Population

Population structure and growth, population movements (migration), the distribution and density of the population, and employment.

Structure and growth

Population pyramids

A **population pyramid** shows the **age and sex structure** of a country, with **males on one side**, **females on the other**, and age groups going up.

- **Pakistan's pyramid** has a **wide base** and narrows quickly: a **large proportion of children and young people** (about **a third under 15**, and about **60%** under 30). This shows **high birth rates** and fast growth.
- **Changes over time:** the base is **slowly narrowing** as the **birth rate** begins to fall and **life expectancy** rises, so the proportion of **older people** is increasing.

Effects of the present and projected structures

Effects	Detail
a high dependency ratio	many children (and older people) depend on the **working-age** adults, and so need **schools, health care, food and housing**
a large labour force in future	a **"youth bulge"**: potential for **growth** if there are **jobs and skills**; otherwise **unemployment**, **poverty** and **unrest**
pressure on services and resources	**schools, hospitals, housing, water, power, food** and **jobs**
an ageing population later	more pensions and health costs

Birth rates, death rates and natural increase

- **Birth rate** (**births per 1,000 people per year**) in Pakistan is **high** (roughly **28 per 1,000**, and falling slowly); the **death rate** has **fallen sharply** (roughly **7 per 1,000**) because of better **health care**, **vaccination**, **food** and **water**. The gap, the **natural increase** (birth rate minus death rate, expressed as a percentage), is about **2%** a year.

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- **Trends:** the **population has grown rapidly** (about **34 million in 1947** to over **240 million** in the **2023 census**). It is among the **top five** countries in the world by population. Growth is **slowing** but remains **high**.

> NOTE
>
> Birth and death rates and population totals are **approximate** and **change over time**. Read the values from the graphs and tables in the question, and describe the **trend** (rising, falling, the gap between the lines).

Factors that contribute to population growth

Factor	How it contributes
Social	**early marriage**, a preference for **large families** and for **sons**, **extended families**, **religious** and **cultural** attitudes towards family planning
Educational	**low literacy**, especially among **women**, which means **less awareness** of family planning
Economic	children are seen as **workers** and as **support in old age**; **poverty** (high infant mortality encourages more births)
Political	**weak or inconsistent** family planning policy; **limited** health and welfare programmes
Declining death rate	better **medicine** and **food**, so more survive

Other reasons often given: **Afghan refugees** added to the population; children work on farms and in cottage industries; families in villages want many workers; and some people believe that family size is **God's decision**.

Problems for development, sustainability and solutions

Problems: more demand for **food, water, housing, schools, jobs and power** than is available; **unemployment**; **pressure on cities** (slums and traffic); **environmental damage** (deforestation, pollution, water shortage); a **lower income per head**.

Is it sustainable? At present rates, **resources** and **services** cannot keep up, which makes the **current growth unsustainable** unless it slows and the **economy** grows faster.

Solutions: family planning and **health services**, **female education** and **jobs for women**, **raising the age of marriage**, **reducing infant mortality**, **economic growth** and **job creation**, **information**

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campaigns, **involving religious leaders** (for example, scholars explaining that child spacing is allowed in Islam), and the work of **NGOs**.

Movements of population

Causes: push and pull factors

	Push factors (reasons for leaving)	Pull factors (reasons for going)
Rural–urban migration	**poverty**, **lack of jobs**, **small farms**, **poor services**, **drought and floods**	**jobs**, **higher wages**, **schools, hospitals**, **bright lights**
Seasonal migration	**no work** in the slack season; **cold** in the mountains (winter)	**harvest work** (**cotton picking**), **construction**
Emigration	**unemployment**, **low pay**, **insecurity**	**better pay** in the **Gulf**, **UK, USA** and elsewhere; family links; **remittances**
Immigration (including refugees)	**war** and **persecution** (for example in **Afghanistan**), disasters	**safety**, relatives, **work**, and **aid**

Effects of movements

- **In cities: shanty towns** (**katchi abadis**) with poor **housing**, no **clean water or sanitation**; **overcrowding**, **traffic** and **crime**; pressure on **services** and **jobs**; and the growth of the **informal sector**.
- **Refugees: tent cities** and **camps** (for Afghan refugees in **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan**, and after floods and earthquakes); strain on local resources, **competition for jobs**, but also **labour** and trade.
- **In rural areas: depopulation**, loss of **young workers**, **fewer farm workers**, **elderly** people left behind; but **remittances** raise incomes.

Measures to solve the problems

Self-help schemes (people build their own homes with materials and training, such as the **Orangi Pilot Project** in Karachi); provision of **clean water**, **sanitation**, **electricity**, **schools and health** in the **katchi abadis**; **regularising land ownership**; **rural development** (jobs, services, **small industries**) to reduce the push; **new towns** and planned **housing**; **better transport**. Poor housing and services are **adverse effects** that must be tackled.

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Distribution and density

Definitions

- **Distribution: where** people live: the **pattern** of settlement (clustered or scattered).
- **Density: how many** people live in a **unit of area**, usually **persons per km²** (**population ÷ area**).

Variations

- **Between provinces:** the **Punjab** has the **highest density** (and about **half of the population**); **Sindh** is next (very **high** around **Karachi** and **Hyderabad**, **low** in the **Thar**); **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** is **medium** (high in the **Peshawar valley**, low in the mountains); **Balochistan** has the **lowest density** (the largest province by area but with only a small share of the population); **Gilgit–Baltistan** and **Azad Kashmir** are **sparsely** populated in the mountains.
- **Within provinces:** the **canal-irrigated** Central Punjab and **cities** are dense; the **Cholistan** and **Thal** deserts and **Salt Range** are sparse.

Factors that explain the variations

Type	Factors
Physical	**relief** (flat plains are dense; mountains and plateaux are sparse), **climate** and **water** (rain or **irrigation** supports farming; **deserts** are empty), **fertile alluvial soils**
Economic	**jobs** in industry and services in **cities** (Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad), **agriculture** in canal areas; **minerals and ports**
Social	**historic settlement** and **facilities** (schools, hospitals), **tribal and family** patterns
Political	**government investment** and **policies** (canal colonies, new towns, roads), **conflict** and **security**

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Employment

Primary, secondary and tertiary occupations

	Meaning	Examples
Primary	getting **raw materials** from nature	**farming, fishing, mining, forestry**
Secondary	**making things**	**factory work**, **construction**, **manufacturing**, **power**
Tertiary	**services**	**teaching, nursing, banking, transport, shopkeeping, government**

The workforce. Roughly **35–40%** work in **primary** (mainly **agriculture**), about **20–25%** in **secondary** industry and **construction**, and about **35–40%** in **tertiary** services. Over time **agriculture's share has fallen** and **services' share has risen** as the economy changes and people move to towns.

Unemployment and underemployment

- **Underemployment** means that people **work less than they could or would like to** (for example **seasonal farm workers**, or **part-time** workers who want full-time jobs).
- **Causes (rural): seasonal** farming, **small and fragmented** farms, **mechanisation**, **few other jobs**. **Causes (urban): rural migrants** arriving faster than **jobs** are created, **slow industrial growth**, **power cuts**, **a skills mismatch** (education does not fit the jobs), and **recession**.
- **Problems for development: wasted human resources**, **low incomes** and **poverty**, **lower GDP and GNP** (less output), **crime and unrest**, and **brain drain** (educated people leave).

Skilled and manual labour

Pakistan has a **huge supply of manual and unskilled labour** but a **shortage of skilled workers** (**engineers, doctors, managers, technicians**) because of **limited education and training**, and many skilled people **emigrate** (**brain drain**). Skills shortages hold back **industry** and services.

Literacy, education and training

Literacy is about **60%** (lower for **women** and in **rural** areas). **Education and training** for both males and females, in rural and urban areas, **increase skills and productivity**, **raise incomes**, **reduce population growth** (educated women have fewer children) and **improve health and development**. The government's aim is to expand **schools**, **technical and vocational training**, and **adult literacy**, but **funding** and **access** are problems, especially for **girls** in **rural** areas.

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TRY IT

Explain the causes of rural unemployment and underemployment in Pakistan.

Outline. *Seasonal* nature of farming; *small, fragmented* farms with more workers than needed; *mechanisation*; *lack of non-farm jobs* in villages; *low education*. **Effect:** low incomes and **migration to the cities**.

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