

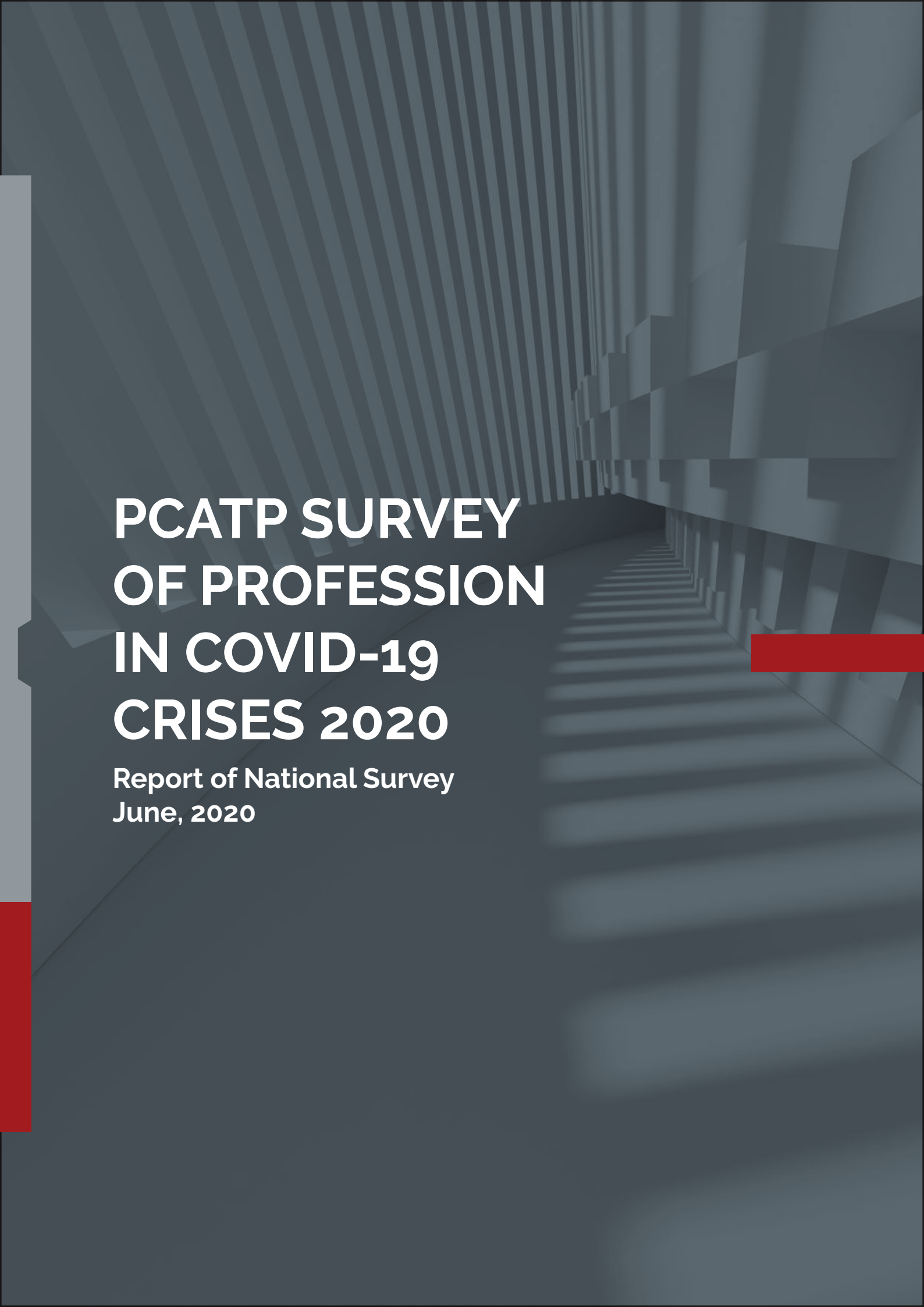


The Pakistan Council  
of Architects and  
Town Planners

# PCATP SURVEY OF PROFESSION IN COVID-19 CRISES 2020

Report of National Survey  
June, 2020

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## [preface]

I am greatly pleased to share with you the report of the survey of the status of Architecture and Town Planning practices during the coronavirus emergency in Pakistan.

I am grateful to all those without whose assistance and contributions this survey and the survey report would not have been realized:

Mr. Rafiq Jaffer, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, who participated in designing the survey questionnaire, organised the data and converted it into graphics, analysed the data and wrote the report of the survey; also his able assistant Mr. Uzair Azhar, who designed and implemented the Google survey;

The Registrar, Ar./Plnr.T. Sadia Fazli who made all information required for the survey available on a timely basis, and followed up respondents through periodic emails;

All those architects and town planners who took time off from their busy schedules to review and comment on the draft questionnaire and the draft report of the survey.

Last but not the least, all those architects and town planners who took time off from their busy schedules to fill and submit the survey questionnaire, and shared their frank views on a range of topics related to the survey topic under trying circumstances.



**Kalim A. Siddiqui**  
Chairman PCATP

## [executive summary]

PCATP conducted an online survey to ascertain the nature and extent of difficulties being faced by Pakistani architects and town planners during the coronavirus emergency. Filled forms were received from 656 respondents, included 90% architects and 10% town planners, with the sample being highly reliable statistically.

**M**ost respondents were young, with 70% graduating and getting PCATP membership in the last ten years. They were mostly based in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, with the rest based across Pakistan. The most common types of clients/work included private houses, commercial buildings, and private housing schemes, followed by apartment buildings, educational institutions, corporate / institutional clients and government buildings. About half of them said that they paid income tax.

Some 39% of the respondents were from small, while 22% were from medium, and 12% were from large organizations, and 19% were sole practitioners. Half of the respondents were employed, mostly full time, while 30% were doing sole practice and 14% were partner/director in a company.

Regarding the corona crisis, a third of respondents said that their office had fully introduced Work From Home (WFH) protocols in their offices, while 45% said that they had introduced it partially, and 18% said they had not introduced it at all. A fourth of respondents said that all employees were working from home, a third said that all except a few non-tech employees were working from home, while 42% said that less than 50% employees were working from home.

Offices had to consider a number of issues when deciding to go for WFH, including physical access to items required for work, communication, productivity, and management, followed by internet, software and hardware issues. Most offices used office server through cellular data / broadband, and remote working software for working remotely. Half the respondents agreed

**business  
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planners hub.**

the majority (57%) of respondents said that their employers responded in a timely and adequate manner to the on-going crisis.

that it would be helpful to know about the experience of working remotely in other offices. Most respondents found their clients to be understanding and cooperative while their office was working remotely.

Some 58% of respondents running their own businesses said that they were facing financial stress due to the corona virus crisis, a third said that they were facing financial crisis to some extent, while only 11% said that they were not facing a financial crisis. Commonly cited reasons included projects being put on hold, no new work assignments, and no regular income due to "lock outs" and site work suspended. Other reasons included client's inability to pay due to prevailing situation, and fee payment being tied with progress of work achieved at site. Almost half the respondents said that they found the reasons for financial stress alarming for their work or survival. Most respondents said that government intervention/instruction and financial assistance could help in improving their present predicament.

Most respondents in employment had 3 or more dependents, and someone in addition to themselves supported the family. The period of current employment of in-service employees ranged from less than one to over ten years. Some 45% of in-service employees reported a reduction in salary due to the crisis, with a third reporting up to 25% reduction in salaries, 42% reporting 25-50% reduction, and a fourth reporting more than 50% reduction in salaries.

Some 153 out of 515 respondents (30%) said that they had been laid off after the corona crisis. Considering their qualifications, most respondents had low monthly salaries, with those laid off having significantly lower salaries than those who were currently employed. The majority of laid off employees said that their layoff was temporary, they received a notice period, but did not receive any payment on layoff. Half of the laid off employees who were paid their dues said that they received over 75% of payment, while the rest received a lower proportion of their dues. Two-thirds of employees said that they did not have any problem in getting their dues from their employers.

The majority (57%) of respondents said that their employers responded in a timely and adequate manner to the on-going crisis. The remaining respondents said that the response was either inadequate, or delayed, or both.

One-third of respondents said that they were still without a job due to the corona crisis. Of those a fourth said they could barely manage 1-2 weeks, 39% said they could manage 3-4 weeks, and a third said they could manage over a month without a job.

## Recommendations emerging from the survey findings include the following

1. A series of training programs especially webinars for PCATP members to be initiated. Architect / Town Planner as Mentors to be identified who could effectively maintain working during the Covid19 Pandemic and lock down. Their availability and willingness to share their success stories, WFH strategies, and learnt lessons with the affected Architects and Town Planners is required. A schedule to be formulated and circulated ASAP.
2. There is a need to generate funds on PCATP portal through different possible channels for affected Architects and Town Planners.
  - a. Concerned Government Authority to be contacted if possible. This can be a tedious process and has time implication. However, it is suggested to form a committee in this regard who can pursue this issue with the government.
  - b. In parallel, a much quick initiative to start from PCATP family. Funds to be generated with the contribution from PCATP members. An official communication to be circulated in this regard.
3. Loan Schemes from Banks / Financial Institutions to be evaluated. PM Kamyab Jawan scheme (Loan) is although closed by now. However, a similar loan initiative can be very helpful for self-employed and un-employed Architects and Town Planners.
4. It is also suggested that PCATP can roll out a boot camp to generate Business Initiative Ideas where potential Architects / Town Planners (unemployed) can come up with business ideas to locally produce construction and fit out related goods and services. Business incubators can have alliance with PCATP and prepare a program for the Architects / Town Planners hub. Business ideas to be pitched to the Potential Investors from the industry. It will lead to grow entrepreneurial thirst in our youth professionals, and can contribute towards a much desired, better and healthier future of Pakistani Architects and Town Planners Community.
5. The above actions and suggestions can be supplemented / added / modified. We would welcome input in this regard from PCATP members.

# #1 [introduction]

The main objective of this survey was to ascertain the nature and extent of difficulties being faced by members of the architecture and town planning profession during these difficult times in Pakistan. The gathered information and the analytical data will be shared among all stakeholders for understanding the state of the current situation and subsequently find ways and means to improve and prepare a set of recommendation on the basis of empirical data.

The survey comprised of three sections:

- A. Personal Profile
- B. Clients / Practice
- C. Impact of Coronavirus and Lockdown

This report describes the survey methodology, the key findings of the survey, and makes recommendations based on these findings.



## #2 [methodology]

In this section we describe the survey instrument, the approach to data collection, the sampling procedure and validity of the sample, and the data analysis approach.

### 2.1. Survey instrument

The first step of the survey involved the development of a survey instrument. The challenge before us was to develop an instrument which would be comprehensive enough to cover all the dimensions of the crisis, without becoming so lengthy that respondents would not fill the survey. In order to reduce the time for filling the form, we developed response options for open-ended questions, enabling respondents to choose one or more responses from the options available simply by putting a tick against the relevant box. We pilot tested the instrument with a few respondents, and made some minor changes based on the feedback received.

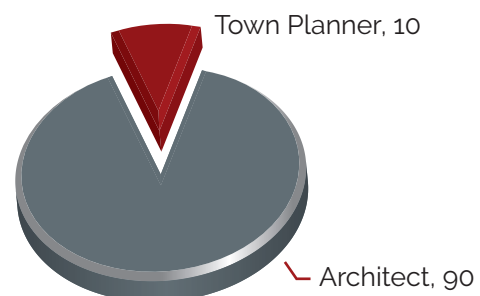
### 2.2. Data Collection

The survey form was uploaded on Google Survey and the survey link was emailed to all the 7042 architects and 1340 town planners registered with PCATP on 2nd May, 2020 with a week to complete the survey. Reminders were sent out on 11th May for the final deadline of 15th May, 2020.

### 2.3. Sample

Filled survey forms were received from 656 respondents (594 architects and 62 town planners) (see Figure 1) or 7.8% of the total population. This sample size had a margin of error of +/- 1.99% at 95% confidence level. That is we can be 95% sure that our responses represent the total population of architects registered with PCATP, with a very small margin of error. This is a highly scientific sample, since the standard for an adequate sample size is one with a margin of error of +/- 5.0% at 95% confidence level.<sup>1</sup>

► **Figure 1:**  
Proportion of architects  
and town planners  
in research sample,  
% (N=656)



1 <https://surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Using Google Survey had a number of advantages. Firstly, the data was automatically converted into an excel file, which could then be converted into an SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) file for analysis. This saved time, and ensured the accuracy of the data, compared to manual data entry.

In the first round of analysis we prepared frequency tables of the data. In some cases (e.g. year of graduation, year of PCATP membership, number of dependents, time period at current job, monthly salary, etc.) we created categories (e.g. 2001-2005, 2006-2010, etc.).

In the second round of analysis, we applied crosstabs to some of the data. For example, to see if there was a difference in the rate of IAP membership between younger and older respondents, we compared their responses by their year of graduation, and checked if the difference in responses was statistically significant.

Once all the data had been organised, we created graphic presentations to make the data easy to understand. These graphs are presented extensively in this report, and were used to share the findings and their analysis among stakeholders. Their feedback contributed to the analysis given in this report.

# #3 [key findings]

The key findings of the survey are presented under the same headings as the survey sections:

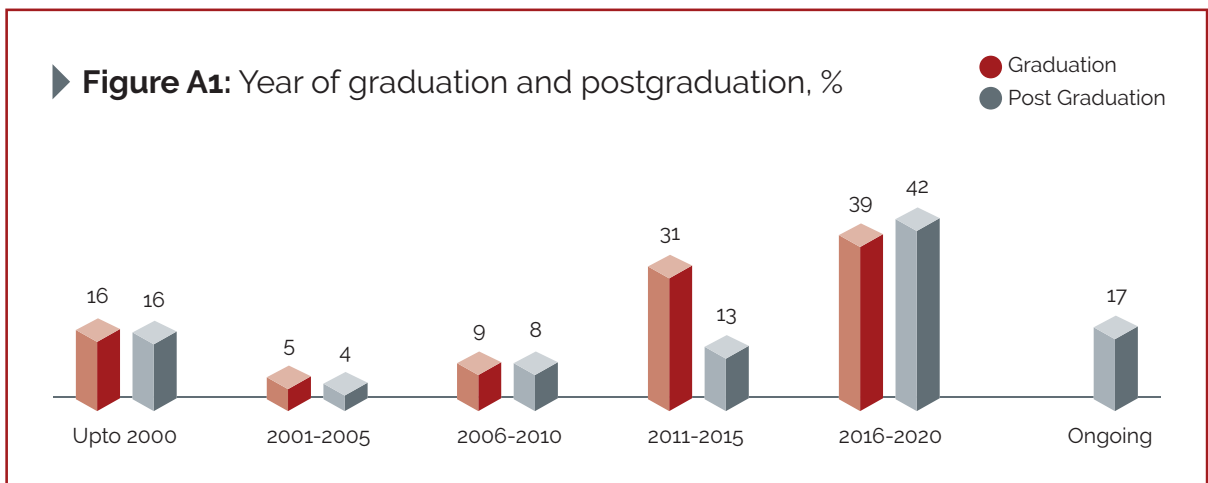
**A** Personal Profile

**B** Clients/ Practice

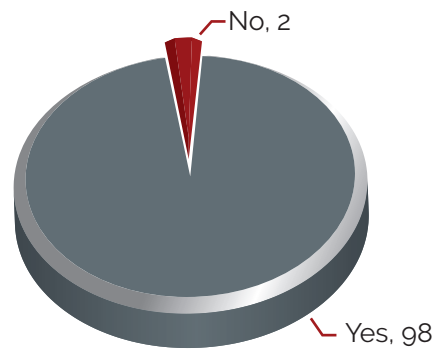
**C** Impact of Coronavirus and Lockdown

## A. Personal Profile

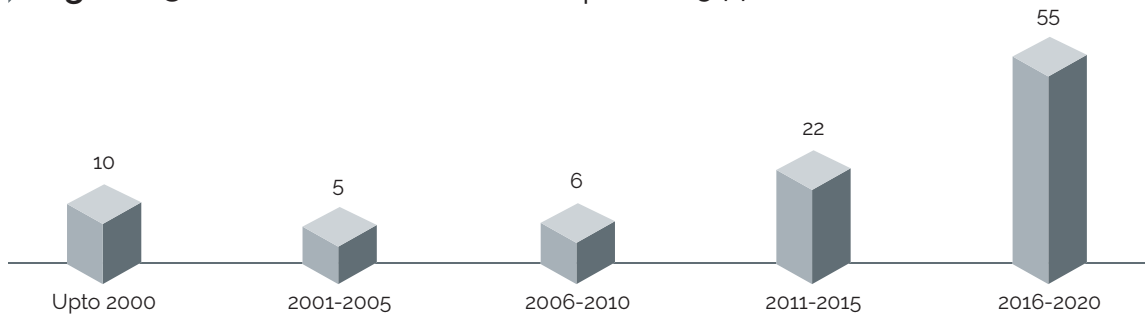
The basic individual information was collected to do an experience based analysis of professional standing. All the respondents were graduates, while 165 (25%) had done post-graduation. Some 70% of respondents got their graduation and 55% got their post-graduation degrees in the last ten years, while 17% were in the process of completing their post-graduation degrees. Almost all (98%) the respondents were PCATP members, which was understandable since the survey questionnaire was sent out to architects and town planners in the PCATP membership database. Three-fourths of respondents (77%) got their PCATP membership in the last 10 years, with 55% getting the membership in the last five years, a reflection of the young age of the majority of respondents. The data clearly points to the young age of the majority of respondents (Figures A1 to A3).



► **Figure A2:**  
Are you a registered member of PCATP, % (N=656)

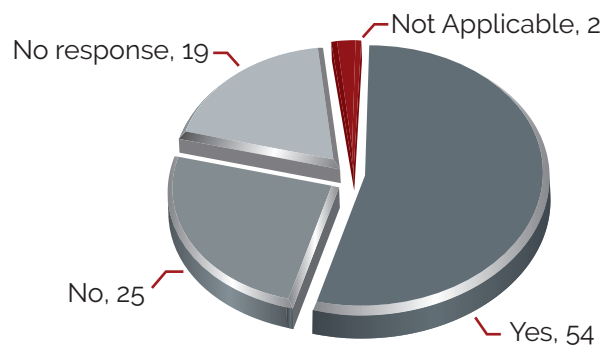


► **Figure A3:** Year of PCATP membership, % (N=544)



About half the respondents (54%) said that they paid income tax, a fourth said that they did not pay income tax, while the remaining did not respond or said that the question was not applicable to them (Figure A4). A far greater proportion of older compared to middle-aged and younger respondents, and partners and sole practitioners compared to employees said that they paid income tax.

► **Figure A4:**  
Are you an income tax payer?  
% (N=656)



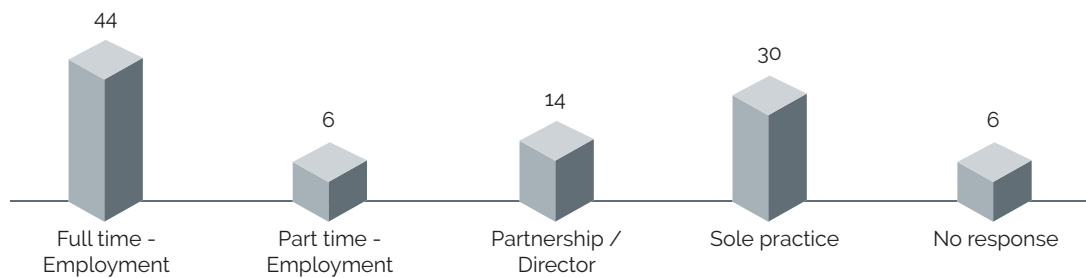
## #3 [key findings]

**B. Clients / Practice**

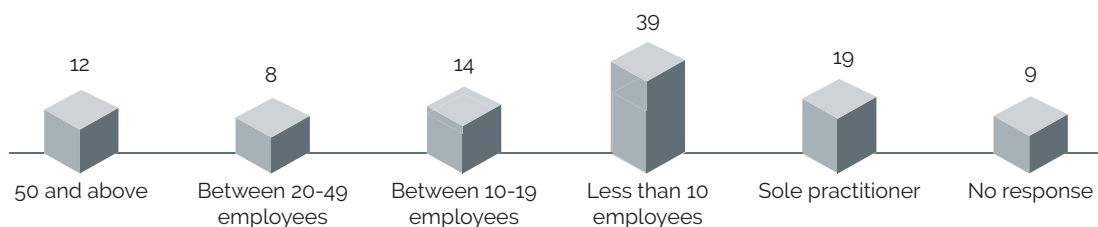
This section of the survey was designed to explore the nature of practice (employment or business, organizational size), the location of practice, and the nature of clients/work.

Some 39% of the respondents were from small organizations (<10 employees), while 22% were from medium (10-49 employees), 12% were from large organizations (50 and above employees), and 19% were sole practitioners. Half of the respondents said they were employed, including 44% full time and 6% part-time, while 30% said they were doing sole practice and 14% said they were partner/director in a company (Figures B1 and B2). Full-time employment was highest and sole practice was lowest in those who had graduated in the last five years, while sole practice was highest and full-time employment was lowest in those who had graduated 15 years ago or earlier.

► **Figure B1:** Category of practice, % (N=656)

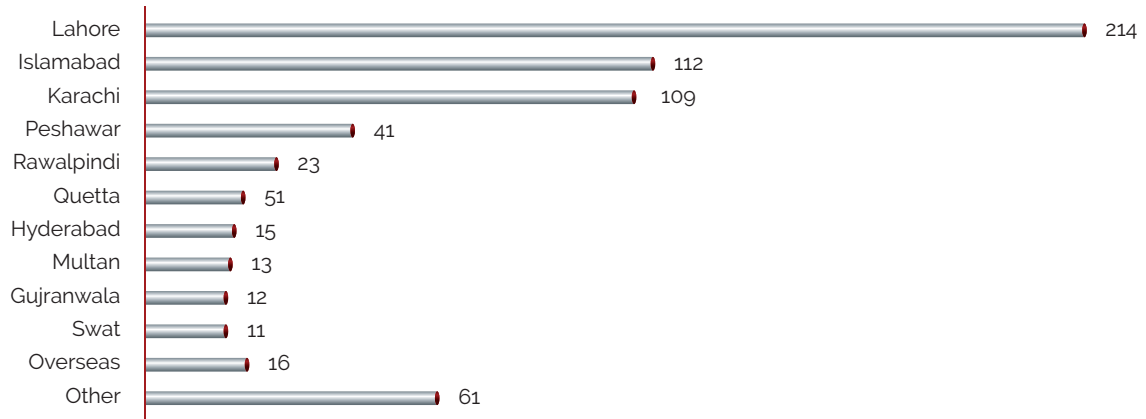


► **Figure B2:** Approximate number of employees, % (N=656)

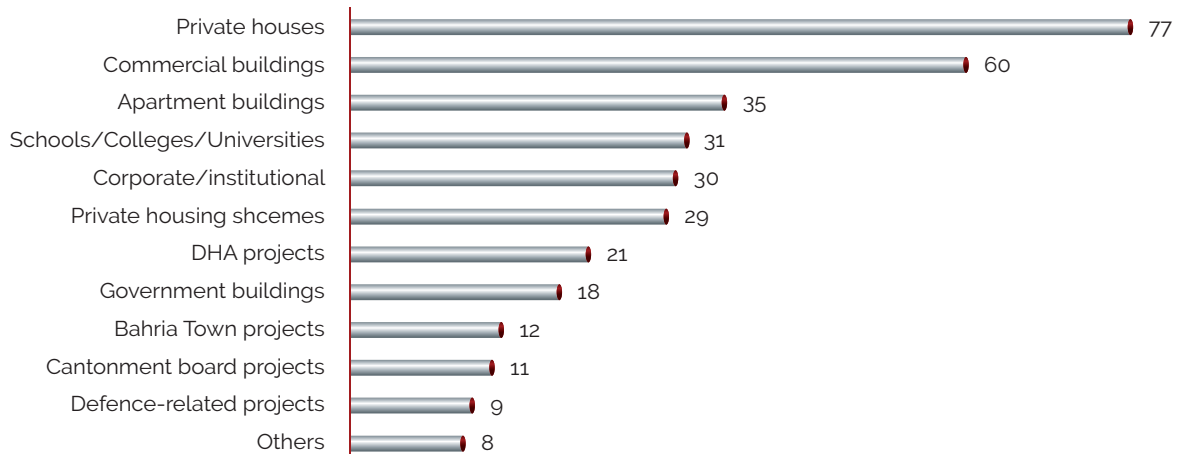


Respondents were practicing across Pakistan, mostly in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi. The most common types of clients/work included private houses, commercial buildings, and private housing schemes, followed by apartment buildings, educational institutions, corporate / institutional clients and government buildings (Figures B3 to B4).

► **Figure B3:** Location of your practice (N=656)



► **Figure B4:** Location of your practice (N=656)



## C. Impact of Coronavirus and Lockdown

This part of the survey was designed to explore the impact of the coronavirus crisis and the resulting lockdown on the business, employment and lives of architects and town planners.

### C1. Own Business / Company

This section of the survey explored the impact of the coronavirus crisis and the resulting lockdown on respondents who ran their own businesses.

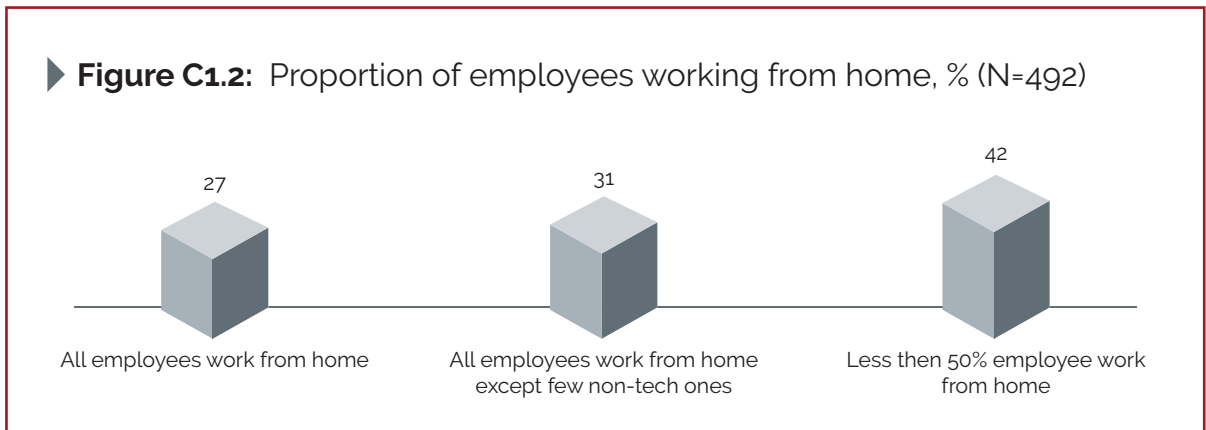
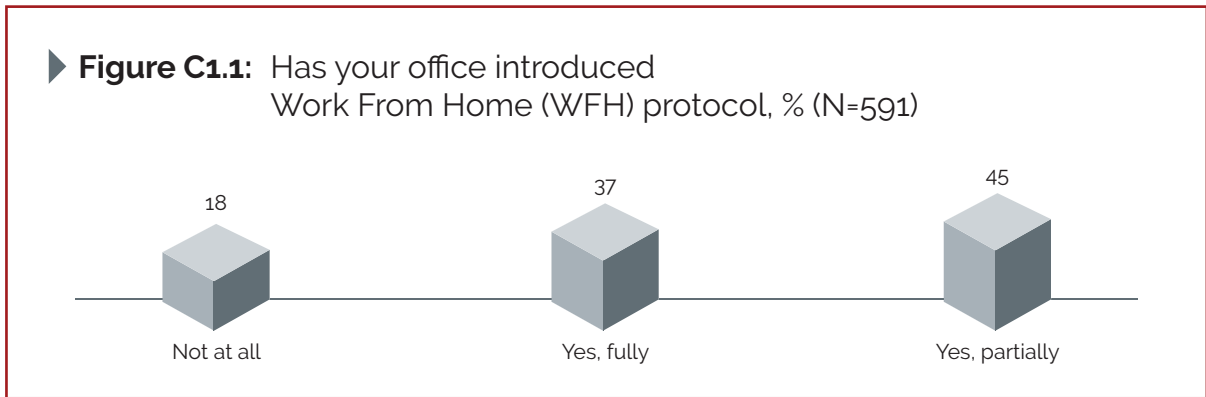
Some 37% respondents said that their office had fully introduced Work From Home (WFH) protocols in their offices, while 45% said that they had introduced it partially,

### #3 [key findings]

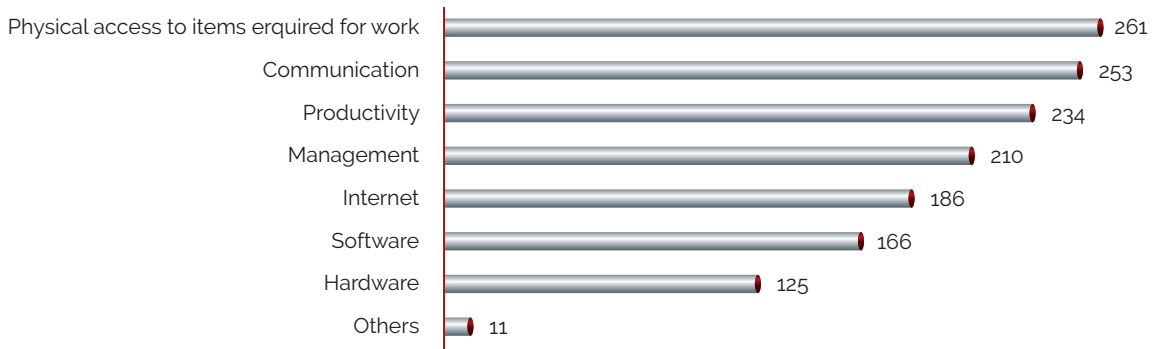
and 18% said they had not introduced it at all. A fourth of respondents said that all employees were working from home, a third said that all except a few non-tech employees were working from home, while 42% said that less than 50% employees were working from home (Figures C1.1 and C1.2).

Respondents mentioned a number of issues that their office had to consider when deciding to go for WFH, including physical access to items required for work, communication, productivity, and management, followed by internet, software and hardware issues. Regarding the options offices were using for working remotely, most respondents mentioned using office server through cellular data / broadband, and remote working software like Team Viewer / Zoom / Microsoft Teams, while a few mentioned email, WhatsApp, and phone. Half the respondents agreed that it would be helpful to know about the experience of working remotely in other offices, 11% said it would not be helpful, while a fourth said that it would help to a limited extent (Figures C1.3 to C1.5).

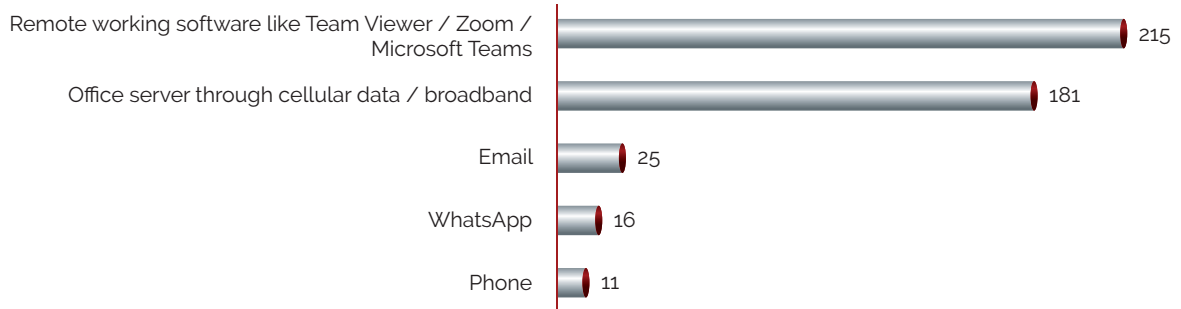
One third of respondents agreed that their clients had been understanding and cooperative while their office was working remotely, while the majority (58%) said that clients had been understanding and cooperative to some extent, with only 9% saying that they had not been understanding and cooperative (Figure C1.6). More tax-paying compared to non-tax paying respondents said that their clients had been understanding and cooperative while their office was working remotely.



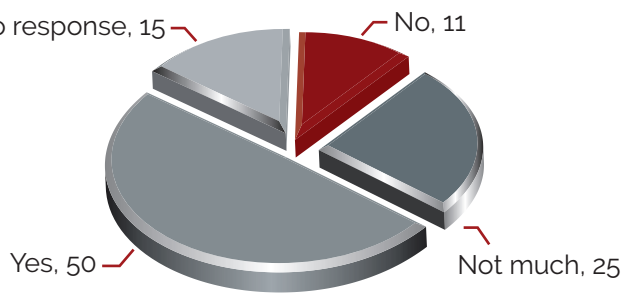
► **Figure C1.3:** Biggest issues your office had to consider when deciding to go for WFH, multiple responses



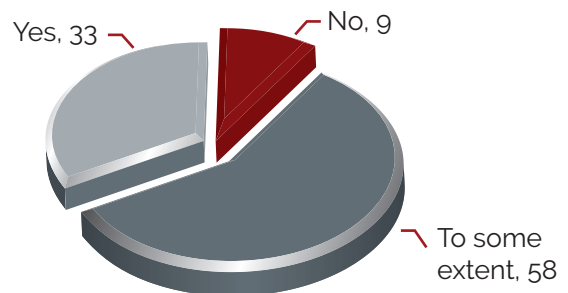
► **Figure C1.4:** Which option are you using for working remotely? multiple responses



► **Figure C1.5:** Would it be helpful to know about the experience of working remotely in other offices?, % (N=656)



► **Figure C1.6:** Have your clients been understanding and cooperative while your office is working remotely? (N=557)





### #3 [key findings]

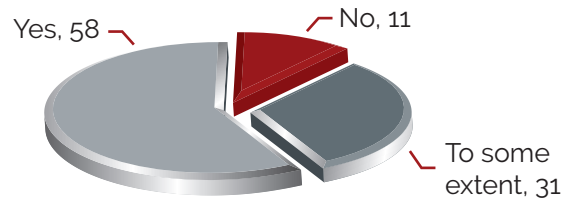
Some 58% respondents said that they were facing financial stress due to the corona virus crisis, a third said that they were facing financial stress to some extent, while only 11% said that they were not facing any financial stress (Figure C1.7). A greater proportion of part-time employees, partners/sole practitioners compared to full-time employees, and respondents from small organizations and sole practices compared to large and medium-sized organizations said that they were facing financial stress due to the corona virus crisis.

The most commonly cited reasons for financial stress included projects being put on hold, no new work assignments, and no regular income due to "lock outs" and site work suspended. Other commonly mentioned reasons included client's inability to pay due to prevailing situation, and fee payment being tied with progress of work achieved at site. A smaller number of respondents mentioned projects being cancelled, or client not being accessible for communication (Figure C1.8).

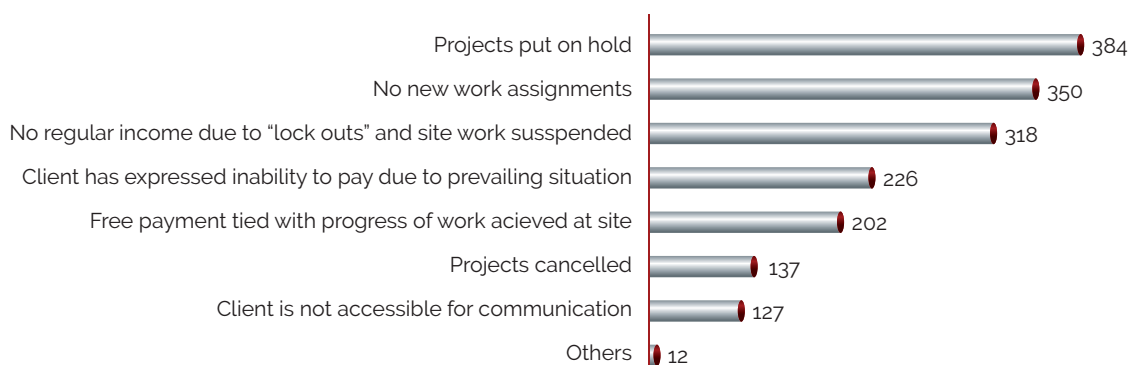
Almost half the respondents said that they found the reasons for financial stress alarming for their work or survival, while a slightly smaller number said that they found the reasons for financial stress alarming only to some extent. Only 11% said that they did not find the reasons for financial stress alarming for their work or survival (Figure C1.9). The sense of alarm was greater among sole practitioners and partners compared to employees.

A third of respondents said that government intervention/instruction could assist in improving their present predicament, while an equal number said that financial assistance would better serve the purpose, but only 7% mentioned an interim loan. A third of respondents said that the government body dedicated for such assistance could assist them, while a smaller number mentioned their client or the particular department they dealt with. Only 3% mentioned a bank, which is understandable since only 7% wanted a loan (Figures C1.10 and C1.11).

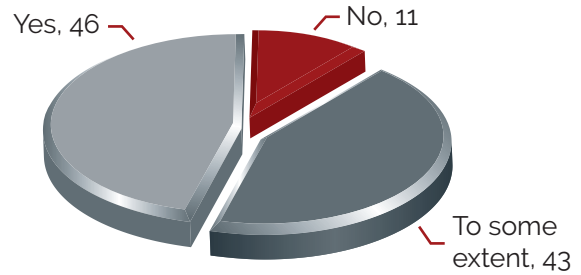
► **Figure C1.7:**  
Are you facing financial stress due to corona virus crises?  
% (N=590)



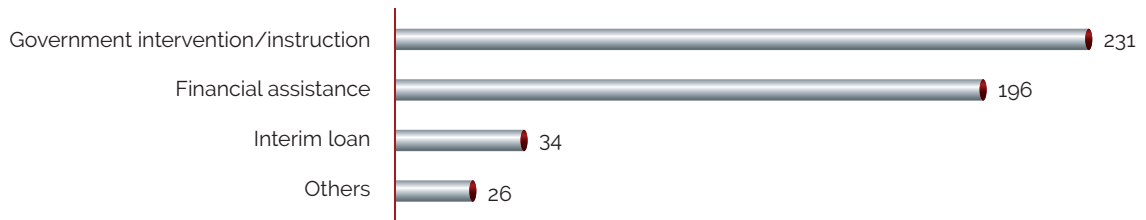
► **Figure C1.8:** Reasons for financial stress during coronvirus crisis  
multiple responses



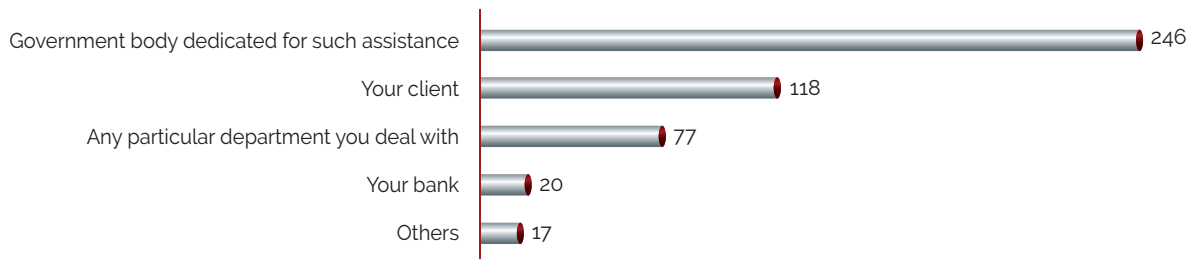
► **Figure C1.9:**  
Are any of the reasons for financial stress alarming for your work or survival?, % (N=549)



► **Figure C1.10:** Which of the following measures could assist in improving your present predicament, multiple responses



► **Figure C1.12:** Who of the following could assist in improving your present predicament, multiple responses



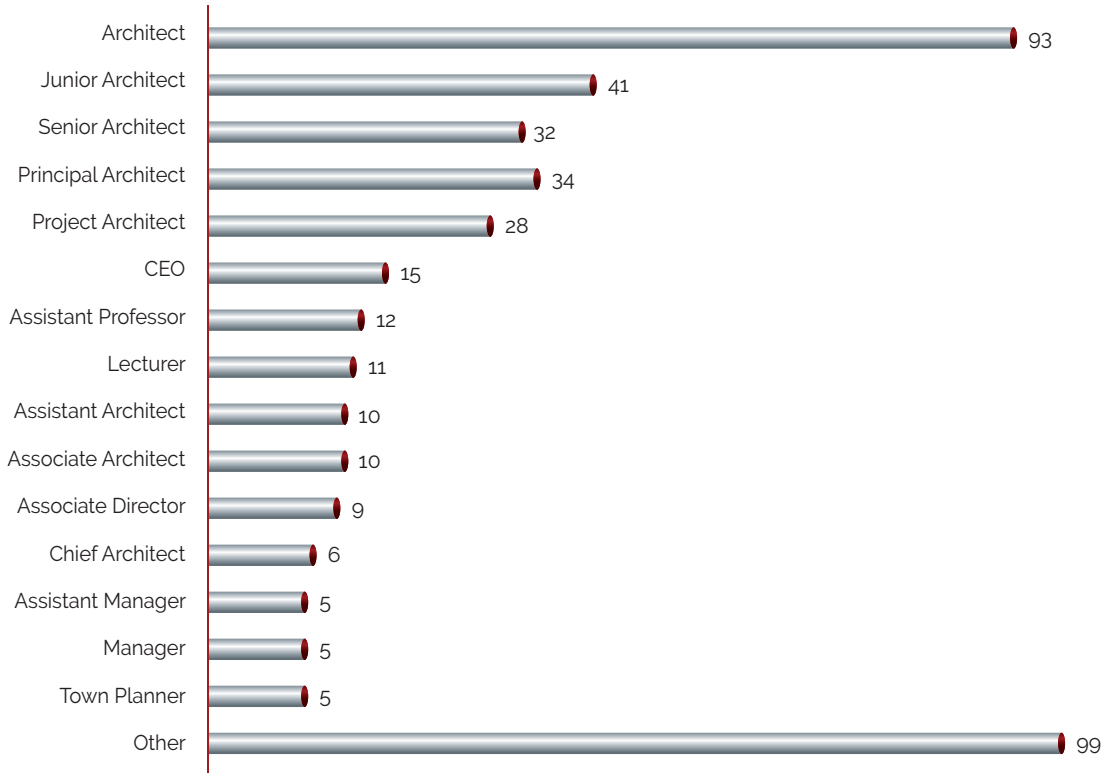
## C2. Employed

This section of the survey explored the impact of the coronavirus crisis and the resulting lockdown on respondents who were employed.

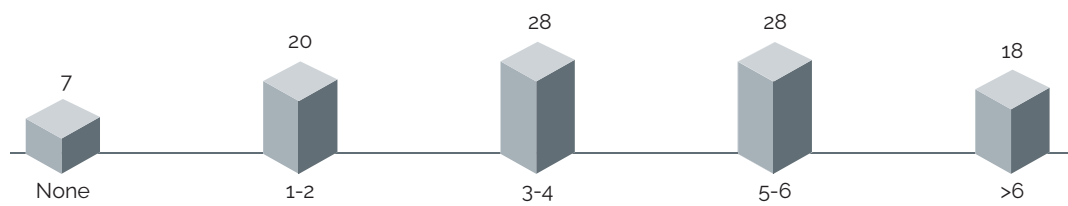
The majority of respondents were architects, and ranged from Junior to Senior and Principal Architects, mostly engaged in offices/projects, while a few were involved in academia. About three-fourths of respondents had 3 or more dependents, including 18% who had more than 6 dependents, while a fourth had 1-2 dependents or none. Almost two-thirds of the respondents said that someone other than themselves supported the family (Figures C2.1 to C2.3). This was truer of younger and middle-aged compared to older respondents and employees compared to partners and sole practitioners.

#3 [key findings]

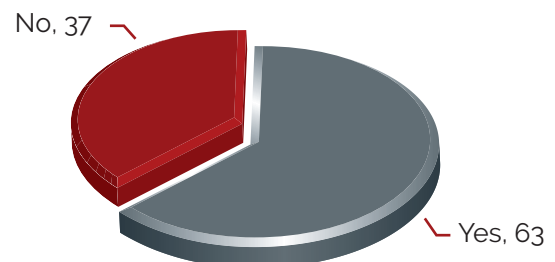
► **Figure C2.1:** Your designation/position at the office of employment (N=415)



► **Figure C2.2:** Number of dependents, % (N=470)



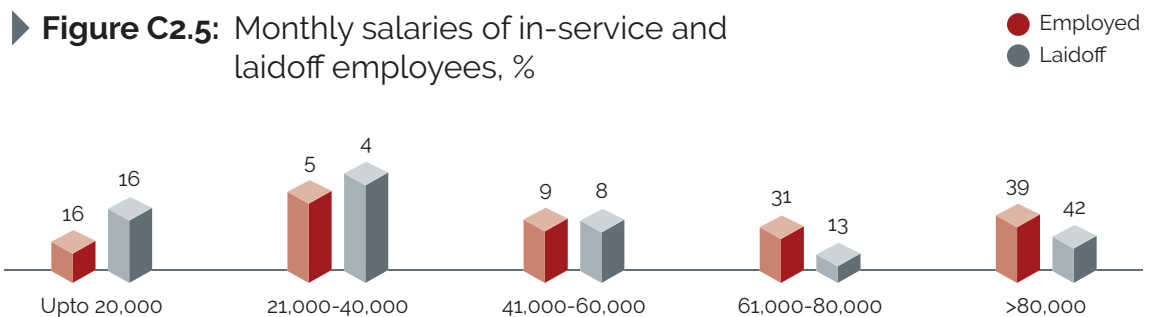
► **Figure C2.3:** Does anyone other than yourself support the family? % (N=535)



### #3 [key findings]

Some 153 out of 515 respondents (30%) said that they had been laid off after the corona crisis (Figure C2.4). This was truer of younger and middle-aged compared to older, part-time compared to full time employees, sole practitioners compared to partners, non-tax payers compared to tax-payers, and respondents from small organizations and sole practices compared to large and medium-sized organizations.

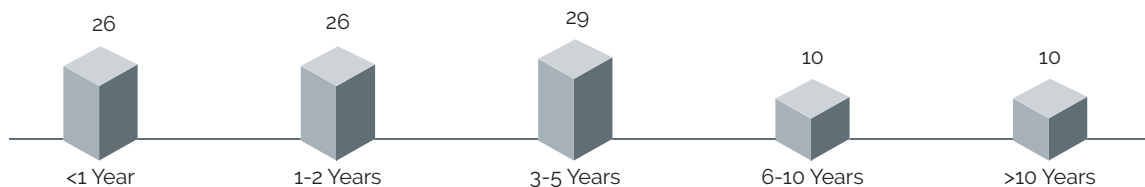
Considering their qualifications, most respondents had low monthly salaries. Those who were laid off had significantly lower average salaries compared to those who were currently employed. For example 25% of laid off but only 10% of in-service employees had monthly salaries of Rs. 20,000 or lower, while 37% in-service but only 11% laid off employees had monthly salaries over Rs. 60,000 (Figures C2.4 and C2.5). A greater proportion of respondents working in small compared to large organizations were in the lowest income category.



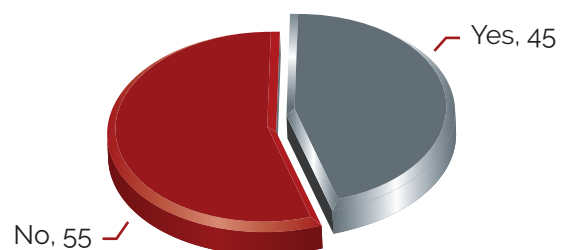
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The period of current employment of in-service employees ranged from less than one to over ten years. Some 45% of in-service employees reported a reduction in salary due to the crisis, with a third reporting up to 25% reduction in salaries, 42% reporting 25-50% reduction, and a fourth reporting more than 50% reduction in salaries (Figures C2.6 to C2.8).

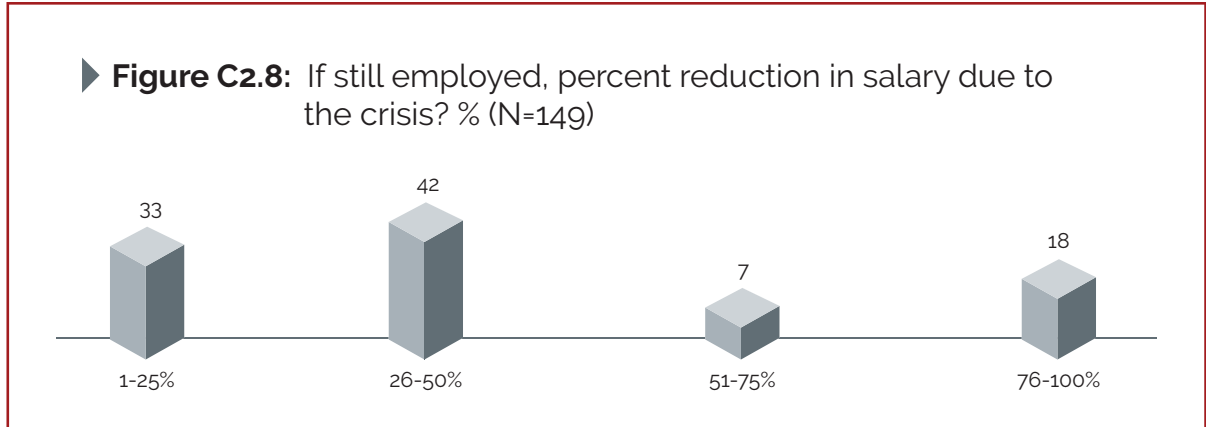
► **Figure B2.6:** If still employed, your time period at the current job, % (N=213)



► **Figure C2.7:**  
If still employed, any reduction in salary due to the crisis?  
% (N=409)



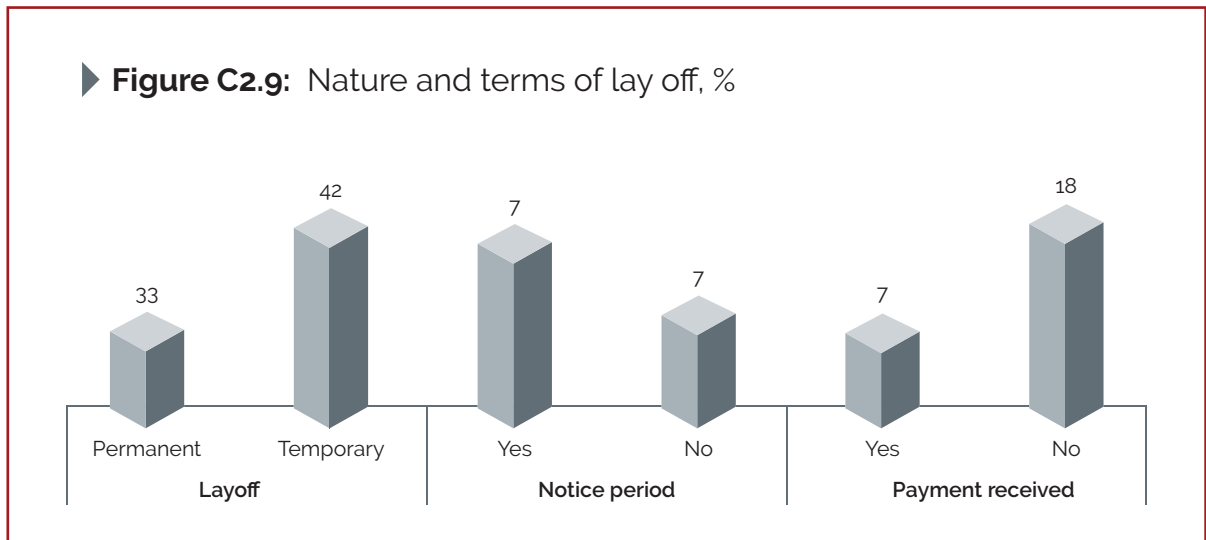
#3 [key findings]



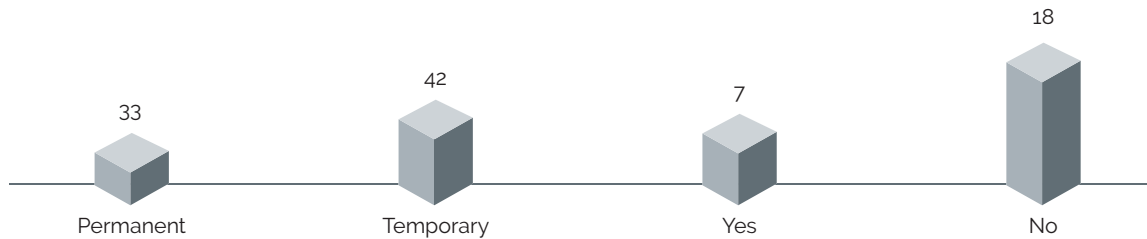
Of the 153 employees who said they had been laid off, the majority said that their layoff was temporary (74%), they received a notice period (66%), but did not receive any payment on layoff (75%) (Figure C2.9). A significantly greater proportion of younger and middle-aged compared to older, in the lowest compared to the highest salary bracket, and part-time compared to full-time employees and partners/sole practitioners said that their layoff had been temporary. A significantly greater proportion of employees in the upper compared to lower salary bracket said that they were given a notice period before being laid off. A significantly greater proportion of younger and middle-aged compared to older and upper compared to lower salary bracket respondents said that they did not receive any payment after being laid off.

Half of the laid off employees who were paid their dues said that they received over 75% of payment, while the rest received a lower proportion of their dues, with 7% receiving 25% or less of their due payment (Figure C2.10).

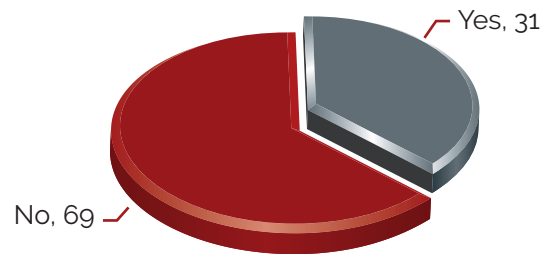
Two-thirds of employees said that they did not have any problem in getting their dues from their employers (Figure C2.11). This was truer of part-time employees, tax payers, and younger and middle-aged compared to older respondents. Problems mentioned included delays in payment of salary and employer not being able to pay.



► **Figure C2.10:** Percentage of salary received as payment? (N=41)



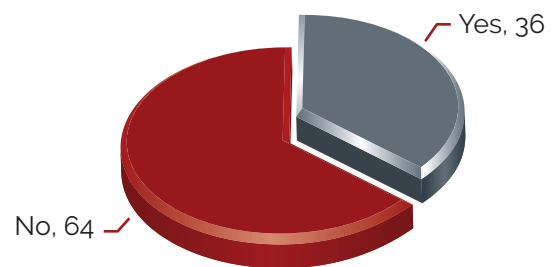
► **Figure C2.11:**  
Any problems in getting dues from your employer?  
% (N=319)



22

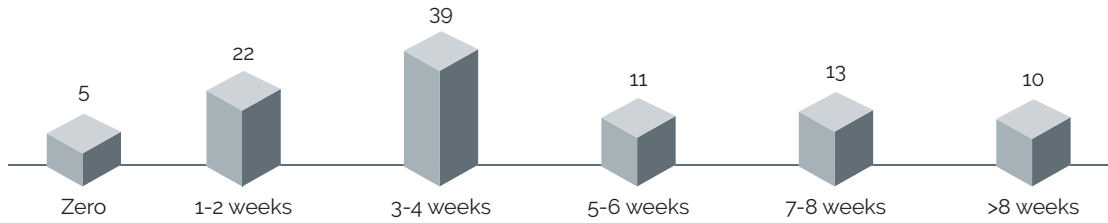
One-third of respondents said that they were still without a job due to the corona crisis (Figure C2.12). This was truer of younger and middle-aged compared to older respondents, employees in the lowest compared to the highest salary bracket, part-time compared to full-time employees, sole practitioners and partners, and respondents in small organizations and sole practices compared to large and medium-sized organizations. Of those still jobless a fourth said they could barely manage 1-2 weeks, 39% said they could manage 3-4 weeks, and a third said they could manage over a month without a job (Figure C2.13).

► **Figure C2.12:**  
Are you still without a job due to the corona crisis?  
% (N=338)



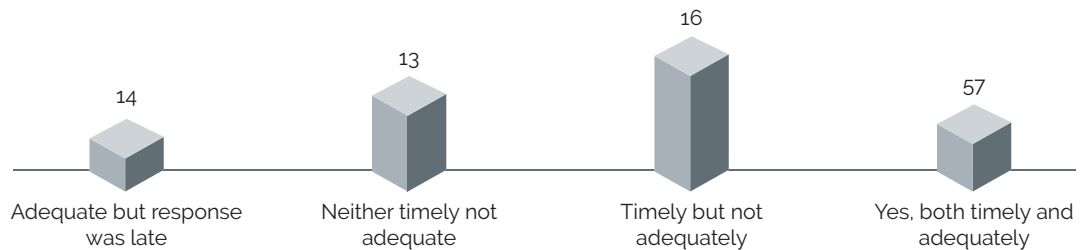
#3 [key findings]

► **Figure C2.13:** How many weeks can you manage without a job?  
% (N=126)



The majority (57%) of respondents said that their employers responded in a timely and adequate manner to the on-going crisis - this was truer of younger and middle-aged respondents from large organizations. The remaining respondents said that the response was either inadequate, or delayed, or both – this was truer of part-time employees.

► **Figure C2.14:** Have your employers responded in a timely and adequate manner to the on-going crises? % (N=382)



# #4 [conclusions & recommendations]

## 4.1. Conclusions

The study highlights certain areas of concern. They include:

- Many organizations are experiencing issues related to implementing WFH in offices, and getting their clients fully on board in this new arrangement, and are in need of help in this regard.
- A significant number of employees are having to attend offices rather than following WFH protocols, which can expose them to risk of coronavirus infection.
- Most respondents running businesses are experiencing financial stress due to projects being put on hold, absence of new projects, and clients' inability to clear payments, and find the resulting stress alarming.
- Most respondents have low salaries considering their qualifications and rising inflation.
- Almost a third of employees have been laid off, with a significant proportion having low salaries and a substantial number of dependents, and most of them are still without a job.
- Most laid off employees have not received their due payments after being laid off.
- A significant number of employers did not respond to the on-going crisis in a timely and/or adequate manner.

At the same time it also highlights some positive aspects. These include:

- The majority of offices have introduced WFH protocols, although most have introduced it partially.
- The majority of employees are still in service rather than being laid off.
- The majority of layoffs are temporary, and most laid off employees have been given a notice period. Those receiving payments have received 75% of their dues.
- Over half of the employers responded in a timely and adequate manner to the on-going crisis.



### #3 [conclusions & recommendations]

#### 4.2. Recommended Set of Executive Actions

Based on the findings of the study we would recommended the following:

1. A series of training programs especially webinars for PCATP members to be initiated. Architect / Town Planner as Mentors to be identified who could effectively maintain working during the Covid19 Pandemic and lock down. Their availability and willingness to share their success stories, WFH strategies, and learnt lessons with the affected Architects and Town Planners is required. A schedule to be formulated and circulated ASAP.
2. There is a need to generate funds on PCATP portal through different possible channels for affected Architects and Town Planners.
  - a. Concerned Government Authority to be contacted if possible. This can be a tedious process and has time implication. However, it is suggested to form a committee in this regard who can pursue this issue with the government.
  - b. In parallel, a much quick initiative to start from PCATP family. Funds to be generated with the contribution from PCATP members. An official communication to be circulated in this regard.
3. Loan Schemes from Banks / Financial Institutions to be evaluated. PM KamyabJawan scheme (Loan) is although closed by now. However, a similar loan initiative can be very helpful for self-employed and un-employed Architects and Town Planners.
4. It is also suggested that PCATP can roll out a boot camp to generate Business Initiative Ideas where potential Architects / Town Planners (unemployed) can come up with business ideas to locally produce construction and fit out related goods and services. Business incubators can have alliance with PCATP and prepare a program for the Architects / Town Planners hub. Business ideas to be pitched to the Potential Investors from the industry. It will lead to grow entrepreneurial thirst in our youth professionals, and can contribute towards a much desired, better and healthier future of Pakistani Architects and Town Planners Community.
5. The above actions and suggestions can be supplemented / added / modified. We would welcome input in this regard from PCATP members.



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