

‘Pakistan to be fourth most populous nation by 2030’

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KARACHI: Due to poor effort by authorities in the field of family planning, Pakistan is bound to face greater challenges by 2030 when it would be the fourth most populous nation of the world, experts said on Monday.

‘Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. If it continues to grow with the same pace, it will be ranked fourth by 2030,’ said an expert while speaking at a panel discussion regarding family planning in the country organised by the Dow University of Health Sciences.

Experts said the country lacked proper family planning, and the government’s measures were not headed in the right direction.

Dr Talib Lashari of Sindh government’s Costed Implementation Plan (CIP), gynaecologist Dr Shershah Syed, Dr Noreen Lalani, Dr Minhaj Qidwai, Prof Lubna Baig, Dr Ashfaq Shah, and Dr Nighat Shah spoke at the event.

Experts said ineffective measures resulted in a decrease in family planning to 34 per cent from 35pc last year. The participants of the panel discussion stressed on the need for women’s education, adding that due to lack of awareness 35pc of women expired during pregnancy.

They said child death rate is 10pc, which was much higher than that of neighbouring countries. Some 9pc people adopted traditional methods for family planning.

Experts said without proper education of family planning, it was impossible to meet the ambitious targets set out by authorities. They highlighted the issue of early marriages and 80pc rate of teenage pregnancy which was one key factor behind growing population.

Experts added that the absence of women in decision making was one of the key reasons behind poor family planning.

Often, many people did not even bother to plan their families while in developing countries desire to have a male child was yet another cause of overpopulation.

Besides, low-quality services and unavailability of stock of contraceptives led to poor family planning.

Experts said incorrect perceptions and unfounded worries regarding family planning might be significant barriers in controlling the growing population. They added that due to the population increase, 54pc of infants were born premature who suffered from various health issues afterwards.

However, 75pc of population was aware of family planning among which 50pc were females but no practical implementation on better family planning was properly observed.

‘This growth in population results in increased poverty and causes higher mortality rates of mothers and infants than in neighbouring countries. Besides, this also creates hurdles in educational grounds as is evident from the fact that 25 million children are unable to go to school,’ said a panellist.

Discussants said as growing population created problems in education and health sectors, it also harmed the country on social grounds.

To achieve targets of family planning, there should be regular workshops and seminars for female students of medical colleges, they said. It would also benefit students of other colleges as well as in this way students would get to know the importance, benefit and advantage of it.

Keeping in consideration importance of midwifery in Pakistan, they said midwives should be trained and provided with the latest equipment.

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