

How Pakistan is Combating COVID-19 Pandemic?

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Pakistan ranks 5th globally by its population and a home to approximately 212.22 million people. As of May 31, 2021, Pakistan has reported 921,053 confirmed COVID-19 cases with mortality rate of 20,779 (2.3%). The Punjab province while taking the lead reported cases 3,39,686, Sindh secured second position with 3,17,665 reported cases, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa third in line reported 1,32,549 cases, Balochistan reported 25,148 cases, The Capital of Pakistan Islamabad reported 81,195 cases, Gilgit-Baltistan reported 5,578, and Azad and Jammu Kashmir reported 19,232 cases of Coronavirus¹. However, the recovery rate in Pakistan is quite tremendous, 841,241 (91.3%) people has successfully combatted this deadly virus. A report published by Bloomberg in March 2021, stated that Pakistan is not included among top 30 countries which are hit hard by this novel pandemic^{1,2}.

What are government policies?

Government of Pakistan took decisive steps to contain Coronavirus pandemic which included several realpolitik policies; Pakistan introduced the concept of Smart-lockdown, in which those hotspots where the case positivity rate was 15% or above faced complete shut-down of civic activities while other areas observed soft activities to sustain life, 6-feet social distancing, home stays, a complete ban was imposed on social gatherings, closure of educational institutions, establishment of COVID-19 testing

laboratories, quarantine facilities, mask wearing policy, work from home policy, hand washing policy etc. Since the start of this pandemic government remained vigilant and understood its severity, nationwide immediate actions were taken. Furthermore, the government restricted all kind of international travel, and partially banned intra and inter-provincial travel just to contain cases within those territories³.

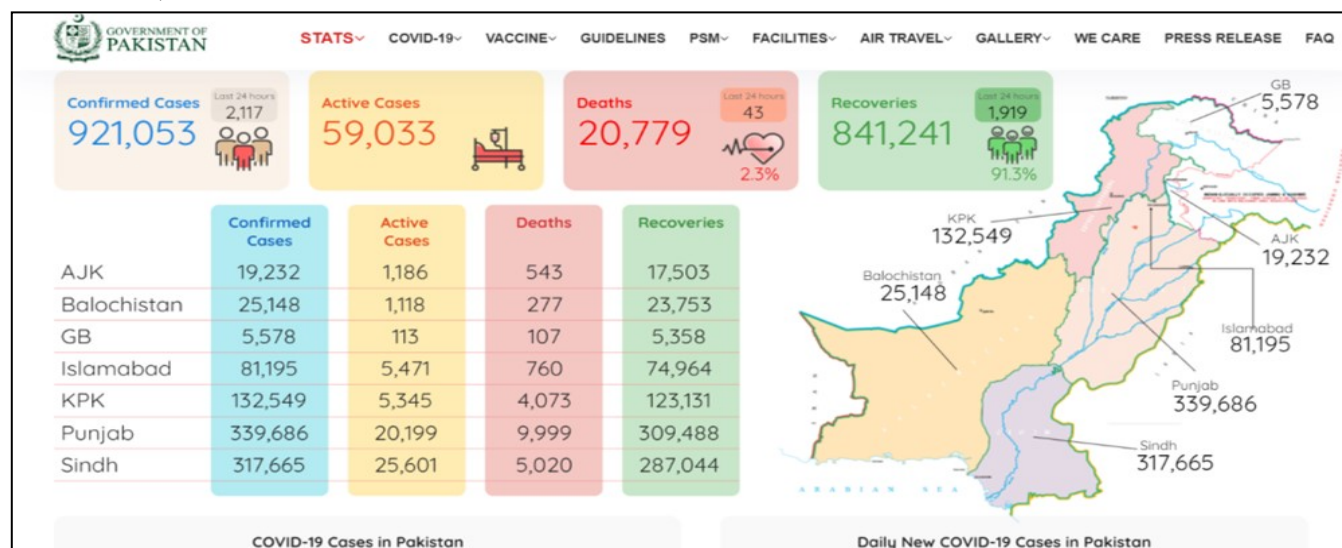
World Health Organization and efforts of Pakistan

In the first quarter of 2020, there was no any reported COVID-19 case in Pakistan, since then government started taking precautionary measures by following the guidelines developed by World Health Organization (WHO) to combat pandemic⁴. Pakistan fully acknowledged their directions in screening, testing sick people, contain infections, maintain medical supplies and communication with public by and large. In-fact, many tools has been implemented like; capacity assessment tool. While extolling the government's effort, the WHO emissary to Pakistan Mr. Palitha Mahipala said: "I am quite impressed by the dedication and commitment of Pakistani government to contain this emergency. They prepared well and remained vigilant for all eventualities"⁵.

Role of Mass and social media

Government of Pakistan arranged multiple health awareness programs on different Television channels with the help of health pantheons. Moreover, Pakistan is working on smart solutions and exploring the

FIGURE I: COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE PAKISTAN. DATA RETRIEVED ON MAY 31, 2021.¹



contemporary dynamics of technology to create a common psyche among people about the prevention of Coronavirus, mitigating the risks of virus, to sabotage the mayhem among people². In a joint-venture with telecommunication industry, caller-tunes and ringtones with awareness messages are activated on mobile phones on large scale in people's native languages. Government is regularly sending SMS to its people to remain safe and healthy. The provincial health authorities are calling distraught people regularly and inquiring about their social, physical and mental health¹.

Vaccination process in Pakistan

Now, Pakistan is fully focused to vaccinate its nationals. Since February 2021, vaccination process has started in Pakistan in several phases, in first phase front-line health workers were vaccinated throughout Pakistan, in second phase, senior citizens who were aged 60 and above were vaccinated on a large scale, in third phase people who aged between 40 to 59 participated in vaccination process, government has just announced the fourth phase of vaccine jabs for young people aged from 19 to 39, teachers, and other staff. Pakistan is planning to vaccinate 70% of its population by the end of year 2021¹. In Pakistan, 1,513,144 people have been vaccinated so far. Government is working by dint off to increase the vaccination capacity in different cities on daily basis, it is worth mentioning that the vaccination process is simple, easy and well-mechanized which is a good sign for common people^{1,6}.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Hassan T: Manuscript writing
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Saeed S: Conception, idea of study

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