

HEALTH



Introduction:

According to World Health Organization, health means a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹ Children's health and health problems are different from those of adults. There are many aspects to children's health which demand special attention from conception through adolescence. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in a society and hence, must be treated with special care and attention. The state is responsible for child well-being, health, safety, and nourishment. The other stakeholders like community, family and teachers play an important role in child well-being.

It is very important for the state to provide its children with healthy atmosphere and accessible health services. In order to empower children with full developmental potential, it is necessary for them to have a good health and also the access and availability of health related services.² According to UNICEF, a nation's true positioning is measured by how well it treats its children. This consists of their health and safety, material security, education, socialization, and them being brought up in loving families and communities and having a sense of inclusiveness into which they are born³

Despite the progress in the health system across the world, an estimated 200 million children under the age of five are malnourished. In addition to this, 38 million children suffer from obesity.⁴ About 75% of newborn die due to three avoidable and curable key conditions. These consist of the complications during labor and delivery; infectious diseases like sepsis, meningitis, pneumonia and premature births.⁵

¹<https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/constitution>

²<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/improving-early-childhood-development-who-guideline>

³<https://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf>

⁴https://www.un-ilibrary.org/children-and-youth/state-of-the-world-s-children_82edf4c7-en

⁵<https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/health#:~:text=Each%20year%20>

Right to Health:

The World Health Organization (WHO) gives the right to the highest attainable standard of health for all, referring to the fact that it implies to every segment of the society, especially children and women. This means a system of legalities for member states to make sure that appropriate and suitable circumstances are available for peoples' good health, without any kind of discrimination.

The right to health is an internationally recognized human right and is correlated to other human rights including housing, education, work, information and participation. It also consists of several entitlements. This refers to the right to govern one's own health and body and should be free from all sorts of interferences.⁶It should not be provided to people based on their race, age, religion, political affiliations and even socioeconomic status⁷

Child Health in Pakistan:

Being a developing country, Pakistan faces many challenges in ensuring a well-functioning and accessible health system to all citizens. The conditions are worse in the rural and remote areas of the country. Rural and remote areas are the most neglected and excluded regions. Furthermore, other disparities are based on provinces, income levels, levels of education, especially that of the mothers.⁸ Hospitals, medicines, referral systems, ambulances and frontline workers including doctors, nurses, paramedics and other staff members are quite scarce and poorly trained. People, especially children belonging to these rural regions, don't receive adequate treatment and hence suffer from various forms of illnesses that could have been avoided if they were to get good care and services from the health department.

⁶<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/human-rights-and-health>

⁷<https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/constitution>

⁸<https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/health#:~:text=Each%20year%20about%2091%2C000%20children,maternal%20and%20newborn%20health%20care.>

Considering the state of children in Pakistan, it will not take much longer to come to a realization that they suffer the most due to such conditions. They are quite vulnerable and naive to the importance of health, hygiene and nutrition. Similarly, the less privileged children suffer the most. They are deprived of the affordable and good quality services, maternal and child health services, sanitation, and good nutrition and safe drinking water. An estimated 12 million (over 40%) of Pakistan's children under five years of age are stunted and 17.7% are wasted with 2.5 million children under five years of age estimated to be severely wasted.

According to the Global Food Security Index, Pakistan lies on the 78th number among the total amount of 107 countries. Its current water availability is even less than 1100 cubic meters per person and the water storage capacity is limited to only 30 days. In addition to that, Pakistan has one of the highest population growth rates in all the SAARC states. However, it is short on specialists, doctors, nurses, paramedics, lady health visitors, midwives and other health workers. Pakistan has the lowest densities of health workforce in the entire region and internationally, with a significant health professional density of about 1.4 per 1000 population. This is quite insignificant as compared to the indicative minimum threshold of 4.45 physicians, midwives and nurses per 1000 population.⁹ But, surprisingly, nurses, lady health workers' and midwives' contribution is appreciable to keep the population healthy, especially in the rural regions. About 43% of the child bearing mothers are handled by unskilled midwives and health workers, which, in fact, is quite alarming for the state.

Not only law, but the religion and social fabric of the state also promotes a beneficial environment where children are entitled to be protected, brought up with care and provided with the basic necessities of life.

Maternal and Child Health:

Reproductive, Maternal, Child and Neonatal health related issues are highly prevalent in Pakistan. Despite the fact that from the year 2000, the

⁹<http://phkh.nhsrsc.pk/sites/default/files/2019-06/Pakistan%20Human%20Resources%20for%20Health%20Vision%202018.pdf>

world has witnessed a decrease in the rate of neonatal morbidity by 50% and the number of maternal deaths by almost 33%, South Asia still seems to be one of the top regions that is struggling to provide good maternal and child health related facilities to its people. Neonatal mortality and stillbirth rates are twice as worse in South Asia as in sub-Saharan, according to a Lancet publication. Pakistan, in particular, is in a very worse condition as it deals with one of the highest maternal mortality rates in South Asia, while having the highest neonatal mortality all around the world. These circumstances call for drastic measures to address the root causes of such problems.¹⁰

Health issues start from an early age when maternal and neonatal health services don't reach out to the needy. Data from Pakistan show one of the highest infant mortality rates in the region, even worse than Somalia, Afghanistan and Central African Republic.¹¹ The infant mortality rate for Pakistan in the year 2020 has been 59.109 deaths per 1000 live births, showing a 1.84% decline since 2019.¹² Whereas, mortality rate under age five is 61.23 deaths per 1000 births.¹³ These statistics make the challenge of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 3 has two targets: a) Reduce newborn mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1 000 live births in every country (SDG 3.2); and b) Reduce under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births in every country (SDG 3.2).¹⁴

Nevertheless, Pakistan, despite of the deadly pandemic and crisis time, is fighting hard to protect her people, especially the mothers and small children as they are more vulnerable and exposed to such threats. UNICEF warned the governments and donors about the strained health

¹⁰<https://www.dawn.com/news/1506464/maternal-and-child-health>

¹¹<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2018/07/09/maternal-and-newborn-health-in-pakistan-risks-challenges-and-the-way-forward/#:~:text=Poor%20delivery%20system%2C%20weak%20infrastructure,t he%20lowest%20in%20South%20Asia.>

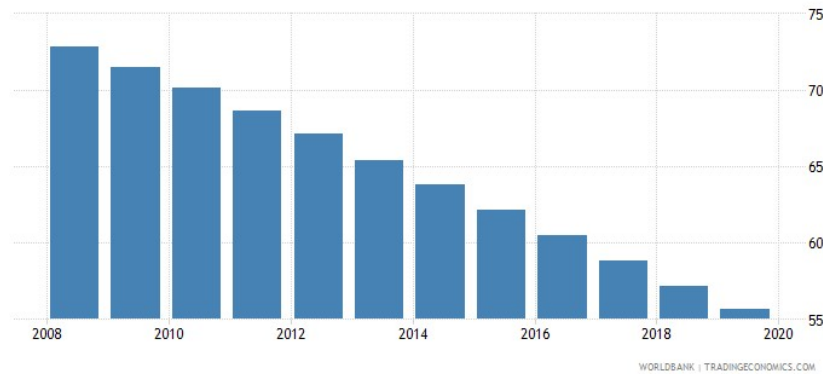
¹²<https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/PAK/pakistan/infant-mortality-rate>

¹³<http://www.geoba.se/country.php?cc=PK&year=2020>

¹⁴<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/children-reducing-mortality>

systems and disruptions in services due to Covid-19, with about 29 million expected child births in South Asia and 116 million, all around the globe since the pandemic declaration and the lockdowns. Mothers and children have been dealing with uncertain and harsh realities like crowded health centers, equipment shortages and the insufficiency of well-trained birth attendants.¹⁵

Government of Pakistan is trying to minimize these issues at the Federal and Provincial levels with the assistance from WHO. They work hand in hand on various health strategies and programmes to enhance neonatal, maternal and child health, especially in the neglected regions.¹⁶ UNICEF and various other international agencies are also helping out the government to achieve its goals.



Source: Trading Economics¹⁷

The graph shows a declining trend in child mortality in the past few years.

¹⁵<https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/press-releases/millions-pregnant-mothers-and-babies-born-during-covid-19-pandemic-threatened>

¹⁶<http://www.emro.who.int/pak/programmes/maternal-neonatal-a-child-health.html>

¹⁷<https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/mortality-rate-infant-per-1-000-live-births-wb-data.html>

Malnutrition:

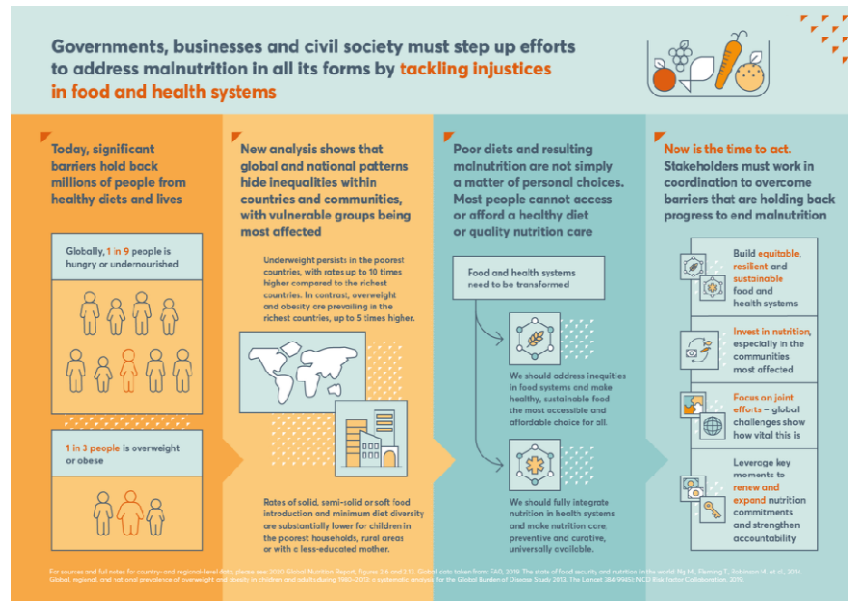
A situation report published by WFP shows that about 40.2% of children under the age of five are suffering from stunting growth. Similarly, 17.7% of the children under the age five category are suffering from wasting. This is unfortunately the highest level of wasting in the history of Pakistan, while 28.9% of them are underweight.¹⁸ The situation is dismaying and highly deplored by WHO.

Women belonging to the age group of 15-49 struggle with the burden of malnutrition thrice as much. 14% are undernourished, 28% are overweight whereas 38% are having obesity. 57% of adolescent girls are anemic.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the declining rate of malnutrition in Pakistan is 0.5% which is extremely disappointing. Prevalence of such crucial factors like poverty, food insecurity, low socio-economic conditions, unhealthy food intake, maternal health and nutritional status, low birth weight, suboptimal breast feeding, environmental conditions, cultural practices, contribute to the problem. In order to fight this battle, an immediate and well organized interventions must be introduced.²⁰

¹⁸<https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/wfp-pakistan-country-brief-may-2020#:~:text=In%20Pakistan%2C%2040.2%20percent%20of,and%2028.9%20percent%20are%20underweight.>

¹⁹<https://www.nutritionintl.org/2020/02/leaders-urged-to-act-quickly-to-improve-nutrition-in-pakistan/>

²⁰<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07315724.2020.1750504>



Source: 2020 Global Nutrition Report²¹

²¹<https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/2020-global-nutrition-report/executive-summary/>

Hunger and Nutrition:

Global Hunger Index analyzes the situation of hunger among countries on the scale of 100 points. It varies from “low” to “extremely alarming”. This index considers four different indicators, constituting undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

GHI 2020 positions Pakistan on the 88th number in the list 107 countries in the world. In the last couple of years, the state has made significant improvement in addressing the issue of malnourishment. Nevertheless, a lot more is needed to achieve the milestone and beat the challenge. The classification of countries is done through the following Severity Scale.

low	Moderate	Serious	Alarming	Extremely alarming
≤ 9.9	10.0-19.9	20.0-34.9	35.0-49.9	≥ 50.0

Source: Global Hunger Index 2020

Pakistan’s GHI is 24.6 for the year 2020. This means that the situation for the nourishment of children is quite serious and has to be made one of the top priorities of the government.²²

Polio Virus:

Polio exists in only two countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) of the world. International Health Regulations has also declared Pakistan as a state having the potential of international spread. Total 77 Wild Polio Virus type 1 (WPV1) cases and 64 Circulating Vaccine Delivered Polio Virus (CvdpvD2) cases were observed in Pakistan, in the year 2020.²³

Numerous anti polio drives have been carried out in different cities of Pakistan while Rawalpindi District Administration has planned to arrest

²²<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/results.html>

²³<http://polioeradication.org/polio-today/polio-now/this-week/#:~:text=No%20circulating%20vaccine%2Dderived%20poliovirus,reported%20in%202019%20remains%20three.>

the parents who refuse to get their children vaccinated during these campaigns, under the sections 269 and 270 from the Pakistan Penal Code.²⁴ All the workers involved in the vaccination drives are instructed to follow the SOPs to cease the spread of the Corona Virus as well.

Global Childhood Report:

Millions of children all around the globe have been deprived of the opportunity to be able to enjoy their childhood, for many years now. Ill-health among children is one of the many significant reasons to why this happens. The scale for the index “End of Childhood” is 1 to 1,000. It considers “Childhood Enders” as death, chronic malnutrition, being out of school and being forced into adult roles of work, marriage and motherhood. The scores are allocated according to the following guide:

Few children missing out on childhood	Some children missing out on childhood	Many children missing out on childhood	Most children missing out on childhood	Nearly all children missing out on childhood
≤ 940	760-939	600-759	380-599	≥ 379

Source: Global Childhood Report 2020

About 121 out of 180 countries have made quite a few enhancements since the last year. This proves that states are taking into account the problem of child protection and its severity. But on the other hand, 19 countries have not shown any progress and are facing considerably a worse situation. Singapore tops all the countries in the world, when it comes to the issue of child safety whereas Niger ranks refer to the worst conditions for children. Pakistan, however, lies on the 147th rank having a score of 667/1000. It means that many of the state’s children are deprived of their childhood.²⁵

²⁴<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2265102/refusing-polio-vaccination-a-crime>

²⁵<https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/advocacy/global-childhood-report-2020.pdf>

Pneumonia:

Pneumonia is one of the top communicable diseases that leads to high child mortality rates. It kills more than 2000 children under the age of five per day and 8, 00,000 per year. One child dies every 39 seconds, globally.

²⁶Children belonging to poor socioeconomic class suffer the most as they are deprived of proper nutrition and the access to basic health services like vaccinations, diagnosis or treatment procedures. Children having weak immune system end up fighting for breath, due to living in areas with high air pollution and unclean water consumption.²⁷Global target for Pneumonia mortality rate, set by the Global Action Plan for Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (GAPPD), is to be 3 per 1000 live births by the year 2025.²⁸

A research conducted at Aga Khan University proves that only 5% of the mild Pneumonia patients require antibiotics. If the diagnosis and treatment procedures are enhanced, then thousands of children will be safe from receiving antibiotics unnecessarily.²⁹

Child Health in a Pandemic:

The world recently got hit with the biggest global pandemic after World War-II. Covid-19, also known as Corona Virus has affected millions of people, putting everyday life to halt. World's economy, health, education and everything else is ceased as if life has taken a break from human species. History does have encountered numerous incidents of wars and epidemics that changed everything and nothing was the same ever since. But this global endemic is proving to be even more devastating from others.

²⁶<https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/press-releases/one-child-dies-pneumonia-every-39-seconds-agencies-warn>

²⁷<https://nation.com.pk/28-Dec-2019/pneumonia-epidemic>

²⁸<https://stopppneumonia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PAKISTAN-2020.pdf>

²⁹<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/681128-only-5pc-of-children-with-mild-pneumonia-require-antibiotics-says-aku-study>

WHO announced it as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January, 2020 after witnessing cases from five regions under the domain of the organization, within only one month span. In these dark hours, WHO, along with OCHA, IMO, UNICEF, ICAO, WFP, FAO, the World Bank and numerous other UN Secretariat agencies joined hands to form a Crisis Management Team (CMT) to deal with social, economic and development aspects of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, WHO is also supporting Pakistan's Ministry of Health Services, Regulation and Coordination in the establishment of the nation's "We Care" program in order to protect frontline health care workers engaged who are involved in the pandemic response.

In such challenging times, children and the elderly are the most vulnerable people as their immune system is not at their best. Special care must be paid to these individuals. In addition to this, the marginalized and neglected categories of people are treated unjustly and are exposed much to these harsh realities. Street children are not educated over the issue and hence, fail to follow the SOPs. Therefore, they fall victim to the highly communicable disease more easily. More specifically, people belonging to congested and crowded regions of the country are affected the most during this pandemic.

Although, the available data shows that a very low percentage of children have been directly affected by the pandemic, yet the indirect consequences can be quite long term and severe. Strained health systems, household income loss, and disruptions to care-seeking and preventative interventions like vaccination may prove to be substantially bad for child survival. According to a research, about 1.2 million children and 56,700 mothers could die in 6 months due to disruption in health services and interventions. There may be an increase in child wasting as well.³⁰

In this critical and crisis time medical frontline workers in Pakistan have been performing their duties round the clock. Their contribution and sacrifices can never be neglected. They have proved to be "modern day

³⁰<https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children/>

heroes” in such uncertain and difficult times. Dr. Shahzad Mumtaz, a Pakistani doctor, was presented with a Leadership Award and an Appreciation Certificate for his dedication and commitment for the fight against Covid-19 in Saudi Arabia.³¹ WHO’s chief has praised Pakistan’s response to the situation, while keeping the economy afloat.³² The world acknowledges and celebrates the services of nurses and midwives on 7th April. They are appreciated for their work (providing quality and respectful treatment to the patients) and addressing patients’ queries during collection of data for clinical purposes. They were vigilantly participating in the response activities during the pandemic crisis. It would not have been possible to deal with the situation without their assistance.³³

While there are countless blessings to be grateful for, the country still needs to keep following the SOPS in order to completely defeat the spread of the virus and stabilize the economy once again.

International Commitments:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Pakistan lies on the sixth number in the whole world to sign and ratify to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), less than a year after it was actually adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1990. According to article 24 of UNCRC, every child possesses the right to the best possible health and healthcare services. The state needs to impart healthcare, food, clean environment and health related information among the people. In addition to this, the well-developed nations should participate in assisting the poorer nations with health care facilities.³⁴

³¹<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2265929/pakistani-doctor-wins-saudis-praise-for-leading-fight-against-covid-19>

³²<https://www.dawn.com/news/1582311>

³³<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/events/world-health-day/world-health-day-2020>

³⁴<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/humanitarian/uncrc19-summary2.pdf>

<p>1</p>  <p>DEFINITION OF A CHILD</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>MAKING RIGHTS REAL</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>NAME AND NATIONALITY</p>
<p>8</p>  <p>IDENTITY</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	<p>13</p>  <p>SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION</p>
<p>15</p>  <p>SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED</p>
<p>22</p>  <p>REFUGEE CHILDREN</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p>	<p>27</p>  <p>FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>
<p>29</p>  <p>AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	<p>32</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	<p>33</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p>	<p>34</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	<p>35</p>  <p>PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p>
<p>36</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	<p>37</p>  <p>CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p>	<p>38</p>  <p>PROTECTION IN WAR</p>	<p>39</p>  <p>RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p>	<p>40</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p>	<p>41</p>  <p>BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p>	<p>42</p>  <p>EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p>
<p>43-54</p>  <p>HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS</p>	<h1>CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD</h1>					

Sustainable Development Goals:

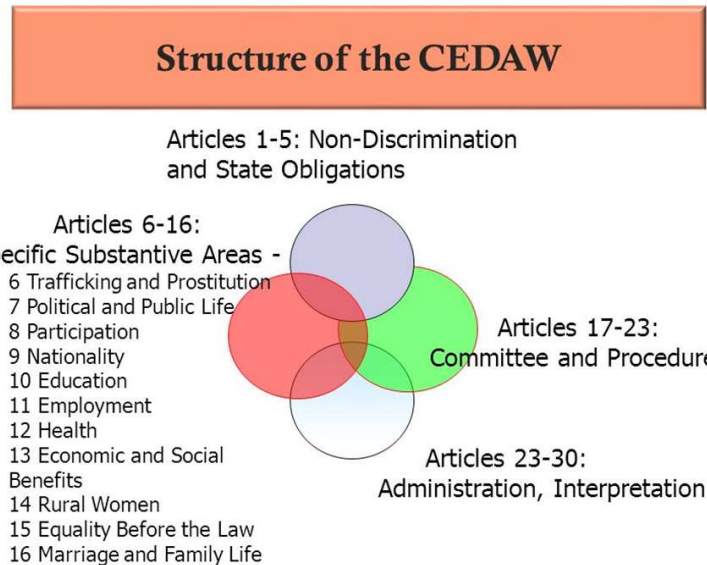
In addition to UNCRC, the government of Pakistan is also affiliated with a number of other international initiatives including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015. SDG 3 is particularly dedicated to good health and wellbeing. Nevertheless, others goals (i.e. zero hunger, clean water and sanitation, climate action and poverty) also contribute to good health conditions of the people. All of these goals are applicable for people of every age group, including children.



Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women:

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by Pakistan in 1996. Its articles primarily focus on the health, marriage and family life, rural women, stereotype and

cultural prejudices, trafficking and prostitution. All of these articles are emphasizing on the female gender, including girl child.³⁵



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by Pakistan in the year 2011. It aims at improving various domains in the lives of people with disabilities. This consists of children as well. It works for their health, education, capacity building, empowerment and much more.

³⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/convention-on-the-elimination-of-all-forms-of-discrimination-against-women-cedaw-articles>



Figure 1 - Link between the SDGs and the CRPD



Several articles of the SDGS align with those of CRPD, giving them more recognition and significance.

Pakistan is a member of many different forms of global partnerships including disease prevention, universal immunization and improvement in health care infrastructure. It has improved health indicators in the past three years.

These affiliations act as a driving force for the state to provide its citizens with the required health services. Being a part of such an influential and extended international conventions, Pakistan is obliged to protect its children and ensure a healthy and developing environment all around the country, including the remote regions.

National Commitments:

- ***Pakistan's constitution:***

The supreme national law entitles children of the nation with basic human rights and necessities. It promises to provide them the right to life, liberty and dignity. It discourages all sorts of prejudices and indiscriminations, torture and exploitation, slavery, trafficking and child labor among citizens. It ensures the protection of marriage, family units, mother and child health.³⁶ This makes the state responsible to look after its children against child labour, prostitution, violence, child trafficking and all forms of discrimination. Pakistan also has both formal and informal institutions for child protection purposes. However, the constitution does not directly address the health services provided for the general public of Pakistan.

- ***Planning Commission of Pakistan:***

It mainly follows “Vision 2025” agenda, which was prepared by the institution back in 2014. Both the Provincial and Federal Health Ministers validated the vision in August 2016 as to achieve the goal of Universal

³⁶https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/sites/unicef.org.pakistan/files/2018-11/UNICEF_Pakistan_-_SitAn_Report_-_2017_1.pdf

Health Care.³⁷ It aims at working for human and social capital of the nation as a priority. Its seven pillars are quite similar to the SDGs presented by the UN. Health indicators of 2020 are still not doing very good with Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of about 178.001 per 100,000 live births and Child Mortality Rate (CMR) of 78.002 per 1000 live births. The Planning Commission makes health services accessible to the neglected, marginalized and unprivileged areas of the society by strengthening regulatory factors and inclusive health financing. It also emphasizes upon the improvement of inter-disciplinary coordination and intra-disciplinary techniques that would be essential to obtain the universal health goal, particularly for agenda-2030.³⁸

The pillar “People First” refers to the provision of health and education services, poverty alleviation and gender empowerment. This vision aims at collaborating with the provinces in improving their respective health systems and the goal is to increase the budgetary allocations from the GDP to about 3% on health sector.

In addition to that, the vision will also be working for the vulnerable groups like children as well. It will ensure a Plan of Action for children, promotion of an inclusive education setup, enforcement of special quota in education and encouraging sports for differently abled persons.³⁹

³⁷<http://phkh.nhsrsc.pk/sites/default/files/2019-06/Pakistan%20Human%20Resources%20for%20Health%20Vision%202018.pdf>

³⁸<https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/annualplan/AnnualPlan2019-20.pdf>

³⁹<https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/vision2025/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>



- ***Annual Plan:***

According to the Annual Plan 2019-2020, In order to monitor and evaluate the burden on the health department, the state has empowered the Health Information System and aims to launch Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). To increase the coverage of the healthcare budget and attain all the targets, this plan will try to raise the number of paramedical workers, extend the Lady Health Worker (LHW) programme to benefit unprivileged female patients; bring fertility rates consistent with maternal health; reinforcing primary sector alongside trained personnel in the Basic Health Units or Rural Health Centers, introduction of health emergency surveillance and response system, carry out the national plan for vaccinations and building a well-functioning Health information and

Disease Surveillance System. Micro health insurance opportunities will also be utilized to expand health coverage, especially to the vulnerable groups of the society.⁴⁰

- ***Universal Health Coverage:***

Pakistan Economic Survey on the Health Status shows that to attain the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030, numerous initiatives were executed. For example, the introduction of population control, health insurance and family based health care. Pakistan also signed to the International Health Partnership (IHP+) in the year 2010. The Government of Pakistan is also trying to increase the budget for health by receiving Technical Assistance from the World Bank. Pakistan is moving towards attaining universal birth registration and ensuring institutions that record deaths, work for mental health, human life security and social justice by health financing methodology.

- ***Post 18th Amendment:***

After the 18th amendment, provincial governments are given the sole responsibility to regulate several domains of the public including health as well. They also control the legislation and administration of the child protection issues.

The present government prioritizes the health and nutrition of the people and focuses on the strengthening of primary and secondary health care facilities. However, the improvement is observed quite slowly.

Health Budget FY2020-21:

The government of Pakistan, led by Pakistan *Tehreek e Insaaf* (PTI), has put forward the budget for the financial year 2020-2021, which shows a rise in the budget by 130%. Rs. 11,058 billion were allocated for health in the financial year 2019-2020, whereas Rs. 25,494 billion has been assigned to the sector this year, at the federal level.

⁴⁰<https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/annualplan/AnnualPlan2019-20.pdf>

In addition to that, the government has also provided Rs. 70 billion for a special programme to mitigate Covid-19 impact in the Public Sector Development Programme of FY2020-21. It will be working for health services, education, sewerage, solid waste management and safe drinking water. It is going to be a coalition between federal and provincial governments.⁴¹ According to the Federal Budget 2020-2021, National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination has received Rs. 14,508 million, whereas Covid Response and Other Natural Calamities Program has received Rs. 70,000 million and National Food Security and Research Division has been assisted with Rs. 12,000 million.⁴²

Pakistan's government has also assisted several programmes via Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) development portfolio in the FY2020 to achieve SDGs. 62 health projects received Rs. 23,975.926 million from PSDP and by 10-04-20, around Rs 11,483.979 million were allocated for improving quality and access to health care services.

Punjab's Health Budget:

Punjab being the most populated province in Pakistan, receives only Rs. 13 billion to fight the pandemic crisis of Covid-19. It has designated Rs. 284.2 billion for the health budget, showing an increase of about 1.86% when compared to the last year. The authorities have decided to spend Rs. 12 billion on the *Sehat-Insaf* Card Programme. Around 250.7 billion has been earmarked for running expenditures and over Rs. 33 billion for the development schemes.

Also, the Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Department (SH&MED) has received Rs. 6 billion for improvement and access of health facilities to the regions including Dera Ghazi Khan, Sahiwal and Gujranwala.

Rs. 1.7 billion will be granted to the Integrated Reproductive Maternal and Newborn Child Health and Nutrition Programme in the financial year

⁴¹<https://mmnews.tv/budget-2020-21-rs-25-50-billion-allocated-for-health/>

⁴²http://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_in_Brief_2020_21_English.pdf

2020-21 for project funding. Primary and Secondary Health Department(P&SHD) will spend 11.6 billion on the improvement of THQ Hospitals, DHQ Hospitals, BHUs under the Prime Minister's Health Initiative.

Furthermore, Rs. 127.15 billion has been assigned for health services, around 6 billion for public health facilities and Rs. 23.92 billion for the health administration purposes. Health services will also be enhanced in Wazirabad Institute of Cardiology, Punjab Institute of Neurosciences(PINS) and Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Centre.⁴³

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Health Budget:

Rs. 124 billion has been designated for health in the province of KPK alongside Rs. 24 billion, specifically for dealing with Covid-19. The government neither imposed any new tax nor increased the existing tax to give a cushion to the struggling economy in the times of the crisis. From the health budget, around Rs. 24.4 billion will be spent on development schemes regarding health sector. Rs. 13.8 billion will be dedicated to the settled districts whereas Rs. 10.6 billion will be utilized in the marginalized districts. Rs. 10 billion has also been designated for Universal Health Coverage in KP.⁴⁴

Sindh's Health Budget:

Sindh has assigned Rs. 139.178 billion to the health sector, around 19 billion more than the budget for health in the year 2019-20. It is mainly focused on two main segments, namely: medical education and medical services. Polio control, TB, HIV/AIDs, LHWP, Hepatitis control, EPI and various other interventions will receive Rs. 7 billion from the Sindh government.

⁴³<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2243515/budget-2020-21-punjab-health-sector-funding-1-86>

⁴⁴<https://www.dawn.com/news/1564679>

TB control receives Rs. 559.4 million, Rs. 5.5 billion have been allocated to deal with stunting and malnutrition, which is a multi-sectoral program. Rs. 1.2 billion are given to the LHWP, Rs. 1.9 billion to eliminate Hepatitis, Rs. 267.9 million for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Programme, Rs. 2.3 billion for the EPI, Rs. 1 billion for the 200 Bed Infectious Disease Control Hospital at NIPA, Karachi, Rs. 1 billion for the renovation and completion of newly established 22 hospitals functional.⁴⁵

Balochistan's Health Budget:

The provincial government of Balochistan has announced to raise its health budget by 30% to Rs. 31.405 billion for the fiscal year 2020-21. Rs. 7.050 has been assigned for the development of the sector, especially focusing upon the frontline workers against the global pandemic, including medical staff, paramedics and nurses.

Conclusion:

In a nut shell, child health, nutrition, growth and development with fair opportunities to achieve their full potential as healthy adult is a global concern and significant issue in the international policies and discourse. Some important concerns encompass maternal and child health, mortality rates, malnutrition, poverty, polio virus, pneumonia and covid-19. These are considered deadly for the children. We must focus on the overall wellbeing of our children with great vigilance. We must ensure children with safe social and physical environment for their growth and development. They are our assets and future. Investing in them is investing in our future. Investing in their Health and education is, in fact, investment for healthy and prosperous society.

⁴⁵<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/674146-with-rs19bn-increase-sindh-allocates-rs139bn-for-health-fighting-covid-19>

Recommendations:

- In order to introduce a well -functioning and a systematic approach to deal with the issue of child protection, it is important for all the governments of the world to join hands and work together to fight the evils against children. They need to cooperate, commit and pay special attention to the root causes. This will not only require governments, but other entities of the state as well, including NGOs, families, educational institutions, private sector agencies, caretakers and even children too. Governments should harness coalitions throughout different segments to surpass ecological and commercial issues in order to provide children with their rights and entitlements and a healthy and nurturing space for the children in the future.
- However, on the national level, a set of national policies and strategies, well equipped stakeholders, juvenile justice, multi-sectoral coordination, well operational referral system and identification of child victims of any sort of violence, must be introduced.
- Awareness raising sessions are quite necessary. Education on health issues, prevention methods and control should be integrated into the minds of the common man.
- Effective food supply and proper nutrition must be provided to every child.
- Adequate and safe water supply and basic sanitation should be ensured.
- Shelters for street children should be made more common to protect our children from the exposure to various harmful and avoidable circumstances, including infectious and local endemic diseases.

- Maternal and Child health care, especially family planning must be dispersed among the public.
- Health Information System should be incorporated to get a better hold of authentic and reliable data figures for further useful research analysis.