Title: Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 Lockdowns in Pakistan Affecting Girls and Rural Residents

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Abstract:
In this article, we examine the feasibility of working and studying from home in Pakistan. We take advantage of the 2018–19 Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey, released only weeks ago. PSLM is a nationally representative household survey with extensive information on employment outcomes, children’s educational attainment, internet and TV access information, and hand-washing place. Following Dingel and Neiman (2020)’s approach, we define the feasibility of jobs that can be done from home for both urban and rural districts. We also investigate the possibilities for students to study from home via TV or internet. We find that only 10% of jobs in Pakistan can be done from home, and rates are even lower for rural residents, as so many of Pakistan’s workers are in low-skill, low-paying service industries and cannot work from home. Our results also highlight the homeschooling challenges Pakistan’s students face, given low rates of access to TV and the internet. Pre-existing inequalities in which many rural female students already lack educational opportunities will further compound these difficulties. Our results highlight the need for state’s financial support for vulnerable workers and expanded internet access for both teaching and effective job performance.

JEL Codes:
D24, J22, R12, R23, I24, O53

Keywords:
COVID-19, Occupations, Tasks, Pakistan, Work from Home, Distance Learning

Data Description:
We use the 2018–19 Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey, released only weeks ago. PSLM is a nationally representative household survey with extensive information on employment outcomes, children’s educational attainment, internet and TV access information, and hand-washing place.