

OpenVoiceNews Pakistan

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Pakistan's Parsi Population Faces Sharp Decline

July 21, 2025

– Categories: General News



Pakistan's Parsi (Zoroastrian) community, once a vibrant minority known for its contributions to the nation's development, is now shrinking rapidly due to low birth rates, migration, and intermarriage restrictions.

Once a thriving and influential minority, Pakistan's Parsi (Zoroastrian) community is now slowly fading away. Known for their philanthropy, business acumen, and civic contributions, the Parsis were once a vital part of urban centers like Karachi and Lahore. Today, however,

their numbers are alarmingly low, and the community is grappling with a future filled with uncertainty.

The decline of the Parsi population in Pakistan is not a sudden one, but the pace has picked up in recent decades. The community has shrunk to just a few thousand people. Experts and community members point to a combination of factors: low birth rates, strict traditions on interfaith marriage, and a steady stream of migration abroad, particularly among younger Parsis seeking better opportunities or more accepting social environments.

Parsis practice the ancient Zoroastrian religion, which originated in Persia (modern-day Iran). The community first arrived in the Indian subcontinent centuries ago, fleeing religious persecution. They settled primarily in what is now India and later spread to parts of Pakistan. In the early days of Pakistan's independence, Parsis played a major role in building businesses, running charities, and supporting public institutions.

Despite their relatively small numbers, the community left a lasting mark on the country. Prominent families helped establish major companies and funded hospitals, schools, and social welfare programs. Even today, many of their charitable initiatives continue to benefit people across religious and ethnic lines.

However, preserving that legacy has become increasingly difficult. Many younger Parsis feel disconnected from their heritage or see limited prospects for personal and professional growth in Pakistan. At the same time, Parsi religious norms still discourage marriage outside the faith, which has further contributed to population decline. Unlike in the past, where large Parsi families were common, modern couples often choose to have only one or two children or none at all.

Leaders within the community are aware of the crisis. Some efforts have been made to encourage intra-community marriages, offer support to young couples, and boost engagement among the youth. But reversing the decline is proving to be a tough challenge.