



Government of Pakistan  
M/o Planning Development & Special Initiatives  
**Pakistan Bureau of Statistics**  
21-Mauve Area, G-9/1  
Islamabad  
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**No. Census. PD&SI (1)/2020**

**Islamabad dated 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2021**

Subject: **MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR UPCOMING POPULATION CENSUS**

Kindly find enclosed herewith minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 at 09:30 AM in the Committee Room at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of M/o PD&SI duly approved by the Chairman of the Committee, (Deputy Chairman Planning Commission) for information please.

  
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**Distribution: -**

1. Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Zubair, Chief Economist
2. Professor Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin, Independent researcher
3. Dr. G. M. Arif, Independent Researcher, Ex Joint Director, PIDE
4. Mr. Ehtasham Shahid, DG (Operations), NADRA,
5. Dr. Zeba A. Sathar, Demographer, Country Director, Population Council, Islamabad
6. Dr. Syed Muhammad Arif (Retd). Professor, University of Balochistan
7. Dr. Durr-e-Nayab, Demographer, Joint Director / Director Research, PIDE
8. Dr. Ayesha Shiraz, Demographer, Senior Fellow, NIPS
9. Dr. Sanam Wagma Khattak, Demographer, University of Peshawar
10. Khawaja Mazhar Jamal, GIS / Geography Specialist

Copy for information to:

- i. SA/JS to Minister, M/o PD&SI, Islamabad.
- ii. SPS to Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Islamabad.
- iii. SPS to Secretary, M/o PD&SI, Islamabad.
- iv. APS to Member (Census & Surveys), PBS, Islamabad.

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Subject: **MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR UPCOMING POPULATION CENSUS**

Sixth Meeting of the Committee constituted for “**Recommendations & Adoption of Best Practices for upcoming Population Census**”, was convened by the chairman of the Committee Deputy Chairman Planning Commission (DCPC), in the Committee Room at 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Ministry of PD&SI on **25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021** at 9.30 pm. A delegation from NADRA attended the meeting for presentation regarding Civil Registration & Vital Statistics (CRVS) System. List of participants is at **Annexure A**.

2. Meeting started with the recitation of few verses from the Holy *Quran*. DCPC welcomed all the honorable members. After brief introduction of all members, he requested Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (Support Services/ RM), PBS & Member (Secretary) of committee to proceed as agenda of the meeting. Member (SS/RM), PBS informed that there are two main agenda items for today's meeting as follows: -

- Presentation on TOR 4, *“to review the best practices of field operations including monitoring/supervision & data processing to minimize the omissions/ errors and complete coverage”*.
- Presentation on Civil Registration Management System (CRMS) by NADRA

Member (SS/RM), PBS after approval of Chair, informed that committee in its first meeting decided during deliberation on TOR 4 that *“A comparative study will be conducted by the PBS regarding pretesting of field/ monitoring/supervision operations adopted by different countries for devising the way forward for upcoming census improvements”*. Accordingly, PBS has done extensive work on review of the field operation mechanism adopted in Census 2017 with identification of issues and also did comparative studies of the mechanism followed regionally / globally for devising proposals for improvement in the process. He further informed that currently, a working group under guidance of Dr. G M Arif is reviewing it for compilation of comprehensive report. TOR wise recommendations of the all working groups will be presented in the next meeting. He informed that during review of the whole census procedure, many shortcomings are identified like Non conduct of Pilot & Post enumeration Survey, delayed and incomplete communication/ media campaign, Issues regarding transparency in compilation process, sluggish coordination mechanism, checking of CNIC with NADRA, Role of Armed Forces, non-implementation of instructions/ observation of experts due to printed questionnaire etc. All these lead to apprehensions of stakeholders and achieving the exact objective of census with relevant data. He then presented comparative study of 3 regional & 3 global countries and identified the best practices used by the other countries for conduct of census. Based on the review of Census 2017, comparative study of countries and the **UN guidelines** for field operations and overall conduct of census, and the recommendations/ suggestions of the experts in committee, PBS proposed the following considerations for committee for conduct of next census.

- To ensure universality: - Everyone living in country must be counted, whether they have CNIC or not, legal or illegal etc.
- To avoid duplication and recall bias, census must be conducted simultaneously all over country in shortest possible time
- For effective Planning, coordination, monitoring & ownership of the whole process a system like NCOC may be established with presence of Provincial governments and all tiers of stakeholders, who will oversee the whole process and will take appropriate decisions for successful completion of census activities. Terms of Reference of the committee will be developed after detailed deliberations within committee and with other stakeholders.
- Exhaustive and updated frame for complete coverage with updated and digitized maps.
- Conduct of Pilot and Post Enumeration survey

- Effective public campaign from start to end at all levels by involving notables and lowest level of communication modes like Hujra/ Bhaitak etc.
- Real time monitoring of field operations and results through technological interventions like dashboards
- Development of census support at tehsil level for effective coordination, monitoring and IT Support
- Comprehensive trainings and involvement of female enumerators especially LHWs in the data collection process.

In the end Member (SS/RM) informed that as desired by worthy Chair, PBS has initiated working on designing and implementing Census as project and PPMI has provided the resource for training the PBS staff for project management tool "Primavera" and currently three days training is in progress.

3. After the Presentation of Member (SS/RM), the worthy Chair opened the floor and requested the respected members to present their point of view

- **Dr. Muhammad Arif** appreciated the comprehensive work done by PBS, however, he was again of view that presence of armed forces in Balochistan not only helped in successful conduct but also helped in getting full coverage with credible data. Therefore, role of army must be considered for conduct of next census especially in the areas where there are greater ethnic interests. Further for effective coverage and quality data, work must be done on homogeneity of block sizes. Moreover, cross checking of CNIC with NADRA may be avoided as it creates unnecessary issues and also delays the process and possibility of using OCR Pens may be adopted for data collection instead of tablets especially in far flung areas of country.
- **Dr. Zeba. A. Sathar** was of view that the suggestions shared by G M Arif regarding TOR 4 are very comprehensive and it cover all aspects, (out of which some were already presented by Member (SS/RM)) may be presented for broader discussion in the committee. Regarding Involvement of Army in the census process, she was of view that there is trade off between its use as in some instances it also raises confidence issues. Census is a civilian operation for counting people for planning and effective resource allocations, it must be conducted by civilians and for security, local police and rangers can be utilized. This will also reduce the budget for conduct of census. Further she again emphasized that linkage of CNIC will lead to exclusion of marginalized and poorest of the poor, therefore must be avoided.
- **Dr. Durr-e- Nayab** said that she has submitted in her recommendations, that as security / law order situation in the country has greatly improved, the upcoming census may be conducted by dividing the whole country in to three parts, one where there is no need of security forces, second where use of local police/ rangers may be made and third the conflict struck areas where armed forces may be used for complete coverage and provision of security. Further CNIC must not be linked with data collection and NADRA data must not be used as replacement of Population & Housing Census as it is not complete and cannot be validated especially regarding births & deaths.
- **Dr. G M Arif** was of view that working group recommendations must be presented in the committee for deliberations and building consensus. He added that the International/ National observers in the last census have not raised any objection on the role of armed forces for security arrangements, however, they have apprehensions on parallel data collection being done by them which is against the UN principals. Further he strongly emphasized on improving the trainings as the neither the trainings were comprehensive nor as per international standards.
- **Khawaja Mazhar Jamal**, was of view that exclusive use of armed forces is necessary for security purposes in Sindh especially Karachi as in 1991 and 2011, political parties hijacked the whole census process for getting desired results and resultantly whole process was scrapped and huge resources were wasted.
- **Professor Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin**, was of view that for effective and credible census, we must focus on the main objective of census and use the exclusively designed short questionnaire with relevance to objectives. He again emphasized that by using shorter question, census can be conducted in shortest possible time by imposing curfew for avoiding duplications and accurate count.

4. After, PBS presentation, worthy chair requested NADRA team to briefly present regarding the status of data updation of data regarding Civil Registration & Vital Statistics(CRVS). Colonel Sheikh Muhammad Jafer Iqbal DG CRMS, NADRA, informed that CRMS updates data about births, deaths, marriages and divorces which is subject of local governments for provinces and federal government for ICT & areas of erstwhile FATA. NADRA provides support for online access to centralized and real-time provision of data. He then asked Mr. Shafeeq, Assistant Director, CRMS, NADRA to present the updates of data. He informed that the system has extensively evolved since 2004 and now NADRA has extensive coverage at Union council level with their centers. MOUs have been signed with all provinces and regions for online data entries. He added that Punjab and Sindh have vast coverage & reporting. However, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan are lagging behind. As this requires self-reporting therefore efforts are made to improve the reporting by creating awareness regarding its importance. Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (SS/RM) added that the basic objective of requesting NADRA is to present that whether CRMS information at this stage can be utilized as register based census approach. Mr. Shafeeq informed that Census is regarding counting persons, NADRA can provide data for 18 years and above for validation of census results and can help to identify the Pakistanis and non -Pakistanis, it can also help PBS for application of self-enumeration as NADRA has developed specialized software for registration of overseas Pakistanis. **Dr. Zeba. A. Sathar** stressed that both PBS and NADRA have different mandates and one must not confuse it. NADRA CRMS data in no way can replace Population Census data at this stage as denominators are not exhaustive. PBS through Pakistan Demographic Survey(PDS) will be able to get better estimates regarding births, deaths and growth rate. **Professor Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin** also added that Nepal is the only country which has been successful to replace Census with registration system, however there is still long way to achieve this in Pakistan. Surveys can be conducted to evaluate the percentage of coverage of registration, he further added that NADRA data is good source but it cannot replace census at this stage due to its incompleteness. It may be used to verification/ justification of census results especially related to population 18 years & above.

5. The DCPC thanked all esteemed members for their valuable feedback. He appreciated PBS for not becoming defensive and conducting extensive exercise for critically analyzing all steps to identify shortcomings in order to improve next census. He was of view that the working groups and PBS may work jointly for achieving the objectives of this committee. The recommendation so far proposed by working groups must be presented in the next meeting. Regarding the issue of Army deployment, he was of view that this decision may be taken by provinces after top political level deliberations according to their specific context and needs. He was also of view that linking of CNIC made things complicated in last census as it is not in accordance with the primary objective of the census. He added that idea of centralized mechanism for effective monitoring and coordination like NCOC is appreciated. The hierarchy proposed also seems practical as it involves all stakeholders however it may be called "**National Census Coordination Committee**" (N3C) and comprehensive TORS of the committee may be devised. Further trainings are the most important part of the process and specialized mechanism may be adopted for need assessment and evaluation of trainings by looking at possibility of engagement of academia/ universities. *He was of view that avenues may be explored for evaluating that whether curfew approach for conducting census is workable or not.* Moreover, for conducting the next census "Digitally" there is need for greater collaboration with the IT universities like COMSATS & NUST regarding technology advice for successful rollout along with risk mitigation measures. He again stressed that adopting of Project Approach with Monitoring & evaluation framework, appropriate work plan and dedicated Census team is essential for efficacious results. The worthy Chair also appreciated the work done by NADRA, however, he was of view that information collected by NADRA serves specific purposes but it does not address the census objectives. *It can be used as value addition for validation and evaluation but cannot be used as complete register for replacement of census.* However, keeping in view the NADRA's wide spread network and enhanced use of digital technology, there is need to explore the possibilities of NADRA being the service provider for conduct of Digital Census. PBS and NADRA must sit together in next week to devise the roadmap for the cooperation and broader engagement between both organizations for the upcoming census with clear identification of technological hazards to be faced in conducting the gigantic exercise of census digitally and developing Risk management strategy for addressing the issues. He showed confidence that committee has broadly addressed all TORs, however, as it is time bound activity therefore efforts must be made to complete the task within the given timelines.

**Decisions:**

- i. **Work and recommendations of the working groups may be presented in the next meeting for deliberation and developing broader consensus.**
- ii. **Professor Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin will present the case studies of countries where curfew was imposed to conduct census and its impact on the results in the next meeting.**
- iii. **PBS may hold exclusive meetings with NADRA, IT universities like COMSATS and NUST for technological advice and provision of services for conduct of Digital Census with Risk mitigation strategies**
- iv. **The Committee will present the first draft of the report by next week for initial scrutiny.**
6. **Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the committee members and other participants from the DCPC.**

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021**

1. Mr. Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, (Chair)
2. Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, Member (Support Services/ RM), PBS, (Member/Secretary)
3. Colonel Sheikh Muhammad Jafer Iqbal, DG, CRMS, NADRA Islamabad
4. Professor Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin, Independent researcher, (Member)
5. Dr. Zeba A. Sathar, Country Directors Population Council, Islamabad, (Member)
6. Dr. G..M Arif, Independent Researcher Ex. Joint Director of PIDE, (Member)
7. Dr. Syed Muhammad Arif, Retd, Professor, University of Balochistan, (Member)
8. Dr. Durr-e-Nayab, Demographer, Joint Director, PIDE, Islamabad, (Member)
9. Khawaja Mazhar Jamal, GIS specialist, Karachi, (Member)
10. Mr. Ayazuddin, Member (Census & Surveys), PBS, Islamabad
11. Mr. Usama Bilal, Director, NADRA, Islamabad
12. Ms. Rabia Awan, Director. PBS, Islamabad
13. Mr. Yasir Ishfaq, Director, Data processing/ Support Services, PBS, Islamabad
14. Mr. Shehryar AchakZAI, Director, NADRA, Islamabad
15. Mr. Shafeeq, Assistant Director, NADRA, Islamabad
16. Ms. Rumana Sadaf, Chief Statistical officer, PBS, Islamabad
17. Mr. Inam Ullah Khan, Assistant Census Commissioner, PBS, Islamabad
18. Mr. Muhammad Saeed, Assistant Census Commissioner, PBS, Islamabad
19. Syed Farhan Hussain, DPO, PBS, Islamabad