

The Impact of the 18th Constitutional Amendment on the Distribution and Management of Natural Resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The 18th Constitutional Amendment, enacted in Pakistan in April 2010, significantly expanded provincial authority by transferring a range of responsibilities from the federal government to the provinces, including the management of natural resources. This constitutional reform was intended to enable provinces such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to exercise greater control over their mineral wealth, forests, water resources, and energy sector. This study examines the extent to which the 18th Amendment has influenced the distribution, governance, and management of natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study uses a qualitative research design based on focus group discussions and interviews with government officials, civil society representatives, and business stakeholders, along with secondary sources such as policy documents and academic literature. The data was examined using thematic analysis. The findings show that the Amendment created a real shift towards decentralization and gave the province more say in resource decisions. At the same time, problems remain, such as weak institutional capacity, slow implementation, corruption, and delays in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. The study also finds that local communities are still not fully included in decisions about resources that affect their lives. The paper ends with practical recommendations, including capacity building, stronger transparency measures, timely revision of the NFC Award, and wider participation of local stakeholders. These findings can help policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners understand how devolution is working in practice and what still needs to be fixed.

Keywords: 18th Constitutional Amendment; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; natural resource management; devolution; fiscal federalism; NFC Award; Pakistan

BACKGROUND

Pakistan is a federation made up of provinces that differ widely in the natural resources they hold. For much of the country's history, decisions about minerals, forests, water, and energy were controlled mainly by the federal government, leaving provinces with limited say over resources found within their own boundaries. This centralized model often left provinces feeling that they were not getting a fair share of the wealth generated from their own land.

In 2010, Pakistan's Parliament passed the 18th Constitutional Amendment, one of the biggest constitutional reforms in the country's history. The Amendment abolished the Concurrent Legislative List, which had let the federal government legislate on 47 subjects that overlapped with provincial matters, and transferred most of these subjects to the provinces (Adeney, 2012). It also strengthened fiscal federalism by increasing the share of resources provinces receive from the federal divisible pool through the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award (Khan, 2021). For a province like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is rich in

hydropower potential, minerals such as chromite, marble, and gemstones, forests, and natural gas, this shift carried major implications for how resources would be distributed, managed, and taxed going forward.

Problem Statement

Although the 18th Amendment promised more provincial control over natural resources, there has been little systematic study of what changed on the ground in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Existing research tends to focus on the fiscal and administrative side of devolution, such as the NFC Award formula, while paying less attention to how resource distribution and management practices have shifted in the province, and what challenges remain. This paper responds to that gap by examining, in a focused way, how natural resource governance in KP has changed since 2010 and what opportunities and problems this change has created.

Research Questions

This study is guided by two research questions:

1. How were natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa distributed and managed before and after the 18th Amendment?
2. How has the 18th Amendment affected the allocation and management of natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

Research Objectives

1. To understand how natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were distributed and managed before and after the 18th Amendment.
2. To examine the impact of the 18th Amendment on natural resource allocation and management in the province.

Significance of the Study

This research is useful for several audiences. For policymakers, it highlights the practical gaps between what the Amendment promises and what has been delivered, information that can guide future reforms. For scholars, it adds field-based, qualitative evidence to a body of literature that has so far leaned heavily on legal and fiscal analysis. For local communities and civil society groups, the study gives a voice to concerns about participation and transparency in resource decisions that directly affect their livelihoods. More broadly, because Pakistan is not the only country experimenting with decentralized natural resource governance, the lessons from KP's experience, particularly around the gap between legal authority and institutional capacity, may also be relevant to other federations undergoing similar transitions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 18th Amendment and Natural Resource Governance

The 18th Amendment is widely described in the literature as a turning point for federalism in Pakistan. Adeney (2012) explains that the Amendment removed the Concurrent List and reassigned most of its subjects to the provinces, which she describes as a genuine, though incomplete, step toward inclusive federalism. Myerson (2014) argues that giving provinces stronger constitutional footing was necessary to hold together a diverse federation like Pakistan. Bhatti (2012) notes that the Amendment was meant to

improve social sector governance broadly, including how natural resources are handled at the provincial level.

Natural resources are not spread evenly across Pakistan's provinces. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa holds significant hydropower potential along the Swat, Kunhar, Chitral, and Indus rivers, along with mineral deposits such as chromite, copper, marble, and gemstones (Malik, 2017; Naveed, 2018). After the Amendment, KP created or restructured several institutions to manage these resources, including the KP Oil and Gas Company, the Directorate of Environment, and updated legislation such as the KP Mines and Minerals Development Act, 2016, and the KP Climate Change Policy, 2018 (Ali, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the principle of subsidiarity, the idea that decisions should be made at the lowest practical level of government, closest to the people affected by them (Kataria, 2008). Fiscal federalism theory is also relevant, since it explains why decentralizing revenue and expenditure decisions can improve efficiency and accountability, provided that sub-national governments have the capacity to manage these responsibilities (Oates, 2004; Faguet, 2014). Together, these frameworks help explain both the promise of the 18th Amendment and the practical difficulties of putting it into practice.

Resource Distribution and Management: Pakistan and KP

Several studies have examined how devolution has played out across different sectors in Pakistan. Nishtar et al. (2013) found that devolution reshaped the health sector but left many implementation gaps at the provincial level. Rana (2020) reviewed Pakistan's overall decentralization experience and found it a mixed picture: greater autonomy on paper, but uneven capacity to use it in practice. Studies specific to KP describe both progress and persistent problems, including delays in the NFC Award (Pasha, 2011), corruption risks in resource management (Kolstad & Søreide, 2009), and limited inclusion of local communities and civil society in decision-making (Ullah, 2018).

Research Gap

Much of the existing literature on the 18th Amendment concentrates on legal and fiscal questions, with far less attention paid to the lived experience of stakeholders directly involved in managing KP's natural resources. There is also little qualitative, field-based evidence capturing how government officials, civil society actors, and business representatives themselves perceive the changes brought by the Amendment. This study addresses that gap by using primary, stakeholder-based data to examine resource distribution and management in KP after devolution.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study follows a qualitative research design. Qualitative methods were chosen because the research questions are about people's experiences, perceptions, and judgments regarding a complex policy change, which are better captured through open discussion than through numerical measurement alone.

Population and Sampling

The research population included provincial government officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and business stakeholders involved in natural resource management in KP. A purposive

sampling technique was used to select participants who had direct knowledge and experience of resource governance. Three focus groups were formed, each with six to twelve participants drawn from political, departmental, and technical backgrounds.

Data Collection

Primary data came from focus group discussions and interviews, each lasting 60 to 90 minutes. Sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed in full to preserve the participants' exact views. Secondary data included policy papers, government reports, and academic studies on the 18th Amendment and natural resource governance in KP, which helped place the primary findings in a broader context.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, an approach that involves reading through transcripts closely, coding recurring ideas, and grouping these codes into broader themes. This is an inductive process, meaning the themes emerged from what participants actually said, rather than being decided in advance by the researcher.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Six major themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the focus group discussions and interviews with provincial government officials, civil society representatives, and business stakeholders. These themes are presented below, each followed by a short analytical comment linking it back to the study's research questions. Table 1 summarizes the themes before the detailed discussion that follows.

Table 1: Summary of Themes from the Findings

THEME	CORE FINDING	MAIN CONCERN RAISED
Paradigm shift in governance	Clear moves from federal to provincial control of resources.	Incomplete and uneven implementation.
Local participation	Amendment opened the door to community involvement.	Participation remains largely symbolic.
Decentralization and capacity	Province gained real decision-making authority.	Limited technical and institutional readiness.
Policy transformation	Policies were revised to reflect provincial priorities.	Bureaucratic delay and corruption slow execution.
Stakeholder participation	Wider range of actors now consulted.	Risk of power imbalance among stakeholders.
Resource allocation & NFC Award	More equitable allocation reported.	Delayed NFC Award threatens fiscal fairness.

A Real but Incomplete Shift in Governance

The first and most consistent theme across all three focus groups was that the 18th Amendment produced a genuine change in who holds authority over natural resources. Elected representatives and departmental officials alike described the Amendment as a turning point that moved decision-making away from a federally controlled, top-down model toward one in which the province has real, constitutionally protected authority. This was not described as a cosmetic change; participants pointed to concrete evidence, including new provincial departments, restructured agencies, and revised legislation covering mining, wildlife, and climate policy, as proof that authorities had genuinely moved to the capital city Peshawar rather than remaining with Islamabad in practice.

At the same time, almost every participant qualified this positive assessment with concerns about implementation. Several officials described provincial institutions as under-resourced and, in some cases, not fully prepared to absorb their new responsibilities when the Amendment first took effect. This was attributed to a mismatch between the pace of legal change and the slower pace of building institutional capacity: laws and mandates changed quickly in 2010, but the staffing, training, and systems needed to use the new authority effectively took much longer to develop, and in some departments are still developing today.

A closely related concern was the absence of clear, formal coordination mechanisms between the federal and provincial governments. Participants warned that without such mechanisms, well-intentioned reforms could produce uncoordinated or even contradictory action, for example when federal and provincial bodies both claim jurisdiction over the same resource or regulatory decision, or when information about resource revenues is not shared consistently between the two levels. Several participants also linked incomplete implementation to broader governance weaknesses, particularly corruption, low transparency, and weak accountability mechanisms, arguing that decentralization redistributes power but does not, by itself, remove the underlying temptations or opportunities for misuse of that power. In their view, decentralization needs to be accompanied by stronger internal controls, or it simply relocates old problems to a new level of government rather than solving them. The theme suggests that the answer to the first research question, on how resource governance changed after the Amendment, is that authority shifted clearly and substantially, but the administrative and institutional foundations needed to exercise that authority well are still being built.

Local Participation Remains Limited in Practice

A second major theme concerned the gap between the promise of local participation and its practice. Several participants, particularly academics and civil society representatives, described the Amendment as having, in principle, democratized resource management by creating space for local stakeholders who had traditionally been excluded from decisions about the resources on their own land. This was seen as one of the more forward-looking aspects of the reform, since it recognized that communities living closest to a resource often understand it best and have the strongest stake in how it is managed.

However, participants were candid that this potential has not yet been fully realized. Several felt that real decision-making power still rests with a relatively small group of officials, political figures, or established interest groups, rather than being genuinely shared with the wider population. One recurring concern was that community consultation, where it happens, is often treated as a formality to be completed rather than a genuine input into decisions, meaning that local voices are heard but not necessarily acted upon. Participants were clear that this is not simply a matter of holding more meetings; it requires deliberate investment in capacity building and knowledge sharing so that communities have the technical

understanding and confidence needed to engage as equal partners in discussions about resource management, rather than as passive recipients of decisions made elsewhere.

Participants advocated for a more holistic model of participation that goes beyond symbolic inclusion, one where local voice are not only invited into the room but are given real influence over outcomes. These finding echoes wider research on community-based natural resource management, which shows that active local involvement can both improve conservation outcomes and increase community welfare, since management decisions are more likely to reflect the needs and priorities of the people who depend on the resource day to day (Ullah et al., 2021). It also resonates with research on the role of civil society organizations in strengthening transparency and accountability in resource governance (Hussain et al., 2017).

Decentralization Brings Autonomy but Also New Risks

A third theme, closely linked to the first, focused specifically on decentralization as a governance model rather than as a one-time legal change. Participants widely agreed that the Amendment redistributed authority from the federal to the provincial level in a way that gave KP more control over how its natural resources are used and protected. Several described this as a psychologically significant shift as much as a legal one: provincial officials increasingly see themselves, and are seen by others, as the primary decision-makers on resource questions, rather than as implementers of federal policy handed down from Islamabad.

Alongside this, participants raised three specific risks associated with decentralization that had not been fully anticipated when the Amendment was passed. The first was technical readiness: several participants questioned whether provincial institutions currently the specialized expertise have, for example in geology, hydrology, or environmental science, needed to manage complex resource sectors well, given that much of this expertise had historically been concentrated at the federal level. The second was consistency: because the Amendment gives provinces considerable discretion in how they interpret and apply their new powers, participants worried that different provinces might develop quite different practices, which could complicate national-level coordination on issues like energy policy or environmental protection. The third was internal equity: participants noted that decentralization shifts the question of fairness from being purely about the federal government and the provinces to also being about fairness within the province itself, raising the risk that certain districts, sectors, or groups could end up capturing a disproportionate share of resource benefits unless deliberate steps are taken to prevent this.

These concerns are consistent with international research on multi-level environmental governance, which finds that devolving authority downward can produce more efficient and locally appropriate resource allocation, but only when it is paired with adequate local capacity and clear mechanisms for coordination across levels of government (Lockwood et al., 2009). Similarly, comparative work on decentralization processes elsewhere has found that success depends heavily on clear guidelines, sufficient resources, and functioning coordination mechanisms, rather than on the legal transfer of authority alone (Baumann, 2000).

Policy Change Has Outpaced Execution

A fourth theme centered on the distinction between policy reform and policy execution. Participants agreed that the legal and policy framework for resource management in KP has changed substantially since 2010, with a much stronger emphasis on localized decision-making, provincial ownership of resources, and province-specific legislation. Several officials pointed to this as one of the clearest and most tangible achievements of the Amendment: a body of provincial law and policy now exists where, before 2010, most of these questions would have been addressed, if at all, through federal frameworks not designed with KP's specific circumstances in mind.

However, participants were equally clear that changing a policy on paper is not the same as changing outcomes on the ground, and several barriers were identified that separate the two. Bureaucratic inertia was the most frequently mentioned obstacle, described in terms of slow internal decision-making, resistance to new procedures, and a tendency for new policies to be absorbed into existing routines rather than genuinely changing how business is done. A related concern was the shortage of technical know-how among officials tasked with implementing new resource policies; participants argued that passing a law is only useful if the people responsible for applying it have the training and tools to do so correctly. Corruption was again raised as a significant obstacle in this context, with participants describing it as a direct barrier to fair and effective policy execution, since resources intended for implementation can be diverted, and enforcement of new rules can be selectively applied or ignored altogether when oversight is weak.

Participants stressed that overcoming these execution challenges requires sustained, practical effort, not another round of policy writing. Suggested priorities included investing in administrative training, streamlining bureaucratic procedures so that decisions can be made and acted on more quickly, and pairing new legislation with dedicated implementation budgets and monitoring systems, rather than if a well-written law will implement itself.

Stakeholder Participation Is Broadening, but Needs Structure

A fifth theme concerned the range of actors now involved in resource decisions. Participants observed a genuine broadening of stakeholder participation since the Amendment, with civil society organizations and business representatives increasingly included alongside government officials in discussions about resource allocation and management. This was generally welcomed as an opportunity to improve transparency, accountability, and the overall quality of decision-making, since a wider set of perspectives can help decision-makers anticipate problems and identify practical solutions that a purely government-led process might miss.

At the same time, several participants cautioned that broader participation, if left unstructured, could create new problems of its own. A specific concern raised repeatedly was the risk of power imbalance among stakeholders: participants worried that better-resourced or better-connected groups, such as larger businesses or politically well-connected organizations, could dominate consultation processes at the expense of smaller or less organized groups, including local communities. Participants called for clear guidelines and formal mechanisms, such as structured platforms for dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, to help ensure that disagreements among stakeholders are resolved constructively rather than allowed to undermine the participatory process altogether.

A further concern, distinct from general power imbalances, was the specific challenge of ensuring representation for marginalized and vulnerable groups, including indigenous and remote communities, women, and low-income households, who are often the most directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods but the least likely to be represented in formal consultation processes. Participants argued that stakeholder engagement frameworks need to actively and deliberately reach out to these groups, rather than if general, open invitations to participate will be sufficient to include them in practice.

Resource Allocation Has Improved, but the NFC Award Delay Is a Concern

The sixth and final theme concerned the practical outcomes of devolution for resource allocation, and this was where participants offered some of the clearest positive assessments alongside their most pointed criticism. Several participants, including a former provincial chief minister, acknowledged a genuine improvement in resource allocation since the Amendment, attributing this directly to the devolution of decision-making power to the provincial level, which has allowed KP's government to make allocation

decisions that better reflect the province's own priorities and internal geography, rather than relying on a federally determined formula applied uniformly across the country.

This positive assessment was consistently paired with concern about the delayed revision of the National Finance Commission Award, the mechanism that determines how revenue is shared between the federal government and the provinces, and among the provinces themselves. Participants argued that this delay is not a minor administrative issue but a structural problem that undermines the fiscal side of devolution: even where the province now has more legal authority over resource decisions, its ability to plan and finance long-term resource management is constrained if the underlying revenue-sharing formula is out of date or delayed. Several participants urged the federal government to expedite the NFC Award's revision and implementation to avoid disparities in resource allocation across provinces.

Looking to the future, participants converged on four priorities that they saw as essential for consolidating the gains already made and addressing the gaps identified across all six themes. The first was continued capacity building, particularly technical and administrative training for officials directly involved in resource management. The second was stronger anti-corruption measures, including clearer rules, more consistent enforcement, and better monitoring of how resource revenues are collected and spent. The third was more effective and genuinely inclusive stakeholder engagement, building on the broadening of participation already observed but giving it clearer structure and safeguards. The fourth was the creation of dedicated platforms for ongoing dialogue between government, communities, and businesses, so that engagement becomes a continuous process rather than a series of one-off consultations.

DISCUSSION

Answering the Research Questions

Taken together, these six themes provide clear answers to the study's two research questions. On the first question, concerning how natural resources in KP were distributed and managed before and after the Amendment, the findings show a genuine and substantial shift. Before 2010, resource decisions in KP were largely made by, or subject to approval from, the federal government, with the province having limited independent authority over its own minerals, water, and energy resources, and a correspondingly limited role in setting priorities for how those resources should be used. After the Amendment, KP gained considerably more legal and institutional authority, reflected in new provincial bodies such as the KP Oil and Gas Company, restructured agencies such as the Forestry, Environment, and Wildlife Department, and updated legislation covering mining, wildlife, and climate policy. This matches what Adeney (2012) and Rana (2020) describe at the national level: a real transfer of authority to the provinces, even if the transition has not been smooth everywhere and even if, as this study finds, the transfer of formal authority has outpaced the transfer of practical capacity to use it.

On the second research question, concerning the effects of the Amendment on resource allocation and management, the findings produce a more mixed but still coherent answer. On the positive side, participants across all three focus groups described more equitable resource allocation, a stronger provincial voice in resource governance, and a broadening of the range of actors involved in decision-making, all of which are consistent with the theoretical goals of fiscal federalism, namely that decentralizing revenue and expenditure decisions can improve both efficiency and local accountability (Oates, 2004). On the negative side, the study consistently found that KP still faces capacity gaps, corruption risks, bureaucratic delays, uneven and incomplete implementation, and participation that remains more symbolic than substantive for many local communities. These findings align closely with Haider (2023), whose study of the post-18th Amendment scenario in KP similarly stresses the importance of capacity building, anti-corruption measures, and stakeholder engagement for improving resource governance, suggesting that these are not

isolated observations from this study's participants but a broader, recognized pattern in how devolution has played out in the province.

Interpreting the Gap Between Authority and Capacity

A useful way to interpret these findings as a whole is that the 18th Amendment successfully transferred formal, legal authority to the province, but this transfer has not yet been matched by an equal transfer of technical capacity, a correspondingly reliable flow of financial resources through a timely NFC Award, or genuinely inclusive decision-making practices. This is not a problem unique to Pakistan or to KP. International research on decentralization consistently finds that devolving authority is a necessary but not sufficient condition for better resource governance; success also depends on whether sub-national governments are given, or are able to build, the institutional capacity needed to use their new powers effectively (Faguet, 2014). Lockwood et al. (2009), studying multi-level environmental governance in the Australian context, reach a similar conclusion: devolving authority downward tends to produce better, more locally appropriate outcomes only when paired with adequate local capacity and functioning mechanisms for coordination across levels of government. KP's experience, as described by this study's participants, fits this pattern closely: the legal shift happened relatively quickly in 2010, but the administrative, technical, and fiscal foundations needed to fully realize its benefits are still being built more than a decade later.

This gap also helps explain why participants' assessments of the Amendment were consistently double-sided rather than simply positive or negative. Almost every theme in the findings combined a genuine acknowledgment of progress with a specific, concrete concern about implementation. This pattern suggests that participants are not questioning the value or direction of devolution itself but are identifying where the process of building capacity to match new authority has fallen behind, and where deliberate, sustained investment is still needed.

Local Participation and the Limits of Formal Inclusion

The theme of limited local participation deserves particular attention because it points to a distinction between formal and substantive inclusion. The Amendment formally opened space for community and civil society involvement in resource decisions, and participants in this study confirmed that this space now exists in ways it did not before 2010. However, the persistent finding that decision-making power remains concentrated among a relatively small group of officials and influential figures suggests that formal openness does not automatically produce substantive influence. This distinction is well documented in the wider literature on community-based natural resource management, which shows that active, meaningful local involvement, as opposed to nominal consultation, tends to produce better conservation outcomes and stronger community welfare, precisely because it ensures that management decisions reflect the priorities of the people who depend on the resource in question (Ullah et al., 2021). Civil society organizations, when genuinely included rather than symbolically consulted, can play a similar bridging role, contribute specialized knowledge and helping hold government processes accountable to transparency and sustainability standards (Hussain et al., 2017). The recommendations arising from this study's findings, particularly around structured stakeholder platforms and deliberate capacity building for community representatives, are aimed directly at closing this gap between formal and substantive participation.

Fiscal Federalism and the Unfinished Business of the NFC Award

The concern raised repeatedly around the delayed NFC Award reflects a core principle of fiscal federalism theory: that decentralizing decision-making authority without a correspondingly reliable and predictable flow of financial resources can leave sub-national governments formally empowered but practically constrained (Oates, 2004). Participants in this study did not treat the NFC Award delay as a narrow technical

or budgetary issue; they connected it directly to the province's broader ability to plan, invest in, and sustain effective resource management over the long term. This is consistent with wider research on Pakistan's fiscal federalism, which identifies the NFC Award as one of the central, unresolved pieces of the devolution agenda, whose timely revision is necessary to fully realize the goals the 18th Amendment set out to achieve (Khan, 2021; Pasha, 2011). The findings of this study suggest that, from the perspective of those directly involved in resource governance in KP, this remains one of the most consequential unfinished elements of the reform.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The six themes and the discussion above point to a consistent policy implication: the next stage of implementing the 18th Amendment in KP should focus less on further legal or constitutional change, and more on closing the gap between the authority the province already has and its practical capacity to use that authority well. This includes targeted technical training for officials, stronger and more consistently enforced anti-corruption and transparency mechanisms, structured and adequately resourced platforms for stakeholder and community participation, and sustained federal-level pressure to finalize and implement a revised NFC Award. None of these steps require reopening the constitutional settlement reached in 2010; all of them are implementation measures that can be pursued within the existing legal framework, which suggests that meaningful improvement in resource governance in KP is achievable without further constitutional negotiation, provided there is sufficient political will and sustained investment in institutional capacity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 18th Constitutional Amendment has meaningfully changed how natural resources are distributed and managed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, shifting real authority from the federal government to the province. This shift has created opportunities for more equitable resource allocation, stronger provincial institutions, and broader stakeholder involvement. At the same time, the study finds that these opportunities are only partly realized. Weak institutional capacity, delayed implementation, corruption risks, and limited community participation continue to hold back the full benefits of devolution. The delayed NFC Award stands out as a pressing concern that affects the province's ability to plan and finance resource management effectively.

Viewed across all six themes, the overall picture that emerges is one of a reform that succeeded in changing the rules of the game but has not yet finished changing the game itself. Authorities have moved to the province; the institutions, skills, funding streams, and inclusive practices needed to make full use of that authority are still catching up. This is neither a story of failure nor of complete success, but of a transition that remains, more than a decade after 2010, genuinely in progress. Recognizing this helps clarify what kind of action is now needed: not a further round of constitutional reform, but sustained, practical investment in the capacity, transparency, and inclusiveness of provincial resource governance.

Based on these findings, the study offers the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen capacity building for provincial institutions responsible for natural resource management, through technical training and adequate funding.
2. Improve transparency and accountability through regular audits, clear monitoring systems, and public access to information on resource revenues and spending.
3. Improve coordination between federal and provincial governments to avoid duplication and conflicting decisions.

4. Revise and implement the NFC Award without further delay, to ensure the province receives its fair and predictable share of resource revenue.
5. Strengthen environmental safeguards through consistent enforcement of Environmental Impact Assessments and monitoring of resource extraction.
6. Create structured, ongoing platforms for local communities and civil society to take part in resource decisions, backed by genuine capacity building rather than symbolic inclusion.
7. Encourage further research, including sector-specific studies on mining, hydropower, and forestry, and longitudinal studies that track outcomes over time.

This study is based on qualitative data from a limited number of focus groups and interviews in one province, so its findings should be read as an in-depth exploration of stakeholder perspectives rather than a nationally representative survey. The sample, while purposively selected to include a broad mix of political, departmental, and technical voices, cannot capture every perspective relevant to resource governance in KP, and the views reported here reflect the specific participants who took part in 2023 rather than the population. Future research could build on this work in several directions: larger, more representative samples; quantitative analysis of resource revenues and their allocation over time; sector-specific case studies covering mining, hydropower, or forestry individually; and comparative studies examining how other resource-rich provinces, such as Balochistan or Sindh, have navigated the same post-Amendment transition. Longitudinal research that revisits these same themes in future years would also be valuable, since many of the challenges identified here, particularly around capacity building and the NFC Award, are likely to evolve as implementation continues.

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