

EFFECT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MECHANISMS: PERSPECTIVE FROM UGANDA AND NIGERIA

Yinus, Saliu O.¹

Hussaini, Umar Aliyu.^{2*}

Adamu, Danmallam B.³

Jaafar, Ridwan⁴

Nasasira, Jossy⁵

Jimoh, Charles⁶

^{1,5}Kampala International University

²Nkumba University, Uganda

³University of Jos, Nigeria

⁴Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB), Belgium

^{1,6}Ladoke Akintola University of Technology

*corresponding author: aliyuumarhussani@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) birthed a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), which impacted virtually all aspects of human life. The spread of the virus across the globe led to a pandemic that resulted in various response measures imposed by the state as means to curb the spread of the disease which eventually influence the Sustainable development of a nation. The concept of sustainable development of the nation is based on socio-economic and financial-economic and environmental conversation. Despite several studies regarding the impacts of the pandemic on specific aspects of human life and the economy of developing nations like Nigeria and Uganda, the extent to which COVID-19 pandemic influence on Sustainable Development mechanism has not been well explored. This paper examining the effects of COVID-19 on the sustainable development mechanism of the selected regions. Finding from the study revealed that the lockdown had a huge negative influence on sustainable development mechanisms such as socio-economic and financial economic while positively related to the aspect of an environmental conversation by increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation and reduced carbon footprints on the planet. The suggests that all citizen of the selected sampled nation needs to collaborate with governments on the effort to effectively curb the spread of the virus.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, lockdown, environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

The emergency of coronavirus influence the sustainable development of the nation worldwide. The concept of sustainable development of the nation is based on socio-economic and financial economic and environmental conversation. Many people have lost their jobs and livelihoods as a result of the imposed lockdowns and travel restrictions, disrupting economies and social activities and affecting various sectors: education, trade, transport & aviation, labour, public health, amongst others. Conversely, posing a somewhat positive impact on the environment, as human footprints have reduced and governments are pressurized to ban the trade of wildlife to prevent the next pandemic (Cate & Colin, 2020).

The virus (COVID-19) started in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 when a great number of patients presented pneumonia-like symptoms in hospitals (Fan, Liu, Pan, Dougla & Bao, 2020; Sohrabi, Alsafi, O'Neill, Khan, Kerwan, Al-Jabir & Agha, 2020). This was later known to originate from the Wuhan Seafood market from a new virus – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS – CoV-2) that is closely related to the original SARS virus in bat and pangolins, with bats having closer relatedness to SARS-CoV-2 than pangolins (Li, Zai, Zhao, Nie, Li, Foley & Chaillon, 2020). However, much else is still unclear about the transmissibility and whether bats and pangolin are the sources of the novel Covid-19. Wuhan was not locked down since December when the virus was identified until January 23, 2020 (Chen, Yang, Yang, Wang & Bärnighausen, 2020), making efforts to contained the virus at source fruitless (Musinguzi & Asamoah, 2020).

COVID-19 has spread rapidly and has caused great mayhem to communities, countries, and the world entirely, with many lives lost and the number of confirmed cases keep surging. As of August 4, 2020, at least 699,027 people have died and over 18 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 of which 11,731,138 have recovered worldwide (Worldometer, 2020). To combat the virus, researches are being conducted worldwide to find a cure and crucial clinical testing for a vaccine are already underway with encouraging results (Bar-Zeev & Moss, 2020). However, there is still no approved cure or vaccine for widespread use (Li, Liu, Yu, Tang & Tang, 2020) and social distancing and lockdown remain the only options, which have proven effective in flattening the curve (Musinguzi & Asamoah, 2020; Alam, Siddiqui, Imam, Ali, Mushtaque & Ishrat, 2020).

The emergence of the virus and its persistence has caused a great impact worldwide,

such as the loss of jobs, livelihoods, and human lives (ILO, 2020). Consequently, the virus has instituted fear and anxiety in the minds of people (Cao, Fang, Hou, Han, Xu, Dong & Zheng, 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). It has disrupted social and religious activities and has caused an economic meltdown. As a consequence of countries across the world imposing tight restrictions on movements, many people have lost their jobs and livelihoods posing a detrimental impact on economies (ILO, 2020). In an attempt to understand the impact of the virus and to add to the existing body of knowledge, we looked at the effects of COVID-19 on the sustainable development of the selected region, especially as it relates to the socio-economic, health, education, and environmental conversation aspect.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development Mechanism

The report of the World Summit on Social Development (2005) acknowledged three core areas of sustainable development, called The Three Pillars of Sustainability. The pillars are economic development, environmental development, and social development, also informally known as profit, planet, and people. These three cores vary in basis, but, are similar in collective goal and place each other into consideration. Sustainability has been crossing boundaries in all areas of society. Nations around the world are taking major steps in creating a society that functions and Prosper with sustainable development through some basic sustainable development mechanisms like education, health management, socio, and financial development.

COVID-19 and Sustainable Development

A report from (UNDP,2020) revealed that that COVID could drive the number of people living in extreme poverty to over 1 billion by 2030, with a quarter of a billion pushed into extreme poverty as a direct result of the pandemic. This serves as a pointer to the extent to which covid19 influenced the sustainable development of a nation worldwide. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that during the first quarter of 2020, 5.4% of global working hours were lost (equivalent to 155 million full-time equivalents (FTE) jobs) to the virus with China and other Asia/Pacific countries being the hardest hit, accounting for 80% of the global reduction in working hours. The second quarter of the year has seen a greater impact, revealing a 14% decline in working hours, equivalent to 400 million FTE jobs lost worldwide with lower-middle-income countries being the hardest hit. During this later quarter,

different regions and sub-regions experienced different degrees of job and income loss: Asia and the Pacific recorded the highest (235 million), followed by the Americas (70 million), Europe and Central Asia (45 million), Africa (45 million), and the Arab States (8 million FTE jobs) (ILO, 2020).

Lu, Wang, Lin, and Li (2020) surveyed the occurrence of fear, anxiety, and depression between medical and administrative staff, using questionnaires to measure the rate at various numeric rating scales (NRS). Their findings have shown that the severity of fear, anxiety, and depression differ significantly between the groups with front line medical staff in close contact with infected patients showed higher scores in fear

COVID-19 and Education Sector

Evidence from Literatures revealed the relevance of education sustainable development of any nation cannot be underestimated and efforts to combat the spread of the virus has resulted in complete closure of many educational institutions (from primary to tertiary institutions) worldwide with great socio-economic implication. The financial burden on low-income parents has increased as childcare costs such as food, healthcare, and remote learning increased (Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, Kerwan, Al-Jabir, Iosifidis & Agha, 2020).

Studies have shown an alarming increase in the rate of domestic violence as a direct effect of stay-at-home orders (Campbell, 2020; Chandan, Taylor, Bradbury-Jones, Nirantharakumar, Kane & Bandyopadhyay, 2020). Furthermore, the virus has also led to the cancellation or postponement of conferences. In some cases, conferences have moved online holding virtually on zoom, Twitter, and similar platforms. These remote platforms are no match to physical meetings that have greater networking and job seeking opportunities (Nicola et al., 2020).

COVID-19 and Environmental Impact

Due to the imposed partial or total lockdown as response measures to flatten the curve of the virus (by reducing community transmission) in many countries of the world, the rate of Green House Gases (GHGs, such as CO₂, CH₄, N₂O water vapor, etc.) emission have drastically reduced (Aletta & Osborn, 2020). Day to day human activities, social gatherings, religious activities (such as Hajj), scientific conferences, sports, tourism, etc. Have all come to a halt or reduced for months now. All these activities are accompanied by human footprints on the environment translating to a reduction in air pollution (from motor-vehicles, aircraft, small and large industries,

etc.) (Dutheil, Baker, & Navel, 2020; Gautam, 2020), water pollution (such industrial effluents), and noise pollution (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020). In addition to the reduction in air pollution levels, the reduction in aircraft movement worldwide (ICAO, 2020), is a notable positive impact on avian life, as bird-aircraft conflicts (birdstrikes) may also reduce. Just a century ago, humans with their aircraft joined birds in the airspace. Since then the aviation industry has witnessed great development and aircraft movements have intensified as a result of the human need for air travel and transboundary operations (El-Sayed, 2019). This has contributed to serious bird strikes over the past years (El-Sayed, 2019). Furthermore, the lockdown in many countries of the world where migratory birds' flyways are located may help to reduce their illegal killing, an event celebrated at flyways and stop over sites, in parts of Africa (Eason, Rabia & Attum, 2016).

Assessment of COVID 19 Pandemic and sustainable development in Uganda

The educational system and Unemployment Issues.

In terms of social effects, the closure of schools, places of worship, entertainment venues negatively impacting the quality of life and has the potential to impact human capital development going forward: In the education sector, the impact will be felt by low and average-income households in both public and private schools, given the inability to access innovative educational instructions. More than 17.5 million people are in both public and private schools, all seated at home. Even though the government of Uganda has partially opened up schools which are being implemented in phases, some students have abandoned studying because of overstaying homes and some scenarios show that some female students have been pregnant while at home and this has affected the total number of students who have managed to return to school.

COVID 19 has also led to Unemployment for both formal and informal workers: The closure of the business is already affecting millions of Uganda's who depend on them for employment. According to the National labour force survey (2016/17), the informal economy alone employs 84.9 percent of the population, 90% of whom are youth (10-30 years). Closure of business implies that this segment of the population is already out of the market. Survival could imply the adoption of negative coping strategies, such as cutting down on consumption to the barest minimum, theft, and insecurity. The shock on the services sector, which contributes to 43.5% of GDP⁹ and employs close to 43% of the total labour force (67% of whom are in urban areas, and

more than 80% in Kampala alone¹⁰) will significantly affect growth and livelihoods of millions of Ugandans. Overall, the pandemic has directly affected the livelihoods of more than 60% employed in both industry and services, close to 90% of whom depend on these two sectors in urban areas. These sectors are largely informal, employing 90.5% of young people. Taking an example of teachers in private institutions whose earning is basically from teaching, it has been identified that some teachers have opted for other business so that they can earn a living, and some have lost their jobs completely while others are being paid half salaries which have made it hard for some of the teachers to manage to pay their bills.

Transportation, Tourism, and businesses Aspect

Since 2020, the transport business has been affected due to COVID 19 control measures that have been imposed by the government of Uganda to control the spread of the virus. Public transport was restricted to carry half capacity while transporting passengers to different destinations and this has affected the passengers who pay high transport fees so that the public transporters like busses can also be able to maintain their daily income though they also face the challenge of taking longer to get the customers to fill the entire vehicle for example buses which used to take minutes to get full now they can take approximately 3 hours to get full and this has also affected the income generated per day because the number of vehicles that could leave the bus terminals is reduced in numbers (UNDP – Uganda, 2020).

Tourism is also part of means of generating revenue for the Uganda government, the rise of COVID 19 has caused immediate losses in the tourism industry of Uganda: Uganda's Tourism contributes approximately 10 percent of GDP and over USD 1.6 billion in foreign exchange and has made significant strides with annual international arrivals rising from 1,684 in 2013 to 1,927 in 2017. The stoppage of airline travels and the imposition of quarantines on inbound travelers across the globe led to the complete fall in the number of tourist arrivals, and distortion of the entire value chain. The effects are far reaching given that the sector contributes 6% of total employment, directly and indirectly. In 2017 alone, tourism employed 605,500 people (6.3% of total employment). Following the immediate drop-in occupancy rates, several large hotels laid off more than 1,000 workers, each, with more layoffs anticipated due to the lockdown.

A recent survey by the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC, 2020), indicates that

micro and small businesses which employ most of the urban poor, have experienced the most severe effects compared to medium and large-scale businesses. This may be because 47% of informal businesses in Kampala alone sell directly to individuals or households (Morgan, 2018). This has further exacerbated pre-existing credit constraints as 69% of the businesses surveyed by EPRC reported a decline in credit, with 34% experiencing a severe decline. This has made many micro and small business owners fail to meet their loan obligations and may face rising interest rates and crippled businesses. The lockdown has further led to a surge in unemployment. The EPRC has projected that 3.8 million people are likely to lose their jobs temporarily, while 625,957 are predicted to lose their jobs permanently. Besides, 80% of the workers are likely to lose their jobs permanently in Kampala alone (Beau briefing paper, 2020).

The potential rise in prices of food has negatively affected food security and welfare of the population in Uganda, considering that food constitutes 45.5 percent of household monthly expenditure, price rises can have devastating effects at the household level. Due to the Lockdown that was imposed on the citizens of Uganda, the demand for food increased because people were stocking food because they didn't know what was coming next, and also the lockdown that shutdown movement of people to different districts brought food scarce because some people are long distance farmers which affected their movement hence bringing down food production and an increase in prices which has an overall negative effect on the economy of the nation.

The emergence of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has imposed a threat on health, economy, social relations globally. In Nigeria, there has been confirmed cases of COVID-19 across the 36 states including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). In response to curtail the spread of the virus, the federal government of Nigeria imposed restriction measures which led to total and or partial closure of the economy. In the process, economies are grinding to a halt, jobs and livelihoods are lost on scales never seen before. The impact is huge and increasing in low and middle-income countries, especially in Nigeria with over 202 million population (World Bank, 2020)

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria, citizens from all 36 states of the nation witness different challenges (UNHCR,2020). The lockdown in all states has affected mobility with limited access to basic needs including food and other commodities impacting livelihood opportunities. A citizen seeking means to go out for daily bread

is having to pay double for transportation due to the measures put in place during the ongoing pandemic, the cost of living has gone high considering the increase of food commodities, it is difficult to access basic health and hygiene facilities to comply with physical distancing measures. The level of the unemployment rate is high. And these put a threat to socio and economic development of the nation.

COVID-19 and Wildlife Trade in Nigeria

A staggering number of wild animals are farmed, poached, and commercialized for pets, food, and medicine in our world today. Wildlife trade has become so lucrative with profits worth more than \$20 billion per year (Alacs, Georges, FitzSimmons & Robertson, 2010; Volpato, Fontefrancesco, Gruppuso, Zocchi & Pieroni, 2020), at the cost of the environment as it paves the way to the extinction of the species involved. Recent development and on the environment and conservation is the pressure to ban the trade and consumption of wildlife in many parts of the world (Cate & Colin, 2020), like China where it has already been banned (Staden, 2020).

Studies and reports by locals and traditional medicine practitioners in Nigeria have shown an alarming decrease of pangolins and other wildlife in forests owing to pre-COVID-19 human activities (Soewu & Adekanola, 2011). In Ghana (Boakye, Pietersen, Kotzé, Dalton & Jansen, 2015), Sierra Leone (Maxwell et al., 2014), Nigeria (Soewu & Adekanola, 2011), Benin (Akpona, Djagoun & Sinsin, 2008), as well as across India (Vijayakumar, Prabhu, Yabesh & Pragashraj, 2015), Pakistan (Altaf, Javid, Umair, Iqbal, Rasheed & Abbasi, 2017), China (Fan et al., 2020) amongst others, different parts of the whole animal is harvested and commercialized for various medico-magical, spiritual uses, and as food. The demand for this creature has led to it being on the brink of extinction (Volpato et al., 2020). This serves as a possible lesson to learn to protect and avoid wildlife trafficking.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings, the study concluded that the lockdown had a huge negative influence on sustainable development mechanisms such as socio-economic and financial economic while positively related to aspects of an environmental conversation by increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation and reduced carbon footprints on the planet. Therefore, all citizen of the selected sampled nation needs to collaborate with governments on the effort to effectively curb the spread of the virus.

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