

11TH EDITION

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

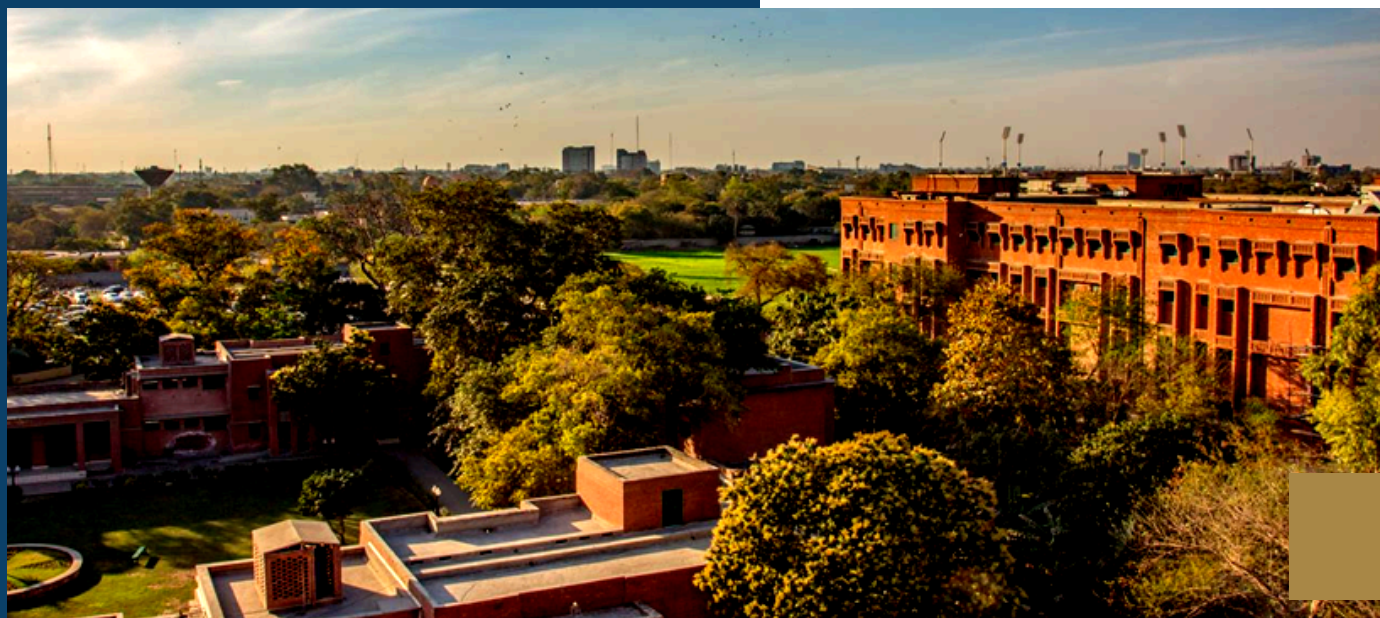
JANUARY – JUNE 2025



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



**Population Research
Center, FCCU Lahore**



HIGHLIGHTS

- Holding of Youth Conference in collaboration with PWD
- President and Executive Director of the Population Council, Dr. Rana Hajjeh, visited FCCU
- Launch of Digital Data Repository
- Introduction of Demography Course at the postgraduate level.
- Holding of Essay Competition 2025 on "Data and its role in social development"
- Development of International & National Linkages
- Coordination with PWD to develop collaboration on seminars, conferences, and joint research
- Set up of the PRC Research Lab for the students
- A research publication sent to a HEC-recognized journal

- Webinar on "Promotion of Young Children's Development and Health"
- Data Collection of Research Project "A phenomenological understanding of 'Family Planning' reflected through the lived experiences of residents of a rural community in Punjab"
- Participation in the Dissemination Seminar on the Longitudinal Panel Study in Punjab: Using Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) Framework, Phase-V 2024.
- Proceedings of the 5 Meeting of the Water, Environment & Agriculture Societies' Consortium, Punjab - Feb 26, 2025
- Development of Demographic Course
- UNFPA's Powerful Advocacy Through Short Film: Salma -The Silent Scream Meet the PRC Team!!
- PRC Engages Students on Child Marriage Awareness through UNFPA's Short Film Salma
- Meet the PRC Team!!!

Youth Conference in collaboration with PWD

The Youth Conference under the Chief Minister's Population Management and Family Planning Program was held at Forman Christian College on March 6, 2025. The Population Research Center organized the conference in collaboration with the Population Welfare Department (PWD). The conference aimed to address family planning challenges and the role of youth engagement in Pakistan. The conference featured distinguished speakers, including Ms. Saman Rai (DG, PWD, Punjab), Dr. Jonathan S. Addleton (Rector, FCCU), Dr. Aslam Bajwa (Provincial Lead, TCI-Pakistan), Mr. Salman-ur-Rasheed (PWD, Punjab), and Mr. Shahid Nawaz (PWD, Punjab).

These experts highlighted the challenges of rapid population growth, the importance of youth participation in family planning initiatives, and the need for premarital counseling. The sessions provided valuable insights into how effective policies and youth-led initiatives can contribute to sustainable development and improved family planning outcomes.

The conference also included student research presentations on female empowerment and cultural barriers to family planning, further enriching the discussion. Students from FCCU, Ms. Tayyaba Asad from the Psychology Department, and Ms. Roshan Nazer from the School of Business Management presented their research papers on family planning, addressing key concerns.



**“The youth of today
are the leaders of
tomorrow.”**

Nelson Mandela
Former President of South Africa

President and Executive Director of the Population Council, Dr. Rana Hajjeh, visited FCCU

Forman Christian College University (FCCU) welcomed esteemed guests from the Population Council (PC) on January 8, 2025, for a significant meeting with PRC Advisory Board and PRC Team aimed at strengthening partnerships and exploring collaborative opportunities.

The newly appointed President and Executive Director of the Population Council, Dr. Rana Hajjeh, visited FCCU as part of her first official trip to Pakistan in her new role. She was accompanied by Dr. Zeba Sathar, who is a Senior Associate and Country Director at the Population Council's office in Islamabad, Pakistan. The visiting delegation also includes Mr. Ali Mazhar, Director of Communication at the Population Council

In the meeting, Dr. Hajjeh highlighted that the Population Council operates in more than 14 countries, including Pakistan, focusing on areas such as reproductive health, rights, and choices; adolescents and young people; gender equality and equity; and climate and environmental changes. She commended Pakistan's Population Council country office for its efforts in establishing collaborative relationships with five universities across the country through the PRC initiative.

Dr. Zeba Sathar, while recounting the rigorous selection process through which the Population Council, in partnership with UNFPA, chose FCCU to establish the first Population Research Center in 2019, acknowledged the significant achievements of PRC FCCU.

Dr. Sikandar, along with the PRC team, presented an overview of the center's accomplishments since its inception in 2019,



and deeply appreciated the Population Council's ongoing support. Dr. Sikandar presented the PRC's publications and souvenirs to the visiting delegation from the Population Council, followed by a group photo with members of PRC's Advisory Board, including Dr. Sufian Aslam (Associate Vice Rector), Dr. Vaqas Ali (Director PRC), and department chairs Dr. Muhammad Ali Bhatti (Economics), Dr. Sharoon Hanook (Statistics), and Dr. Khadija Shakrullah (Geography).



Launch of Digital Data Repository

The Population Research Center (PRC) has successfully launched its “Digital Data Repository”. It is a powerful resource designed to streamline the access and management of datasets securely and efficiently, collected and published by the Government of Pakistan. The purpose of this data repository is to provide streamlined access to datasets to students, researchers, faculty, and staff.

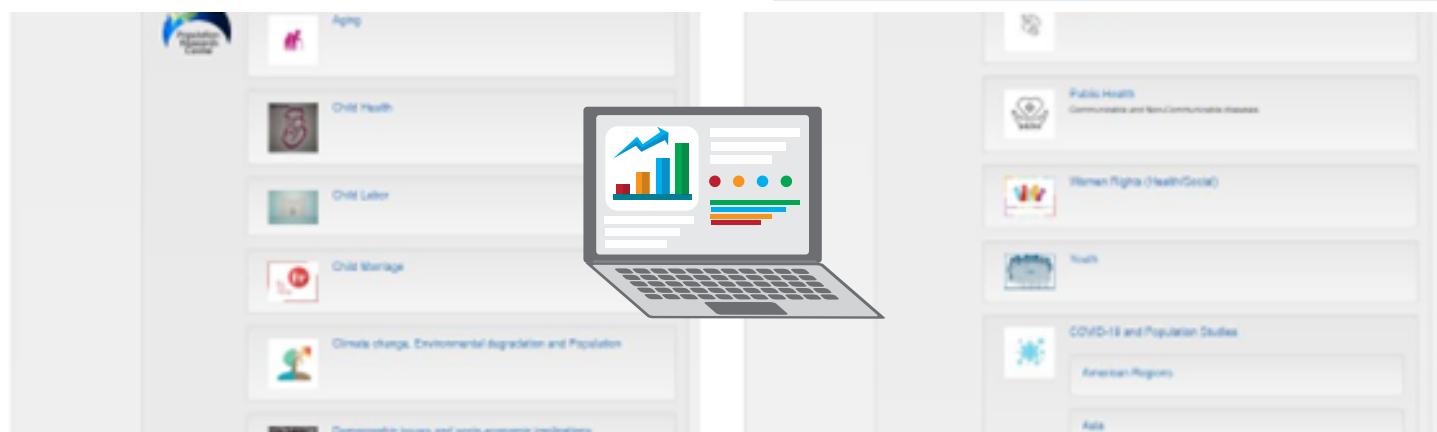
The Digital Data Repository will provide users with easy access to surveys, micro and macro datasets, along with research reports by leading organizations, i.e., UNFPA, UNICEF, Population Council, and PAP.

Key features of the repository include:

Datasets: PDHS 1990–91, PDHS 2006–07, PDHS 2012–13, PDHS 2017–18, Pakistan Maternal Mortality Survey 2019, A complete step-by-step guide on how to download the MICS dataset from IPUMS. The uploading of other datasets is in process, as discussions are in process.

Reports and Journal Articles: Reports and journal articles falling under PRC’s themes population-related issues i.e., demographic issues and socioeconomic implications, child health, child labor, child marriage, women's rights (health/social), youth, aging, marginalized communities, education, family planning, climate change, environmental degradation and population & COVID-19, etc.

PRC-FCCU Publications: PRC Booklets, Journal Articles & Newsletters



Introduction of Demography Course at post Graduate level.

The PRC has developed a course titled "Demography of Pakistan," with the primary objective of analyzing the social science aspects of demography in the country. The course is structured to position demography and population studies as an interdisciplinary field that intersects with various academic disciplines for postgraduate students.

The results and award ceremony are tentatively scheduled for August 2025. The following awards will be given to the winners respectively:

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- A cartoon-style illustration of two brown money bags tied at the top. Each bag has a circular opening in the front, revealing a stack of Euro banknotes inside. The bags are set against a plain, light brown background.

Certificate and prize of Rs. 20,000

Certificate and prize of Rs. 15,000

Certificate and prize of Rs. 10,000



W. Edwards Deming
Statistician, Professor, Author

Development of National & International Linkages.

The PRC has developed linkages with the national NGO, Maternity & Child Welfare Association Pakistan (MCWAP). The PRC had a meeting with the NGO President and Executive Members. After the detailed discussion, both parties concluded the meeting on the following points:

- Signing an MOU between the two organizations
- MCWAP's data sharing for the PRC digital repository
- Digitalizing the MCWAP's data with the help of PRC and FCCU students
- Using these datasets for research publications and further exploring more opportunities, like research grants, etc.
- Event organizing through this collaboration
- Collaborative research for exploring funding opportunities and projects

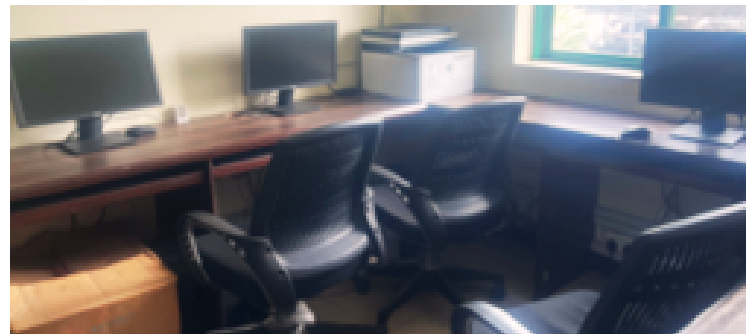


Further, the PRC has also established international linkages with Dr. Aisha Khizar Yousafzai, Professor of Child Development and Health from the Department of Global Health and Population at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, USA. The PRC has coordinated with her to develop collaboration on seminars, conferences, joint research, or signing an MOU.



Establishment of PRC Research Lab for Students

The PRC, in collaboration with UNFP, has established a Research Lab for FCCU students. The necessary equipment and arrangements have been put in place, and its official launch is scheduled for August 2025.



Coordination with PWD to develop collaboration on seminars, conferences, and joint research

The UNFPA team members, Ms. Hasna and Ms. Tania Durrani, made significant contributions to fostering a joint collaboration between the Population Welfare Department (PWD) and the Population Research Center (PRC) in the areas of seminars, conferences, and joint research initiatives. They facilitated the first meeting between PWD and PRC, during which it was mutually agreed to formalize the collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Afterwards, The PRC team collaborated with the Health and Population Department, Punjab, on matters of mutual interest, particularly in areas of research studies, evidence-based policy development, and capacity-building initiatives related to population dynamics and welfare.

The Population Research Center (PRC), FCCU, recognizes the vital role of the Health and Population Department, Punjab, in addressing demographic challenges, stabilizing population growth, and promoting reproductive health and family planning services. This collaboration aims at conducting research studies, strengthening technical capacities, and enhancing evidence-based decision-making.

This collaboration will focus on the following key areas:

1. **Capacity Building:** Organizing training sessions and capacity development programs for staff and stakeholders of both departments. Creating capability-building opportunities for students, e.g., leadership roles in jointly organized events, internships, and training.
2. **Dissemination:** Organizing events like seminars, panel discussions, and policy talks to discuss and create awareness on population-related issues. Dissemination will also include uploading reports, datasets, or any other materials shared by the Directorate of Training, Research and Production, Punjab, on the PRC, FCCU's online repository.
3. **Research Studies:** Collaborative analysis of data shared by the Directorate of Training, Research and Production, Punjab.
4. **Joint Research:** Designing and conducting joint research on population trends, family planning, reproductive health, and related social determinants.
5. **Others:** Collaboration in any other area that both organizations deem fit.
6. **Funding:** This collaboration does not oblige either of the collaborating departments to supply funds to maintain or sustain this agreement. This collaboration will contribute meaningfully to our collective goal of improving population welfare outcomes



A research publication sent to an “HEC-recognized journal”

The PRC submitted the research paper titled “Crude Oil Price Variability and Employment Dynamics in Pakistan: A Sectoral Analysis” for publication. The study has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Public Affairs, an international. The abstract of the article is provided below.

Abstract: The current research analyzed the link between crude oil prices and employment in Pakistan's agricultural, industrial, and services sectors. Pakistan being an oil-importing country is heavily dependent on oil. In 2022, the country imported worth \$5.23 billion crude oil, becoming the 29th largest importer in the world. Therefore, the whole economy as well as each sector is dependent on oil and its fluctuating prices. The changes in the price of oil affect the economic sectors through different channels, making them sensitive. In this research, time series data for the period 1981–2019 has been used. Three models have been developed and estimated for each sector: agriculture, industry, and services based on the theoretical model efficiency wage model and ARDL co-integration technique. The results of the estimated models indicated an inverse association between crude oil price and employment in the agricultural, industrial, and services sectors. The study results ask for the stabilization of oil prices by adjusting taxes and profit margins of oil companies by the Government of Pakistan to promote sectoral employment for the welfare of people. Investigating the link between oil prices and sectoral employment in Pakistan demands an in-depth analysis based on theoretical foundations. The authors contributed to the existing literature by conducting this research. The literature is full of studies examining the relationship between oil prices and aggregate employment. However, there are very few to no studies in the existing literature examining the oil price impact on sectoral employment, especially in Pakistan.

Keywords: Crude Oil Price, Sectoral Employment, Efficiency Wage Model, ARDL



Factors That Affect the Price of Oil



News cycles



Policy changes



Supply



Consumer demand



Politics



Reports

Investopedia

Webinar on “Promotion of Young Children’s Development and Health”

"The Population Research Center (PRC) at FCCU organized a webinar “Promotion of Young Children’s Development and Health” on 22nd April 2025 at 5 pm. Dr. Aisha K. Yousafzai, Professor of Child Development and Health, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard T.H. Chan, School of Public Health, was the keynote speaker. The theme of the webinar was the well-being of children and the stability of families among disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in low- and middle-income countries, with a special focus on South Asia, and East and Southern Africa. She talked about Early Child Development (ECD) and its promotion in low- and middle-income countries through the health sector, with a special focus on factors affecting ECD, like poverty, maternal, infant, and young child nutritional deficiencies, inadequate stimulation, maternal depression, family stress, violence and child maltreatment, infections (HIV, AIDS, malaria, diarrheal disease).

She also discussed one of her most significant studies, “Pakistan Early Child Development Scale-Up” (PEDS) trial, a cluster randomized controlled trial evaluating responsive stimulation and nutrition interventions to strengthen early child development and growth outcomes. Dr. Yousafzai shared the main takeaways from her landmark study and commented on the current situation for young children in Pakistan, including inequalities in opportunities, risks, and key challenges (tension, integration, capacity building and advocacy) in ECD promotion in Pakistan. She also added that the Lady Health Worker (LHW) Programme has been a key conduit for promotion of ECD in Pakistan.



The webinar can be accessed through the PRC's official YouTube channel:

YouTube link:



<https://youtu.be/J4184lkyuCM>

“In order to solve the great problems of our time—poverty, inequality, disease—we need a deeper understanding of populations and human behavior.”

Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland

Former Director-General of WHO,
former Prime Minister of Norway

Data Collection of Research Project “A phenomenological understanding of ‘Family Planning’ reflected through the lived experiences of residents of a rural community in Punjab”

The Population Research Center (PRC) has collected data from the respondents for the study “A Comparative Phenomenological Study of Family Planning and the Reproductive Choices among Rural Communities in Punjab”. The study explored the respondents’ perceptions and beliefs about marriage, family, and desired family size that were constructed through the interplay of the structure and agency reflected in their choices about childbearing and child rearing throughout their life course. A total of 32 respondents were recruited to participate in this study. Prior to sample selection, a male and female key informant were selected from the community. The male key informant recruited the male participant,s and the female key informant recruited the female participants. The criterion for selection is provided below in Table:

		Gender	
		Male	Female
		16	16
Religion	Muslim	12	12
	Christian	4	4
Employment status	Employed	16	8
	Not Employed	-	8
Total		N = 32	



Participation in the Dissemination Seminar on the Longitudinal Panel Study in Punjab: Using Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) Framework, Phase-V 2024.

The Population Research Center marked its presence at a high-impact seminar hosted by the National Institute of Population Studies (NIPST&R), a premier research institution under the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (NHSR&C), Government of Pakistan.

The event, titled “Dissemination Seminar on the Longitudinal Panel Study in Punjab: Using Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) Framework, Phase-V 2024,” spotlighted the critical insights into the realities of family planning and public health in Punjab, using fresh, evidence-based data backed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) under its 2024 Annual Work Plan.

In her welcome address, Mrs. Samina A. Hasan, Executive Director NIPST&R, set the stage for a compelling day of discussion. The UNFPA’s representative, Ms. Tania Durrani, Provincial Lead, Punjab, echoed the importance of data-driven policy for reproductive health. Key presentations by Ms. Rabia Zafar (Director, NIPST&R) and Dr. Tauseef Ahmed (Advisor, PMA, NIPST&R) revealed striking findings from women’s interviews, health facility surveys, and client exit interviews.

Dr. Tauseef Ahmed’s presentation delivered a compelling overview of the study’s findings, revealing that Contraceptive use is rising, but not in the right direction. Traditional methods like sterilization and condoms still dominate, while access to modern options such as implants remains alarmingly limited, often due to stock-outs and under-equipped health centers. A particularly concerning trend highlighted in the data was the high unintended pregnancy rates among women over 25, highlighting persistent unmet needs and gaps in maternal health integration.



Lady Health Workers (LHWs), although influential, often guide clients toward less effective methods, indicating a critical need for retraining and service quality reform.

Dr. Tauseef also mentioned that on a positive note, the Population Welfare Department (PWD) staff demonstrated stronger technical knowledge than their private sector counterparts, and data on commodity distribution between PWD and the Department of Health (DoH) showed promising consistency, an indicator of improved monitoring. The seminar also brought attention to critical mental health concerns, with 43% of women reporting symptoms of anxiety and 17% experiencing depression. Additionally, many survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) rely on informal support systems, revealing a serious gap in professional psychological care.

The session concluded with Ms. Saman Rai, Director General PWD, delivering a call to action: Prioritize service delivery, diversify contraceptive choices, and integrate mental health care into the public health system.

This seminar marked a pivotal step toward smarter policies and stronger systems, aiming to build a healthier, more empowered future for women across Punjab.



Proceedings of the 5th Meeting of the Water, Environment & Agriculture Societies' Consortium, Punjab – 26th February, 2025

26th Feb 2025. The PRC Team Member Syeda Zain Fatima Shamsi attended the Fifth meeting of "Water, Environment & Agriculture Societies' Consortium" under Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan (WRAP) – Climate Resilient Solutions for Improving Water Governance (CRS-IWaG)

1. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is an international non-profit, scientific research organization under the CGIAR, focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI is a research-for-development (R4D) organization with offices in 15 countries and a global network of scientists operating in more than 30 countries across Asia and Africa.

IWMI was established in Pakistan in September 1986 as a permanent research centre by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between IWMI and the Government of Pakistan. IWMI Pakistan's office is in Lahore, with operations spread to various locations across the country. This MoA is administered by the Ministry of National Food Security & Research (MNFSR), Government of Pakistan.

2. IWMI, with financial support from UK aid, has initiated a project entitled "Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan (WRAP) – Climate Resilient Solutions for Improving Water Governance (WRAP CRS-IWaG)". The Project aims to strengthen water governance at national and provincial levels, supporting adaptation to climate change and improving environmental sustainability.

3. In pursuit of its mission, IWMI established a "Water, Environment & Agriculture Societies' Consortium" and held its fourth meeting on December 18, 2024.

4. The fifth meeting of the consortium was planned for Wednesday, February 26, 2025, in person, and was held at the IWMI Office, 12 Km Multan Road, Lahore.

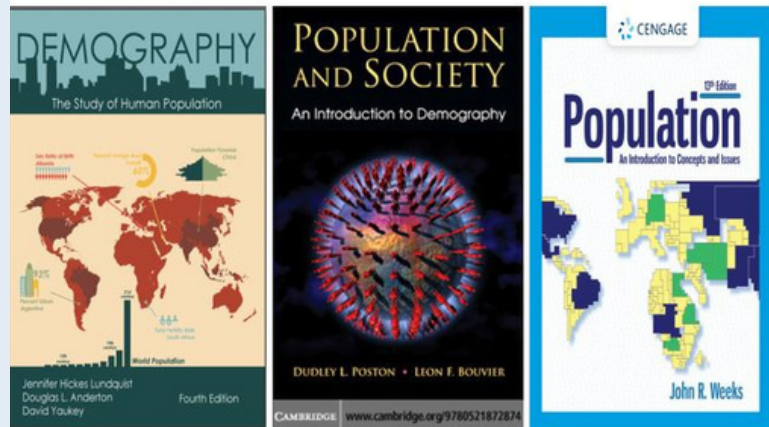


Development of Demographic Course – PRC Collaboration Meeting – 26th May 2025

Under the current UNFPA work plan, the Population Council sought the valuable support of all Population Research Centers (PRCs) in developing and delivering a demography course, inspired by the successful model implemented by the Population Research Center at Forman Christian College University (PRC-FCCU). In this context, Professor Dr. Muhammad Vaqas Ali from PRC-FCCU shared the course outline and key insights with fellow PRCs during an online session held on Monday, May 26 at 11:00 AM.

The presentation titled "Teaching Demography in Pakistan: PRC-FCCU's Experience and Course Design for SOCL 507" outlined the rationale, development, and structure of a graduate-level course in demography. It addressed the urgent population challenges facing Pakistan such as rapid population growth, low human development indicators, and gender disparities and highlighted the limited academic infrastructure for demography in the country. The presentation detailed the course objectives, content, readings, and teaching strategies used to root demographic education in local realities, aiming to build institutional capacity and promote data-driven policy engagement through research, training, and student-led learning.

Course Readings



SOCL 507: Demography

Why offer this course

- **Introduce** the MPhil Sociology students to Demography
 - Pakistan demographic trends and link to Social issues
 - Introduce students to available datasets (dissertation)
- Part of **PRC-FCCU's broader mission to mainstream population studies** in academic spaces

Course objectives

- Introduce key demographic concepts and foundational theories
- Understand key concepts: fertility, mortality, migration, population structure, etc.
- Compare Pakistan's demographic trends with global patterns
- Analyze how population growth relates to resources, environment, and development
- Examine policy and planning frameworks addressing demographic challenges

Course Design Strategy

A Dual-Lens Curriculum: Textbooks and Local Research			
Textbooks Used: Weeks, Lundquist, Poston Jr. (global theoretical base)	Additional reading about Pakistan: Journal articles, government/NGO reports, UNFPA briefs, Info about census	Data Sources Introduced: PBS, PDHS, MICS, UN databases	Local Policies Ex. Punjab Population policy 2017

UNFPA's Powerful Advocacy Through Short Film : Salma –The Silent Scream

UNFPA Pakistan has taken a significant initiative in addressing the critical issue of child marriage through its short film *Salma – The Silent Scream*. This thought-provoking film tells the story of a young girl whose dreams are cut short as she is forced into early marriage, shedding light on the deep emotional, psychological, and social impact such practices have on girls across Pakistan. The film sheds light on the challenges faced by child brides and emphasizes the importance of empowering young girls through education and awareness.

Through *Salma*, UNFPA sends a powerful message: child marriage is a violation of human rights that deprives girls of their education, autonomy, and future potential. The film is not only a moving narrative—it is a call to action, urging communities, leaders, and families to challenge harmful traditions and protect the rights of young girls.

This initiative is part of UNFPA's broader mission to promote gender equality and reproductive rights. By combining storytelling with advocacy, UNFPA is using creative platforms to raise awareness, engage youth, and inspire social change. The film was launched in the presence of national stakeholders and international representatives, reaffirming UNFPA's commitment to ending child marriage and supporting adolescent girls through education, empowerment, and health services.

UNFPA's film '*Salma-The Silent Scream*' was screened in Lahore, shedding light on the urgent need to end child marriage in Pakistan. Through the power of cinema, UNFPA amplify the voices of countless girls and advocate for a future where they can thrive.



Director: Mohsin Ali (led the film's narrative direction)

Producers: Abrar Hassan and Hina Aman (overseeing production and coordination)

Writers: Mohsin Ali, Rabia Qadir, and Abrar Hassan (crafted the screenplay and storyline)

Lead Actress: Marhaba Noor (portrays Salma, the central character whose life is transformed by child marriage)



UNFPA continues to work closely with government bodies, civil society organizations, and young people to create safe, supportive environments where every girl can grow, learn, and lead. *Salma – The Silent Scream* stands as a testament to the transformative power of storytelling in shifting mindsets and sparking meaningful change.



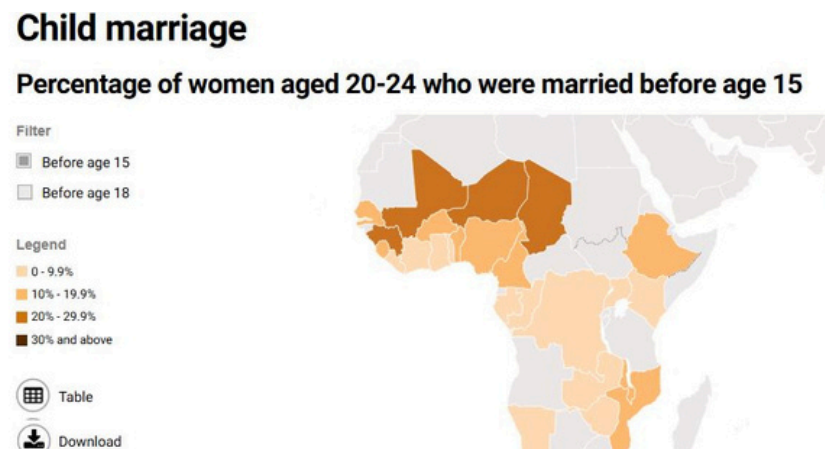
PRC Engages Students on Child Marriage Awareness through UNFPA’s Short Film Salma

The Population Research Centre (PRC) has taken a significant step toward raising awareness on the critical issue of child marriage by incorporating **UNFPA’s short film Salma** – The Silent Scream into an engaging student activity. This emotional and thought-provoking film, which highlights the struggles of a young girl forced into early marriage, served as a powerful educational tool to spark dialogue and reflection among students.

As part of this initiative, PRC assigned students a creative and reflective task. After watching the film, students were asked to participate in a pre- and post-test exercise, allowing them to assess how their understanding and attitudes evolved. They were also invited to create posters and write-ups that visually and narratively captured the themes of the film, such as gender inequality, loss of education, and the importance of empowering girls.

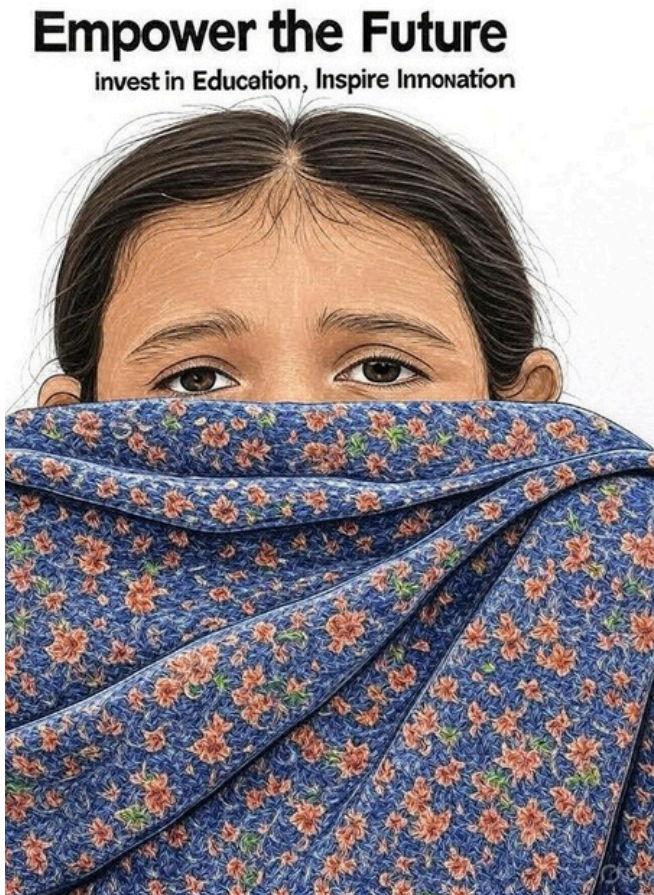
The response was overwhelmingly positive. Students engaged deeply with the subject matter, producing insightful reflections and impactful artwork. Through this assignment, they not only demonstrated empathy and awareness but also became advocates for change in their own right.

PRC is proud to support such educational initiatives that combine advocacy, creativity, and critical thinking, and remains committed to promoting the values of dignity, choice, and gender equality in line with UNFPA’s mission.



FCCU Student's Pre and Post-Test Exercise

Posters Prepared by the M.Phil Student Babar Lal.



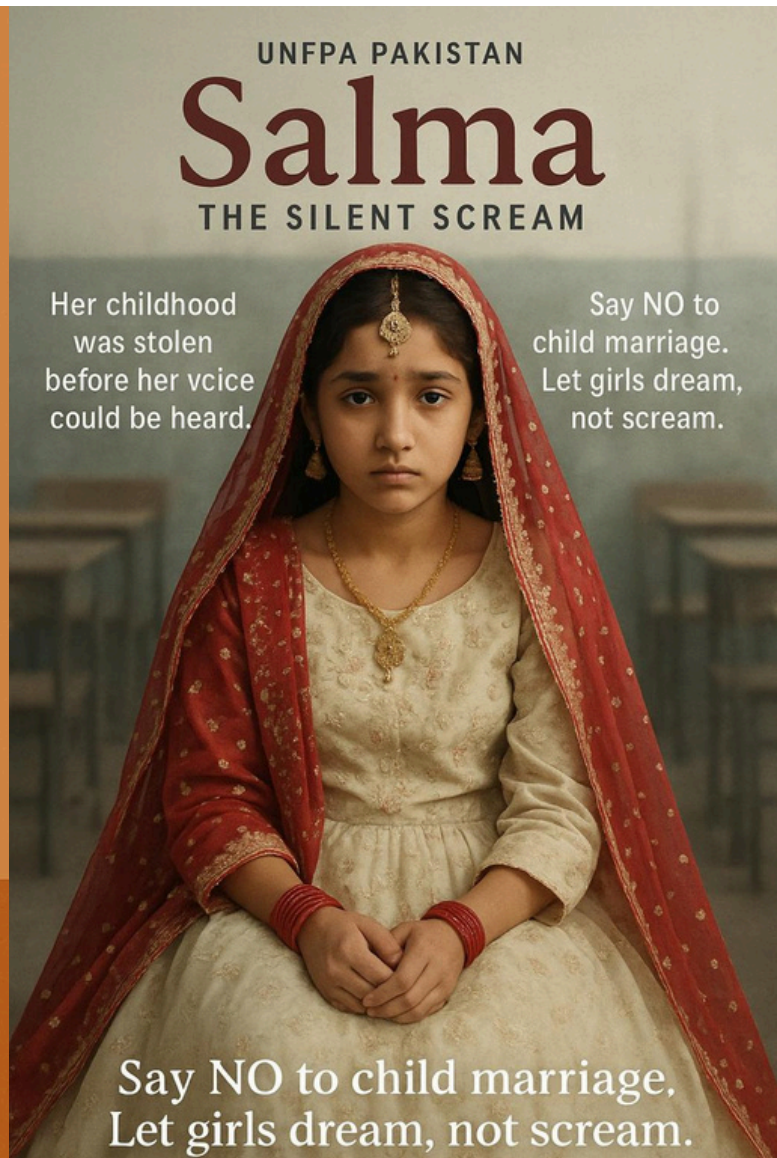
“I used to imagine that life would just go by laughing and playing. But now, there’s no laughter. I’m still a child and I’m pregnant so I feel strange.”

—14-year-old Nepali girl, married at age 12

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Posters Prepared by the M.Phil Student Muhammad Farhan



"Educating girls is one of the most powerful ways to prevent child marriage"

Girls Not Brides - The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage



FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Poster Prepared by the M.Phil Student Muhammad Asfand Yar

CHILD MARRIAGE IN PAKISTAN

Muhammad Asfand Yar
263205562



Child Marriage:

The marriage of a girl or boy under the age of 18.



According to the Pakistan Demographic Health Survey 2017–18, 18% of women aged 20 to 24 in Punjab were married off before the age of 18, and 2% were already married by that age.

(Source: Dawn News)



Child marriage in Pakistan continues due to a strong influence of culture, community perceptions, varying interpretations of religion, and the desire to protect family honor. These are some of the key factors that play a role in the continuation of child marriage practices.



According to data obtained from the Punjab Police under the Right to Information Act 2013, a total of 146 cases under the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 were registered in Punjab between January 2019 and December 2023.



The prevalence of teenage pregnancy decreased from 54.4% in 1990–1991 to 43.7% in 2017–2018. The pooled prevalence was 42.5% (95 % to 49.6%). Teenage pregnancy was significantly associated with place of residence, wealth status, education.

FCCU Student's Pre and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Kanzul Eman

Name: Kanzul Eman

Roll No: 263199568

Profile of Participant

My participant was 36 years old and was married at young age. She has three daughters & her elder daughter got married when she was 16 year only. In her family, daughters are married early to protect the family honor.

Before watching the video (Pre-Test Insights)

Before watching the video, my participant believed that marriage was an essential milestone in a girl's life, to protect the family honor and social respect. She told that, marriage meant taking on responsibilities of a wife & eventually becoming a mother. She saw it as normal for girls to be married to be married by age 15 or 16, especially when family face financial burdens. For my maid, the main reason for marrying her daughter early were poverty, fear of society and family honor. She said, "We were in debt and could not afford dowry late. People start talking if girl stays unmarried for too long." For my maid, the main reasons for marrying her daughter early were economic hardship, fear of societal judgment, and honor. In her view, marrying girls early helps protect family's respect in community. She believed a girl could become pregnant soon after marriage, even at the age of 15 or 16. She did not fully understand the physical or emotional problems her daughter might face during such an early pregnancy. Instead, she saw childbirth is normal duty of a married girl. In her opinion, if a girl married and living with her husband that meant success, even if it ended her education & face difficulties in her in-laws.

After Watching the Video (Post-Test Insights)

After watching the video, my maid's view on child marriage began to change. She was shocked to see how early marriage causes health problems, emotional pain & even death during childbirth. She said, I didn't know how girls could suffer like this. The video help her understand that girls are not physically and emotionally ready for marriage and pregnancy at 14 or 15. Now, she believes girls should marry after age 21 or 22 when they are prepared. With regret, she said that if I had known this all before I would have waited.

Her New Understanding:

The mother now says she would have delayed her another two daughter's marriage & let her work and study.

She concluded by saying, "We always thought marriage was the solution. Now I see it can be a problem if done too soon."

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Tirzah Sumbal

Name: Tirzah Sumbal

Roll NO: 263196170

"Pre-Post Test Study on Perceptions of Child Marriage After Watching an Awareness Video"

Participant Profile: The participant is a 25-year-old woman who was married at the age of 17, making her a survivor of child marriage. She became pregnant at 19 and has since experienced long-term health issues, including physical weakness. Her insights are shaped by both personal experience and cultural context.

Response of participant:

Before the session, she carried the heavy weight of her lived experience — a child marriage at the age of 17 that left lasting marks on her health and perception of womanhood. She saw marriage not as a partnership, but as a duty tied to motherhood, explaining that "it is a relation which is only maintained when you have children, otherwise it will finish." Her definition of child marriage came from deep personal pain: "it is not appropriate... for a very young girl it is extremely difficult to maintain the relationship with in-laws, doing house chores and with all this having a baby." She shared her own hardship of conceiving at 19, which left her "bones extremely weak now." Though she believed girls should marry and conceive at 30, she still justified early marriage in certain cases — when the home environment was unsafe or if a proposal came without dowry. "If the environment in in-laws is not good," she said, "I will not let my girl be in this environment... I will get her married as soon as possible." For her, early marriage was not ideal — but it was survival.

After the session, her language shifted from resignation to realization. She no longer viewed marriage as conditional upon motherhood but as a complicated journey of sacrifice: "a relationship which is maintained on compromises... you have only one choice — either you take care of in-laws or yourself." Child marriage, once simply seen as "not appropriate," had now become to her "extremely dangerous... a torture for mind and physical health." Her views on age had also evolved: she now firmly believed "the minimum age should be 25, not less than this, because a girl gets mature at this age." Though she still acknowledged unsafe environments as a potential reason for early marriage, she insisted it should "only" be considered then — and "otherwise never." Her reflections no longer carried only the voice of someone surviving a system, but of someone ready to challenge it. She transformed her suffering into clarity, and her story now speaks not just of damage, but of deep awakening.

Recommendation

Awareness campaigns using videos or storytelling can be powerful in changing perceptions. Educational institutions, NGOs, and social workers should use such tools widely in areas where child marriage is still prevalent.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Rida Husain

Rida Hussain
Roll # 263206837
M. Phil Sociology

Participant Background

The participant was a 36-year-old Lahore domestic worker who got married to a man only two years her senior at the age of 15. She had barely finished primary school when she was abruptly dragged out of the classroom and placed in charge of the home, domestic duties, bearing, and raising the kids. Chronic weariness, interrupted schooling, and the perception that education was a luxury she could not afford seemed to be the consequences of her early marriage. However, until recently, she believed that this shift was "what families do" to uphold social standing and preserve honour and that she accepted this faith of her however for her own daughters she wants them to be somewhat older before marriage however education is a luxury and would rather have them be economically independent through working as house helpers.

Study Design

The participant responded to six open-ended questions both before and after viewing the 17-minute UNFPA Pakistan short "Salma – The Silent Scream" in order to investigate how the film may alter such deeply held beliefs. Her definitions of marriage and child marriage, the proper ages for conception and marriage, the reasons for early marriage, and the alleged negative consequences of getting married young were all explored in these questions. This study examines changes in her expressed knowledge without determining her internal cognitive processes by comparing her precise words before and after viewing.

Questions

1. What is marriage?
2. What is child marriage?
3. At which age a girl should get married?
4. At which age a girl should conceive?
5. In which situation a girl should get married earlier?
6. What are the side effects of child marriage?

Discussion

Before watching Salma – The Silent Scream, the 36-year-old domestic worker described marriage as "what families do when a girl grows up" and child marriage as "sending a girl away before she's ready." She believed girls around 16 or 17 could marry and have children soon after. Although she admitted it often left them "tired and missing school," she accepted it as part of life.

Immediately after the film, she spoke of noticing familiar scenes Salma carrying a child and watching her sister in law study, "I used to look at girls studying longer than I could, which made me jealous." When asked again what child marriage meant, she added, "It can hold a girl back from learning." On the right age to marry, she suggested "maybe eighteen, not younger," a modest shift from her earlier view. She still felt family needs mattered, but now thought waiting a little longer might help protect the girl's life.

Her list of damages expanded a little when asked about it; in addition to exhaustion and missed school, she also noted "feeling lonely sometimes." "It's still hard to change, but I see that girls need more time," she said, avoiding a direct disapproval of the practice. Her voice conveyed both worry and a realistic judgment of social norms.

This delicate shift from blind acceptance to gentle questioning shows how doubt can be planted with just one viewing. Although she didn't change all at once, her own remarks reveal the beginnings of critical thinking, realising that a little more childhood time may have a significant impact.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Noor ul Sehar

Submitted by: Noor-UI-Sehar - 263184693

Respondent- 48 years old

Named R- A child bride who got married at the age of 12/13- had 12 children and 4 survived out of those 12 children.

Narrative Story-

I was around 12 maybe 13 years old, when I was married off. Still a child that didn't even understand what marriage meant. One day I was playing outside in my yard and the next moment I was a bride being married off to someone I didn't know. My whole life changed in a moment I couldn't even comprehend.

They call it child marriage. I didn't know the term back then. But now, when I look back, yes that's exactly what it was. A girl was being handed over to another family before she could understand herself, her body, her rights.

My parents said it was Allah ki marzi. My father said he had too many responsibilities, and marrying me off meant one less burden. I don't blame him entirely, maybe he really thought it was the best he could do. But deep down, I know I have paid the price for him to be done with his duty/ get rid of his responsibility.

I had twelve children. Before I even knew how to take care of myself, I was expected to raise others. My body was tired, my mind was confused, and my heart. My heart never really got a chance to be a child.

If you ask me today, I'll tell you the truth: No girl should be married so young. A girl should marry when she's at least 22, when she knows who she is, when she can speak for herself. And having children? That's not something in-laws or society should decide. It should be a decision between husband and wife, and it should happen when they're both ready. It should be around 24, 25 age not. Not earlier.

When I watched that video, it literally felt like my own story. It was about girls like me that are gotten into marriage too young. I could not hold back my tears. I saw myself in that screen. I saw the confusion, the pain, the silence. I realized what happened to me was not just my story. It is, in fact, the story of thousands of girls. We are taught to stay quiet, to accept it as fate. It's a wrong we've wrapped in culture and called Destiny.

Now, I have a daughter and is 17 years old. Every time I look at her, I think, how could anyone see her and think she is ready to be someone's wife? She is a little girl who is still learning how to live. One thing after my own life experience, I have promised myself that I will never do to her what was done to me. She will study and live a good life. I still say "Allah ki marzi thi" when people ask me about my past. Maybe it's the only way I know to explain what happened without breaking myself, or maybe it gives me peace. But in my heart, I know Allah did not ask us to stop thinking. He gave us wisdom and gave us daughters as a blessing, not as a burden to pass on quickly and ruin their lives.

I was a child bride. But my daughter will not be one.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Malaika

Pre-Test

What is child marriage?

Child marriage is when a girl or boy gets married at a young age, like in their early teens. In our village, it's common. Parents think it's better to marry daughters early so they don't bring shame or get into trouble.

At what age should a person get married?

I think girls can get married around 14 or 15. That's how it's always been. If the girl has reached puberty and looks mature, then most people believe she's ready.

When should a girl should conceive after marriage?

Usually right after marriage. That's what elders expect. They say if a girl doesn't get pregnant soon, people will start talking, and it will bring a bad name to the family.

Should a girl be married for the sake of family honor or to settle a debt?

Sometimes yes. If the family is poor or if there is pressure from society, then they have no choice. Honor is everything for families like us, and girls are often married to avoid shame or settle disputes.

What are the harms of child marriage?

I don't know much. Maybe the girl feels scared or sad to leave her home. But that's normal all girls have to go through it sooner or later.

Post-Test

What is child marriage?

Child marriage is when a girl is married off before she is mature or ready usually before 18. The video showed how dangerous it can be. That girl was just a child, but she had to become a wife and mother. She didn't even get to live her own life.

At what age should a person get married?

A girl should only marry when she is an adult, maybe after 18 or even later. She should be educated and have the ability to make her own decisions. Marriage is a big responsibility it's not just about cooking or cleaning, but also health, mental pressure, and adjusting to a new life.

When should a girl should conceive after marriage?

Not immediately. A girl needs time to understand her body and settle into married life. If she is too young, her body cannot handle pregnancy. Like in the video the girl was weak and needed blood, and in the end, she died. That's not how life should be for anyone.

Should a girl be married for the sake of family honor or to settle a debt?

No, but people like us don't have any other options and no one can do anything about it. A girl's life should not be used like that. Honor and money come and go, but in our families, elders don't understand this. Families must think about girls' future, her dreams, and her safety, not just about izzat or tradition and it can only done when people get awareness about it.

What are the harms of child marriage?

It ruins a girl's health, her education, and her childhood. She can get very sick, like the girl in the video who died from pregnancy complications. She's not ready emotionally or physically. She loses the chance to study, to grow, and to choose her own path. It's not just one life that's affected, but the whole family suffers too.

Conclusion

Before watching the video, the house help believed that early marriage was normal and even necessary due to tradition, poverty, and social pressure. However, after watching the video, her views changed. She realized the serious risks involved, especially to a young girl's health, education, emotional well-being, and right to live fully. She now sees that child marriage is harmful and that girls deserve a chance to grow up, study, and make their own choices in life.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Muqadas Majeed

Muqadas Majeed
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Mphil Sociology
21st of June, 2025

Pre And Post-Feedback After Watching the UNFPA Documentary:

Profile of the Participant:

The participant was a 40 years old lady who herself was married at a very young age. In her family, girls are married off right after they get their first period. Her husband was 25 years older than her. This marriage was strictly arranged by her father with a silent approval from her mother. It was her husband's second marriage. His first wife was dead with whom he had children of this participant's age (at the time of her marriage). She had 4 daughters and 2 sons from this marriage. One day, on an allegation of an extra-marital affair, her husband divorced her and abandoned their children. Participant's father married her off to her cousin who is 8 years younger than her and was never married before. Her second husband had no biological family alive. This participant's father raised him. He had to marry this lady and embrace her children.

The participant was quite satisfied with her second marriage and mentioned that her first marriage was a horrible experience. She considered herself a beautiful woman with an unfortunate marital life. Her husband was her father's cousin with young children and she was too young at the time of marriage to hold all responsibilities and be a wife to a 40 years old man. She never owned her marriage or husband from heart just on the functional basis. In her current marriage sometimes conflicts happen because of her children from previous husband but overall it is better than her past.

Participant's Views on Child Marriage:

This participant's views on child marriage remained unchanged before and after the documentary. Based on her own experience, she firmly believes that a girl or a boy should never get married before they fully mature and assume their roles properly as a man and a woman. To her, marriage is more than duties and responsibilities. There should be love and a sense of companionship among spouses; therefore, she would definitely seek permission from her children before she fixes their marriage.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Writeup by the M.Phil Student Aliyya Zainab

Aliyya Zainab
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Mphil Sociology

Pre And Post Feedback After Watching the UNFPA Documentary from a respondent (Househelp)

Child marriage movie: Salma – The Silent Scream

Respondent—28 years old

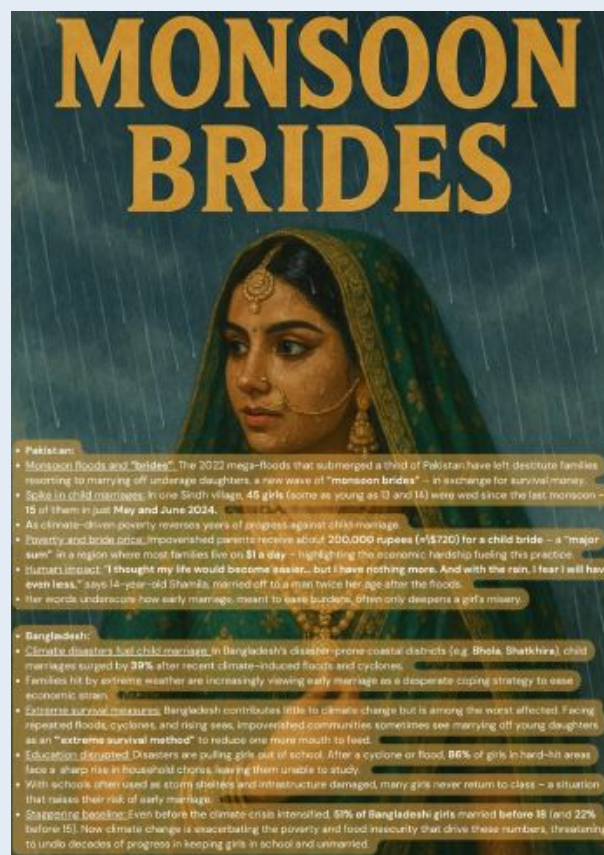
My house helper, who is 28 years old and has six children, believed that marriage is a big test in life. She said if a girl gets good in-laws, her life is good, but if not, her life is ruined. She thought girls should get married between 18 and 20 years old because they are young and can easily adjust in their husband's home. According to her, older girls don't settle in well. She shared that she had seen young girls in her area get married early, and they accepted everything and lived their lives quietly. She also said that parents often marry their daughters early to protect the family's honor and to stop girls from running away or being misled. Although she admitted that life is hard for girls who marry before 18, she still believed that their innocence helps them adjust in married life.

After watching the video "Salma: The Silent Scream" her views began to change. She was very sad about how the mother-in-law treated the young girl in the video and said that if the mother-in-law had cared for her, the girl could have been saved. The video reminded her of her own cousin, who was also married young. Her cousin died during childbirth, along with her baby, on the day of Eid. This memory made the issue feel very personal and painful to her. She realized that young girls often cannot speak up or express their pain. She said that if a mother-in-law treats a young bride like her own daughter, things could be different. Her answers were different from before watching that video. She now believed that girls should complete their education before marriage so that they can take care of themselves and not rely on others. She said if someone around her wanted to marry their daughter early, she would advise them to wait and let the girl finish her studies. But when asked about parents marrying daughters early to protect honor, she stayed quiet at first and started crying. Then she softly said that parents feel forced to do it. When I reminded her about the girl's death in the video, she said she had no answer. Her silence showed that her thinking had changed. The video made her question old beliefs and feel the pain that early marriage can cause.

FCCU Student's Pre- and Post-Test Exercise

Poster Prepared by the M.Phil Student Taha Javed

Climate change is not only an environmental crisis but also a social one. In recent years, researchers and humanitarian organizations have observed an alarming link between climate-induced extreme weather events and a rise in early child marriages in vulnerable regions. Intense monsoons, catastrophic floods, and prolonged droughts are putting immense socioeconomic pressure on families, leading some to marry off their underage daughters as a coping mechanism. This emerging phenomenon illustrated by Pakistan's so-called "monsoon brides" – threatens to reverse progress made in reducing child marriage prevalence. Globally, child marriage rates had been on a steady decline, but a "global polycrisis" of climate shocks, conflicts, and economic strains now risks undoing those gains. According to UNICEF, "the ravaging effects of climate change are forcing families to seek a false sense of refuge in child marriage", as impoverished parents hope early marriage will secure their daughters' well-being amid crisis. In fact, an estimated two-thirds of all child marriages worldwide already occur in regions with higher-than-average climate risk exposure. By 2050, nearly 40 million girls are projected to face the double threat of climate change and child marriage – a 33% increase from today's figure. This paper explores the connection between climate change driven extreme weather and the rise in early child marriages, with a focus on Pakistan and similarly affected regions. We examine how climate-driven socioeconomic pressures from economic destitution to displacement and protection concerns are fueling child marriage, drawing on case studies and data from South Asia and Africa.



CHILD MARRIAGE IS MORE THAN JUST A SOCIAL ISSUE.

It's a mental health crisis too.





Meet the PRC Team!!!

Dr. Shamaila Athar

Associate Professor & Chairperson
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Dr. Shamaila Athar is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)'s Department of Sociology. She has a vast experience of over 15 years of teaching, along with professional experience of over 10 years serving the corporate sector FMCG, as well as Research experience. Her research interests include the study of marginalized communities such as minorities, especially religious minorities, women, and transgender community. Dr. Shamaila has published fourteen articles in national and international journals.

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Welcome

"PRC congratulates Ms. Shumaila Athar on her appointment as the Head of the Sociology Department and welcomes her as a member of the PRC Advisory Board."



11TH EDITION

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

JANUARY – JUNE 2025



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