



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION
AKHTAR HAMEED KHAN NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RURAL
DEVELOPMENT (AHKNCRD)
ISLAMABAD



NEWSLETTER

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VISION

“Socio-economic empowerment of rural and the under-privileged communities for sustainable development”

MISSION

“Knowledge-based capacity building of the Public & development sectors engaged in rural development”

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Barrister Nabeel A. Awan,
Secretary, Establishment



View of the Main Building of NCRD



Mr. Israr Mohammad Khan,
Director General,

AHKNCRD-AARDO One-day Seminar on “Climate Change: Implications and Adaptation,” 16 April, 2026



The hon’ble Chief Guest, Eminent panelists and Director (T) during the seminar proceedings

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing global challenges, with far-reaching implications for ecosystems, economies, and human well-being. Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to its impacts, including rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, floods, droughts, and water scarcity, which threaten livelihoods and sustainable development.

Keeping in view the growing urgency of addressing climate change and its far-reaching impacts on development, NCRD organized a one-day policy seminar on “Climate Change: Implications and Adaptation,” on April 16, 2026.

The seminar was organized in collaboration with African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO). It was joined by a total of 65 participants from across the country.

The seminar provided a platform for experts, policymakers, practitioners, and participants to deliberate on emerging climate challenges, adaptation strategies, and policy measures required to build resilience and promote sustainable development.

The first session on “Key Concepts vis-à-vis Global and Local Perspective on Climate Change” was conducted by Mr. Muhammad Nawaz, Climate Integration Specialist, Islamabad. During the session, he provided participants with a clear overview of key concepts related to climate change, including its causes, observed impacts, and future projections. He explained how global warming is driving shifts in temperature and precipitation patterns worldwide, and connected those global trends to Pakistan’s local context — from rising heat stress and water scarcity to impacts on

agriculture and vulnerable communities. Through real examples and data, he helped participants understand how climate change is not just a distant global issue, but an immediate challenge affecting livelihoods, food security, and ecosystems at the local level. The session set a strong foundation for the rest of the training by building shared understanding of the science and relevance of climate change.

The second session, titled “Climate Change and Food Security in Pakistan: Implications and Adaptation”, was delivered by Mr. Arif Rasheed Goheer, Executive Director, Global Climate Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), Islamabad, who discussed the growing impact of climate change on Pakistan’s food security, including challenges related to agricultural

AHKNCRD-AARDO One-day Seminar (cont'd from page 1)

productivity, water availability, and extreme weather events.

In his session, Mr. Aftab Alam Khan, CEO of Resilient Future International Pvt. Ltd., focused on the strong interlinkages between climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters in Pakistan. He explained how a warming climate is altering weather patterns, making extreme events more common and more severe. Drawing on recent case studies, he elaborated on how climate-induced hazards such as floods, heatwaves, and prolonged droughts are exacerbating vulnerabilities across the country. Mr. Aftab emphasized that understanding these climate-disaster linkages is critical for design-

ing early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and community-based adaptation plans that can reduce future losses.

During the concluding ceremony, participants lauded the seminar for its rich content, expert-led sessions, and interactive learning environment. They particularly appreciated how the discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation provided both global perspectives and local context relevant to Pakistan's vulnerability, while also offering practical insights into resilience-building, policy responses, and community-based adaptation strategies.

The concluding ceremony was chaired by Mr. Faisal Khan Tarakai, Provincial Minister of Labour for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). He

reiterated the urgency of addressing climate change implications from a Pakistan-specific lens, noting that the country remains among the most vulnerable to climate-induced risks despite contributing minimally to global emissions. He stressed that adaptation must be placed at the center of development planning, with stronger coordination between government, academia, private sector, and local communities. Mr. Tarakai also appreciated the active participation in the seminar from across the country. He lauded NCRD for its training initiatives and called for translating these discussions into practical, locally-driven adaptation strategies to build resilience for vulnerable communities across the country.

AHKNCRD-AARDO Online International Training Programme on "Social Safety Nets: Challenges and Opportunities," 06-09 April, 2026

The four-day online training programme on "Social Safety Nets: Challenges and Opportunities" was jointly organized by African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) and AHKNCRD from 6th to 9th April, 2026. The programme brought together policymakers, development practitioners, and subject experts to deliberate on the evolving landscape of social protection systems, particularly in Pakistan, while also drawing insights from global best practices.

The primary objective of the training was to enhance participants' understanding of social safety nets, their implementation challenges, and opportunities for strengthening these systems to reduce poverty and vulnerability. The sessions were designed to provide both theoretical frameworks and practical insights into major social protection initiatives.

The training programme was attended by 106 participants from 24 countries including Pakistan, Mauritius, Bangladesh, India, Sudan, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Liberia, Malawi, Kenya, Indonesia, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Eswatini and Nepal.

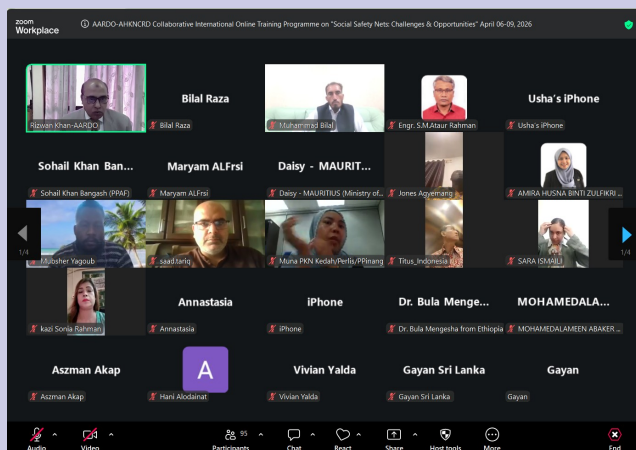
During the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Israr Mohammad Khan, Director General of AHKNCRD, delivered the welcome address and introduced the course. He emphasized the importance of social safety nets in addressing poverty, inequality, and socio-economic vulnerabilities in developing countries. He highlighted the need for capacity building and policy innovation to improve the effectiveness of these programmes.

H.E. Dr. Manoj Nardeosingh, Secretary General of AARDO, delivered the inaugural remarks. He stressed the significance of international cooperation and knowledge sharing among member countries to strengthen social protection sys-

tems. He noted that social safety nets play a vital role in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially in eradicating poverty.

The first technical session was delivered by Mr. Ali Kemal, Chief (SDGs) at the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives. He shed light on

erty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) discussed the role of PPAF in poverty alleviation through community based development, livelihood support, and micro-finance initiatives. The session highlighted PPAF's success in empowering marginalized communities, particularly women, through participatory approaches.



Group snapshot of the participants, AARDO and NCRD representatives

the issues and opportunities surrounding social safety nets. He discussed structural challenges such as limited fiscal space, targeting inefficiencies, and governance issues. He emphasized the importance of data-driven policymaking and the integration of digital technologies to improve transparency and targeting mechanisms. His second session focused on Pakistan's policies and initiatives in social safety nets, providing an overview of the country's evolving social protection framework.

Mr. Aftab Alam Khan, CEO, Resilient Future International, focused on global best practices in social welfare programmes. The session emphasized adaptability and contextualization, noting that successful models must be tailored to local socio-economic conditions.

Mr. Sohail Khan Bangash, from the Pakistan Pov-

erty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) discussed the role of PPAF in poverty alleviation through community based development, livelihood support, and micro-finance initiatives. The session highlighted PPAF's success in empowering marginalized communities, particularly women, through participatory approaches.

Mr. Muhammad Noman Ali from Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) provided an in-depth overview of BISP's operational design, targeting mechanisms, and impact. He explained the use of the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) for beneficiary identification and the role of digital payment systems in ensuring transparency. The session also discussed the expansion of BISP into complementary initiatives such as education stipends and nutrition programmes.

Mr. Muhammad Saeed Ahmad Raza from Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal elaborated on Pakistan Baitul Maal (PBM's) role in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations through financial assistance, healthcare support, and educational scholarships. The session highlighted PBM's targeted interventions for marginalized groups.

Mr. Arshad Mehmood shed light on the Akhuwat Foundation and explained Akhuwat's interest-free microfinance model, which is based on principles of solidarity and community support. This session illustrated how innovative, faith-based approaches can complement formal social safety net systems.

The programme concluded with a session that included a course report presented by Dr. Abdul Rehman Khan Niazi, Director (Training), summarizing the key learnings and discussions.

Dr. Khushnood Ali, Programme Coordinator & Head, Research Division, AARDO gave the valedictory remarks, emphasizing the need for sustained commitment and regional cooperation in strengthening social safety nets.

Trg. Course on “Social Protection in Pakistan: Programs and Strategies,” 06-10 Apr, 2026

Social protection plays a vital role in promoting inclusive and sustainable development by safeguarding individuals and vulnerable groups against economic and social risks. Through

measures such as social assistance, health coverage, pensions, and livelihood support, social protection helps reduce poverty, enhance resilience, and improve overall well-being. It contributes to social equity by ensuring that disadvantaged populations have access to essential services and opportunities.

Keeping in view the importance of social protection in Pakistan, NCRD organized a five-day training course on “Social Protection in Pakistan: Programs and Strategies” from 06-10 April, 2026.

The major objectives of the training were to discuss the concept of social protection, its various programmes & their importance; to have an overview of the various Social Safety Net Programmes of the country; and to provide

a forum for sharing experiences and strategies with regard to social protection and various relevant programmes & strategies in Pakistan.

World’s Best Practices in Social Protection & Welfare Programmes; Institutional and Governance Issues in Social Protection Programmes; Coordination, Monitoring & Evaluation Issues in Social Protection

Programmes in Pakistan; Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) as largest Social Protection programme of the Country; Fiscal and Economic Constraints in Social Protection Programmes in Pakistan; Role of Non-Governmental Sector in Social Protection & Services; and, Adaptation to Technological Advancements for Efficient Social Protection Programmes.



Group photo of the participants with Resource Person, Director (T) and Course Coordinator

The course comprised of intellectual and participatory sessions based on delivery of technical sessions coupled with participatory discussions. Different themes and subjects pertaining to social protection were covered during the programme. They included: The Concept & Components of Social Protection in Pakistan; Social Protection in Pakistan: Policies, Reforms and Initiatives; Common Interventions and Approaches in Social Pro-

tection; World’s Best Practices in Social Protection & Welfare Programmes; Institutional and Governance Issues in Social Protection Programmes; Coordination, Monitoring & Evaluation Issues in Social Protection Programmes in Pakistan; Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) as largest Social Protection programme of the Country; Fiscal and Economic Constraints in Social Protection Programmes in Pakistan; Role of Non-Governmental Sector in Social Protection & Services; and, Adaptation to Technological Advancements for Efficient Social Protection Programmes.

During the concluding ceremony, the participants appreciated the relevance and quality of the sessions, highlighting the practical insights gained into social protection frameworks, policies, and implementation mechanisms. The feedback reflected improved understanding of key social protection programmes and strategies, with participants appreciating the interactive discussions and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

Training Course on “Climate Change– Mitigation and Adaptation,” 13-16 Apr, 2026

NCRD organized a four days’ training course on “Climate Change– Mitigation and Adaptation” from April 13-16, 2026.

The training aimed to equip the participants with practical knowledge and skills to address the growing challenges of climate change. The training focused on building an understanding of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable practices, and enhance resilience to climate impacts. Participants were also introduced to key concepts such as resource conservation, disaster risk reduction, and climate-resilient development, fostering an informed and proactive approach towards environmental sustainability in today’s rapidly changing world.

The eminent resource persons that were invited to impart technical and issue-oriented knowledge on subject matter included Mr. Arif Rasheed Goheer, Executive Director, Global

Climate Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), Islamabad; Mr. Syed Mahmood Nasir, Ex IG Forests, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Islamabad; Dr. Pervaiz Amir,

highlighting that the workshop offered practical, well-structured insights into climate change, its mitigation and adaptation approaches.

In his concluding remarks, the Director Training, NCRD, Dr. Abdul Rehman Khan Niazi emphasized the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the face of increasing environmental and socio-economic challenges. He emphasized that building resilience to climate impacts requires a coordinated approach involving government institutions, communities, academia, and development partners. Stressing the im-



Group Photo of Participants with Director (Trg.), NCRD

Environmental Policy Analyst/Regional Member, South Asia Global Water Partnership, Islamabad; Brig (R) Sajid Naeem, Senior Programme Manager/ Country Representative, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Islamabad; and Dr. Ghulam Rasool, Advisor, China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre, Islamabad.

The participants appreciated the rich discussions,

portance of awareness, capacity building, and evidence-based decision-making, he encouraged participants to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the training in their respective professional roles. He also appreciated the active engagement of the participants and expressed confidence that the training would contribute to advancing effective climate action and sustainable development.

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Trg. Workshop on “Human Development for Socio-economic Progress,” 27-29 Apr, 2026

NCRD organized a three days training workshop on “Human Development for Socio-economic Progress” during 27-29 April, 2026.

The major objectives of the workshop were to learn significance and components of human development and the approach of human development for socio-economic progress; to analyze the state of human development in Pakistan in connection with the nationalized targets prepared in light of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals; and to promote sharing of relevant experiences among the participants with respect to human development for socio-economic progress in Pakistan.

A total of six Resource Persons were invited to deliver the sessions who belonged to the following institutes and departments: Mr. Tariq Mahmood, Director General, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Islamabad; Ch. Muhammad Ashraf, Former Director General, NCRD, Islamabad; Mr. Waqar Sherazi, Former Director (Country Operations), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Islamabad; Mr. Usman Akash, Director, Averose School System, Islamabad; Dr. Ali Kemal, Chief

(Employment & Research), Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Islamabad; and, Mr. Shahid Mahmood Minhas, Advisor (Trainings), Russell’s International, Islamabad.

The workshop reinforced that research on socio-economic issues must move beyond numbers and

across regions, genders, and communities while linking local realities to the UN SDGs framework.

Furthermore, the key sessions on government policies, reforms, and community participation emphasized that research should directly inform policy and practice. Participants learnt that meaningful human development depends on evidence-based policy reforms, equitable resource distribution, and active citizen engagement. The focus on social and emotional personality, along with responsible citizenship, underscored that individual attitudes and collective participation are just as critical as institutional reforms for driving inclusive progress.

During the closing ceremony of the workshop, participants lauded the comprehensive content, relevance to current development challenges, and the practical insights shared throughout the sessions.

They particularly appreciated the interactive learning environment, expert facilitation, and opportunities for meaningful discussion on key aspects of human development and socio-economic progress. Participants also acknowledged the effectiveness of the training in enhancing their understanding and professional capacity.



Participants engaged in group activity during one of the sessions

place people at the center. Through sessions on the Human Development Paradigm, Human Security, and Gender Justice, participants learned to frame progress around well-being, rights, and inclusion rather than just GDP growth. The discussions highlighted that sustainable development in Pakistan requires addressing disparities

Training Course on “AI and Digitalization in Libraries,” 04-07 May, 2026

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is emerging as a transformative technology that is reshaping the way information is managed, accessed, and shared across the globe. In the library sector, AI is opening new avenues for improving service delivery, enhancing resource management, and meeting the evolving information needs of users. From intelligent search systems and automated cataloguing to personalized recommendations and virtual assistance, AI-driven applications are helping libraries become more efficient, accessible, and user-centered. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, the integration of AI in libraries holds significant potential for strengthening knowledge dissemination, supporting research, and fostering life-long learning.

Keeping in view the growing importance of the subject, the National Centre for Rural Development (NCRD) organized a four-day training programme on Artificial Intelligence in Libraries to enhance participants’ understanding of emerging AI technologies and their applications in modern library services and information management. The objectives of the training course were to apprise the participants about the application of AI

in libraries; to provide course participants with the practical tips and techniques for overcoming writing obstacles using AI; to familiarize the participants with the ethical considerations related to AI, especially concerning user privacy in

subject and the programme’s significance in addressing contemporary professional and institutional needs.

The programme concluded on a positive note, with participants expressing confidence in applying the knowledge and skills acquired to modernize library services, enhance digital access, and integrate AI-driven solutions in their respective institutions. Participants reflected on their learning experience and showed enthusiasm for contributing to the transformation of libraries into more efficient, innovative, and user-focused knowledge centers in the digital era.

During the concluding ceremony, Director Training expressed gratitude to the participants for their active engagement, enthusiasm,

and commitment throughout the training programme. He appreciated their contribution to making the sessions interactive and meaningful, and urged them to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their respective professional settings. He also emphasized that the effective implementation of learning outcomes would help strengthen institutional capacity and improve service delivery in their organizations.



Group photo of participants with NCRD Faculty Members

libraries; and to provide a forum for experience sharing with regard to AI and digitalization in libraries.

The overwhelming response to the course reflected its relevance and success, as a total of 174 participants from diverse departments and organizations across the country attended the programme. This remarkable participation represents one of the highest enrollments in NCRD’s training history, demonstrating the growing interest in the

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Trg. Course on “Research Methodologies for Socio-economic Issues,” 11-14 May, 2026

NCRD successfully organized a 4-day training course on "Research Methodologies for socio-economic Issues" was held from May 11 to 14, 2026. The training aimed to provide participants with knowledge of different research methods, data collection techniques and data analysis.

The programme was joined by a total of **52** participants from various sectors engaged in research and development.

The training equipped participants with a full research cycle toolkit, from problem formulation to final reporting. A major takeaway was learning how to select, refine, and clearly define research problems that are relevant to Pakistan's socio-economic context, ensuring studies address real policy gaps.

The hands-on sessions on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method data collection, combined with SPSS training for statistical analysis, built practical skills for handling real datasets. Participants also strengthened their academic foundation through guidance on literature re-

view, research proposal design, referencing, and HEC's plagiarism policy, emphasizing integrity in research. Overall, the programme underscored that robust research methodologies are essential for generating credible evidence that can inform development policies and drive inclusive socio-

Expert, Islamabad; Dr. Umm-e-Laila, Associate Professor, Dept. of Governance & Public Policy, National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Islamabad; Dr. Sundus Younis, Assistant professor, College of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering, National University of Science and Tech-

nology (NUST), Islamabad; Ms. Rabia Zafar, Lecturer, Bahira University, Islamabad; and Dr. Zeshan, Professor, Institute of Environmental Sciences and Engineering (IESE), NUST, Islamabad

At the concluding ceremony of the training course on Research Methodologies for Socio-economic Issues, Director Training, NCRD, Dr. Abdul Rehman Khan Niazi, highlighted the critical importance of strengthening research capacity to effectively address complex socio-economic challenges in the country. He emphasized that sound research methodologies are essential for evidence-based policymaking, informed decision-making, and sustainable development planning. He further stressed the need for participants to apply rigorous analytical tools and ethical research practices in their professional work for impactful outcomes.



Group photo of Participants with Director (Trg.) and Course Coordinator

economic progress in Pakistan.

Eminent resource persons that were invited to deliver sessions on subject matter included: Dr. Usman Mustafa, ME & IE Consultant, Federal Water Management Cell, Ministry of Food Security, Islamabad; Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Sector Economist, Financial Modeling and Forecasting

challenges in the country. He emphasized that sound research methodologies are essential for evidence-based policymaking, informed decision-making, and sustainable development planning. He further stressed the need for participants to apply rigorous analytical tools and ethical research practices in their professional work for impactful outcomes.

In conversation with Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan



Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan,
Chief Advisor, Lackson Group of Companies
& Former Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural
Research Council (PARC)

Brief Profile

Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan carries over 38 years of diverse experience in agricultural research, policy formulation, commercialization of technologies, value-added product development, and marketing, and has contributed significantly to advancing Pakistan's agricultural sector.

He has worked with institutions such as Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Planning Commission, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), GTZ, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), International Exhibition for National Security and Resilience (ISNAR), and the World Bank.

Interview

Keeping in view his expertise in agriculture and food security, NCRD invited Dr. Muhamad Azeem Khan for an interview. The following paragraphs present the excerpts from our conversation with him.

Q. How would you assess the current state of food security in Pakistan, and what are the major challenges facing the sector today?

Pakistan's food security situation is best described as a paradox of "production amidst deprivation." Agriculture contributes around 22–24% of GDP, employs approximately 37–38% of the labor force, and supports the livelihoods of nearly two-thirds of the rural population. Pakistan is among the world's largest producers of wheat, rice, milk, sugarcane, mangoes and livestock products. Yet food and nutrition insecurity remain widespread.

According to national and international estimates, around 40% of children under five are stunted, one of the highest rates in South Asia, while micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread

among women and children. Nearly one-third of food produced is lost or wasted before reaching consumers. Furthermore, more than 80% of farms are below 5 hectares, limiting economies of scale and technology adoption.

The challenge today is not simply food production. Pakistan has largely achieved cereal self-sufficiency in normal years. The real challenge is ensuring that food is available, accessible, affordable, nutritious, stable and sustainable. Climate shocks, rising food inflation, water scarcity, post-harvest losses, fragmented markets, low value addition, weak extension systems and inadequate investment in research and innovation continue to undermine food security.

The biggest structural issue is that much of Pakistan's agriculture remains trapped in a low-productivity, low-profitability equilibrium. Smallholders often produce commodities rather than market-oriented products, making them vulnerable to both climate and market shocks.

Q: What impact is climate change having on Pakistan's agricultural productivity and food systems?

Climate change is no longer a future concern—it is already affecting Pakistan's food systems. Pakistan consistently ranks among the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Average temperatures in Pakistan have increased by approximately 0.5–0.8°C over recent decades, and climate projections indicate a further rise of

In conversation with Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan (continued)

1.5–3°C by mid-century under moderate emission scenarios. The IPCC projects that wheat yields in South Asia could decline by up to 16–20% by 2050 if adaptation measures are not implemented.

The economic impact is already visible. The 2022 floods affected over 33 million people, damaged more than 4.4 million acres of crops, killed over 1.1 million livestock, and caused agricultural losses estimated at over US\$3.7 billion. Similarly, repeated heatwaves have reduced productivity of wheat, maize, vegetables, fruits and livestock.

Agriculture is increasingly exposed to multiple climate risks simultaneously: water scarcity, extreme heat, changing pest dynamics, floods, droughts and salinity. For example, wheat yield losses can exceed 10–15% when temperatures rise above critical thresholds during grain filling periods.

The challenge extends beyond farms. Climate change disrupts transportation networks, storage systems, food prices, labour productivity and nutritional outcomes. Therefore, climate adaptation must be integrated across the entire food system rather than focusing solely on crop production.

Q. Despite being an agrarian economy, why does Pakistan continue to face food security concerns in certain regions?

Food insecurity in Pakistan is less about national food availability and more about unequal access and vulnerability. Nationally, Pakistan generally produces enough calories to feed its population. However, food security varies significantly across provinces and districts. Districts in Balochistan, southern Sindh, parts of KP and former FATA regions experience chronic food insecurity due to poverty, weak infrastructure, climate vulnerability and poor market access. Nearly 40% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty in some rural regions, while food expenditure often consumes 50–60% of household income among poor families. When food prices rise, vulnerable households simply consume less food or shift to lower-quality diets.

A second reason is the mismatch between production and nutrition. More than 60% of cultivated area is devoted to wheat, rice and sugarcane, while production of pulses, fruits, vegetables and nutrient-rich foods remains relatively underdeveloped.

Third, Pakistan loses an estimated 20–40% of fruits and vegetables post-harvest, reducing both farmer incomes and food availability.

Thus, food insecurity persists because of poverty, poor dietary diversity, climate shocks, weak markets and inadequate value chains—not necessarily because the country lacks food production capacity.

Q. What role can modern agricultural technologies and innovations play in improving crop yields and ensuring food security?

Pakistan possesses some of the largest yield gaps in the region. Farmers often achieve only 40–60% of attainable yields under existing agroecological conditions. For example, Wheat yields in

Pakistan average around 3 tonnes/ha, while progressive farmers achieve 5–7 tonnes/ha. Maize yields can exceed 10 tonnes/ha under improved management, compared to national averages closer to 5–6 tonnes/ha. Water productivity in many cropping systems remains far below global benchmarks.

Modern technologies can help close these gaps. Precision agriculture, climate-resilient varieties, biotechnology, digital advisory systems, AI-based pest management, drones, satellite monitoring and protected agriculture offer significant opportunities.

Studies show that climate-smart agriculture can increase productivity by 15–30%, improve water-use efficiency by 20–40%, and reduce production risks significantly.

However, technology adoption requires supportive ecosystems. Farmers need access to finance, extension services, quality inputs, digital connectivity and markets. The most successful countries combine technological innovation with strong institutions and market development.

The future lies not in producing more with more resources, but in producing more with fewer resources.

Q. How can smallholder farmers be supported to enhance their productivity and resilience?

Smallholders constitute more than 90% of Pakistan's farming households and operate the majority of agricultural holdings. Yet they often remain excluded from modern value chains.

Supporting smallholders requires moving beyond subsidy-based approaches. First, climate information services should be expanded. Farmers need localized weather forecasts, early warning systems and climate advisories.

Second, financial inclusion must improve. Less than 10% of smallholders have meaningful access to formal agricultural credit, while crop and livestock insurance coverage remains extremely limited.

Third, farmer organizations and cooperative models should be strengthened. Globally, organized producers achieve better market access, lower transaction costs and stronger bargaining power.

Fourth, smallholders should be integrated into value chains through contract farming, aggregation centres, digital marketplaces and agro-processing hubs.

The objective should be to transform smallholders into commercial agribusiness entrepreneurs rather than treating them merely as subsistence producers.

Q. What are the major causes of post-harvest losses in Pakistan, and how can they be minimized?

Post-harvest losses represent one of the most cost-effective opportunities for improving food security.

Studies suggest Pakistan loses: 15–20% of cereals; 25–40% of fruits and vegetables; and significant quantities of milk, meat and fisheries products. These losses are worth billions of rupees annually.

The primary causes include poor harvesting practices, inadequate storage, weak cold chains, limited processing capacity, poor packaging and inefficient transportation systems.

Pakistan's cold storage capacity remains insufficient relative to horticultural production. Consequently, farmers frequently experience severe price collapses during bumper harvests while consumers face shortages later in the season.

Reducing losses by even 10 percentage points could add more food to the national supply than expanding cultivated land in many regions.

Investment in cold chains, warehousing, logistics, processing facilities, grading centres and digital market systems should therefore be treated as food security investments rather than merely infrastructure projects.

Q. What policy measures should the government prioritize?

Pakistan requires a transition from an "Agriculture Production Policy" to a "Food Systems Transformation Policy."

Priority areas include: Climate adaptation and resilience; Water productivity and resource efficiency; research and innovation; nutrition-sensitive agriculture; value chain development; market reforms; digital agriculture; and one health integration.

Pakistan spends billions annually on input subsidies and commodity support. However, relatively limited resources are directed toward innovation, value addition, post-harvest systems and agribusiness development.

Future investments should focus on specialized production clusters, export-oriented value chains, agro-processing zones and climate-smart technologies.

Most importantly, implementation must become the focus. Pakistan often faces an implementation deficit rather than a policy deficit.

Q. What opportunities and strategies do you see for achieving sustainable food security in Pakistan over the next decade?

Pakistan possesses enormous untapped potential. Agriculture contributes roughly US\$90 billion annually, yet significant opportunities remain unrealized due to low productivity, weak value chains and limited value addition.

The next decade should focus on five strategic transformations: First, climate-resilient agriculture and adaptation; Second, specialized high-efficiency production clusters linked to markets and processing industries. Third, value addition and agro-industrialization. Currently much of Pakistan's agricultural output is sold as raw commodities rather than high-value products. Fourth, digital transformation through AI, remote sensing, precision agriculture and e-commerce. Fifth, One Health and food systems approaches that integrate agriculture, nutrition, environmental sustainability and public health.

Conclusion

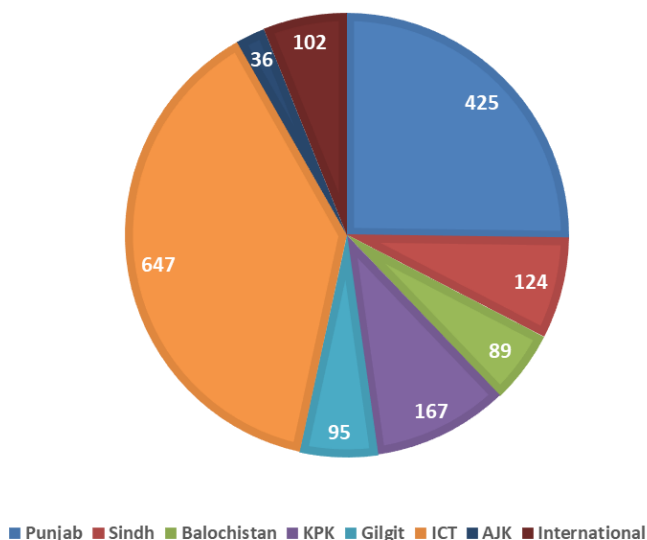
The interview ended with profound thanks from NCRD to Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan for sharing his valuable thoughts and recommendations on various agricultural and food security issues.

Summary of Trainings' Participation 2025-26

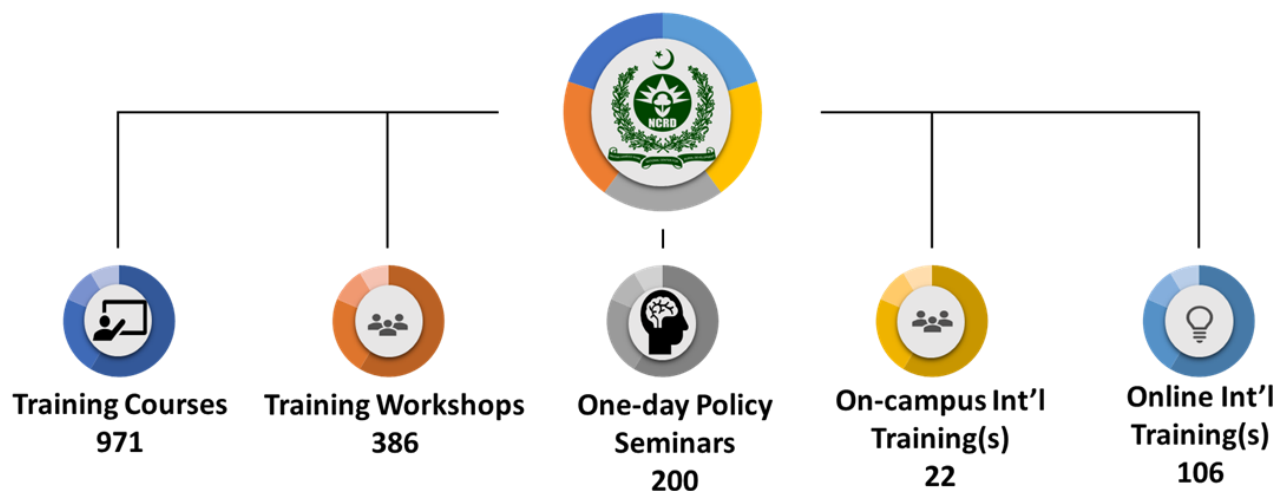
Number of training programmes conducted during FY 2025-26



Overall region-wise participation during the FY 2025-26



Category-wise detail of participation during FY 2025-26



NCRD'S ANNUAL TRAINING PLAN 2026-2027

TRAINING COURSES				TRAINING WORKSHOPS			
S#	Title	Date	Coordinator	S#	Title	Date	Coordinator
1.	Office Management: Rules and Regulations	Jul 20-24, 2026	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	1.	Data Analytics for Planning and Decision Making	Jul 27-31, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director
2.	Local Government Systems- Challenges and Solutions	Aug 03-07, 2026	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	2.	Emotional intelligence for Workplace Success	Aug 31-Sep 02, 2026	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director
3.	Environmental Concerns in Development	Aug 03-07, 2026	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director	3.	Managing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	Sep 14-16, 2027	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director
4.	Public Health: Contemporary Issues and Solutions	Aug 10-13, 2026	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director	4.	Ethical Leadership and Management at Workplace	Oct 05-07, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director
5.	Cyber Security and Data Protection in Digital Governance	Aug 17-21, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director	5.	Stress Management for Workplace Efficiency	Nov 10-12, 2026 (Tue-Thu)	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director
6.	Poverty Alleviation Challenges & Solutions	Aug 31-Sep 04, 2026	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	6.	Effective Communication & Presentation Skills for Professionals	Dec 28-30, 2026	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director
7.	Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation	Sep 07-11, 2026	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director	7.	Human Rights: Challenges & Solutions	Dec 28, 2026- Jan 01, 2027	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer
8.	Livestock Farming for Poverty Alleviation	Sep 14-18, 2026	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	8.	Digital Marketing for Entrepreneurship	Feb 01-03, 2027	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer
9.	Project Proposal Writing	Sep 21-25, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil, Deputy Director	9.	Professional Ethics for Efficiency and Management	Feb 01-04, 2027	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director
10.	Disaster Management – Issues & Strategies	Sep 28-Oct 02, 2026	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	10.	Report Writing Skills for Development Projects	May 03-07, 2027	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer
11.	Gender Mainstreaming for Inclusive Development	Oct 26-30, 2026	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN COLLABORATION WITH AARDO & CIRDAP			
12.	Planning and Management of Development Projects	Nov 02-06, 2026	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director	S#	Title	Date	Coordinator
13.	Social Protection in Pakistan: Programmes and Strategies	Nov 02-06, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director	1.	Social Mobilization and Community Engagement (Online AARDO)	Sep 21-24, 2026	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director
14.	Waste Management – Issues and Options	Nov 16-20, 2026	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	2.	Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation (AARDO)	Oct 14-22, 2026	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director
15.	Research Methodology for Socio-economic Issues	Nov 23-27, 2026	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director	3.	Water Management for Enhancing Agricultural Productivity (AARDO)	Dec 09-17, 2026	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director
16.	Artificial Intelligence in Libraries	Nov 30-Dec 04, 2026	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	4.	Social Safety Nets for Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation (CIRDAP)	Jan 20-26, 2027	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer
17.	Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management	Jan 04-08, 2027	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director	5.	Sustainable Livelihood and Income Generation (AARDO)	Mar 25-Apr 01, 2027	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director
18.	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) of Development Projects	Jan 04-08, 2027	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director	6.	Professional Ethics for Efficiency & Management (Online AARDO)	Apr 26-29, 2027	Mr. M. Ahsan Jamil Deputy Director
19.	Social Mobilization and Community Organization for Development	Jan 11-15, 2027	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	NATIONAL SEMINARS IN COLLABORATION WITH AARDO			
20.	E-Governance for Service Delivery	Apr 05-09, 2027	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director	S#	Title	Date	Coordinator
21.	Business Management for Small and Medium Enterprises	Apr 12-16, 2027	Mr. Hanifullah, Research Officer	1.	Responsible Citizenship for Nation Building	Aug 20, 2026	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director
22.	Innovations in Library Management	Apr 19-23, 2027	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director	2.	Climate Change: Issues, Mitigation and Adaptation	Nov 19, 2026	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director
23.	Water Resource Management- Principles and Practices	Apr 26-30, 2027	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	3.	Governance Issues and Possible Solutions	Jan 14, 2027	Ms. Maira Razzaq Assistant Director
24.	Food Security – Issues and Way-forward	May 10-14, 2027	Mr. Bilal Raza Deputy Director	4.	Bridging Gap between Industry and Academia	May 13, 2027	Mr. Mubasshir Zaman Khan, Deputy Director