

Looking Beyond the Impact of COVID-19: The Economist View

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Abstract

The Pandemic, which was branded 'Chinese Virus' has now become a global plague. The cause of the COVID 19 was said to be as a result of the Chinese eating rats, snakes, and certain "uncleaned" animals. The virus originating from China was first reported in December and has managed to spread throughout the entire globe. This article seeks to throw more light on the socio-economic impact of the COVID 19 and attempts to further present several solutions that could edge the impact.

Keywords: Public Financial Administration, Economic management, Procurement Acts, Procurement System, Development Economics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The plague emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. COVID-19 was declared to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on the 30th of January, 2020 by the World Health Organization, and it was recognized as a pandemic on the 11th of March, 2020. As of today, more than 1.21 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in over 200 countries and territories, resulting in approximately 65,700 deaths, with more than 252,000 people recovered. According to health specialists, the COVID-19 is mainly spread during close contact, and by small droplets produced during coughing, sneezing, or talking. These small droplets may also be produced during breathing, they rapidly fall to the ground or onto surfaces and are not generally airborne over large distances.

People may also catch COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface and then their face. The virus is reported to survive on surfaces up to 72 hours. It is most contagious during the first 3 days after symptom onset, although spread may be possible before symptoms appear and in later stages of the disease. The time between exposure and symptom onset is typically around 5 days, but may range from 2 to 14 days. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Complications may include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. There is no known vaccine or specific antiviral treatment. Primary treatment is symptomatic and supportive therapy. Recommended preventive measures include hand washing, covering one's mouth when coughing, maintaining distance from other people, monitoring and self-isolation for people who suspect they may be infected.

2.0 CONSPIRACY THEORIES

There have been several conspiracy theories concerning the origin and nature of the COVID-19. This piece, however is not going to talk for nor against any of them, as this is not the core subject in question. People are therefore free to choose or accept whichever theory they believe in. A China-Made Virus: It is believed that China created this virus in order to defeat the Western's (specifically USA, UK and EU) economies. Columnists are able to convince the masses by proving this theory; that China had long prepared for this virus. "the 'Chinese virus' originated in the city of Wuhan, China, and as at now it has reached almost every corner of the world, except the capital of China: Beijing and the economic capital: Shanghai near Wuhan". Another very important argument raised is the fact that the stock market worldwide has almost halved, but the virus has had little effect on the Chinese market. China today celebrates a stop to the epidemic, announcing that they even have a vaccine. The question at hand is, "how could the Chinese create it so quickly without having prior genetic formulation?" - well, if you are the creator of the virus, it is not challenging at all.

No doubt that President Trump is not a fan of China and has been doing his possible best to bring back all American owned businesses from China back to the US. Lately, Trump has been speaking of how great the American economy is becoming with improvement on all fronts thus, jobs were coming back to the US. And yes, Trump initially downplayed (as you would call it) the 'Chinese Virus', saying it was a political hoax. Weeks went by without the necessary measures being put into place. Now it very possible

that China shall OWN the stocks of all Western Alliances and these countries will soon be 'slaves' to their new master – China.

A 5G-made Virus: on the other hand, it is believed that the sanctioning of 5G in China, Wuhan, to be precise initiated the pandemic. It is further explained why countries like Italy, Spain, USA and UK are also strongly affected – they also permitted the use of 5G. This particular theory has taken root and caused havoc in the UK and in other locations. 5G is said to have a frequency ten times higher than that of 4G when it comes into contact with the human body, causing cell poisoning. Our bodies, in an attempt to fight the radiation, kicks out toxins with some Proteins and DNA which then takes up the form of a virus. This is explained to be cell poisoning. A former Vodafone boss believes COVID 19 is by far the largest coverup, "because the fluidlike symptoms of the toxification is similar to that of COVID-19".

3.0 IMPACT OF THE COVID 19

3.1 Hyperinflation

COVID-19 has undeniably caused hyperinflation on certain items in several countries. Ghana is not an exemption: prices of foodstuffs increased greatly due to panic buy; nose masks, gloves, vitamin C became scares with prices doubling; prices of hand sanitizers has become outrageously expensive for the normal Ghanaian populous to purchase. Hyperinflation will be as a result of major supply chain disruptions as major stock sources and hubs like china shut down, businesses will experience material shortages.

3.2 Unemployment

Aside hyperinflation setting in due to high demand on certain goods, several small-scale businesses are at the verge of collapsing due to lockdown in several countries across the globe. This indeed is affecting the economy as money is not flowing through the system. Some workers have already been laid off due to the lockdown. It is estimated that there will be 25% job losses in the country, but this may increase depending on the degree of impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Panic: Most Ghanaians have still not fully understood what COVID-19 really is, creating futile fear. Majority believe that the world is coming to an end, while others do not know how and when this pandemic would cease. Ghanaians would like to compare this pandemic to Ebola. However, there was no record of any Ebola cases in Ghana, and Ebola never resulted in any lockdown nor border closure. Looking at the transfer and death rate, people are really scared.

Investment Lockdown: There are hundreds of business negotiations that have been brought to a halt due to this pandemic. Lockdowns, travel restrictions, etc. enacted by almost all countries in order to curb the spread of COVID -19 has indeed affected Investment opportunities, as foreign investors are now forbidden to enter or to move within the country. This trend is projected to rise as the level of uncertainty upsurges moving forward. Due to the shutdown, Foreign Direct Investment will definitely fall off as investors reassess the market.

Fear of the Abuse of Political Power: Political powers activated by some heads of state have brought a great deal of concern to fellow countrymen. The opposition party in Ghana, NDC raised concerns when the President activated EI 16 which allows him to take certain critical decisions without consulting parliament. The same situation is in Hungary at the moment. Majority of citizens are distrustful of their presidents and are afraid they might abuse this power.

4.0 LOOKING BEYOND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Improvement of the agricultural sector: As food forms part of man's basic needs and is vital in boosting the immune system, the agricultural sector should be improved. This offers a chance to boost domestic production and consumption of food commodities, such as, rice, maize, cassava, yam and chicken. Ghana has a comparative advantage in trading within the West African Sub-region, among countries that have not yet closed their borders to cargo. If care is not taken, uncertainty, fear and panic could also negatively impact the planting decisions of farmers; hence the need for a massive enhancement in the agricultural sector.

Reduction in Government Budget: It would be ideal to see immediate changes in the state's budget, to compensate for emergency expenses. No government was indeed prepared for this deadly encounter. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forecasts growth of just 2.4% in 2020,

down from 2.9% in November. It also said that a “longer lasting and more intensive” outbreak could halve growth to 1.5% in 2020. Ghana’s Real GDP growth is projected to decline from 6.8% to 2.6% for the 2020 fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Ghana anticipates that, the total shortfall in petroleum receipts, import duties, tax revenues and the cost of the preparedness plan and the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme will cost the economy about GH¢ 9.5 billion.

Private Business Development: This would be the best time for Governments (especially in Africa) to promote private businesses. Apart from enhancing local production of goods and services, private investors should be promptly encouraged to take up possible infrastructural projects.

50 CONCLUSION

I believe the Ghanaian Government, just like any other Government is working hard to curb the pandemic. I am very confident in saying that no government was prepared for this scenario. Let’s not forget that GDP, globally is therefore expected to fall as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so is Ghana’s GDP. It is time for the Government to make a bold decision to cut its budget, improve our agriculture sector and help boost Ghanaian businesses. Education on social distancing needs to be augmented. People’s lax attitude towards the COVID-19 pandemics may expedite its spread in Ghana.

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