

Merits of digital census highlighted

Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: Digital census for the first time in Pakistan in 2023 would be a great success as merits of digital census include time reduction, geographic information system (GIS)-based monitoring, real-time progress analysis, instant data availability and online task allocation.

Speakers highlighted this during a seminar themed 'Census 2023: All You Want to Know About' at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) on Thursday.

Chief statistician of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Naeem uz Zafar said that all preparations were rolled out and the team was ready for a gigantic task. "The effort is entirely indigenous; all the systems devised and tools created are by our own experts," he said.

He shared that census was an important national activity that was linked with resource allocation to provinces, representation in national/provincial assemblies and the delimitation process.

He apprised the audience that after the results of the latest Census 2017 were approved in the 45th Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting held on April 12, 2021, the CCI gave directions for the next census to start as early as possible and it should be according to international best practices through use of the latest technology.

Dr Naeem uz Zafar said that following United Nations (UN) guidelines, it was decided that there ought to be clarity regarding the primary objectives of census policy and planning.

The chief statistician also added that a National Census Coordination Committee (N3C) has been developed at the national level in the House of PBS. N3C can be imagined as the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) that was set up during the pandemic.

N3C would have centralised decision making, a control room with dashboards showing real-time progress, trends and analysis.

"For the first time, self-enumeration method will also be used. It's a two step process. First, you will have to sign in on a portal and fill the form. Towards the end, it will provide you with a QR code. Save it with yourself. Later, when the enumerator knocks on your door, just show him the QR code. Moreover, geo-tagging of each structure, tablet-based and self-enumeration system will build the trust of stakeholders. As many as 126,000 tablets will be used in the exercise," he said.

Regarding the questionnaire, the chief statistician said that there are around 40 questions on eight broad themes.

These include household, basic amenities, demography, education, health, employment, disability and migration.

Earlier in his opening remarks Dr Nadeem ul Haque, vice chancellor of PIDE said that censuses remained controversial in Pakistan, at times delayed for over a decade.

"Now that we are moving towards the new Census, it is time to raise all concerns and questions we have," he said.

It is pertinent to note here that the first-ever regular population census in the areas now comprising Pakistan, was held in 1881. Since then regular censuses were conducted after every 10 years up to 1981.

Six censuses have been undertaken so far in 1951, 1961, 1972, 1981, 1998 and latest in 2017.

Published in Dawn, January 13th, 2023

First-ever digital population census in March

Mehtab Haider



An official from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics collects information from a resident during a census as security personnel guard them in Peshawar.— AFP

ISLAMABAD: Without having the requirement of Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) for verification purposes, Pakistan’s first-ever digital Population Census will collect data from 185,000 blocks in March 2023 whereby a 40-point questionnaire covering eight important areas’ details would be sought.

The 40-point questionnaire will seek information about eight broad areas in the upcoming population census exercise, including households, basic amenities, demography, education, health, employment, disability and migration.

Chief Statistician Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Dr Naeem Uz Zafar said that Pakistan’s Census in 2023 is going to be digital for the first time ever in the country’s history. All the preparations are rolled out and the team is now ready for the gigantic task. “The effort is entirely indigenous; all the systems devised and the tools created are by our own experts,” he said.

He was addressing a seminar, themed “Census 2023: All You Want to Know About” at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Islamabad on Thursday. He said census is an important national activity that is linked with resource allocation to provinces, representation in National/Provincial assemblies and the delimitation process. Therefore, the credibility of the census is of utmost importance. This is what called for comprehensive introspection leading to a solution acceptable to all i.e. digital census.

He apprised the audience that after the results of latest Census 2017 were approved in the 45th CCI meeting held on 12th April 2021, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) gave directions for the next

census to start as early as possible and which should be according to international best practices by using the latest technology. The Government of Pakistan then constituted a committee of renowned demographers and experts with comprehensive TORS to bring transparency, credibility, and wider acceptability of census processes and results. For this, a board-based stakeholders' engagement was carried out in order to have ownership of the process.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, Dr Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, PIDE, said that censuses remain controversial in Pakistan, at times delayed for over a decade. Now that we are moving toward the new census, it is time to raise all the concerns and questions we have.

“The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has estimated that there will be a total funding requirement of Rs34 billion for holding census exercise out of which Rs10 billion have been provided to PBS while they have requested the Finance Ministry to release the remaining amount of Rs24 billion,” said the top official sources while talking to The News here on Thursday.

Sources said for the first time, self enumeration facility will also be made available. Household geotagging will be done to accomplish the exercise. There will be 126,000 enumerators collecting data from 185,000 blocks from all over the country.

The army personnel will provide foolproof security to 90,000 enumerators while police personnel will also accompany the enumerators to provide security at the first stage. Then the army will deploy its Quick Response Force to ensure overall supervision of foolproof security of the whole census exercise all over the country.

Each enumerator will be responsible to collect data from two blocks in 30 days of March 2023. The PBS has already held a consultation with Director General Military Operation (DGMO) and the army showed its readiness to spare personnel for providing security.

The population census will be done on a de-jure basis as everyone will be counted where he or she stayed in the last six months and hold a plan to continue staying in the same place for the next six months.

Arrangements in place for country's first digital census: PBS official

Abdul Rasheed Azad

ISLAMABAD: The country is going to hold a digital census for the first time this year, with all the preparations rolled out and the team now ready for a gigantic task, Naemuz Zafar, the chief statistician of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), has said.

Addressing a seminar titled “Census 2023: All You Want to Know About” organised by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), the PBS chief statistician said that digital census would be a great success, as it will save time by incorporating geographic information systems-based monitoring, real-time progress analysis, instant data availability, online task allocation, data quality assurance, transparency, a dashboard for stakeholders, complaint resolution through a hotline, real-time trend analysis, decision support dashboard and so on.

Zafar said that in this regard all the efforts are entirely indigenous; all the systems devised and the tools created are by our own experts.

He shared that census is an important national activity that is linked with resource allocation to provinces, representation in national/provincial assemblies and the delimitation process. Therefore, the credibility of census is of utmost importance. This is what called for comprehensive introspection leading to a solution acceptable to all - digital census.

He apprised the audience that after the results of the latest Census 2017 were approved in 45th CCI meeting held on 12th April, 2021, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) gave directions for the next census to start as early as possible and should be according to international best practices by using the latest technology. The Government of Pakistan then constituted a committee of renowned demographers and experts with comprehensive TORS, to bring transparency, credibility and wider acceptability of census processes and results. For this a board-based stakeholders' engagement was carried out in order to have ownership of the process.

Addressing the seminar on the forthcoming Census 2023, Zafar said that following UN guidelines and detailed deliberations of the committee, it was decided that there ought to be clarity regarding the primary objectives of census – policy and planning. Ensuring universality, implying that counting of whole population residing in country at time of census should be done, irrespective of its status/whether one is holder of the CNIC or not. The exercise is of counting not of verification. Individual enumeration to be carried out - information on each enumerated person to be collected. It was also agreed upon that census must be conducted simultaneously and in shortest possible time, he said.

The chief statistician also added that a National Census Coordination Committee (N3C) has been developed at the national level in the House of the PBS. The N3C

can be imagined as National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) that was set up during the pandemic. The N3C would have centralised decision making, having a control room with dashboards showing real-time progress, trends and analysis.

For the first time, self-enumeration method will also be used which is a two steps process. First, you will have to sign in on a portal and fill the form. Towards the end, it will provide you with a QR code. Save it with yourself. Later, when the enumerator knocks on your door, just show him the QR code. He would scan it and data will be saved into system. Moreover, geo-tagging of each structure, tablet-based and self-enumeration system will build the trust of stakeholders. 126,000 tablets will be used in the exercise. All checks and security measures are in place for breach or manipulation of the data.

He also said that PBS has conducted training of the digital census in three tiers i.e. training of master trainers, training of trainers (ToT) and training of enumerators. As of now, the pilot census has also been completed. All of this would be backed up by strict monitoring oversight with cross-checks and in-built checks within the systems.

Regarding the questionnaire, the chief statistician said that there are around 40 questions on eight broad themes. These include household, basic amenities, demography, education health, employment, disability, and migration.

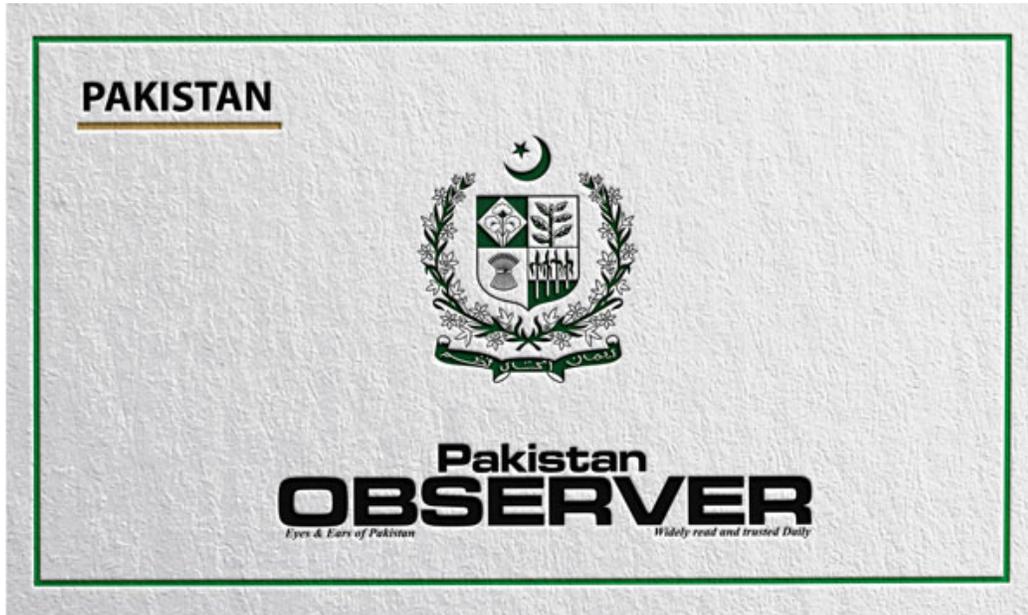
Speaking on the occasion, Dr Nadeemul Haque, vice chancellor (VC) PIDE said that the censuses remain controversial in Pakistan, at times delayed for over a decade. Now that we are moving towards the new census, it is time to raise all the concerns and questions we have.

It is pertinent to note that, the first-ever regular population census in the areas now comprising Pakistan, was held in 1881. Since then regular census were conducted after every 10 years up to 1981. Six censuses have been undertaken so far i.e. 1951, 1961, 1972, 1981, 1998, and latest in 2017.

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Pakistan's census in 2023 to be digital for first time

By News desk - January 13, 2023



Pakistan's Census in 2023 is going to be digital for the first time ever in the country's history. All the preparations are rolled out and the team is now ready for a gigantic task. The effort is entirely indigenous; all the systems devised and the tools created are by our own experts, enunciated Naeem uz Zafar, Chief Statistician, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), proudly. He was addressing a hybrid seminar, themed "Census 2023: All You Want to Know About", at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Islamabad.

He shared that census is an important national activity that is linked with resource allocation to provinces, representation in National/Provincial assemblies and the delimitation process. Therefore, the credibility of census is of utmost importance. This is what called for comprehensive introspection leading to a solution acceptable to all – digital census.

He apprised the audience that after the results of the latest Census 2017 were approved in 45th CCI meeting held on 12th April, 2021, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) gave directions for the next census to start as early as possible and should be according to international best practices by using the

latest technology. The Government of Pakistan then constituted a committee of renowned demographers and experts with comprehensive TORs, to bring transparency, credibility and wider acceptability of census processes and results. For this a board-based stakeholders' engagement was carried out in order to have ownership of the process.

Earlier in his opening remarks Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor PIDE said that the Censuses remain controversial in Pakistan, at times delayed for over a decade. Now that we are moving towards the new Census, it is time to raise all the concerns and questions we have. Speaking on the occasion Dr. Naeem uz Zafar said that following UN Guidelines and detailed deliberations of the Committee, it was decided that there ought to be clarity regarding the primary objectives of census – policy and planning.

Pakistan set to hold first-ever digitised census in March

Mehtab Haider



Pakistan's first-ever digitised population census would be completed in a 30-day period in August 2022. — Reuters

- **Census to collect data from 185,000 blocks in March 2023.**
- **PBS chief statistician says all preparations are rolled out.**
- **PIDE vice chancellor says censuses remain controversial in Pakistan.**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first-ever [digital population census](#) is set to collect data from 185,000 blocks in March 2023 without the requirement of having computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs), *The News* reported Friday.

A 40-point questionnaire — covering eight important areas' details — will seek information about eight broad areas in the upcoming population census exercise, including households, basic amenities, demography, education, health, employment, disability and migration.

Pakistan's census this year is going to be digital for the very first time in the country's history, said [Pakistan Bureau of Statistics](#) (PBS) Chief Statistician Dr Naeem Uz Zafar.

All the preparations are rolled out and the team is now ready for the gigantic task. “The effort is entirely indigenous; all the systems devised and the tools created are by our own experts,” he said.

He was addressing a seminar, themed “Census 2023: All You Want to Know About” at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Islamabad on Thursday. He said the census is an important national activity that is linked with resource allocation to provinces, representation in national/provincial assemblies and the delimitation process. Therefore, the credibility of the census is of utmost importance. This is what called for comprehensive

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“The PBS has estimated that there will be a total funding requirement of Rs34 billion for holding census exercise out of which Rs10 billion have been provided to PBS while they have requested the Finance Ministry to release the remaining amount of Rs24 billion,” said top official sources.

Sources said for the first time, self enumeration facility will also be made available. Household geotagging will be done to accomplish the exercise. There will be 126,000 enumerators collecting data from 185,000 blocks from all over the country.

The army personnel will provide foolproof security to 90,000 enumerators while police personnel will also accompany the enumerators to provide security at the first stage. Then the army will deploy its Quick Response Force to ensure overall supervision of foolproof security of the whole census exercise all over the country.

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