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Submitted: 3 August 2020, Revised: 22 December 2020, Accepted: 22 December 2020

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Policy & Governance Review
ISSN 2580-4820
Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 82-96
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30589/pgr.v5i1.353>

Impact of COVID-19 on Economic Activities and Poverty Threats in the Asia-Pacific Region

Abstract

This paper discusses the impact caused by a virus outbreak called coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The virus initially appeared in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, then spread throughout the world, including the Asia-Pacific Region (APR). COVID-19 is believed to have damaged health and the global economy. Unlike the crisis that was caused by many previous disruptions, the impact caused by COVID-19 is wider and bigger. Many economic sectors have been paralyzed and suffered losses, such as production and trade. Export-import cooperation has become a dependency between countries, and this has also been hampered due to the rapid spread of this pandemic. Then, the closure of transportation access and the suggestion to stay at home has made the tourism sector sluggish. Meanwhile, another effect of this pandemic is the emergence of new poor groups due to the rise in layoffs. This study uses qualitative research methods to search for theoretical references relevant to cases or problems found in various works of literature, mainly scientific journals, books, reports, and actual and trusted news on the internet. This study aims to explore the potential of COVID-19 that not only threatens health, but also social, political, and economic spheres. From the analysis, it was concluded that COVID-19 could inhibit all global socio-economic activities that threaten the success of realizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but on the other hand, this pandemic can also be momentum for a more sustainable life order.

Keywords:

COVID-19; Global Economy; Poverty; Asia-Pacific; SDGs

Aceh Province in Paradiplomacy Practice,” “The Failure of Providing Human Security for Rohingya Refugees (Case Study: Escaping Rohingya Refugees From Shelter In SKB Bireuen, Aceh Province),” “The Public Diplomacy of International Communications,” etc.

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Introduction

In late 2019, world media highlighted the emergence of a virus outbreak that infected Wuhan, China. Initially, the virus known as COVID-19 had only infected tens of thousands of Chinese citizens; slowly but surely, the virus finally came out of its habitat to spread to neighbouring countries such as South Korea, Japan, and surrounding areas. The situation worsened in early 2020 when a virus outbreak began to spread with further reach to almost all countries in the world, such as Iran, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Russia, the United States, and others. The most recent data obtained on May 17, 2020, shows there have been 4.7 million cases with a mortality rate of 15%. The United States is the largest country infected with coronavirus with almost one-third of the total world cases (worldometers.info, accessed May 17, 2020).

Because of its rapid spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that the current crisis is an international health emergency (Sohrabi et al., 2020); therefore, governments around the world are expected to be able to work to address the spread of this pandemic through a series of local policies, especially Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention (NPI) such as quarantine, border closure, intensive medical research, and provision of social protection.

Even so, the commotion of the world community caused by the spread of a deadly virus has happened before. “The global community has experienced many health crises in the past 20 years caused by a series of new viral infections, namely HIV, Influenza A H1N1 virus subtypes, Influenza A H5N1 virus subtypes, SARS-CoV1, MERS-CoV, and Ebola. However, epidemiological novelty caused by a coronavirus (SARS-CoV2), reveals our lack of readiness to deal with its rapid and sudden spread, that is why many governments in the world do not have enough time to deal with it” (Djalante et al., 2020). Experience has shown that several countries have overcome global health crises, but the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic is believed to be greater than the previous crises due to its global scale and widespread closure of business, travel, and restrictions on activities outside the home (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Furthermore, Li et al. (2020) also shared the idea that this virus has a fast spread rate compared to other similar viruses. Therefore, this is a very shocking blow to the governments in the world, because this virus comes suddenly and is difficult to control.

Not only health, but coronavirus has also been able to paralyze various state activities, as stated by Karabag (2020) that this virus has caused a crisis that generates various political and

economic turmoil, from regional to global impact. Moreover, Carlsson-Szlezak et al. (2020) stated that the virus eventually kills production and deactivates important components of the supply chain, stopping production, then causing furloughs and even layoffs as the worst condition. As a consequence, many people have lost their source of income, which ultimately plunges those person into a cycle of poverty (Renahy et al., 2018). Meanwhile, a unique view was expressed by McGowan (2020) where he stated that the existence of a virus is a kind of examination to test the level of economic resilience and social structure of a country; therefore, pandemic management will depend on a strongly educated population as well as a social policy that will be discovered through comprehensive research. Therefore, the government needs to conduct an in-depth study of COVID-19 from various disciplines and points of view to uncover the problem and to find a solution.

The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the development of the world economy, including the Asia-Pacific Region (APR). Economic growth in developing countries in this region has been projected to slow from 6.3% in 2018 to 5.8% in 2019, then 5.7% and 5.6% respectively in 2020 and 2021 (World Bank, 2019). Of course, the economic slowdown coupled with the threat of a deadly virus has caused the economies in this region to be at risk of dropping dramatically in the coming years. Therefore, unnatural disasters such as COVID-19 will be very difficult to overcome without adequate preparation, so that it will adversely affect various aspects of life in the state.

One of the main problems in the global economy faced by the APR is that China, which is a major supplier of various commodities for several countries, has been preoccupied with restoring the condition of its own country.

The world recognizes the capacity of China as the largest importer and exporter in various industrial sectors, and not a few countries rely on China as the leading intermediary input. Even top-class companies such as Apple and Nike have admitted this impact (Fernandes, 2020). Furthermore, UNCTAD (2020) in its report stated that over the past two decades, China has become very important for the global economy. Today, around 20% of international trade in the form of semi-finished products comes from China. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the COVID-19 pandemic, which paralyzed the Chinese economy, has automatically disrupted economic activity and its interactions with foreign countries around the world, including the APR.

Based on the facts, many countries in the APR experienced a massive economic setback, which then affected the country's order. Thus, the authors are interested in discussing the existing economic capacity in the APR and how this ferocious pandemic can threaten the global economy and the emergence of new poverty. This is certainly a big challenge as the world government wishes to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and poverty alleviation in 2030. What can affected countries do to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic? This paper will only focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy in the APR. The subject of the discussion will be divided into three parts. First, the economic potential in APRIL 2, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic spread on economic activities and employment. And the third is the emergence of the potential for poverty.

Method

In this scientific paper, the authors use qualitative research methods with an emphasis on secondary data through searching for relevant reference sources with problems that

can be found in general in various types of literature, such as scientific journals, books, reports, actual news on the internet, and so on. The theoretical references obtained through the study of the literature serve as the basic foundation and main analytical tool in research practice in this scientific article. Therefore, researchers used Atlas.ti software to help the data analysis process to make it more efficient and structured. The data collected in the Atlas.ti software has a special study feature related to the object of this research.

The steps taken by the authors in this literature study are as follows: First, collecting a number of data from various easily accessible sources, such as journals, books, reports, and the latest news on the internet or online media. Second, the data that has been collected is then entered into the Atlas.ti software for in-depth and more systematic analysis. The authors make use of the predetermined coding, then the Atlas.ti software will display the data in accordance with the “research objectives,” which are the focus of this study.

Third, the results of data processing from the Atlas.ti software are then analyzed using the main theory that has been selected in this study. The theory in question is the emergency management (EM) theory. EM is an interdisciplinary study that can be linked and analyzed with a number of disciplines, including economics, political science, and public administration, which can be practiced in policymaking in dealing with emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Fourth, a matter that deserves special attention in this scientific study is how the governments of the countries in the Asia Pacific region are able to face and deal with a number of welfare threats that will and are being faced by the people in this region. The study in this research becomes more interesting when the data that has been found will be linked to the global development agenda

to be achieved in the next ten years, namely Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a reference for the growth and development of countries in the world in facing economic, social, and environmental problems within the scope of the international community.

Finally, what makes the study in this journal important is finding alternative solutions and offering appropriate emergency action in dealing with complex socio-economic threats due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is currently sweeping the world, including in the Asia Pacific region. However, the emergency policy that the authors offer is still with a good assessment and is in accordance with the local wisdom of countries in the Asia Pacific region. The goal is that this policy can be implemented and sustainable as it should be in accordance with the target of achieving the SDGs program, which will be realized in 2030, especially after COVID-19 has passed, leaving humankind to live as before.

Results and Discussion

To analyze the problem in this study, the authors have used the emergency management (EM) theory. Hoetmer (1991) explained that emergency management is the discipline that applies science, technology, planning, and management to deal with extreme events that can injure or even kill many lives, do serious damage to property, and disrupt community lives. Furthermore, McEntire (2005) argued that EM is an interdisciplinary study among other economics, political science, as well as public administration that can be practised in policymaking in response to emergencies; this includes dealing with a vulnerability that is related to poverty and results in an inability to prevent, prepare for, or recover from a disaster. Thus, it can be said that EM has traditionally been a reactive profession, neglecting mitigation and recovery and spending much of its

time addressing preparedness measures for emergency response.

Economic Potential in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region (APR) is one of the regions that has a significant influence on the sustainability of the world economy. Lai (2013) explains that the Asia-Pacific region is one of the main destinations for foreign investment, trade, manufacturing and other business operations. Furthermore, the cooperation of countries in Asia-Pacific has now become an important factor in economic development at the modern stage of the world economy (Kuznetsova, 2016); in this region are countries with the largest economic growth in the world, namely China (Lin, 2011). With this status of excellence, it is not surprising that the APR receives more attention from world economic actors.

Geographically, the APR itself is a region that is inhabited by as many as 47 countries, making this region an area with a large number of countries, and this has become one of the other advantages possessed by this region. Judging from the classical theory put forward by Adam Smith (1729-1790) in one of his masterpieces entitled *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, the economic development of a country depends on its natural resources and the number of its workforce. That way, the more labour and natural resources owned by a country, the greater the economic development that occurs in the country. This also affects the economic growth in the APR due to abundant natural resources and the availability of adequate labour.

To encourage economic growth and to improve prosperity between countries in the APR, countries in the region formed an international forum called the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). At present, APEC has 21 members, most of which are countries with coastlines to the Pacific Ocean.

Quimba and Barral (2019) argue that “APEC is becoming increasingly important in this region, having the region’s most well-known economy and players (China), APEC can balance geopolitics in the region. Trade liberalization and facilitation in APEC can be expressly considered a successful business that contributes to reducing trade costs and efficient movement of goods and services.” Several countries in the APR also have special cooperation ties with two large economies (China and the United States). From the competition of these two superpower countries, it is clear that the countries located in the APR have high values in both eyes, so that the United States and China compete hard to become the most influential in the APR. This is certainly a positive value to push the APR into a very strategic region with good economic growth.

Economic growth that continues to grow in the APR cannot be separated from the strategic location of the region. The APR has emerged as a centre of world economic movement oriented to maritime potential. The geostrategic significance of the region is the main element driving world economic activity. World economic growth is caused by trade activities that occur through ocean routes. As stated by Chin and Yusoff (2019), 90% of world trade is handled and managed by the global shipping industry, which undoubtedly functions as the main pathway that revives international markets. So, it is not surprising that if the APR is a region with trade values that have increased significantly, this is inseparable from the factor of maritime connectivity-based trading activities. This area has a strategic trade route for the economic needs of regional countries and those outside the region.

Southeast Asia as a sub-region of the APR also has an important role in the development of the world economy, because Southeast Asia has major straits in world trade activities, such

as the Malacca Strait, Makassar Strait, Lombok Strait, and Sunda Strait. The Malacca Strait, which is located between the Malay Peninsula (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore) and Sumatra Island (Indonesia), has an important role in ongoing international trade, as expressed by Evers and Gerke (2006) that the Malacca Strait can maintain and even improve its position as the most important shipping lane in the world - more important than the Panama Strait and Gibraltar Strait. Yasin et al. (2019) mention that the Malacca Strait continues to play its role as the most important international waterway, evidenced by the fact that the strait has become the second busiest shipping line in the world. The Malacca Strait also links maritime trade between Europe and the Asia-Pacific, which has brought about 40% of world trade (Zaman et al., 2014). Furthermore, Villar and Hamilton (2017) revealed that "in recent years, between 85% and 90% of the total annual petroleum flow through the Malacca Strait, making the Malacca Strait the main chokepoint in Asia. The Malacca Strait is also an important transit route for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from the Persian Gulf and African suppliers to major importing countries in East Asia such as Japan and South Korea." Therefore, the Malacca Strait in the APR gives importance to the circulation of global cargo along with global economic activities and access to the flow of various resources, such as mineral and oil resources.

Impact on Economic Activities and Employment

In analyzing possible losses due to the coronavirus pandemic, we can refer to past world losses, for example, the impact caused by the SARS virus in 2002. At the beginning of the 21st century, this virus caused the global economy to lose about \$40 billion in 2003; this happened even when China, as the fifth largest economy in the world, contributed 4% of global gross domestic product (GDP) (Carvalho,

2020). From this experience, it can be said that COVID-19 will weaken the world economy even more (Carlsson-Szlezak et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Karabag, 2020). Furthermore, according to the report from OECD (2020), world economic growth, which has weakened since 2019, will be weaker, from 2.9% to 2.4%. So, the world is currently facing massive economic disruption, starting from the slowdown in 2019 to the chaos of economic structure due to COVID-19.

Almost all commodity markets have been affected, including oil revenues. China, as the largest importer of oil in the world, has experienced a sharp decline because of this outbreak. Due to the situation, Saudi Arabia, Russia and other oil-producing countries have promised to cut about 10% of global production (Krauss, 2020). Global fears and uncertainties about the spread of the virus have the potential to change investors' decisions to invest in China and in other countries, which in turn reduce oil prices (Arezki and Nguyen, 2020). COVID-19 also has had an impact on investment because people are more careful when buying goods or investing, as expressed by Baldwin and Di Mauro (2020) where past crises such as the Great Trade Collapse of 2008-09 caused employers and companies to delay purchasing activities and investing. Therefore, it is not surprising if the coronavirus affects market projections; investors could delay investment due to unclear supply chains or due to changes in market assumptions.

As a result of the spread of the coronavirus, China has minimized and even stopped importing and exporting goods from inside and outside the country and vice versa, so that many countries in the world are experiencing barriers to raw materials for production needs. Fernandes (2020) stated that the spread of the coronavirus resulted in a decrease in production in China, whereas China is the centre of world goods production. Furthermore, the closure of

factories operating in China affected factories in other countries, such as Nissan (Japan) and Hyundai (South Korea), which lacked spare parts from China (BBC, 2020). Delay in sending and receiving raw materials will affect exports-imports of countries in the world so that in the end, this might threaten the country's foreign exchange obtained through these activities. Therefore, many countries that depend on the import of raw materials with China will experience a decline in exports because the amount produced will not be as usual.

When the plague strikes, the tourism sector is certainly to be paralyzed because many people will refrain from travelling. This worse situation is not surprising, considering that travel and tourism play an important role in carrying disease and disease vectors (Browne et al., 2016). The same thing was also explained by Gössling, Scott and Hall (2020) who thought tourism was about movement, and transportation acted as a vector for distribution of pathogens on a regional and global scale that also supported the pandemic indirectly. Furthermore, this was also reinforced by Ryu et al. (2020), who argued that the pandemic had a large impact on tourism given the role of quarantine and border control.

In 2015, when South Korea was hit by MERS, which caused a brief outbreak, the number of international visitors fell 41% in mid-summer. Fear of public contagion and government overreaction closes many public events and impedes daily activities (Lee & Ki, 2015). Meanwhile, Evans (2020) illustrates the impact of a virus on economic activity; he said, "During the 2003 SARS outbreak, tourist arrivals in Hong Kong fell 68% in just two months. H1N1 influenza produced a 2.8 billion US dollar hit for the Mexican tourism industry, with a loss of one million tourists over five months due to fears of contagion." A report on the COVID-19 outbreak by UNWTO (2020) has emphasized the decline

in international arrivals and receipts in 2020, revising the outlook for 2020 for international tourist arrivals to be a negative growth of 1% to 3%, which means an estimated loss of 30 to 50 billion US dollars in international tourism reception. The impact is expected to be felt throughout the tourism value chain.

Almost all countries depend on the tourism industry; this sector becomes very important because it is a source of high tax and income for the state. According to FaladeObalade and Dubey (2014), tourism is a potential industry that contributes to a country's income, economic growth, the balance of payments, and foreign exchange earnings. Not only for the state, but the tourism sector also provides benefits for the community in terms of providing employment. According to Ivanov and Ayas (2017), the tourism industry has generated around 235 million jobs; this shows that one job out of every 12 jobs in the world works for the tourism sector. That way, the impact caused by the coronavirus is certainly very significant for economic growth, especially for state revenues and individual incomes. Individual groups get more pressure; losing jobs allows a reduction in income, which ultimately gives rise to new poor groups, and this will be a big problem for developing countries that have been actively working to raise the country's status through poverty alleviation programs within the sustainable framework development.

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) feel huge losses in the tourism sector, especially when Saudi Arabia decided to postpone the arrival of Umrah pilgrims from outside countries. The case in Saudi Arabia is interesting to raise because of its domino effect on other countries, especially Muslim countries. According to Desilver and Masci (2017), around 61.7% of Muslims in the world live in Asia-Pacific with almost 1 billion adherents, while the top three countries are Indonesia (around

209 million), India (around 176 million), and Pakistan (around 168 million). This means that the number of business units engaged in the field of Hajj and Umrah in the APR, such as travel agencies, airlines, lodging, visas, and souvenir shops, must experience a drastic turnover. For example, the loss experienced by Indonesia, “according to calculations, the potential loss of is up to 1.6 to 6 trillion IDR, if it runs for one year then the potential loss can reach 19.2 trillion to 72 trillion IDR. This calculation is just the Umrah and does not include the Hajj” (Savithri, 2020).

Bokhari (2018) explained that the annual pilgrimage of Muslims to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj and Umrah had played an increasingly vital role in economic growth and development. Moreover, in a business perspective, Hajj and Umrah trips are businesses engaged in worship that produce three incomes, namely material income, social income and spiritual income (Andar, Unti and Dedi, 2019). Therefore, the contributions made by these religious activities benefit many countries, as well as the individuals and private sector involved. However, the temporary ban on Umrah is the right decision considering the mass gathering is an effective medium of transmission from an infectious disease such as COVID-19. This has been proven by several previous studies where religious mass gatherings such as Hajj and Umrah are activities that have the potential to facilitate the transmission of infectious diseases (Yezli et al., 2016; Koul et al., 2017; Almutairi et al., 2018; Niu and Xu, 2019). So, Hajj and Umrah activities are not only a matter of the global economy but also closely related to global health.

Apart from the negative impact caused by COVID-19, it turns out that there are groups who look at the current situation as transformative moments or opportunities that can change the world (Davies, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Mair, 2020). Furthermore,

many things will change for the better, such as economic development, including tourism, which will become more sustainable (Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2020; Kozul-Wright & Barbosa, 2020). Simply stated, sustainable tourism is seen as a normative orientation that seeks to steer community systems and behaviour on a broad and integrated path towards sustainable development (Bramwell et al., 2017). Even though sustainable tourism is not a new discourse because this pathway has been discussed since three decades ago (Mihalic, 2016; Bramwell et al., 2017; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018), it seems that COVID-19 is the momentum to generate this old intention.

Threat of Poverty

Besides being known as a region that has rapid economic growth, the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) still has a lot to do in terms of reducing extreme poverty; this is explained by Banerjee and Ng (2019), “Although praised globally for its fast economic growth over the past few decades and has raised 1.1 billion people out of extreme poverty since 1990, the Asia-Pacific continues to have the largest number of poor people in the world.” And sure enough, the long efforts that have been taken by the countries in the region to reduce poverty have been tested, as the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to give birth to a new number of poor people.

The non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI) taken by the government to fight the COVID-19 outbreak has caused considerable job losses. Capital owners are forced to activate the layoff option due to the impasse of economic activity because they are unable to provide a salary to their employees. According to Goshu et al. (2020), the contraction in sales and business income and the negative growth of household income and expenditure has resulted in various economic consequences, including large job losses and the adverse welfare impacts of the

population. Barrero, Bloom and Davis (2020) found that there are three new employees for every ten layoffs caused by the COVID-19 shock, and they estimated that 42% of recent layoffs would result in permanent job loss. However, there is no need to be too discouraged because the amount of job loss depends on the length of the pandemic (Goshu et al., 2020). This means that the society plays a role in the conditions they feel; obeying the government's call to remain at home temporarily can reduce the spread of the virus, although no one can predict how long the pandemic will last.

An increase in the unemployment rate will cause a lot of bad possibilities if not handled properly. Blustein (2019) considered unemployment to have a devastating effect on the psychological, economic and social well-being of individuals and society. Furthermore, the rise of global unemployment due to COVID-19 created an intense level of sadness and trauma for many people (Blustein et al., 2020). Therefore, layoffs as a result of this pandemic present a grim existential challenge for millions of people and some other populations (Goshu et al., 2020). Looking at the worst possible scenario with improper handling, a high level of coverage can result in a surge in poverty. The World Bank estimates that COVID-19 is likely to cause the first increase in global poverty since 1998. Using the latest data, it is estimated that the coronavirus will push 40-60 million people into extreme poverty (Mahler and Lakner, 2020).

With conditions of poverty that continue to increase and the absence of employment opportunities on the rise, another bigger problem is hunger. Poverty and hunger are closely related because hunger is both a cause and consequence of poverty (Sharma, Dwivedi and Singh, 2016; Saxena, 2018). Meanwhile, starvation, if not handled properly, can lead to more serious problems, namely crime. Previous studies have observed that poverty

and crime go hand in hand. Iyer and Topalova (2014) stated that absolute poverty is associated with higher crime rates compared to relative poverty. Meanwhile, income shocks that cause widespread poverty were the main cause of crime (Papaioannou, 2017). Crime is the last resort when there is no other way for a person to meet their needs to stay alive so that this bad intention can be easily stopped. Therefore, the roles, efforts and policies of the government hope to create a conducive climate of life during this long pandemic.

The government is always and should be in a position to be responsible for everything that disturbs the community, but they are too far from reaching the community, so sometimes the assistance does not arrive in a timely way. But the people do not need to worry because there will always be a group community in the middle of the community that is moved to help others. Branas-Garza et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic environment influences the social behaviour of many people along with actions of increasing solidarity, such as giving masks to others, caring for vulnerable groups, and so on. The same thing was also expressed by Campbell (2020). During this crisis period, many people were ready and willing to support community initiatives even though they were in their anxiety. Millions of households were inevitably in poverty before the pandemic, and millions more have the potential to be unless the government continues to protect household income through policy changes (Power et al., 2020). Therefore, for short-term solutions, the existence of the voluntary community is very helpful to the community, but the charitable activities they build are not suitable for long-term solutions. That way, the government must be present for the community, even though late in determining the direction of its policy.

Long before COVID-19 attacked, the government had directed its policy on social

protection as an instrument in eradicating poverty. According to Hidrobo et al. (2018), in the past 20 years, social protection has emerged as an additional policy tool to overcome poverty and hunger in developing countries. Furthermore, social protection policies play an important role in realizing human rights to social security for all groups, reducing poverty and inequality, and promoting inclusive growth by increasing human capital productivity and structural transformation of the national economy (ILO, 2014). Responding to COVID-19, the World Bank (2020) in its report stated that about 106 countries had introduced social protection programs in response to COVID-19; this number had increased by 26% (previously 84 countries). Here it can be seen how the government is swift in addressing the impacts caused by COVID-19, although it still relies on social protection as a policy solution.

For countries with a large GDP per capita, certainly realizing social protection is not a complicated problem. Meanwhile, for low GDP countries, it is certainly burdensome, given that their GDP has declined due to slowing economic activity. At the same time, they are required to budget their income for handling COVID-19, such as the provision of better health facilities, social protection for affected communities, and so forth. Clearly the defiance, as explained by Harris (2013), as an effective social protection system has long been seen as a luxury that is difficult to reach by many developing and low-income countries. Therefore, a sustainable source of funding is needed, outside of state revenues, foreign loans or debt.

As explained in the previous section, nearly three-quarters of the world's Muslim population lives in Asia-Pacific. Luckily for a Muslim-majority country, there is a long tradition of providing social welfare to underprivileged people through a collection of Zakat, which is a religious obligation for all Muslims who have wealth on the verge

of a minimum limit to help those in need. Zakat has a role in providing social protection by protecting people who are vulnerable to risk (Ibrahim and Ghazali, 2014; Hassanain and Saaid, 2016). The strength of Zakat funding sources is very strong. Shaikh (2016) found that the ratio of Zakat to GDP in some countries has exceeded the Poverty Gap Index to GDP (PGI-GDP) and the Poverty HeadCount Ratio to GDP (PHCR-GDP). Therefore, based on its objectives and benefits, Zakat, which is believed to have a sustainable source of funds, seems to be an alternative source of funding for social protection (Rassanjani, 2018). This is also in line with what was conveyed by Ariyani (2016) who said that Zakat is not only a means to improve the welfare of the poor, but it has also developed as a practical mechanism for managing social-economic inequality in any society. The government must now build a strong collaboration with outsiders such as religious organizations, as required in the SDGs 'Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goal,' that building partnerships is pivotal in promoting sustainable development.

The complexity of COVID-19 as a new threat needs more attention in public administration studies, especially public policy. A number of government policy packages in restoring the economy and in preventing the rise of new poor groups must be pursued even in an emergency situation; thus, decision-making models such as rational, bureaucratic, incremental, and so on must be absorbed into emergency management theory to explain organizational dynamics and policymaking. Moreover, a policy certainly experiences dynamics in the formulation process due to political aspects. McEntire (2005) argued that the political obstacles faced in the field and creative ways to overcome them must be incorporated into the emergency management theory. Furthermore, the emergence of vulnerability due to the pandemic is closely related to

poverty, which leaves the country unable to prevent, prepare for, or recover from disasters. Therefore, improving wealth distribution and providing insurance needs to be considered by the government to minimize losses and to increase resilience due to COVID-19, but it is difficult to predict when it will end.

Conclusion

The coronavirus pandemic is very fierce, and there are no signs that the spread of this pandemic can be stopped quickly, so it is necessary to set an effective strategy to prevent the spread of this pandemic to avoid an economic recession. The rapid spread of COVID-19 makes the whole world vigorously concentrate its attention to producing non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI) policies, such as regional quarantine, and also to call on people to refrain from travelling outside the house or carrying out activities as usual outside the house, and many more. However, the policy at once has hampered many economic activities in the tourism, financial and other sectors. The cessation of economic activities will result in huge losses. Many countries are threatened with an economic recession.

The presence of volunteer groups through a series of movements to raise effective donations provides a little fresh air for affected communities; however, that is a short-term solution only. Social protection programs can become a poverty solution in the middle of a pandemic; however, the problem is in financing. Foreign loans are a completely unsustainable funding solution, and maybe it is time for the majority of Muslim countries to look at Zakat as an alternative buffer for social protection programs. Besides, it is better to establish a forum for exchanging information on handling coronaviruses between countries of the Asia-Pacific region in assessing their impact on the economy, to minimize the occurrence of economic recession.

Agenda 2030 is committed to “no one left behind,” which is the heart of the SDGs. More importantly, there are the four objectives (Goal 1 No Poverty, Goal 2 Zero Hunger, Goal 3 Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth) experiencing a slowdown in progress during COVID-19. Countries trapped in crises - life after a pandemic - will fall out of their national and sectoral plans. Without the presence of the international community to overcome the impasse of those who need to get through the crisis, we will never reach the SDGs for all, so these marginalized groups will grow throughout the world. In doing so, it is necessary to promote Goal 17 Partnership for the Goals to facilitate increased progress of the SDGs for countries that are fighting the pandemic. In the end, we need to fight together to revive the SDGs for countries that need help.

Last but not least, the government must make emergency policies amid the unpreparedness of many countries in dealing with this non-natural disaster. The health emergency and the threat of poverty that was being faced during the COVID-19 forced the governments of countries in the Asia Pacific region to find new sources for revenues by providing social protection for their citizens. In the next few months, there will be many “emergency management” made by the governments of Asia Pacific countries to respond to the social and political problems.

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