



26th ANNUAL POPULATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE

November 2025, Islamabad

Building a Prosperous Future through Population Management and Reform: From Crisis to Course Correction

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, Population Association of Pakistan (PAP) maintains a history and mandate to emphasize the crucial relationship between population and social development. As PAP navigates the third decade of its journey in an ever changing and evolving world, we pledge to continue and foster this mandate. Toward that end, PAP has, to date, convened 25 Annual Population Research Conferences (APRCs) covering a range of topics related to population and human development, demographic transition, and policy directions to meet the challenges of a rapidly growing population.

The PAP Annual Population Research Conferences have been successful in engaging researchers and academics, policy makers, politicians, religious leaders, private sector stakeholders, media, civil society and development partners through their participation and contribution in technical sessions, lectures and panel discussions held during these conferences. PAP provides a platform that offers an opportunity to bridge the various social science disciplines including economics, public and social policy, statistics, demography, public health, sociology, geography, and anthropology to deliberate upon solutions for pressing population and development related issues of Pakistan in this changing world. We aim to uphold the significant linkages between population and social development during the 26th APRC and advance thought leadership in population that responds to the national context and emerging population needs and imperatives.

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE 26TH ANNUAL POPULATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Pakistan faces a perfect storm of interlinked population and development challenges that threaten its future stability and prosperity. With current 254 million (approx) people, it is the fifth most populous country in the world, but the country's demographic momentum continues to accelerate. The latest census reports an intercensal population growth rate of 2.55%, outpacing regional peers and exerting immense pressure on health, education, and public services.

Despite initiating one of the earliest family planning programs in the region in the 1960s, progress has been uneven and slow. Today, only 34% of women use any form of contraception, and the Total Fertility Rate remains high at 3.6 children per woman. Maternal and child health indicators remain alarming: the Infant Mortality Rate is 50.1 per 1,000 live births, and 40% of children under five are stunted due to chronic malnutrition. Over 26 million children are out of school, and nearly two-thirds of youth lack access to quality education and employable skills.

In parallel, the country faces unprecedented environmental and climate stress. In 2022, Pakistan was ranked the world's most climate-vulnerable nation, with devastating floods affecting over 33 million people, claiming nearly 1,700 lives, and destroying 1.3 million homes. These disasters exposed the stark vulnerabilities that arise when rapid population growth intersects with poor planning and fragile infrastructure.

The majority of Pakistan's population is under 30, with a median age of just 19. This youth bulge holds immense potential, but if unmet with opportunities, can fuel disillusionment, social unrest, and even extremism. These trends are compounded by economic volatility, political instability, and weak institutional capacity, making population management not just a social priority, but a national security imperative. The urgency for a bold and integrated course correction has never been greater. To facilitate a discussion on these challenges, PAP is convening the 26th Annual Population Research Conference in November 2025 at Islamabad. The Conference will be organized using a hybrid approach, with on-site and virtual participation. This conference provides a vital platform to reimagine Pakistan's population narrative — shifting from crisis to reform, from fragmentation to coordination, and from rhetoric to results.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the 26th Annual population Research Conference is to convene policymakers, researchers, practitioners, youth and stakeholders to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities inherent in population management and reform in Pakistan. Specifically, the conference aims to:

- Emphasize the Strategic Importance of Population Management
- Critically Review and Strengthen Policy Frameworks
- Catalyze Cross-Sectoral Dialogue and Collaboration
- Advance Rights-Based, People-Centered Approaches
- Develop a National Roadmap for Population Reform

CONFERENCE THEME & SUB-THEMES

The overarching theme for the 26th Annual Population Research Conference is ***Building a Prosperous Future through Population Management and Reform: From Crisis to Course Correction***

The conference will cover the following sub-themes,

- **From Demographic Pressure to Demographic Dividend:** Pakistan's rapidly growing youth population poses a double-edged sword: while it holds economic promise, the lack of jobs, skills, and opportunity risks turning demographic potential into social unrest. Urgent reforms are needed to harness this momentum before it becomes unmanageable.
 - **Human Capital in Crisis: Health, Education, and Nutrition:** With millions of children out of school, high rates of stunting, and inadequate healthcare access, Pakistan's human capital is under severe strain—threatening long-term development, equity, and national resilience. Without immediate course correction, Pakistan risks locking generations into cycles of poverty and poor productivity.
 - **Provincial Realities, Local Responses:** Deep disparities in population dynamics, governance capacity, and service delivery across provinces have led to uneven progress. Strengthening localized, evidence-based responses is critical to address regional inequities and ensure national coherence.
 - **Reclaiming the Promise of Family Planning:** Persistently low contraceptive use, high unmet need, and sociocultural resistance continue to undermine family planning programs. A bold, rights-based reinvigoration is urgently required to stabilize population growth and improve maternal-child health outcomes.
 - **Population, Climate, and Urbanization Nexus and Migration:** Uncontrolled population growth is accelerating climate vulnerability and urban strain, as seen in recent disasters and swelling informal settlements. Integrated planning is no longer optional—it is a survival imperative.
 - **Toward Coherent Population Governance and Accountability:** Poor policy coordination, fragmented mandates, and weak accountability have stalled progress on population goals. There is a pressing need for integrated governance, stronger accountability mechanisms, and alignment with national development to drive systemic reform and restore public trust.
- Addressing Cultural and Social Barriers: Identifying ways to address cultural and social barriers to population management and healthcare, including gender inequality and social norms.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

PAP invites social scientists, academics, researchers, and practitioners from diverse backgrounds to submit research and program abstracts based on the conference theme and sub-themes for oral presentations in Technical Sessions and poster presentations during all conference days. All submissions will be subjected to a rigorous blinded review process for selection. Authors of selected abstracts will be invited to present their findings at the conference as oral or poster presentations. Authors accepted for oral presentations will be required to submit a conference paper on the abstract for publication in the Conference Proceedings.

The due dates for submissions are:

- Submission of abstract: **15 August, 2025**
- Announcement of acceptances: **5 October, 2025**
- Submission of 2500 word Conference Paper: **5 November, 2025** (only for abstracts selected for oral presentations)

For Information and Abstract Submission, Please Contact

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