



WORLD POPULATION DAY 2023

*UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GENDER
EQUALITY:
UPLIFTING THE VOICES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS
TO UNLOCK OUR WORLD'S INFINITE
POSSIBILITIES.*

**POPULATION WELFARE DEPARTMENT BALOCHISTAN
IN COLLABORATION WITH UNITED NATIONS POPULATION
FUND PAKISTAN**

World Population Day 2023

World Population Day is observed on July 11th each year to raise awareness about global population issues. It aims to highlight the importance of sustainable development, reproductive health, and family planning. The day encourages discussions on population growth, its impact on resources, and the need for equitable access to healthcare and education. Through various initiatives, World Population Day promotes responsible population management, gender equality, and empowerment, ultimately striving for a balanced and prosperous future for all.



MESSAGES /REMARKS ON THE EVE OF SEMINAR HELD IN CONNECTION WITH WORLD POPULATION DAY 2023.

The Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, in reference to the World Population Day, has given the message that Health and Education are the priority of his government. In health sector reform and improvement, Reproductive Health and Family Planning has core role to help in decreasing maternal and child mortalities, and in improving the overall health status of the people. Therefore, ample budget for health sector and for family planning has been allocated in the budget 2023-24.



He said that reproductive health and family planning are vital components of overall health and well-being for individuals, families, and societies. They encompass a wide range of services, information, and strategies that aim to support individuals in making informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. With effective reproductive health and family planning measures, individuals can exercise their rights, prevent unintended pregnancies, avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and promote their overall health.

Reproductive health services encompass a broader scope beyond family planning. They include antenatal care, safe delivery, postnatal care, prevention and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Illnesses, prevention and management of infertility, and comprehensive sexuality education. Access to these services is essential for ensuring the overall health and well-being of individuals, especially women and adolescents. By providing quality reproductive health services, healthcare systems can address the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals throughout their reproductive lives.

The Chief Minister said that the government of Balochistan, on the World Population Day, reiterates its commitment to work in collaboration of the partners for the good health and wellbeing of the people of Balochistan. With healthy population, the dream of development can be materialized.

MIR ABDUL QUDDUS BIZENJO
Chief Minister, Balochistan

The Chief Secretary, Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, congratulated Population Welfare Department and its partners on organizing the Seminar in connection with celebration of the World Population Day. He appreciated the efforts of Population Welfare Department with regard to organizing events, awareness sessions, satellite clinics and other activities he had been observing through social and print media.



He highlighted the importance of reproductive health and family planning, which has potential for improving health indicators. He remarked, “Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan, faces numerous challenges related to healthcare, including high maternal and infant mortality rates, malnutrition, limited access to quality healthcare services, and low contraceptive prevalence rate. By prioritizing reproductive health and family planning interventions, Balochistan can make significant move towards improving health outcomes for its population. Investing in reproductive health services, ensuring access to skilled antenatal care, safe delivery services, and postnatal care, the health and survival rates of mothers and new-born can significantly be improved.

By engaging community leaders, Ulema-e-Kiram, and local influencers, it is possible to challenge misconceptions, dispel myths, and foster a supportive environment for reproductive health and family planning. In this regard, community-based initiatives and awareness campaigns can play a vital role in breaking down barriers and promoting acceptance.”

He underscored the importance of improving the availability and accessibility of reproductive health services and family planning methods including establishing and adequately equipping healthcare facilities, training healthcare providers, and ensuring the availability of a wide range of contraceptives. Community outreach programs, mobile clinics, and telemedicine initiatives can also help overcome geographical and logistical barriers, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

He pledged to support the agenda of family planning and reproductive health in Balochistan by extending all possible financial, technical, moral and logistic assistance in order to reduce unwanted pregnancies to save mothers and children and ensure a balanced family.

ABDUL AZIZ UQAILI
Chief Secretary, Balochistan

Member Provincial Assembly, Chairperson Women Parliamentarian Forum Balochistan, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, emphasized the need for bringing about a change at grass root level and extending the benefits of Reproductive Health and Family Planning Services to masses in urban as well as rural areas. She rightly pointed out the misconceptions about Population Welfare Program in



the country, particularly in Balochistan. Given the religious and cultural inclinations, it is often misconceived as a birth control program as opposed to the reality that it basically aims at ensuring mother & child healthcare and laying the basis for a healthy and prosperous family. In order to shun these misconceptions, the narrative of Population Balance rather than Population Control needs to vigorously advocated and disseminated at all strata of society, so that with popular acceptance of the program the standard of life could be improved. She urged the people to realize the fact that growing population will turn out to be a liability rather than an asset. Regrettably, keeping in the mind the limited and continuously depleting resources, people do not see growing population as more mouths to feed but as more hands to earn.

Moreover, she admitted to the fact that the lack of legislation and implementation of policies have proved to be stumbling blocks in making Population Welfare Program a success in the province. Therefore, a multisectoral approach should be adopted. She proposed a comprehensive strategy encompassing coordinated efforts ranging from planning, policy making, legislation, advocacy, mass awareness to timely execution of decisions and provision of services at doorstep.

Drawing the attention of the audience towards this year's theme, i.e., Unleashing the Power of Gender Equality: Uplifting the Voices of Women and Girls to Unlock Our World's Infinite Possibilities, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi underlined the importance of Gender Equality and deemed it as the foundation for development.

DR. RUBABA KHAN BULEDI
Member Provincial Assembly, Chairperson
Women Parliamentarian Forum Balochistan

Social Activist, First Woman Speaker of Balochistan Assmebly, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani

shed light on the importance of the theme of this year's World Population Day i.e. Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities. She very rightly advocated the concept of Healthy Mother; Healthy children to be the base of not only a balanced family but also a strengthened and



enlightened society. For, this will empower women on one hand and will help men to reap fruits of shared social responsibilities. To this end focus on Education is of paramount importance, given the socio-economic landscape of the country in general and that of Balochistan in particular. Focus on female education and female health should be prioritized by all the stakeholders right from policy making to the execution of social development programs.

Sharing her views on the services being provided by the Population Welfare Department, the distinguished speaker suggested the department and its allied organizations to ensure Program's visibility across the province. The service delivery outlets need to made accessible to all; and the services provided therein shall be extended to all the rural areas. Awareness programs shall be carried out at all strata of society involving every section of society, so that everybody is well aware of the significance of the subject and knows the vitality of the services being provided in this regard.

In order to achieve the objective, the Government needs to take the lead and activate the Task Force for supervising the program and providing necessary guidance for achieving short- and long-term goals.

RAHILA HAMEED KHAN DURRANI
Social Activist, First Woman Speaker of Balochistan Assembly

Religious Scholar Dr. Qari Abdul Rasheed sharing his views on the occasion discouraged gender discrimination in society. He referred to the last sermon of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Khutba-e-Hajjatul Wida which is undoubtedly a charter of human rights. It very clearly laid down the principles, rights and duties towards women; granting them an honoured and elevated status in society. Besides, the divine revelations have further elevated the status of women thereby shunning all forms of discrimination against them. Relating these injunctions and teachings to today's human life, he remarked that, unfortunately, what actually is lacking is the implementation of these golden principles. Therefore, the life of the majority population of the country presents a dismal picture. Instead of erecting the foundation of a prosperous and sound family as a unit of stable society, the women are mired in the unending quest for basic necessities and social security.



He went on to say that another factor responsible for threatening the social fabric is the social taboos associated with the socio-legal status of women in Pakistan. Ironically, birth of a female child, focus on their education, women's role in decision making and their share in inheritance are yet to be granted social acceptance and recognition.

Along with educating people through formal education, community outreach and community engagement programs shall be pursued involving the services of the influentials of the community to garner wider social acceptance.

Dr. QARI ABDUL RESHEED
Religious Scholar

Secretary Government of Balochistan, Population Welfare Department, Mr. Abdullah Khan extended his gratitude to all the stakeholders for organizing the event. He urged that such advocacy campaigns will give renewed vitality to our commitments.

He submitted that family planning and healthy norms are fundamental human rights; therefore, the government of Balochistan has been working actively on policy interventions. It will clearly provide a roadmap for future course of action. In the presence of a viable & practicable strategy and clear direction the capacity and potential of the human resource can be utilized to the maximum coupled by efficacious use of financial resources for achieving the cherished goal of a balanced family where every member enjoys a healthy life.

These interventions aimed to introduce bills that promote reproductive health awareness, enhance access to commodities, and provide choices for family planning and child spacing. By implementing such measures, the government seeks to reduce unintended pregnancies and prevent maternal and newborn mortalities, which claim the lives of hundreds of women each year.

He urged the importance of aligning the services of public and private sector for reaping the fruits of the program. For, working in isolation will not supplement the efforts of each other. This public private partnership will promote innovation, increase technical cooperation, reduce costs of services, ensure greater accessibility to services and help infrastructure development.



ABDULLAH KHAN

**Secretary, Population Welfare Department,
Government of Balochistan**

Director General, Population Welfare Department, Balochistan Ghulam Mustafa Hanbi apprised the audience of the demographic landscape of the province. With an average annual growth rate of 3.37% the population of the province is expected to witness a twofold increase by 2050. Alarming, 1000 maternal deaths occur annually. These maternal deaths can be avoided if contraceptive use rises from the current 20%. In terms of contraceptive usage, the unmet need is 32%; in other words, the unmet need can simply be described as the percentage of the couples of child bearing age who are not using contraception but want to. All these factors contribute to high fertility resulting in the higher number of maternal and infant deaths and increased child malnutrition. It is worrying that 48 infants die before reaching one year of age (per 1000 live births); and 27% children under the age of 5 are underweight.



It is in this context that the World Population Day provides us with an opportunity to reassure our commitment, spread awareness and execute plans with a vision to improve the standard of life. There is no denying the fact that global population growth at an exponential rate has posed serious challenges to socio-economic life across the globe, where even developed nations are striving hard to maintain a balance between resources and opportunities. This calls for realizing the gravity of the situation and executing the Population Welfare Program on priority basis. The concerted efforts of all stakeholders in this regard will ensure improvement in demographic indicators.

The recommendations of the Council of Common Interests have already outlined the key areas and set long and short-term targets. Let us now resolve to translate it into reality through coordinated and collaborative efforts.

GHULAM MUSTAFA HANBI
Director General, Population Welfare Department,
Government of Balochistan

Provincial Lead, UNFPA Dr. Sarmad Saeed Khan, representing the United Nations agency aimed at improving reproductive and maternal health worldwide, provided an insight into multisectoral and multidimensional approach towards addressing issues pertaining to reproductive health and family planning in Pakistan. He emphasized that in order to achieve sustainable population growth public discourse on population dynamics as a core economic and social development element should be promoted. In addition, increase spending on population services: Pakistan's current public sector spending of less than \$ 1.0 per capita should be doubled to eliminate unmet need.



Another important factor is to sustain political commitment and increase accountability to ensure that the system is delivering and meeting the family planning needs of the constituents.

He also drew a comparison between Pakistan's population and economic growth. The ratio has proved to be inversely proportional. Imbalanced and uncontrolled population growth has proved to be an obstacle in the way of economic stability. Because, for 1% increase in population there should be 3% increase in economic resources.

He urged on ensuring enabling environment, service delivery and coordination and communication so that the public at large can benefit from reproductive health and family planning services. Public sector services can be realigned to meet the needs; public-private partnerships can be promoted to reach the unreached. Adopting a fully integrated approach to link environment, population, & climatic changes in the national development planning can reap many benefits of improving health indicators and agricultural sustainability and reducing outward migration on urban settlements thus increasing the economic productivity of ecosystems. The Taskforce on Population must press the adoption of such policies.

Data is key to inform the evaluation of a policy. Thus, Pakistan must invest efforts in strong data systems for the timely availability of quality age & sex-disaggregated data according to the needs of various stakeholders so that these policies and programs are evaluated regularly.

DR. SARMAD SAEED KHAN
Provincial Lead, UNFPA

As Head of Gynecology Department, Dr. Uzma Sohail shared her vast experience of social norms and taboos associated with reproductive health and family planning in somewhat reserved society of Balochistan. She underlined some of these factors such as disregarding the importance of women education, women's inability to take decisions in their marital life and lack of awareness about basic health issues and the available facilities. In the very first place a girl's education is compromised on account of early age marriage. They are put at a greater risk of facing medical complications at such a tender age, which leave life-long adverse implications. Let alone bearing and nourishing a baby, she herself requires proper physical and emotional growth.

Besides, there are cases where no consideration is given to the physical well-being of a woman for conceiving and giving birth to more babies. Malnutrition is one the major reasons contributing to not only Maternal Mortality Rate but also Infant Mortality Rate. In addition, in case of a medical emergency the services of untrained birth attendants are resorted to; further aggravating the situation.

Lack of awareness about and accessibility to the Reproductive Health and Family Planning is yet another major obstacle in addressing maternal and neonatal health issues. Service delivery outlets at very distant places across the province owing to the long distances and rigid terrain have made it hard for women to go there.

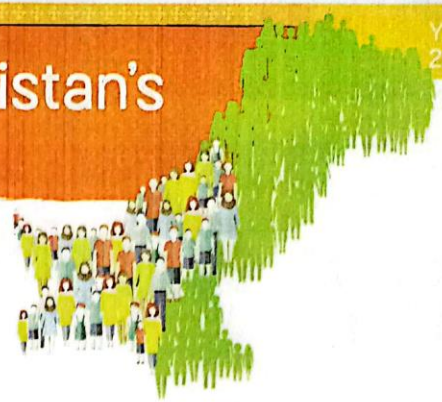
The way forward to overcome these issues is to prioritize women education and awareness; reforming social norms and bringing about behavioral changes through community engagement such as discouraging early age marriages; and ensuring availability of commodities and visibility of services outlets.

DR. UZMA SOHAIL
Head of Gynecology Department,
DoH, Balochistan.

Current State of Balochistan's Population

YEAR 2023

A rapidly growing population means ever-increasing demands for food, schools, health facilities, jobs and infrastructure, and rising pressure on the government to keep pace in providing these services at an equally fast pace.



POPULATION

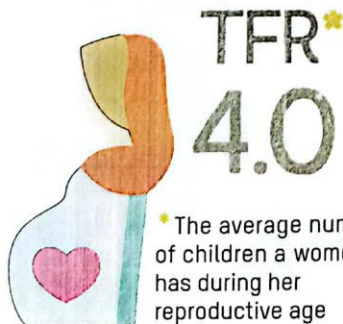
AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE



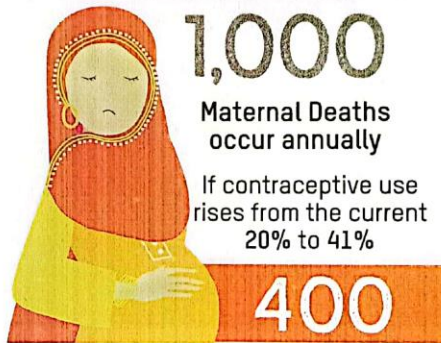
BY 2050 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT POPULATION OF BALOCHISTAN WILL BE

24 million
AT THE CURRENT RATE OF FERTILITY DECLINE!

TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

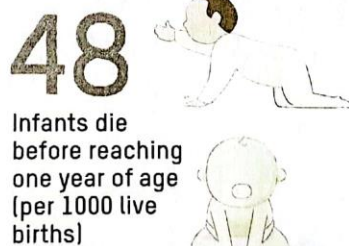


MATERNAL DEATH



MOTHERS WILL BE SAVED!

INFANT MORTALITY RATE



UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

32%
unmet need*



On average couples have 1 unintended child*

* Couples of child bearing age who are not using contraception but want to

MALNUTRITION



Abdullah Khan says PWD making efforts to improve reproductive health services

Independent Report QUETTA: Secretary Population Welfare Department Government of Balochistan Mr. Abdullah Khan expressed a renewed commitment of making the contraceptives available to all the eligible couples for ensuring small family norms through proper child spacing.

Welfare Office Quetta in connection with World Population Day. The purpose of the seminar was to sensitize people regarding the family planning as a fundamental human right, child spacing, personal hygiene and small family norms.

Mustafa, District Officer Ayub Kakar, Deputy Director Noor Ullah Tareen, Deputy Director Shahmir Mandokhail and others were also present on the occasion.

Family planning key to improve health indicators in Balochistan

By Our Reporter

QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili has said that family planning has potential for improving health indicators in Balochistan. He was speaking to the participants of a seminar organized by Population Welfare Department in collaboration with UNFPA and FPAP on Thursday.

and low contraceptive prevalence rate, adding that by prioritizing reproductive health and family planning interventions, Balochistan can make significant moves in improving health outcomes. He emphasized on investing in reproductive health services, safe antenatal and postnatal care, and added that family planning is crucial in reducing unintended pregnancies which become the highest cause of maternal and infant mortality rates in the province.

Women empowerment must to control population growth: Rubaba

QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary of Law, Science, and Information Technology Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi Thursday underscored the need to empower women to bring the rapidly growing population to a sustainable level. Effective measures should be taken by formulating strategies to empower Pakistani women by providing equal opportunities and creating awareness about their reproductive health rights to bring the rapidly growing population to a sustainable level, said Buledi.

said gender equality is a global issue, Pakistan ranks at the bottom of the Gender Gap Index ranking of 2022, which means that Pakistan has a very low rate of gender equality. The percentage of women seats in the national assembly is also low, women empowerment through women education, women participation in the labor force, and gender equality are issues of national importance for which multi-faceted measures are indispensable for their solution, she maintained.

special traditions in which religious scholars, civil society, students, and all sections of the society will have to advance the message of awareness. Balochistan is the largest province of the country where health facilities and food were facing shortage and maternal mortality rate for which the Health Department, Education Department, and Population Welfare Department will have to take concrete steps to deal with it, he noted.

Seminar on population calls for action to save mothers through effective measures

QUETTA (6 AM Report): The Population Welfare Department Government of Balochistan, in collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Population Development (UNFPA) and Family Planning Association Pakistan (FPAP) successfully organized a One-Day Seminar titled "Unleashing the Power of Gender Equality: Lifting Voices of Women and Girls to Unlock our World's Infinite Possibilities", in connection with World Population Day here on Thursday.

The seminar attracted a large number of attendees, including members of civil society, students, and all sections of the society. Chief Secretary Balochistan Mr. Abdul Aziz Uqaili, Secretary Population Welfare Department Abdullah Khan, DG Population Ghanam Mastafa, Religious Scholar Dr. Qari Abdul Rasheed Al-Azhari, Special Secretary Health Dawood Bazar, provincial lead UNFPA De. Sarmaid, among others.

Rubaba Buledi calls for empowering women to control population growth

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She said gender equality is a global issue, Pakistan ranks at the bottom of the Gender Gap Index ranking of 2022, which means that Pakistan has a very low rate of gender equality. The percentage of women's seats in the national assembly is also low, women's empowerment

through women's education, women's participation in the labor force, and gender equality are issues of national importance for which multi-faceted measures are indispensable for their solution, she maintained. Addressing the ceremony through video link, Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili said that the government is taking serious steps to achieve the national goals related to family planning and the implementation of effective policy in this regard should prove to have substantial results.

Speakers emphasize the importance of effective population management

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She said that the World Population Day helps us look into global issues in our context, adding that the population growth has far-reaching effects for the generations to come. She said that in context of Balochistan, more children are not seen as more mouths to feed but more hands to work and earn, adding that even children are seen as commodity and as an asset and specifically in rural areas children and daughters are either traded, married or sold. "These are our own faces which we have to look into," she added.

WORLD POPULATION DAY 2023

