

# **Effects of COVID-19 on daily Life of Common People of Pakistan**

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What actually is COVID-19? It is a disease that affects the human respiratory system. The first case of Coronaa was recorded in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. At first, scientists were unable to determine what type of virus is it, until the death rate increased. Since then, the virus had spread all across the world. Travelling, both through domestic and international flights, was suspended all across the world. WHO later considered the outbreak in 2020 as a global pandemic.

The first incident of COVID-19 in Pakistan was recognized on February 26, 2020. The number of instances grew rapidly. To control the spread of the virus, the Government of Pakistan enforced a strict lockdown starting from March 15, 2020. The decision was taken in haste hence, people were bound to return to their hometowns in limited time duration. Within a week, educational institutions had to adopt e-learning. People enjoyed spending time at home initially, but then found themselves stuck at home all day, unable to break free.

Since then, in many aspects, the pandemic has been harsh! It still has an impact on every Pakistani. It has transformed the world as well as people's lifestyle especially when it comes to the first COVID-19 wave and lockdown in 2020. Businesses, students, labourers, and doctors were all affected by the outbreak. The common people of Pakistan were dealing with a variety of issues

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on a personal basis, such as middle-class employed men and women being fired as a result of the pandemic, resulting in unemployment, depression, and difficulties in meeting their basic necessities. Everything within life changed drastically. Many families lost their loved ones. Some fought the battle with COVID19 till their last breath, fortunately returning to life. However, different people in Pakistan had varied perspectives on the outbreak. Many people mistook it for a plot and spread superstition stories and baseless rumors. People rumored Covid as a conspiracy of America and neglected the critical situation. The increasing number of deaths with each passing day grew distressing, and a strange lifestyle developed.

In Pakistan, certain companies went down in flames. People suffered losses, and many were forced to close their businesses. Small businesses such as rickshaw drivers, public transportation, stationery shops, eatery business including school and college cafeterias, all were affected. The daily wage workers and the construction industry were the hardest hit, as they didn't have any other source of income. Such people were unable to survive in the lockdown. Those who somehow survived had to live from hand to mouth. Both public and private transportation services such as Daewoo, Uber, Careem, Airlift, Swvl, rickshaw, school buses and others were abruptly abolished, posing serious barriers for drivers. Common people and daily wage workers faced a great economic recession.

On the other hand, students were studying online, which influenced both children and adults learning as they were unable to concentrate. Pakistan is a country where the majority of students from rural areas lack access to technological resources. Thus, the lack of Internet services was a great barrier for online education. Moreover, basic instructions regarding the usage of online platforms were not given to students. Along with facing difficulties in adapting to the pandemic's increasing obstacles, online studies further aggravated the

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situation. The board system was disrupted, and board exams could not be held. The students were ultimately promoted to the next class. Many students were pleased as a result of this decision, while some students claimed exams and legitimate results. Teachers were also affected, as they were unable to provide clear concepts in online classrooms due to a large number of online sessions. As physical activities were ceased, there was a huge communication gap between students and teachers.

The virus is taking its toll on people's mental health in Pakistan. During the social distancing phase, people began spending more time with technology. Teenagers' sleep patterns were affected by increased usage of digital media. People began to procrastinate. All age groups were affected by a lack of motivation and laziness. The abrupt lifestyle change resulted in psychological issues such as aggressive behaviour in youngsters, a high rate of anxiety and depression, and domestic violence. As a result of sitting idle at home, people began to overthink petty issues, causing themselves anxiety. The factors that triggered various mental health issues included, closure of schools and colleges, unemployment, economic concerns, and the threat of getting infected with COVID-19 itself. People who were fighting Corona had the highest rates of psychological problems. Over 23 suicide cases linked with COVID-19 are reported in Pakistan, out of these 7 were confirmed and the other 4 were suspected COVID-19.

In my opinion, people had been affected in both positive and negative ways yet, the negative effects are more significant. A notable factor was the lack of awareness and education among the common people regarding the precautionary measures taken against the COVID19. Non-serious attitude regarding social distancing and covering faces through masks can be blamed for the widespread of COVID19 in Pakistan. On the other hand, educated people played their role with responsibility and followed the SOPs. In addition to it, I

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people for whom the COVID19 proved to be a blessing in disguise such as the owners of medical, surgical equipment and pharmaceutical industries. The prices were doubled and the mafia came into action, engaging in stockpiling of face masks, medicines, oxygen cylinders and ventilators. Hence, the people belonging to the lower class were affected the most. One-fourth of the country's population lived in poverty. Consequently, mental health has been affected the worst. People still are facing numerous problems, but life goes on and that's how everyone is struggling for their survival.