

Need for autonomy of PBS underlined

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ISLAMABAD: The need for an autonomous and independent Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has been emphasized to ensure credible economic data for future planning and policymaking of the country.

This was underlined during a meeting of Senate Committee on Statistics chaired by Senator Dr Jehanzeb Jamaldini on Friday.

Senator Rukhsana Zuberi and Senator Mohsin Aziz stated that PBS works under the Ministry of Finance and such organization must be free from the administrative control of the ministry to ensure credibility of data and no influence of the ministry.

“If you are not independent, you plan in the hands of a few individuals and as a result your credibility is damaged,” Mohsin Aziz added.

The senior officials of the PBS informed the committee that ‘National Account’ is main indicator of the Bureau that provides basis for calculation of GDP growth by taking into account total value of goods and services for a fiscal year. National Account data is also published is economic survey.

The meeting was informed that functions of Ministry of Statistics (Statistics Division and its attached department including Pakistan Bureau of Statistics) are to conduct population & housing census in the country, and collect and compile price statistics, external trade, labor force, mining, manufacturing etc. This data serves as benchmark for all socio-economic development plans and administrative activities and also provides basis for political representation in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies, distribution of funds to the federating units and quota to all civil posts in federal government departments. This data is also used by the general public, planners, researches, students and other stakeholders. Brief account of the important activities of PBS is as follows:-

Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey on district level and provincial/national is being conducted regularly and the last round was conducted in 2014-15. The PSLM household income and expenditure survey (HIES) is conducted regularly and the last round was done in 2015-16 while the next round is planned for the year 2018-19.

The meeting was informed that 6th population and housing census, as per international convention, is a decennial activity all over the world. The census provides data on population size, distribution and its demographic characteristics, for socio-economic development planning and administrative activities in the country.

The Constitution of Pakistan provides that the seats in the National Assembly would be allocated to each province and the federal capital on the basis of population in accordance with the last preceding census officially published. However, for the general election 2018, the government made 24th Constitutional Amendment, under which Provisional Census-2017 Results have been used for delimitation of National Assembly seats and follow-up by-elections, as the results of the 6th census are yet to be approved by the Council of Common Interests (CCI). Previous meeting of the CCI presided over by the then government had left the decision to be taken by the next government.