



**FORMAN  
CHRISTIAN  
COLLEGE**  
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)



# **HEALTHY FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN CHANGING SOCIETY - ROLE OF FAMILY PLANNING**

## **PRC'S SECOND RESEARCH ESSAY COMPETITION**



# FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

FCCU was founded in 1864 with a vision to impart quality education to the people of this region and to contribute to their academic, economic and social development. From the premises of a small college, FCCU has grown into an academically robust university that offers a wide range of opportunities to its students to grow and reach their full potential. FCCU welcomes students from all backgrounds and all regions of Pakistan and abroad to a university where they live, grow and learn, meet some of the greatest thinkers in their chosen disciplines and make lifelong friendships — a place they can truly call home.

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In unison with the motto of FCCU “by love serve one another” the mission of PRC is to serve the people in the true spirit of inclusion and democracy as the premier teaching and research institute of Population Studies in Pakistan. The main purpose of the institute includes providing advanced training to students in Population Studies, generating and disseminating research on population growth and its impact, spreading awareness on population related issues and evaluating existing policies and initiatives to counter the population problem in Pakistan and collaborating with national and international institutions for trainings and research.

**PRC Research Essay Competition 2024**  
**on**  
**Healthy Families and Communities In**  
**Changing Society - Role of Family Planning**

This booklet contains student essays submitted to a research essay competition organized by the Population Research Center (PRC) at FCCU, funded by the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) at FCCU. The booklet contains the top fifteen essays, selected after a critical evaluation by the evaluation committee.

The top three candidates were given prize money. The material (text, facts, and figures) written in this booklet is solely the author's responsibility, not that of the organizer or funder.

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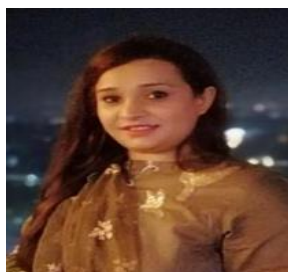
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# **Healthy Families and Communities in a Changing Society: The Role of Family Planning**

**Concept Note**

**By**

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In Pakistan, as is the case for many developing countries, the dynamics of family structure, population growth, and socio-economic disparities are multifaceted. It is our duty, as scholars, policymakers, and advocates, to address these changes head-on and seek comprehensive solutions.

Pakistan's population is estimated to be 241.49 million, according to the latest digital census which was held in 2023. The rapid rise in population has numerous repercussions for the country's socioeconomic and political development. The country is struggling to control rapid population growth and increased family sizes. There are multiple obvious, as well as hidden reasons for the high population growth in Pakistan. For this, adopting family planning is a need of the hour.

Promoting the uptake of family planning as a substantive policy measure is important as it can result in direct health and community benefits by saving the lives of women and children by preventing maternal mortality, complications with premature births, infant and child mortality, stunting and wasting etc. Pakistan's infant mortality rate is 53 deaths per 1000 live births, the neonatal mortality rate is 39 deaths per 1000 live births, while the under-five mortality rate is 63 deaths per 1000 live births (UNICEF, 2023). Similarly, over 40 percent of Pakistan's under-five children are stunted, as compared to the South Asian average of 31 percent (Hyder & Ersado, 2023).



On a broader level, sound family planning policies can aid the public sector in responding to growing challenges linked with health, poverty, education, urbanization, climate change, and environmental degradation. When accounting for population growth, there are almost 3 million more poor people in the country than in 2018 (The World Bank, 2023). Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon that deteriorates education and health quality in the country. The root cause of rising poverty is the accelerating rate of population growth which needs to be controlled by proper family planning.

According to the annual contraceptive performance report (2020-21) published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the overall Contraceptive Performance in terms of Couple Years of Protection (CYP) for the year 2020-21, as compared to 2019-20, has decreased by 3.3%. However, the adaptation of family planning practices and increased usage of contraceptives is challenging in the patriarchal family systems of Pakistan. Some prominent challenges for women in adopting family planning services in Pakistan include family structure, women's autonomy, decision-making, mobility, norms, culture, religion, and ineffective policy implications. Contraceptive usage is directly and indirectly dependent on family structures.

Studies show that in-laws influence the usage of contraceptives by Daughter-in-law (DIL) through their husbands and by controlling their mobility (Pradhan & Mondal, 2023). One in five women in Pakistan do not use contraceptives and thus bear unwanted pregnancies due to patriarchal family systems and the norms and values they offset. According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2022), Pakistan ranks a startling 145<sup>th</sup> number, out of 146<sup>th</sup> countries, which indicates the enormity of the issue. In health and survival, Pakistan ranks a woeful 143rd number out of 146<sup>th</sup>. Studies show that women living in rural areas have higher unmet needs than women living in urban areas, given the different family structures, and educational levels in rural and urban areas in Pakistan (Asif & Pervaiz, 2019; Meherali et al., 2021).

The variance in the usage of contraceptives in rural and urban areas gives rise to internal migration and thus urbanization. Research shows that better access to reproductive and maternal care could be associated with internal migration flows: urban to urban and rural to urban (Dadras et al., 2023).

Incorporating family planning services and implementing effective policies is challenging for the state and public sector. Pakistan has a diverse population with varying cultural and religious beliefs which may discourage contraception. Some religious and traditional leaders may oppose family planning, making it difficult for policymakers to promote these policies. As existing literature shows, culture and religion play a significant role in determining whether couples go for family planning or not. Furthermore, political instability and ad-holism disrupts long-term policy planning and implementation. Despite the numerous challenges, the country has made its FP2030 commitments aligned with its national goals agreed under the Council of Common Interests (CCI) Recommendations and the targets set for the National Action Plan to strengthen family planning. Considering population as a socio-economic-cultural issue, the government has developed a new national narrative called ‘Tawazun’. (FP, 2030). The vision behind this narrative is as follows:

*“By the end of 2030, Pakistan envisions a society where women and girls are empowered and all couples enjoy basic rights to decide the number of their children freely and responsibly by maintaining a balance (tawazun) between their family size and resources, make informed choices to achieve a prosperous, healthy, and educated society.”*

We, as academics and social scientists, truly believe that this narrative will help in controlling the rising population. However, incorporating effective family planning requires a multi-faceted approach involving education, community engagement, healthcare infrastructure improvement, and collaboration with religious and community leaders. In addition, linking academic discourse to advocacy could pave the way for a better future. In a democratic Pakistan, political parties must lead the narrative-building process for family planning by giving it primacy in their calls to the electorate. The crucial role of civil society organizations cannot be understated in this context.

In this regard, the Population Research Center at FCCU has organized its second research essay competition ceremony for bachelor's students to enlighten them about the importance and significance of family planning practices.

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# **Still Fighting for the Right to Choose: Examining the Impact of Low Women Empowerment on Family Planning in Pakistan**

*Tayyaba Asad*

Pakistan is facing the threat of collapse at the hands of a population crisis, and low levels of women empowerment are a major cause. For several decades now, the country has been battling an unsustainable population growth rate, which currently stands at an alarming 2.55% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). At the same time, its level of gender inequality is one of the worst in the world as indicated by a position of 142 out of 146 on the Global Gender Gap Index of 2022. These two issues are deeply intertwined, and their successful resolution is dependent on significant improvements in both. This essay will explore the bidirectional relationship between overpopulation and low women empowerment in the context of family planning; the focus will be on highlighting how various indicators of low women empowerment relate to family planning in Pakistan, and the ways and importance of overcoming various barriers in this area.

The relationship between female education and fertility has been studied extensively, and their results support the same outcome: the more educated the female population of a country, the lower its population growth rate. Winston (1930) was one of the first researchers to emphasize a negative correlation between female education and fertility rates, and his findings have been corroborated widely since then by Kasarda (1979), Jain (1981), Bhat (2002), and Ali & Gurmu (2011) to name a few. This issue is highly relevant to Pakistan where only 46.49% of women are literate, 34.2% have attained high school education, and a mere 8.3% have acquired tertiary education (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021); the situation is particularly deplorable for women in rural areas of Pakistan. A low literacy rate presents some obvious challenges for family planning in terms of effective dissemination and utilization of information; illiterate women are less likely to understand information about contraception methods, family planning, and reproductive health, and are at a higher risk of falling prey to misconceptions. The scope and impact of this issue, however, is much larger than the inability of women to read and write as low educational attainment translates directly into a lack of awareness. A young girl who has been told since day one that birth-giving

is the ultimate mark of womanhood and that all her children will be provided for by God is unlikely to accept the use of contraception. Similarly, someone who has never been taught how to think critically about issues, to look at the bigger picture, or to make decisions for themselves is unlikely to know how to do so. In such circumstances, education acts as a powerful moderating force against the strong influence of traditional socialization. Female education also indirectly reduces fertility by delaying the age of marriage and first conception. It should thus be an important focal point for women's empowerment aimed at improving family planning in Pakistan.

An increase in female employment is another notable indicator of women's empowerment that has been linked to more sustainable reproductive practices in developing countries. In a study conducted in rural Africa, Van den Broeck and Maertens (2015) found that female employment reduces the number of children per woman by 25% and that this effect is larger for illiterate than for literate women. Based on these findings, they also recommended targeting family planning programs in areas where female employment is rising to increase their effectiveness. These results can logically be extrapolated to Pakistan, a developing country with an alarmingly low female labor force participation rate of 24% (International Labor Organization, 2022). Complete financial dependence on a male family member, especially the husband after marriage, significantly limits the decision-making power of a woman; she is bound to make reproductive decisions based on the demands of the person she and her offspring rely on for survival. Thus, the financial liberation offered by formal employment grants women greater power to negotiate the number of children they want, their birth intervals and their quality of life. In addition to this, a job in their chosen field can act as a healthy focus for women, reducing the pressure on their traditional role of child-bearing and -rearing.

Upadhyay et al. (2014) identified the decision-making power of women in various social realms as a domain of women empowerment. Being members of a patriarchal, and often misogynistic, society leaves Pakistani women with limited power to make choices for themselves. Right from the beginning, girls are reliant on their parents (mostly fathers) to entertain education as an option for them, and to continue doing so until the end, despite the financial and social costs incurred. If women do make it to the workforce, they are faced with a whole new set of obstacles to overcome. Many

occupations, especially those with high status and good wages, are deemed inappropriate for women in South Asia which significantly limits their options. At the workplace, women are also disproportionately subjected to unfair wages, hostile attitudes, and harassment. These issues, combined with the overall stigma attached to women working in Pakistan, often force them out of the workforce. The most disheartening fact, however, is that even if women raise their status and decision-making power by acquiring an education and means of self-sufficiency, the ultimate reigns remain in the hands of men due to the nature of society. All this is true for reproductive decisions as well, and a change in the status of women is necessary for their effective contribution to family planning. This proposition is supported by Nadeem et al. (2021) who found women's decision-making autonomy to be positively associated with contraceptive use. Shah et al. (2020) also identified the lack of approval by husbands as a significant reason for women's resistance to using modern contraceptives in Pakistan. Thus, the vast gap between men's and women's decision-making power needs to be bridged to improve the efficiency of family planning programs in the country.

An undeniable relationship exists between women's empowerment and sustainable population growth in Pakistan; the arguments presented above support this conclusion. The good thing is that both of these areas have been an important focus for improvement in the country. In the last 14 years, Pakistan has dramatically expanded school enrollment for girls (Barón & Bend, 2023), and thousands of projects are actively trying to empower women through the provision of microfinance loans, legal assistance, and practical guidance for day-to-day matters. Awareness about family planning is also rising in Pakistan. Unfortunately, however, the rate of progress has been dismally slow. A vast majority of girls are still out of school, strong barriers to female employment exist, and the country continues to be plagued by regressive ideas about gender roles and family planning. Moreover, the prevalence of contraception usage in Pakistan has remained stagnant between 30-35% since 2007 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Another issue to consider here is that women's empowerment has often not been a direct or major part of family planning programs in the country. This is largely due to the existence of a vast number of obstacles to population control, many of which can be tackled more easily in the short run. For example, the focus of most family planning initiatives in Pakistan has been on increasing the supply of contraceptives and clarifying

away misconceptions about them. While these efforts are necessary for an immediate reduction in population size, I believe that women's empowerment can be a significant solution in the long run.

There is immense potential for women to help in resolving the population crisis being faced by the country right now. If the extent of the projects aimed at empowering women through education and employment opportunities can be increased, and the wide social gap between men and women can be reduced, overpopulation can be tackled quite naturally and sustainably. The country would benefit the most from targeting these programs toward women who face added social disadvantages on account of their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geographical location. While it is easier to launch family planning programs in the select few urban centers of Punjab and Sindh that already boast higher-than-average incomes, easy access to medical resources, and well-established information channels, these are the areas that require them the least. Instead, the focus needs to be on the vast majority of families that are living around or below the poverty line in the remote and underdeveloped regions of the country. By helping the women in these areas acquire an education and means of self-sufficiency, the efficacy of new and existing family planning programs can be increased manifold. An empowered female population will not only be better aware of the benefits of a small family for them and their country but will also be able to choose such a family for themselves. Numbers paint a very gloomy picture of Pakistan, but an in-depth analysis highlights the potential for improvement and in doing so grants hope. If the country continues to strive for women's empowerment and redoubles its current efforts, it will surely overcome its population crisis and leave behind a country with a notably healthier social landscape.

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## **Societal Attitudes and Family Planning: Breaking Stigmas and Taboos/ Social Pressures and Gender Role**

*Roshan Nazer*

The world that we humans inhabit represents an ever-evolving panorama of contemporary societies. Societies all over the world, collectively navigating the trajectory towards modernity, rationality and better education give one the impression that the concept and administration of family planning must be prevalent and thriving, paving the path towards stable demographic patterns, heightened women empowerment, and ameliorated economic and health conditions. Though this may be the case for some of the first-world countries, the reality for the majority of societies all over the world is the polar opposite. The application of the notion of family planning in societies, notably in third-world countries, resembles a solitary grain of sand amid the expansive beach of societal dynamics. The Pakistan Reproductive Health and Family Planning Survey reveals a shocking difference between knowledge (97%) and use of contraception (28%) (Khawaja, Tayyeb, & Malik, 2004). Not much difference in results is found in countries such as India, Saudi Arabia, Ghana and Ethiopia etc. These astonishing results owe to the possible social stigmas associated with family planning, societal pressure and the one-sided decision of men regarding this matter. The need of the hour is to raise awareness about contraceptive methods and their benefits among both men and women and dismantle the social taboos, all while advocating gender equality in this matter.

While it may not be much factual for the first world nations, families, specifically women in developing countries grapple with unaddressed needs for contraception under the sway of societal pressure. Most of this societal pressure exists as a consequence of the prevailing fallacy rooted in the misapprehension of religious (Islamic) tenets, faultily proclaiming that family planning infringes upon religious principles. A common misinterpretation of Islamic teachings is that children are a gift from God and family planning is prohibited (Abdi et al., 2020). This is the reason why most of the couples, specifically women who encounter stigma for even talking about contraception notably belong to Muslim, conservative Christian or Hindu families.

According to WHO family planning factsheet for 2022, 41.3% of married or

unmarried women do not use any sort of contraception. One of the reasons identified by WHO for this nonuse is cultural and religious opposition (WHO, 2023). In many cultures all around the globe, it is considered a shameful act to even refer to family planning or resorting to contraception. For instance, in Pakistan, cultural and “religious” taboos stand in the way of the adoption of family planning (Camphuijsen, 2016). Rukhsana Anwar, central president of the National Program Health Employees Association in Punjab argues that the biggest hurdle against family planning in Pakistan is that it carries a social stigma (Khan, 2023). A cross-sectional study conducted at Urban Health Care Centre Azizabad Sukkur reveals that 30% of women don’t use contraceptives because of “religious” reasons, 20% due to prohibition from elders, and 45% due to discouragement from relatives (Shah, Nisar, and Qadri, 2008).

Even with the exception of Muslim nations, women all over the world continue to face the barrier of shame in their approach towards family planning. In many countries globally, specifically in Asia, engaging in discourse concerned with sexual activity remains a taboo. (Adhikari & Tamang, 2009).

Apart from religious reasons, people still feel embarrassment and shame in talking about contraception (Roberts et al., 2005). This embarrassment can be further linked with the stigma that society places on premarital sexual activity. The concept of chastity is very strictly limited to girls in major societies of the world. Hence young girls prevent approaching contraceptive measures due to the fear of being recognized and shamed as sexually active (Regmi et al., 2010). Even within the state of matrimony, for women, such as those in India, conversations pertaining to sex and related topics persist as a taboo. Couples avoid the discussion of family planning due to shame and embarrassment (Parsekar et al., 2021).

An additional reason why there is a societal aversion towards contraceptive measures in numerous societies is the desire for sons. This phenomenon is suitably exemplified by families in South Asian countries where pervasive gender discrimination compels women to endure repeated childbearing until they give birth to a male offspring. The preference for a son encourages a woman’s decision of the nonuse of contraception (Jayaraman, Mishra & Arnold, 2009). This preference is higher in rural than urban areas among illiterate families (Chavada & Bhagyalaxmi, 2009). For instance, Sardar Jan Muhammad Khilji from Quetta, and Mastan Khan Wazir from North Waziristan

have 60 and 22 children respectively, from multiple wives. The reason for this absurdity, as identified by Yasmin Lehri, a former Balochistan assembly lawmaker, is the desire for sons (Khan, 2023).

As we journey towards the identification of potential socio-cultural factors averse to family planning, we recognize gender inequality and the coercion from husbands against contraception as one of them. The autonomy of women when it comes to such matters in a male-dominated society is like a mere drop in the limitless ocean. This very statement is ironic as it is mainly women who are predominantly affected by decisions regarding childbearing and contraception. Male dominance does not allow women to participate in marital decisions (Pegu et al., 2014). A cross-sectional study conducted at SRM Medical College Hospital reveals that 19% of women who don't use contraceptives do so due to opposition from their husbands (Murugesan, Sundaram & Muthusamy, 2016). In Pakistan, 67.5% of husbands decide on the planned number of children and use of contraceptives (Zafar et al., 2003).

One of the main reasons for male opposition is the desire for increased sexual pleasure (Nkonde, Mukanga & Daka 2023). This is also the reason that even if the use of contraceptives is approved by males, it is the women who use them rather than males. A survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 2017-2019 reveals that only 8% of couples relied on male condoms (“What portion of women use birth control?”, 2023).

The nonuse of family planning is calamitous at a societal and global level as it causes unwelcome pregnancies, increased abortions, expeditiously expanding population, economic degradation, and constrained resources of health and education. Awareness about family planning is necessary as it improves the quality of life and the economic state of society (Tuladhar et al., 2008). The need for awareness of family planning is coupled with the demand of de-stigmatizing this matter, reshaping societal attitudes towards it, and dispelling the misconceptions regarding this matter. The advocacy for comprehensive sex education programs is an imperative step in debunking the possible myths encircling family planning.

The first misconception that must be addressed concerning contraception is that religion discourages it. Family planning is permitted by Islam (Zaman, 1971). The

Bible also allows it (Hicks, n.d.).

Moreover, women of all ages must be taught that there is no shame in being sexually active and using birth control. Birth control must not be looked at as a taboo as it is simply medicine (Watson, 2020). Despite the existing fact that premarital sexual activity, especially from girls, is socially unacceptable almost all over the world, providing them with contraception is imperative as it can save their lives (“Promoting Family Planning”, n.d.).

Men should be persuaded to end discrimination against daughters and view them equally as sons (“Preventing Son Preference and Undervaluing of Girls in Asia Pacific”, 2020). The autonomy of women in family planning must be upgraded by providing them with higher education (Senarath & Gunawardena, 2009). In this regard, collaboration with community leaders and sponsors is necessary to enable the education of women in poverty.

Men should be encouraged to use protection as there is a global need for male contraception (Abbe, Page & Thirumalai, 2020). Healthcare paternalism must be put to an end by establishing legal provisions ensuring the consent of women in any and all reproductive decisions.

Public awareness campaigns must be launched by the government, starting from rural areas to normalize the discussion of family planning and its various ways to mitigate the stigma surrounding it. The merits of contraception must be highlighted in these campaigns. Sex education for adolescents is necessary to normalize the discussion of marital topics. Community dialogues, where families can indulge in a discourse of family planning, discussing the potential barriers and their possible solutions must be organized in all areas timely.

Husbands and in-laws who create hurdles and favor sons must be specifically targeted in these campaigns and must be educated. Moreover, in these campaigns and workshops, the major focus should be on youth as they bear the burden of bringing forth a change. The youth must be taught the importance of having a limited family size and its beneficial effects on society as a whole. Regular visits to health centers must be made compulsory for married couples to disseminate knowledge of various

methods of contraception and their benefits so that individuals may feel less intimidated by the concept of limiting family size. Lastly, healthcare services and means of contraception must be made readily available in all areas of the country.

To bring things to a close, it can be asserted that the foundation for outcome-driven enactment of family planning can only be guaranteed by combatting the societal pressure and stigma encircling it. An environment characterized by informed and inclusive choices can be forged by promoting open discussions, dismantling the misconceptions and challenging the long-standing irrational norms in opposition to contraception. In our collective journey towards a liberated and equitable future, it becomes clear as day that breaking the chains of social constraints not only paves the way towards personal freedom but also towards a society where efficient family planning is a shared societal goal. Upon the victorious realization of such a goal, not only do we achieve a sustainable population equilibrium, but also women empowerment, improved economic and health conditions and poverty alleviation across the globe.

Some recommendations in this regard include the initiation of sex education programs disseminating accurate information, launching campaigns aimed at battling against the stigmas and taboos surrounding family planning, and advocating for policies fostering gender equality in this decision-making process. By diligently pursuing these steps, surely, we can forge an empowering environment for families, where their choice to limit their family size is a deeply personal and respected endeavor.

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## **Family Planning and Poverty Alleviation: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty through Planned Parenthood**

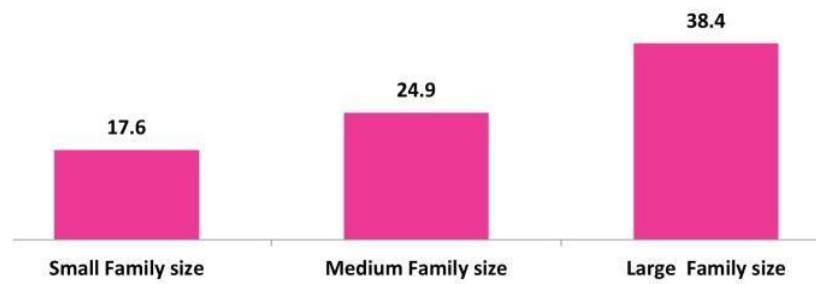
*Zuha Iqbal Randhawa*

Poverty is the state in which an individual or a community lacks the financial resources to meet the minimum standards of living and is not able to fulfill their basic human needs. People who live in poverty live without clean water, proper housing, basic medical attention and healthy food (Chen & Catalano, n.d.). Poverty can be broken into 4 types.

- **Occasionally poor-** people who have lived above the poverty line but can be affected by natural and unexpected catastrophes.
- **Cynically poor-** these are people who live through consistent, but less severe phases of poverty.
- **Usually poor-** these are people who usually live in poverty except in times that take an unexpected turn like a family member finding a job.
- **Always poor-** these are people who live consistently below the poverty line even if their income level changes (*How to Break the Cycle of Poverty: Impact on Global Growth*, 2022).

Several causes that can lead an individual or a community into poverty. Poverty can be caused by a lack of education and skills as it limits their ability to access well-paid jobs, gender, disability, living in a remote area where services are not easily accessible and the size of families. Large families are at a higher risk of poverty as they have greater living costs with less income (*Causes of Poverty and Inequality - EAPN*, n.d.). According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in Pakistan has reached 39.4% in 2023, increasing from 34.2% in 2022. This means that 95 million citizens of Pakistan are living in poverty with 12.5 million people being pushed below the poverty line (*World Bank: Pakistan's Alarming 39.4% Poverty Rate Rise*, 2023). According to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics report, the size of the household is one of the main factors that have led to poverty all across Pakistan. Empirical data shows that a household is considered poor if it has a large family size. The poverty level in Pakistan has increased from 17.6% in small families to a shocking rate of 38.4% in large families (*The State of Poverty in Pakistan: PIDE Report 2021*, n.d.).

**Figure 1.7 Households Size Dimension of Poverty**



Source: Author's calculation based on 2018-19 HIES Survey

The reason why there are large families in Pakistan is because of the mindset that sons contribute more to earnings. As there are no social insurance programs for economically unstable people, sons are considered a vital resource. This is because boys are most likely to contribute to child labor and look after their old parents (Butt, M. S., & Chishti, S, 1993). The inflation rate in Pakistan reached 29.7% in December 2023 with an increase in the cost of household and utilities to 37.7% and an increase in the cost of food to 27.50%. The minimum wage in Pakistan has increased to PKR 32000 per month (*Pakistan Inflation Rate*, n.d.). However, with a high inflation rate, the minimum wage is not enough to cover the costs of families with large sizes. With a rapid increase in inflation and a limited income, which might be enough to sustain a few people, will not be sufficient when there are greater mouths to feed.

With the inflation rate increasing in Pakistan every day and the cost of housing and utilities skyrocketing, solving the issue of poverty is an urgent matter. Numerous strategies that can be used by the government to break the cycle of poverty. On a personal level, individuals can start advocating for the need to combat climate change as an improved climate can protect vulnerable communities from harsh weather conditions and weather catastrophes. The government can help the ones living in poverty attain housing and homeownership as it can allow families to become financially stable by allowing them to focus their funds on other areas. It can also reduce the chances of respiratory and other infectious diseases. The government can also establish programs that provide food assistance to those living in poverty as well as establish food stores in areas where food is already scarce. Providing healthcare facilities in underserved areas can help those communities tackle medical obstacles and reduce their medical expenses (*How to Break the Cycle of Poverty: Impact on Global Growth*, 2022).

Another strategy for breaking the cycle of poverty, which is most applicable in Pakistan is planned parenthood. As mentioned before, family sizes are also a leading factor that increases the chances of poverty. To reduce the size of an average family, there must be planned parenthood. With proper family planning programs, the cost of providing for an extra or unplanned child can be avoided which would allow mothers to earn and contribute to the family's income (Campbell, A. A., 1968). These programs can also raise the parents' income level by reducing the costs of childbearing and allowing them to invest in their human capital investment and earn higher wages (Bailey, M. J., Malkova, O., Norling, J., 2014).

The reason why planned parenthood is important is because it avoids unwanted pregnancies and allows couples to access enough financial resources that are needed for a child's upbringing. Family planning treatment is done through Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). It has two types; the implant, which lasts for 3-5 years and the intrauterine device which lasts for 5-10 years (Azad, 2023). By the end of 2030, Pakistan will become a society where women are empowered and couples can enjoy the right to decide the number of children they want by maintaining a balance between the family size and their resources. Pakistan has made 9 commitments in achieving this task, namely.

- By adapting and implementing policy reforms based on evidence through political will and enabling the environment in all areas.
- By providing universal access to services that can lower fertility rates and address the need for contraception.
- By providing information and services in remote areas.
- Through adapting to the Uniform Understanding of the National Narrative
- By ensuring security and an efficient supply of contraceptives.
- By providing legislative support.
- Strengthening the system to sustain the family planning efforts.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the results and effectiveness of family planning programs.
- By deploying and allocating funds for family planning and reproductive health activities (*Pakistan - Family Planning 2030*, n.d.).

Pakistan's first family planning program was introduced in 1965 as part of the Third-Five Year program. This program had set a five-year goal of birth rate reduction from 50 per thousand to 45 per thousand. The plan was both administrative and clinical as

family planning councils were set up on the provincial and district levels and the national level, the program was supervised by the Family Planning Commissioner who was the head of a new division in the Ministry of Health, the family planning division. On the clinical side, contraceptive supply outlets were set up on local levels (Robinson, 1978). In 2020, the Population Welfare Department of Punjab proposed new initiatives for family planning. The key measures included implementing the population policy. The health departments will ensure access to family planning services at all service centers. Gynecologists, paramedics and all types of health workers will take family planning services as a priority and will also receive family planning counseling skills. The government also aims to improve contraceptive commodities by introducing Implanon NXT (a contraceptive implant) and training paramedics to insert Implanon („Family Planning 2020”, n.d.).

With the rapid increase in the rate of poverty in Pakistan, it is of utmost importance to address and solve this issue. Poverty is caused by many reasons, mainly lack of education, gender, and disability. While all these factors are applicable in Pakistan, the main reason here is the large family sizes. The graph provided previously also emphasized the fact that families with large sizes are at a greater risk of poverty. As most people in Pakistan have not been able to move on from the conservative approach that sons must be the breadwinners in the family, they often produce multiple children to a boy which ultimately leads to greater expenses, and the finances mainly being spent on food, limiting the Children’s right to education. Hence, the root cause is family size. It is important to address the issue of poverty through planned parenthood to build a sustainable community.

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## **Planning And Poverty Alleviation: Breaking the cycle of poverty through Parenthood**

*Areeba Nadeem*

Poverty is the most critical issue that humans have been facing since the Stone Age. In this world, millions are deprived of food, clean water, and shelter. On one hand, where lack of education, unequal wealth distribution, poor infrastructure and corruption are being debated, poor family planning has been the most neglected issue for centuries. Childhood hunger, malnutrition and mental distress are the most common factors among the children born because of poor family planning. In the areas, mostly the slums where the poorest of families live, whose houses are tents made up of torn clothes, have a common trend of giving birth to 8-10 children with a gap of a mere 2 years at most. Arthur A. Campbell mentions in his Journal of Marriage and Family that “One of the major burdens of poor people is the large number of children dependent on them.” He further mentions that “In 1966, poor adults of working age (18-64) had twice as many children to provide for, on the average as did adults with adequate incomes.” In his journal, he also briefly explained that “The definition that the poor have high fertility, is in part, redundant. Because the definition of poverty is based on both the income and the number of people living in a household. Even if the proportion of people defined as “poor” or “near poor” declines from its current level of 25 percent to 5 percent, that 5 percent will have high fertility.” (A. Cambell, 1968)

Pakistan is facing a major family planning crisis since the Indo-Pak subcontinent. The cause lies in the lack of education among men and women. Especially, the people living in rural areas have no sense of proper family planning and childbirth, they just continue the false traditions that have been set by their ancestors in the old times. Poverty in Pakistan has been recorded, by the World Bank at 39.3% using the middle-lower income poverty rate of US dollar 3.2\$ per day for the fiscal year 2020-21. Here In Pakistan, 40% of its population lives below the national poverty line which is Rs.3030 (Haider, 2021). Despite this condition, the birth rate in Pakistan is rapidly growing each year. People who are still stuck to their false beliefs and traditions even consider family planning a great taboo to talk about. Even women of some families do not have the right or the education to decide the number of children they are willingly happy to have and

as a result, they produce children beyond their income and strive for the rest of their lives.

One of the most essential things that plays an immense role in alleviating poverty is empowering and educating women in our society or giving them information about parenthood and family planning. Through these women will have the liberty to plan the gap between their pregnancies and learn about their reproduction cycle to have healthy and risk-free pregnancies. This will not only break the cycle of poverty through parenthood but will also reduce the deaths caused by childbirth. A gap between children also makes the parents able to invest more in their education and future, resulting in a pragmatic dispersion that can end poverty in our society. In some households the whole family should be educated about the benefits aroused through family planning, breaking the stereotypes of having 5-8 plus children. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends having children 3 years apart. Thoughtfully planned families tend to have a bright future and availability of resources for their children which potentially makes them strong and healthy, on the other hand poorly planned families face difficult circumstances e.g., lack of nutrition, proper education, and other necessities required for a good livelihood.

A great advantage that family planning brings is the prosperity of a country. If a country has a higher illiteracy rate facing overpopulation, then it does not develop economically and ultimately falls into distress. The more the population the country has, the more it suffers to develop. With Overpopulation the resources become limited and there occurs a decline in the system. By having access to family planning, the country flourishes more briskly and there is also availability of required resources without interruption and as a result, the people of that country become strong and educated.

Family planning enhances the economy of a country; for example, the agriculture sector will develop more organic food and a country will have sufficient and healthy food for its people. There will be enough clean water for every household, and enough electricity to generate gas, coal and other non-renewable sources will also decrease gradually. The rate of most harmful diseases is also reduced by avoiding unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion and limiting the transmissions of HIV from mothers to newborns. It also stops the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and gonorrhoea etc. (Allen, 2007)



Natural family planning (NFP) is a term that includes methods of fertility control and focuses on a couple's awareness about the fertile period of the women. ("Natural Family Planning: Advantages and Disadvantages - News-Medical.net") It proves quite effective in reducing the odds of pregnancy to less than one percent per year. Except for a menstrual calendar, this method is completely free of cost. The one disadvantage that this term brings is the fact that it is hard for couples to agree to use such methods.

Funding in family planning also creates a major difference. Times magazine on July 13, 2024, mentioned in an article that "At the Generation equality forum in Paris, the U.N attracted many political business leaders and invited them to put their money where their mouths were. It enforced economic justice for women meaning access to education and a greater ability for women to learn about their bodily anatomy. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation promised to invest 1.4\$ billion dollars for the next five years." Despite these advantages of investing in family planning, many developing countries underfund this vital health program and thus face grave consequences. In Pakistan, the government has developed a new National Narrative with its idea to adopt the middle course "TAWAZIN" and decide the family size according to the resources making it fulfill the fundamental rights of all citizens. A few are the commitment goals to alleviate poverty through family planning proposed by the Pakistani government:

- Universal access to services
- Mobilizing Funds
- Empowering women
- Legislative support

Policies are being made as the world is advancing more in family planning and poverty alleviation. FP2020(family planning2020) has made noteworthy advancements to expand family planning progress.13 countries have passed the law legalizing contraception. Forty-one countries are using cost implementation plans to design and budget their family planning. The FP2020 initiative has also improved the understanding of the flow of resources.

## INITIATION OF POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS

PAKISTAN	TURKEY	IRAN	BANGLADESH
1965	1965	1989	1976

It is interesting to note that all these Muslim countries started their family planning programs at the same time or even later than Pakistan's policy declaration.

Family planning has proved remarkably effective and sustainable in the reduction of poverty. Over the years the avoidance of unintended pregnancy would save the family cost of 8000\$ for childcare. It would also enable couples to add 600\$ in income for some years by providing resources for women to work. When all the savings and discounted earnings are added for the years in which unintended pregnancies were prevented the total income benefits from 7800\$ for 300\$ spent on family planning. In China, it has been declared a policy to give birth to two children to replace both parents. Their effective family planning has been one of the major reasons for China's appearance as a superpower in the world. Investment in family planning reduces poverty and enhances the mental and physical health of children. Demography reveals that the world population will increase by 40% in the next 40 years from 6.5 billion to 9.5 billion.

To sum it all up, Family planning primarily reduces poverty. It also empowers women through education and allows them to be independently free. Family planning gives parents a chance to invest more in their child's education and future. By providing sustainable development, family planning serves as the primary goal for the growth and development of a country. Governments, healthcare workers and social workers should work together so that family planning services are accessible to all without any discrimination of their financials or status. If people all over the world accept this as a social issue, make efforts to plan their families accordingly and support their women we can overcome poverty on a large scale. In some countries, social or healthcare workers also provide door-to-door services to create awareness about this problem. It is our duty as a nation to break the false norms and make it common to have counseling sessions about family planning so that our children can have a flourishing and thriving

life ahead. Through our efforts, we can diminish poverty, save our household income and plan a better future.

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## **Education and Awareness: Enhancing Knowledge about Family Planning in Changing Societies**

*Tayyab Babar*

The health and well-being of households are of extreme significance in our continuously converting cultures. As society adapt to evolving cultural standards, it is turning into more and more critical to look at and comprehend the important significance of circle of relatives planning in promoting each private properly-being and the overall vitality of societies. Family planning, encompassing a spectrum of methods and practices aimed at enabling individuals to make informed decisions about the number and spacing of their children, emerges as a linchpin in the pursuit of healthier families and communities. This essay pursuits to explore the problem of "Healthy Families and Communities in Changing Society - Role of Family Planning," with a selected emphasis at the transformational effect of schooling and attention in enhancing understanding of own family planning. By examining historic viewpoints, present problems, and future opportunities, this study aims to understand the complicated web of factors that impact family making plans decisions in ultra-modern world. This study emphasize the important function of informed choice-making in developing more healthy and more resilient societies (DeRose, 2004).

The historical analysis of family planning demonstrates an intriguing path characterized by changes in culture, shifting societal viewpoints, and the ongoing reinterpretation of family standards. Historically, historical civilizations employed basic family planning strategies that were shaped by cultural beliefs and traditions. The availability and effectiveness of these approaches differed among countries, reflecting the varying values that influenced family systems. During the progression of societies, namely in the periods of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, a more sophisticated comprehension of reproductive health developed (Jessee, 2020).

Nevertheless, conversations regarding family planning frequently took a backseat to dominant moral and religious ideologies. The onset of the 20th century saw remarkable advancements in contraceptive methods, which freed individuals from the limitations of unintended pregnancies. However, enduring historical obstacles like social stigmas and restricted information availability continued to influence choices regarding family planning. Comprehending this ongoing sequence of events is crucial in acknowledging

the origins of present-day difficulties. It emphasizes the significance of education and awareness in navigating the intricate landscape of family planning within the framework of our evolving society. (Rusterholz, 2019)

Currently, the field of family planning is confronted with numerous complex difficulties that are closely connected to the changing dynamics of our communities. The rapid growth rates of the global population, which frequently surpass sustainable levels, present a significant obstacle to family planning initiatives. Furthermore, the availability and cost-effectiveness of contemporary contraceptive technologies are not uniformly distributed, resulting in a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. Societal standards, both cultural and religious, might generate opposition to the utilisation of family planning technologies due to their strong influence on the fabric of society. Moreover, gender dynamics persist as a prominent factor, exerting influence over decision-making processes inside families. (Aliyu, 2018)

The persistence of stigma around debates on family planning impedes free dialogue and hampers educational attempts. Economic inequalities further exacerbate the prevailing difficulties, since those with limited financial means may encounter obstacles in obtaining family planning services. Tackling these current obstacles is crucial in promoting healthy families and communities, highlighting the importance of comprehensive approaches that prioritize education and awareness as fundamental elements of successful family planning in our evolving society. (Adelekan, 2014)

Education plays a significant role in influencing the development of family planning within the wider scope of promoting the well-being of families and communities in a fast-evolving society. Formal educational institutions have a crucial role in including family planning subjects into their curricula, equipping individuals with the knowledge and abilities needed to make well-informed choices regarding reproductive health. In addition to formal education, community-based initiatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a substantial role in increasing knowledge on family planning. (Liu, 2020).

These educational initiatives aim to not only distribute information about contraceptive methods but also to actively confront and transform society perspectives on family planning. Individuals who possess knowledge and understanding are more capable of effectively managing the intricacies associated with making decisions about family

planning. This, in turn, promotes healthier reproductive behaviour and enhances the overall welfare of families. Education plays a crucial role in building healthier societies by promoting a culture that recognizes and embraces family planning as a significant aspect of individual and societal well-being (Bongaarts, 2019).

Within the broader context of developing healthy families and communities in a society that is undergoing rapid change, awareness campaigns and the impact of the media play a significant role in molding attitudes and supporting informed decision-making on family planning. Given the interconnected nature of the world we live in today, media platforms function as influential means for the dissemination of information and the challenge of societal norms. Strategic awareness efforts, whether they are conducted through traditional media sources or digital platforms, contribute to the elimination of stigmas associated with family planning, the creation of places for open debate, and the dispelling of misinformation. Celebrities and influential people can have a major impact on public opinion by using their platforms to encourage projects that promote family planning (Rogers, 2021).

Furthermore, social media acts as a dynamic arena for community participation, enabling the sharing of personal experiences and testimonials, which in turn helps to build a sense of solidarity and understanding among individuals. As society continues to develop, the role of awareness campaigns and the impact of the media becomes increasingly essential in not only the dissemination of information but also in the altering of cultural narratives and the creation of an environment that is supportive of family planning choices. (Pakrashi, 2022)

Within the larger discourse of encouraging healthy families and communities in our ever-evolving society, cultural sensitivity in family planning education appears as a vital component that must be taken into consideration. When it comes to developing educational programmes that are both effective and inclusive, it is necessary to acknowledge and respect the various cultural norms that exist. When it comes to reproductive health, different communities have different points of view, and family planning programmes need to be careful to manage these complexities. (Cammock, 2018)

When educational initiatives are made with sensitivity to cultural values and traditions, they are more likely to resonate with local populations, which in turn reduces opposition

and fosters greater acceptance. Furthermore, in order to adjust educational messages in an appropriate manner, it is essential to have an awareness of the impact that religion has on the variety of family planning options. Not only do we encourage respectful conversation through the incorporation of cultural sensitivity into family planning education, but we also give individuals the ability to make choices that are in line with their cultural backgrounds, which helps us contribute to the overarching goal of fostering healthier families within the ever-evolving fabric of our global society (Yarger, 2017).

The policies of the government play a crucial part in determining the landscape of family planning in the context of fostering healthy families and communities in our society, which is always evolving. Creating an environment that is conducive to accessing family planning services requires the design and implementation of policies that are supportive. This is a key step in the process. In addition to addressing the accessibility and cost-effectiveness of contemporary methods of contraception, comprehensive strategies also emphasize educational and environmental awareness activities. Through the use of legislation and public health programs, governments, as essential players, have the ability to affect the norms and views that society has towards family planning (May, 2017).

A holistic approach to reproductive health can be ensured through the incorporation of family planning components into more comprehensive healthcare policy. A further factor that contributes to the effectiveness of such programs is the provision of financial assistance to family planning initiatives and the establishment of partnerships with non-governmental organizations. Recognizing the central role that government policies play in the discussion of family planning is essential to the development of a society in which individuals can make choices based on accurate information, which in turn contributes to the successful realization of healthier families and communities within the context of a social fabric that is always shifting (Mbizvo, 2014).

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## Normalizing the Talk of ‘We Two and Our Two’ in Pakistan

*Amna Ehtisham*

"If you cannot feed us, why do you give birth to us" were the infamous words from "Bol", a Pakistan's social drama film. While garnering mixed reviews from the masses, these words cast a light on a bigger moral and social dilemma of our country, overpopulation with limited resources.

Pakistan secures the 5<sup>th</sup> position on the World Population Index. With an exponential increase rate of 1.9 percent each year, the country's birth rate continues to thrive. However, Pakistan's position of 102<sup>nd</sup> on the global hunger index reveals a much uglier picture of the living conditions in the country.

In a country crippled with widespread poverty, one may consider family planning to be a norm for the general public. Quite contrary to this rational approach, the norm of the country revolves around a great stigma against family planning—a concept regarded so foreign and sanctimonious; that it is no lesser than a taboo. Any attempt to preach to the masses about the wonders of family planning is halted by the social stigma this topic has carried for generations. Consequently, deeming this topic a taboo has secured it first place among the numerous root causes of overpopulation in our country.

A domino effect can be noticed upon examining the root causes. A parent lacking the necessary education about family planning may not consider contraceptives. The lack of awareness may result in more mouths to feed as opposed to the limited income of the household; a story so common in every village to an urban city of Pakistan. The suffering of such children from families with lower household incomes and a number of offspring is a major consequence of such poor family planning. Millions of children in Pakistan are deprived of basic living necessities as 24 percent of our population lives below the poverty line. The poor literacy rate and increasing instances of child labor are directly correlated with overpopulation. In such circumstances, the famous line from ‘Bol’ accurately voices out the pain of these children lacking even the fundamental needs like clean water, education, and proper food. Family planning as a concept is unheard of for these children as their parents and ancestors paid no heed to it and unfortunately, they might end up repeating the cycle if no initiative is taken.

To no surprise, the maternal mortality rate in this same society is the highest among all the countries of South Asia. The lack of awareness and the rigidity towards not learning healthy family planning is taking its toll upon the mothers of our generation. Incorporating a personal account on the matter, I recall consoling my housekeeper as she mourned the death of her

stillborn child. I wondered why she continued putting her body through this ordeal, as she already had 8 daughters at home. But she voiced my concern by expressing her husband's desire for a son. The prejudice towards daughters remains another dilemma, but the situation at hand raises a bigger question. Why does she lack awareness about her bodily autonomy and family planning? Why are the daughters of our nation unaware of the limitations of their fragile bodies? Stories of such women all around us are not unheard of.

In a country where women lack awareness about their own bodily autonomy, curbing the explosion of the population rate will not be an easy feat. The resistance towards educating and hence empowering women to make wise decisions for their bodies and future children reflects the internalized misogyny within our society.

The government of Pakistan has taken initiatives to tackle overpopulation and maternal mortality rates through advertisements, government-led campaigns, etc. The lack of cohesion between the stance of the government-led campaigns and what was actually being derived from them resulted in a lesser impact. The criticism by religious clerics over such campaigns by deeming it infanticide has led to the failure of such initiatives in Pakistan. But even from religious perspectives, faith-based advocacy towards proper family planning cannot be denied. Yet, the masses are indoctrinated to consider it a taboo.

Frequent childbearing is considered a norm and a duty of a woman despite this claim not being supported by the religion. This deprives the women of their bodily autonomy as they are robbed of their choice. The collective control over the female body is asserted upon them resulting in complications during pregnancy, lifelong health issues, postpartum depression, and other mental health issues not only in the mother but the offspring as well. Islam legitimizes the use of contraceptives if one desires a smaller family, but the religion is manipulated and the shame culture towards any such rightful demand is directed. Even when women are aware of their reproductive rights, the power dynamic of a household prevents them from seeking their rightful autonomy. In such cases, the misconceptions of those who hold this power, more often the men, should be educated.

Tackling the shame culture that comes with such conversations is necessary to educate our masses. Secondly, the campaigns led by the government on this matter should be made more targeted. If the population of an area lacks education on the modes of contraceptives, the campaigns should be designed to cater to that need. Similarly, the tone of voice used in advertisements on the topic at hand should resonate with the targeted population. Adapting a better-designed approach to this matter is crucial for changing the negative attitude toward family planning.

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## **Societal Attitudes and Family Planning: Breaking Stigmas and Taboos/ Social Pressures and Gender Role**

*Khazeena Rasheed*

Often when we hear the word “abortion”, the western world comes to mind because we have been conditioned to believe that these incidents only occur where there’s a lack of morality. But what if I were to tell you that our Islamic Republic of Pakistan has constantly been at the top of countries with the highest abortion rates? It would seem impossible to believe since we live in a society, where there’s no sort of awareness regarding reproduction and safe sex. Both men and women here don’t even know that there’s such a thing as consent.

However, before we delve further into these social taboos and stigmas, we need to get to the root cause of the problem. There is no single culprit because this societal attitude has resulted from years of conditioning and silencing. Women are grossly mistreated and often do not know about their rights and that’s because we live in a patriarchal world, where laws have been put into place to protect the privileged. On the other hand, there is an entire community that glamorizes religion and claims that Islam has given women countless rights. If that is the case, then why are there thousands of cases of rape, forced marriages, domestic violence, and honor killings? In our Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where is the justice and equality?

Despite the huge generation gap, there are still some tragedies that have victimized people of all ages. Women are not given a voice and to avoid bringing shame to the family, they are forced to marry against their will. This has a long list of repercussions. When a woman is married into a foreign family, it not only impacts her mental health but creates hurdles for future generations to come.

Our society has laid down a couple of ground roles and even speaking up against them means you are committing treason of the highest order. Why is that so? Gender roles do apply to a certain extent but that does not justify the way these expectations harm both the men and women. Men are brought up with the notion that their only job is to put food on the table and that women should obey their partners and look after the kids. These societal expectations hurt everyone involved.

For instance, a newly married couple struggles to find a healthy balance because the man of the house is always working, and the woman is always occupied with house chores. When the man comes home exhausted, the woman expects that she will be able to find comfort, because, after all, they are a married couple. But what happens is that the man becomes avoidant because he believes that he has done his duty, and the rest of the problems are the woman's job. When this type of behavior carries on, things only go downhill from there.

There are so many instances where the mothers are forced by their husbands to get an abortion because the father refuses to raise a daughter. On the other hand, due to the lack of any sex ed, some women are forced to perform at-home abortions which lead to serious health issues and even death in some cases.

According to Islam, both divorce and abortion are frowned upon, yet our country still accounts for over half of these statistics. From a very young age, daughters are taught that the only way to make a marriage work is by compromising. By compromise, they mean that a woman should stay silent and endure any kind of abuse from their respective partners. Our society is quick to put all the blame on the woman if a marital relationship does not work out. A divorced woman is considered a burden and a taboo, she has nowhere to go.

*How can we break down these stigmas and fight against these taboos?*

It all comes down to parenting because as a parent, it should be your job to teach your son to respect women and treat them rightfully. But the complete opposite happens, and mothers often encourage their sons to keep their wives under their control. The Pakistani gender roles clearly state that the man should be the breadwinner of a household and the woman is only responsible for house chores and raising the children. So, when their kid grows up watching his father be emotionally unavailable and mistreat his mother, he thinks he is meant to do the same. The never-ending cycle starts, and the abuse continues.

Despite these stigmas and taboos, some brave young folks try to speak up and fight for their rights, but they are met with endless challenges. If a daughter takes one step against the gender roles put into place, the men of the family treat it as the end of the

world. Because remember, there is nothing more precious than your family's reputation, not even your children's mental health or lives.

Every few weeks, there is a new case where a brother or father killed a girl in the name of honor and when you ask them what she did to deserve it, the men proudly claim that they saved their family. Is it so bad that society will say a few words and later move on? Is a family's fleeting reputation more important than their blood?

Due to the lack of awareness and compassion, not only is the future generation impacted but our economy suffers a loss as well. If you're not educating your daughters and sons about right and wrong, how can we expect a change?

The same girl who was forced into a marriage will endure domestic abuse and will not be able to raise her kids the right way. If the mother's mental health is not well, how can we expect her to not traumatize her kids as well? Apart from this, instead of making sure that their kids live healthy lives, the parents completely disregard the concept of family planning and bring more lives into this wretched society.

Lack of family planning leads to injustice and malnourished and mentally unwell children. The mother can barely deal with the plethora of house chores and the father keeps drowning in more workload. This leads to none of the children being happy and the family is forced to live a life of poverty. Poverty means no access to resources and a lack of education, which in turn, results in the same cycle continuing for another generation.

Kids watch their parents and take on the job of carrying the same generational trauma. The societal stigmas and taboos become more set in place because no one takes the first step. This is why it is extremely important to educate the youth of today and make sure that they are mentally fit enough to start a family. As they say, "Charity begins at home," so if the household members do not stand up and have uncomfortable discussions with their elders, the cycle will never stop.

This essay is not meant to degrade anyone, but the main purpose is to raise awareness. Never forget that it is only meant to provide comfort to the discomfited and discomfort the ones who cannot bear to step out of their comfort zone.

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# **Empowering Women: Promoting Gender Equality through Family Planning**

*Shaheer Khalid*

An equitable gender system is essential to a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable society and is a fundamental human right. However, there is still work to be done worldwide to achieve gender equality. Empowering women is a critical component of advancing gender equality, and family planning is essential to this effort. Societies may enable women to take charge of their reproductive health, make educated decisions about their bodies, and pursue their personal, professional, and educational goals by giving them access to comprehensive family planning options. For advancing gender equality, this essay analyzes the significance of family planning for women's empowerment. It does this by looking at how it affects social development overall especially in health, education, and economic empowerment. A basic human right is the availability of family planning and other reproductive health care.

Encouraging women to make knowledgeable decisions about their reproductive health improves their well-being and advances society as a whole. By preventing unwanted pregnancies, spacing out deliveries, and selecting the number of children they choose to have, family planning services help women improve the health of both mothers and their children. Women who are in charge of their reproduction can put their health and well-being first, which lowers the rate of maternal death and improves the health of their children.

Moreover, family planning supports women by increasing their agency and autonomy in household and community decision-making processes. Women who have control over their pregnancy are more inclined to pursue higher education, enter the workforce, and take part in community activities. Women who have this liberty feel more empowered and can stand up for their rights and make significant contributions to society.

The availability of family planning services is positively correlated with women's economic empowerment and educational achievement. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that women are more likely to pursue higher education and enter

employment when they have agency over their reproductive decisions. Women can invest in their education and job development by delaying childbearing and spacing out pregnancies, improving their and their families' financial success.

Family planning also gives women the confidence to explore economic possibilities and engage fully in the workforce. Women are better equipped to manage their career goals and caregiving duties when they can plan their pregnancies and spacing out their births. This flexibility helps women individually, but it also helps society by promoting economic expansion and reducing poverty. Family planning additionally provides women the confidence to explore economic possibilities and engage fully in the workforce. Women are better equipped to manage their career goals and childcare obligations when they can plan their pregnancies and spacing out their births. This flexibility helps women individually, but it also helps society by promoting economic expansion and reducing poverty.

Family planning empowers women and increases their involvement in politics and society. Women are more likely to participate in community activities, fight for their rights, and be involved in decision-making at all societal levels when they have agency over their reproductive choices. Women gain from this increasing participation, which also helps create more democratic and inclusive political systems.

Moreover, attaining gender parity in political participation requires empowering women via family planning. Women are more equipped to seek political leadership positions and take part in electoral processes when they can plan their pregnancies and take care of their reproductive health. Representation is essential for guaranteeing that women's opinions are heard during the policy-making process and that institutions and governments are appropriately responding to their demands.

Even with the many advantages of family planning for women's empowerment, there are still several obstacles in the way of guaranteeing that everyone has access to reproductive health care. These difficulties include restricted access to medical facilities, societal and cultural hurdles, insufficient money for family planning initiatives, and stringent laws and policies protecting reproductive rights.

But these problems also offer chances for advocacy and action. Governments and

NGOs may address the unmet need for contraception, enhance mother and child health outcomes, and advance gender equality by funding comprehensive family planning initiatives. Furthermore, family planning measures must be incorporated into more comprehensive plans for sustainable development, such as those that support women's rights, economic empowerment, and education.

In addition to being a question of reproductive health, empowering women via family planning is a critical first step in attaining gender equality and sustainable development.

Societies may empower women to take charge of their bodies, make educated decisions about their reproductive health, and pursue their goals in school, the workplace, and personal growth by giving them access to comprehensive reproductive health services.

In summary, family planning has a profoundly positive impact on women's health, education, economic empowerment, and social and political engagement. Governments, organizations, and private citizens all need to prioritize funding women's reproductive health and rights as we work to create a more just and equal society. Family planning can help achieve gender equality and pave the way for a better future for women and girls worldwide.

Moreover, empowering women through family planning has far-reaching benefits for health, education, economic empowerment, and social and political participation. As we strive toward a more just and equitable world, investing in women's reproductive health and rights must be a priority for governments, organizations, and individuals alike. By promoting gender equality through family planning, we can create a brighter future for women and girls everywhere.

# **Exploring Family Planning Challenges: A Comprehensive Analysis of Global and Local Realities**

*Sullaha Noor*

## **Abstract:**

This comprehensive research paper combines two unique vantage points: a thorough analysis of fertility rates, out-of-wedlock births, and the need for contraceptive options among low-income and nearly poor women in the United States from 1960-1965, and a holistic view of the obstacles related to family planning that takes into account the complex interplay between education, resources, poverty, and access to fertility control services worldwide. By uniting these perspectives, this paper aims to offer a complete comprehension of the issues that financially disadvantaged women face and proposes thoughtful, all-encompassing remedies to enhance family planning outcomes on a global level.

## **Introduction:**

The research that has been undertaken aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by women who were facing financial hardships in the United States from 1960 to 1965. This study delves deep into various aspects such as the number of babies born, the percentage of unmarried mothers, and the poverty levels during this time. By taking a closer look at these factors, we hope to gain a clearer understanding of the difficulties these women faced in accessing effective birth control and family planning services during that period. The study is expected to provide valuable insights into the social and economic conditions prevalent during that period and help us develop better strategies to assist women facing similar challenges today.

## **Fertility Disparities:**

Research indicates that there are notable variations in fertility rates across different socio-economic groups. Particularly, the focus of the research has been on women who belong to low-income or near-poor families. Analysis of the available data reveals that economically vulnerable groups have significantly higher rates of childbirth

compared to other segments of society, during the specified period. This indicates a clear and strong link between the economic status of a woman and the likelihood of having children. In other words, women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have more children than those from more affluent backgrounds. This finding has significant implications for policymakers, as it highlights the need to address economic inequalities and support vulnerable groups to promote more balanced demographic trends.

### **Illegitimate Births and Poverty:**

One significant finding in the estimates is the higher incidence of illegitimate births among women facing economic hardship, highlighting a concerning disparity in impoverished communities. This underscores the complex relationship between poverty and family dynamics, warranting further examination of the socioeconomic variables that impact family planning choices, particularly when resources are limited.

### **Contraceptive Services as a Necessity:**

It is essential to recognize that there are significant challenges surrounding reproductive health, and one of the most pressing issues is the lack of accessible contraceptive services. Research indicates that the absence of effective family planning resources contributes to elevated levels of unintended pregnancies, especially in vulnerable populations. In light of this, it is crucial to examine the potential impact of providing adequate contraceptive services on empowering women to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

### **Economic Implications:**

High fertility rates among underprivileged women have significant economic impacts that go beyond just demographic factors. When there are more births, resources become more strained, leading to an increase in poverty. This is because low-income families often struggle to provide for their children's basic needs, such as food, healthcare, and education. As a result, they may resort to child labor, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Therefore, it is essential to explore the wider implications of high fertility rates for society and advocate for targeted family planning interventions. These interventions can help women plan their families, which can lead to better health outcomes for both mothers and children. Additionally, they can help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, which can result in a decrease in maternal and infant mortality rates.

Moreover, targeted family planning interventions can have significant economic benefits. By enabling women to plan their families and space their children, they can participate more fully in the workforce, which can boost economic growth.

### **Global and Local Realities:**

The interconnections between education, resources, poverty, and family planning in developing countries, with a global perspective. Despite progress in education, health, and employment in underdeveloped regions, family planning remains a persistent challenge, as highlighted in the introduction. In particular, education plays a crucial role in promoting and understanding family planning methods, especially in areas where children are considered a source of labor.

### **Improving Contraceptive Accessibility:**

Access to reliable contraception is crucial for individuals and families to plan their futures and take control of their reproductive health. However, many people in countries with limited resources and impoverished American communities face significant challenges in obtaining and using contraceptive methods. These challenges can include cultural beliefs that discourage the use of contraception, opposition from religious or political groups, and the particular difficulties that lower-income families face when it comes to accessing healthcare services.

To address these challenges, experts have proposed a range of creative approaches that aim to improve accessibility to reliable contraception. These solutions take into account the diverse cultural beliefs and values of communities and aim to provide information and resources that are tailored to the needs of different populations. For example, some programs have focused on providing education and counseling services to women and girls, while others have worked to increase access to a wider range of contraceptive

methods, including long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) like intrauterine devices (IUDs) and implants.

Other proposed solutions include expanding access to telemedicine and other digital health technologies, which can help people in remote or underserved areas connect with healthcare providers and obtain the care they need. Some organizations have also advocated for policy changes that would increase funding for family planning programs and improve insurance coverage for contraception.

### **Comparative Analysis:**

This essay discusses the findings of a study conducted from 1960 to 1965 that looked into fertility disparities among impoverished Americans. The study's insights are used to conduct a comparative analysis that sheds light on the persistent difficulties encountered by economically vulnerable populations globally. The analysis emphasizes the pressing need for comprehensive family planning interventions to address the challenges faced by such communities.

The primary discoveries made in the study and the critical assessment of those findings provide insight into the income disparities in fertility control aspirations of economically vulnerable populations. The research also highlights the challenges faced by lower-income couples in adopting reliable contraceptive practices. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of motivation in family planning and how it plays a crucial role in helping couples effectively plan their families.

### **Conclusion:**

This article presents a detailed analysis of the challenges in family planning by merging insights from local and global perspectives, leading to a nuanced understanding. The data from 1960-1965 highlights the difficulties faced by economically disadvantaged women in the United States, underlining the necessity for targeted interventions. On the other hand, the global perspective advocates for a comprehensive approach that encompasses education, resources, poverty, and accessibility to enhance family planning outcomes worldwide. Introducing innovative programs, enhancing education, ensuring the availability of contraceptive methods, and

implementing targeted interventions can lead to positive changes in family planning practices. This comprehensive approach aims to improve overall health and economic development for all socioeconomic groups, breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering a brighter future.

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# **Empowering Women: Promoting Gender Equality through Family Planning**

*Ayesha Fatima*

Throughout history, society has absolutely, for lack of a better word, screwed over women. Patriarchy has been a plight in society. Back in the day, we were burned at the stake and today we are burnt in our homes. Society progresses and things change but somehow the misery of women is a constant that we, as a society, have accepted. Endorsed even. Women were dying then, and women are dying now. Victim blaming is a sickening virus that runs deep in our male-dominated society. We, as members of the modern era, should aim to change not only this narrative of femicide but also empower those said women. Back in the day, women did not even have the right to vote, much less the right to their bodies. Abortion was seen as a carnal sin. Forced pregnancies and nonconsensual births were disgustingly normalized. Family planning enables us to hold both parties accountable. This way the ‘blame’ isn’t shifted onto the woman, the way it always has been. Family planning not only prevents unwanted pregnancies but also significantly decreases unwanted abortions. While abortion itself is a right every woman should have, family planning reduces the need for abortions in the first place, therefore also minimizing the risks that come with it.

Gender equality is still a long battle we have yet to win. In the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Pakistan has been ranked 142 out of 146 countries — with a 57.5 percent gender parity — the highest since 2006. (Amin Ahmed, 2003). Through family planning, we promote more than just awareness and a means of population control. We promote women's empowerment. Their right to bodily autonomy. Through the wonders of modern science, the XY chromosome holders (men) are also able to get medical procedures to prevent pregnancies. From vasectomies to simply using contraceptives. Female and male sterilization are both viable options. Family planning programs are associated with lower fertility and lower maternal mortality (Cleland et al., 2006). Family planning inevitably is a feminist cause. It aims to empower women. They get to choose the desired number of offspring they want, which studies have shown paves the way for them to live a healthy life. They can make more strategic life choices via family planning. They aren’t trapped in a box, labeled as ‘mother’ or ‘wife’.

Family planning enables women to be more than just their bodies. Oftentimes, especially in cultures such as ours, women are broken down as ‘baby factories.’ Their lives end when they get married or when they give birth. Women are more than mothers. They are individuals, and through family planning, they get to claim their individuality, which society is so hellbent on taking from them. Family planning is essentially a woman’s right to choose. Her right to decide when she wants kids, and how she wants kids. Other than acquiring freedom of choice, family planning offers many health benefits to women. Studies show that long-term use of oral contraceptives may reduce the risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer. In addition, family planning is linked to reduced stress and anxiety. By allowing women to rest in between pregnancies, they tend to focus more on their health and nutrition, leading to overall well-being. For both men and women, family planning plays a crucial role in preventing STDs.

As discussed earlier, family planning enables women's empowerment, but the reverse is also true. Women’s empowerment fosters effective family planning. Educated women are more likely to understand the benefits of family planning and utilize available services. They also aim to challenge social norms and achieve economic independence. This creates a synergistic impact when family planning and women’s empowerment work together, and the positive effects multiply.

In conclusion, investing in both areas creates a virtuous cycle where empowered women make informed choices about their families, contributing to a healthier and more prosperous society. It’s important to remember that every woman’s needs and experiences are different. Consulting a healthcare professional can help individuals choose the family planning method best suited for their health and personal goals. Family planning, as a concept, should be more normalized. Teens and young adults should be given proper education and access to make smart choices.

# **Sustainable Population Growth: Balancing Demographic Changes Through Family Planning**

*Shanze Ahmad*

Pakistan's efforts towards sustainability have been inconsistent over the years but regular investment in family planning will manage demographic challenges and have a long-term impact on sustainability. A sustainable population refers to an economy that protects resources, biodiversity and reasonable standards of living for the population (Gotmark & Anderssen, 2023). Gotmark and Anderssen (2023) argued that a reduction in population size through a low TFR (Total Fertility Rate) will be more beneficial for the environment and population growth as it will reduce the consumption of resources and make it easier to distribute resources equitably. Family planning is capable of addressing human rights issues, reducing consumption that degrades the environment, improving gender equality and human capital development. There is a lack of awareness of the impact of family planning beyond reducing population size in developing countries (Wazir et al., 2021).

Pakistan was amongst the pioneer developing countries that introduced family planning programs in the 1960s but has been retrogressing since then (Tarique, 2022). The introduction of family planning in Pakistan was set as an agenda on the development policy, however, Pakistan's development policies are focused on achieving high economic growth and infrastructural development (Tarique, 2022). The United Nations elucidates on the importance of family planning in improving national health and human rights indicators as it reduces child and maternal mortality as well as enhances gender equality due to providing women with autonomy to decide about their family size and health (Wazir et al., 2021).

This paper will discuss Pakistan's current demographic structure, the progress of current family planning programs implemented in Pakistan and the development of a sustainable population in Pakistan through strong family planning policies and programs.

## **Literature review**

### **Pakistan's Demographic Structure**

The 7th Population and Housing Census of Pakistan estimated that Pakistan will house 241 million people in 2023: an increase of 2.5 growth rate since 2017 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The maternal mortality rate in Pakistan has also decreased to 186 per 1000 live births in 2019 due to improved maternal healthcare systems (Wazir et al., 2021). The Total Fertility Rate was 3.7 per woman and the Infant Mortality Rate was 56 per 1000 live births in 2020 which indicated that women were having three or four children, and the probability of infant deaths was very high (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

In the Demographic Survey of 2020 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020), the Crude Birth Rate in 2020 was 27 per 1000 population and the Crude Death Rate was 6.7 per 1000 persons. The difference between the crude birth rate and crude death rate resulted in a natural increase rate of 2.0 which indicates that there is a decline in mortality rates and an increase in fertility rates (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The decline in mortality rates is a result of improved health services and lifestyle which has also improved the life expectancy rate in Pakistan. The life expectancy rate is 65 years and only 4% of the population consists of old persons (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). This projects that Pakistan's population is steadily increasing but continues to face high infant mortality that will lead to a higher birth rate and the low death rate will contribute to an increase in old persons in the population.

### **Efforts in Family Planning in Pakistan**

Family planning refers to the attempts the couples make regarding the number and spacing of babies while the systematic effort, often funded by the government, for providing information, supplies and services for modern fertility control are known as family planning programs (Gotmark and Anderssen, 2023). Pakistan's Family Planning 2030 agenda consists of increasing CPR to 50% by 2025 and increasing it to 60% by 2030 which will lower the total fertility rate to 2.2 children per woman. As a result, this will lead to slowing the population growth to 1.1% by 2030 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Pakistan currently had a 46.4% Contraceptive Prevalence Rate in 2020 which has been mostly static over the years (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Pakistan's family planning programs provide method mix options for family planning such as oral pills, condoms, IUCDs, injectables, Contraceptive surgery/sterilization and implants. Although the highest level of fertility is observed in the 25-29 age group, the use of contraceptives is more common in the 30-39 and 40-44 age groups which indicates that family planning is considered more towards the end of a married woman's reproductive age (Khan, 2021). The use of contraceptives is also much higher in urban regions as compared to rural regions as women in urban areas are more educated and informed about family planning (Khan, 2021). Three million clients consulted Family Planning Mother and Child Health (MCH) Service Delivery for prenatal and postnatal care as well as Lady Health workers are deployed to spread awareness of sexual and reproductive health (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021). This suggests that various family planning methods and services are utilized to meet the Family Planning 2030 agenda and meet SDGs demands.

### **Challenges for Achieving Family Planning 2030**

The national policies on sexual and reproductive healthcare of Pakistan are overall well-structured and coherent with set targets but the struggle with implementing these policies has caused hindrances in progress (Tarique, 2023). One of the main challenges is the lack of proper leadership in addressing rapid population growth and the lack of political commitment to developing sustainable population growth (Minister of National Health Services & UNFPA, 2021). This resulted in conservative forces causing further resilience towards family planning (Minister of National Health Services & UNFPA, 2021). Low investment in female education and counseling male members on a community level resulted in low levels of female empowerment in making decisions about reproductive and sexual health (Minister of National Health Services & UNFPA, 2021). In addition, there is also a supply issue in distributing contraceptive and reproductive healthcare services as most women prefer private sector service due to easy access, but many rural and poor women are still unable to access these services (Minister of National Health Services & UNFPA, 2021).

## **Recommendations**

One of the principal recommendations is that there should be a strong political will and commitment towards sustainable population growth as it will provide funding for family planning and SRH and pave the way for multi-sectoral collaborations for implementing family planning (UNFPA, 2021). The Pakistani government should implement family planning policies and promote public-private partnerships as well as regulate these collaborations so that they remain consistent in their progress. Collaborations with religious groups such as Al-Huda can also educate women on their sexual and reproductive health as well as inform young women on family planning when they get married. In addition, improvements are required in supplying family planning services to poorer regions of Pakistan as the majority of Pakistan's population lives beneath the poverty line (Tarique, 2022). Hence, a large portion of the population can be educated in family planning which will further decrease the total fertility rate.

Increasing literacy levels of women in Pakistan to empower them with knowledge and critical thinking that allows them to make informed decisions on their sexual and reproductive health. It is also beneficial to engage the youth in interactive sessions on SRH through digital apps so that they can make decisions that contribute to sustainable population growth. Awareness campaigns and counseling sessions should be conducted for men and women about family planning and reproductive healthcare to not only make informed decisions about the size of their family but also reduce unsafe pregnancies and abortions (Wazir et al., 2021). This will result in low maternal and infant mortality rates which will fulfill the demands of SDG 3 for a healthy population (Wazir et al., 2021).

## **Conclusion**

Pakistan's speculated TFR in 2030 is 2.2 children per woman which may decrease the population growth rate (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). It will also lead to a further reduction in the young dependent population while the aging dependent population increases, therefore, more resources can be focused on looking after the growing aging population. Family planning will aid in balancing the dependency ratio

in Pakistan and reduce the burden on the working-age population. This will be followed by sustainable population growth that will allow the country to reserve resources, reduce environmental degradation and improve standards of living.

Family planning, as a whole, can be viewed as a micro-level practice that has a macro-level impact on achieving sustainable living. The UNFPA (2021) proclaimed that a nation would receive 120 dollars' worth of social, economic and environmental benefits if they spent a singular dollar on universal access to contraceptives, therefore, making family planning a sustainable and cost-effective intervention. This further supports several SDGs such as improvements in national health and education systems, reduction in poverty levels, advancements in gender equality, ensuring productivity towards economic growth and development of sustainable cities. Henceforth, family planning will also result in socioeconomic prosperity for Pakistan due to its sustainable population.

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# **Sustainable Population Growth: Balancing Demographic Changes through Family Planning**

*Mahnoor Butt*

Population growth is a double-edged sword for Pakistan. On the one hand, it is a source of strength and potential, creating a large, young workforce that can drive innovation and growth. However, it simultaneously poses certain challenges, straining already scarce resources and giving rise to demographic changes. According to the World Bank (2021), Pakistan's population is estimated to be around 220 million and is projected to grow rapidly in the coming years. This ineffectiveness of prevailing population policies and family planning can be attributed to a lack of acceptance of family planning, cultural taboos, inadequate financial resources, and weak institutional capacity, amongst many others. The paper aims to scrutinize the significant demographic changes and consequences of this rapid population growth and effective methods of tackling these changes through family planning and population control.

Boosting one of the highest population growth rates in the world, Pakistan's population structure is young and dependent, putting immense strain on the country's social services and economic resources. With approximately 45% of our median-age population falling below 15 years, the dependency ratio on additional assistance from state institutions stood at 94 dependents per 100 working-age persons in 1992, ranking as one of the highest in the world (World Bank, 1984). This surge in population and urbanization has led to heightened demand for employment, income, and consumption while reducing the availability of savings, investment, and productivity. Pakistan experienced a decline in its investment rate, dropping from 19 percent of GDP in 1981 to 16 percent in 2005. Correspondingly, the savings rate decreased from 14 percent to 12 percent. Afzal (2009) identifies a substantial negative correlation between population growth and investment and savings rates. Thus, implying that swift population growth diminishes the resources earmarked for capital accumulation and economic progress.

With the urban labor force growing faster than urban employment opportunities, the result manifests in elevated unemployment and underemployment rates. The nation faces a low labor force participation rate (38 percent), high unemployment rate (6

percent), low savings rate (12 percent), low investment rate (16 percent), low productivity growth (1 percent), and environmental degradation (Ahmad,1984). Overall, the rapid demographic expansion has eroded the efficiency and competitive edge of the Pakistani economy. Furthermore, the urban income distribution is also skewed and unequal, with a large proportion of urban dwellers living below the poverty line. According to the World Bank (2021), the urban poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines was 9.3 percent in 2015-16, while the urban Gini index was 33.5 in 2013-14. Urban consumption patterns are also more resource-intensive and wasteful than rural ones, putting pressure on the national budget and balance of payments. The World Bank (2019) reported that Pakistan's urban areas alone consumed 75.7 billion kWh of electricity in 2016, accounting for 73.2 percent of the total electricity consumption in the country.

Moreover, the accelerated population growth rate has also contributed to a rapid urbanization process, which has had far-reaching implications for urban planning and management. According to the 2017 Population Census, 36.4% of the population lives in urban areas, and the UN Population Division estimates that, by 2025, nearly half the country's population will be living in cities (UNDP, 2019). This urbanization has amplified the demand for transportation, communication, energy, and other infrastructure facilities while simultaneously reducing their efficiency and reliability. The urban transportation system has been unable to cope with the growing traffic volume and congestion, resulting in long travel times, high transport costs, accidents, noise, and air pollution. A study conducted by an NED research team calculated the traffic volumes in Karachi during peak hours to be 3500 vehicles per hour, even though the current road capacity allows for only 3400 vehicles per hour on the road (Zameen Research, 2019). The urban housing sector in Pakistan also falls short of providing adequate and affordable housing for the urban population, resulting in overcrowding, slums, squatter settlements, and homelessness. According to the UNDP, Pakistan has a huge housing deficit of nearly 10 million units and is growing (UNDP,2022). Urban population growth in the country has not been matched by growth in housing units or equitable access to land, resulting in housing shortages and the growth of slums.

Simultaneously, the surge in population growth has escalated the demand for education, health, water supply, sanitation, and other social services, yet compromising the quality

and accessibility of these services. Particularly within urban settings, the educational infrastructure needs help to accommodate the burgeoning student population, leading to decreased enrollment, elevated dropout rates, and diminished educational outcomes. This is clear from Pakistan's literacy rate, which is 35% and falls below all neighboring South Asian countries (Ahmad,1984). Moreover, the escalating population contributed to a heightened infant mortality rate of 101 per 1000 live births in 1990-92, surpassing figures in India (80), Bangladesh (94), Sri Lanka (19), and China (31) (Ahmad,1984). This can be attributed to the urban health system being unable to meet the growing health needs of the urban population, resulting in high morbidity and mortality rates from communicable and non-communicable diseases. These challenges underscore the profound impact of demographic changes on various facets of society, necessitating comprehensive strategies to address the evolving needs of a rapidly expanding population.

By facilitating and promoting family planning programs in Pakistan, the significant demographic changes and their consequences due to the population surge can be tackled. Family planning can lower the fertility rate and slow population growth, resulting in a more balanced age structure and a lower dependency ratio. This can reduce the burden on the working-age population and the social services and increase the availability of savings, investment, and productivity. A lower dependency ratio can also create a window of opportunity for economic growth, referred to as the demographic dividend if accompanied by appropriate policies and investments by governing bodies. (UNFPA,2021) In addition, family planning can improve the urban population's employment opportunities and income distribution by reducing the labor supply and increasing human capital. A smaller, well-educated labor force can have higher productivity and lower unemployment and underemployment rates. A more equitable income distribution can reduce poverty and inequality and improve social cohesion and stability. (United Nations, 2021)

Moreover, family planning can reduce the urban population's environmental impact and resource consumption by lowering the population pressure and the demand for energy, water, food, and other goods and services. A smaller and more efficient urban population can have a lower ecological footprint and greenhouse gas emissions and a higher resilience to climate change and natural disasters. A more sustainable urban

consumption pattern can also improve the national budget and balance of payments and reduce the dependence on external sources. (United Nations, 2021) Therefore, expanding the access and quality of family planning services in Pakistan is imperative, especially in urban areas, where the population pressure is most acute and the demand for social services is highest. This requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that involves multiple stakeholders, such as the government, the private sector, and the urban residents.

Family planning and population issues should be recognized as national priorities and integrated into the development plans and strategies alongside increased political will and policy support. The government should allocate adequate financial and human resources and implement evidence-based and progressive policy reforms, such as the National Action Plan on Family Planning and the New National Narrative on Population. (Love-Koh et al., 2020) Furthermore, family planning services and commodities should be made available and affordable for all segments of the urban population, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the youth. The government should ensure contraceptive commodity security and efficient supply chain management, providing incentives and subsidies to the private sector to deliver family planning services and products.

To achieve sustainable population growth, leadership bodies must work to integrate and coordinate family planning with other health and development sectors, such as child health, nutrition, education, and poverty reduction. This can improve the quality and accessibility of services and create positive outcomes for multiple health and development goals. Moreover, it is essential to address the social and cultural factors that affect the use of family planning. Factors such as gender inequality, son preference, stigma, and misinformation can discourage or prevent people from using family planning. Addressing these factors requires engaging with various stakeholders, such as men, religious leaders, traditional healers, and community groups, to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and build trust and support for family planning. The government and civil society should use various communication channels and platforms, such as mass media, social media, community mobilization, and advocacy campaigns, to disseminate accurate and positive information about family planning and

its benefits and to address the myths, misconceptions, and cultural barriers that hinder its use.

Pakistan's rapid population growth poses a significant threat to its sustainability. Through effective policies and programs promoting family planning, Pakistan must adopt a holistic and multisectoral approach to ensure sustainable population growth and secure a better future for its people.

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## **Impact of Investing in Education on the State of Economy, Society and Population**

*Muhammad Nabeel Khan*

There are certain experiences in life that leave you in awe and amazement but at the same time leave you discouraged. It is a different feeling that is not easy to describe in words. Such was my feeling last Sunday evening when our maid/house help called my mom and asked if the kids were home. My mom replied, yes kids are home, what happened? She told her that her youngest and only son is having difficulty in mathematics and crying and that if he does not prepare well, his teacher will punish him so can the kids please help him out, to which my mother abruptly answered yes! Before even asking me, who is perhaps “the greatest mind in mathematics”. That’s where things got interesting, I had not seen a mathematics book for ages and was never good at it and now all of a sudden I had to teach my maid’s kid, all sorts of questions started doing rounds in my mind i.e., how am I to teach him something I wasn’t good at? Will he be able to grasp my method of teaching? And then the obvious embarrassment factor considering my mathematical “prowess”.

Anyway the kid came, he was a polite and confident 5<sup>th</sup> grader, well dressed and all things in place (a geometry box with all accessories i.e., compass, scale, etc.) As we started, I asked him to give me a moment to go through the chapter which was triangles (equilateral, Isosceles, etc.) and their angles. I was able to grasp it, thanks to my teachers back in 3-4 grade who taught these concepts well for which I will always be grateful to them. Now, when I started to explain to him in Urdu in easy terms, thinking that he may not be familiar or comfortable the other way round it was to my astonishment that it was not the case, and he was equally equipped as we were. He kept asking questions, had a keen interest and was open. So, after we were done with it, out of amazement I asked him about his school and teachers and the overall environment. He told me about the class size, which was 30-35, and that the teachers were good, but they rushed on, that’s why he sometimes finds it difficult to cope. Afterward, I asked my mother about his tuition which we pay apart from his mother’s salary and I was amazed that it was merely Rs.3000, the amount of money that is meager for so many people like us let alone the government, and the impact it could have not just at an individual level like the phenomenal kid I met but at a macro level on our country and society.

As an economics major, we study the Human Development Index (HDI) and in the calculation of HDI, education is an important component. It is accounted for as the mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more and expected years of schooling for children of school-entering age. And unfortunately, Pakistan ranks abysmally poor on that front. Resultantly with what is supposed to be a great advantage for any economy i.e., youth bulge, there is increasing intolerance and polarization. In a society that consists mostly of the young, one would expect the polity to be booming with youth culture, which stems from adopting new ways of life, be it fashion or the overall worldview, youth calls for change breaking the shackles of the existent status quo but for a positive change to occur education is imperative, so they can form their worldview in an informed manner, and be what they are supposed to be i.e., a catalyst for positive change.

*According to UNICEF, 'Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school, representing 44 percent of the total population in this age group.'*

With such wide-scale disparities, Pakistan is a breeding ground for all sorts of extremism be it religious, political, or outright terrorism. This 22.8 million is not a number, these are not passive souls, they are very much human and have the same tendencies and desires for material and prosperity as anyone else, but do they have the opportunity? The answer is no. This huge number of children will be adults in a decade or two and will have no chance of coping with their privileged counterparts. The painstaking question is what would they do? Considering that the state and society are oblivious to them, and they are left at their disposal, what would be their association with this society and its norms? What would be their best shot at attaining some sort of social mobility in life? Who is to blame when the society becomes even more increasingly intolerant and dangerous, especially for women and minorities? Already Pakistan is considered one of the most dangerous places for women. Although our religion preaches otherwise, and if you ask a man on the street they would deny or not agree to the fact that Pakistan is a difficult place to be, violence is on the rise.

Then there is religious vigilantism, ever wondered who these vigilantes are? What is behind their motivation to behead anyone who they are told to have committed blasphemy without an iota of evidence? One of the most important reasons is the



promise of a better life ahead and perhaps that's their only shot towards that, consider what it takes to become so gross that you do not care about taking a human life, the lynching of a factory manager in Sri Lankan origin in Sialkot, Priyantha Kumara serves as an example.

With such a state of affairs how can anyone expect the world to invest in Pakistan let alone consider us a normal country? These out-of-school 22.8 million children are supposed to be a great asset (in economic terms a comparative advantage) the catalyst that plays the foremost role in taking the country to new heights. Pakistan is fortunate enough to have China and India as its neighbors, one is set to become the global superpower and number one economy, while India which has a similar demographic is eyeing to be the third largest economy in the world. Over the past three to four decades, both have made tremendous strides in utilizing their large population to accelerate growth and attain the position that they have. China has lifted 800 million people out of poverty in a short period of time. While China is no democracy, India has its own set of challenges which are quite similar to Pakistan like communal, religious divide, nepotism, and corruption yet they have managed to keep the house in order and moved onwards and upwards while Pakistan seems to be stuck in a crazy circle.

To break this cycle, I would again refer to where it all began, the example of young 5<sup>th</sup> grader Rehan, the son of my maid who is a shining example of what difference education can put in a person regardless of the circumstances, how it instills hope in the hopeless and gives them a sense of purpose to foresee a better tomorrow and bear in mind we are talking about a 5<sup>th</sup> grader in a Rs.3000 school. Such is the difference between setting the priorities right and effective resource allocation. Economic stability and family planning stem from an informed and educated citizenry. There can be no economic stability without the economy not being able to cope with the growth rate of population, and that rate cannot be brought down to sustainable levels without investing in education and making the polity aware. There are various reasons for this high growth rate in population but as a matter of fact, many developed countries serve as an example of how through better education and opportunities for a high quality of life, rates decreased from very high to as low as Japan of today. The state has to take responsibility and invest in its people otherwise we are headed to a dead end, socially let alone economically. It is possible, it's just a matter of getting our priorities right and

investing in people, this cannot be excused for scarcity of resources, it is just a matter of channelizing the existing resources to where they matter the most instead of subsidizing the elites (*According to UN, Economic privileges accorded to Pakistan's elite groups, including the corporate sector, feudal landlords, the political class and the country's powerful military, add up to an estimated \$17.4bn, or roughly 6 percent of the country's economy*) towards education and health.

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# **Economic Stability: Impact of Family Planning on Financial Well-being of Families and Communities**

*Mariyam Afzal*

## **Introduction**

In rapidly evolving societies, changes in economy, technology, and culture are evident which shape how families and communities are structured in contemporary society. Amid the societal shifts, family planning has been observed as a pivotal factor that aids in the prosperity and well-being of families and communities. Simultaneously, economic stability is a significant cornerstone that boosts prosperity and well-being. Family planning is beneficial for the development of the community, conservation, and distribution of resources, economy, and environment. The role of family planning in transforming communities necessitates the need to understand the phenomena in a broader context. This research paper employs a comprehensive tone in understanding the importance of family planning and its impact on the financial well-being of people and communities.

Family planning is the mutual decision-making between individuals on the number of children and the interval between each. The objective behind this planning can be for several reasons: health of women, financial constraints, and birth spacing. Such an ability affects not only individual families but also the economic structures of the countries. This paper will understand the need for family planning in contemporary society for financial well-being and the economy by highlighting the correlation between family planning (demographic factors) and economic stability.

## **Case Study**

Family planning has become a wide-reaching topic today with many emphasizing the need to control fertility. The objective gained special attention in the 20th century, with leading figures like Margaret Sanger highlighting the significance of contraceptives. Over time, reproductive autonomy has been recognized as a fundamental human right. The global perspective on this agenda has divided populations with people relating it to gender equality, health outcomes, birth spacing, better distribution of resources, and financial well-being. Out of all the possibilities,

one that has been on high alert is the economic development and financial well-being of individuals and communities.

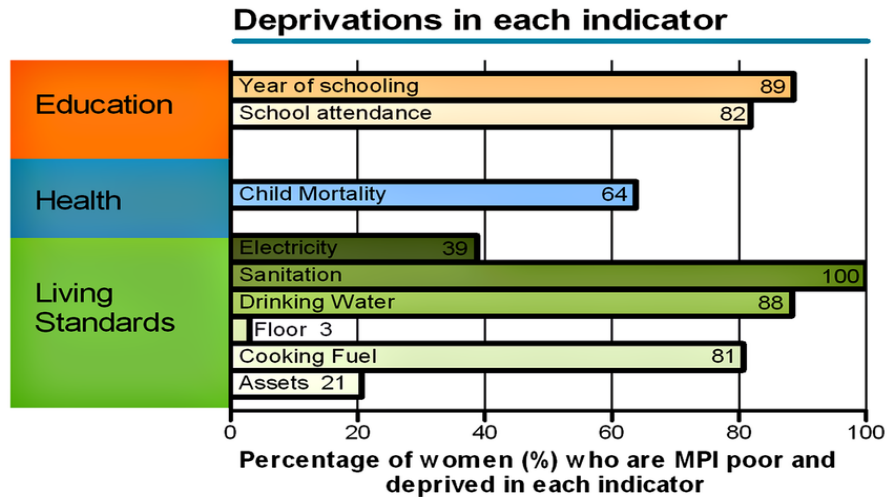
For social and economic growth, both economic stability and family planning remain related and vital aspects. Much of the available research on the subject emphasizes the correlation between demographic variables and economic well-being. In a narrow context, family planning helps families in better income allocation and investment. In a broader context, trends like fertility rates and population growth determine the stability of an economy. Bloom et al. (2003) discuss that a rise in fertility rates does not only inhibit economic growth but also strains the available resources. On the contrary, proper family planning and the use of contraceptives have contributed to boosting the economy (Cleland et al., 2006).

Family planning also ensures the safety of the mother, reducing the risks that arise from pregnancy and delivery. It was reported that 40% of pregnancies in 2012 globally were accidental. In simple terms, these are 85 million accidental pregnancies that contribute largely to the world population. The rising number in preceding years reveals inaccessibility to contraceptives and lack of awareness (Starbird et al., 2016). Such a number can pose huge constraints on the financial well-being of the family and the economic stability of the larger society. The relationship between family planning and economic stability can be bidirectional or correlated. Nevertheless, if we look at this subject from a broader perspective, we understand that this analysis requires a multi-faceted approach.

At the family level, it has been observed that family planning enables households to reduce expenses and allocate their income appropriately. A cost-benefit analysis provided by Missie Thurston (2021) reveals that families that are smaller in size retain a higher percentage of their incomes for savings and allocate this percentage towards many investment options: infrastructure, education, retirement, and security. In the long term, such decisions lead to higher employment, productivity, and better wages in the economy. In contrast, families that are bigger struggle to meet their ends with the available resources and make difficult financial choices. In such families, it has been observed that women's needs are considered inferior, such as their education, and they are deprived of literacy and employment.

**Figure 1.1**

*Percentage of women who are MPI poor and deprived in each indicator.*

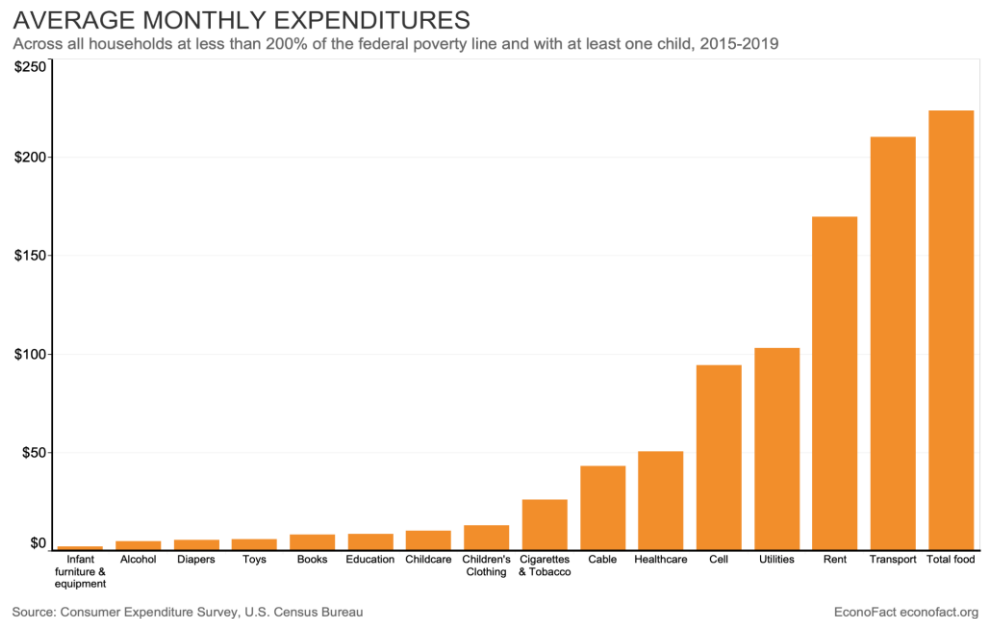


[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Percentage-of-women-who-are-deprived-in-each-indicator-Percentage-of-women-deprived-in\\_fig4\\_259589494](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Percentage-of-women-who-are-deprived-in-each-indicator-Percentage-of-women-deprived-in_fig4_259589494)

Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of women who are deprived in each indicator due to poverty. According to these statistics, we understand how such a huge percentage of the overall population can fail to deliver in the economy. Investment in women's education and living standards generates long-term economic benefits, an increased workforce, a better literacy rate, and improved health and welfare (Thurston, 2023). The bar graph in Figure 1.2 has been added to our analysis to showcase that families spend about 75% of their income on necessities. Given the rising poverty rates globally, a low-income family barely fulfills the standard of living. These statistics double with the birth of a new child which highlights the importance of family planning to the community and the economy (given that the resources are already limited). On the contrary, with smaller family sizes, there will be fewer mouths to be fed, and fewer children to clothe, educate, and nurture (Gennetian & Gennetian, 2022).

**Figure 1.2**

*Average Monthly Expenditures of Households (U.S)*



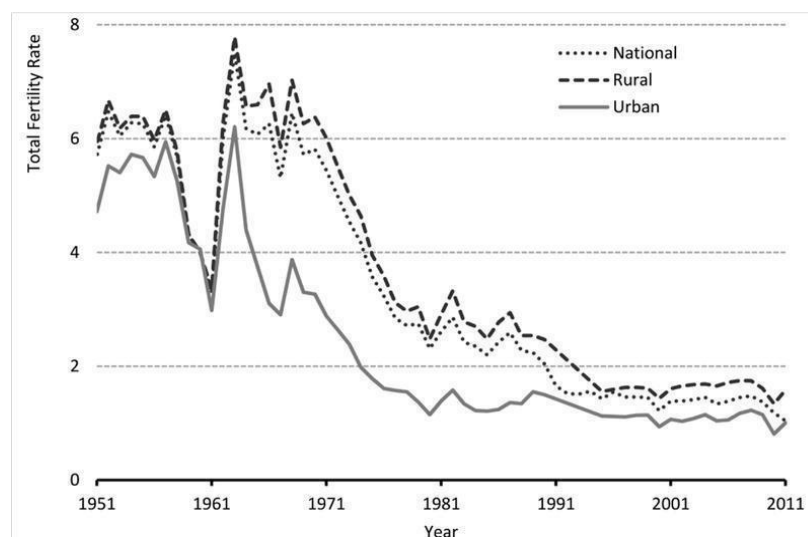
<https://econofact.org/how-do-low-income-families-spend-their-money>

In 1979, China implemented its "One-Child" Policy to curb the rising demographics in the country that cause socio-economic constraints. The initiative was announced to boost economic stability and advancement in the country. The policy lasted till 2015 and the TFR in China reported a vital decrease in children born per woman from 5-6 to 1.5- 1.6 (Kane & Choi, 1999). The immediate effects of the policy were recorded as rapid economic growth in the country and an increase in the workforce. Women who were not birthing children were now actively involved in labor, family maintenance was easier, and the state could devise better policies for education and employment.

China implemented a one-child policy then changed it to two children in 2016 followed by the three-child policy in 2021 because of the negative impacts of the former policy. This has caused economic problems as well as deterioration of social security by an increase in the aging population and the reduction of the working population due to the one-child policy (Jazeera, 2023). Further, it distorted the normative structuring of the family as many people were raised in single-parent homes and with or without siblings as well as no close relatives, social interpersonal development being impaired as well as emotional health. The changes seek to achieve proper demographic proportions in regard to age and sex while ensuring that a country's economy and social systems are healthy and stable (Kane & Choi, 1999).

**Figure 1.3**

*Fertility Trends in China 1951-2011*



<https://studycorgi.com/chinas-one-child-policy-and-its-effect-on-economy-family-and-society/>

The idea of family planning here is not only limited to reduced children per family, for economic stability. However, one way to look at it is the smart decisions being undertaken by families that best support a nation and its well-being. To understand this better, we can compare two nations, Japan and Nigeria. Japan is a stable economy, being ranked as 3rd largest globally in terms of nominal GDP. Overall, the country has higher standards of living, a strong industrial base, low unemployment, and better access to healthcare and education (The Economist, 2023). Compared to this,

Nigeria, one of the biggest nations in Asia ranks at 39th position globally, for nominal GDP. However, the country has smooth economic growth and established sectors.

**Figure 1.4/Table 1.1**

*Demographic Comparison between Japan and Nigeria*

Population

Details for **Japan** and **Nigeria**

	Japan	Nigeria
Population:	125,125,000	218,541,000
Inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> :	331.0	236.6
Life expectancy males:	Ø 81 years	Ø 52 years
Life expectancy females:	Ø 88 years	Ø 53 years
Average age:	Ø 49.5 years	Ø 19.2 years
Birth rate:	6.60 ‰	37.12 ‰
Death rate:	11.70 ‰	13.08 ‰
Migrationrate:	0.70 ‰	-0.35 ‰

<https://www.worlddata.info/country-comparison.php?country1=JPN&country2=NGA>

Despite these economic stats, both countries face potential economic challenges due to existing demographics. The fertility rate in Japan is 1.2 births per woman. Where the birth rate is declining, the existing population also faces a shrink in the workforce, and an aging population (Jazeera, 2023). On the contrary, the fertility rate in Nigeria is 5-6 children born per woman, and a risk of strain on social services and available resources (Statista, 2024). Where each nation is established and growing, they both have their respective demographic challenges that need to be addressed rapidly to resolve potential economic risks in the future. This reveals how family decisions and policies targeting family planning should be applicable in such a way that best suits the needs of a nation and avoids strain on available resources.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the correlation between family planning and economic stability cannot be underestimated. It is evident, through the paper, how strategic family planning can lead to favorable economic outcomes. This paper provided a comprehensive case study to understand the relationship between family planning and economic stability through a multifaceted approach. Through the analysis of popular policies like the “one-child” policy in China, we can understand how strategies and



decision-making can result in boosting the economy and improving the overall living standards of the people.

Family planning has helped families in reducing poverty, better reproductive health, increasing capital investment, and better allocation of resources. However, through the comparison between Japan and Nigeria, we were also able to grasp the significance of tailoring these policies to the needs of the time. It is important to identify the risks and rising economic challenges that are to be resolved through appropriate family planning.

This paper highlighted how economic stability has become dependent on family planning and demographics in today's times. For an improved livelihood and establishment in the long term, family planning is one of the determinants of success. How families decide to proceed has implications beyond the well-being and financial condition of the families and extends to factors like the availability of resources, the nation's economic performance, the health of the women, the exercise of rights, and living standards.

Therefore, in light of this conclusion, it is recommended that nations take the subject seriously and increase public awareness regarding the matter. Educational programs and awareness of the economy are vital aspects that should be acknowledged by all demographics for property in the long term.

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## **Healthy Families and Communities in Changing Societies - The Role of Family Planning**

*Hadia Ather*

From the moment a man cries it is first, to the moment it is clothed in white, ready to depart this world, what is always present at the side is family. Except in a minority of mournable cases, family is always there, either wailing or celebrating. A group of people makes an individual not much of an individual but part of a tightly knit group. A group is more valuable than any materialistic tendencies or worldly currencies a man could wish to possess.

As the more convenient introduction of a family suggests, a family and its consistent presence embody support. In healthy families, members support each other's individual growth and development (Brown et al., 2018, p. 112), but just like any other existence in this world, no family is exact of another. Where a variety of fairytale families exist, disrupted and disturbed families are not uncommon either. Similarly, the word "perfection" is an attribute worthy of no family. Every family holds its cup of good or bad, warm or cold, healthy or unhealthy.

While pondering over what leads to a higher percentage of troubled families, one common factor that arises is financial tribulations. Financial difficulties often require individuals and families to make difficult choices and sacrifices in their daily lives (Jones et al., 2020, p. 89). Unless a person is born with an eternal convenience of high financial stability, assured to run safely over a long course of time, no such couple exists which is immune to crippling anxiety related to building agreeable living conditions for their children. In such anxious times, one always considers their financial well-being while planning a family. Alas, many rural populations of our country are unaware of the consequences of a larger family. The lack of sex education and the obsession with having a male offspring is what drives many families towards pitiful conditions. This simultaneously leads to an unwanted yet significant increase in societal poverty. As of 2023, research shows that about 37.2 percent of Pakistanis live in poverty. Highlighting the obvious domino effect of low education further affecting the scale of poverty and mental wellbeing in a society, as well as diminishing education voids can lead to a massive and clear change in our society. As mentioned before, the pointless preference

of male offspring over female ones has birthed many unwanted perceptions in our society. Parents with sons are deemed more blessed whereas a female child is looked down upon. On the contrary, a female is undoubtedly a powerful being if nourished and raised. As the topic of greatness of women has been stirred, one way in which the percentage of unhappy families can decline significantly is through pushing the women out of society-imposed "weak" demeanors and towards more strength and empowerment. Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women (Angelou,n.d).

A woman's role in our society should go through a positive extension and a welcomed change would no doubt be observed. Where general perceptions limit the women of the family only to homemaking and the male of the family to providing the finances, different individuals, despite the stereotypes, shouldn't feel shame in doing against what is generally expected of them. Although these perceptions have changed greatly over the years, blatant misogyny in our society still stands and has no doubt hurt families as well. Problematic behavior within families leads to more harm than what our ignorant society repeatedly refuses to acknowledge. This societal ignorance has proved to be poisonous. To resolve this problem, the power of education must be held firmly and used cautiously as well as widely. The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change (Rogers, n.d).

Putting aside the pitiable patriarchy in our communities, stereotyping genders in general while imposing familial duties that adhere to their more recognized image is a practice our society has observed for decades. Not just our South Asian culture, every culture and society stereotypes and stigmatizes. Although change is practiced over a period, the ones who adhere to change initially are seen negatively and viewed differently.

This stereotyping and its influence on families is something ignored more often than we can say. This problem is deemed insignificant and people in general choose to skip the page relating gender roles and their effect on families. A man is no doubt masculine, and is expected to work to provide for his family but this work doesn't mean it should diminish the act of expressing his emotions towards his children. Holding and bestowing affection upon a child, cooking for them and showing close and keen interest in their lives should never be only the mother's appointed job. Similarly managing finances shouldn't be only the father's job. If a woman is perfectly capable of not only

lending a helping hand but earning more than her significant other as well. If she is provided with an opportunity that makes her earn more than her husband, fears of trespassing societal norms should not be given any heed. In such situations, the husband's security and support are something that can truly play a part in cementing a healthy family. A world where judging mothers, labeling them as "irresponsible" and accusing them of ignoring motherly duties just because employment ensures regular and satisfactory payment is in her possession is undoubtedly an unjust world. With the progress of time, the percentage of working mothers has increased. Research conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the percentage of working moms in 2012 was about 48 percent. As of 2022, it has grown to about 72.9 percent. Keeping in mind the generalization of mothers in our society and the norms changing with the passage of time, one should realize that if a woman chooses to be a stay-at-home mother herself, nothing is more empowering than her doing what she believes is right for her and her family. As the American novelist, Louisa May Alcott has presented beautifully in her book "Little Women", just because someone's dreams are different than the others does not mean they are unimportant. The index of happiness in a society would emerge massively only if people let people be and say nothing if they had nothing good to say at all.

Further discussing healthy families and their effect on societies, one incredibly amazing factor commonly present in more peaceful families is strong and secure communication. Family makers which encourage communication and provide a safe environment for children to express their opinions brush away many possible turbulences from making their way into the lives of their families.

Positive confidence in one's family and optimistic expectancy of support lowers depression rates. An increase in a person's contentment with oneself is usually influenced by a family's earnest support. Effective communication is essential for successful relationships. (Doe, J. 2019). Members of a community, taught to practice acceptance and communication at a very young age, are more likely to build a welfare state of their environment.

Elaborating further on the general importance of communication in family systems, one factor that is bound to be highlighted is that communication is exactly what most family elders believe "compromise" is. To be in a successful marriage does not mean blindly

submitting to every fault one's partner shows, it means communicating and discussing what bothers a person's significant other and what creates hurdles and differences in a relationship. This undoubtedly has a healthier effect on the offspring's upbringing as well.

These factors are not the only ones in building healthy families, in fact, many may believe blood relations aren't the only family either. Some show more attachment towards a "selected" family than the one they are born into. Some adopted children and adoptive parents show unrequited love towards each other as well. Such scenarios may exist in any society, in any time period but giving rise to healthy emotional support and being welcoming towards change is surely what this world needs.

Dr. Jonathan Addleton (Rector, FCCU) presented cash prizes to the top three winners while & Dr. Sikandar Hayat (Dean, Social Sciences) presented a certificate of participation to all the participating students in the ceremony held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at E-001.



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