



Nutrition Policy Initiative for Pakistani Police School Recruits: Enhancing Health and Performance

Farzana Siddique¹, Sana Imtiaz¹

¹Institute of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.

Executive Summary

This policy brief addresses the imperative problem of evidence-based nutritional guidelines for police recruits in Pakistan, with the strategic policy guidelines to optimize health, improve performance, and ensure well-being of police recruits. Some of the key initiatives are nutrition education and balanced diets, minimizing junk food consumption, preventing nutritional deficiencies, overcoming socioeconomic obstacles to nutrition, hiring nutritionists and dietitians, strengthening nutrition support programs, and comprehensive evaluation and monitoring. Collaboration among government ministries, nutrition organizations, and police departments is required for successful implementation. Investing in the nutritional well-being of police recruits will enhance law enforcement capabilities and national security in Pakistan.

Background

In Pakistan, unwholesome eating habits in young adults lead to prevalent disease conditions like nutritional deficiencies, obesity, and diabetes among adults¹. Socioeconomic problems like poverty (40% of Pakistan's adult population fall under poverty line)² and ignorance are responsible for poor eating habits in young adults³. Alarming health statistics among adults include 79.7% vitamin D deficiency in adult population with 17.7% Global Acute Malnutrition crisis level and 41.7% anemic adult women⁴. Tobacco use is common among adults, with 45% of adult males and 6% of adult female smoke⁵. The spread of fast-food chains has promoted consumption of junk food among adults. Fast food culture attracts youth with extravagant deals. Research shows that fast food could be more costly than regular food. In Pakistan, the fast food trend may impact health of young adults⁶. Healthy dietary patterns are significant for police personnel's physical performance and overall health. Barriers to healthy eating can negatively affect dietary patterns⁷. Many adults in Pakistan face widespread nutrient deficiencies and are at risk for chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Adults suffer from deficiencies in iron, vitamin A, calcium, vitamin D, zinc, and iodine⁸.

Since police recruits undergo rigorous training, nutritional health plays a significant role in optimizing their physical capabilities, performance, and mental well-being. Similar to other young adults, police recruits are confronted with nutritional challenges, but their unique training needs necessitate specialized attention. The scarcity of research on the nutritional health of police recruits in Pakistan highlights and underscores the importance of evidence-based nutritional guidelines tailored to their specific needs. Developing strategic policy guidelines will assist in safeguarding their health, improve performance, and ensure overall well-being while undergoing training, ultimately contributing to the development of effective and competent law enforcement officers.

Problem Statement

Pakistan police recruits, with rigorous training, are susceptible to nutritional problems like healthy dietary habits and deficiency, impairing their health, performance, and training efficiency. This impacts their overall well-being, training effectiveness, and ultimately readiness to serve as effective law enforcement personnel.





Strategic Policy Guidelines for Police Recruits

Educating Police Recruits on Balanced Diets

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) should develop a nutrition policy for police recruits, establish a surveillance system. GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) should collaborate with Ministry of Interior on formulating dietary guidelines, nutrition education materials, and facilitate policy formulation and implementation. When designing dietary guidelines for police recruits, policymakers and nutrition organizations can develop new guidelines while drawing upon existing dietary guidelines, such as the My Plate Dietary Guidelines for Adults, for insights on serving sizes and recommendations, particularly for young adults. Provincial Police Departments should implement nutrition-related policy guidelines and educate training recruits in different provincial Police Training Institutes like Police Training College Lahore, Police Training School Peshawar, and others. Provincial Police Departments should ensure proper implementation monitoring, and evaluation of nutrition programs in Provincial Police Training Institutes, promoting a culture of healthy eating among police recruits.

Reducing Junk Food Consumption

The MoI should develop policies to reduce junk food consumption among police recruits, including banning junk food sales in Police Training Institutes and substituting vending machines with healthy vending machines that typically provide nutritious snack foods like fresh fruits, nuts, and dried fruits. Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society (PNDS) formulated dietary guidelines should follow for limiting junk food, while GAIN should facilitate implementation of these policy guidelines. Provincial Police Departments should enforce these policies within Provincial Police Training Institutes, tracking efficacy, encouraging healthy eating habits, and minimizing junk food consumption.

Nutritional Deficiency Prevention and Management

GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) should formulate policies for nutritional deficiency prevention and management among police recruits. They should conduct nutritional assessments to identify deficiencies and develop supplementation programs based on dietary guidelines from nutrition-related bodies like Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society (PNDS). These policies should be implemented in Provincial Police Training Institutes with the support of GAIN and technical support from the Provincial Police Departments. GAIN should conduct health screenings and nutrition assessments of police recruits prior to and after the supplementation programs to determine their effectiveness.

Addressing Socioeconomic Barriers to Nutrition

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) should develop policies to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to nutrition among police recruits. GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) should ensure free health screenings and dietary guidelines based on recommendations from Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society PNDS and other nutrition related organizations. Provincial Police Training Institutes should provide subsidies on healthy food and collaborate with public and private food manufacturers and suppliers to provide nutritious food at low or no cost. GAIN should assist the government in executing this policy by providing nutritious food available at affordable prices, low prices, or even zero cost for police recruits.

Hiring of Nutritionists and Dietitians for Police Recruits

The National Police Bureau (NPB), in association with the Ministry of Interior, and GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition), should formulate a policy and infrastructure for the hiring of nutritionists and dietitians in every provincial Police Training Institute. Police Training Institutes should



implement this policy, hiring nutritionists to provide general nutritional guidelines and dietitians to develop tailored dietary plans for every recruit. The goal is to improve the health and well-being of police recruits through nutrition assessments, personalized diet plans, and health education, ultimately enhancing their performance and benefiting the police force.

Strengthening and Enhancing Nutrition Support Programs

Nutrition support programs for police recruits can be enhanced and strengthened through nutrition counseling sessions, provision of healthy meals and planning, nutrition education workshops, monitoring and evaluation of nutritional status, and providing healthy food options. Nutrition-related public and private organizations should develop these programs based on dietary guidelines and GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) should collaborate in their implementation in Police Training Institutes, guided by Provincial Police Departments and the NPB. The MoI and NPB should guide and facilitate these efforts, the MoP can assist in infrastructure development.

Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation of Nutrition Initiatives for Police Recruits

The National Police Bureau (NPB), in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) should develop a policy for comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of Nutrition Initiatives for police recruits. An integrated monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed with key performance indicators and periodic evaluation. The framework may involve a broad system for evaluation of all the nutrition initiatives or separate monitoring for each program, as per resource and budgetary allocation. This combined effort is designed to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and promote effective implementation of nutrition initiatives in Police Training Institutes.

Policy Implementation

The policy guidelines will be implemented through a collaborative effort between government ministries, nutrition organizations, and police departments to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of nutrition programs for police recruits. The Policy Implementation Action Plan is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Nutrition Policy Implementation Action Plan.

Policy Objective	Responsible Entity	Action Plan (1 Year)	Action Plan (2 Years)	Action Plan (3 Years)
Educate Police Recruits on Balanced Diets	MoI, MoP, PNDS, GAIN, others, Recruit Training Schools	Formulate Nutrition Policy, Develop Dietary Guidelines, Educate Recruits	Establish Policy Frameworks, Establish Partnership with Nutrition Organizations	Evaluate Effectiveness & Make Programs
Reduce Junk Food Consumption	MoI, MoF, PNDS, GAIN, others, Police Recruit Training Institutes	Develop Policy, Ban Junk food sales, Replace with Vending Machines in Police Recruits Training Institutes	Allocate Funds, Implement Policy	Monitor Progress & Expand Areas
Prevent Nutritional Deficiencies	MoI, NPB, MoF, PNDS, GAIN, NFP, Police Recruit Training School	Conduct, Nutritional Assessments, Develop Supplementation Programs	Allocate Funds, Implement Policy, Monitor Progress	Evaluate Effectiveness & Expand Areas

Address Socio-Economic Barriers	MoI, MoF, MoP, GAIN, Provincial Governments, Provincial Police Departments, Police Training Institutes	Develop Policy, Implement Policy	Give Financial Supports, Offer Subsidies, Partner with Nutrition related Food & Supplement Suppliers	Evaluate Effectiveness, Expand Programs
Hiring Nutritionists & Dietitians	MoI, MoP, MoI, NPB, GAIN, PNDS	Develop Policy Infrastructure, Hire Nutritionists & Dietitians	Implement Policy & Allocate Funds	Monitor Effectiveness, Adjustments & Expand Program
Strengthen Nutrition Support Programs	MoI, MoF, NPB, GAIN	Develop Nutrition Counseling, Healthy Meal Planning, other nutrition strengthening Programs	Allocate Funds, Implement Programs	Monitor Effectiveness & Adjustments
Monitor & Evaluate Nutrition Initiatives	MoI, MoP, MoF, GAIN, NPB	Develop Monitoring & Evaluation Framework	Implement Progress Monitoring System	Evaluate Effectiveness & make Improvements

Conclusion

Prioritizing nutrition for police recruits will bring long-term benefits to Pakistan. By fueling their bodies with balanced diets, law enforcement agencies can build a healthier, high-performing workforce. Adequate nutrition plays a crucial role in enhancing performance, minimizing disease risk, and optimizing overall health and well-being. With these strategic guidelines, Pakistan can develop a more effective police force, better positioned to serve and protect the country. Investing in nutrition is investing in a safer future for everyone in the country.

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Acronyms

GAIN - Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

MoF - Ministry of Finance

MoI - Ministry of Interior

MoP – Ministry of Planning

NPB - National Police Bureau

PNDS - Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society

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