



Impact of COVID-19 on South Sudan: A Review on Social and Economic Management Policies from the First Wave

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors GRD and GNCM designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, authors GRD and MR, wrote the protocol, authors GRD, GNCM, KJD and WX wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors JH, CBV and AY managed the analyses of the study. Authors JH, GRD, GNCM and AY managed the literature searches. Ideally, all authors contributed equally and read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/SAJSSE/2022/v13i130344

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/83101>

Review Article

Received 02 December 2021

Accepted 04 January 2022

Published 05 January 2022

ABSTRACT

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease, i.e., novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) emerged in Mainland China in Wuhan the capital of Hubei Province. It spreads through droplets produced while coughing or sneezing. Its symptoms include fever, dry cough, fatigue, sputum production, shortness of breath, sore throat, etc. In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a "Pandemic" which affected human lives and economies. South Sudan is a developing country and does not have adequate resources to overcome this pandemic (COVID-19).

Aims: The primary objective of this article is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the youngest country in the African continent (South Sudan) on its weak economy coupled with hyperinflation and depreciation of currency etc. and lessons learned from other countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology: A review was carried out to accomplish the objective of the study by extracting data from the database of Science Direct, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Research Gate, and authentic websites for World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, etc., studies covered major areas across the globe but more especially countries that have trade ties with South Sudan and the East African

Results: There is a drop in South Sudan's crude oil export which is crucial for the economy. The responsive rate to vulnerable citizens was low, inadequate policies implementations, there was massive unemployment, it has created the state of xenophobia between nationals and foreigners, online learning through the use of televisions (TVs) and radio stations has not been effective.

Conclusion: The management of the COVID-19 pandemic call for collaboration between authorities the public, and inter-states as there is no country immune. The use of e-commerce is crucial for developing countries, which reduces social interaction between traders and consumers, reducing the chances of a complete economic shutdown. Lastly, there is also a need to establish learning infrastructures for online studies and birth control initiatives, especially for the least developed countries.

Keywords: COVID-19; infectious diseases; livelihood; policies; South Sudan.

1. INTRODUCTION

In late December 2019, a respiratory disease called Coronavirus (COVID-19) emerged in Mainland China, Wuhan the capital city of Hubei Province. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with COVID-19 have a mild respiratory illness; however, older people and those with underlying medical problems such as chronic respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, etc., are at high risk to develop severe illness [1,2]. COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic on 11th March 2020 by the Director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. He was deeply concerned about the increasing number of COVID-19 infections across the globe [3]. The word "Pandemic" comes from the Greek words 'Pan' meaning all, and demos 'the people.' It is known as a widespread epidemic of contagious disease throughout the whole of the country or one or more continents at the same time [4].

In human history, there have been many significant pandemics such as Cholera, Aids, Influenza, plague, etc., whereas COVID-19 is the newest of such kind [5]. The COVID-19 virus spreads principally among people who are in contact with each other through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, "Touching a surface or object that is contaminated by the virus and after

that touching their mouth, nose, or eyes can cause COVID-19 infection" [6]. WHO-China Jointly reported that symptoms like fever, dry cough, fatigue, sputum production, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, or arthralgia, chills, nausea or vomiting, nasal congestion, diarrhea, and conjunctival congestion, etc. it belongs to COVID-19 diseases [7]. Therefore, to achieve this study, research questions were developed which include (1) What is the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on South Sudan? (2) What can South Sudan learn from other countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic? (3) What measures can be put in place to tackle the impact of COVID-19 pandemic?

1.1 The Spread of the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic across the Globe

The COVID-19 virus continued to spread rapidly across the world, as in the third week of February 2020, Italy showed a rapid spread of the virus in Europe, which led to 60 million people under lockdown [8]. In early April 2020, the infection rate increases, and days after Spain's cases surpasses Italy [9]. The United States of America also reported its first case in January 2020, and in late March 2020, it became the country with the highest number of confirmed cases in the mid of April 2020. Moreover, the United States became the country with the highest death toll rate with over 20,000 fatalities. As of July 2020, the total number of COVID-19 increased to over

a 4.4million people, with over 150 thousand deaths [10]. Similarly, Latin American and Caribbean countries also reported a rapid spread of COVID-19 cases. For instance, in early August 2020, over 2.8 million cases were reported in Brazil, while Mexico also confirmed over 448 thousand patients. In total, the region has over 5.1 million diagnosed cases with increasing fatalities [11].

Likewise, the first case of COVID-19 was reported towards the end of January 2020. A week later, eleven cases were also confirmed; this led to the increase of local transmissions and as of March 2020, the cases increased to over 2,400 in Australia [12]. As a result of the rapid increase of COVID-19 cases, the first Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus designed a living document that was made to be updated periodically [13]. Similarly, Africa reported its first case of COVID-19 on 15th February 2020 [14]. However, the cases of COVID-19 continue to rise rapidly across the continent, with over 700,000 cases and over 12,000 deaths reported. The total number of new cases also increased by 18%, according to the WHO African Region External Situation report of July 2020 [15].

Accordingly, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it's unclear whether the COVID-19 Pandemic will show rapid progress in Africa; Notably, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and South Africa have the highest cases. However, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have also shown a rapid increase in April 2020 [16]. The current global number of total confirmed active cases 66,709,926/352,273,211, death toll stands at 5,615,112 (1.59%) and recoveries at 279,948,173, (79.47%), vaccinated 4,767, 511,223,914 (61.12%), so far as of 24th Jan, 2022 [17].

1.2 COVID-19 Pandemic Cases in South Sudan

Like any other country, South Sudan was affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the first case was reported on 5th April 2020, in Juba, the capital city. The patient is 29 years old female UN staff [18], [19]. The total cases of COVID-19 in South Sudan stand at 11,076, with active cases at 442 with 10,514 recovered and 120 deceased as of 4th August 2021 [17]. As in April 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) warned that "lifting restrictions could lead to deadly resurgence", added that "*No country is*

immune and no country can claim that it has strong health system" [20]. It is a clear message to countries such as South Sudan with inadequate health facilities despite small fatalities. However, due to the economy's nature, some restrictions have been lifted amidst slow-increasing cases [21].

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine prepared simulation-based estimates for COVID-19 pandemic scenarios in South Sudan, based on COVID-19 spread in Europe. The study anticipated that in one year, the number of symptomatic cases would have been between 2.8 and 3.4 million (using a population of 11 million of South Sudan) with an estimated fatality between 23,000 and 31,000 [22]. However, it has not been seen as the testing rate is very low as compared to other countries. Hence, the primary objective of this article is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the youngest country in the world (South Sudan) on its weak economy coupled with hyperinflation and depreciation of the currency, etc., and lessons learned from other countries in the fight of COVID-19 pandemic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

COVID-19 pandemic posted threats to many sectors particularly, social, and economic aspects of life [23]. In dealing with this pandemic, so many theories and measures have been put in place to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially management and social-behavioral measures [24]. This literature explores the management measures, and policies learned during mitigating the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both micro and macro levels. It is imperative to know that a human being always understands and adopts some strategies to minimize the effects of disasters, in this case, the COVID-19 crisis. For instance, as in some African traditions, an expectant mother still gets prepared to welcome a new baby [25]. Similarly, when COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, WHO warned other countries before the pandemic hit their regions as the virus has come to live with us [7]. As a result of COVID-19, management theories/policies/measures are being applied in every aspect of life.

2.1 Management Theory/Measures

Management is the most important human activity from the time human beings started to

form social organizations to accomplish those aims that cannot be achieved as individuals. The government has provided a coordination role for individual efforts [26]. Notably, the emergency of COVID-19 has increased the practices of management theories. Therefore, the prominent theory adopted and practiced by almost all government institutions across the globe has been the Governmentality Theory. This theory was developed in the 1970s, and it emphasized mostly three aspects among those are security and population which are the main dominant. The main aim of governmentality theory is to guide individuals by placing them under guidelines for what they do and what will happen [27]. Therefore, this theory is broadly understood as the procedures necessary for directing human behavior in their day-to-day activities to protect others [28,29].

Douglas stressed the decisive approach that leaders must render decisions on behalf of the population, which must be quick, swift, healthy, and sure to better their daily lives [30]. The applicability of this theory has been seen as social-distancing. Kritika & Pramod posit that “*extreme social distancing*” is pretty much the only intervention available to keep healthy individuals spaced from each other; it is useful only if we contribute our part [31]. However, the lack of saving and no alternative income sources has made it hard for the poor to adhere to social-distancing measures [32].

2.2 The socio-economic Settings of South Sudan

The vulnerability of the South Sudan economy lies in oil price, weather, and conflict-related shocks. However, before the COVID-19 pandemic has shown recovery with estimated Gross Domestic Products (GDP) growth up to 9% in the Financial Year (FY2019). Imperative to know that, the oil sector continues to be the primary driver for economic growth with an estimation of producing over 61 million barrels in the financial year FY 2019/2020). On the other hand, agriculture in all the cultivated land accounted for only 6%. Note should be taken that agriculture is a practice only for subsistence use as the sector is still developing adopting new technologies from developing countries [33].

Similarly, living standards deteriorated as the pandemic disrupted livelihoods. Not forgetting

that expenditure on key social and economic sectors such as education, water, and sanitation health are limited. This causes poverty levels are expected to remain couple with acute food security in the region. For this may, there is a serious humanitarian crisis as a result of continuous conflict across the county which led to the displacement of millions of people who are uprooted from their livelihood [34].

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The conducted literature search was related to the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the studies were examined for eligibility.

3.1 Literature Search and Search Strings

Our data sources relied on literature search and retrieved from the database of Elsevier, Scopus, and Web of Science. To extend our search we also searched working papers and reports of ‘World Health Organization’ ‘World Bank’ ‘WFP’ etc. by using a combination of the keywords of “COVID-19”, “social impact”, and “economic policies”. Furthermore, the researchers revisited the WHO database on purpose because of the nature of our current study interest which is related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure the quality of the research database.

3.2 Data Validation

To validate the literature quality, three independent researchers (Miss. KJ, Mr. JH and, Mr. CBV) double-checked the reference list of the selected studies that were retrieved to ensure that they were not only relevant to the research topic but also, they are up to date literature from recognized and authentic sources. The first criterion was the year of publication which ranged five years before the COVID-19 pandemic and after pandemic hits. The rationale for selecting the base year was due to the number of strategies or policies that emerged as a result of fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic which is not only suitable for studies but also comparison purposes. Studies also covered major areas across the globe but more especially countries that have trade ties with South Sudan and the East African region with some examples of strategies employed in different countries. Thereafter, the collection was subjected to screening by language and only papers published in English were selected.

3.3 Risk of Bias, Quality Assessment and Data Analysis

The risk of bias and quality assessment for each source included in this study was conducted by two independent researchers (Mr. GRD and Mr. GNCM), Furthermore, to enhance the quality and reduce the bias of the results, other two impartial researchers (Ass. Prof. MR and Dr. WX) crosschecked the work of the first two researchers and necessary corrections were made to enhance the quality of the paper after some discussions.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Different Regions across the Globe

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a massive economic shock across the world due to business interruptions and shutdowns from social distancing measures [35,36]. As already noted, the impact of COVID-19 has sharpened the social-economic sector, especially in emerging economies, to mention Africa, parts of Asia, and Latin American Countries [37,38]. Accordingly, the COVID-19 shock to African economies is said to come in three major waves: lower trade and investment from China, especially in the short term. There is also a slump in demand associated with the lockdowns affecting domestic and intra-African trade [39]. African Development Bank (AfDB) projected the real Gross Domestic Products (GDP) for Africa to contract by over 1.6% in 2020, which dropped to around 5.5% points in January 2020 pre- COVID-19 projection, this could result in losses to more than \$145.4 billion [40].

For example, in the East African region, it has been projected that per capita incomes have declined in the year (2020), and the actual payments are lower compared to 2014 [41]. Similarly, Africa is vulnerable because of its poor public health system and close ties of common cooperation areas, especially with China [42]. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimated that Africa would lose about \$65 billion, particularly the oil-producing countries, as crude oil declines [43]. Similarly, the lockdown in the Asian region has resulted in global economic distress. China has become the supplier of intermediate goods globally; therefore, the continuous lockdown in different

areas and countries has led to the disruption of China's supply chain that affected other producers worldwide [44].

Mostly People below the poverty line are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the contraction of economic activities [45]. For example, in most developing countries, a large portion of the population does not have access to social protection; Africa is one of the developing regions with an estimation of 60% of its population living in slums (informal settlements). Moreover, the average family size of a household is large compared to developed continents, which increases the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic [46,47]. It was estimated from the projector of the 2020 Global Economic Prospect Report (GEPR) that COVID-19 could increase by about 2.3 percent on the global poverty population rate [48].

4.2 Projection of Working-hour Losses in the Labor Sector across the Globe Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Accordingly, the labor market has been disrupted significantly for women who account for many workers in front-line occupations, particularly in the health and social care sector. The downturn in these sectors has increased the risk of losing some of the achievements made in past years, the little available jobs remaining, there has been a reduction of working hours globally this retards output and efficiency [49]. In Africa, it shows average because before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. There was already a high unemployment rate, up to 5 percent [50]. South Sudan, for example, with 12.3% is among the highest countries in Africa amidst the low population size [51].

The closure of micro institutions such as schools and businesses forced many people to be left with no more alternatives but to go home. The level of poverty increases among poor people as they rely on hand-to-month living standards with little savings. [32]. There is an increase in domestic violence, especially among women [52]. It takes another degree, especially in developing countries (LDCs) such as South Sudan, with high domestic violence caused by different ethnic norms. On the other hand, the COVID-19 Pandemic is deepening inequalities among women and girls that existed on the social, political, and economic grounds [53,54].

Globally education system was interrupted. In April 2020, over 93 percent of the learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic totaling over 1.5 billion children and youth in pre-primary and higher education in over 200 countries worldwide [55,56]. COVID-19 pandemic has caused inequalities in the education system, especially in developing countries. As there was an alternative to switch from face-face learning to online classes, some students cannot afford the necessary resources for online teaching like the internet and computers [57].

4.3 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on South Sudan’s Economy

The impact of COVID-19 on South Sudan’s economy is skyrocketing, as it is already crippling with hyperinflation as one of the highest recorded in the East African region since 2017-2020 [58]. Notably, there are many driving factors for South Sudan’s high inflation rate, including rapid currency depreciation, dependence on imported consumer and capital goods, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contraction as a result of fall in international oil price in the world market, unrest, and uncertainty situation in the country, etc. [59-61]. Therefore, COVID-19, in particular, in South Sudan and the region, is a blow to the nose because of the weak red light of economic shrink.

4.4 The Rate of Inflation in East African Countries, 2017-2020 (%)

Table 2 reveals the situation of inflation rate in East African countries, including South Sudan. It is imperative to know that South Sudan remains in debt distress. The external position is weak with total public debt during 2018/19, estimated at 34.2 percent of its GDP, has depleted reserves, and is in deep economic crisis. The gap between the official and parallel market exchange rates remains high and increases from 85 percent in June 2019 to more than 100 percent in June 2020. It gave room for high risk and exposed the economic system vulnerability before COVID-19 Pandemic [62].

4.5 GDP growth in East African Countries from 2014-2020

Fig. 1. shows the gross domestic product (GDP) in East African countries. The figure reveals that South Sudan is the only country whose GDP is negative compared to other countries in the region. Burundi also registered the second least after South Sudan; there are conflicts and insecurity in both countries, which caused the poor performance. The conflict in South Sudan, for example, disrupted oil production, which accounts for more than 70 percent of GDP and 10 percent for agricultural activities, respectively [59].

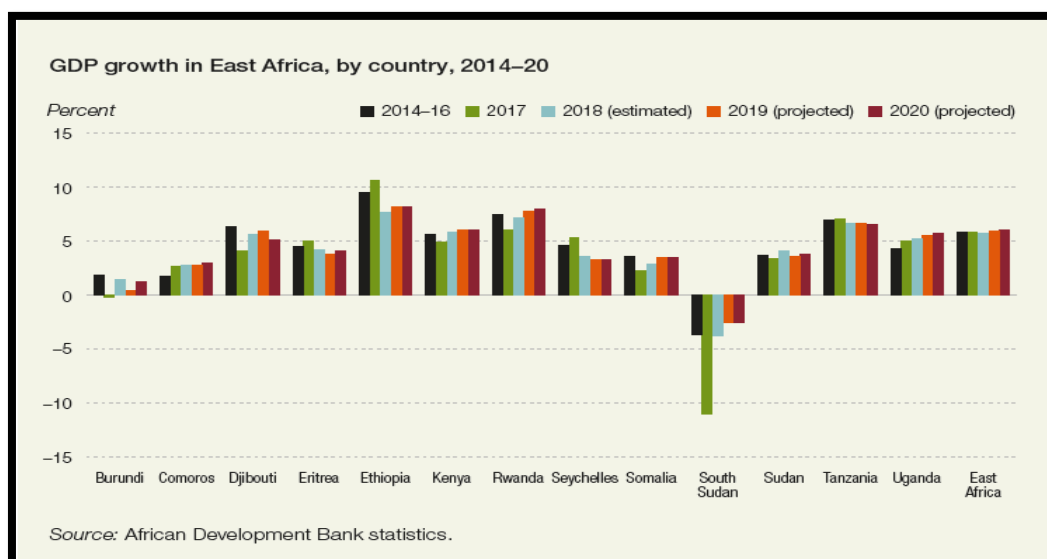


Fig. 1. The gross domestic products (GDP) in East African countries including South Sudan
 Source: Adapted from African Development Bank without modification:
 Available: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2019AEO/REO_2019_-_East_Africa_.pdf

Table 1. Projected working-hour losses in the second half (fourth quarter) of 2020 by region

	2020 (Quoter 2)		BS*		PS**		OS#	
	Hours lost	Equivalent number of full-time jobs (48 hours/week)	Hours lost	Equivalent number of full-time jobs (48 hours/week)	Hours lost	Equivalent number of full-time jobs (48 hours/week)	Hours lost	Equivalent number of full-time jobs (48 hours/week)
	%	Millions	%	Millions	%	Millions	%	millions
America	18.3	70	7.8	29	15.6	60	2.5	9
Arab States	13.2	8	3.9	2	11.9	7	-0.1	0
Africa	12.1	45	3.5	13	10.8	40	-0.1	0
Europe and Central Asia	13.9	45	5.4	18	10.6	35	1.2	4
Asian and Pacific	13.5	235	4.5	80	11.5	200	1.2	21
Globe	14.0	400	4.9	140	11.9	340	1.2	34

Source: Adapted and modified by selecting continental and regional overview from ILO, 2020. NB: Negative values indicate a recovery to above pre-crisis levels, *BS (baseline scenario), **PS (Pessimistic scenario), and #OP (Optimistic scenario). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf

Arguably, the economic impact of COVID-19 in South Sudan was felt before the virus reached the region due to the restriction effected in China and Europe, which led to a slowdown of trade [63]. Additionally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected South Sudan GDP to grow by over 8.1 percent by 2020; however, many factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have slowed down the growth [39]. As South Sudan's economy relies mostly on crude oil explorations, agriculture sectors need to be developed, accordingly, only 4.3% of the land is cultivated for subsistence use, this would stop dependent only on the main sector (exploration of crude oil).

4.6 South Sudan's Export to China from 2014-2018 Compared to other Countries in Africa

Fig. 2. reveals export from African countries, including South Sudan. It is imperative to know that South Sudan's economy depends on exporting crude oil, particularly to China which is termed as an economic downfall for the youngest African Country [64]. Therefore, it clearly explains that any disruption in China's supply chain could affect South Sudan's economic growth. It has been reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Sudan's economy declined sharply, and it is projected to decrease - 3.6% in the financial year 2021, which is about 10 percentage points below the before pre-pandemic baseline [65].

The livelihood of the most population is also disrupted, especially the market sector dealing with agricultural produce. It should be noted that South Sudan imports most of its staple food from neighboring countries. However, due to implementation of the movement restrictions across borders led to an increase in prices of the available stock in East African cities and worst in South Sudan's capital city Juba [66]. It has affected the demand and supply curves; for example, a kilogram of maize increased from 159-298 South Sudanese pounds equivalent to (\$0.5-\$1) in April 2020, just within a month. Simultaneously, the imports volume has fallen up to 50%, which increases the risks of a protracted pandemic with predictable consequences for cereal imports and domestic consumption [67,68]. The movement restriction between inter-states within South Sudan has also affected farmers, especially the vegetable growers because their produce (perishable) couple with traditional preservation methods for a more

extended period, which affected their returns [69].

4.7 COVID-19 Pandemic impact on South Sudan's Social System

In the line of social interaction, COVID-19 affected the education sector in South Sudan due to the closure of primary schools and institutions of higher education. It is essential to know that South Sudan does not have well-built infrastructures that enable students to have online classes like other countries in the world. For instance, due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, Chinese universities initiated online teaching based on any information and technology network, which offered over 500 courses [70]. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought xenophobia¹ to the country after the confirmation of the first and second cases found among humanitarian aid workers in South Sudan.

As a result, the government warned citizens about xenophobic behavior towards foreigners [71]. Therefore, South Sudanese were assured that COVID-19 is a disease that has inflicted pain in humanity in all races and nationalities regardless of their financial status. Further, almost half of the population are in neighboring countries for refuge due to civil war in South Sudan. For instance, Uganda is hosting over 2.7 million refugees from South Sudan [72,73]. The relatives of these refugees working in South Sudan were stuck due to lockdown. It causes a lack of support for the families in various refugee camps in Uganda and other neighboring countries.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Response of Countries against COVID-19 Pandemic

In the East African region, Uganda and Kenya responded by instructing Landlords not to collect rents for three months [74]. This measure ensured that tenants have surplus income to buy their daily necessities because their livelihood has been disrupted. In West Africa, for example, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo has announced that his government will pay public water bills for the next three months as the

¹ (*Xenophobia*) Is the state of fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange of foreign (65)

Table 2. The rate of inflation in selected East African countries

Country	2017*	2018*	2019#	2020#
South Sudan	187.9	104.1	108.2	91.4
Uganda	5.6	3.2	4.3	4.8
Eritrea	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
Ethiopia	7.2	13.0	9.3	8.5
Kenya	8.0	4.8	5.5	5.4
Rwanda	8.2	0.9	4.1	4.0
Burundi	16.1	12.7	22.1	23.1
Sudan	32.6	43.4	35.0	33.1
Tanzania	5.3	4.8	5.2	5.1
East Africa	14.0	14.5	12.5	11.4
Excluding South Sudan	11.3	12.8	10.9	10.2

Source: Adapted without modification from African Development Bank Statistics. Available at: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2019AEO/REO_2019_-_East_Africa_.pdf

*Estimated values; # Projected values

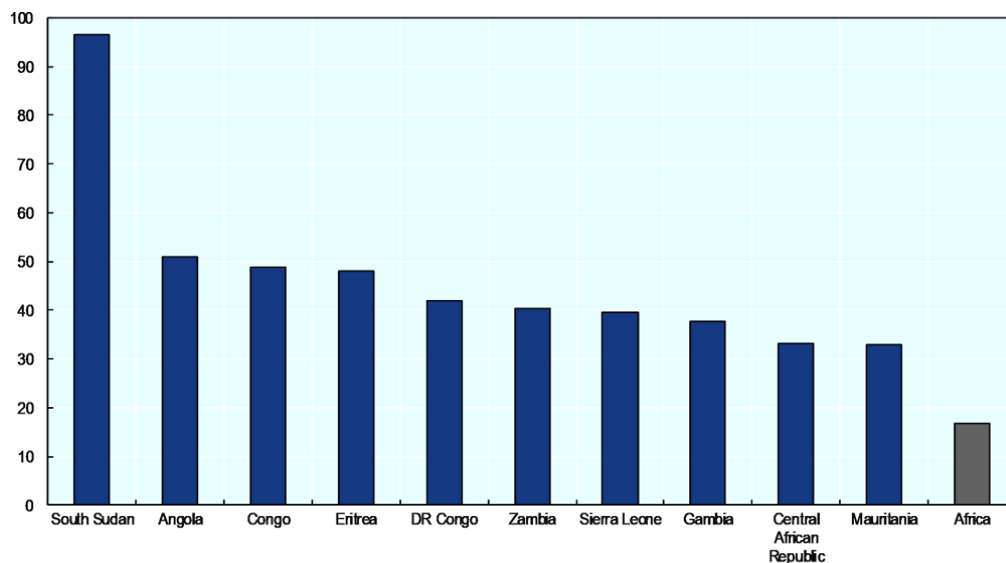


Fig. 2. South Sudan export to China from 2014-2018 compared to other African countries (in %age)

Source: Adapted from OCED, 2020 without modification. Available: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-and-africa-socio-economic-implications-and-policy-responses-96e1b282/>

country tries to combat the spread of COVID-19 [75]. Moreover, he also directed the Ministry of local government in coordination with other authorities to enhance hygiene in public places such as the market to promote sanitation [76]. Similarly, some West African countries that were hit by the Ebola outbreak in 2014, not a while ago the Democratic Republic of Congo, have put these measures in swift detection, early testing, rapid response, and cross-border collaboration among neighboring countries international community [77].

The Government of The Republic of Malawi has appointed a Special Cabinet Committee (SCC)

on Coronavirus in operation since March 2020 to provide policy guidance and matters concerning the COVID-19 pandemic were plans of getting into lockdowns [1], [78]. On the other hand, the United States of America released a tremendous amount of money to help millions of unemployed citizens [79]. Similarly, European Union pulled out 540 billion Euros in response to measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. It also prepares the ground for a recovery fund to relaunch the economy and ensure solidarity with the most affected member states. As of (July 2020), the leaders had negotiations on these funds' medium usage [80].

5.2 South Sudan Response against CoViD-19 Pandemic

Awareness has been among the major policies which were put in place and been carried out on different platforms such as radios, televisions, print newspapers, etc. However, the awareness coverage has been within the capital city and nearby towns because of poor infrastructure development and the unaffordability of these devices by indigenous especially in remote areas that do not have access to radio and telecommunication network services [81].

Border closer is also one of the policies that have been put in place by the South Sudan authorities to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Note should be taken that, this lockdown failed because South Sudan imports most of the food from neighboring countries such as Uganda and Kenya [82].

Lockdown: This is one of the policies that the government implemented to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown is a situation in which people are not allowed to enter or leave their premises freely as they wish or they used to because of an emergency [83]. Notably, most countries recommended lockdown as the best way of preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the lockdown in South Sudan has been hard to implement because of a weak economic breakdown where everyone has to work to have food on the table daily coupled with the situation of acute hunger across the country [84,85].

Launch of distance learning: The Ministry of High Education of the Republic of South Sudan has launched distance learning for students as a measure to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic [86]. It came as a result of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regional office in Abuja's clarification of webinars as part of UNESCO's continuity during and after the COVID-19 pandemic [87]. In response to the rising food crisis, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) proposed \$24.9 in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission along the food supply chain. Similarly, to monitor the potential impact of COVID-19 on agriculture, food security, and livelihood, as well as early warning, a budget of \$ 2.5 million was proposed by United Nations Program in South Sudan [88].

5.3 Strategies Where South Sudan would have adopted from Other Countries

Accordingly, South Sudan has learned much however the response rate was low in terms of COVID-19 emergency assistance to its citizens. For example, in many of the world's responses, literature revealed different types of lockdown, such in Pakistan's cities Karachi, and Islamabad where "mini smart lockdown" in various areas was effected after an increase in COVID-19 pandemic cases [89], [90]. However, this kind of smart lockdown has not been applied in South Sudan. Though in low capacity, South Sudan neighboring countries such as Uganda have assisted vulnerable citizens such as children and elderly people respectively under the Senior Citizen Grant Program (SCGP), where UGX 25,000 is equivalent to a \$7 monthly payout to older people [91].

It was done to increase their purchasing power as it was found that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused more than two-thirds of the population to experience income shock both in Uganda and Kenya [92]. While in South Sudan, it is imperative to know that most of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency funds have been donations. Most of the International Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are the primary service providers.

In response to education, South Sudan government institutions made little progress in the online education system than developed and other developing countries. In some developing countries, television and radio stations have been the option even though such initiative has been taken in South Sudan neighboring countries, i.e., Uganda and Kenya, which allowed students to take on their classes during the lockdown exercises [93]. However, not all the students benefited from this initiative in South Sudan particularly, students in remote areas who don't have access to radio and television (TV) sets. Studies revealed that in many African countries, the closure of the schools caused by the pandemic has caused inequalities, and children who don't have access to online education have been most affected [94].

6. CONCLUSION

This article set out to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on South Sudan's weak economy coupled with hyperinflation and rapid

depreciation of its currency in managing its socio-economic policies as compared to other countries in the region and across the globe. The COVID-19 Pandemic has shaken and revealed the health sector's vulnerability across the globe, which significantly impacts other sectors such as socio-economic. It also shows that health is the primary determinant of other sectors, especially the economy.

Timely taken measures could be helpful to control such pandemic diseases. It is recommended that there is a need for collaboration between authorities, the public, and inter-state as there is no country immune. Lastly, each country, including South Sudan, would prepare for the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, given the situation, regions/countries with their various allies should put aside their differences and fight commonly against the COVID-19 Pandemic. Aid should be provided to developing countries to combat the economic situation of poor people. The government should give awareness to the public.

Further, there is a need for birth control, especially for poor people in developing countries. To ease the economic distress government of South Sudan should introduce E-commerce, which can be an economic driver for domestic growth and international trade [95]. Further, developing countries like South Sudan should adopt the smart lockdown system and build a better internet infrastructure that enables students to study and e-commerce. Moreover, the media should play a positive role in providing messages of awareness about such pandemic diseases.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Department of School of Economics and Management of Yangtze University and Prof: Mohammad Rizwan for his guidance toward this paper and the support of the Doctoral Initiative Project and Hubei Rural Development Research Fund Yangtze University, Daystar University Nairobi, Kenya, and the University of Juba through research activities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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