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POPULATION BULLETIN

POPULATION RESEARCH CENTRE, SESS IBA

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Edited by Neelma Faraz

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF PRC

Workshop – Electoral Data Mapping with GIS



IBA SESS
School of Economics and Social Sciences

POPULATION RESEARCH CENTRE
Workshop Series

DATA MAPPING WITH GIS

AN INTRODUCTION TO GIS CONCEPTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO DATA MAPPING USING ELECTORAL DATA.

The workshop will be conducted by Mr. Muhammad Toheed, visiting faculty (SESS) and associate director, Karachi Urban Lab (KUL) IBA.

Mr. Toheed is an urban planner and geographer specializing in urban informality, infrastructural violence, climate change, and GIS-based mapping.

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Saturday April 27, 2024
Main Campus IBA

QR Code for Registration Pass

United States Australia

The Population Research Centre (PRC) organized a one-day workshop on **Data Mapping with GIS** on April 27th, at the Main Campus IBA Karachi, conducted by Mr. Muhammad Toheed, a visiting faculty member and associate director of the Karachi Urban Lab at IBA. During the workshop, attendees explored various data types and learned how to effectively utilize QGIS software for spatial analysis. The session proved to be quite engaging and was well-received, drawing over 50 students and faculty members who participated actively in the hands-on learning experience. This workshop not only enhanced the participants' technical skills but also enriched their understanding of the practical applications of GIS in various fields such as urban planning, environmental science, and social research.



Dialogue – Demographic Diversity and SDGs

On June 6th, 2024 - PRC in collaboration with the UNFPA Karachi office, hosted an enlightening session on **Demographic Diversity and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** featuring **Dr. Luay Shabaneh**. Moderated by Dr. Khadija Bari, director of the Population Research Centre, the event attracted a diverse audience, including academics, researchers, students, and journalists.



Dr. Shabaneh's discussion focused on the policy and implementation gaps in Pakistan, emphasizing the urgent need for strategic actions to address these challenges. A critical theme that emerged from the session was the importance of building human capital through investments in education and skills development.

Another key takeaway was the emphasis on investing in women and youth to address population and high fertility issues and to make use of the demographic dividend. Empowering women through education, healthcare, and economic opportunities was highlighted as essential for sustainable development. Similarly, investing in the youth to harness their potential and drive economic growth is crucial. Addressing these demographic challenges is vital for achieving better progress towards the SDGs and improving the overall well-being of all citizens.

This insightful session underscored the significance of demographic diversity and strategic investment in human capital, particularly in women and youth, to drive sustainable development

Seminars and Policy Discussions



Our team at the PRC actively engages in a variety of seminars, discussions, and dissemination events. We are committed to exploring diverse perspectives, participating not only in our own events but also in those organized by various other entities within the field. Recently, we attended the National Seminar on Utilization of Census Data in Development Planning, a Dissemination Seminar on the Baseline Longitudinal Panel

Study Using the PMA Framework in Sindh, and a Dissemination Seminar on Strengthening the Community-Based Health Care System through the Community Midwives Plus Project in Sindh. Additionally, we contributed to the Stakeholder Consultation and Focus Group Discussion on the Political Economy Analysis of Family Planning. These engagements provide us with invaluable exposure, allowing us to learn about ongoing research efforts and exchange ideas with a wide range of professionals involved in population-related research. By contributing to these discussions and events, we not only broadened our knowledge base but also built connections with individuals working in different capacities within the realm of population studies.

Data for Development

The Population Research Centre at BUIITEMS, with facilitation from PRC IBA, organized an important event titled "**Data for Development - Youth and Employment Challenges in Baluchistan**," as part of the D4D Initiative by SDPI and UNFPA. This event brought together key stakeholders from government, academia, and civil society to explore ways to transform challenges into opportunities for the youth of Baluchistan. The session featured a keynote address by Mr. Zahoor Buledi, Minister of Planning & Development, and a panel discussion chaired by Dr. Khalid Hafeez, Vice Chancellor of BUIITEMS. Dr. Khadija Bari from PRC Karachi was among the esteemed panelists who shared valuable insights on improving youth employability in the province. The event underscored the importance of collaboration in shaping policies that will empower the region's young population.



Training Lecture

As part of the **Civil Servants Training Program** in Baluchistan, Dr. Khadija Bari, delivered a lecture on the demography of Pakistan. Her presentation aimed to provide in-depth insights into the current demographic trends and future projections, emphasizing the importance of understanding population dynamics to craft effective policies.



Research Publications

PRC officials are actively engaged in high-quality research, contributing to significant studies that address pressing global health and social issues. Their work spans various disciplines, aiming to drive policy change and improve societal well-being.

- **Dr. Khadija Bari**, co-authored a study titled "**No Use of Schools: The Heterogeneous Effects of Conflict in Pakistan on Enrollment Rates of Boys and Girls.**" This research aims to estimate the impact of conflict witnessed in Pakistan on the enrollment rates of boys and girls. With Pakistan having the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children approximately 22.8 million aged 5-16 years the study provides critical insights into how conflict differentially affects school enrollment for boys and girls in the country. This study has been published in the Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JACPR-01-2024-0873>

- **Dr. Muhammad Nasir** co-authored two important studies on mental health in South Asia. The first study, titled "**The Prevalence of Mental Disorders and Intentional Self-Harm in South Asia**," was published in Cambridge Prism: Global Mental Health. It highlights the substantial mental health burden in the region, focusing on the high prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders among adults and vulnerable populations. The study calls for urgent policy action to prioritize mental health interventions and early treatment strategies. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2023.72>
- The second study titled "**The Economic Burden of Mental Disorders in South Asia**," has been accepted in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry and is currently in press. This research examines the economic costs of mental disorders in the region, revealing that productivity losses often surpass healthcare expenses. It advocates for stronger mental health policies and investments to address the significant economic burden. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2024.104239>

NAVIGATING MATERNAL AND NEONATAL HEALTH IN PAKISTAN: CHALLENGES, PROGRESS AND WAY FORWARD

BY Team PRC

Maternal and neonatal health (MNH) in Pakistan is a critical public health issue, characterized by high fertility rates, substantial unmet needs for family planning, and persistently high maternal mortality rates. Despite various interventions, the progress remains uneven, particularly in rural and underserved regions. The unmet need for

family planning where women want to delay or avoid pregnancy but lack access to contraception, is a key factor that exacerbates these issues.

This unmet need not only contributes to higher fertility rates but also increases the risks associated with frequent and closely spaced pregnancies, leading to higher maternal mortality.

Maternal And Neonatal Health (MNH): The health and well-being of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, as well as the health of newborns during the first 28 days of life.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR): The average number of children a woman is expected to have during her lifetime, based on current age-specific fertility rates.

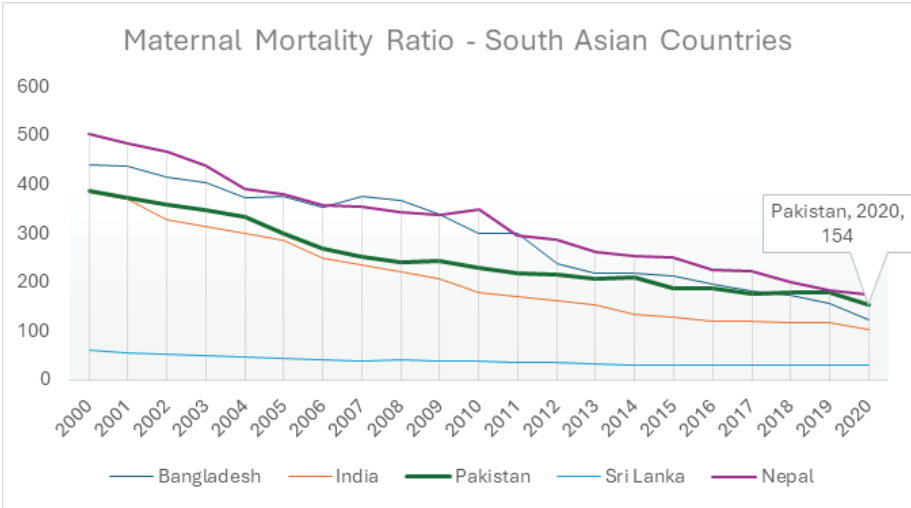
Unmet Need for Family Planning: The proportion of women who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception to achieve that goal.

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR): Maternal mortality ratio is the number of women who die from pregnancy-related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100,000 live births.

As a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Pakistan is committed to achieving a range of targets related to maternal and neonatal health (MNH) such as Target 3.7, which seeks universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services by 2030. The country's progress towards these goals is hindered by systemic obstacles, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, socio-cultural barriers, and disparities in service delivery. By exploring the relationship between unmet family planning needs and maternal health outcomes, we can better understand the complexities of MNH in Pakistan and the progress required to meet global targets.

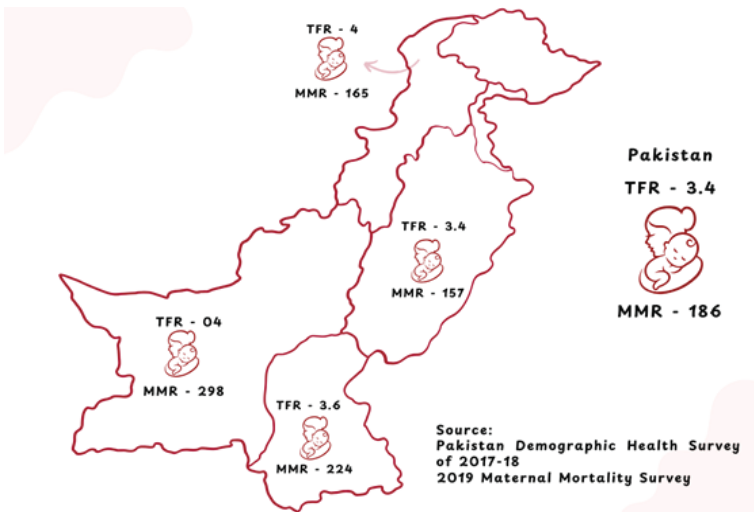
Overview – Challenges

The current state of MNH in Pakistan presents a complex and urgent public health challenge. Empirical data consistently highlights high maternal mortality rates, largely driven by preventable causes such as severe bleeding, infections, and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy. According to the Pakistan Maternal Mortality Survey (2019), the MMR stood at 186 per 100,000 live births, the World Bank's modeled estimates for 2020 reported a slightly lower figure of 154 per 100,000 live births. However, these figures remain alarmingly high, exceeding most other countries in the region.

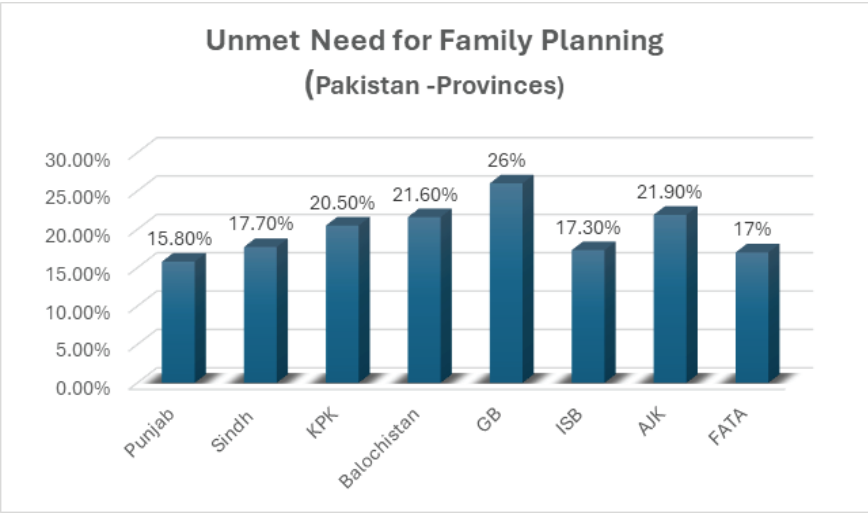
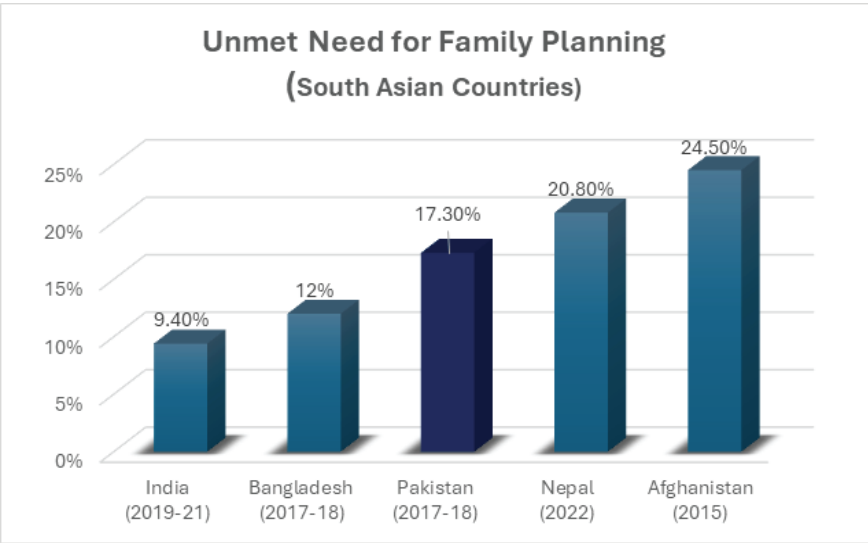


Data Source: World Bank Data - Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)

Moreover, Pakistan's total fertility rate (TFR) also remains among the highest in South Asia, recorded at 3.32 (according to the 2024 estimates by The World Factbook). This is second only to Afghanistan in the region and significantly higher than neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka (2.13), India (2.03), Bangladesh (2.07), and Nepal (1.85). This high fertility rate, especially prevalent in rural regions, significantly increases the risks associated with frequent and closely spaced pregnancies and hinder progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 3.1, which aims to reduce the global MMR to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.



The situation is compounded by the substantial unmet need for family planning, a critical issue that limits women's ability to control the timing and spacing of their pregnancies. The PDHS 2017 data reveals that approximately 17% of married women in Pakistan have an unmet need for family planning, indicating a significant gap between women's reproductive intentions and their ability to fulfill them.



Data Source: PDHS 2017-18

Overview – Progress

To address these challenges, several initiatives have been introduced across Pakistan, aiming to improve access to maternal and neonatal healthcare services. One such initiative is the **Community Midwives Plus Project in Sindh**, which has introduced Group Antenatal Care (GANC) at the community level through community midwives. The Project in Sindh was initiated and supported by the **Population Council** and implemented in collaboration with the **Health and Population Welfare Departments of Sindh**. This project aims to improve access to antenatal care and family planning services, particularly in underserved rural areas. By offering group sessions, GANC fosters a supportive environment where women can receive essential health education, share experiences, and build a sense of community. The results have shown promise in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates by ensuring that women receive consistent, quality care throughout their pregnancies. In Punjab, similar efforts have been made to integrate family planning with maternal health services. The province has implemented training programs for community health workers, aiming to increase the availability of skilled birth attendants and provide comprehensive reproductive health services at the primary healthcare level. Both

In Baluchistan, where the MMR is alarmingly high at 298 per 100,000 live births, efforts have been initiated to expand healthcare infrastructure and deploy mobile health units to reach the province's remote populations. However, these initiatives are still in their early stages, and much more substantial efforts are needed to meet the healthcare needs of the region.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the MMR stands at 165 per 100,000 live births, community-based health programs have been implemented to enhance maternal care. Although these programs have achieved some success, significant gaps in service delivery remain, underscoring the need for ongoing improvements and resource allocation.

Recommendations

To address the interconnected challenges of high fertility rates, unmet family planning needs, and maternal mortality, Pakistan can benefit from adopting a range of proven strategies that have shown success in various countries, including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The following recommendations could help improve maternal and neonatal health (MNH) outcomes across Pakistan

- 1. Expand Community-Based Family Planning Initiatives:** Bangladesh's success in reducing its Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and improving family planning uptake through community-based interventions provides a valuable model. Pakistan should expand similar programs, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This could involve deploying community health workers and providing incentives to healthcare providers to increase the reach and effectiveness of family planning services.
- 2. Integrate Family Planning with Primary Healthcare Services:** Drawing from Sri Lanka's experience, Pakistan should prioritize the integration of family planning services with maternal health at the primary healthcare level. Ensuring that family planning is an integral part of antenatal care can help prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce maternal mortality. This integration can be particularly effective in provinces with high TFRs, such as Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- 3. Scale Up Successful Provincial Initiatives:** Initiatives like the Community Midwives Plus Project in Sindh, which introduces Group Antenatal Care (GANC) at the community level, should be scaled up and adapted across other provinces. This approach has the potential to improve access to both antenatal care and family planning services, thereby reducing maternal and neonatal mortality. Expanding such programs nationwide would ensure that women across Pakistan receive consistent, high-quality care throughout their pregnancies.
- 4. Invest in Healthcare Infrastructure and Workforce Development:** To address the severe challenges faced by provinces like Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there must be substantial investments in healthcare infrastructure, including the expansion of mobile health units and the development of rural healthcare facilities. Additionally, training and retaining skilled healthcare workers, particularly in remote areas, is crucial. Incentive-based programs similar to those in Bangladesh could be introduced to attract and retain talent in these regions.
- 5. Enhance Data Collection and Monitoring:** Effective policymaking requires accurate and comprehensive data. Pakistan should invest in improving data collection systems related to maternal deaths, fertility rates, and family planning needs. This could involve enhancing the capacity of local health departments and implementing digital health records to ensure timely and accurate reporting, which is essential for tracking progress and making informed decisions.

THE COST OF IGNORING WOMEN: PAKISTAN'S WORKFORCE DILEMMA

By: Muhammad Rakkan Basit

The articles in student's corner are submitted by students studying in different programs at IBA

As the son and grandson of working women, I have grown to cite a fair number of women as my greatest sources of inspiration. However, it is a shame that most of the people I have come across do not share the sentiment. I seldom blame them, but rather the system that, for 77 years, has not provided a platform to showcase Pakistan's great women. In fact, Pakistan is among the global economies with the lowest levels of gender parity and women's labor force participation. This article will explore the impact of low female workforce participation on human capital and the broader economy, highlighting what Pakistan loses as a result.

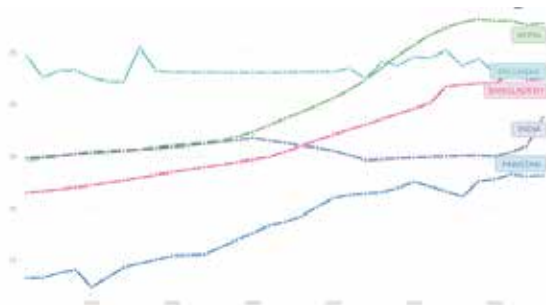


Figure 1 - Labour Force Female (% of Total Pop.)
Data Source: WorldBank Data

Female labor force as a percentage of the total show the extent to which women are active in the labor force.

The Global Gender Gap Index rankings, 2024



Figure 2 - Data Source: Global Gender Gap Report, 2024)

Human Capital Theory states that a population's productivity and economic value is a result of investing in their skills, education, and health. A major opportunity cost Pakistan faces in this context is the underrepresentation of women in the labour market. As the country fails to harness the full social, economic, and innovative potential of half its population, Pakistan forgoes potential GDP growth and the diverse contributions women could bring, thus limiting overall human capital development and economic advancement. A comparison of female labor force participation across South Asian countries highlights Pakistan's lag in engaging women in its workforce, showing a significantly lower percentage of women actively participating in the labor force compared to neighboring countries (Figure 1).

Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2024), indicating one of the world's largest gender gaps in workforce participation with only about 22% of Pakistani women actively employed.

Half of these women work in agriculture as 'contributing family workers,' remaining both unrecognized and unpaid for their labor. Such statistics highlight the need to address women's 'time poverty,' which refers to the limited time women have for paid work or personal development due to the disproportionate burden of unpaid household and caregiving responsibilities. Given no financial freedom, women are usually compelled to submit their earnings to their family, perpetuating a cycle of dependence on male family members.

Other factors limiting female labor force participation in Pakistan include restricted

mobility, safety concerns, housework and childcare responsibilities, narrow occupational opportunities, and limited access to education and skills development. For example, 70% of women cannot visit markets or health facilities alone due to conservative norms, over half feel unsafe in their neighborhoods, and 83% of non-working women cite housework as a barrier. Additionally, two-thirds of firms acknowledge that gender biases affect their hiring decisions for both managerial and non-managerial roles (World Bank, 2018).

Women's education directly correlates with higher productivity and innovation in the workplace. However, research shows that only 49% of women in Pakistan are literate, with the figure dropping to 38% in rural areas, compared to 71% and 65% literacy rates for men in urban and rural areas, respectively. This has a direct repercussion on women's chances to participate meaningfully in the workforce. Education is necessary for human capital and being unable to provide women the quintessential means to contribute effectively to society and the economy, both, the country, and its people are at loss.

To understand what Pakistan is sacrificing by underutilizing its female human capital, consider that the country could potentially see a 60% increase in GDP by 2025 if it closes its gender gap, equating to roughly \$225 billion in opportunity cost forgone annually, according to a policy paper titled *Increasing Women's Inclusion in the Pakistan Economy (2024)* by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI). Where economies like China strive to reach their full potential and continue to expand, Pakistan allows itself to be left behind in a rapidly advancing world. Education opens doors for women to engage in diverse sectors, yet Pakistan ranks among the lowest in female literacy rates.

In Pakistan, only 13% of women own bank accounts, highlighting the financial gender gap that exacerbates chronic poverty (Nikkei Asia, 2023). Furthermore, 70% of women using public transport report experiencing harassment (Asian Development Bank). Despite these challenges, UNDP research reveals that 95% of Pakistani women are motivated to start a business, and they display greater motivation than men in Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA), as shown in Figure 3.

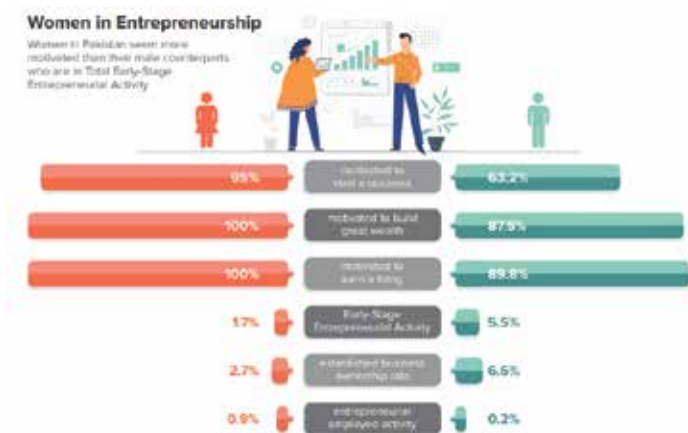


Figure 3
 (Source: *Womenomics: Accelerating gender equality for economic empowerment*)

As Michelle Obama once said, "No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half its citizens." Gender parity in the workforce is not just about fairness but is essential for sustainable economic growth. The World Bank notes that countries closing the gender gap experience faster development and stronger human capital. By removing barriers and investing in women's education and workforce participation, Pakistan can unlock its full potential, driving long-term prosperity and a more equitable society. While this article doesn't cover workplace discrimination or the limited awareness of entitlements like maternity leave, it advocates for economic empowerment through women's entrepreneurship, formalizing the informal economy, improving education and healthcare, and enacting policy reforms for women's rights. Pakistan needs the support of its mothers and sisters; without them, we are incomplete.