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<b>Article:</b>	<b>COVID-19 Pandemic and Pakistan's Response, a Partial Lockdown, and the Effectiveness of Quarantine</b>
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### **ABSTRACT**

Pakistan, which shares borders with China and Iran, was essentially impotent to stop the spread of the Coronavirus. The first case of the Coronavirus was reported on February 25, 2020. On the same day, the Pakistani government honoured Pakistani explorers who had been to Iran. One of the primary contributors to the outbreak in Pakistan was the tardy establishment of quarantine establishments. Travel to or from Iran was responsible for 78% of coronavirus cases. Pakistan declared the closure of all educational institutions and imposed a partial curfew across the whole country. It was difficult for the government of Pakistan to provide services to the local population since there were not enough records and data sets. The problem with the disease was solved, and the lockdown, although only partially effective, did have some effect. The various lessons that have been learned from the past have been presented as a foundation for what is to come to adapt to circumstances involving pandemics and pestilence in the future.

**Keywords:** COVID, Pakistan, Pandemic, Coronavirus

## Introduction

Since its discovery in Wuhan, China, in 2019, the novel coronavirus also known as SARS-CoV-2 has spread to more than 200 different nations and territories throughout the world. As of the 17th of April in the year 2020, there had been a total of 2 million cases reported from around the world, along with 130 thousand fatalities (WHO, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) has made the official declaration that it is a pandemic, and it is a threat that is becoming more widespread across the world. This presents a wide variety of challenges for various fronts for all the world's nations on a variety of different levels. After the first case was reported, it took 67 days to reach one hundred thousand reported cases, 11 days to achieve two hundred thousand cases, 4 days to reach three hundred thousand cases, and just two days to reach four hundred thousand cases (WHO, 2020). Asymptomatic patients have also been a significant contributor to the propagation of the virus. Both China and South Korea have seen a significant reduction in the number of newly reported cases, which is an indication that the virus has been successfully contained in both countries (Noreen et al., 2020). Because of the exponentially accelerating surges in the number of cases in various parts of the world, some nations have been compelled to place 1.7 billion people, which is almost 20% of the world's population, under lockdown. To bring the virus under control, extreme steps have been adopted, including the closure of markets, schools, and other institutions, as well as the sealing of borders (Davidson, 2020).

Taking preventative measures against the flare-up of Covid was/is advocated. These include changing one's eating habits, performing checks, and maintaining records of observations. As a result of the enormous support from the Pakistani people, an infection control strategy that is proactive is needed for the immediate aim of preventing epidemics across all systems. The infection control precautions established inside Pakistan's healthcare system should be given top attention considering the lessons learned from the pandemics that have previously occurred in other nations. Depending on the level of emergency activation and how responsive the government is seen to indigenous risk assessments. Infection control procedures and administrative infrastructure support may be enhanced with the government's unwavering commitment to being ready for different types of pandemic outbreak scenarios. To be ready for the ever-evolving infectious disease, temperature checking at public locations like airports and train stations shouldn't be taken lightly. These inspections are particularly crucial in Pakistan because that is where COVID-19 was introduced to the country by travellers (Khan et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2020). Recently, chloroquine was also tried as a treatment for

Coronavirus, but the results were not particularly encouraging. In 2007, a comprehensive investigation was conducted on the contagious viral diseases that were prevalent in Pakistan (Noreen et al., 2020). It was suggested that Pakistan is currently struggling with a variety of problems, such as flooding, earthquakes, and pestilence of numerous viral infections e.g., Polio, dengue, and hepatitis (Khalil et al., 2017). The world had seen this episode of Covid before. It has already been observed in a variety of locations across the earth (Manuell and Cukor, 2011). It was discovered in the year 1960. Covid was given the moniker severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) because it induced symptoms in both the upper and lower respiratory tracts of humans and was dubbed an extremely serious respiratory illness. In the years 2002 and 2003, the contamination caused by Covid had its first outbreak. This influenced 29 countries across Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. There were around 8,000 instances, with 9.5% of them ending in fatalities (Fielding et al., 2015). Research carried out between 2010 and 2015 discovered that Covid was perceived as being in both animals and human beings. Although it proved fatal, there is yet no antibody available. Consequently, the government of Pakistan is anticipated to pursue a comprehensive welfare plan that prioritizes the protection of nature (Nafees and Khan, 2020). In the fight against pandemics and epidemics, quarantine is an important preventative tool that can be independently verified to be effective. In its most basic form, it entails the seclusion of the thought patient for a predetermined amount of time. If an individual develops symptoms associated with a particular illness during this period of disengagement, that person is sent to an emergency clinic to receive additional care (Sadeghi, 2020). If they did not encourage any of these adverse effects, then they are free to go. The length of time spent in quarantine varies according to the illness. The gestation period of a covid is 14 days; this length of time was suggested as the isolation period for a covid infection (Backer et al., 2020).

To identify, isolate, quarantine, and treat suspected and confirmed individuals, a surveillance system (including standard, contact, droplet, and airborne transmission precautions) should be integrated into the hospital healthcare system (acute medical wards, isolation wards, intensive care units, general wards, ambulatory day centres, pharmacy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy units). The state should prioritize waste and line management, environmental cleaning, and personal protective equipment (such as surgical masks, face shields, gloves, and gowns) to make sure that hospitals are appropriately equipped. The state should also make sure that accident and emergency departments have triage stations. Pakistan needs to be ready for COVID-19's future effects given the uncertainty surrounding its transmission, morbidity, and mortality, as well as the lack of a vaccine and an efficient antiviral

treatment. Pakistan should implement these safeguards because infection control readiness and preventative measures are the best way to reduce the risk of nosocomial spread.

### Methodology:

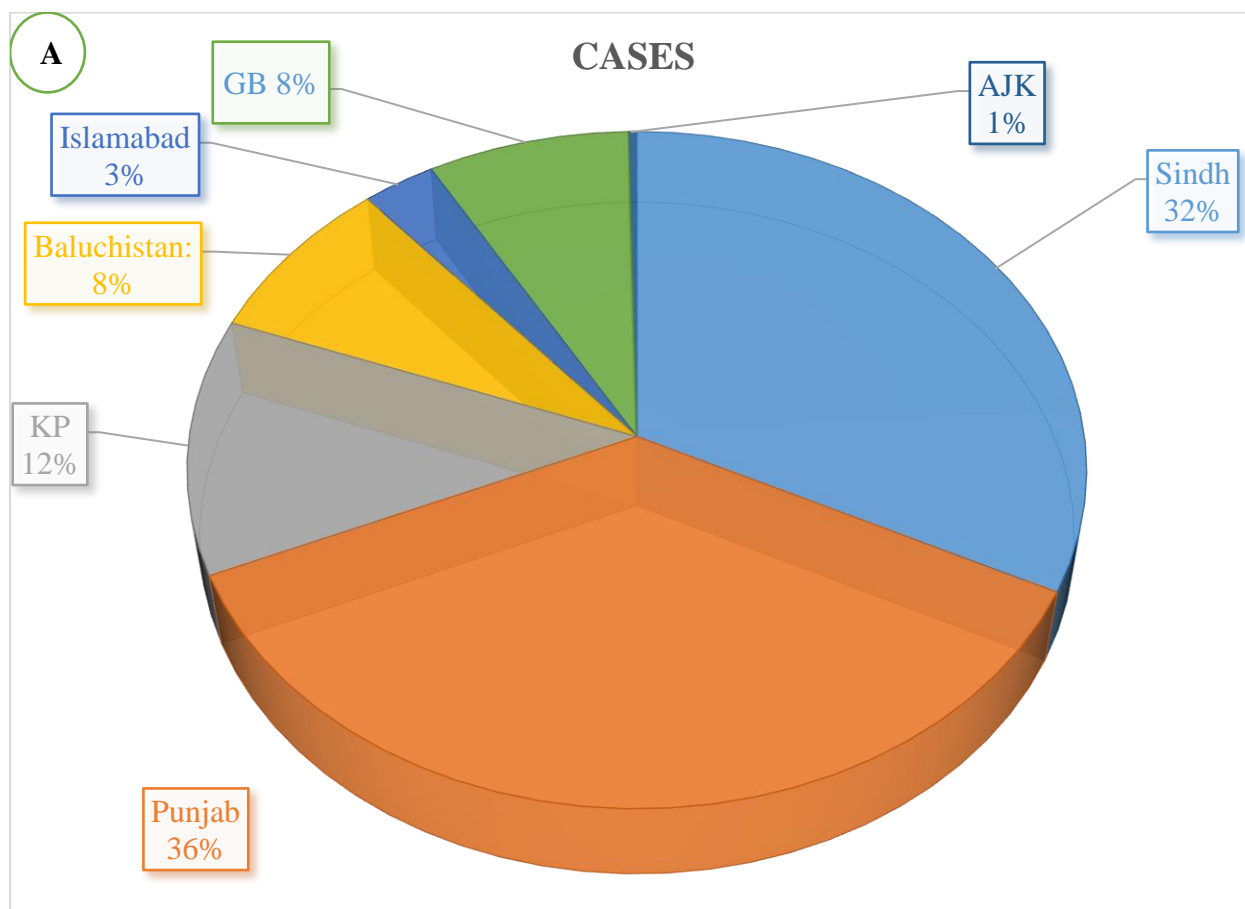
This was an examination of a work area. A significant amount of the material was obtained via various forms of printed, electronic, and internet-based forms of entertainment.

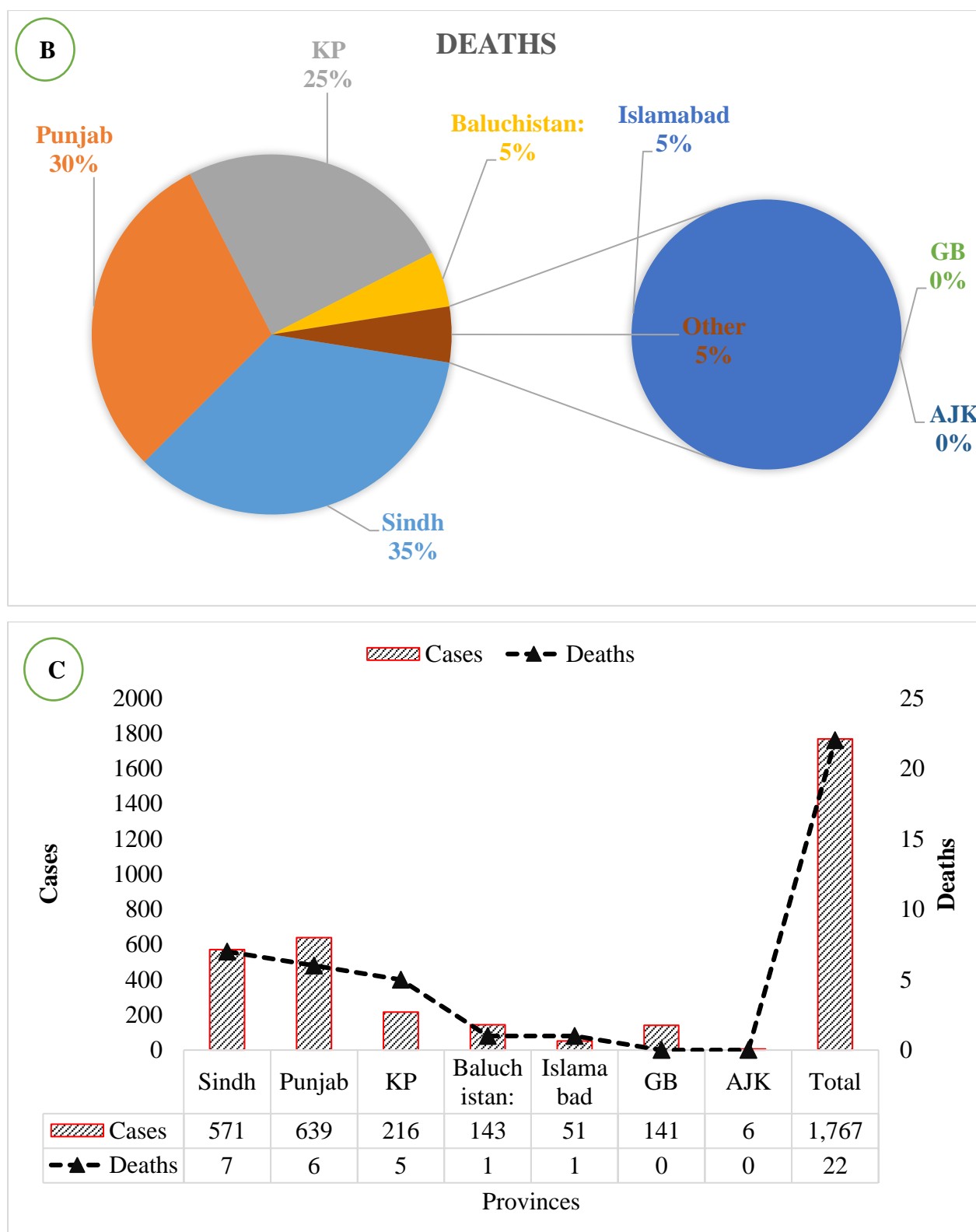
### Limitation of the Current findings

It was unable to discover a patient with Coronavirus and contact them because the lockdown was only partially successful.

### Outcomes

On February 25, 2020, the first coronavirus case in Pakistan was confirmed. With 25 fatalities, the number of coronavirus cases reached 1865 on the 31st March. The number of new cases is on the rise, according to WHO reports (WHO, 2020). The number of Coronavirus cases is incredibly low when compared to other countries, especially the neighbours (Iran and China). On February 25th, the first coronavirus case was confirmed, and on March 29th, the first death was confirmed. No one accepted on Covid at that time. One thing is certain: Pakistan's situation isn't worse when compared to the neighbouring countries (China and Iran).





**Figure 1. The breakdown of the total percentage of cases (A), deaths (B) and number (C) by province**

The data by territory revealed that the Punjab province, which is Pakistan's most populous region, saw the highest rates of instances (Figure 1). The number of passings was almost negligible up until the 30 Walk, but due to a steady increase, it became a problem.

According to measurements, Pakistan has maintained and attained the lowest level of Coronavirus cases. The question of how Pakistan acquired Covid arises. On January 10, 2020, the first case in China was identified (Munthali and Xuellian, 2020; Duc et al., 2020). Iran followed on February 18, 2020. Pakistan was completely quiet throughout this time, and no preventative measures were changed. When the first case was discovered, Pakistan was previously focused on the border between Pakistan and Iran and international travel. Below is a list of Pakistan's many policies and related information.

### **Government Preparedness**

Following the World Health Organization's designation of the corona epidemic as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), the government of Pakistan has announced the creation of a National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 as part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSa). Guidelines and standard operating procedures for international flights arriving in Pakistan were included in this document, which was intended for authorities and health experts (Noreen et al., 2020). Policy frameworks have been designed for federal, provincial, and regional stakeholders in Pakistan to strengthen the country's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to confirmed incidents of COVID-19. The government has initiated a battle to put a halt to the alarmingly rising number of incidents. There is an urgent requirement for participation from the community. China is an example of a nation that is responsible and determined, and it is a success story. To guarantee that the general populace is safeguarded, the government must take decisive action, and private citizens must also take significant steps. If the government does not take the necessary steps to prevent it, a catastrophic event may befall the entire country. Because of the unanticipated rise in population, the provinces of Sindh and Punjab have been entirely cut off, and the military has been called in to bring the situation under control.

Following a review of the crisis in the country by the National Security Council, the government of Pakistan took precautionary measures, including the closure of all educational institutions for three weeks and the prohibition of public gatherings. These actions were taken to halt the further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Since the 21st of March 2020, all international flights have been placed on indefinite hold, and the western borders have been shut down (Junaidi, 2020). The general population has been strongly encouraged to regularly practice social distancing and proper hand hygiene. A policy that enables employees of many private offices to perform their jobs from home has been widely implemented. A Coronavirus Relief Fund for three billion rupees has been established by the Sindh government (Bhatti, 2020). A National Coordination Committee on Coronavirus has been formed to monitor this emergency,

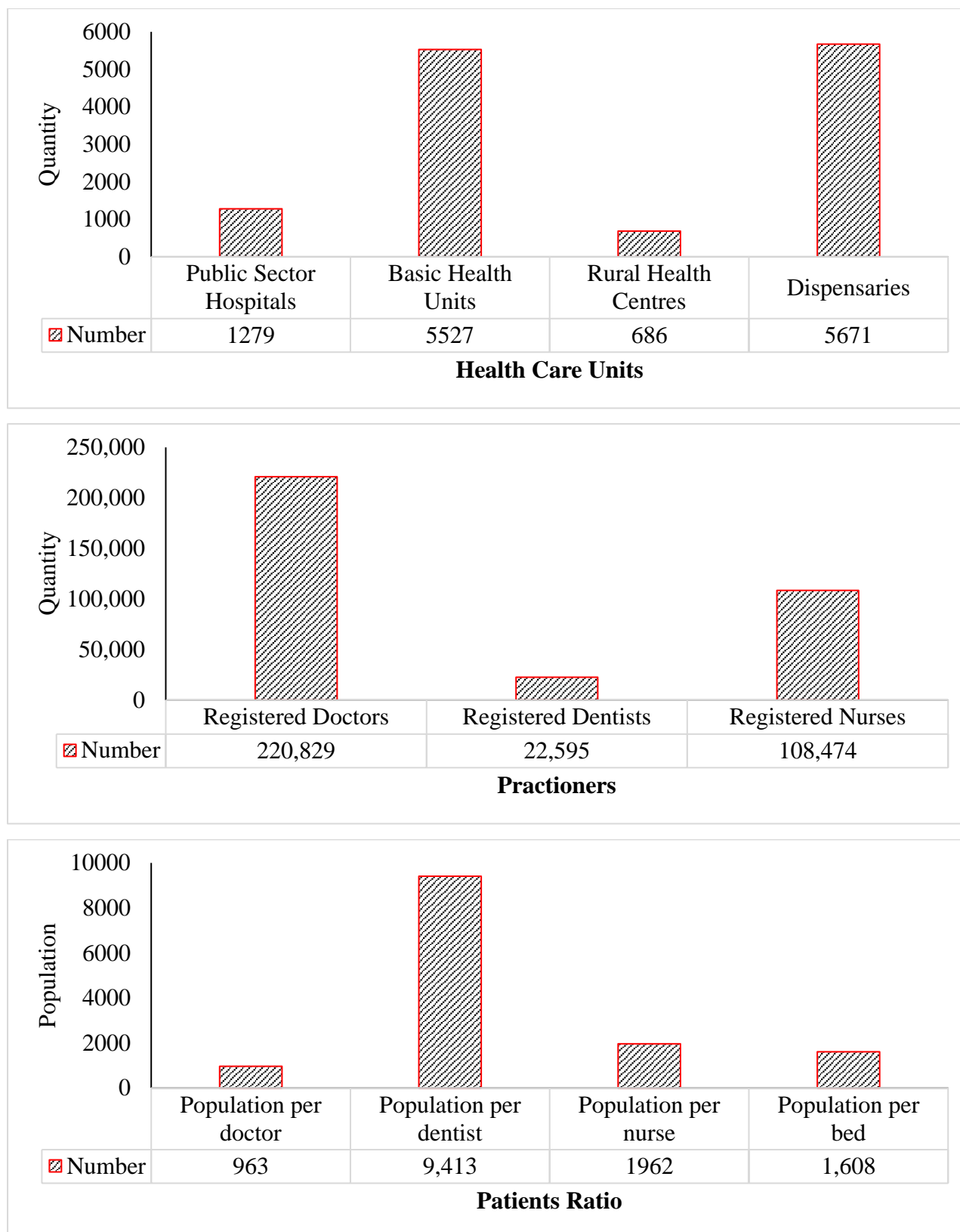


and the Prime Minister himself is keeping a daily watch on the situation. This committee was formed under the direction of the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (SAPM), who is also monitoring the situation. Since Sindh was the first province to be hit and the one that was hit the hardest, the government of Sindh took the necessary precautions by implementing risk reduction and medical emergency measures at the appropriate times and by conducting vigorous public awareness campaigns. This has been lauded in every setting, and other provinces, including Punjab, have begun to implement similar strategies to combat the coronavirus in their territories. Since the 22nd of March in the year 2020, the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, and KPK have been placed under a total and stringent lockdown, and there will be consequences for any infractions.

In Karachi's exhibition areas, the Pakistani military has constructed a field hospital with 10,000 beds, and they are keeping quarantine facilities in DG Khan and Multan for Iranian pilgrims who are travelling through the Taftan crossing (Iqbal and Hasnain, 2021). Since the devolution that took place in 2011, it has been determined that matters of health fall under provincial jurisdiction. One of the reasons for the inadequate reaction is that the federal government and the provincial governments are unable to work together effectively.

### **Healthcare Facilities:**

Although the provision of medical services in Pakistan is primarily the responsibility of the state, it does involve both the public and private sectors to varying degrees. Primary care, secondary care, and tertiary care are the three tiers that are included in the overall structure of the state's healthcare delivery system. The provision of medical services to citizens falls under the purview of the state (WHO, 2016). The Coronavirus illness serves as a distressing and necessary reminder that our healthcare system is vulnerable and insufficient. According to the results of the economic survey that was carried out in 2019, the most up-to-date information regarding the provision of health care and trained human resources can be found in the table that is located directly below Figure 2 (Noreen et al., 2020).



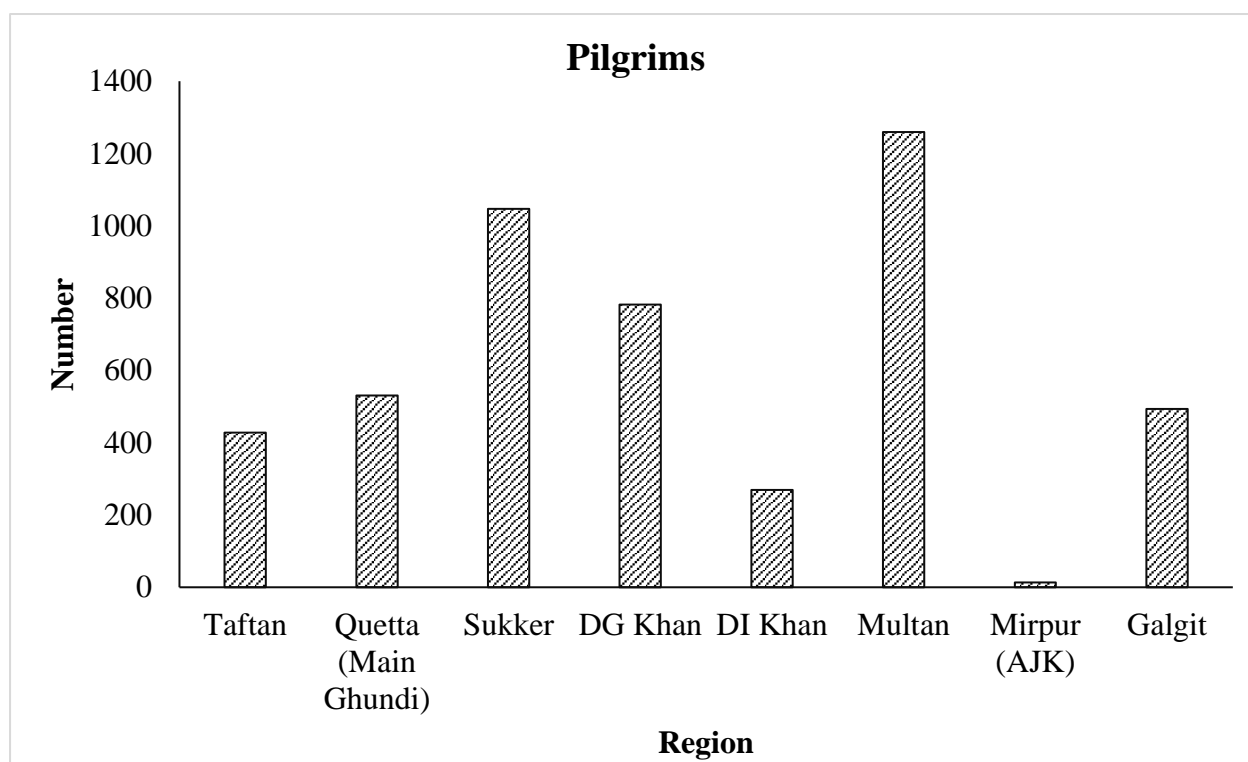
**Figure 2. Pakistan's medical facilities and staff**

#### **Quarantine Shelters:**

The Pakistani government has built quarantine facilities at its borders and in several major areas. The public body has also decided to shut down important urban districts for more

than a month. Considering this, the entire nation was put into a state of self-imposed quarantine by the directives of other nations, including China and Malawi (Haq et al., 2008). In any case, the government has not provided any offices to maintain the residents in their residences. They were allowed to leave their homes to purchase basic requirements and daily essentials like food and medications. This is how a select few stores were allowed to remain open. These include grocery stores, corner shops, and pharmacies. Some businesses and stores, like hotels, wedding lobbies, and hair salons and salons, were completely closed.

One significant problem for Pakistan was Iranian pioneers. > 3000 travel requests were collected and stayed at Taftan in the first seven days of spring.



**Figure 3. The arrival of pilgrims at Taftan (Hashim, 2020)**

Over 6000 people made it difficult to be constrained in the isolated town of Taftan. Pakistan was unprepared for this and had not expected such a large number. At first, it was decided to quarantine them for 14 days at Taftan. However, the pioneers were not cooperating and were engaged in attempts to leave the quarantined area.

On Walk 26, it was decided to send the tourists to their respective destinations instead of where they were supposed to be. 4596 were assigned to the common organization in this way. They were in several quarantined areas (Figure 3).

This surrendering and transporting of explorers were cited in several publications and electronic media as a motive for the emergence and propagation of the coronavirus in Pakistan. Taftan, according to Aljazeera television, was the epicentre of the outbreak in Pakistan.

Comparing a huge number of recorded cuts that had been transferred by a lot of different people led to the discovery of the following difficulties.

1. Unsanitary conditions
2. Remoteness
3. Inability to obtain necessary medication
4. Capacity
5. Accessibility to food and water

Some quarantine communities were exceptional. For example, the tourists coming back from Iran had to go through the quarantine process in Multan, which was in the Modern Domain. 1247 travellers were prevented from accessing the maximum allowed capacity of 3000. Travellers who were in danger in Sukkur were rescued in Labor State before they were isolated. The home of the state has appeared in the city, posing a challenge to the public authority for the community that was quarantined. In general, the course of action including the quarantine was not desirable. As a result, breaking news needed to be reported on both friendly and electronic media. As a direct result of this, pioneers from Iran were held responsible for the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. According to the information provided by the representative of the wellness service, 78.2 cases were able to be traced back to tourists who had originated in Iran.

### **Closure of Institutes:**

On Wednesday, March 13, 2020, the government ordered the closure of all schools, universities, and colleges across the country to prevent the rapid spread of the COVID virus. This demonstration of government was first criticized because no alternative game plans were prepared to salvage the season of the understudies. This was the primary basis for the criticism. For example, classes that are taken through the internet, a testing program, how well one understands the materials, and so forth. In later years, as the passage of time progressed, the disease rapidly spread around the globe, including in Pakistan. This included the country of Pakistan. It was shown that this conclusion was valid and that making this choice was an acceptable one.

The initial pronouncements suggested that all educational facilities would remain closed until March 31st. After that, the deadline was pushed back to the 31st of May 2020, and it was specified that this vacation would be treated as an excursion throughout the summer. Because of the relatively warm weather throughout the summer, several areas of Pakistan's educational institutions observed a summer vacation period between June and August. This year, all the students in the undergrad program will be expected to attend classes during the

hottest months of the year. This may be a straightforward issue for certain people, but it's not all that compelling. Every one of the schools, universities, and colleges is not prepared to manage temperatures that are higher than 40 degrees Celsius, which will be a serious problem, especially for younger children. In addition, there is typically an increase in the prevalence of summer illnesses such as diarrhoea and dengue fever around this time (Benjamin et al., 2006; Malik et al., 2020). Pakistan may need to organize a separate meeting to administer vaccinations for sporadic illnesses in addition to a separate program to combat the rising temperatures.

### **Labour:**

The segment of our workforce that is most dependent on day-to-day wage jobs is the most vulnerable. There are about 72.5 million people actively employed in Pakistan. There are 63 million people who are over the age of 15 and 9.5 million who are over the age of 50 working in various fields. 7 million of these people are employed in work that pays daily, whereas 3.6 million are unemployed (Abdul-Fattah et al., 2021; Ahmad, 2020). It was impossible to expect the public authority of Pakistan, which is a non-industrial nation, to appear at each everyday pay work to provide sufficient assistance for the people's day-to-day necessities. In the beginning, just a partial lockdown was implemented in Pakistan. The purpose of the midway lockdown was to restrict unnecessary association and variety in communication. The use of fractional lockdown proved to be beneficial for the routine compensation task. They were able to enter the setting of their employment.

During the stage that came after that, important urban communities were protected. One more time, we can't call it a complete lockdown because people are still able to leave the building and get various goods that are necessary for daily life. The most important commercial areas, as well as hotels and restaurants, were completely closed. Following the lockdown of multiple cities, the Central Government of Pakistan has announced a relief package consisting of 3,000 rupees per month for 7 million people who workday to day wage jobs (Saqlain et al., 2020). In any event, there might not have been an acceptable record or data collection for such labour, and it was difficult to differentiate between work and day-to-day wage work, both of which made it difficult to identify the ideal person. Aside from this, three thousand rupees was not nearly enough to cover month-to-month expenditures. According to research conducted by (Haq et al in 2008), the average monthly cost of providing food for a family of five has increased from Rs. 14,000 to Rs. 17,000 (Graham et al., 2013).

The most recent estimates suggest that anywhere from 12.3 to 18.53 million people could have their remittances disrupted due to the Coronavirus. Currently, the monthly

unfortunate occurrences total somewhere around 22 billion. If the lockdown continued, the monthly loss might grow up to 260.9 billion per month, which would result in an overall breakdown and irreparable loss to the workers of Pakistan. In this scenario, the country would face an economic catastrophe (Ajofan and Gaipoy et al., 2020).

Although the Coronavirus outbreak has been contained, Pakistan still has a big way to go. Pakistan needs to address both the general population as well as the workers. It is anticipated that Pakistan will adopt the stringent foundation with absolute certainty and make use of the public authority hardware for improved preparation soon.

### **Conclusions:**

Pakistan, along with other developing nations, suffered from limited resources; as a result, the country was not in the mental state necessary to deal with a pandemic that was rapidly spreading. Nobody anticipated that Pakistan would be able to successfully manage this pandemic, so nobody had high hopes for them. The several discoveries made that led to improvements in control over the Coronavirus were encouraging. Consequently, the several outbreaks that occurred in Pakistan were able to be estimated and played a significant role in the dissemination of COVID-19. The coronavirus is/was new to the world, and it had the same effect on poor and rich countries equally. The following is an illustration for the future that shows how agricultural nations appear to have less power when compared to the created world due to the reasons that were listed before. Arrangement and the value of quarantine office executives

1. Occupational health and safety standards for medical personnel and other workers in the welfare sector
2. Education and consciousness among the general populace
3. Managing daily wage work and other bad aspects of a public sector
4. Sanitizer and good personal hygiene
5. Availability of emergency care on time
6. A coronavirus vehicle office
7. The capacity to receive prompt care in emergency clinics

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