

## Gender Studies (2023)

(Q7)

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

### INTRODUCTION:

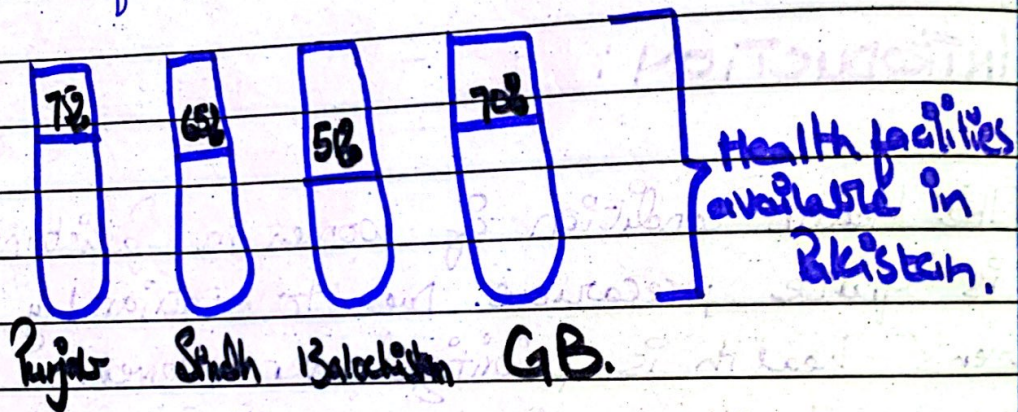
The health condition of women in Pakistan is quite precarious. Due to patriarchy, men's health is prioritized over women's. Women health needs to be prioritized because they are the source of economic prosperity for Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistani women suffer from diseases such as anaemia, Poly-Cystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Post-Partum Depression etc. Yet, their diseases are treated as normal and health facilities lack the resources to cure disease in women. Harriet Beecher Stowe has said:

"Health is a woman's capital"  
"Harriet Beecher Stowe."



# STATUS OF WOMEN HEALTH IN PAKISTAN:

Women's health in Pakistan is overlooked due to vast research available on men masculine body structure while there is dearth of research conducted on women body. Following are the statistics of women health facilities provided in the provinces. Following data has been extracted out from Express Tribune Reports:



## • Unawareness of Women's Hormonal Conditions:

In Pakistan, a number of women suffer from **endometriosis, PPD, PCOS** and **hormonal issues**. Yet, these issues are not known by men and policy making circles. According to different resources, many women in Pakistan die **commit suicide** because of **post-partum depression**. Unfortunately, the male-dominated society perceives the mood changes in women as



misbehaviour and short-tempered attitude while completely ignoring the underlying causes of such problems.

## Maternal Health Issues:

According to Dr. Shaheen Zafar, women in Pakistan have serious maternal health issues because of nutritional deficiency and unawareness. Around 42% of Pakistani women are anaemic. Moreover, early marriages lead to early pregnancies which are not dealt with care and girls due to negligence, are unable to take care of themselves during such a difficult time.

## Menstrual Hygiene and unawareness among Pakistani women:

"When I got my first period, I did not tell anyone for a few months because I was ashamed"

"A little girl's message to UNICEF."

Menstruation is considered ~~to be~~ a taboo



in Pakistan and even women do not talk about it. According to UNICEF, menstrual hygiene is neglected in Pakistan which increases the chances of getting chronic infections and it also reduces a girl's productivity in school as well.

## Impact of Climate Change on Women and its current status in Pakistan:

Another issue which is on the rise in Pakistan and that is climate change. Women are now ~~face~~ bearing the brunt of climate change, as well. According to a doctor, high temperature leads to high levels of cortisol in women. Resultantly, this causes excruciating period cramps. The issue is being overlooked by Pakistani policy makers.

## Lack of facilities for women in Pakistan:

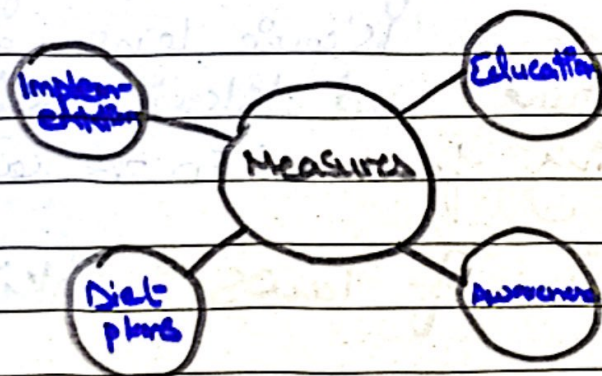
Women suffer because of lack of facilities in health sector as well. A lady ~~was~~ in Dir, KP named Farida Bibi had to be in Peshawar due to lack of



health facilities in Dir. On her way to Peshawar, ~~the~~ <sup>she experienced</sup> ~~roads~~ were extremely **lumpy and rocky**. Faida Bibi had to suffer from heavy internal bleeding in her ~~time~~ of pregnancy and she was in a very dangerous health situation.

## Measures to improve women's status in Pakistan:

The following chart shows the measures which should be taken to improve women's status in Pakistan:



## Education: A tool to uplift the situation of women:

Not only health, but the government of Pakistan needs to focus on the education of women as they are married off earlier. According to **World Bank**, early marriages will cause a loss of **trillion dollars in 2030** in



developing countries. Education in women will also create awareness among them regarding their rights and also their duties.

## Awareness Campaigns to educate people:

For this purpose clerics and scholars should contribute. They would help in explaining the importance of education in women and how one should take care of them. All of this must be given an Islamic lens due to strong culture and Islamic traditions which are being followed in the country.

## Implementation of laws in Pakistan:

There are a number of laws which have been passed to protect women but the implementation process is quite weak. For instance, Article 25A of Pakistan's Constitution grants each and every citizen with equal rights but Pakistani women are still facing a lot of issues. Thus, committees should be built to check the implementation of laws.



## Introducing Different Diet Plans:

In 2020, United Nations targetted a few women and taught them how to make nutritional meals out of scarce resources. Such programs should be planned nationwide to later create a healthy society as a healthy woman leads to a wealthy and healthy society nation.

## Conclusion:

There is a dire need to uplift the health status of women in Pakistan. They are the asset of the country and their health issues are far more crucial than men's. The policy making circles need to fix the implementation process and facilitate women to take care of their health via awareness campaigns and social media.

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