

Elucidate the current health status of women in Pakistan. What measures could be taken to improve health as a whole? Support your answer with suitable examples.

### 1) Introduction

The women in Pakistan do not enjoy equal status in most walks of life. When it comes to basic provisions like health and education the situation appears to be precarious. Early marriages, malnutrition, complication during pregnancy are some of the problems that are required to be addressed to improve the status of women health in country.

### 2) Current status of Women's Health in Pakistan

Following are some instances of poor status of women health in Pakistan

#### a) Malnutrition a manifestation of poor health

A big chunk of women population is suffering from malnutrition. It could

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be either a result of lack of balanced diet or a consequence of food unavailability due to poverty or scarcity. This malnutrition, most of the times causes anemia.

Around 40% of Pakistani women suffer from anemia due to malnutrition during pregnancy.

b) Child Brides and Excessive child Bearing  
as a Manifestation of Low Health Status

In Pakistan child brides are still common. In spite of all prohibitions young girls are forced to get married. Such marriages have adverse effects on the overall health of young women.

According to WHO there are 19 million child brides in Pakistan out of which 4.65 million are below the age of 15.

c) Overall neglected Health sector cannot cater the needs of women.

Pakistan's health infrastructure is one of the worst in the world. Owing to its financial constraints, Pakistan has not been able to provide ample resources to its health sector.

Federal

In the budget of 2023

24.5 billion were allocated

for health department which was around 2.5% of total

of the public sector budget for

development.

PMA suggests that according to World Health Organization this value should be around 6%.

d) Lack of Female Healthcare staff

is also a concern.

As in distant areas there is a big issue that women have to refer to only male staff because of scarcity of female staff. Similarly,

many fresh medical graduate women do not opt for professional careers. This exacerbates the already precarious situation.

High mortality rate during pregnancy

In recent times the world has seen a significant decline in deaths during pregnancy. But situation in Pakistan is not that satisfactory or encouraging. As, even in modern times, many women die during pregnancy.

In Pakistan mortality rate during  $1/38$  pregnancy  $1/38$ . However, in Sri Lanka this rate is around  $1/250$ .

### 3) Ways to Improve Women's Health status

Some of the following ways can be very useful in improving health status of women: during

a) Investing more resources in public health care.

According to global health standards Pak a country should spend at least 6% of its GDP on its public health sector. By doing so, Pakistan will be <sup>able to</sup> improve access to health facilities which will be beneficial for public in general and women in particular.

b) Enforcing <sup>the</sup> ban on child marriage affectively.

By doing so, ~~to~~ women will be spared from health issues caused by <sup>child bearing</sup> at a very young age, and women or girls will be able to improve their mental and physical health.

c) Family Planning can be very crucial

Lack of family planning is one of the major reasons of Pakistan's women's high mortality rate

This will save women from the complications caused by excessive child bearing.

d) Recruiting more women in health care

This refers to recruitment of doctors, paramedics and the health workers. As in a conservative society like Pakistan, women health providers can ensure the resolution of problems faced by women.

e) Educating women on health problems that they may face

It is imperative to provide basic awareness and education to women about the major ailments, which they might catch. For instance, breast cancer has become prevalent among women. Government and non-governmental organizations can spread about symptoms of this disease so that timely diagnosis and treatment may save many lives.

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F) Lending financial help to women coming from lower strata of society for the maintenance of their health

Just like Benazir Income Support Fund, a special fund should be created that will be given to deserving women. So, that they can pay for basic health services.

### Conclusion

One cannot refute the fact that the status of women health is one of the worst in the world. Malnutrition at a young age, mal-nutrition and complications during pregnancy are some of the major problems. However, by overhauling health sector, spreading basic awareness among women and many such other initiatives can improve women health drastically.