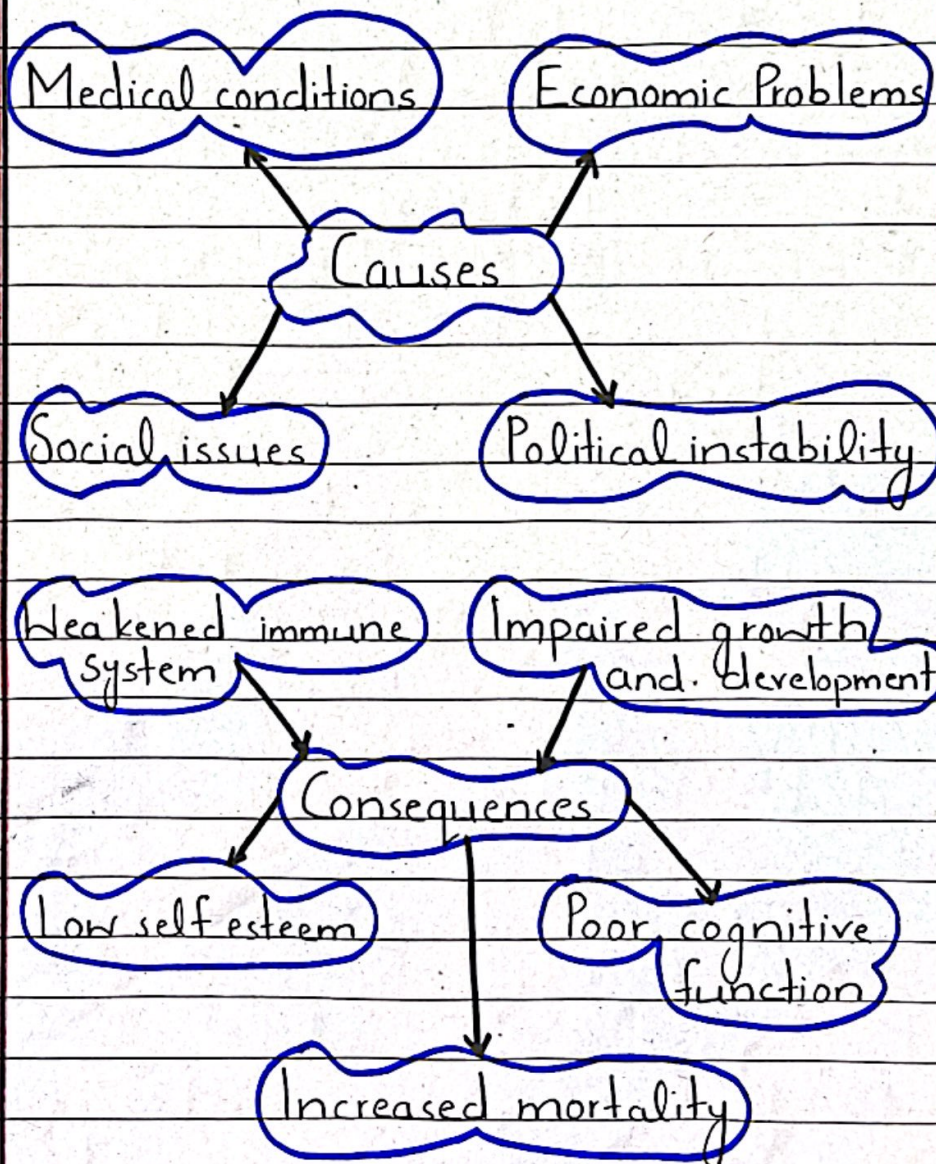


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Malnutrition In Pakistan: Causes And Consequences

Brain storm



Outline

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Causes of Malnutrition

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3. Consequences

- 3.1 Impaired growth and development
- 3.2 Weakened immune system
- 3.3 Poor cognitive function
- 3.4 Low self esteem
- 3.5 Increased mortality

4. Conclusion

The Essay

"Malnutrition is a silent emergency, a slow motion disaster (UNICEF)"

Malnutrition is a state of nutrition in which a person's diet does not provide adequate nutrients for optimal health and proper body functions. It is a public health concern in Pakistan significantly affecting a substantial portion of the population, particularly children, women, and vulnerable groups. In Pakistan half of the children are suffering from protein energy malnutrition and they are stunted. According to the national nutrition survey (2019) 40% of children under 5 years are short for their age that is chronic malnutrition. Most of the children under 5 years are badly influenced

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by malnutrition but the childrens above 5 years are also affected by malnutrition. About 52% women of reproductive age are malnourished. Older people and vulnerable groups are also affected.

Hence most of the population is suffering from malnutrition in Pakistan. The major causes of malnutrition are: economic problems, medical conditions, social issues, and political instability where as the consequences are alarming.

Individual with malnutrition is prone to: impaired growth and development, weakened immune system, poor cognitive function, low self esteem and increased mortality.

So malnutrition is a chronic condition affecting millions of people and their lives, that is alarming.

To began with economic problems that triggered malnutrition in Pakistan's population, poverty is the main

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evil in the economic sector. Most of the population of Pakistan is poor and they even don't have the access to basic life needs. They don't earn enough to feed themselves thus it contribute to many problems including malnutrition. For instance if an individual doesn't earn money how would he feed his family, automatically they would stay hunger or eat unhygienic food that lead to malnutrition. Like poverty, food insecurity is also cutting the roots of the society. Individual's don't have access to safe and nutritious food to sustain life. They don't consume adequate nutrients that are essential for their body. Most of the population specially rural areas people depends on one person in the family, there is no concept of per capita income therefore they can't afford nutritious and clean food. Most of the food

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is deteriorated by improper handling and post harvest losses from farm to fork.

About 33% of the food is wasted by unhygienic practices and improper handling which contributes to food insecurity.

Another factor of food security is water crises and lack of agricultural practices.

Crops are not watered properly and farmers are not trained

and are not aware by

technologies. Pakistan ranks 99th

in the global hunger index indicating food security situation.

One of the biggest issue in Pakistan is unemployment.

There is minimum job opportunities for people. They don't have jobs to earn basic life needs for their families.

For instance, if an individual don't have a job, how would he feed his family. In

Pakistan there are very few job opportunities in urban

areas only. Most of the people have went to another countries for job. That's how

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economic problems is the root cause of malnutrition affecting millions of people in Pakistan and around the globe.

Secondly another cause of malnutrition are some medical conditions including chronic diseases, gastrointestinal disorders and metabolic disorders. Medical conditions like chronic kidney disease, a condition in which the kidneys do not function properly leading to malnutrition and related complications.

Also chronic liver disease in which liver doesn't function properly leading to malnutrition.

Same in the case of respiratory diseases like chronic pulmonary disease etc can cause malnutrition due to increased energy expenditure and decreased appetite. During cancer treatment, radiation therapy etc individual suffers from nausea, vomiting and malnutrition due to high frequency radiations.

A gastrointestinal disorder, celiac

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disease in which an individual is unable to digest gluten leading to malabsorption of nutrients and automatically malnutrition. In Crohn's disease that is inflammatory bowel disease that causes malabsorption of nutrients leads to malnutrition. Many such disorders in which the person is unable to absorb the essential nutrients lead to malnutrition. Some metabolic disorders like diabetes when it is uncontrolled impaired nutrient absorption. Hypothyroidism / hyperthyroidism can alter metabolic rates, affecting nutrient utilization. Also hormonal imbalances such as polycystic ovary syndrome, can disrupt hunger and satiety hormones leading to abnormal eating patterns. Hence metabolic disorders & medical conditions can lead to malnutrition by impairing nutrient absorption, altering metabolism and impairing appetite regulation.

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Thirdly social issues play a significant role in perpetuating malnutrition particularly in vulnerable populations. Limited education and awareness about proper nutrition and healthcare practices also contribute to malnutrition as individuals may not prioritize healthy eating habits and are often involved in poor eating habits and they also don't prioritize their health or seek medical attention when needed. Furthermore, social inequality and gender discrimination leads to malnutrition particularly among women and girls. They often have limited access to education which can lead to a lack of knowledge about proper nutrition and healthcare practices. Women often have limited access to household resources making it difficult for them to prioritize nutrition for themselves and their families. They also bear the

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burden of house responsibilities leaving them with limited time to focus on their own nutrition. Often in rural areas and also in urban cities men are meant to be the superior and that's why they should feed good rather than women. Cultural norms also contributes to malnutrition in several ways like, certain foods may be prohibited or restricted due to cultural or religious beliefs. For instance Hindus don't eat beef that contains proteins and other essential nutrients. It leads to inadequate nutrient intake. Vegan diets may also be restricted which leads to malnutrition. Additionally cultural beauty standards may promote unhealthy eating habits or restrictive eating while social status and food choices can lead to overconsumption of unhealthy foods. False feeding practices is also a social norm that leads to malnutrition

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in Pakistan. These cultural norms and practices can have profound impact on nutrition particularly vulnerable population in Pakistan.
