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## Chapter 12

# Population, Labour Force and Employment

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Rapid population growth and high fertility rates are significantly straining the country's economic development and its ability to provide essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection. The government is taking proactive measures to control population growth and fertility rates. They create awareness through media campaigns and provide Family Planning services through Family Welfare Centers (FWC), Reproductive Health Services Centers (RHS-A), Regional Training Institutes, and Mobile Service Units.

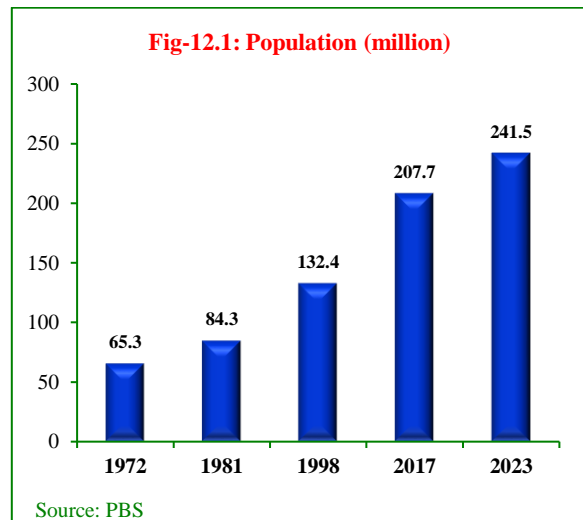
Despite comprising approximately 50 percent of the population in Pakistan, women's participation in the country's labour force is considerably lower than that of men. However, it is essential to recognize their abilities, skills, and efficiency and understand the challenges and obstacles they encounter. Doing so is crucial in developing strategies that help retain female employees, promote gender equality, and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment. This, in turn, can contribute to a more balanced labour force and foster hope for a brighter future.

Pakistan faces the daunting task of transforming its large number of young people into a demographic dividend. Unfortunately, the country's economic opportunities have not kept pace with its population growth and changing age structure. However, there is the reason for optimism given the government's efforts to improve employment prospects for young people through initiatives such as the "Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme" and the "Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme."

### 12.1-a Population Census

Population census data is a crucial source of information for measuring the composition and distribution of a population. Government use this data to determine how to allocate funds and assistance to provinces, districts, and localities. Additionally, the data is used to assign National Assembly seats by defining the limits of legislative districts.

Pakistan's population has increased more than threefold in the last 50 years, largely due to high fertility and growth rates. As a result, population density has risen from 82 people per square kilometer in 1972 to 303 people per square kilometer in 2023. Figure 12.1 provides an overview of the population census since 1972.



Pakistan conducted its Seventh Population and Housing Census on 1st March 2023, the largest digitization exercise in South Asia. The Council of Common Interest (CCI) approved the results of Pakistan's First Ever Digital Census on 5th

August 2023. This Digital Census featured unique characteristics, such as self-enumeration through a web portal, the first in the region. The Census also provided an economic frame to determine the size of economic clusters throughout the country.

Based on the 7th National Population and Housing Census, the country's overall population has increased by 16.3 percent to 241.5 million, compared to the population in 2017 (excluding Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). The population growth rate at the national level is 2.55 percent. In contrast, the growth rate in urban areas is 3.65 percent, which is higher than the population growth rate in rural areas, i.e. 1.90 percent, due to rural-urban migration. The population density increased from 260.88 persons per square km in 2017 to 303 persons per square km in 2023. Additionally, the average household size has decreased from 6.39 in 2017 to 6.30 in 2023.

**Table 12.1: Population Indicators** million

Indicators	Population Census 2017	Population Census 2023
Population	207.68	241.50
Households	32.20	38.34
Average Household size	6.39	6.30
Rural Population	132.01	147.75
Urban Population	75.67	93.75
Population growth (%)	2.40	2.55
Population growth (Urban)	3.01	3.65
Population growth (Rural)	2.07	1.90
Population Density/sq.km	260.88	303

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

### 12.1-b Provincial Break up of Population

Table 12.2 provides a province-wise breakdown of the population in 2017 and 2023. With a population of 127.68 million, Punjab remained the most populous province, followed by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, with 55.69 million, 40.85 million, and 14.89 million, respectively. The population of Islamabad reached 2.36 million in 2023.

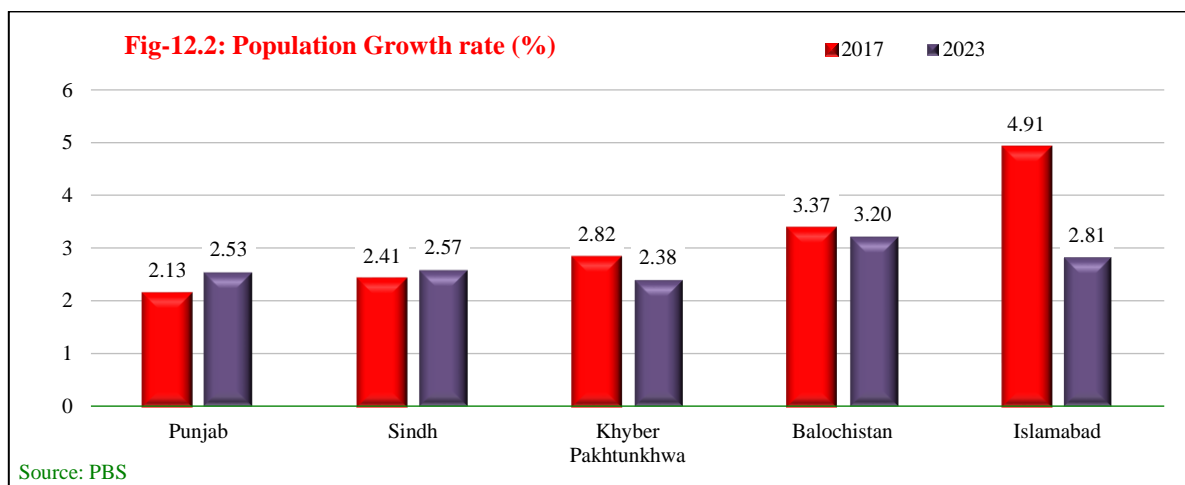
### 12.1-c Province-wise Population Growth Rate

Table 12.2 presents the average annual growth rate of the population from 2017 to 2023 for all provinces. The data indicates that the population growth rate of Punjab and Sindh increased, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Islamabad experienced a decline in population growth. Punjab saw a significant increase in population growth rate, rising from 2.13 percent to 2.53 percent. On the other hand, Islamabad witnessed a substantial decline in population growth rate, plummeting from 4.91 percent in 2017 to 2.81 percent in 2023. Figure 12.2 compares the provincial growth rates.

**Table 12.2: Province-wise Population** million

Area	Population 2017	Population 2023
Punjab	109.99	127.68
Sindh	47.85	55.69
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35.50	40.85
Balochistan	12.34	14.89
Islamabad	2.00	2.36
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>207.68</b>	<b>241.50</b>

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics



### 12.1-d Urbanization

Pakistan's urban population increased from 75.67 million to 93.75 million between 2017 and 2023, making it one of the most urbanized nations in South Asia. Almost 39 percent of its population lives in urban areas.

Urbanization strongly impacts a country's economy and development, leading to changes in various areas such as labour market opportunities, family structures, education, health, environment management, security systems, and governance. The Population and Housing Census of 2023 revealed that the urban population is rising, with 38.82 percent of people currently living in urban areas. This trend is observed in most provinces, except in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the share of the urban population decreased from 16.55 percent in 2017 to 15.01 percent in 2023. Similarly, the urban

population in Islamabad decreased from 50.37 percent in 2017 to 46.90 percent in 2023.

Table 12.3 presents the percentages of urban and rural population across different provinces. The data demonstrates that from 2017 to 2023, the share of the urban population in Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan increased due to better education, health, and earning opportunities in urban areas. Among all the provinces, Sindh has the highest urban population, from 51.89 percent in 2017 to 53.73 percent in 2023. Punjab ranks second with an increase from 36.86 percent to 40.70 percent in the same period. Similarly, Balochistan's urban population rose from 27.62 percent in 2017 to 30.96 percent in 2023. However, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa differed from other provinces as the percentage of the rural population increased due to the merger of FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Table 12.3: Rural-Urban Distribution of Population**

Area	Rural Population (%)			Urban population (%)		
	1998	2017	2023	1998	2017	2023
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>63.56</b>	<b>61.18</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>36.44</b>	<b>38.82</b>
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	83.1	83.45	84.99	16.9	16.55	15.01
Punjab	68.7	63.14	59.30	31.3	36.86	40.70
Sindh	51.1	48.11	46.27	48.9	51.89	53.73
Balochistan	76.7	72.38	69.04	23.3	27.62	30.96
Islamabad	34.4	49.63	53.10	65.6	50.37	46.90

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

### 12.2-a Population & Family Planning

Family Planning (FP) is widely recognized as an effective means of controlling population growth and improving maternal and child health care. Pakistan is a signatory to FP commitments and an active global family planning community member. The country is working tirelessly to revamp its population programmes by strengthening collaborative partnerships, increasing resource mobilization, and improving governance and oversight.

Pakistan has made its FP 2030 commitments in line with the national goals agreed upon under the Composite Coverage Index (CCI) recommendations and the targets set for the National Action Plan to strengthen family

planning. The objectives of FP 2030 commitments are as follows:

- Adapt and implement evidence-based progressive policy reforms with political will and an enabling environment at all levels.
- Universal access to services to lower fertility rates and address the unmet need for contraception.
- Addressing information and service needs, especially in remote areas.
- Gearing for Uniform Understanding of National Narrative.
- Contraceptive commodity security and efficient supply mechanism.

- Legislative Support
- Institutionalization of human development and system strengthening to sustain family planning efforts.
- Monitoring and evaluation for results and effectiveness.
- Mobilizing Funds and Allocations for family planning and reproductive health activities.

Measurement report of FP 2030 indicators shows that 6.4 percent of maternal deaths and 5.7 percent of unsafe abortions and unintended pregnancies from 2022 to 2023 have been prevented due to modern contraceptive use. It is expected that these indicators will show improvement in the future, and this trend will help in controlling the fertility rate. The progress of other FP indicators is given in Table 12.4.

**Table 12.4: FP 2030 Indicators**

Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total users of modern methods of contraception(mn)	9.97	10.53	11.18	11.77	12.46
Modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCp)(%)	18.3	18.9	19.5	20	20.7
Percentage of women estimated to have an unmet need for modern methods of contraception (mUN)(%)	17.7	17.7	17.8	17.8	17.7
Number of unintended pregnancies averted due to modern contraceptive use(mn)	3.66	3.86	4.1	4.32	4.57
Number of unsafe abortions averted due to modern contraceptive use(mn)	1.92	2.03	2.15	2.27	2.4
Number of maternal deaths averted due to modern contraceptive use	5,200	5,500	5,900	6,200	6,600

Source: [www.fp2030.org/commitment-makers](http://www.fp2030.org/commitment-makers)

### 12.2-b FP Initiatives Undertaken by Provincial Population Welfare Departments (PWDs)

After the 18th Amendment, the Federal Ministry of Population Welfare was dissolved, and the Population Welfare Programme was devolved into the provinces in 2010. The objective of Provincial Population Welfare Departments is to stabilize population growth and reduce the fertility rate by improving access to quality reproductive health care through integrated service delivery

#### Sindh

- PWD is providing training on Family Planning, Contraceptive Logistic Management Information Systems, and Electronic Client Record (ECR) modules to doctors/paramedics of the Health Department as well as the private sector's service provider
- Awareness sessions are conducted regarding Family Planning through Universities and Colleges and in shanty areas through Social mobilizers
- Writers, columnists, and opinion makers are engaged in dialogue to seek their support on

family planning through electronic and social media, seminars, workshops, etc.

- Regional Training Institutes are providing 24 months of training in Family Planning

#### Balochistan

- Arrangement of Satellite Camps. These camps are conducted in the residences of community health workers or influential figures such as the head of the village and provide health services like antenatal and postnatal care and management of other minor ailments
- Establishment of District Resource Development Centers at 15 district headquarters
- Involvement of Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP), Hakeems and Homeopaths
- Coordination with Public and Private Stakeholders
- Developing Reproductive Health Bill and Early Child Marriage Restraint
- Prepared a policy document on postpartum family planning and post-abortion family planning

- Engaging 500 Community-Based Mid Wives (CMWs)
- Introduction of Sayana press injection (contraceptive) in the province

### Punjab

- Establishment of the Punjab Population Innovation Fund (PPIF) to support innovative ideas
- Introduction of pre-marital counseling
- Strengthening of advocacy campaign
- Establishment of Model Centres
- Involvement of Imams & Khateeb
- Incentivizing family planning clients
- Establishment of adolescent health Centres
- E-Registration of Eligible Couples / Clients

### Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- Family Planning services are rendered through trained healthcare service providers and include the free distribution of contraceptives and essential medicines.
- Service delivery outlets, such as Family Welfare Centers, Mobile Service Units, and Reproductive Healthcare Services Centers, play a crucial role in providing these services to the community.
- The government is addressing the challenge of high Population Growth Rate (PGR), total Fertility Rates (FR), and low Contraceptives Prevalence Rates (CPR) through a variety of initiatives, including media campaigns, adoption of the provincial narrative of “Tawazan.”
- The establishment of additional service centers and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) for youth engagements.
- Involvement of Ulema.

### 12.3 Gender Gap

Women comprise almost half of Pakistan's population, and providing an enabling environment is a prerequisite for equal participation of women in economic activity. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development

emphasizes gender equality through women's empowerment. The SDG 5 calls to end all forms of discrimination, eliminate violence against women and girls in all its manifestations, ensure health and reproductive rights, and bolster the political, social, and economic participation of women. Women have traditionally remained under represented in leadership positions in Pakistan's political and public sphere, but the environment is slowly changing. The government has taken measures to accelerate women's electoral and political participation.

Pakistan is committed to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, ILO conventions, and Child Rights Conventions, all of which aim to ensure women's rightful place in society. In the past few years, considerable progress has been made, attributable to more deliberate investments in improving the lives and well-being of girls and women.

The following legislative actions and initiatives have been taken recently for women's protection and empowerment.

- The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022
- The National Commission on the Rights of Child (Amendment) Bill, 2021
- The Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2021
- The definition of rape under section 375 has also been expanded, and gang rape penalized.
- The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020
- Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2020
- Torture, Custodial Death and Custodial Rape (Prevention and Punishment) Bill 2020
- Establishment of Gender unit in the M/O Planning, Development & Special Initiatives.
- Launching of National Gender Policy Framework in 2022.

- Approval of Five Es (Exports, E-Pakistan, Energy & Environment, Empowerment and Equity) Framework.

The government of Pakistan is fully aware of its constitutional responsibility to protect women's rights. Under the Prime Minister's initiatives, the government has introduced two projects to empower women. The details of these projects are as follows:

- a) **The CDWP has approved an umbrella PC-I on the Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment, costing Rs 5777 million.** The project focuses on women's empowerment through many initiatives by the multiple executing agencies, as below.

- a. Transfer of Assets, Interest-free loans, and Training.
- b. Grant in Aid to Widows of Shuhda's Families.
- c. Establishment of Day Care Centers for Working Women in Tertiary Care Hospitals and Public Sector Universities.
- d. Child Protection Institute for girls.
- e. Upgradation of Family Protection and Rehabilitation Centre.
- f. Skills training of women in Jails.
- g. Fund for Training of Women Directors Programme.

- b) **Prime Minister Strategic Reform Initiatives for Women's Mobility-Women on Wheels (cost Rs 4476.17 million):** The objective of this project is to increase accessibility and mobility of women by providing Motorcycle/ Scooty at subsidized prices in Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Government of Pakistan will provide capital subsidy to the successful applicants. A total of 22000 bikes will be delivered all over the country.

**Mother and Child Support Programme (MCSP):** Improving maternal and child health outcomes—such as mortality rates and nutrition indicators—offers significant potential gains

with respect to human capital accumulation and sustainable economic growth. This component focuses on increasing the uptake of public services and improving nutritional intake.

### Financial Inclusion of Women

**Banking on Equality (BoE):** Reducing the Gender Gap in Financial Inclusion: The Policy aims to introduce a gender lens within the financial sector through specific measures to bring a shift towards women-friendly business practices. The Banking on Equality (BoE) Policy has several actions in place to achieve the following headline targets:

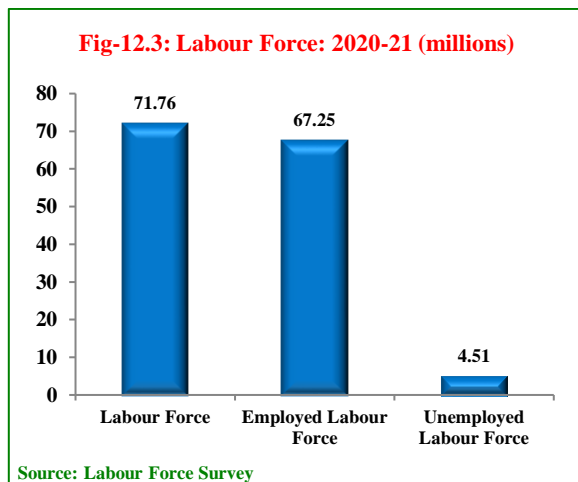
- 20 million women-owned active accounts by 2023,
- 20 percent of banks' workforce to be women by 2024,
- 10 percent of Branchless Banking agents to be women by 2024,
- 75 percent of bank access points to have trained women champions by 2024, and
- All bank staff are to go through gender sensitivity training by 2024.

The BoE policy was completed in the second year of its implementation in December 2023. In terms of progress, all banks are implementing their Board-approved gender mainstreaming policies and plans to improve the ratio of women staff to at least 20 percent, which stood at 15.4 percent as of December 2023. Banks have also developed women-centric products and services and established dedicated women's financial services departments/units. Further gender sensitivity training has been given to 70 percent of all bank staff, while women champions have been appointed at 64 percent of branches to facilitate female customers.

### 12.4 Labour Force & Employment

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has conducted Labour Force Surveys (LFS) since 1963. However, LFS for 2022-23 could not be undertaken due to the engagement of PBS with the 7th Population & Housing Census. However, work on LFS 2024-25 is under process.

According to the latest available LFS 2020-21 (Figure 12.3), the total labour force stands at 71.76 million (48.5 million rural and 23.2 million urban). The employed labour force stands at 67.25 million (45.7 million rural and 21.5 million urban), and 4.51 million are unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 6.3 percent.



The employment structure in Pakistan has changed over the decades. Table 12.5 provides details of the total employed and unemployed labour force in Pakistan. Due to technological transformation, the share of employment in the agriculture sector (37.4 percent) has shifted to industry and the services sector. The services sector is the largest growing sector of the economy, and the share of employment in the services sector was 37.2 percent in 2020-21.

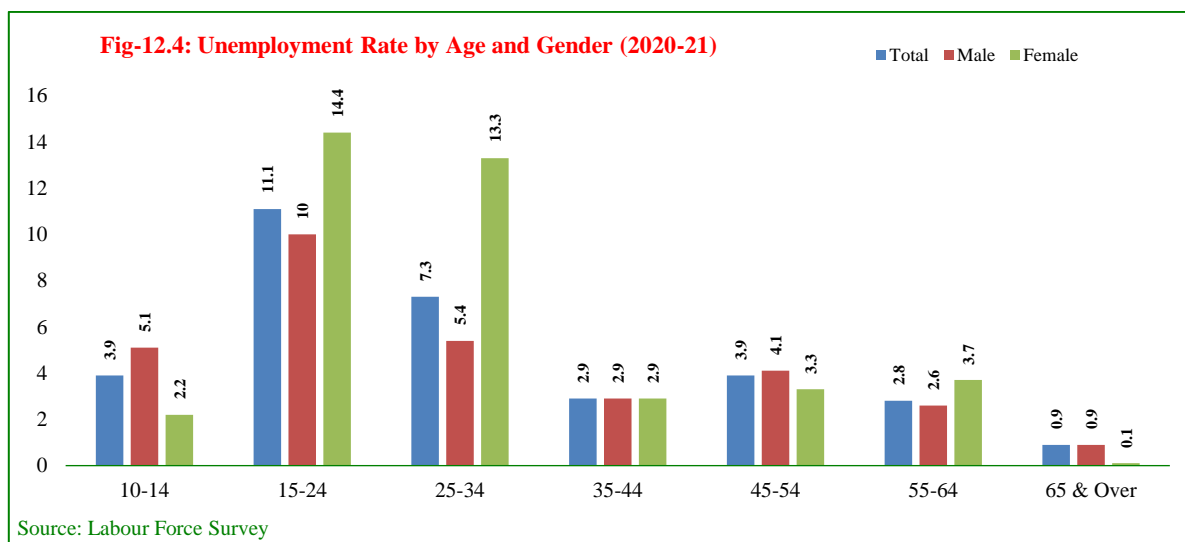
### 12.4-a Distribution of unemployment concerning age and gender

The unemployment profile, categorized by age and gender, reveals that the youth (aged 15-24) have the highest unemployment rate of 11.1 percent, with 10.0 percent for males and 14.4 percent for females. The second highest unemployment rate is seen in the age group of 25-34 years, with a rate of 7.3 percent. Among this group, 5.4 percent of males and 13.3 percent of females are unemployed. Notably, unemployment is more prevalent among females, especially those between 15 and 24 years of age. This situation forces the youth to wait for employment opportunities after entering the labour force, which restricts their learning opportunities and may lead to a rise in discouraged workers.

**Table 12.5: Labour Force (2020-21)**

Indicators (million)	2020-21
Labour Force	71.76
Rural Labour force	48.50
Urban Labour Force	23.26
Employed Labour Force	67.25
Rural Employed Labour Force	45.7
Urban Employed Labour Force	21.5
Unemployed	4.51
Unemployment rate (%)	6.3
Share of Employment in Agriculture (%)	37.4
Share of Employment in Services (%)	37.2
Share of Employment in Industry (%)	25.4

Source: Labour Force Survey 2020-21



### 12.4-b Skill Development & Employment Generation

A country's capacity to generate employment depends upon its available resources, technological base and advancement, and institutional strategies. Similarly, human resources, skills, and technical competence determine the type of employment contributing to sustainable economic growth. Skill development is an important area to focus on to train the youth to meet the needs of emerging market dynamics. For this purpose, the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission's (NAVTTTC) strategic initiatives are reshaping the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) landscape, fostering skill development, and addressing systemic TVET challenges in Pakistan. NAVTTTC's skill development-related initiatives and, most importantly, the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme (PMYSDP) registered substantial progress in the TVET landscape of Pakistan, creating a robust, inclusive, and globally competitive workforce for sustainable national development. PMYSDP is the vehicle of change to empower youth and harness their potential for human development and the transformation of the future of Pakistan.

#### Progress/Achievements

Following progress/achievements were made through the implementation of the development projects.

- **56,000** youth are currently enrolled under the PMYSDP, a Rs 4.9 billion programme for skill training in emerging 39 IT, 53 Industrial, and 34 hardcore skills. The programme targets the domestic and international job market, especially for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Gulf countries, the European Union (EU), and far-eastern states like Japan, Korea, etc.
- **37,999** youth equipped with technical hands-on skills in IT, industrial, and conventional technologies under PMYSDP aiming to bridge the skilled workforce gap between the demand and supply of skilled workforce (i.e., demand:1.2 million and supply:0.47 million).

- Under the PMYSDP programme, 16,000 IT aspirants are being trained and certified with the collaboration of globally recognized IT agencies like Google, Microsoft, Cisco, etc. 5,000 youth will be skilled and certified in 08 hospitality trades with global agencies like High-Filed UK, City & Guild, etc. for enhanced acceptability.
- During the last two years, 22,000 skilled workers were jointly assessed and certified with TAKAMOL-Saudi Arabia and facilitated migration to KSA as skilled workers under the NAVTTTC-TAKAMOL joint skill verification programme.
- **3,700** informally skilled workers assessed and certified as skilled professionals under NAVTTTC's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme.
- Moreover, **500** assessor were trained on Competency based Training & Assessment (CBT&A) and RPL regime.
- NAVTTTC is revising the National Skills Strategy and National Vocational Qualification Framework.
- NAVTTTC is revising the National Skills Strategy and National Vocational Qualification Framework, which will be completed by the end of April 2024.
- Under the guidance of the Ministry of Federal Education, 16 general education colleges are converted into high-impact IT training centers to teach youth about Game development, AI, Blockchain, and Cloud Computing.
- Skill Training for 500 students in high-impact IT courses is being launched in 16 FDE colleges with the collaboration of NUST, NUML, COMSATS, and NSU during the 4th Quarter of FY 2024 under the PMYSD Programme.
- **100** TVET institutes were accredited last year by the National Accreditation Council for TVET streaming.

#### New Initiatives

- Prime Minister has directed, NAVTTTC to equip 100,000 youth in Information



- Technology / High-Tech, 100,000 youth with Conventional skills, and 150,000 youth with Industrial IR4.0 skills in the next three years for enhanced IT and industrial exports.
- To reduce regional disparities Prime Minister has directed, NAVTTC to launch a unique skill training initiative for training 12,000 youth in hydro-power, hospitality, mines & minerals, agriculture/livestock, construction, and regional trades.
  - NAVTTC, in collaboration with Punjab Skill Development Fund (PSDF), BISP, Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) and Akhuwat, is launching a skill training programme titled Poverty Alleviation through Skilling **1,000** BISP beneficiaries (Orphan children) by which skill vouchers will be issued to **1000** beneficiaries and a minimum of 60 percent employment (20 percent abroad and 40 percent local) will be ensured under this initiative with collaboration of POEPA and Akhuwat.
  - NAVTTC is launching an End-to-End Business solution and outcome-based training initiative for 6,000 youth in the next 03 years, bringing a paradigm shift from supply to a demand-driven outcome-based funding model. The programme encourages innovative ideas in TVET, targeting overseas and domestic job markets focused on Return on Investment, Payback period, and foreign remittance through skilled workforce.
  - A pilot programme for Healthcare and Nursing training is being initiated with the Pakistan Nursing Council and POEPA to meet the healthcare sector demand of far-eastern countries like Japan, Korea, etc.
  - **1,000** youth will be skilled in German, Japanese, Korean, English, and Arabic through genuine language training platforms, collaborating with Training service providers like NUML.
  - NAVTTC is developing a central databank for effective coordination and informed decision-making between federal and provincial entities.
  - Skill mapping for labour export was recently carried out, leading to BEOE / M/o OP&HRD, and NAVTTC Training initiatives are being aligned with mapped overseas skills.
  - **TAKAMOL** skill verification centers are being increased to enhance the supply of skilled workforce to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. So, 36 Trade Testing Centers (TTCs) of the POEPA were recently registered by NAVTTC, and 07 were referred to TAKAMOL for further scrutiny and consideration of TAKAMOL-KSA.
  - **3,000** Madrassa students will be skilled in conventional and industrial skills under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training guidelines.
  - **5,000** youth will annually be trained in small, medium, and large Industries and 5,000 in entrepreneurship training under NAVTTC's Skill Development Initiatives, promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship culture in youth.
  - **150** TVET institutes will annually be accredited by the National Accreditation Council of NAVTTC and promoted/encouraged for international accreditation with global reputed agencies
  - E-learning content development for **200** TVET Qualification is being initiated in collaboration with Virtual University (VU).
  - PSDP programmes being executed by NAVTTC the "**Youth Skill Development Programme**", at a total cost of Rs 4700 million. The programme has a similar intervention to the Skill for All Programme.
  - "**Prime Minister's High-Tech Training & Global Skills Recognition Programme**," which envisages providing IT-related training to 16000 youth, High-Tech training to 25000 youth, training in conventional trades to 15000 youth, and RPL for 15000 youth is being executed by the NAVTTC from PSDP at the cost of Rs 4938 million.
  - **Prime Minister Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme:** This scheme

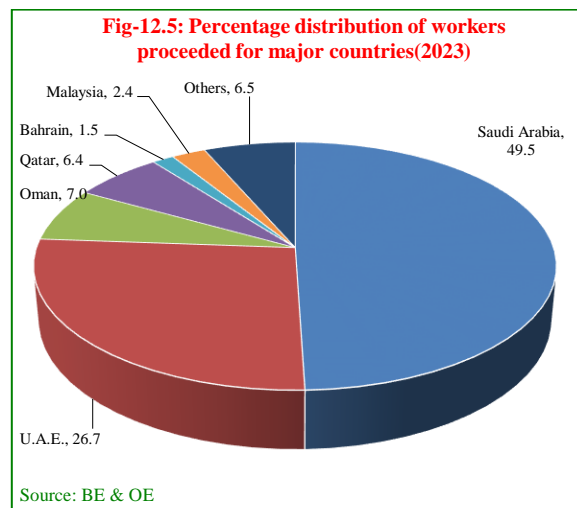
will promote entrepreneurship among youth by providing business loans on simple terms and with less markup through 15 Commercial, Islamic, and SME banks. This programme offers a remarkable 25 percent quota reserved for women. Micro-financing through small business loans will promote a norm of job creation rather than job seeking among the country's youth bulge. Adding agricultural loans will help the rural youth bring innovation to farming. Under this programme, the government has disbursed Rs 76,081 million till February 2024 for business and for the first time for Agriculture.

- **The Ministry of Information Technology and Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB)** is leading a transformative initiative to establish 10,000 e-Rozgaar centers in Pakistan, fostering growth for freelancers and startups. These centers, operating on a public-private partnership model, provide dedicated workspaces and address financial barriers through interest-free loans up to Rs 10 million, which have been established in every district in collaboration with provincial IT departments; the initiative aims to empower and elevate the digital entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

### 12.5 Overseas Employment

Pakistani workers play a crucial economic role by sending remittances to their home country. These remittances serve as a vital source of income for many households in Pakistan, contributing to poverty alleviation, improving living standards, and stimulating consumption.

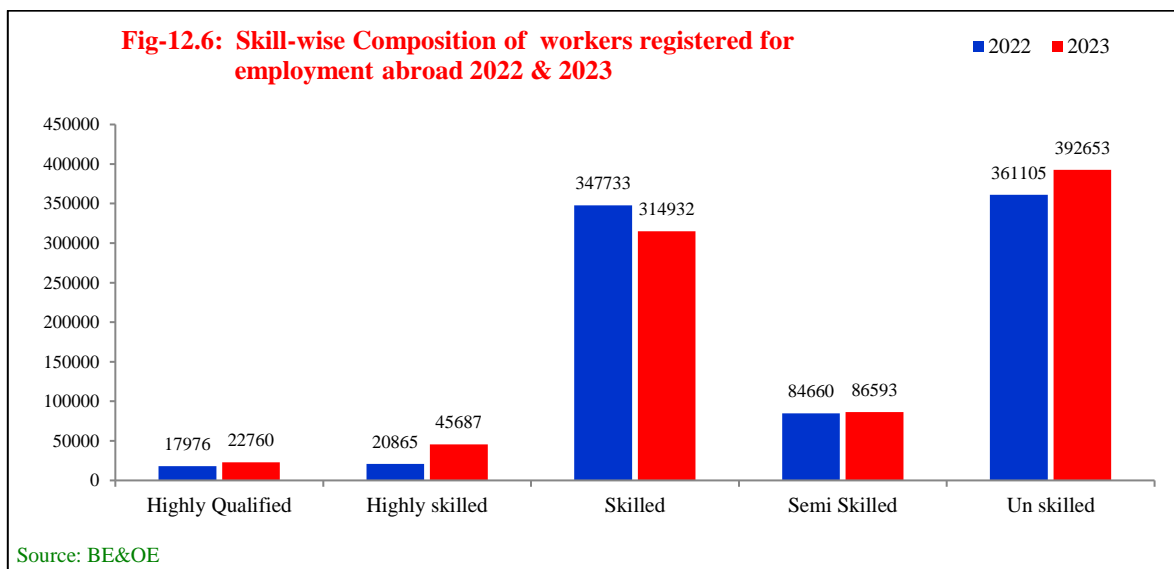
More than 13.53 million Pakistanis have gone abroad through official procedures to work in over 50 countries until April 2024. About 96 percent of Pakistani registered workers for overseas employment in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They contribute to the development of Pakistan's economy by sending remittances, the primary source of foreign exchange after exports.



During 2023, the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) and Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) have registered 862,625 workers for overseas employment. An overall increasing trend (4 percent) was observed in terms of emigrants registered in 2023(862,625) as compared to 2022(832,339). According to BE&OE, during 2023, more than 49.5 percent (426,951) of Pakistani workers moved to Saudi Arabia for employment, followed by the UAE (26.7 percent) to earn their livelihood. Oman employed 60,046 Pakistani workers (7.0 percent), while Qatar offered jobs to 55,112 individuals (6.4 percent). Bahrain and Malaysia hosted 13,345 workers (1.5 percent) and 20,905 workers (2.4 percent).

### Skill Composition of Emigrants (2022 & 2023)

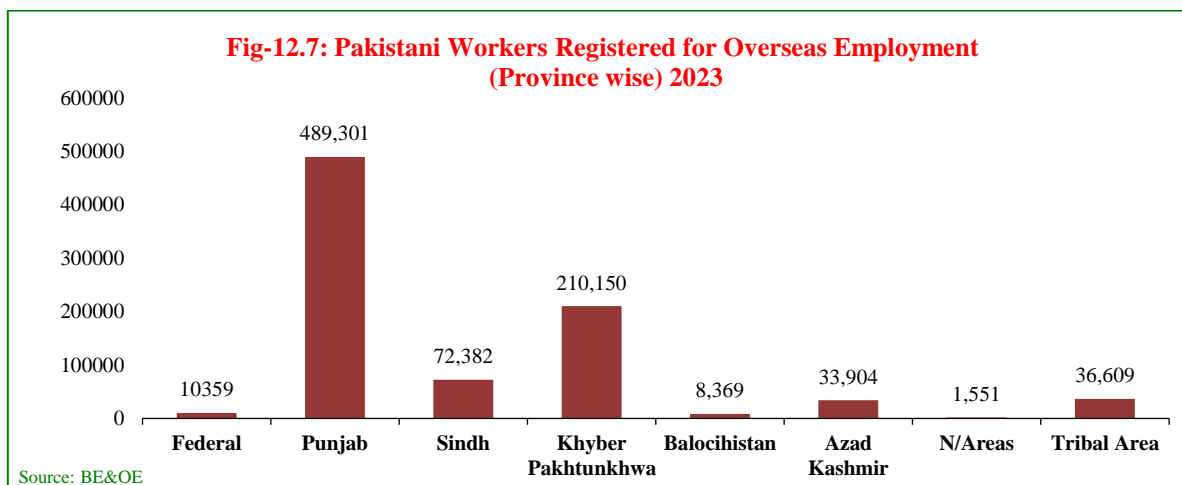
Fig-12.6 shows the comparative analysis of skill composition during 2022 and 2023. The highly skilled persons who proceeded abroad for employment increased from 20,865 in 2022 to 45,687 in 2023. Similarly, an increase of 26.6 percent and 2.28 percent was also observed in highly qualified and semi-skilled trades during 2023. On the other hand, a rise of 8.7 percent was witnessed in unskilled categories. However, number of skilled workers registered for overseas employment decreased from 347,733 in 2022 to 314,932 in 2023. Upskilling and workforce certification are the pressing needs of the time to meet international standards and demand. In this regard, the role of NAVTTC and TEVTA is crucial to producing a skilled and qualified force.



### Province wise Emigration (2023)

In 2023, the highest number of workers who went abroad for employment was from Punjab

(489,301), followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (210,150), Sindh (72,382), and Tribal areas (36,609), as shown in Figure 12.7.



### Steps to Boost Workforce Export

M/o Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD)/BE&OE has taken following steps to boost the workforce export and to ensure safe, orderly, and regular emigration;

- **Awareness Campaigns:** BE&OE conducts comprehensive awareness campaigns using various media channels such as print, electronic, social media, and radio. These campaigns aim to guide potential emigrants through the process.
- **OEP Licensing:** To increase the manpower

export from Pakistan, 2,416 overseas employment promoters (license holders) are working.

- **Complaints Redressal Mechanism:** BE&OE has an effective complaints redressal mechanism.
- **Disbursement of insurance claims:** BE&OE ensured the timely payment of Rs 364.5 million as insurance claims for the death or disability of emigrants.
- **Audit of Overseas Employment Promoters:** Enforcing a strict policy,

BE&OE canceled 138 OEP licenses between July and December 2023 because of unsatisfactory performance.

- **Registration of Foreign Employers:** The bureau initiated the registration of foreign employers on its website to facilitate and transparently regulate the overseas employment of Pakistani citizens and the emigration process.
- **Japan Sending Organizations:** BE&OE finalized the nomination of 100 sending organizations for Japan under the Memorandum of Cooperation on TITP. Eighteen of these sending organizations have already received final approval.
- **E-Protector Implementation:** E-Protector has been successfully implemented in all Protectorate offices of BE&OE, enhancing efficiency and technology adoption in the emigration process.
- **New Protectorate Sub-Offices:** For the facilitation of Pakistan migrant workers, five new Protectorate sub-offices have been opened in Sukkur, Abbottabad, Bagh, Rawalakot, and Islamabad. All of them are operational, contributing to better accessibility for emigrants.
- **National Emigration and Welfare Policy:** The first-ever proposed “National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis” is under development. It emphasizes a comprehensive approach to addressing the welfare of emigrants, with a special focus on global best practices and digitizing the emigration process.

### Overseas Employment Corporation

The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) is an Autonomous Body under the administrative control of the M/o OP&HRD. The objectives of OEC are to promote the emigration of the Pakistani workforce for employment abroad, arrange pre-departure workforce training against specific demand, where necessary, and ensure smooth and swift travel arrangements for selectees.

### Initiatives

- To empower Pakistani skilled workers to obtain jobs in Japan, OEC started language classes from February 2022, and 250 candidates have completed these language e-courses. OEC sent 37 workers from July to February 2024.
- Two MoUs are in the pipeline between Pakistan and Germany, i.e., on labour Mobility Partnership and to enhance cooperation in the Technical & Vocational Education & Training field.’
- The Ministry of Health Saudi Arabia has resumed its operation for taking workforce in the medical field from Pakistan, and 288 health professionals (July-Feb 2024) have been moved for employment
- From July to February 2024, OEC sent 641 health professionals to Kuwait’s MoH, and it is expected that opportunities will increase in Kuwait in the next couple of years.
- OEC and the Ministry of Employment & Labour, Korea has signed Service Commitment Agreement to execute the employment permit system and under this agreement 751 workers (July-Feb 2024) proceeded to Korea for employment.

To explore emerging job markets in the international labour market, OEC has taken initiatives to sign MoU/letter of intent to explore the new emerging markets like:

- MoU with DHAMAN Health Assurance facilities in Kuwait
- MoU with Al-Salam Hospital Kuwait
- MoU with Dr. Sulemain Al-Habib medical group KSA.
- M/s Elegancia Health Care, Qatar
- M/s Nesma & Partners KSA
- OEC has signed MoUs (November 2023) with three workforce recruiting companies (Alfnar, Maharah, Albawani) in KSA.
- In February 2024, OEC signed 26 Letters of Intent with different companies/ Employers in KSA and an MoU with Nesma & Partners.

### Concluding Remarks

Countries with a growing youth population, such as Pakistan, have the potential to benefit from a demographic dividend by investing strategically in education, skill development, and job creation. This can lead to a more dynamic and robust workforce, which drives economic growth and innovation. The government

supports this effort by offering skill-training programmes and facilitating access to finance to encourage youth entrepreneurship. Skill development institutes are also working to enhance the employability of the youth. Additionally, the government is exploring overseas employment opportunities, which will help reduce the unemployment burden on the economy and boost remittances.

