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## **“EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON PAPER INDUSTRY DUE TO CLOSING OF SCHOOLS IN PAKISTAN”**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Basically the very aim of this research article is to assess and measure the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the paper industry in Pakistan. For this, primary research has been adopted in which all primary data has been collected through conducting survey. The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly affected paper industry like many other industries throughout the world. Pakistan has also experienced an adverse impact on paper industry during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic due to closing of all schools for months. Production was reduced almost from 20% to 30% per month soon after the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amplification of COVID-19 has been predicted to cause a long-term bad impact on paper mills of Pakistan.

Paper industry of Pakistan has not been excluded from the curse of this Pandemic. This research examines the real damage caused to the paper industry and survey was carried out for better assessment of loss caused by the closing of schools during the first wave of Covid-19. In order to get exact results data has been collected from seven paper mills of Lahore and Sheikhpura region randomly to build research based on the foundation of a working hypothesis. Telephonic interviews were organized with production heads of the mills and detailed discussion was done to dig the exact figure of production due to Government policy to restrict students from attending schools for some months consequently. This research is a result-oriented descriptive study describing the current situation using a quantitative approach. Probability with simple random sampling to assess the most appropriate results. This study is essential to paving the way for the development of additional contingency plans and new working strategy in a minimized human contact situation due to COVID-19 pandemic.

### **INTROUDCTION:**

Since last two years COVID-19, self isolation, quarantine, furlough, social distancing, palliatives and many other terms have been emerged as the new vocabularies of the entire world. Apparently, this is precisely a decade from the last pandemic experienced by the human race. However, the current COVID-19 pandemic outbreak stated from a province of China “Wuhan” called Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was announced, which hit all the nations of the world within four months from its emergence and was declared a pandemic in March 2020 (Ogunnusi, 2020)<sup>1</sup> which is still hitting the nations of the world without distinguishing race, language, creed and socio-economic status. The paper industry is major industry of Pakistan which produces paper for different uses. Major portion of paper is being used in the making of writing pads and note books for the students. During the COVID-19 first wave which was started in Pakistan Feb 2020 and from March 2020 to June 2020 all schools were closed and students were restricted to live and study at homes. Resultantly, paper was not used as it was using before. All stationary shops were keeping the stock and bulk of books and note books store rooms. So, due to disturbance in supply and demand chain, the paper mills decided to reduce the production of paper per day. So the co-relation between closing of schools and production of paper was created. This research examines the said relation and measure the loss conducting survey.

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<sup>1</sup> (Ogunnusi, 2020)

## **OBJECTIVE**

The first and foremost objective of this research article is to evaluate the losses caused to the production of Paper Industry of Pakistan due to closing of schools throughout the country during Covid-19.

The production of paper industry of Pakistan was badly damaged due to closing of schools as large number of papers is used in schools and when the schools were closed throughout the country, the production of papers was being closed or decreased by the paper mill owners which caused loss to the paper industries.

In this research article, a thorough research is being conducted using the quantitative research technique and collecting primary data via survey.

## **KEY TERMS and ABBRIVATIONS**

Throughout research, these key terms will be used;

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Paper Industry
- Self-isolation
- Social Distancing
- Quarantine
- Lahore and Sheikhpura region
- Online Learning

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted businesses globally, including disturbing all the industries and socio-economic and educational activities. Resultantly the world has to adjust the new norm of socially distancing and many aspects of life are going to change dramatically to maximize safety. One of these aspects is education since students must now stay at home in many countries. The effects of COVID-19 on education throughout the world and especially in developing countries have made education more difficult for many students. In developing countries, like Pakistan, many students have limited access to the internet or devices connected to the internet, making it hard for them to keep up with the educational activities. This COVID-19 pandemic has put even more strain on government and school officials. The World Bank estimates an increase of up to 25% of children below the minimum level of educational proficiency and it is by the fact that in 71 lower-income countries, more than 30% of students don't have access to the internet (Farr, 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

Due to the severe waves of COVID-19 the paper industry has, like many others, has been badly hit. Last year in April, the production of paper was completely suspended at several paper mills in all developed countries. For instance, in Europe, the market was forecast to shrink from \$896.6bn (£703.8bn) in 2019 to \$868.8bn (£681.9bn) (Gorvett, 2020)<sup>3</sup>. The developing countries, like in developed countries, were also facing the same issues. Domestic paper mills of Pakistan also had to reduce the production of paper during first wave of Covid-19 when all schools were closed.

Every nation has suffered due to the virus but third world countries like Pakistan have suffered the most. The first case of COVID-19 in Pakistan was reported in February 2020. The first wave of COVID-19 in the month of March 2020 was extremely severe which disturbed the whole wakes of life. Since then, schools and universities have been intermittently closed and opened several times, causing anguish among families. Pakistan's already struggling economy has had a major setback due to the implications of COVID-19.

A major loss of approximately 1.1 trillion Pakistani rupees was estimated due to the disease and also it has had a major impact upon the currency value and market finances in which heavily affecting sectors are tourism, transport, and hospitality etc.

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<sup>2</sup> (Farr, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> (Gorvett, 2020)

Because of this COVID-19, some of the small and medium-sized enterprises such as small salons and apparel stores were on the edge of collapse it was very much difficult for them to survive and those who have been saves from the drastic waves of COVID-19, are still fighting for their survival.

Many companies which are dealing with manufacturing sector underwent downsizing to tackle the financial strains, rendering many workers unemployed. The paper industry which is Pakistan's one of the major export is also facing a downfall. Consequently, there is a noticeable decrease in foreign reserves of the country (Z.F.Hassan, 2021)<sup>4</sup>.

This worldwide deadly pandemic covered the whole world, that is posing hard socio-economic challenges, especially for the Developing Countries. Prior to COVID-19, global growth was projected to increase by 3.3 % in January 2020, which was contracted by less than three percent in the month of April last year because of the result of the pandemic. According to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) June 2020 estimate, the growth was projected to reduce further by less than five percent which is dramatically even more than estimated expected financial loss. In this worse scenario, Pakistan was no exception at all. This COVID-19 drastically changed the whole living era of the universe. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the GDP growth was projected at 2.5% estimated for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 while it was projected less than 0.4%. therefore, the recent last quarter of last fiscal year bore the most significant brunt of the COVID-19 crisis (Mirza, 2020)<sup>5</sup>.

The paper industry of Pakistan is one of the biggest industries of the Country which generate revenue for the country. A large number of labor is attached with this industry. The waves of COVID-19 disturbed the whole paper industries of the nation.

From the starting of this world wide pandemic, number of writing stuff has been noted down about impacts and effects of Covid-19 on education, industry, socio-economic growth, human behavior, social and moral norms etc. till date. Many reports, research articles, documentaries etc have been done to highlight the problems faced by the societies due to COVID-19. However, there is still literature gap to be filled up and huge space to highlight the impact of this dangerous disease on paper industry of Pakistan. In this Research Article, a thorough research has been done in order to evaluate and analyze the real loss caused to the Paper Industry in Pakistan during the first wave of Covid-19.

## **RESEARCH STATEMENT**

The research statement is to dig out whether closing of primary schools and other educational institutions have effect the business of paper industry throughout Pakistan. During the different waves of Covid-19, like every other county of the whole world, Pakistan also closed its all educational institutions especially primary schools were closed as they were closed never before. The closing of schools resulted the poor academic performance of the students. Like many other industries which the paper industry has a great co-relation with the schools. When the schools were closed and there was no use of note books at all. The paper industry of Pakistan has to stop its business or to minimum its paper production. This caused a huge loss to the paper mills throughout Pakistan.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Like many other industries, paper industry in Pakistan is one of the best industries which not only accommodate number of families of lower middle class families and lower class families through jobs opportunities and huge number of labor is attached with this industry. This industry plays great role in National Economic Growth. All students per day use note books which are being made with paper and it is a great business spread all over the country. Everyone knows the importance of paper industry in schools. During Covid-19, as number of other industries effects badly and caused huge loss to people as individual and on national level too, similarly, the paper industry got huge loss as well. This research article will evaluate that paper industry has suffered huge loss during the different waves of Covid-19 all over the country. So, the research problem is

“Does the closing of primary schools affect the paper industry in Pakistan during first Covid-19 wave?”

During this research, this research question will be addressed and a tentative solution will be drawn applying the scientific research techniques.

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<sup>4</sup> (Z.F.Hassan, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> (Mirza, 2020)

## **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

The long term goal of this research is to in depth analysis of closing of schools throughout Pakistan and the effect of it on paper industries. Different Government policies which were formulated and were being practiced throughout Covid-19 for protection of children from the world wide epidemic. The sub objectives of this research paper would be the following:

1. Assess the relationship of schools with paper industry.
2. In depth analysis of closing of schools in order to dig out how much loss has been caused to the paper industry throughout Pakistan by it during different waves of Covid-19.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Simple working hypothesis has been applied in this research article which is as follows:

**“The Production of Paper Industry in Pakistan was decreased due to closing of schools during covid-19”.**

In this hypothesis two variables have been applied one is dependant variable and the other is independent variable and both variables have a strong co-relation with each other:

### **Independent Variable:**

Covid 19

### **Dependant Variable:**

Production of Paper Industry

## **EXPLANATION**

There is adverse co relation in the above mentioned two variables. Supposing that if the schools were closed during first wave of Covid-19, the paper industry had to minimum its production because there is a co relation between schools and paper industry. Paper is used for the making of note books and hand books for students. During covid-19, all schools were closed and students of high classes were shifted to use online classes. Home work and school were completely vanished so all the paper mills had to low their production of paper per day. It caused loss to the paper industry throughout the country.

## **QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH:**

Basically this research has been conducted on the footsteps of Quantitative Research. For this research a thorough study in scientific method has been done for digging out the true picture of the ongoing scenario keeping in mind the problem statement.

Besides that, before starting survey, all type of relevant literature on this research was been thoroughly studied from the internet. It is apparent that the optimal source of information is the Internet. The World Wide Web, as it is commonly known, hosts a plethora of information with respect to Covid-19 and its impacts and effects on all industries throughout the world.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In research, both primary and secondary sources have been applied. Firstly, five famous paper mills were been selected as sample for this research. All these industries were based in the Lahore and Sheikhpura and with this sample a direst survey has been conducted.

The primary research method for this study is very useful in order to develop thorough understanding with the hypothesis in hand.

## **RESEARCH TECHNIQUE/METHOD**

In this research article, random sampling technique has been applied for survey. Seven paper mills from Lahore and Sheikhpura region were being chosen.

<b>Name of</b>	<b>Production of Paper in</b>	<b>Production of Paper in the month of April</b>	<b>Decrease in</b>
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<b>Paper Mills</b>	<b>the month of January 2020</b>  <b>(all schools were opened)</b>	<b>2020</b>  <b>(all schools were closed)</b>	<b>Production %</b>
<b>Premier Paper Mill Pvt. Ltd.</b>	120 Tons	90 Tons	30%
<b>Century Paper Mill Limited.</b>	200 Tons	160 Tons	40%
<b>Naseer Paper Mill Pvt. Ltd.</b>	100 Tons	70 Tons	30%
<b>Sadiq Paper Mill Pvt.Ltd.</b>	150 Tons	110 Tons	40%
<b>Mandiali Paper Products Pvt. Ltd.</b>	110 Tons	90 Tons	20%
<b>Al-Aziz Paper Mill Pvt. Ltd.</b>	117 Tons	107 Tons	10%
<b>Al karam Paper Mill Pvt. Ltd.</b>	125 Tons	90 Tons	35%

### **LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS:**

In this research, all other independent variables have been limited and restricted to effect on the dependent variables. Supposing that, there may be workers on strike due to salary issue, emergency situation because of eruption of fire in the mill or any other reason which could be caused to minimize the production during the first wave of COVID-19. But these entire variables have been controlled and there is no role of these said variables on the production of paper mills. Only one independent variable has been applied which is closing of schools during the first wave of COVID-19.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Using data from a sample of more seven paper mills of Lahore and Sheikhpura region and applying analysis of paper production before the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, has

been found a conclusive data to measure the loss caused to the paper mills due to closing of schools during first wave of the pandemic. This evaluation remains robust even after controlling for other socioeconomic drivers of COVID-19 outbreak.

Findings of this research suggest that paper industry is one of the major industry of Pakistan which also effects during the different waves of COVID-19 and the mill owners had to minimize the production of the paper per day due to closing of schools throughout the country for more than three months. All other variables which can effects the production of paper were restrictedly controls and only one variable was measured i.e. closing of schools during first wave of COVID-19.

This research suggests that closing of schools was also a major factor in reducing the production of paper and it caused loss not only to the mill owners also on national level and now keeping in mind the current scenario, the policy makers should formulate future policy choices less palatable, with serious implications for human lives and national economy.

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