### **Health Issues in Pakistan**

According to the <u>World Health Organization</u> (WHO), Pakistan is facing a health crisis due to massive monsoon rainfall. And unprecedented levels of flooding and landslides in 2023. Some of the common health issues in Pakistan are malaria, tuberculosis, dengue fever, cancer, ischemic heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, and maternal and child health problems. These health issues are exacerbated by the lack of a proper healthcare system, low immunization rates, poor sanitation and hygiene, malnutrition, infectious diseases, and environmental health hazards.

### **Health Expenses**

The health system in Pakistan is a mixed one that includes public, parastatal, private, civil society, philanthropic contributors, and donor agencies. However, the performance of Pakistan's healthcare system as a whole places it 154th out of 195 nations. Pakistan spends only 2% of its GDP on total health expenses. Which is one of the lowest in the world. There are not enough local hospitals, nurses, and medical professionals in Pakistan to care for everyone who lives in poverty. Moreover, the health infrastructure is damaged by the floods and landslides, resulting in shortages of health workers and supplies.



### **Increase Budget For the Health Sector**

Some of the possible solutions for health issues in Pakistan are to increase the budget allocation for health, improve the healthcare infrastructure, ensure universal access to health services, promote preventive and primary health care, strengthen the disease surveillance and response system, enhance the immunization coverage, improve the sanitation and hygiene conditions, address the malnutrition and food insecurity, prevent and control the infectious and non-communicable diseases, and protect the environmental health.

### **Key Health Issues**

Health is a fundamental human right and a crucial determinant of a nation's development. In Pakistan, like many developing countries, health issues continue to be a significant challenge. Despite some progress in recent years, Pakistan faces a myriad of health problems, ranging from inadequate healthcare infrastructure to preventable diseases and high maternal and child mortality rates. This essay explores the key health issues in Pakistan and examines the underlying factors contributing to these challenges.

### **Inadequate Healthcare Infrastructure:**

One of the primary health issues in Pakistan is the inadequacy of its healthcare infrastructure. The country's healthcare system is fragmented and struggles to provide basic healthcare services to its population. Rural areas, in particular, face a severe shortage of healthcare facilities, leading to limited access to medical care for a significant portion of the population.



### **High Maternal and Child Mortality Rates:**

Pakistan has one of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in South Asia. These high mortality rates are attributed to factors such as limited access to skilled healthcare professionals during childbirth, poor maternal nutrition, and a lack of awareness about maternal and child health practices. Efforts to improve maternal and child health services are ongoing but have not yet yielded the desired results.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

The prevalence of communicable diseases remains a significant concern in Pakistan. Diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and polio continue to affect a large portion of the population. Inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene practices, and a lack of vaccination coverage contribute to the persistence of these diseases.

### Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):

Non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer, are on the rise in Pakistan. Lifestyle factors, including poor diet, lack of physical activity, and tobacco and alcohol consumption, contribute to the increasing burden of NCDs. The healthcare system faces challenges in managing and preventing these diseases effectively.



#### Malnutrition:

Malnutrition is a pervasive issue in Pakistan, affecting both children and adults. It is a complex problem influenced by factors such as food insecurity, limited access to nutritious food, and poor feeding practices. Malnutrition leads to stunted growth in children and compromises the overall health of the population.

#### Insufficient Access to Clean Water and Sanitation:

Access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities is limited in many parts of Pakistan, particularly in rural areas. Contaminated water sources contribute to the spread of waterborne diseases, posing a significant health risk to the population.

#### **Healthcare Financing:**

The healthcare financing system in Pakistan is largely inadequate, with a substantial portion of the population lacking access to affordable healthcare services. High out-of-pocket expenses for medical treatment can lead to financial hardships for families, preventing them from seeking necessary care.



### Lack of Health Education:

A lack of health education and awareness in Pakistan is a contributing factor to many health issues. People often lack knowledge about preventive measures and healthy behaviors, which hinders efforts to improve overall health outcomes.

# **Summary**

The <u>health issues in Pakistan</u> are multifaceted and deeply rooted in socioeconomic and cultural factors. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that encompasses improving healthcare infrastructure, increasing access to healthcare services, promoting health education and awareness, and tackling issues related to sanitation, malnutrition, and communicable diseases. Additionally, sustained investment in healthcare and strong policy measures are essential to achieving meaningful progress in addressing Pakistan's health i

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