more accountable for the protection of the environment. In the present age, we observe the natural and pure environment has been spoiled by the environmental pollution which has dangerous causes in its background; it has become a more serious barrier to the promotion of a clean and green atmosphere. This research explores the extent to which current environmental laws in Pakistan incorporate principles of environmental ethics in legislations, on sustainability and related Islamic injunctions. By analyzing Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997, and recent constitutional mendments, the paper investigates how these laws integrate environmental ethics, which emphasize the moral responsibility of humans to protect and preserve nature for future generations. The paper further explores the Pakistan



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environmental laws and Islamic injunctions, to bring out the way how Islamic teachings on environmental stewardship are incorporated into the country's legal framework. It analyzes how these principles in practice play out in real life and provides insight into whether the present laws are adequately working to promote sustainable development, ecological balance, and the duty to protect the environment. Findings taken from the above discussion suggest that although lot of success has been achieved in regarding legality and ethics, still need improvements for the better sustainability and ethical orientation of environmental governance in Pakistan.

Keywords:

Environment, Islamic Injunctions, Law, Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Sustainability.

1. Introduction

Life on our planet is closely interlinked with the environment. The Earth, which is inhabited by about 8.7 million plant and animal species, supplies vital resources like food, air, and water, which guarantee the existence of all living things. The word "environment" comes from the French preposition *environ*, which means "around," and includes all naturally occurring living and non-living organisms and their interactions with climate, weather, and natural resources. It is the basis for all ecological and human processes, and thus its conservation is an absolute necessity for maintaining life.

Over the past few decades, the widespread growth of industrialization, urbanization, and technological innovations has dramatically transformed the environmental setting. The prominent worldwide issues like pollution, deforestation, water shortages, loss of biodiversity, and climate change have become more intensified, posing a threat to ecosystems and interfering with the natural balance. Not only do these issues jeopardize the environment but also human health, food security, and sustainable development are facing critical threats. In Pakistan, the impacts of environmental degradation have also become apparent, with the growing temperature, air and water pollution, and deforestation making socio-economic vulnerabilities worse.

Among all of God's creatures, human beings are special, blessed with intellect, moral sense, and the capacity to mold the world around them. According to Islamic thought, human beings have the status of vicegerents (*Khilāfah*) on the planet, tasked with preserving balance (*mīzān*) and being guardians (*amānah*) of natural resources. Islam's teachings focus on the preservation of the environment, calling humankind to utilize resources wisely and avoid harming the Earth. The Quran and Hadith have

many instances of the protection of nature, the prohibition of wastefulness (*isrāf*), and the encouragement of sustainable living.

While environmental legislation and regulation exist, enforcement is still a major problem in Pakistan. The policy-practice gap is frequently compounded by poor governance, ignorance, and the lack of ethical integration into legislation. While environmental ethics have been debated topics in Western philosophy since long ago—ranging from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism—the Islamic environmental ethics offer a unique moral and legal basis for sustainable environmental policy-making. The incorporation of such ethical frameworks within environmental policy can improve regulatory performance, as well as foster greater public compliance.

This research paper discusses the interconnection between environmental ethics and legislative policies in Pakistan and how Islamic principles can influence sustainable environmental governance. Through the analysis of secular and Islamic views of environmental ethics, the study will determine the main challenges in Pakistan's environmental policies and suggest measures for enhancing their ethical and legal bases. It is important to understand the interplay between religion, ethics, and law to formulate holistic policies that not only respond to ecological issues but also resonate with society and culture.

2. Literature Review

The intersection of environmental legislation, ethics, and Islamic injunctions has been a growing field of study, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan. Environmental ethics, particularly in terms of Islamic teachings and legal frameworks, provide an avenue to seek solutions for ecological issues. The perception and application of such principles are crucial for evaluating Pakistan's environmental laws, which serve as a potential platform for integrating ethical and religious dimensions into sustainable environmental governance.

According to Palmer et al. (2014), environmental ethics emerged as a crucial philosophical subfield in the 1970s and has since evolved into a flourishing area of research. Their study reviews both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives on environmental value and examines whether environmental ethics should prioritize best consequences, principles and rights, or environmental virtues. Additionally, they discuss critical traditions such as ecofeminism and environmental pragmatism, which provide alternative frameworks for understanding environmental responsibility. Palmer et al. also emphasize the complex ethical dilemmas posed by anthropogenic climate change, highlighting the need for diverse ethical approaches, including those rooted in religious and cultural traditions. ¹

The study by Khan and Iqbal in 2021 reveals that policymakers and environmental activists realize the value of Islamic environment norms but believe a more structural

integration is needed in national as well as local policies. 2

In his study, Bourdeau (2004) asserts that human behavior and environmental policies should be guided by a code of ethics based on fundamental principles and practical considerations. The relationship between humans and nature has always been complex, with nature being alternately viewed as both a provider and an adversary. While the Western traditions were thinking of human beings as being separate from nature and dominion over nature, it developed into the model of stewardship. The Eastern philosophies, on the other hand, consider human beings as a part of nature. From anthropocentrism to biocentrism, there exists a great range of philosophic views about the environment. Bourdeau advocates for a pragmatic approach where the basic needs of humans are met, and ecosystems and other species' needs take precedence over secondary human desires. He urges support for the Earth Charter, which embodies balanced respect for nature and future generations. 3

Purdy (2013) discusses the historical separation between environmental law and environmental ethics, which initially seemed destined to evolve together. Forty years ago, both legal and philosophical experts anticipated a close relationship between the two fields. However, environmental law and ethics diverged significantly. Purdy diagnoses this divide and advocates for their reconciliation. He holds that environmental law has always changed with the shifting public values and cannot advance without ethical thought. Law and ethics are especially connected when the issues are complex, such as food systems, animal rights, and climate change. Purdy addresses these issues using the perspectives of philosophy, history, and psychology, proposing legal reforms to spur ethical growth in these emerging fields. 4

The basic Islamic principles of stewardship (khilāfah), trust (amānah), and balance (mīzān) are highlighted by R. Rizk(2004) as forming the sustainability agenda. The research demonstrates the applicability of Islamic environmental ethics in practical governance. Rizk's work underpins the critical role that Islamic teachings play in fostering ethical environmental practices and provides a theoretical basis for the integration of such values into legislative frameworks. 5

As noted by Katohar et al. (2023), climate change has posed an existential threat to third-world countries like Pakistan. This study tries to show how the Islamic ethical principles concerning the preservation of the environment and human dignity may come into play to cushion the adverse effects brought about by climate change. This paper will feature the contributions of Islamic scholars and institutions toward environmental awareness and thus make a case for the integration of these ethical codes into Pakistan's climate change mitigation and adaptation policies. The study emphasizes that Islamic ethics may hold the promise of globally relevant solutions while moving solutions addressed to Pakistan's historical challenges forward. 6

Islamic Law and Environmental Ethics delves into the jurisprudential dimensions

(*usul al-fiqh*) that mobilize practical reform within Islamic environmental ethics, according to (Jenkins, 2005). Through governing religious adaptations in terms of divine principles, Islamic jurisprudence offers mechanisms for normative change. Jenkins argues that these principles operate as diagnostic tools for making judgments regarding the use of Islamic resources in environmental governance. In reality, this suggests that Islamic environmental ethics are by no means too rigid and also allow for adaptive application in various legislative and policy frameworks. 7

Study of (Hanif, 2024) bridges classical Islamic teachings and contemporary challenges posed by industrialization and technological advancements. Hanif argues that principles like *khilāfah*, *amānah*, and *mīzān* offer a balanced approach to integrating modern progress with ecological stewardship. The paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Quranic injunctions and Prophetic traditions, highlighting their application in fostering sustainability. Furthermore, Hanif elaborates on the modern-day interpretations and case studies from Muslim-majority countries to present the actual practice of Islamic environmental ethics. Such understandings will help create a guideline for incorporating ethical and religious elements into Pakistan's environmental law in order to solve contemporary issues. 8

In his study 2017, Siddiqui proposes that though some of the environment policies in Pakistan are articulated under Islamic ideals, they are superficial and not perceived as workable measures. 9

Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of Islamic environmental ethics by addressing climate change and environmental challenges in Pakistan. It will help Pakistan integrate ethical principles with legislative and policy frameworks to develop sustainable solutions to its environmental crises. Moreover, Islamic scholars and their institutions play a crucial role in furthering awareness and their implementation, presenting a holistic approach for mitigation and adaptation through climate change.

3. Environmental Challenges and Islamic Ethical Perspectives

The environment is the setting or circumstances in which a person, animal, or plant exists. The sun, moon, sea, earth, forest, and desert provide a natural environment for humans and other living things to thrive. In a closer view, a person's behavior and interactions with their surroundings shape their environment. Living in a filthy, congested, and toxic environment can cause physical, psychological, and emotional health issues. A successful man creates a happy and healthy environment by their actions and mindset. ¹⁰

Pakistan, a country that is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, is facing enormous environmental difficulties such as floods, droughts, air and water pollution, and soil degradation. These concerns affect not only the natural environment, but also the livelihoods and well-being of millions.

Addressing these difficulties necessitates a holistic approach that combines scientific understanding with ethical and cultural principles. Pakistan's experience with climate change highlights the importance of incorporating Islamic environmental ethics into policies and practices. According to studies, while there is an increasing acknowledgement of the importance of incorporating ethical frameworks into environmental management, the practical application of Islamic principles remains limited.¹¹

As global temperatures increase, catastrophic weather events grow more common, and biodiversity disappears, it's crucial to study ethical frameworks and cultural traditions that can help find sustainable solutions. In this research, Islamic environmental ethics provide a unique perspective that emphasizes humans' moral responsibility to care for the Earth.¹²

3.1 Islam and Environmental Protection

Islamic teachings, including the Quran and Hadith, offer ethical guidance for environmental care. Tawhid (God's Oneness), Khalifah (stewardship), and Amanah (trust) emphasise the interdependence of all creation. Humans are responsible for protecting and preserving nature.

Islam holds that since the environment is God's creation, protecting it means upholding its principles as a manifestation of the Creator.¹³

In Islam, the theological idea that God created the interacting system and that all of its components should be preserved and fostered is supported by the symbolic scenario of the interaction between the animals and the environment in their service to one another.¹⁴

In Islam, the theological idea that God created the interacting system and that all of its components should be preserved and fostered is supported by the symbolic scenario of the interaction between the animals and the environment in their service to one another.

The religion of Islam has given special instructions for the survival and protection of all resources, so it presents moderation in all matters as an important principle. It prohibits excess and unnecessary spending.

يَبَىٰ أَدَمَ خُدُّوْا زَيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ 15

From the medical point of view, this verse is also very useful. In the matter of food and drink, moderation should be kept in mind so that people remain physically healthy.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW also commanded to avoid extravagance as he said:

وعن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: كل ما شئت والبس ما شئت ما اخطاتك اثنتان: سرف ومخيلة 16

The religion of Islam does not justify corruption in any way, if anything spread

harm instead of profit and affects the balance of the environment, Allah does not like it. Allah swt mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ 17

Allah SWT invites us to consider the earth, air, water, living and dead creatures, trees, stones, mountains, seas and other wonders in the world in order to identify and understand His knowledge, power and Lordship, he has the Universe in balance Allah said:

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَيْسَ أَتَقَنَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ 18

The above mentioned verses show that Allah SWT has created this universe with balance and stability, he has kept all resources for the living creature to get benefit but he warned not to exploit and make corruption to affect the moderation of universe. He has clearly mentioned that such person who put the lives of living creatures in danger or makes distraction is in the category of disliked mankind.

Islam has encouraged the preservation of natural resources and it guide us how to keep the environment clean and green. It has preferred purity in general.

Cleanliness:

Islam has taught us to adopt cleanliness in every walk of life as the Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ 19

We observe that Islam has set ethical and social values to keep the environment free from all types of corruption. Likewise it directed to bury the dead bodies so the atmosphere may remain unpolluted.

We are given the commandment to take a side while sneezing, the purpose behind this to stop spreading the virus and keep the mankind safe. Islam forbids spitting everywhere. And wherever spitting is done, it should be covered with mud.

Similarly it forbids urinating and defecating in the streets so as not to pollute the environment-

As we mentioned earlier that Humans are given the status of viceroy and custodian of this universe; he is being guided in two ways about the globe protection. One, there are few cautions which are asked the humans to be conscious about those and some are the instructions which encourage them to make the environment sustainable.

Significance of Water:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ. 20

The above verse indicates that Water is life, all living things depend on it. Islam has directed to preserve this asset which has life for all living things, and it must not be wasted and spoiled.

The Holy Prophet SAW said:

"لَا يَبُولَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي الْمَاءِ الدَّائِمِ الَّذِي لَا يَجْرِي، ثُمَّ يَغْتَسِلُ فِيهِ" 21

He said that none of you should urinate in stagnant water that does not flow. Then

they started bathing in it.

Usage of water should be in minimum quantity which Sunnah has fixed:

ان النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَغْتَسِلُ، أَوْ كَانَ يَغْتَسِلُ، بِالصَّاعِ إِلَى خَمْسَةِ أَمْدَادٍ، وَيَتَوَضَّأُ بِالْمُدِّ.

The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, washes, or he used to wash, with a saa' to five mudds, and he performs ablution with a mudd.

It clarifies that even in performing the religious rituals, water should not be wasted. 22

Islam cares about the resources of water, and according to Hadith the best charity for the loved ones is to arrange water:

قلت: يا رسول الله إن أمي ماتت أفاتصدق عنها، قال: "نعم"، قلت: فاي الصدقة أفضل؟، قال: "سقي

الماء." 23

I said: Messenger of Allah! My mother has passed away; can I donate on her behalf? He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Yes." I asked: "Which charity is better?" He said: "Give water (to the thirsty)."

Watering to plants, animals, birds and all living things is charity and rewarding. Actually culture of creating water resources is being promoted here as universe is dead without water.

In 21st century as global warming is become a serious issue and it has put the living things lives in danger, one of a serious problems its creating is the scarcity of water, Islam has focused this issue fourteen hundred and half years ago and instructed its cure:

ذكر الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم أموراً سبعة يجري ثوابها على الإنسان في قبره بعد ما يموت، وذلك فيما رواه البزار في مسنده من حديث أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: « سبع يجري للعبد أجرهن وهو في قبره بعد موته: من علّم علماً، أو أجرى نهراً، أو حفر بئراً، أو غرس نخلاً، أو بنى مسجداً، أو ورث مصحفاً، أو ترك ولداً يستغفر له بعد موته 24

The Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, mentioned seven things for which a person will be rewarded in his grave after he dies, and that is according to what Al-Bazzar narrated in his Musnad from the hadith of Anas bin Malik, may God be pleased with him, that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Seven rewards will be given to the servant while he is in his grave after His death: Whoever taught knowledge, or ran a river, or dug a well, or planted palm trees, or built a mosque, or inherited a Qur'an, or left behind a son who seeks forgiveness for him after his death.

Besides these instructions and opportunities, its also to be focused that humankind is accountable about all the blessings, they enjoy and get benefit as Allah SWT says:

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ 25

“Then you will on that day be asked about bliss”.

Importance of Plantation in Islam:

Various verses of Holy Quran encourage us to grow plants and trees:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا 26

Allah swt invites the attention of mankind towards water as it's an asset to get benefit and to be reserved and he said about plants simultaneously, the purpose is to inject the sense of plantation on earth.

Further its encouraged by the last prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَوَانَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

قَالَ: «مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ غَرَسَ غَرْسًا، فَأَكَلَ مِنْهُ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ دَابَّةٌ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ 27

Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A Muslim who plants a fruit-bearing tree and then humans and animals eat from it, it becomes a charity for the one who planted it.”

Wishes and exercises of plantation in Paradise will continue:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سِنَانٍ حَدَّثَنَا فُلَيْحٌ حَدَّثَنَا هِلَالٌ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "كَانَ يَوْمًا يُحَدِّثُ وَعِنْدَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَادِيَةِ أَنْ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ اسْتَأْذَنَ رَبَّهُ فِي الرَّزْعِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: أَوْلَسْتَ فِيمَا سُئِلْتَ؟ قَالَ: بَلَى، وَلَكِنِّي أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَرْزَعَ، فَاسْرِعْ وَبَدِرْ، فَتَبَادَرَ الطَّرْفَ نَبَاتُهُ وَاسْتَوَاؤُهُ وَاسْتِحْصَادُهُ وَتَكْوِينُهُ أَمْثَالَ الْجِبَالِ، فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: دُونَكَ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُشْبِعُكَ شَيْءٌ، فَقَالَ الْأَعْرَابِيُّ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، لَا تَجِدُ هَذَا إِلَّا فَرَشِيًّا أَوْ أَنْصَارِيًّا، فَإِنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ زَرْعٍ، فَأَمَّا نَحْنُ فَلَسْنَا بِأَصْحَابِ زَرْعٍ، فَضَجَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ 28

“One day the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, was talking to a man from the people of the desert that a man from the people of Paradise had sought permission from his Lord to plant crops He said to him: Aren't you able to do whatever you want? He said: Yes, but I like to sow. So he hurried and sowed, and the plants quickly grew, grew, and were harvested. And he made it into shapes like mountains, Then God Almighty says: Spare yourself, O son of Adam, for nothing will satisfy you. The Bedouins said: O Messenger of God, you will not find this except a Quraysh or Ansar Oh, they are the owners of crops, but we are not the owners of crops. The Messenger of God laughed.”

This expresses that plantation is an important part of human nature. Moreover, the writer has given the name of Mzra'ah to this chapter in his book which shows that he prefers plantations due to its benefits for the living things.

Islam not only preferred to have more plants but put it in the category of charity to encourage the humans as the underline hadith says:

حدثنا ابو الوليد، حدثنا ابو عوانة، عن قتادة، عن انس بن مالك، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "ما من مسلم غرس غرسا فاكل منه إنسان او دابة إلا كان له به صدق" 29

On the authority of Anas ibn Malik, on the authority of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, who said: "There is no Muslim who plants a tree and a person or animal eats from it except that it is due to him as charity.

4. Analysis of Inclusion of Environmental Ethics in Legislation

Environmental ethics is incorporated in the provisions of the Environmental Protection Council under § 4 of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act of 1997. Coordination and supervision of environmental protection under § 4 focus on ethical obligations for conserving the environment for future generations. Approval of national environmental policies and integration of principles of sustainable development reflects strong ethical responsibility in balancing development with environmental preservation.

Subsection (1)(d) concerns the protection of species, habitats, biodiversity, and non-renewable natural resources, reflecting ethical stewardship and intergenerational equity, principles well aligned with Islamic teachings. Protecting biodiversity resonates with the Islamic principle of tawhid (unity), as emphasized in this verse:

"The biodiversity of the planet cannot be harmed by humans, and Allah threatens to 'reduce him (to the status of) the lowest of the low' if he does not abide by the rules that restrict his rights as a human being." 30

The said provision also recognizes that creation is something interconnected and, thus directed not to cause environmental degradation as *fasad* (corruption) which is emphasized in the following verse :

According to Allah, "Destruction and corruption arise on land and in the sea as a result of the evil that men have done, so that He may make them taste a portion of what they have done, so that they may return." 31

4.1 Islamic Environmental Ethics and the Prohibition of Hazardous Waste

Section 13 of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997, prohibits the import of hazardous waste into Pakistan's territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zone, and historic waters. This provision aligns with ethical obligations to prevent environmental harm, safeguard public health, and uphold the integrity of natural ecosystems.

Islamic teachings emphasize cleanliness, the protection of public spaces, and the responsible use of natural resources. The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) equated the

act of removing harmful materials from public pathways with an essential component of faith, as narrated in Sahih Muslim

"الإيمان بضع وسبعون أفضلها قول لا إله إلا الله وأدناها إمالة العظم عن الطريق الحياء شعبة من الإيمان-

"Faith has over seventy branches, the highest of which is to declare that there is no god but Allah, and the lowest is to remove harmful objects from the road. Modesty is also a branch of faith."

This hadith underscores the ethical responsibility to ensure that public spaces remain free from pollutants and hazards. The prohibition on importing hazardous waste reflects this principle, as such waste can contaminate land and water, endangering human and environmental health.

Furthermore, the Prophet (s.a.w.) emphasized the importance of a hygienic lifestyle, comparing the removal of waste to good health. This highlights the ethical obligation to prevent pollution, promote sustainable waste management, and discourage exploitative practices, such as wealthier nations exporting hazardous materials to developing countries.

4.2 Legal Perspective on Clean Air and Environmental Responsibility

Air pollution is a major environmental concern, and Section 15 of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997, addresses this issue by regulating motor vehicle emissions. It prohibits the operation of any vehicle that emits air pollutants or noise beyond the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS). To ensure compliance, the Federal Agency has the authority to mandate pollution control devices, enforce the use of cleaner fuels, and require regular vehicle maintenance and testing. Vehicles failing to meet these regulations cannot be legally operated until corrective measures are taken.

Islam emphasizes the protection of nature, including air quality, as part of ethical and religious duties. Trees and plants play a vital role in purifying the air, and their preservation is strongly encouraged in Islam. The Qur'an highlights the connection between a healthy environment and human well-being

"وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبَثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا" 32

"And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth (abundantly) by the permission of its Lord, and as for that which is inferior, its herbage comes forth but scantily. Thus do We repeat the signs for a people who give thanks."

This verse implies that a clean and fertile environment leads to healthy growth, not only for plants but also for human societies. Conversely, a polluted environment hinders development and prosperity. The regulation of vehicle emissions aligns with this principle by ensuring that air remains clean for the well-being of all.

Furthermore, the Qur'an describes the sky as a protective layer, safeguarding life on Earth

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا": 33

"And We have made the heaven a guarded canopy."

This verse reflects the importance of maintaining the atmospheric balance, which excessive pollution disrupts. By enforcing emission controls on motor vehicles, Pakistan's environmental laws align with Islamic teachings on environmental stewardship and the collective responsibility to preserve the air as a blessing for all.

4.3 Integrating Environmental Ethics with Legal Frameworks

The regulation of motor vehicle emissions in Pakistan is not just a legal obligation but also an ethical commitment to public health and environmental sustainability. By ensuring cleaner air, these laws support both modern environmental science and the Islamic principle of protecting nature. Implementing stricter pollution controls, promoting eco-friendly fuels, and encouraging sustainable urban transport are necessary steps toward fulfilling this responsibility.

Through legal enforcement and ethical awareness, Pakistan can work toward a cleaner environment, ensuring that future generations inherit a world where air quality is protected, public health is prioritized, and natural resources are respected in accordance with both scientific principles and religious values.

Environmental laws in Pakistan impose strict penalties on those who violate regulations designed to protect the environment. Section 17 of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997, outlines punishments for contravening various provisions, such as pollution control measures and hazardous waste disposal. Those who violate these provisions face fines up to one million rupees, with additional daily fines for continuing violations. If an offender gains monetary benefits from such violations, the Environmental Tribunal can impose further fines proportional to the financial gain. These penalties are designed to deter environmental destruction and ensure compliance with regulations aimed at protecting public health and natural resources.

4.4 The Quranic Perspective on Environmental Corruption and Consequences

Similar to the legal penalties for environmental violations, the Qur'an warns against spreading corruption on Earth, including the destruction of natural resources. The Quranic concept of corruption (*fasad*) encompasses not only moral and social decay but also the destruction of the environment through human actions.

"Do not spread corruption on the earth." 34

This verse highlights the responsibility of humans to maintain the balance of nature rather than exploit it irresponsibly. The Qur'an further explains that environmental degradation is often a consequence of human misconduct:

"Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned, so that He may let them taste some of what they have done, that perhaps they will return to righteousness." 35

This verse mirrors the principle of legal accountability, where penalties are imposed for violations. Just as environmental laws enforce consequences for polluters, the Qur'an warns that destruction of natural resources results in divine consequences, affecting both individuals and societies. The idea of "tasting the consequences of one's actions" aligns with the concept of legal retribution, where polluters are fined in proportion to the damage they cause.

The Qur'an also links environmental purity to prosperity:

"A clean and fertile land grows its plants by the command of God, but in impure and salty lands, nothing but a small and worthless plant grows." 36

This verse suggests that polluted land yields poor results, just as societies that neglect environmental ethics face long-term harm. The consequences of pollution—whether in the form of deforestation, water contamination, or air pollution—reflect the Quranic warning that human negligence leads to suffering.

The Shariah (Islamic law) places environmental protection within the framework of protecting life (hifz al-nafs), one of its core objectives. Natural pollution, depletion of resources, and ecological destruction are direct threats to human survival. Thus, just as the law imposes penalties for harming the environment, Islamic teachings emphasize that the consequences of such harm—whether legal, social, or divine—are inevitable.

4.5 Environmental Ethics in the Constitution of Pakistan

According to the Constitution of Pakistan (1973), the recent Twenty-sixth Amendment Act, 2024, added to Article 9 of the Constitution of Pakistan has widened the framework of fundamental rights by positively enunciating environmental rights. Earlier, Article 9 had read, "No person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law." But now, with the amendment, a new provision, Article 9A, has been added, saying that "Every person shall be entitled to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment." The amendment supports the constitutional mandate for safeguarding the environment and secures the people's legal right to insist upon a pollution-free and ecologically sound environment. It follows the international environmental scenario and consolidates Pakistan's promise towards sustainable development and environmental justice.

This amendment is deeply rooted in environmental ethics, which stress that human beings have a moral obligation to respect and conserve nature. 37

5. Conclusion

The environmental legislations in Pakistan have evolved over time, incorporating

various international frameworks and domestic policies to address environmental challenges. However, there are significant gaps in implementation, enforcement, and public participation. The inclusion of sustainable development principles is evident, but their practical application remains weak due to lack of political will, institutional inefficiencies, and limited public awareness. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, improving enforcement mechanisms, and fostering collaboration among government agencies, civil society, and the private sector are crucial for effective environmental governance. Future policies should focus on enhancing accountability, ensuring compliance, and integrating environmental considerations into national development plans to achieve long-term sustainability.

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