

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Interactive Presentations (IP)

Author: Ms. Aisha Jagirani
Beihang University (BUAA), China

PROMOTING SPACE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN PAKISTAN-INITIATIVES,
ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND ISSUES**Abstract**

With about 180.8 million inhabitants, Pakistan is the sixth most populous and the 34th largest country in the world in terms of area. Pakistan's economy, which is pre-dominantly based on agriculture, is the 24th largest in the world in terms of purchasing power parity and 41st largest in terms of nominal GDP. Pakistan is counted among the Next Eleven (N11) countries that have the potential to become the world's largest economies in the 21st century. Despite considerable potential to develop into a stable, moderate and democratic state, major challenges of internal security, poor agricultural productivity, inadequate infrastructure, food insecurity, insufficient health and educational facilities, depletion of natural resources, rapid environmental degradation and recurring natural disasters have burdened the country and have hampered sustainable development of Pakistan. Space technology applications offer a cost effective means of addressing many of the above mentioned issues and have made impressive advances in the last few years in different countries in the region. Unfortunately, for various reasons, Pakistan has not been able to fully exploit the benefits of space technology and its applications to meet the challenges she faces. One of the reasons is lack of awareness and understanding by planners, decision-makers and users about the potential benefits of space technology in planning and implementation of developmental plans as well as good governance. Similarly, Pakistan's space program enjoys little public support due, primarily, to lack of awareness of the benefits space offers and the ubiquitousness of space applications in modern life. There is thus an acute need to create awareness and educate all segments of the society and stakeholders in Pakistan about the potential benefits of space technology and its applications. In the past ten years, many initiatives have been taken to promote space education and awareness for students as well as decision-makers in Pakistan. These include non traditional ways and programs to educate students and create awareness among the general public. This paper covers achievements of Pakistan in promoting space education and awareness in the country and the related issues and impediments to pursue these programs.