



Covid-19 Vaccination in Pakistan: Challenges and Priorities

Muhammad Umair Sohail, Department of Statistics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Hina Munir, Department of Education, The women University Multan. (Corresponding Author)
hinamunnir@gmail.com

Obaid Aslam, Department of Education, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus, Faisalabad

Khizar Hayat, Department of Education, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus, Faisalabad

Abstract- Most under-developed countries are facing the problem of low economic growth and receive limited financial assistance programs for the economical year 2020-2021. They are unable to provide the basic hygienic facilities, clean water and to control climate changes. It's a very difficult task for low-income countries to produce or manage the COVID-19 vaccine due to limited research and financial infrastructure. The government of Pakistan is still struggling to control polio and other genetically transferred diseases, but this commination disease creates another medical problem all over the country. Recently, collaboration was engaged between Pak-China medical research institutions to facilitate the community as much as possible. From various control group studies, the government starts the vaccination of frontline paramedical staff to keep their life secure. But the question is that is it possible for the government to manage 220 million doses with high poverty rate, low economic growth, immature behavior of religious scholars, and high police pressure from the opposition parties. The objective of this study is to provide a framework by elaborate on their challenges and priorities. Due to limited workforce and financial support, large burden of early communication and placebo diseases, the current pandemic is demanding a comprehensive framework to control the speedy spreadness of COVID-19 and quick health and economic recovery.

Keywords: Communication diseases, COVID-19, Low economic growth, Poverty level, Vaccination

I. INTRODUCTION

In South Asia, the use of vaccines to control the communication or genetically transmitted diseases is a challenging task, Especially in Pakistan and Afghanistan, there are various direct and indirect factors which influence the vaccination process (1). Pakistan is struggling to educate the public about the use of vaccines and its long health benefits. Several conspiracies are moving in society about short and long run disadvantages of vaccines. These are

- The COVID-19 is a biological weapon created by the United State of America (USA) to negatively affect the chinese economic growth.
- As like polio, religious scholars establish a thought that the COVID-19 vaccine negatively affects the female reproductive system.
- The COVID-19 vaccine transferred microchips inside the body to transmit our personal information to the main server (3).

These types of immature and nonsense attitude of the public even of ex-government personnel's creating the panic situation and the public may be hesitant to use the COVID-19 when these types of rumors are continuously discussed on social media. The long run lock is not a genius option to implement in the current environment because we already have below the average economic growth.

Major Challenges during COVID-19

Following are major barriers during the vaccination process in low income countries. These are discussed below,

Low Financial Status

The low economic growth in underdeveloped countries is directly affecting the vaccination process. Most governments in these countries are struggling to provide basic hygienic facilities to the community. They face the problem to import or produce these novel vaccines to control the pandemic.

Political Pressure

In low income countries, the government faces high criticism from opposition parties. When governments organize positive things for their citizens, opposition parties pressurize them to achieve their political benefits.

Limited Resources

The availability of limited infrastructure, workforce, and no or few research laboratories create the worst situation in low income countries. They are unable for efficiently follow COVID-19 SOPs and maintain

social distancing. Every department has its own priorities and it's very difficult for low income countries to build the national consensus between all of them.

Role of Religious Scholars

In the sub-continent, the religious scholars have a large number of followers. Recently, it is observed that most religious scholars transfer their misleading comments during daily and jumma prayer/s without understanding the genetic structure of diseases and vaccines. The implementation of SOPs in religious places like mosques, tombs, etc. is not up to mark.

High Rate of Poverty

Due to low gross domestic production (GDP), the per person annual capital is very low. Majority of the population is unable to afford the latest or advance vaccine for preparing immunity against novel diseases. The governments are unable to provide/organize vaccines for their citizens. It's a challenging task to maintain or follow SOPs for low income families because they are struggling to fulfill their basic hygienic facilities. More than one third of Pakistani communities have no clean water, fresh air, and good quality and quantity of food.

Low Literacy Rate

The literacy rate of the under developed countries is very low, majority of his community is illiterate or have low education. They are not familiar with the importance and use of novel vaccines in their lives. Most people in these countries do not take it seriously and discuss it as a source of entertainment by establishing different nonsense jokes.

High Population Density

As we know, one third of the total human population is living in South Asia. Due to high population density, most urban areas are overcrowded. That is very difficult to keep the social distancing, quarantine and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) of COVID-19. Especially in big cities like Karachi and Lahore, the population growth rate is very high and the government shows limited interests in favor of public health. Erectly, The government of Pakistan is focused on building large bridges and motorways instead of building hospitals, laboratories, and research institutions.

Role of Mass Media

In 21st century, we do not neglect the importance of print and electronic media. Especially, social media is a key instrument to create awareness campaigns about strict implementation of SOPs and effectiveness of vaccination. Approximately 4 billion active social media accounts and 17% of Asian community are available on social media (2). Currently, social media is an active instrument to engage all agencies and create awareness programs. Since the strict implementation of SOPs is the only good option and start of awareness campaigns about COVID-19 vaccine is a challenging task during the current anti-vaccine campaign from some uneducated scholars and non-state actors.

Top Priorities to Engage Limited Resources

As we observed in most countries, the second wave of COVID-19 has started and seems to be worse as compared to the first one because the public and government cannot take it seriously. The key responsibility of our civil society is to move forward and facilitate the government as much as possible and establish the positive conceptions about vaccines. The government of Pakistan should prepare a framework for building a coordination body by considerable participation of all stakeholders. The coordination body will work to control anti-vaccine campaigns and create awareness about it.



Figure 1: *Major responsibilities of coordination body*

In Figure 1, the major responsibilities of the coordination body to consider the following core areas for building positivity about vaccination.

National Consensus

The fundamental responsibility of the coordination body is to build the consensus between all the stakeholders. The significant participation of all government and private agencies is required for the quick health recovery. Especially, the joint collaboration of all political parties in the favor of national goals increases the probability of success. The opposition parties make sure to facilitate the government during COVID-19 pandemic and increase the level of local resilience by helping poor people during lockdown. In any public meeting make sure the strict implementation COVID-19 SOPs and social distancing.

Religious Awareness

In Asian countries, no one neglects the significant contribution of religious scholars. Most religious scholars have a larger number of followers; these followers showered their lives on him/her. In this situation, the coordination body is to build a good understanding and collaboration with religious scholars to create the awareness vaccine and its positive impact on their health.

Role of Media

The fundamental responsibility of mass media is to play a professional and sensible role for creating awareness among the public to follow COVID-19 SOPs. The electronic and print media engage their resources and organize substantial campaigns against anti-vaccination propaganda. Electronic media tried to air a positive picture of COVID-19 vaccination and avoid negative propaganda. The government should organize strict check and balance on social media by blocking those accounts which support and share COVID-19 conspiracies. The social media website also makes sure that their media is not used in any type of negative campaigns.

Public Education

This is a key responsibility of our government to educate the public about communication disease and its impact on their financial status. As we know, the public confidence in vaccines is directly correlated with public education (4). Several studies are available which shows the importance of science and technology in human life and public opinion about it (5). The existing conspiracies in society may establish the anti-vaccination thoughts in the mind of the public; an extensive and timely public-private partnership is required to remove such misleading communications. The health workers make sure the correct and accurate share of information. The higher authorities create the feelings among the public that they are listened to and responded properly.

Role of Civil Society

Not only the government, has the civil society had to make sure of their positive contribution for the quick health and economic recovery. They move one step forward to facilitate the poor societies by providing food, water, and other hygienic facilities. The civil society can organize different national and

international seminars to educate the public about the impact of COVID-19 on our daily life and the importance of vaccines.

Role of Health Authorities

Keeping the current pandemic under consideration, the health authorities and workers may engage all agencies to discourage all kinds of conspiracies. The different kinds of corner meetings must be organized for creating motivation and awareness among the public about novel viruses. Health authorities must engage meetings with religious scholars to ensure their positive contribution for the quick health recovery.

Contribution of Researchers

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher tried to focus their energies to provide a framework for the quick health recovery. Data analysts and social scientists can organize misleading information and educate the public about the positive aspects of COVID-19 vaccine. The analysis of misleading information, pattern of information, their sources, media of spreadness, and their impact on the community will provide a framework to control the anti-vaccine campaign (6). When the vaccine is available in the market, the researcher can share his formula, effect on health, and future benefit for his family and community may increase the confidence level of the public on the vaccine and help to discourage conspiracies.

II. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

For the last many decades, the government of Pakistan has been struggling to control misleading information traffic on social media and the similar motivation is observed to control conspiracies against vaccines. There is no significant pathway to analyze social media accounts and filters to judge the source of these conspiracies. Our belief is to implement hard and fast rules and prepare new laws to control conspiracy traffic in our daily life and on social media as well.

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