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Editorial

Dear Readers,

A blissful Happy Independence Day on 14th August, 2023!

The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services continues its research and capacity building initiatives as per its annual workplan for the 2022-23.

This Issue of the PIPS Parliamentary Research Digest includes the detailed Matrix of approved Demands for Grants by the National Assembly of Pakistan as per the annual budget FY 2022-23. The issue also includes absorbing articles on education sector and youth related initiatives in Pakistan's Annual Budget and Population expansion viz-à-viz recently concluded first digital population census (2023).

We welcome feedback of our invaluable readers.

Please do not hesitate to send your feedback or contact for any of our services at research@pips.gov.pk

Muhammad Rashid Mafzool Zaka
Director General (Research)



The Honourable Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan / President PIPS Board of Governors Raja Parvez Ashraf presiding the PIPS BoG meeting at the Institute on Wednesday, August 02, 2023

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE MAJLIS-E-SHOORA
(PARLIAMENT) IN JOINT SITTING
06-07-23

This House strongly condemns the act of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

This House believes in respecting all religions, beliefs, and their Holy Books.

This House urges that appropriate steps be taken by the Swedish authorities against the perpetrators including but not limited to legal action, and to ensure that no such act takes place in future.

This House urges that incidents of Islamophobia be dealt with the same seriousness as hate against other religions.

This House urges that relevant international organizations and states must legislate to criminalize desecration of Holy Symbols of the religions including Holy Books, personalities, places of worship and followers.

This House acknowledges and appreciates the convening of the OIC session for providing platform to compile recommendations and devise a collective future strategy to counter Islamophobia.

This House resolves that the international community takes appropriate measures for promoting inter-faith harmony to ensure that any act that hurts religious sentiments may never take place in future.

Sd/-

Mr. Murtaza Javed Abbasi,
Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
Khawaja Muhammad Asif,
Minister for Defence
Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah,
Minister for Water Resources
Raja Riaz Ahmed,
Leader of Opposition
Mr. Asad Mahmood,
Minister for Communication

Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif,
Prime Minister
Mr. Azam Nazeer Tarar, (Senator)
Minister for Law and Justice
Mirza Muhammad Afridi (Senator),
Deputy Chairman
Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira (Advisor)
Engineer Amir Muqam (Advisor)
Mr. Danesh Kumar (Senator)
Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Khan (Senator)

-: 2:-

Mr. Muhammad Hashim Notezai,
Minister of State for Power
Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim khani,
Parliamentary Secretary for Maritime Affairs
Dr. Darshan,
Parliamentary Secretary for Aviation Division
Ms. Naz Baloch,
Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change
and Environmental Coordination
Sardar Muhammad Irfan Dogar,
Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage
and Culture Division
Rana Iradat Sharif Khan,
Parliamentary Secretary for Energy
(Power Division)
Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha,
Mr. Muhammad Riaz,
Chaudhry Abid Raza,
Ch. Zulfiqar Ali Bhinder,

Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah (Senator)
Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen
(Senator)
Mr. Gurdeep Singh (Senator)
Mr. Mohammad Humayun Mohmand
(Senator)
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Parliamentary Secretary for Cabinet
Division
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Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani,
Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja,
Ms. Shamim Ara Panhwar,
Mehar Ghulam Muhammad Lali,
Ms. Shaista Pervaiz,
Mr. Azhar Qayyum Nahra,
Mr. Riaz-ul-Haq,
Syed Javed Husnain,
Members of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament)

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Federal Budget 2023-24 - Demands for Grants and Appropriations As Approved by National Assembly

Compiled by
Muhammad Adnan Azeem
Director Budget Computerization, Ministry of Finance

Voted Expenditure

S. No.	Ministries / Divisions	Budget Estimates Financial Year 2022-23 (Million Rs.)	Budget Estimates Financial Year 2023-24 (Million Rs.)	% Wise Increase/ Decrease with Prev. FY Original Estimates	Vertical Allocation to each head as of Total Voted 2021-22	Vertical Allocation to each head as of Total Voted 2022-23
1	Aviation Division	2,227	3,381	34%	0.0402%	0.0477%
2	Airports Security Force	10,196	12,296	17%	0.1842%	0.1734%
3	Cabinet	282	293	4%	0.0051%	0.0041%
4	Cabinet Division	2,563	2,742	7%	0.0463%	0.0387%
5	Emergency Relief and Repatriation	393	838	53%	0.0071%	0.0118%
6	Intelligence Bureau	10,313	12,247	16%	0.1863%	0.1727%
7	Atomic Energy	13,794	16,633	17%	0.2492%	0.2345%
8	Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority	1,409	1,644	14%	0.0255%	0.0232%
9	Naya Pakistan Housing Development Authority	969	1,001	3%	0.0175%	0.0141%
10	Prime Minister's office (Internal)	465	625	26%	0.0084%	0.0088%
11	Prime Minister's office (Public)	528	635	17%	0.0095%	0.0090%
12	National Disaster Management Authority	631	700	10%	0.0114%	0.0099%
13	Board of Investment	378	429	12%	0.0068%	0.0060%
14	Prime Minister's Inspection Commission	61	132	54%	0.0011%	0.0019%
15	Special Technology Zone Authority	914	1,070	15%	0.0165%	0.0151%
16	Establishment Division	6,203	8,237	25%	0.1120%	0.1161%
17	Federal Public Service Commission	1,085	1,207	10%	0.0196%	0.0170%
18	National School of	2,409	2,903	17%	0.0435%	0.0409%

	Public Policy					
19	Civil Services Academy	949	1,336	29%	0.0171%	0.0188%
20	National Security Division	143	182	22%	0.0026%	0.0026%
21	Council of Common Interest (Secretariat)	135	130	-4%	0.0024%	0.0018%
22	Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division	601	786	24%	0.0109%	0.0111%
23	Commerce Division	5,262	9,260	43%	0.0950%	0.1306%
24	Communications Division	204	252	19.1%	0.0037%	0.0036%
25	Other Expenditure of Communications Division	22,392	30,178	26%	0.4045%	0.4255%
26	Pakistan Post office Department	15,709	20,425	23%	0.2838%	0.2880%
27	Defence Division	4,299	6,355	32%	0.0777%	0.0896%
28	Federal Government Educational Institutions in Cantonments and Garrisons	8,976	12,516	28%	0.1621%	0.1765%
29	Defence Services	1,563,000	1,804,000	13%	28.2328%	25.4345%
30	Defence Production Division	916	998	8%	0.0165%	0.0141%
31	Economic Affairs Division	681	801	15%	0.0123%	0.0113%
32	Miscellaneous Exp. of Economic Affairs Division	12,979	16,424	21%	0.2344%	0.2316%
33	Power Division	355,368	450,566	21%	6.4191%	6.3525%
34	Petroleum Division	71,675	51,504	-39%	1.2947%	0.7261%
35	Geological Survey of Pakistan	1,157	1,288	10%	0.0209%	0.0182%
36	Federal Education and Professional Training Division	20,747	26,974	23%	0.3748%	0.3803%
37	Higher Education Commission (HEC)	66,025	66,300	0.4%	1.1926%	0.9348%
38	National Rehmatul-Lil-Alameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyyin Authority	140	211	33.8%	0.0025%	0.0030%
39	National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVITC)	469	1,033	55%	0.0085%	0.0146%
40	National Heritage &	2,438	2,647	8%	0.0440%	0.0373%

	Culture Division					
41	Finance Division	2,610	4,233	38%	0.0471%	0.0597%
42	Other Expenditure of Finance Division	5,468	6,185	12%	0.0988%	0.0872%
43	Controller General of Accounts	9,497	11,879	20%	0.1715%	0.1675%
44	Superannuation Allowances and Pensions	605,542	796,983	24%	10.9380%	11.2366%
45	Grants Subsidies & Miscellaneous Expenditure	1,057,430	1,523,513	31%	19.1006%	21.4799%
46	Revenue Division	57	76	25%	0.0010%	0.0011%
47	Federal Board of Revenue	34,398	40,557	15%	0.6213%	0.5718%
48	Foreign Affairs Division	2,284	3,874	41%	0.0413%	0.0546%
49	Foreign Missions	25,007	43,055	42%	0.4517%	0.6070%
50	Housing and Works Division	5,916	7,134	17%	0.1069%	0.1006%
51	Human Rights Division	1,658	2,243	26%	0.0299%	0.0316%
52	National Commission for Human Rights	-	173			0.0024%
53	Industries and Production Division	33,631	62,182	46%	0.6075%	0.8767%
54	Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Secretariat	80	79	-1%	0.0014%	0.0011%
55	Information and Broadcasting Division	2,822	4,768	41%	0.0510%	0.0672%
56	Miscellaneous Exp. of Information & Broadcasting Division	6,674	10,260	35%	0.1206%	0.1447%
57	Information Technology and Telecommunication Division	8,048	9,953	19%	0.1454%	0.1403%
58	Interior Division	12,041	13,240	9%	0.2175%	0.1867%
59	Other Expenditure of Interior Division	6,614	9,303	29%	0.1195%	0.1312%
60	Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)	13,979	18,016	22%	0.2525%	0.2540%
61	Combined Civil Armed Forces	162,670	194,701	16%	2.9383%	2.7451%
62	National Counter Terrorism Authority	269	819	67%	0.0049%	0.0116%
63	Inter-Provincial Coordination	2,099	2,378	12%	0.0379%	0.0335%

	Division					
64	Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division	1,142	1,351	15%	0.0206%	0.0190%
65	Law and Justice Division	5,774	7,208	20%	0.1043%	0.1016%
66	Federal Judicial Academy	221	290	24%	0.0040%	0.0041%
67	Federal Shariat Court	521	827	37%	0.0094%	0.0117%
68	Council of Islamic Ideology	196	225	13%	0.0035%	0.0032%
69	National Accountability Bureau	5,233	6,159	15%	0.0945%	0.0868%
70	District Judiciary, Islamabad Capital Territory	774	1,261	39%	0.0140%	0.0178%
71	Maritime Affairs Division	1,178	2,056	43%	0.0213%	0.0290%
72	Narcotics Control Division	3,635	5,123	29%	0.0657%	0.0722%
73	National Assembly	3,453	3,308	-4%	0.0624%	0.0466%
74	The Senate	1,397	1,775	21%	0.0252%	0.0250%
75	National Food Security and Research Division	9,303	12,579	26%	0.1680%	0.1774%
76	Pakistan Agriculture Research Council	5,738	8,349	31%	0.1036%	0.1177%
77	National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Division	19,304	23,948	19%	0.3487%	0.3376%
78	Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Division	1,880	3,086	39%	0.0340%	0.0435%
79	Parliamentary Affairs Division	482	705	32%	0.0087%	0.0099%
80	Planning, Development And Special Initiatives Division	6,159	8,077	24%	0.1112%	0.1139%
81	CPEC Authority	131	-		0.0024%	0.0000%
82	Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division	2,202	1,752	-26%	0.0398%	0.0247%
83	Benazir Income Support Programme	364,078	471,683	23%	6.5764%	6.6502%
84	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal	6,040	7,675	21%	0.1091%	0.1082%
85	Privatization Division	237	310	24%	0.0043%	0.0044%

86	Railways Division	45,315	55,384	18%	0.8185%	0.7809%
87	Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Division	1,285	1,767	27%	0.0232%	0.0249%
88	Science and Technology Division	11,612	12,969	10%	0.2097%	0.1828%
89	States and Frontier Regions Division	787	894	12%	0.0142%	0.0126%
90	Water Resources Division	2,064	3,589	42%	0.0373%	0.0506%
91	Federal Miscellaneous Investments & Other Loans and Advances	101,101	163,601	38%	1.8262%	2.3066%
92	Development Expenditure of Aviation Division	2,485	5,450	54%	0.0449%	0.0768%
93	Development Expenditure of Cabinet Division	71,366	90,065	21%	1.2891%	1.2698%
94	Development Expenditure of Board of Investment	-	1,115			0.0157%
95	Development Expenditure of Special Technology Zones Authority	-	55			0.0008%
96	Development Expenditure of Establishment Division	425	439	3%	0.0077%	0.0062%
97	Development Expenditure of SUPARCO	7,395	6,900	-7.2%	0.1336%	0.0973%
98	Development Expenditure of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division	9,600	4,050	-137%	0.1734%	0.0571%
99	Development Expenditure of Commerce Division	1,174	1,100	-7%	0.0212%	0.0155%
100	Development Expenditure of Communications Division	9,250	12,021	23%	0.1671%	0.1695%
101	Development Expenditure of Defence Division	2,232	3,400	34%	0.0403%	0.0479%
102	Development Expenditure of	500	-		0.0090%	0.0000%

	Survey of Pakistan					
103	Development Expenditure of Defence Production Division	2,200	2,000	-10%	0.0397%	0.0282%
104	Development Expenditure of Power Division	7,953	5,839	-36%	0.1437%	0.0823%
105	Development Expenditure of Federal Education & Professional Training Division	3,140	10,428	70%	0.0567%	0.1470%
106	Development Expenditure of Higher Education Education Commission	44,179	69,700	37%	0.7980%	0.9827%
107	Development Expenditure of National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVITC)	4,100	8,072	49%	0.0741%	0.1138%
108	Development Expenditure of National Heritage & Culture Division	550	540	-2%	0.0099%	0.0076%
109	Development Expenditure of Finance Division	1,660	3,220	48%	0.0300%	0.0454%
110	Other Development Expenditure	134,806	164,750	18%	2.4350%	2.3228%
111	Development Expenditure of Revenue Division	3,189	3,200	0%	0.0576%	0.0451%
112	Development Expenditure of Human Rights Division	185	5,814	97%	0.0033%	0.0820%
113	Development Expenditure of Information & Broadcasting Division	1,333	981	-36%	0.0241%	0.0138%
114	Development Expenditure of Information Technology and Telecommunication Division	6,331	11,000	42%	0.1144%	0.1551%
115	Development Expenditure of	9,093	9,950	9%	0.1642%	0.1403%

	Interior Division					
116	Development Expenditure of Inter Provincial Coordination Division	3,472	6,900	50%	0.0627%	0.0973%
117	Development Expenditure of Law and Justice Division	1,814	1,400	-30%	0.0328%	0.0197%
118	Development Expenditure of Narcotics Control Division	208	150	-39%	0.0038%	0.0021%
119	Development Expenditure of National Food Security and Research Division	10,129	43,850	77%	0.1830%	0.6182%
120	Development Expenditure of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination Division	12,651	13,100	3%	0.2285%	0.1847%
121	Development Expenditure of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division	41,677	29,897	-39%	0.7528%	0.4215%
122	Development Expenditure of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Division	500	500	0%	0.0090%	0.0070%
123	Development Expenditure of Science & Technology Division	5,716	8,000	29%	0.1033%	0.1128%
124	Development Expenditure of State and Frontier Regions Division	-	964			0.0136%
125	Development Expenditure of Water Resources Division	91,878	107,500	15%	1.6596%	1.5156%
126	Capital Outlay on Development of Atomic Energy	25,991	26,100	0%	0.4695%	0.3680%
127	Capital Outlay on Development of Pakistan Nuclear	290	150	-93%	0.0052%	0.0021%

	Regulatory Authority					
128	Capital Outlay on Petroleum Division	1,481	1,500	1%	0.0267%	0.0211%
129	Capital Outlay on Federal Investments	205	255	20%	0.0037%	0.0036%
130	Development Loans and Advances By the Federal Government	104,103	157,314	34%	1.8804%	2.2180%
131	External Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government	49,717	41,879	-19%	0.8981%	0.5904%
132	Capital Outlay of Civil Works	15,060	41,881	64%	0.2720%	0.5905%
133	Capital Outlay on Industrial Development	2,850	13,000	78%	0.0515%	0.1833%
134	Capital Outlay on Maritime Affairs Division	3,465	2,572	-35%	0.0626%	0.0363%
135	Capital Outlay on Railways Division	32,648	33,000	1%	0.5897%	0.4653%
	Total Voted	5,536,119	7,092,734	22%	100%	100%
	Total Charged and Voted	5,536,147	7,092,775	22%		

Source: Website of Finance Division Federal Budget 2023-24

Charged Expenditure

S. No.	Ministries / Divisions	Budget Estimates Financial Year 2022-23 (Million Rs.)	Budget Estimates Financial Year 2023-24 (Million Rs.)	% Wise Increase/ Decrease with Prev. FY Original Estimates	Vertical Allocation to each head as of Total Charged 2021-22	Vertical Allocation to each head as of Total Charged 2022-23
1	Pakistan Post Office Department	10	10	0%	0.00004%	0.00002%
2	Superannuation Allowances and Pensions	3,458	4,017	14%	0.01240%	0.00971%
3	Grants, Subsidies and Misc. Expenditure	22,000	26,400	17%	0.07889%	0.06382%
4	Foreign Missions	50	50	0%	0.00018%	0.00012%
5	Law and Justice Division	312	369	15%	0.00112%	0.00089%
6	National Assembly	2,708	5,000	46%	0.00971%	0.01209%

7	The Senate	2,349	3,282	28%	0.00842 %	0.00793%
8	External Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government	296,877	658,644	55%	1.06459 %	1.59221%
9	Staff, Household and Allowances of the President (Personal)	411	597	31%	0.00147 %	0.00144%
10	Staff, Household and Allowances of the President (Public)	645	812	21%	0.00231 %	0.00196%
11	Servicing of Foreign Debt	510,972	872,219	41%	1.83234 %	2.10850%
12	Foreign Loans Repayment	3,792,401	4,398,068	14%	13.59948 %	10.63190 %
13	Repayment of Short Term Foreign Credits	142,772	46,690	-206%	0.51198 %	0.11287%
14	Audit	6,096	7,561	19%	0.02186 %	0.01828%
15	Servicing of Domestic Debt	3,439,090	6,430,305	47%	12.33251 %	15.54464 %
16	Repayment of Domestic Debt	19,654,368	28,898,040	32%	70.48020 %	69.85821 %
17	Supreme Court	3,091	3,555	13%	0.01108 %	0.00859%
18	Islamabad High Court	1,122	1,543	27%	0.00402 %	0.00373%
19	Election	6,289	7,786	19%	0.02255 %	0.01882%
20	Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment of Women at work place	100	115	13%	0.00036 %	0.00028%
21	Wafaqi Mohtasib	943	1,250	25%	0.00338 %	0.00302%
22	Federal Tax Ombudsman	306	391	22%	0.00110 %	0.00094%
	Total Charged	27,886,369	41,366,703	33%	100%	100%

Source: Website of Finance Division Federal Budget 2023-24

ANALYSIS

Budget Analysis: Education Sector and Youth-Related Initiatives in Pakistan's Annual Budget 2023-24

Areebah Shahid

Executive Director

Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA)

1. Introduction

This budget analysis aims to delve into the allocation of funds, highlight key initiatives, and assess their potential impact on education and youth empowerment initiatives in Pakistan. The analysis is based on available data and reports from the Government of Pakistan and other credible sources.

1.1 Overview of the Education Sector in Pakistan: Challenges and Areas for Improvement

After the introduction of Article 25A to the Constitution of Pakistan in 2010, education was recognized as fundamental human right by the State. Accordingly, drawing directly from the Constitution, the State is obligated to “...provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years...”¹

Unfortunately, despite the passage of 13 years since Article 25A was introduced, the targets set under said article were not achieved. Even though sustainable economic development cannot be achieved without a highly skilled workforce, education continues to rank among low-priority sectors in Pakistan. Pakistan’s total spending towards education in the last two decades has remained at 2 percent or less of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).² Pakistan spent 1.4 percent on education in 2021-22 and 1.7 percent in 2022-23 – the lowest in the South Asian region.³

It is then a little wonder that in just five years, Pakistan’s education indicators, especially with regard to access, have seen a steep decline. From 22.8 million out-of-school (OOS) children in 2017-18, the number of school-aged children who are not in schools has risen to a staggering 25 million.⁴ Since the subject of this paper is the federal budget, it is pertinent to point out that, during the same five-year period, the federal capital has seen a 100 percent increase in the number of OOS children with the figure rising from 30,000 to the current 60,000 OOS.⁵

Again, since the federal budget is under review, the salient points below deserve attention as they have directly and largely contributed to the continued dismal state of public investment in education.

¹ “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan,” National Assembly of Pakistan, accessed June 10, 2023, https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf.

² Asim Bashir Khan, “Bringing All the Girls to School,” Pakistan Youth Change Advocates, July 2020, <https://pyca.org.pk/Bringing-All-The-Girls-To-School-Updated.pdf>.

³ ProPK Staff, “Govt Allocates Just Rs. 97 Billion for Education in Budget 2023-24,” ProPakistani, June 9, 2023, <https://propakistani.pk/2023/06/09/govt-allocates-just-rs-97-billion-for-education-in-budget-2023-24/>.

⁴ *Let's Talk Education | S2 | EP11 | Ali Kemal - P2*, Facebook (Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2023), <https://www.facebook.com/bolojawan/videos/558290456434956>.

⁵ “Public Schools in Rural Islamabad Are Underfunded, Understaffed and Overcrowded” (Islamabad: The Spokesman, 2023), Pakistan Youth Change Advocates.

- Since the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment that devolved school (i.e., primary, secondary and higher secondary) education to the provinces, the federal government has consistently allocated the biggest chunk of its education budgets for tertiary or higher education. The allocation for school education has been especially dismal during the last two fiscal years where a little over 1 percent was allocated for school education by the federal government.⁶ Needless to say, this meager allocation has failed to meet the needs of the growing population of school-aged children in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and we have seen a sobering fall-out of this with a sharp increase in the number of OOS children in the federal jurisdiction.
- Since the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the provinces have consistently met their national and international obligations of allocating 15 to 20 percent of their planned public expenditure on education.⁷ However, Pakistan's overall expenditure on education as a percentage of its GDP has fallen short of the 4 to 6 percent mark owing to the abysmal allocation in the federal budget that has hovered over a mere 2 percent or less for the last two decades.⁸
- Much like the rest of the country, the majority of OOS children in the federal area comprise girls. Despite this, the federal education budget remains entirely gender blind with lump sum allocations made under various educational levels without providing a gender-wise break of how these funds will necessarily be utilized.

This state of affairs demands an immediate departure from conventional budgeting practices in favour of steps that can give the federal education sector a much-needed extraordinary boost. Unless radical steps are taken, educational access, quality, infrastructure and the sector's overall capacity will continue this downward trend.

1.2 Overview of the Youth Development Initiatives in Pakistan: Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Investment in youth development in Pakistan is crucial for the country's progress and sustainable future. However, several challenges need to be addressed to ensure effective investment and provide opportunities for the youth. Here are some challenges and possible ways forward:

- i. **Limited access to quality education:** One of the major challenges is the limited access to quality education, particularly in rural areas. The distance of schools from homes, a lack of basic facilities, and subject specialist teachers are just some of the factors that hinder both access and quality of education.⁹
- ii. **Unemployment and underemployment:** Pakistan faces high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth.¹⁰ The lack of job opportunities and skill mismatch further exacerbate this issue.

⁶ Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, *Overview of Federal Education Budget 2022-23*, Facebook (Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, June 11, 2022), <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=390528686431754&set=pb.100064238763365.-2207520000.&type=3>.

⁷ Asim Bashir Khan, "Bringing All the Girls to School," Pakistan Youth Change Advocates, July 2020, <https://pyca.org.pk/Bringing-All-The-Girls-To-School-Updated.pdf>.

⁸ Khan, "Bringing Girls to Schools."

⁹ Khan, "Bringing Girls to Schools."

¹⁰ World Bank, "Unemployment, Youth Total (% of Total Labor Force Ages 15-24) (Modeled ILO Estimate)," World Bank Open Data, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?location>.

iii. **Gender disparities:** Gender disparities persist in Pakistan, limiting opportunities for young women. Investment should prioritize empowering young women through education, vocational training and promoting their participation in decision-making processes. Awareness campaigns and legal reforms should also be implemented to address gender-based discrimination and violence.

iv. **Political participation and civic engagement:** Encouraging political participation and civic engagement among the youth is essential for their empowerment and active involvement in shaping the country's future. There is, however, currently a lack of investment directed towards creating platforms for youth participation, resulting in an acute lack of young people's participation in democratic processes.¹¹

Accordingly, investing in youth development in Pakistan requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses challenges related to education, employment, gender disparities, political participation, and social barriers.

2. Federal Budget 2023-24: Highlights & Key Initiatives

2.1 Education Sector

A total of Rs. 97.098 billion have been allocated for Education Affairs and Services in the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24.¹² This marks a modest increment of 5.5 percent to the revised allocation for FY2022-23.¹³

Keeping up with past precedent, the lion's share of the federal education budget, i.e., Rs. 76.589 billion or 79 percent has been reserved for tertiary education.¹⁴ An allocation of Rs. 4.468 or 4.6 percent of the overall education budget has been earmarked for pre-primary and primary education.¹⁵ Finally, Rs. 10.778 billion (or 11.1 percent of the overall education budget) has been proposed for secondary education.¹⁶

For the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Rs. 59.71 billion has been earmarked in the budget proposal marking an increase of Rs. 14.992 billion from FY2023-24 during which the revised allocation stood at Rs. 44.718 billion.¹⁷

As per the budget speech, Rs.5 billion have been allocated for the promotion of sports at school, college and university levels.¹⁸

A notable contribution towards school education in the proposed budget includes a significant increase in the Education Stipend Programme under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Under the proposal made for FY2023-24, the current ambit supporting 6 million

¹¹ Correspondent, "Youths' Lack of Political Participation Examined," The Express Tribune, November 5, 2022, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2384748/youths-lack-of-political-participation-examined>.

¹² 1. Ahmad Ahmadani, "Education Sector Receives Marginal Budget Boost for 2023-24," Profit by Pakistan Today, June 9, 2023, <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/06/09/education-sector-receives-marginal-budget-boost-for-2023-24/#:~:text=The%20government's%20allocation%20of%20Rs,of%20the%20current%20fiscal%20year>.

¹³ Ahmadani, "Education Sector Budget Boost,"

¹⁴ "Govt Allocates Just Rs. 97 Billion for Education in Budget 2023-24," ProPakistani, June 09, 2023, <https://propakistani.pk/2023/06/09/govt-allocates-just-rs-97-billion-for-education-in-budget-2023-24/>

¹⁵ "Government allocates Rs. 97 billion for Education."

¹⁶ "Government allocates Rs. 97 billion for Education."

¹⁷ "Government allocates Rs. 97 billion for Education."

¹⁸ Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, "Budget Speech Urdu," June 9, 2023, https://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_2023_24/Speech_urdu_2023_24.pdf.

children has been increased to support 8 million. For this purpose over Rs. 55 billion have been allocated to benefit school-aged children hailing from underserved backgrounds across the country. The Federal Minister for Finance further stated in his budget speech that 52 percent of the beneficiaries will entail girls.

Rs. 6 billion have also been allocated under BISP to provide 92,000 deserving students with scholarships at the undergraduate level.

2.2 Youth Empowerment Initiatives

The budget speech for FY2023-24 saw several initiatives being announced for youth empowerment. While some of these initiatives, such as the Prime Minister's Laptop scheme were announced under the education budget head, others were announced as standalone schemes to encourage young entrepreneurs.

A total of Rs. 10 billion have been earmarked for Prime Minister's Laptop scheme. According to the Federal Minister for Finance, around 100,000 laptops will be distributed among deserving young people through this initiative.¹⁹

The establishment of the Pakistan Endowment Fund was also proposed during the Federal Minister's budget speech. This fund is aimed at providing scholarships to deserving students who might otherwise not be able to pursue education at the higher secondary and college levels. Rs. 5 billion have been earmarked for this purpose.²⁰

Several significant proposals were made during the budget speech to encourage entrepreneurs who are either 30 years old or younger. These include:²¹

- i. A proposal for a 50 percent reduction in the rate of taxation on the income received by youth-led businesses for a maximum of Rs. 2 million for individual-owned businesses and Rs. 5 million for youth-led companies.
- ii. Rs.10 billion have been allocated to provide loans on favorable terms to young entrepreneurs under Prime Minister's Youth Programme for Small Loans.
- iii. Rs.5 billion have been earmarked under Prime Minister's Youth Skills Programme to provide specialized training to young people.

3. Analysis of Education and Youth Development Initiatives in Federal Budget 2023-24

The federal budget proposal submitted to the Parliament on June 9, 2023, was announced against the backdrop of Pakistan's unrelenting rough patch over the last 12 months.

The most obvious among the multiple fronts – and the most relevant to this discourse – is of course the ongoing economic crisis. Pakistan became the top-most country in Asia viz-à-viz inflation after its inflation rate rose to 38 percent in May 2023.²² The country also runs the

¹⁹ "Budget Speech Urdu, 2023."

²⁰ "Budget Speech Urdu, 2023."

²¹ "Budget Speech Urdu, 2023."

²² "Pakistan Inflation Rate May 2023 Data - 1957-2022 Historical - June Forecast," Pakistan Inflation Rate - May 2023 Data - 1957-2022 Historical - June Forecast, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/inflation-cpi>.

imminent risk of default with no major headway having been made during talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).²³

The country's economy also took a major hit with the climate-change-triggered floods in 2022. Last year's flooding in Pakistan was ranked among the costliest natural disasters in the world costing the country \$14.9 billion worth of damages and \$15.2 billion in economic losses.²⁴ Despite the magnitude of the calamity, Pakistan has been unable to raise the required \$871 million from international aid.²⁵

Not very surprisingly then, the budget proposal for FY2023-24 is a mixed bag of modest improvements compared to its predecessor.

As far as the education sector is concerned, keeping up with past precedent, the federal budget has once again fallen short on two major accounts:

- i. The disparity between budgetary allocations between school and tertiary education is glaring and will continue to prevent thousands of children in the federal capital from accessing education.
- ii. The planned public expenditure on education under the federal budget misses the 15 to 20 percent mark by a huge margin. Even if the provincial budgets are able to meet this obligation, as they have in the past, Pakistan's overall spending on education as a percentage of its GDP will still remain a far cry from the international standard of 4 to 6 percent.

As we have seen in almost every budget cycle, budget estimates announced during the initial proposal stage often see several revisions as the year progresses and social sector subjects such as education often see major cuts. For instance, in June 2022, Rs. 135 billion had initially been pledged under the federal education budget.²⁶ However, this was revised to 91.777 billion²⁷ marking a mid-year reduction of Rs. 43.223 billion. Given the current economic crisis, it is quite plausible that the already modest allocation of Rs. 97.098 under Education Affairs and Services might experience a further cut.

Despite this gloomy commentary, the increase in allocations under BISP's Education Stipend Programme is a welcome development. Although the Stipend Programme will support 8 million out of the 25 million OOS children,²⁸ in the given economic situation, it is still an important step in the right direction to encourage greater enrollment and retention, especially among girls.

²³ Al Jazeera, "Pakistan Lays out Budget but May Not Satisfy IMF," Business and Economy News | Al Jazeera, June 9, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/6/9/pakistan-lays-out-budget-but-may-not-satisfy-imf>.

²⁴ World Bank Group, "Pakistan: Flood Damages and Economic Losses over USD 30 Billion and Reconstruction Needs over USD 16 Billion - New Assessment," World Bank, October 28, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/28/pakistan-flood-damages-and-economic-losses-over-usd-30-billion-and-reconstruction-needs-over-usd-16-billion-new-assessme>.

²⁵ "Six Months on since the Pakistan Floods, 8.6 Million People Are Facing Hunger; IRC Calls for World Leaders to Address the Imbalance of Climate Change," The IRC, January 22, 2023, <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/six-months-pakistan-floods-86-million-people-are-facing-hunger-irc-calls-world>.

²⁶ Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, *Overview of Federal Education Budget 2022-23*, Facebook (Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, June 11, 2022), <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=390528686431754&set=pb.100064238763365.-2207520000.&type=3>.

²⁷ ProPK Staff, "Govt Allocates Just Rs. 97 Billion for Education in Budget 2023-24," ProPakistani, June 9, 2023, <https://propakistani.pk/2023/06/09/govt-allocates-just-rs-97-billion-for-education-in-budget-2023-24/>

²⁸ " | Ministry of Finance: Government of Pakistan |," | Ministry of Finance | Government of Pakistan |, June 9, 2023, https://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_2023_24/Speech_urdu_2023_24.pdf.

Compared to the federal education budget generally and the school education budget specifically, the upcoming funds earmarked for youth-related initiatives hold greater promise.

The announcements specific to youth empowerment are multi-faceted if not all-encompassing. The laptop scheme, the establishment of the Prime Minister's Endowment Fund to grant scholarships for high school and college students and the Graduate Scholarship scheme under BISP are all important initiatives to encourage greater skill development among Pakistani youth.

Similarly, the proposals to reduce the rate of taxation on youth-led businesses and provide soft loans to young entrepreneurs are both significant steps for a country where the majority of the population comprises young people.

That said, the overall allocation for youth-related initiatives is still a very small chunk of the overall federal budget. Similarly, while the proposed initiatives strive to tackle challenges related to education and employment, they fail to take gender disparity, young people's civic participation and social barriers into account.

4. Way Forward

In a nutshell, while the analysis of Pakistan's annual budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 does not paint a perfect picture of education and youth-related initiatives, it does underline the government's commitment to delivering on these fronts. Severely constrained by the ongoing economic crunch, the government must consider steps that can create a greater impact while utilizing minimum resources.

- a. **Federal Government-led Inter-provincial coordination:** As a first step, there is a need for much stronger and uninterrupted coordination between the federal and provincial governments. This is important to develop synergies between the progress happening at the federal and provincial tiers. This is also important to ensure that despite devolution, already available inter-provincial/inter-ministerial platforms can be used for knowledge sharing and extending capacity support to uplift the overall ability of the system to respond to education and youth empowerment-related needs across all jurisdictions.
- b. **Gender-responsive budgeting:** Despite Pakistan's commitment to achieving greater gender parity as part of Agenda 2030, there has been little progress to make sector-specific budgets gender-responsive.²⁹ Integrating gender into the budgetary process does not require extensive planning, resources or even a major departure from current practices.³⁰ It essentially entails the budget call circulars from each department to categorically mention the percentage of financial resources that would be allocated for each gender and the evaluation process at the end of the fiscal year to assess the effectiveness with which gender-specific allocations were utilized.³¹

For the education sector, such a move would help overcome persistent inequality in the number of males and females at each educational level. Concerning youth empowerment, such a move would enhance the overall effectiveness and the Federal Government's

²⁹ Asim Bashir Khan, "Public Investment in Education: An Appraisal of SDG 4 in Pakistan," Pakistan Youth Change Advocates, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://pyca.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/A-white-paper-asim-Bashir-Khan.pdf>.

³⁰ Areebah Shahid, "Gender Responsive Education Budgeting," The Nation, July 16, 2021, <https://www.nation.com.pk/17-Jul-2021/gender-responsive-education-budgeting>.

³¹ Shahid, "Gender Responsive Education Budgeting."

ability to achieve more with less. For instance, a certain percentage of the budget earmarked for young entrepreneurs should be set aside for females. Such a move would simultaneously support the achievement of both youth and women empowerment targets.

- c. Identifying key priorities:** Rather than trying to do everything at once and at the end of the year spending meagre amounts on a large variety of initiatives bearing little fruit, the government needs to divide its priorities across a handful of high-impact initiatives. We have seen this demarcation viz-à-viz youth-related initiatives but this approach is still largely missing from the education budget. Granted that the federal government is responsible for higher education initiatives across the country, which leaves little room to focus on school education within the federal jurisdiction. However, even those limited resources are often loosely budgeted without specific attention to interventions that can boost enrolment and retention rates and improve the quality of education being imparted in the classrooms. For this reason, a small budgetary allocation for awareness drives in union councils such as Tarnol that house the greatest number of OOS children in ICT can help bring more children to schools. At the same time, based on a recent Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted by Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA) with parents, teachers, and local media representatives in underserved communities of Islamabad revealed an array of issues. These range from an acute lack of classrooms resulting in a student-to-teacher ratio of 1 teacher per 60 to 80 students to an inequitable distribution of financial resources between schools in the city and the periphery areas of Islamabad.³²

Accordingly, equitable distribution of resources across different regions, especially in economically disadvantaged areas should be made on the specific needs of each school, taking into account factors such as student population, infrastructure conditions and teacher-student ratios.

- d. Empowering school-level stakeholders such as principals and head teachers:** Technical and financial support should be provided to principals and head teachers to develop and lead the implementation of school/college development plans. This will not only empower grassroots stakeholders but also ensure that each school can meet at least a portion of its development needs without going through the lengthy and inefficient process involving more centralized systems and stakeholders.
- e. Avoid mid-year revisions:** The regular practice of mid-year budgetary revisions resulting in cuts to social sector subjects such as education and youth empowerment should be avoided at all costs. Given the magnitude of the problem, the proposed education budget is already very modest. The budgetary allocations and policies proposed for youth-related initiatives, although welcome in their own right, are not too much for a country whose overwhelming population comprises a significant chunk of unemployed and unskilled young people. Accordingly, any cuts to these sectors would only contribute to weakening Pakistan's long-term development prospects and should thus, not be considered.

³² "Public Schools in Rural Islamabad Are Underfunded, Understaffed and Overcrowded," (Islamabad: Pakistan Youth Change Advocates, 2023).

OPINION

Population Expansion in Pakistan: A historical overview of census data

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1. Introduction:

In 1850, the global population stood at approximately one billion individuals. However, by 1950, a mere century later, it had already exceeded two billion people.¹ A mere half-century ago from the present day saw this number increase to around 6.8 billion inhabitants worldwide, with projections from the U.S Census Bureau in 2010 anticipating that it would surpass nine billion by the year 2050.² Pakistan's demographic statistics are both remarkable and concerning. Regarding population growth rankings across countries in 1950, Pakistan placed fourteenth globally; within just seventy-one years, it swiftly ascended to become the fifth most populous country on Earth. The population of Pakistan currently accounts for approximately 2.9 per cent of the world's populace.³ These alarming rates translate into an annual addition of roughly four million to five million children to the global average. Fundamentally, this represents nothing short of an existential threat. At this critical juncture, it is regrettably apparent that no all-encompassing plan or program exists in place to curb population growth. Given the limited availability of resources, it is anticipated that Pakistan's population will experience an alarming increase from 2.4 to 2.8.⁴ In light of this trend, the government must take decisive actions to address this issue by employing all available means.

This article will delve into the ramifications of rapid population growth, provide a historical context regarding census-taking efforts in Pakistan, and ultimately offer practical strategies to effectively curb the country's population growth.

2. Leading consequences of population explosion:

The substantial expansion of the population in Pakistan has resulted in several detrimental consequences. One significant issue of unchecked population growth is the surge in intercity migration within Pakistan. Due to unequal development patterns across urban areas, individuals are compelled to migrate towards cities that provide a more favourable standard of living.

The exponential increase in population has significant implications for societal division and the proliferation of slums. These informal settlements act as hubs for poverty and criminal activity. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of the population poses substantial risks to internal security. With a current population of 230 million, Pakistan ranks fifth among the most densely populated nations globally and is projected to reach approximately 300 million by 2030. Consequently, acknowledging human security as a prerequisite for maintaining internal stability, Pakistan's National Security Policy released at the beginning of 2022 accurately identified this critical correlation.⁵

¹ Mohsin Mumtaz, "Population explosion: A looming threat," *Pakistan Observer*, May 22, 2023

² *Ibid*

³ Ali Hassan Bangwar, "Pakistan's population problem," *The Express Tribune*, October 23, 2022

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*

Additionally, the increasing population is placing additional strains on our education system. Pakistan currently holds the unfortunate distinction of having the second-highest number of out-of-school children in the world, with nearly 22.8 million children between the ages of 5 and 6 not receiving an education, as reported by UNESCO.⁶ In addition to this alarming statistic, Pakistan's healthcare sector is also facing mounting pressure due to a significant surge in population growth. It is disheartening that we continue to grapple with polio while many other countries have successfully eradicated this virus from their lands.

The inadequate health conditions have an additional negative impact on the country's financial resources. Moreover, Pakistan is ranked 154th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index Report for 2020.⁷ The abundant pool of unemployed individuals with limited skills further hampers sustained economic growth. In addition, the rapid increase in population contributes to a substantial youth bulge. To enhance the Human Development Index and promote sustainable development, it is imperative to prioritize population control and invest in education, healthcare services, and industrial development.

The rapid growth of our population poses a significant threat to the agricultural sector. As the demand for housing and industry increases, the expanding population encroaches on agricultural land and requires higher food production. According to a report from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 16% of the country's population experiences moderate or severe food insecurity, placing Pakistan at 92nd out of 116 nations in the global hunger index rankings.⁸ In this context, Malthusianism theory is applicable; it asserts that while the population grows exponentially, the growth rate of food supply and other resources remains linear, ultimately leading to a decline in living standards and potential die-off due to inadequate resources. Moreover, the adverse consequences of deforestation in Pakistan have been exacerbated by the issue of overpopulation. This is primarily due to the rapid pace of industrialization and urban expansion within the country. The World Wildlife Fund reports that a mere 5.7 per cent of Pakistan's land is covered by forests, making it one of Asia's countries with the lowest forest coverage rates after Afghanistan. Consequently, this high rate of deforestation contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions released into our atmosphere.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change acknowledges that population plays a role in the emission of greenhouse gases.⁹ Within Pakistan, several cities have gained notoriety for their high pollution levels, and this can be attributed to the concentrated population residing within these urban areas. The World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory estimates that environmental factors contribute to approximately 200 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants in Pakistan.¹⁰ As humanity expands its reach through urbanization and industrialization, natural habitats are shrinking rapidly, leaving wildlife species with no choice but to assemble into ever-smaller spaces, putting their survival at risk. Many biologists draw a connection between the extinction of wildlife and potential consequences for human societies on Earth. The exponential increase in our nation's population poses a range of multifaceted challenges. To mitigate these pressures, Pakistan must adopt and implement comprehensive reforms. Educating our citizens on the benefits of smaller family sizes as part of this broader endeavour is imperative.

⁶ "Slow progress of Family Planning in Pakistan and possible Learnings from the successful experiences of Iran, Turkey and Bangladesh," The United Nations Population Fund, Accessed date: August 06, 2023, URL: https://pakistan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/low_uptake_of_fp_pk_-_v9.pdf

⁷ "Human Development Report 2020," United Nations Development Programme, Accessed on August 6, 2023, URL: <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr2020pdf.pdf>

⁸ "The People Bomb," *Dawn*, May 14, 2022, URL: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1699549>

⁹ "Climate change: a threat to human wellbeing and health of the planet. Taking action now can secure our future," The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, accessed on August 06, 2023, URL: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2022/02/28/pr-wgii-ar6/>

¹⁰ Ibid

3. History of Population Census in Pakistan:

Pakistan has a rich historical background when it comes to conducting censuses. Following independence from British rule, Pakistan's first official population count was conducted in 1951. Subsequently, the second Census was carried out in 1961, and the third had to be postponed until 1972 due to political unrest and conflict with India during that period. In March of 1981, the fourth Census took place; however, due to specific circumstances, the fifth scheduled Census for 1990 occurred in March 1998.¹¹

The census bureau was founded in 1950 under the Ministry of Home Affairs and conducted the first three censuses while operating under that ministry. Following the 1972 Census, however, it was established as a permanent department within the Ministry of Interior. This move aimed to preserve expertise and continuity, which had previously been lost after each Census - as seen with the cases in 1951 and 1961. In addition to this reorganization, a registration organization was formed in 1973, also under the Ministry of Interior's oversight, headed by the Census Commissioner. Eventually, merging these two departments in 1976 created what is now known as the "Census & Registration Organization". In March 1978, the "Census & Registration Organization" was divided into two distinct departments. As a result of the General Statistics Act of 2011, the Population Census Organization became part of the Statistics Division and has since remained in this position. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is charged with carrying out census activities.¹²

The Census is recognized as a subject of the federal government in Pakistan, according to its placement at Sl. NO. 38 on the Federal Legislation list, Part-1, Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Pakistan. To determine the allocation of seats in the National Assembly, each province/FATA and Federal Territory are assigned seats based on their respective population figures from the most recent officially published census data under Article-51 of the Constitution. Additionally, funds distribution between the Federation and Provinces are governed by the National Finance Commission through Article-160, which also relies on census statistics. The allocation for recruitment to positions within the Federal sector is also determined based on population ratios provided by the Census. This is stated in Establishment Division's Office Memorandum No. 8/9/72, TRV, dated August 31st, 1973. The first five censuses were conducted with the legal framework of the Census Ordinance from 1959, which was revised periodically. On the other hand, conducting the sixth Population and Housing Census will be governed by the General Statistics Act of 2011.¹³

4. Population Census 2023:

The year 2023 marks a significant milestone in the South Asian region with the implementation of the 7th Population & Housing Census. Noteworthy is that this census initiative distinguishes itself by being one of the most extensive digitization projects ever undertaken, accomplished within a concise timeframe of only 18 months. Unprecedentedly, tablets were employed to enumerate and record population figures for the first time digitally; citizens were also allowed to engage in self-enumeration. Moreover, this landmark census effort facilitated economic analysis by establishing an economic framework capable of identifying clusters across various regions within the nation.

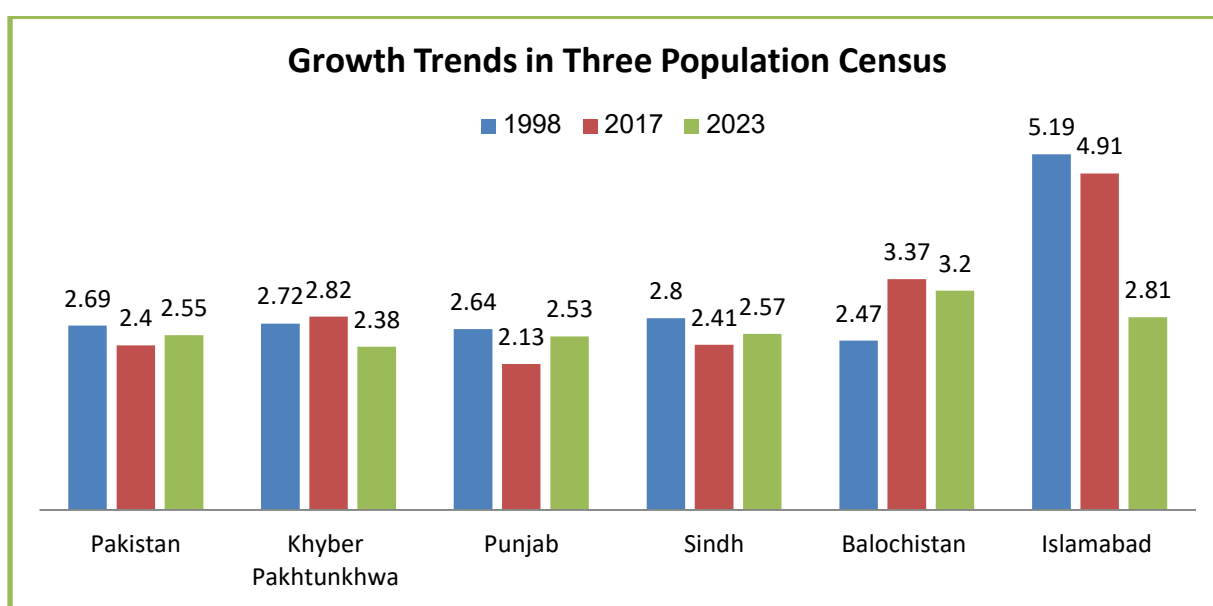
¹¹ "History and Introduction of Population Census," Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Accessed on August 7, 2023, URL: <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-census>

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

Additionally, all structures were geographically tagged to facilitate improved tracking mechanisms. Stakeholders involved had privileged access to online monitoring dashboards throughout the entire process from start to finish.

According to the most recent Census data, Pakistan's population has reached an impressive figure of 241.49 million, making it the fifth most populous country in the world after Indonesia, the United States, China, and India. The Census was conducted starting from March 1st, 2023, with great efforts made to represent the nation's demographics accurately. This comprehensive process revealed an annual growth rate of 2.55% since the previous Census in 2017, a substantial increase of more than 16%. In just under six years between these two censuses alone, there has been a significant rise in population by approximately 35 million individuals.¹⁴ The infograph below shows the growth trends in the census at each region:



Data source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Whereas the table below shows the population count and growth across administrative units in three recent censuses:

Admin Unit	Population (million)			Annual Growth Rate (%age)		
	1998	2017	2023	1998	2017	2023
Pakistan	132.35	207.68	241.49	2.69	2.40	2.55
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	20.92	35.5	40.85	2.72	2.82	2.38
Punjab	73.62	109.98	127.68	2.64	2.13	2.53
Sindh	30.44	47.85	55.69	2.80	2.41	2.57
Balochistan	6.57	12.34	14.89	2.47	3.37	3.20
Islamabad	0.81	2.01	2.36	5.19	4.91	2.81

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

¹⁴ Abdul Wali, "Digital census: Pakistan's population surges to 241.49 million," *The Express Tribune*, August 05, 2023

According to the infograph above, most of the Pakistan's population, precisely 61 per cent or 147.6 million people, reside in rural areas. In contrast, the urban population is 93.7 million or approximately 38.82 per cent of the total population. The province with the largest rural population is Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where nearly 85 per cent of its residents live in rural regions. Balochistan has a significant proportion of its inhabitants living in rural areas, accounting for around 69 per cent of the province's population. On the other hand, Punjab has a slightly lower percentage, with approximately 59 per cent residing in rural parts. Regarding urbanization, Sindh tops all provinces by having the highest proportion – about half (53%) –of its populace living in cities and towns.¹⁵

5. Conclusion:

To confront the growing consequences of overpopulation, it is imperative to implement practical measures for population control and management at all levels. The initial step towards achieving a well-balanced and productive human workforce involves recognizing overpopulation as an existential threat. To address this issue effectively, various strategies must be pursued. Firstly, governments must demonstrate their commitment by implementing pragmatic population planning policies. Additionally, increasing the prevalence of contraceptives can contribute significantly to curbing population growth rates. It is also crucial to involve religious scholars who can provide realistic interpretations of religion that promote responsible family planning practices.

Furthermore, prioritizing education by enhancing literacy rates and ensuring women have access to education will play a fundamental role in reducing birth rates. Challenging harmful traditions such as child marriages through legal prohibitions and actively debunking misconceptions regarding reproduction are further necessary steps. Moreover, enforcing limited-child policies while incentivizing compliance will regulate family sizes responsibly. Creating public spaces and recreational activities helps improve the quality of life and mitigate potential strain on resources due to overcrowding. Promoting awareness campaigns through mass media platforms will educate the general public about the repercussions of high population density while emphasizing sustainable solutions. The leadership must acknowledge that achieving sustainable development and equalitarianism relies on effective population management characterized by inclusivity and limitations.

In the light of the discussion the following set of points may be considered as way forward for future action plan to address this important issue:

- i. There is a crucial requirement for political dedication and expression within legislative processes that must be raised with unwavering determination and consistency. It is essential to ensure sustained involvement from lawmakers to advocate for issues effectively and promote executive branch accountability.
- ii. Ensuring a sustainable population should be viewed as a matter of national importance, with contributions from provincial and federal governments. A consensus must be reached on this issue and adequate funds for its implementation. The long-term nature of addressing population concerns requires patience in waiting for results, given its significant impact across various socio-economic development sectors. Sensitizing and empowering political leaders and bureaucrats is imperative to effectively address this challenge while maintaining strong accountability measures to monitor progress.

¹⁵ Sana Jamal, "Pakistan's population soars to 241 million," *Gulf News*, August 06, 2023

- iii. It is essential for all provincial Health Outlets to embrace and prioritize Family Planning as an integral service thoroughly. This commitment should be accompanied by efforts to strengthen the workforce of Lady Health Workers and other Community Health Worker programs, supplemented with additional interventions like male engagement, premarital counselling, promoting female education, and providing life skills-based education for young individuals about the advantages of family planning. To achieve a more cost-effective and comprehensive family planning program, immediate high-level discussions are necessary. These conversations should lead to decisions that ensure family planning services are included as part of the broader maternal and overall family health services the Department of Health provides. By holistically integrating these services into existing healthcare frameworks, we can enhance access to and quality of care related to family planning.
- iv. To ensure effective governance, it is crucial to establish an annual policy review system at both the national and provincial leadership levels. This will facilitate the evaluation of the policies put forth by these governing bodies and enable necessary adjustments for their successful implementation. Furthermore, it is imperative that we carefully examine the recommendations provided by CCI and take prompt action towards their realization. Reviewing and implementing these suggestions can enhance our policymaking processes and achieve desired outcomes more efficiently.
- v. There is a pressing need for increased focus and dedicated efforts in promoting and investing in birth spacing methods such as intrauterine contraceptive devices and implants. This crucial area has been overlooked for far too long, warranting immediate attention from policymakers, healthcare providers, and relevant stakeholders. It is high time that concerted actions are taken to raise awareness about the benefits of these effective contraception options while ensuring their widespread availability to those who could benefit from them. By prioritizing investment and promotion in this field, we can empower individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary for responsible family planning decisions while addressing critical reproductive health issues.
- vi. There is a pressing need for an increased focus on and investment in promoting birth spacing techniques such as Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices and implants. This issue has been neglected for some time but now demands greater attention.
- vii. In reproductive health, counselling and services are often interconnected. However, the private sector primarily emphasizes sales and service provision rather than offering comprehensive care. The media need to play an active role in promoting messages related to family planning to raise awareness and encourage responsible decision-making regarding reproductive choices.
- viii. Integrating research and evaluation has become a crucial aspect of the policy revision process. It is imperative to have a well-established monitoring and evaluation system supported by reliable data on service coverage and frequent representative surveys such as the Performance Monitoring for Action and operations research. These measures are necessary to ensure effective decision-making based on comprehensive information.



RESOLUTION NO. 549

"Recognizes the importance of commemorating World Population Day on 11th July each year, as designated by the United Nations to highlight the significance of population issues.

Acknowledging that the theme for World Population Day 2023 of "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities," is particularly relevant for Pakistan and other developing countries where there is an urgent need to prioritize the rights, well-being and empowerment of women and girls.

Showing concern that as the world's fifth most populous country, Pakistan's population is projected to reach 403 million by 2050 which is expected to contribute to challenges such as poverty and unemployment; food scarcity and water crisis, housing shortages, healthcare access and human capital development, depletion of natural resources; and environmental degradation.

Observing that the population rise is inextricably linked with women's reproductive health and well-being and often driven by a lack of reproductive rights for women, lack of birth control awareness, child marriages, limited access to education and low female workforce participation.

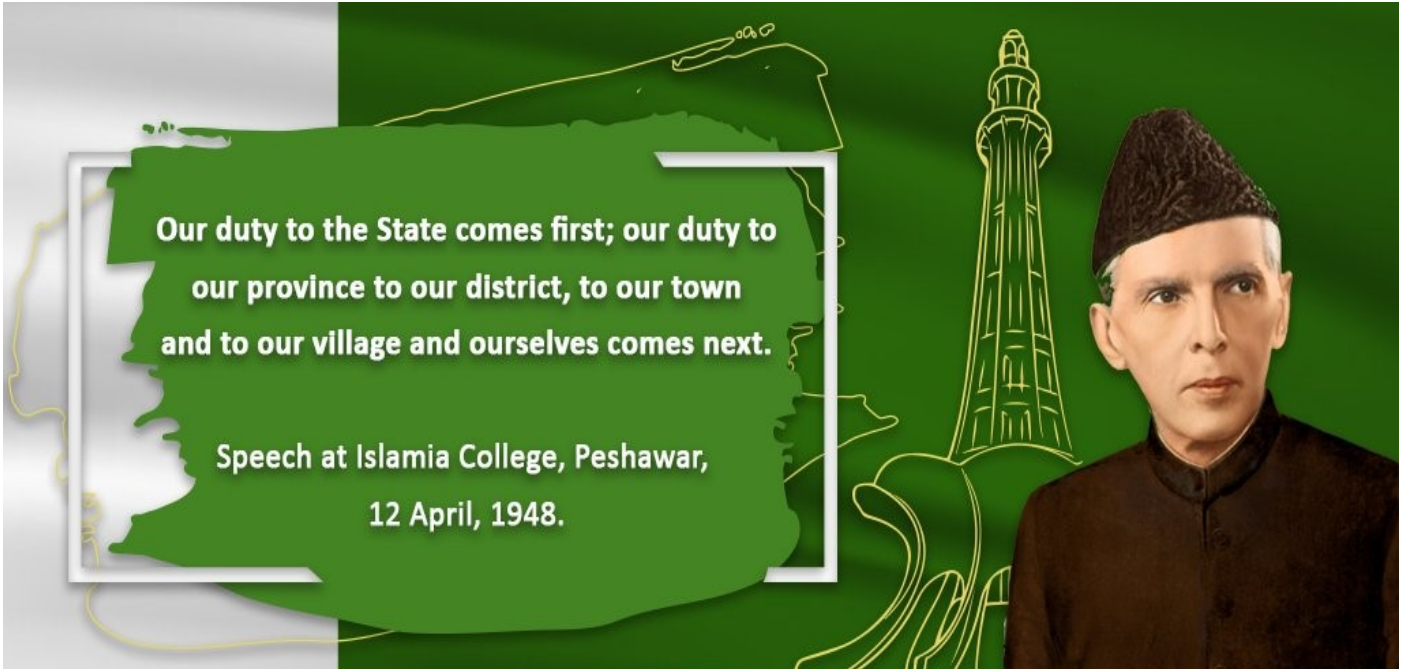
Acknowledging that by effectively managing the population and empowering women with reproductive rights, Pakistan can unlock the potential of its human capital, improve social indicators, and build a prosperous and equitable society.

The Senate of Pakistan, Therefore, urges upon the Government to engage in multi-sectoral collaboration, involving all Governmental agencies including Provincial Governments, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders to work collectively towards achieving sustainable population growth and gender equality".

Moved by Senator Sania Nishtar
Unanimously passed by the Senate of
Pakistan.

Islamabad, the 24th July, 2023.

Celebrating 76th Independence Day of Pakistan



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