

Seminar Report: World Population Day 2024

“Embracing the power of Inclusive Data towards resilient and equitable future for All”

POPULATION
DAY

Date of the Seminar: July 22, 2024

Venue: Serena Hotel, Quetta

Organized by:



POPULATION WELFARE DEPARTMENT, BALOCHISTAN IN COLLABORATION WITH



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World Population Day 2024

Theme: *To Leave No One Behind, Count Everyone*

Over the past three decades, societies around the world have made remarkable strides in enhancing the gathering, analysis, and utilization of population data. Today, population figures disaggregated by age, ethnicity, gender, and other factors reflect the true diversity of our societies with greater accuracy. These advancements have significantly improved global healthcare delivery, particularly in sexual and reproductive health, enabling individuals to exercise their rights and make informed choices. The advent of new technologies has facilitated more detailed and timely measurement of people's experiences than ever before.

However, despite these achievements, the most marginalized communities continue to be underrepresented in data, profoundly affecting their lives and well-being. World Population Day 2024 serves as a critical juncture to address the pressing question: Who is still going uncounted, and why? Understanding the costs of this exclusion on individuals, societies, and global efforts to ensure no one is left behind is paramount.

This day is a call to action for all stakeholders to enhance their commitment to capturing the full range of human diversity in our data systems. Ensuring that everyone is seen and can exercise their human rights is essential for enabling all individuals to reach their full potential.

To realize the rights and choices of those on the margins of our societies, it is imperative to count them – because everyone counts. The strength of our rich human tapestry is measured by its weakest thread. When data and other systems are inclusive of those on the margins, they benefit everyone, thereby accelerating progress for all.

By embracing this inclusive approach, we can ensure that our efforts to improve data systems are not only comprehensive but also equitable, ultimately driving forward global development goals and fostering a prosperous future for all.

The World Population Day 2024 seminar, held on 22nd July 2024, arranged by Population Welfare Department, Balochistan with support of UNFPA was a key event dedicated to this year's theme: "To Leave No One Behind, Count Everyone." The seminar's significance was rooted in its commitment to addressing crucial population issues by emphasizing the need for inclusive data collection and equitable resource distribution. The focus was on ensuring that marginalized and underserved communities are recognized and their needs addressed within broader development strategies.

Objectives:

- The seminar aimed to spotlight the importance of comprehensive and inclusive population data. By addressing disparities and highlighting the needs of marginalized groups, the seminar sought to ensure that everyone is accurately represented and considered in policy decisions.
- A primary objective was to advocate for gender equality by empowering women and girls. Discussions centered on their critical role in societal advancement and well-being, and the need for policies that enhance educational and health opportunities for them.
- The seminar focused on identifying and addressing challenges in reproductive health and family planning services. Strategies were developed to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of these services, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- By gathering experts, policymakers, and community leaders, the seminar provided a platform for collaborative dialogue. It facilitated the exchange of insights and best practices for addressing population issues and enhancing service delivery.
- The seminar aimed to influence policy-making through evidence-based recommendations. It sought to guide policymakers in crafting and implementing effective population management strategies that promote equitable development.

Proceedings

The seminar commenced with a recitation from the Quran, setting a contemplative and respectful tone for the event. Following the recitation, the host formally welcomed all attendees, including distinguished guests and experts. This opening set the stage for a series of speeches and presentations, which were central to the seminar's agenda.

The session then progressed with a sequence of insightful speeches from various experts and policymakers. These presentations provided a detailed exploration of the theme, examined current challenges, and proposed strategies to achieve the seminar's objectives. The seminar effectively facilitated a comprehensive discussion on how to ensure that no one is left behind, fostering a commitment to a more inclusive and equitable society.

Welcome Address and Presentation on RH and FP

**Director General – Population Welfare
Department, Balochistan**

Mr. Ghulam Mustafa

Director General of Population Welfare, Ghulam Mustafa, commenced the World Population Day seminar by warmly welcoming all attendees and emphasizing the significance of this annual observance, established by the United Nations in 1989. World Population Day serves to elevate global awareness regarding the challenges and opportunities linked to population growth, stressing the importance of sustainable development, reproductive health, and family planning. This day reflects the global commitment to addressing these critical issues and advocating for balanced population management.



Mr. Mustafa provided a comprehensive overview of the current demographic situation in Balochistan. According to the most recent census, Balochistan's population stands at approximately 14.5 million. Despite being Pakistan's least populous province, Balochistan faces significant challenges due to its extensive and diverse geography. The vast area complicates the provision of essential services, such as healthcare and education, which are crucial for effective population management.

He highlighted the urgent need for enhanced healthcare services by presenting recent maternal mortality statistics. The national maternal mortality rate in Pakistan is approximately 186 deaths per 100,000 live births. In stark contrast, Balochistan's rate is significantly higher at around 270 deaths per 100,000 live births. This disparity underscores the critical need for immediate and targeted improvements in maternal and child health services within the province.

Mr. Mustafa elaborated on the demographic growth trends in Balochistan. The province has seen a high population growth rate due to both elevated fertility rates and migration patterns. Balochistan's fertility rate remains well above the national average, contributing to rapid population growth. While a growing population can drive economic development and expand the labor force, it also places additional demands on resources and services. This situation necessitates the implementation of effective population management strategies.

The Director General also discussed the recommendations made by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) concerning population welfare. These recommendations emphasize the need for

comprehensive improvements in family planning services, enhanced healthcare infrastructure, and increased public awareness about reproductive health. Such measures are essential for tackling the province's population challenges, ensuring that citizens have access to necessary health services, and promoting informed family planning decisions. Ultimately, these efforts aim to improve the overall quality of life for the residents of Balochistan.

In addition, Mr. Mustafa outlined the vision and mission of the Population Welfare Department. The department envisions creating a well-informed and empowered society where every individual has access to essential reproductive health services and family planning resources. Its mission focuses on promoting sustainable population growth through comprehensive family planning programs, improved healthcare services, and community education. The department aims to enhance the quality of life for all residents by ensuring equitable access to reproductive health services, reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, and fostering a better understanding of population dynamics. By aligning its strategies with these goals, the Population Welfare Department seeks to contribute to the overall development and prosperity of Balochistan.

Mr. Mustafa's presentation also covered key elements of reproductive health (RH) and family planning (FP). He highlighted the importance of providing accessible and effective family planning services to manage population growth and improve reproductive health outcomes. The department's RH and FP programs are designed to offer comprehensive support, including counseling, contraceptive options, and education, to help individuals make informed choices about their reproductive health. Ensuring that these services are widely available and effectively implemented is crucial for achieving the department's objectives and addressing the province's population challenges.

Speech by a student/youth representative

Miss Sara Jamil- Rehnuma FPAP

Sara Jamil, a youth representative, delivered a heartfelt and impactful speech during the World Population Day seminar. She began by extending her gratitude to the organizers and everyone present, acknowledging their commitment to addressing critical population issues.

Sara emphasized the profound connection between effective population control and the enhancement of educational opportunities and future prospects. She articulated that managing population growth is essential not only for balancing resources but also for ensuring that every individual has the chance to achieve their full potential.

She highlighted how a smaller, well-planned family can significantly benefit both the children and the parents. For instance, she shared that in families with fewer children, parents can invest more time and resources into each child's education and personal development. This focused attention

often leads to better educational outcomes, as parents can provide more support with homework, extracurricular activities, and individualized guidance.

Sara illustrated her point with examples of how smaller family sizes allow for greater financial stability. For example, a family with two children can allocate their budget more effectively, ensuring that each child receives quality education, healthcare, and other essential services. This financial stability also reduces stress on parents, enabling them to nurture their children in a more balanced and supportive environment.

She further emphasized the positive impact of family planning on educational infrastructure. Smaller family sizes contribute to less crowded classrooms and better resource allocation within schools. This creates a more conducive learning environment where students can benefit from personalized attention and improved facilities.

Sara concluded by calling on all stakeholders to continue their efforts in promoting family planning and reproductive health. She urged that by working together to manage population growth, society can ensure that educational systems are robust and capable of providing every child with the opportunities they deserve. In doing so, we can foster a brighter and more equitable future for all, where each individual has the chance to thrive and contribute to a prosperous society.

MNCH and Family Planning

Dr. Uzma Sohail –Head of Gynecology Department, Civil Hospital Quetta

Dr. Uzma Sohail delivered a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and issues confronting family planning and reproductive health services. Her speech provided a critical examination of both systemic problems and practical solutions within these domains.

Dr. Uzma Sohail began by addressing a fundamental issue impacting access to family planning services: inadequate transportation infrastructure. She explained that individuals, particularly those in remote and rural areas, face significant barriers due to limited transportation options. The lack of reliable transport means that people often have to travel long distances to reach healthcare facilities, which can deter them from seeking necessary services and restrict their access to contraceptives.

She then highlighted the challenges related to the availability and distribution of contraceptives. She pointed out that contraceptive shortages remain a pressing issue in many regions. These shortages stem from a variety of factors, including inefficient supply chains, poor inventory management, and logistical difficulties. For instance, rural clinics may experience delays in receiving contraceptive stock, leading to periods where certain methods are temporarily unavailable. This inconsistency in supply impacts the ability of individuals to obtain the contraceptives they need reliably.

Dr. Uzma Sohail also emphasized the crucial role of family planning in managing population growth and improving overall health outcomes. She underscored that family planning is not solely about controlling birth rates but also about empowering individuals with the resources and information needed to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. Despite its importance, she acknowledged that the implementation of comprehensive family planning programs faces numerous challenges, including those related to accessibility and supply. A specific method Dr. Uzma Sohail focused on was tubal ligation, a permanent form of contraception. She noted that while tubal ligation is an effective option for many individuals, its uptake is limited by several factors. These include a lack of public awareness about the procedure, cultural and social barriers, and a shortage of trained healthcare providers who can perform the procedure. She stressed the need for increased training and resources to improve access to this method.

Additionally, Dr. Uzma Sohail discussed the importance of education and training for healthcare professionals. She announced plans to provide training on various family planning methods, including tubal ligation and other long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs). This training aims to equip healthcare providers with the skills needed to offer a full range of contraceptive options and to address misconceptions and barriers related to these methods.

Dr. Uzma Sohail also touched upon the impact of drug use on reproductive health. She explained that substance abuse can severely affect fertility and overall reproductive health, complicating family planning efforts. She emphasized the need for education for both healthcare providers and the public to mitigate the negative effects of drug use on reproductive health.

In conclusion, Dr. Uzma Sohail's speech provided an in-depth look at the challenges facing maternal and child health (MNCH) and family planning services. Her detailed analysis highlighted the urgent need for action to address these challenges, ensuring that family planning services are effective, accessible, and equitable.

Dynamics of Population Control and Governance Challenges

Mr. Jawad Dogar - Additional Inspector General

Jawad Dogar, Additional Inspector General, delivered an in-depth presentation on the dynamics of population control and governance challenges in Pakistan. He began by offering a comprehensive overview of the country's demographic profile, emphasizing that Pakistan, with its population exceeding 240 million, is the fifth most populous nation globally. This substantial population size presents



both opportunities and significant challenges in managing such a rapidly growing demographic.

Mr. Dogar outlined the primary factors contributing to Pakistan's high population growth rate, which stands at approximately 2% annually. He attributed this growth to high birth rates driven by cultural preferences and limited access to family planning services, especially in rural and underserved areas. He also noted that advancements in healthcare, which have reduced mortality rates and increased life expectancy, further contribute to the population surge. Additionally, he mentioned that social norms and economic incentives in rural areas, where larger families are often viewed as a source of labor and security, play a crucial role in sustaining high fertility rates.

The presentation highlighted the profound impacts of rapid population growth. In the healthcare sector, the swelling population has placed immense pressure on the system, exacerbating issues related to maternal and child health. Elevated birth rates have led to higher maternal and infant mortality rates, signaling an urgent need for expanded healthcare infrastructure and resources. Overcrowded hospitals, insufficient medical staff, and shortages of essential medicines and equipment further strain the healthcare system.

In education, the growing population has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of educational resources, which can compromise the quality of education and affect future generations. This situation poses a significant challenge to long-term socio-economic development. Schools in many areas struggle to accommodate the increasing number of students, leading to diminished teacher-student interaction and deteriorating educational standards.

Mr. Dogar also addressed the impact of high population growth on crime rates. He explained that increased population density can lead to greater competition for resources and opportunities, which may contribute to rising crime rates. Economic pressures, limited access to quality education, and inadequate infrastructure further exacerbate this issue, creating environments where crime is more likely to occur. The lack of economic opportunities and social support systems in densely populated areas often results in higher incidences of poverty-related crimes and social unrest.

Furthermore, Mr. Dogar discussed the environmental impacts of rapid population growth. He highlighted how the increasing population contributes to environmental degradation through deforestation, overexploitation of natural resources, and increased pollution. Urban areas face severe air and water pollution due to the burgeoning population and lack of effective waste management systems. The strain on natural resources, such as water and arable land, threatens food security and the sustainability of agricultural practices.

From an economic perspective, Dogar noted that while a growing population can potentially provide a larger workforce and stimulate economic growth, it also presents significant challenges. The current rate of population growth outpaces economic development, leading to high unemployment rates and underemployment. The informal sector absorbs a significant portion of

the labor force, often under precarious conditions without adequate labor protections. Additionally, the increased demand for housing, transportation, and public services puts a strain on the economy and hampers efforts to achieve sustainable development.

To address these challenges, Dogar stressed the need for a comprehensive approach. This includes expanding access to family planning services, particularly in underserved areas, and investing in healthcare and education infrastructure. He emphasized the importance of public awareness campaigns and robust policy support to promote effective family planning and resource management. Educating communities about the benefits of smaller family sizes and the availability of contraceptive options is essential for changing attitudes and behaviors.

Moreover, he highlighted the importance of governance in addressing these challenges. Effective governance requires strong institutions, transparency, and accountability. Dogar noted that governance challenges such as corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and lack of coordination among government agencies hinder the implementation of effective population management policies. Strengthening institutional capacities and ensuring good governance practices are crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.

Improving social and economic policies, enhancing community policing efforts, and upgrading urban infrastructure are also critical to mitigating the negative impacts of population growth on crime rates and ensuring a safer, more equitable society. Effective urban planning, investment in public transportation, and the development of affordable housing are necessary to accommodate the growing population in urban areas. Additionally, creating economic opportunities through vocational training and support for small and medium-sized enterprises can help address unemployment and improve living standards.

Overall, Jawad Dogar's presentation underscored the urgent need for coordinated efforts to manage Pakistan's population growth sustainably and address the associated governance challenges effectively. He called for a multi-sectoral approach involving government agencies, civil society, and international partners to develop and implement strategies that promote balanced population growth, enhance social services, and ensure the well-being of all citizens.

Importance of data, family planning and development updates from UNFPA

Dr. Rubina Ali – Assistant Country Representative UNFPA

Dr. Rubina, the Assistant Country Representative of UNFPA, delivered an insightful and comprehensive address during the seminar, beginning her speech by narrating the story of the evolution of the world's population. She traced the journey from a time when the global population was manageable and resources appeared abundant, to the present day, where rapid population growth has become a significant concern for governments and societies worldwide. Dr. Rubina emphasized that as the world's population expanded exponentially, it began to raise alarm bells about the sustainability of resources and the equitable distribution of opportunities.

She pointed out a critical issue that has emerged alongside population growth: the unequal and unjust distribution of resources. Dr. Rubina stressed that despite the global progress in technology and development, the benefits of this progress have not been evenly distributed. Many communities continue to suffer from poverty, lack of access to education, and inadequate healthcare, exacerbated by the challenges of a growing population. She highlighted that this disparity is most acutely felt in underprivileged regions, where limited resources and opportunities can lead to severe consequences, including unwanted pregnancies and maternal and child mortality.

Delving into the specifics of reproductive health, Dr. Rubina mentioned the grave issue of unwanted pregnancies. She explained that these often result in tragic outcomes, such as the death of the mother, the child, or both. This situation underscores the critical importance of accessible and effective family planning services. However, she noted a significant shift in the global approach to population management over the past four decades. The outdated concept of strict population control has been replaced by a more nuanced, people-centered approach. This modern perspective recognizes the autonomy of individuals and couples to make informed decisions about their reproductive health without external coercion.

Dr. Rubina emphasized that the role of development sectors, partners, and experts is not to dictate the number of children people should have but to empower them to make the right decisions for themselves. She stressed that everyone has the right to have as many children as they wish, but if they choose to practice family planning, it is the responsibility of healthcare providers, governments, and organizations like UNFPA to ensure they have access to safe and effective contraceptive methods. This is about upholding human rights, including the right to health, dignity, and personal choice.



She further elaborated on the responsibility of the more privileged members of society to assist those who are less fortunate in exercising their reproductive rights. Access to healthcare, including family planning services, should not be a privilege of the few but a guaranteed right for all. Dr. Rubina highlighted the importance of providing comprehensive education on reproductive health and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, can make informed choices about their lives.

A significant portion of Dr. Rubina's speech was dedicated to the theme of "inclusive data" and the principle of "leaving no one behind." She explained that inclusive data is essential for understanding and addressing the needs of all segments of the population, including marginalized groups. By collecting and analyzing data that reflects the diversity of the population, policymakers can make better decisions that are inclusive and equitable. She gave the example of the importance of possessing a CNIC (Computerized National Identity Card) in Pakistan, which is not only a document of identification but a gateway to accessing various rights and services. Without such recognition, individuals can be excluded from vital aspects of social and economic life, reinforcing the cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Dr. Rubina stressed that "leaving no one behind" means ensuring that all people, regardless of their caste, creed, religion, disability, or any other status, are included in development processes. She emphasized that every individual should have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to lead a healthy and fulfilling life. This inclusive approach is crucial not only for social justice but also for the overall development and stability of societies.

She also touched upon the concept of demographic transition, noting its significance in the context of population dynamics. Dr. Rubina highlighted how today's youth, who make up a significant portion of the population, will eventually age, leading to a shift in demographic patterns. It is crucial, she argued, to keep an eye on this demographic transition to ensure that societies are prepared for the changes it will bring, such as the need for different types of healthcare, social security, and employment opportunities.

Moreover, Dr. Rubina introduced the concept of demographic resilience, which refers to the ability of societies to withstand and adapt to demographic changes. She emphasized that as populations undergo demographic transitions, it is essential to build resilience by investing in healthcare, education, and social services that can support the evolving needs of the population. Demographic resilience, she explained, is not just about surviving demographic shifts but about thriving despite them, ensuring that societies remain strong, stable, and capable of providing for all their members.

In conclusion, Dr. Rubina's speech centered on the themes of data, family planning, and development. She called for a continued focus on collecting and using inclusive data to inform policies, ensuring that family planning services are accessible and respect human rights, and fostering demographic resilience to face the future challenges of population dynamics. Her

address was a powerful reminder of the importance of equity, human rights, and resilience in the pursuit of sustainable development and population management.

The role of development partners in PFP and PAF

Dr. Zaib Dahar- Country Representative PATHFINDER

Dr. Zaib Dahar, the Country Director of Pathfinder, delivered a compelling address focused on the significant role of youth in Pakistan's demographic landscape and the importance of addressing unmet needs in family planning. She began by expressing her gratitude to all the esteemed guests and speakers, acknowledging their contributions to the discussions.

Dr. Dahar highlighted a critical demographic fact: 64% of Pakistan's population is comprised of youth, most of whom are in their reproductive years. This presents a unique challenge, as this segment of the population will inevitably contribute to a rise in birth rates. She emphasized that while controlling births outright is not feasible, educating the youth, providing them with employment opportunities, and facilitating economic growth can empower them to make informed decisions about their reproductive health. This approach can help manage population growth in a more sustainable manner.

Addressing the unmet need for family planning, Dr. Dahar pointed out that 22% of women in Pakistan express a desire for family planning services but do not have access to them. This unmet need is a crucial area that requires immediate attention. Dr. Dahar underscored the importance of inclusive data in identifying and targeting these underserved populations. She explained that comprehensive and accurate data is essential for understanding which areas or groups are not adequately covered by existing family planning programs.

She also discussed the link between poverty and high birth rates, noting that in many communities, there is a belief that having more children will improve economic prospects. To counter this, Dr. Dahar advocated for strategies that prioritize education, particularly for women, as a means of economic empowerment. An educated and empowered woman, she argued, is better equipped to make decisions about her reproductive health and can provide better care and opportunities for her children.

Dr. Dahar referenced a survey indicating that only 1 in 4 women in Pakistan make their own decisions regarding family planning, with the rest relying on their families to decide. She stressed that empowering women through education and economic opportunities is key to changing this dynamic. An educated mother is more likely to make informed decisions and to nurture her children in a way that contributes to the overall development of society.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Dahar highlighted the potential of Pakistan's youth as a driving force for the country's development. She emphasized that this "manpower" could be a significant opportunity for national growth if properly harnessed. She also acknowledged the vital role of

development partners, particularly in the areas of Postpartum Family Planning (PPFP) and Post-Abortion Family Planning (PAFP), in supporting the government's efforts to provide comprehensive reproductive health services.

Dr. Dahar called on all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and international partners, to work together in creating an environment where every woman has the right and the means to make informed choices about her reproductive health. She reiterated that inclusive, data-driven approaches are essential to ensuring that no one is left behind, and that Pakistan can achieve sustainable development through the empowerment of its youth and women.

The agenda of Family Planning, the concept of Tawazun and health services

Abdullah Khan - Secretary of Population Welfare, Balochistan



On the occasion of World Population Day, Mr. Abdullah Khan, Secretary of Population Welfare, Balochistan, delivered a comprehensive message emphasizing the critical need for addressing population growth through the lens of national priorities and Quranic principles. He reflected on the Quran's teachings regarding balance, which he highlighted as essential for sustainable development at both micro and macro levels.

Mr. Khan elaborated on the micro-level strategies by underscoring the importance of empowering women through education and enhanced access to reproductive health services. He emphasized that educating women is vital not only for their personal development but also for enabling them to make well-informed decisions about their reproductive health. He stressed that the provision of contraceptives at all community levels is a fundamental right and a key responsibility of the state. Ensuring that every individual has access to these services is crucial for fostering a balanced and healthy society, ultimately leading to improved overall health outcomes and sustainable population management.

At the macro level, Mr. Khan addressed the need for population policies that are consistent with the Quranic principles of balance and justice. He observed that outdated concepts such as the "two-child policy" are being replaced by a more nuanced and inclusive approach to population control. This new strategy involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including government departments, civil society organizations, and international partners. The goal is to implement effective and sustainable population management practices that respect individual rights and promote equity.

Mr. Abdullah Khan also highlighted the responsibility of all relevant stakeholders—government entities, civil society groups, and community leaders—to actively engage in and fulfill their roles. He emphasized that a collective effort is essential for the successful implementation of these strategies and for safeguarding the rights of individuals. This united approach is necessary to achieve the desired outcomes and ensure that population management efforts are both effective and just.

Guided by the wisdom of the Quran, Mr. Khan expressed optimism about the potential for a well-coordinated and enlightened approach to addressing the challenges of population growth. He believes that such an approach will contribute to a balanced and prosperous future for both Balochistan and Pakistan, ensuring that the needs and rights of all individuals are respected and met.

Family Planning and Islam

Dr. Qari Abdul Rasheed- Religious Scholar

Dr. Qari Abdul Rasheed, a respected religious scholar, began his address by condemning the persistent issue of gender discrimination within society. Drawing from the profound wisdom of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he referenced the Last Sermon, Khutba-e-Hajjatul Wida, as an enduring charter of human rights. This sermon, he emphasized, is not merely a historical document but a divine guideline that unequivocally establishes the rights and dignified status of women. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) explicitly granted women a position of honor and respect, mandating that they be treated with fairness and equality in all aspects of life. The Qur'an and Hadith further elevate the status of women, denouncing all forms of discrimination and highlighting their integral role within the family and society.

However, Dr. Rasheed lamented that these divine teachings are not being fully realized in today's society. Despite the clear Islamic injunctions, many communities continue to deny women their



rightful place, leading to widespread social inequality. He remarked that while Islam provides the foundation for a prosperous and stable family, the harsh realities of modern life often leave women struggling for basic necessities and social security. Instead of being the cornerstone of a thriving society, many women are trapped in a cycle of deprivation and marginalization.

He further pointed out that the social fabric of the nation is under threat due to entrenched taboos and misconceptions about the socio-legal status of women. Dr. Rasheed expressed deep concern over the continued stigmatization of female births, the resistance to educating girls, and the exclusion of women from critical decision-making processes. He noted that these attitudes not only undermine the rights of women but also jeopardize the moral and social health of the entire community.

In light of Islamic teachings, Dr. Rasheed emphasized the importance of family planning as a means to ensure the well-being of women and the stability of the family unit. He explained that Islam advocates for responsible parenthood, where the health and welfare of both the mother and the child are prioritized. The concept of spacing births, as advised by Islamic scholars, is rooted in the idea of preserving the health and dignity of the mother while ensuring that each child receives the proper care and attention needed for their upbringing.

Dr. Rasheed argued that family planning should be understood not as a limitation on the number of children but as a means of fulfilling one's religious duty to protect and nurture the family. He called for greater education and awareness within the community to dispel myths about family planning and to encourage practices that align with Islamic principles. He urged religious leaders and community influencers to actively participate in outreach programs, teaching the importance of responsible family planning within the framework of Islamic values.

Finally, Dr. Rasheed urged the government and religious institutions to collaborate in promoting family planning initiatives that respect Islamic teachings while addressing the practical needs of modern society. He called for a concerted effort to integrate these teachings into community outreach programs, ensuring that every family understands their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Through such efforts, he concluded, the community can build a more equitable and prosperous society, where women are honored and family life is strengthened in accordance with the timeless wisdom of Islam.

The importance of education in Family Planning

Rahila Durrani - Education Minister of Balochistan

Rahila Durrani, the Education Minister of Balochistan, delivered a compelling address, focusing on the intricate link between population management and societal well-being. She began by extolling the sacred role of motherhood, portraying it as a cornerstone of creation and a vital pillar of family and society. She emphasized that mothers, through their care and nurturing, shape the future of the nation by raising healthy, well-rounded children. However, she stressed that this sacred role is increasingly challenged by the pressures of uncontrolled population growth.



In her speech, Rahila Durrani underscored the importance of effective population management as a means of ensuring better opportunities and a brighter future for children. She discussed the direct impact of unchecked population growth on the availability of resources, access to quality education, and overall quality of life. The minister pointed out that without proper planning, the burgeoning population could strain the country's resources, leading to a diminished quality of life and fewer opportunities for future generations.

Rahila Durrani referenced the wisdom of religious scholars, highlighting the importance of maintaining a gap of at least two years between births, as advised in Islamic teachings. This gap, she noted, is crucial not only for the health and well-being of the mother but also for the healthy development of the child. Such practices, she argued, are deeply rooted in the principles of Islam, which advocates for the well-being of both mother and child.

She called for the enactment of comprehensive legislation to protect the rights and health of mothers and children, stressing that this is a critical area where parliamentarians and policymakers must focus their efforts. In the 21st century, she argued, it is imperative that the government not only promotes but also enforces policies that support family planning and reproductive health, ensuring that every mother and child receives the care and protection they deserve.

Rahila Durrani also highlighted the vital role of education in family planning. She emphasized that educating both men and women about reproductive health and family planning is essential for making informed decisions. Education empowers individuals to understand the implications of their choices, leading to healthier families and a more balanced society. She called on all stakeholders, including educators, healthcare providers, and community leaders, to prioritize education as a tool for effective population management.

In conclusion, Rahila Durrani's message was a powerful call to action for the integration of family planning into modern policy-making. She urged a collective effort from government officials, legislators, and community leaders to work together in addressing the challenges posed by population growth. By implementing supportive legislation, raising awareness, and enhancing education, society can protect and support the health and future of children, ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Importance of role of family planning in socio-economic development

Mrs. Hadia Rab Nawaz – Parliamentary Secretary Population



Parliamentary Secretary Hadia Rab Nawaz delivered a compelling address on the significance of family planning in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. She began by acknowledging the critical role that family planning plays, not just as a health issue, but as a fundamental aspect of societal progress. In her view, when families have the ability to decide the timing and spacing of their children, they are empowered to make choices that positively impact their well-being and the broader community.

She emphasized that in a country like Pakistan, where overpopulation continues to strain resources, promoting family planning is essential for creating a balanced and prosperous society. She articulated that well-spaced children lead to healthier mothers and infants, and provide more opportunities for education and personal development. This, she asserted, helps reduce poverty, improves gender equality, and fosters an environment where all individuals can thrive.

Hadia Rab Nawaz also highlighted the economic benefits of family planning. She explained that a well-managed population is vital for economic stability and growth. By preventing large households from overwhelming families, resources can be invested in the education and health of fewer children, who then contribute more productively to society. She noted that educated and healthy citizens are the backbone of a thriving economy and are more likely to drive

innovation and progress. Furthermore, she argued that balanced population growth allows the government to allocate resources more effectively, ensuring that public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure meet the needs of all citizens, while also reducing pressure on natural resources.

The Parliamentary Secretary underscored the connection between family planning and gender equality, stating that it empowers women to take control of their reproductive health and make decisions that are best for their families. She noted that when women can plan their families, they are more likely to pursue education and employment, contributing to both their personal growth and the economy. This, she argued, leads to more equitable societies where women can fully participate in all aspects of life.

She also addressed the alignment of family planning with Islamic teachings, emphasizing that Islam advocates for the well-being and balanced growth of the Ummah. She reminded the audience that Islam encourages responsible parenthood and the careful consideration of a family's capacity to provide for its members. She reiterated that family planning is about ensuring that each life brought into the world is given the best possible start and opportunity to succeed.

World Population Day – Message by Chief Minister Balochistan

Mir Sarfraz Bugti – Delivered by Mr. Sattar Shahwani

On the occasion of World Population Day, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that improving health and education is a top priority for his government. He stated that without taking health seriously, the dream of development cannot be realized. To reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, it is essential to enhance the provision of maternal, neonatal, and child health services in Balochistan and take concrete steps to revolutionize the health sector. Additionally, reproductive health and family planning play a fundamental role in reducing maternal and child mortality and improving the overall health of the population. Therefore, a substantial budget has been allocated for the health sector and family planning in the 2024-2025 budget.

Regarding World Population Day, the Government of Balochistan reaffirms its commitment to focusing on reproductive health and family planning, which are vital components of the overall health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. These services encompass a wide range of information and strategies aimed at helping individuals make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. Through effective reproductive health and family planning



initiatives, individuals can exercise their rights, prevent unintended pregnancies, avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and enhance their overall health.

Reproductive health services extend beyond family planning to include maternal care, safe childbirth, postnatal care, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, infertility prevention and management, and reproductive health education. Access to these services is crucial to ensuring the overall health and well-being of individuals, especially women and adolescents. A high-quality reproductive health care system can help individuals address specific needs and challenges throughout their reproductive lives, enabling them to contribute to the overall development of the province and the country.

Chief Minister Bugti conveyed that the Government of Balochistan reiterates its commitment to working with partners for the good health and well-being of the people of Balochistan. A healthy Balochistan means a healthy Pakistan.

Message by Chief Secretary, Balochistan

Shakeel Qadir Khan – delivered by Miss Habiba

Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, issued a message on the occasion of World Population Day, observed on July 11, emphasizing that improved reproductive health and family planning have the potential to enhance health statistics in Balochistan. The province faces numerous challenges in healthcare, including high maternal and neonatal mortality rates, limited access to quality healthcare services, and low usage of contraceptives. Prioritizing reproductive health and family planning services is a significant step toward improving health outcomes.

Studies and research reports indicate that investing in reproductive health services helps address high maternal and neonatal mortality rates. By ensuring access to maternal care, safe childbirth services, and postnatal care, the health and survival rates of mothers and newborns can be potentially improved. Establishing and strengthening healthcare facilities, training healthcare providers, and promoting community-based initiatives are essential for achieving better health outcomes.

Reproductive health and family planning play a crucial role in reducing unintended pregnancies and associated risks. By ensuring access to and promoting the use of contraceptive methods, couples can make informed choices about birth spacing. This not only improves the health of mothers and children but also reduces the burden on healthcare facilities due to healthier pregnancies.

To achieve better health outcomes, it is necessary to address the cultural and social barriers to reproductive health and family planning through a viable strategy. Engaging community leaders, religious scholars, and local influencers can help dispel misconceptions, eliminate taboos, and create a supportive environment for reproductive health and family planning. In this regard,

community-based initiatives and awareness campaigns can play a key role in breaking down barriers and promoting acceptance, resulting in long-lasting and positive effects.

The Chief Secretary further stated that improving the availability and accessibility of reproductive health services and family planning methods should be our top priority. This includes the provision of healthcare facilities, training healthcare and family planning service providers, and ensuring the availability of contraceptives. He also highlighted that social mobilization, community outreach programs, and telemedicine initiatives can help overcome geographical and logistical barriers, especially in the province's remote and underserved areas.

The Government of Balochistan remains committed to improving health and family planning services in the province.

Remarks by chief guest, Governor Balochistan

Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

On the occasion of World Population Day, Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail highlighted the critical challenge posed by the exponential population growth in the province. He emphasized that Balochistan is currently grappling with the dual issues of resource scarcity and the depletion of natural resources. Celebrating World Population Day in our province aims to raise public awareness about the importance of managing population growth in a balanced manner, which is essential for creating a healthier environment.

Governor Mr. Mandokhail stressed the pivotal role of reproductive health and family planning services in aligning population growth with available resources. These services are crucial for reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. A healthy mother leads to a healthy baby. Balochistan, unfortunately, has the highest maternal mortality rate in Pakistan, making it imperative for us to take significant steps towards population control and improving health-related indicators. This includes enhancing public sector services, such as the provision of contraceptives, accessible health facilities, and quality education, particularly for girls.

He called upon political parties, civil society organizations, and community leaders to unite in prioritizing health and family planning initiatives for a healthier Balochistan. All efforts should focus on integrating and enhancing service delivery at the community level to achieve positive



health outcomes. Development is unattainable without balanced population growth and smaller family sizes, necessitating the adoption of appropriate policy directions.

Governor Mandokhail's message underscores the need for a concerted effort to improve public health and family planning services, ensuring sustainable development and a brighter future for Balochistan.

Event Snapshots: World Population Day Observance



Seminar on World Population Day 2024

"Embracing the Power of Inclusive Data towards a Resilient and Equitable Future for all"
Organized by Population Welfare Department Balochistan
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