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# COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: A SURVEY-BASED STUDY OF ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PAKISTAN'S GENERAL POPULATION

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**Abstract:**
*Lock down has caused an economic recession worldwide. Many studies already report its impact on several major countries. However, no such study reports have been done in Pakistan. Our study suggests that unemployment was already high in Pakistan even before the lockdown. Nonetheless the pandemic made a huge impact on several sectors causing many to lose their jobs. This suggests that the pandemic is not to be entirely blamed for the ever so declined employment rate. Our study was survey based, where we used google survey platform to make a questionnaire, asking people about their employment status before and after the pan.*

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## INTRODUCTION:

There is a long run relationship between economic growth and unemployment(1) A study done in Pakistan suggests that unemployment, inflation and poverty all lead to an increased rate of crime(2). Increased suicidal rates have also been linked to unemployment(3). A novel coronavirus emerged in Wuhan city of China in December 2019 and spread out to become a pandemic(4). Next month on 30th January, WHO declared the Chinese outbreak of CoVid-19 to be a public health emergency of international concern(5). Pandemics are not something new to mankind, they age way back to one of the oldest recorded outbreaks, The plague of Athens in 430 BC(6,7) to the recent Spanish flu(1918), SARS(2002) and MERS(2015) outbreaks(8–10). Studies done on the economic trends during these pandemics, suggest that there is a sharp fall in the economic activity due to disruption of supply and demand chain(11–14). One of the best ways to prevent a contagious outbreak is Quarantine, which is basically isolating the suspected patient for a set amount of time. If in this time s/he develops symptoms then s/he is transferred to a hospital for further care, and if s/he doesn't develop any symptoms then s/he is set free(15). Thus following the prevention, many countries including Pakistan went under lockdown. Which caused major changes in the global economy. Several researches began to predict impacts on several large economies. As N. Fernandes(16) did a recent study in 2020 to estimate GDP reduction of several countries due to CoV-19 lockdown situation. But few to none estimates and studies have been down in Pakistan.

It's shown that an increased sense of risk, combined with little expectation of success in dealing with the risk, may lead to a helplessness reaction, which may alter the normal behavioral response of an individual(17). Today the perceived risk of this new disease with no potent vaccine or treatment as of the time of writing this article (May 19, 2020) may cause a change in preference of how people spend their money. This will ultimately shift the value of goods in the market leading to a ripple in the economy. There is some degree of congruence between opinion and policy, mostly opinion tends to move before policy more than vice versa(18). Public survey's frequently play important role in identifying the problem and helping In the policy making process(19). Our study is among the very few that represent the impact of CoV-19 related lock down on the employment status of the Pakistani population. This may help the policymakers make better decisions regarding the ever so contracting economy in the face of CoVid-19 outbreak.

## METHOD:

Our study was survey based, where we used google survey to make a questionnaire that asked people about their employment status before the lockdown and then during the lockdown. Then we compared these answers for the results.

## RESULTS:

**status of employment before COVID19 pandemic**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 3 | .9 | .9 | .9 |
| | Government employee | 39 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 12.9 |
| | Internee | 19 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 18.7 |
| | Laborer | 7 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 20.9 |
| | part time job of any kind | 7 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 23.0 |
| | private employee | 31 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 32.5 |
| | self employed | 43 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 45.7 |
| | unemployed | 173 | 53.1 | 53.1 | 98.8 |
| | Vander | 4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 326 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

323 responses were collected from various people of several cities of Pakistan. 147(45.5%) were females and 176(54.5%) were males. Major age group was between 20-30 years, 261(80.8%). While 39(12.1%) people between age 10-20 years and rest were above 30 years. 278(86.6%) people were single and 43(13.4%) were married.

To the question about the employment status before the pandemic, a whopping 173 respondents were unemployed, 39 were employed and among the rest, 19 internee, 7 laborers, 7 were part time job holders, 31 were private employee, 43 were self-employed and 4 were wanderers.

When we asked whether the lock down has affected your employment, then 164 said that they had no affect while 117 responded that they had an effect and 42 people were not sure and replied maybe.

**Has lock down during this pandemic affected your employment**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | | 3 | .9 | .9 | .9 |
| | Maybe | 42 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 13.8 |
| | No | 164 | 50.3 | 50.3 | 64.1 |
| | Yes | 117 | 35.9 | 35.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 326 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Looking at the data through a cross table, we found that among the unemployed, 113 people said that the pandemic had no effect on them while 32 said that they had affect and 28 were uncertain. Among other people who reported being employed in some form, 19 government employees said yes, 17 said no and 3 were uncertain. 6 internees said yes, 11 said no and 2 were uncertain. 6 part time job holders said yes, 1 said no. 15 private employee said yes, 13 said no and 3 were uncertain. 30 self-employees said yes, 7 said no and 6 were uncertain. 3 wanderers said yes while 1 said no.

**status of employment before COVID19 pandemic * Has lock down during this pandemic affected your employment Crosstabulation**

Count

| | | Has lock down during this pandemic affected your employment | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Maybe | No | Yes | Total |
| status of employment before COVID19 pandemic | | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | government employee | 0 | 3 | 17 | 19 | 39 |
| | internee | 0 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 19 |
| | laborer | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| | part time job of any kind | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| | private employee | 0 | 3 | 13 | 15 | 31 |
| | self employed | 0 | 6 | 7 | 30 | 43 |
| | unemployed | 0 | 28 | 113 | 32 | 173 |
| | Vander | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Total | | 3 | 42 | 164 | 117 | 326 |

## DISCUSSION:

Research question was, has the pandemic affected employment status of Pakistani population? The study was survey based asking several people different questions related to their employment status. We found that majority of people were already unemployed before the pandemic and majority of those who were employed in some form reported being affected due to this pandemic.

Majority were already unemployed meaning that they were living off of someone else of their family or were dependent on community help, pandemic made it even worse for them. A few previously unemployed people said that they were affected, this might be due to increased demand of home delivery services that they got employed or they might have suggested that it had an even more negative impact. Most of the employed category does reported having an impact of this lockdown pandemic on their employment status.

This is the first study that is linking the lockdown impact on the Pakistani people regarding unemployment. It also shows that the rate of unemployment was already high before the pandemic. Many politicians and policy makers are suggesting that this pandemic caused the unemployment rise, but in fact the unemployment rate was already high and the pandemic lockdown just made it worse. Reforms and new infrastructure for more job opportunities had been the need of this nation for a long time, and these times have just made it an utmost necessity.

Limitations of this study include that, the majority of people involved in the survey were already unemployed. The results can be more accurate if more employed people participate. And the sample size is not viable enough to accurately generalize the whole Pakistani population. Thus, our conclusion is that pandemic does have a negative impact on the employment status but the majority of Pakistani population is already unemployed and thus these lockdown circumstances made it even worse for them to live a normal life.

## CONCLUSION:

Our survey suggests that the unemployment rate in Pakistan was already high before the pandemic and the lockdown that followed it. The pandemic only made it worst. An improved economic plan was always needed to raise the job opportunities and these circumstances have only made it a necessity, if any form of economic growth is desired.

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