

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumors and fake news, as we've seen in the past. Every day we continue to see more false information shared throughout communities, confusing citizens and leaving them unsure as to who can answer their questions.

The **Pakistan Coronavirus CivicActs Campaign (CCC)** captures rumors and perceptions among communities to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, humanitarian agencies and citizens. By providing the public with facts, these coronavirus bulletins aim to create a better understanding of needs regarding coronavirus and to debunk rumors before they can do more harm.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

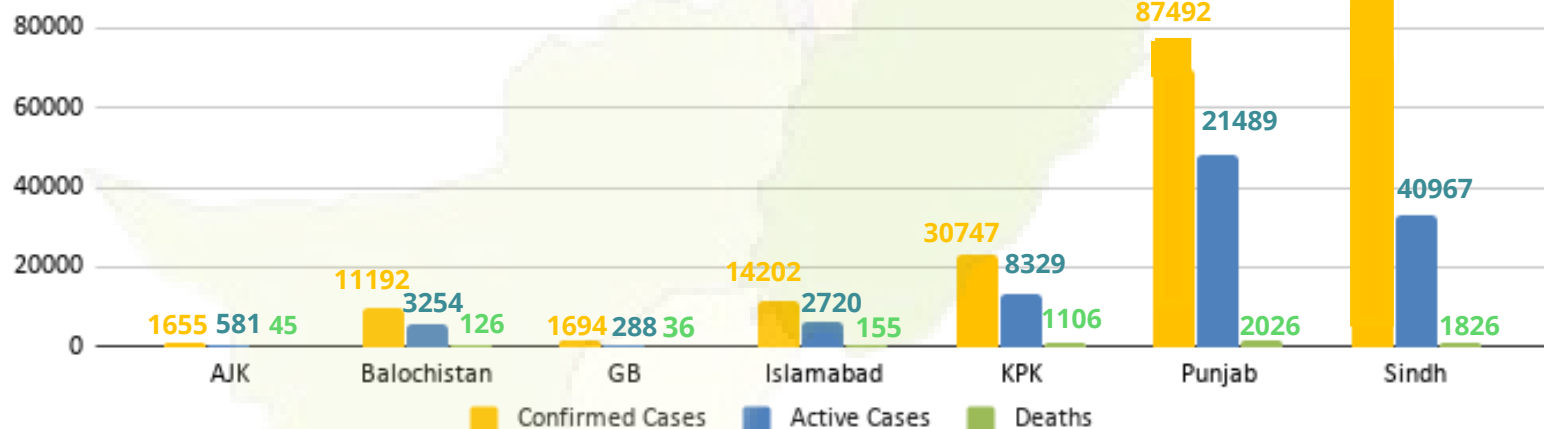
Total Confirmed Cases
253,604

Total Active Cases
77,628

Total Deaths
5,320

Total Recoveries
170,656

COVID-19 Cases status in provinces of Pakistan



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COVID-19 Takes a Toll on the Transgender Community



"Unlike other people who still have some aspect of income, we transgender people are not being educated enough and are restricted to earn by begging and dancing at festivities. If we go outside to beg, people change directions just to avoid us. With lockdowns intact, many functions have also been cancelled leading us to remain locked in doors with nowhere to go."

"As we live in rented spaces, the property owner demands for rent whether we have work or not. When the pandemic outbreak began, the government announced suspension of rent for three months but the owners have not acted upon this saying that money is the need of the hour."

Societal Discrimination Compounds Health Risks

The transgender community has been severely affected by the pandemic, even more so than other groups in Pakistan. The community was marginalized even before the COVID-19 outbreak, but the situation has only worsened. Health systems and related facilities tend to exclude transgender people, which leads many of them to suffer in silence. Additionally, with no work and rations available, lockdowns imposed, and discrimination when asking for help, many transgender people also face psychological issues but struggle to access mental health support.

Facing a lack of opportunities to learn or enhance their skills, many transgender people who worked at organizations which have now become digital platforms have lost their jobs as they find it challenging to adapt to this change without any proper training.

Having Nothing to Eat for Days



"Even before Corona our community was ignored, isolated and socially distant from the rest of the communities because of the way we are. But since corona we have been having more difficulties than ever. I myself have also been affected by this to a great extent. During Ramadan, I remember that a few of my friends and I had to keep our fast with just a glass of water at Suhoor and Iftar" claims Shaiba Jahan, a transgender.

Seeing my trans community in pain, I went to various organizations for seeking aid just to help us get through these rough times as no means of support has been provided to us. Only a handful of these organizations came to our support, and provided us with rations for single individuals which we then distributed to households of 7-8 people."



COVID-19 and Transgender Welfare and Empowerment

My team and I visited the transgender community during COVID-19, and I was shocked to see how one of the transgender communities which were well educated were living in the far flung slum areas on grounds distant from where towns and proper facilities are available.

During our conversation with them, they told us that they are used to living in such harsh environments in which their issues are not highlighted and dealt with. They further added that in order to live, they often have to take decisions or steps which they do not want to do but are forced into doing to survive. "We are seen as beggars and dancers. Despite having bachelors and masters degrees, nobody wants to hire us thus we have no job experience because of this. We just aren't accepted anywhere."



How to deal with this crisis?

The total population of transgender people reported in Pakistan's Sixth Population and Housing Census is 10,418 – though the number has been challenged by activists in the country for being underreported. In 2009, Pakistan became one of the few Islamic countries to legalize a third sex and it started issuing national ID documents and passports from 2017. However, all such state actions have until now failed to provide general healthcare benefits to a large majority of the transgender community, let alone support social mobility.

In a bid to support families living under the poverty line, the Pakistani federal government launched the Ehsaas Emergency Cash program, under which interventions amounting to Rs. 12,000 were given to registered families to help them survive the weeks when the government imposed a strict lockdown to curtail the virus. However, such is the precarious condition of the transgender community that a large number of transgender people didn't attain the benefit from the monetary scheme — either because they didn't possess the national identity card or because, even after registration, they weren't contacted by government representatives.

The government should be mindful of including transgender in welfare programming to sustain their health and livelihood throughout the crisis. A special team should be assigned for analyzing the complete check on balance on the Ehsaas Program, to ensure that the deserving communities are being provided with what the state has promised.

Coronavirus symptoms Include:

- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Tiredness

Contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at



1166



Where can I get tested?

Karachi

Aga Khan University Hospital

Stadium Road, Karachi

Civil Hospital

DOW University Campus
Mission Road, Karachi

Dow Medical Hospital

Ojha Campus
Suparco Road, Karachi

Indus Hospital

Opposite Darussalam Society, Korangi
Crossing, Karachi

Lahore

Punjab AIDS Lab

PACP Complex
6 - Birdwood Road, Lahore

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital

7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore

Islamabad

National Institute of Health

Park Road
Chak Shahzad, Islamabad

Rawalpindi

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

Range Road
CMH Complex, Rawalpindi

Multan

Nishtar Hospital

Nishtar Road,
Justice Hamid Colony, Multan

For more cities visit the

[COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

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