



Socio-Economic Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Zakia LAMRAOUI*

University of Oum El Bouaghi,
(Algeria)

zakia.Lamraoui @univ-ueb.dz

Tayseer Abdul Jabbar Al-Alousi

Averroes University
, (Netherland)

tayseer54@hotmail.com

Abstract ;

Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in over 63,446 confirmed cases and over 2077 deaths in Algeria, and 51,629,691 confirmed cases and over 1,275,382 deaths all over the world, at the time of writing. The Algerian government has implemented various measures to limit the outbreak of the virus. In response to this outbreak, this paper describes the socio-economic implications of coronavirus on society. The main implications are the change in family life concerning the spread of domestic violence against vulnerable people, and high rates of children's exposure to digital technologies that may affect them negatively. also, the education disruption and school closures. the tourism industry is greatly affected because of borders close and restrict flights. coronavirus pandemic has impacted food sector threatening the food security of billions of people. Finally, we can say that the Coronavirus outbreak can create severe socio-economic implications that can harm society and economics in general.

Article info

Received
11 August 2022
Accepted
15 September 2022

Keyword:

- ✓ coronavirus pandemic
- ✓ socio-economic implication
- ✓ education
- ✓ Tourism
- ✓ food security

* Corresponding author

1. Introduction

The coronavirus or COVID- 19 is a novel virus that spread rapidly among people. It first appeared close to a seafood market in Wuhan city, China, on December 2019. It becomes a pandemic by early 2020 due to travelers' transmitting all over the world. This pandemic has made big problems at international and national level, especially health and economic concerns.

On basis of its direct links and volume of travel to china, Algeria was considered by the WHO as one of the 13 top priority countries to be infected by the coronavirus from china (Gilbert, 2020, p. 875). However, the first case which tested positive on February 25 was an Italian man who arrived on February17 to Algeria. This case has been well isolated and he was deported to his country via special flight without anyone being infected.

The true starting point of the epidemic in Algeria is reported on March 1 of two national citizens who came from France in the province of Blida (northern Algeria) which became the epicenter of the epidemic (Lounis M. , 2020a, p. 1). Since May 1, all the 48 provinces of Algeria were affected with a number varying from 2 to 865 of positive cases (Lounis M. , 2020a, p. 1). At the time of writing, November 10, Algeria confirmed 63,446 cases of COVID-19 and 2077 COVID-19 related deaths. (<http://covid19.sante.gov.dz/carte/>).

Since the number of the positive cases started to become alarming, the Algerian

government has implemented various measures to limit the outbreak of the virus. Such as: quarantine, Social distancing or physical distancing, home confinement, lockdown and curfew, ban all public gatherings, and close borders and restrict flights. These measures had negative social and economic implications on the individual and society.

2. Family Life During the Pandemic

Coronavirus pandemic is also expected to increase levels of violence. In the immediate term, the largest contributor is likely to come from the effects of stay-at-home orders and movement restrictions.

The social effects of the pandemic also extend to the inside of our homes, where many people find themselves in sudden forced proximity with their immediate family. People subject to quarantine or self-isolation are at risk for confusion and anger, emotional tendencies that can be explosive when multiple household members simultaneously endure them for weeks or months on end. Indeed, some studies suggest that forced proximity is a risk factor for aggression and domestic violence (Bavel, et al., 2020, p. 466).

Lockdown and social distancing measures to prevent spread of COVID-19 have heightened fears of increasing levels of domestic violence, which includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse... The concentrated time spent in lockdown

means that vulnerable people are more exposed to abuse and it is more difficult for them to seek help (Nicola, et al., 2020, p. 190).

women's exposure to violent partners is increased. Mounting household tensions and economic stresses could also play a role. There are already indications that violence incidence is indeed growing, including increases in calls to violence prevention hotlines and media reports of rising domestic abuse and homicide (UNFPA, 2020, p4).

coronavirus spread also increased caregiving responsibilities on women. They had to take care of the children, elderly, and disabled and at the same time perform household duties. As a result of which women are found to be more stressed than men during the lockdown (Mohapatra, 2020, p150).

Children also are affected by coronavirus outbreak. First, they are exposed to violence, especially violence by caregivers. Children are also often witnesses to domestic violence against women (United Nations, 2020a, p. 10). Second, children are by far more exposed to digital technologies than usual. School closures have meant that access to the digital environment is essential for children's education, socialisation with peers, play, entertainment and self-expression (thevenon& adema, 2020, p. 20). This may affect them negatively by

exposure to bad content. "Increased activity in the digital environment may translate into growing exposure to content risks for children. children may also be exposed to disinformation about COVID-19 that can spread virally and can cause them increased anxiety and fear" (thevenon & adema 20).

Projections show that if violence increases by 20 per cent during periods of lockdown, there would be an additional 15 million cases of intimate partner violence in 2020 for an average lockdown duration of 3 months, 31 million cases for an average lockdown of 6 months, 45 million for an average lockdown of 9 months, and 61 million if the average lockdown period were to be as long as one year. (UNFPA, 2020, p4)

the social distancing policy might also cause hunger to many poor households because of job lost and income disruption which has led to widespread poverty. "Countries with a high number of poor people or people living close to the poverty line are at high risk in terms of both loss of lives and loss of livelihoods if governments do not urgently find a way of providing targeted relief and ensure access to essential services" (United Nations, 2020b, p. 2).

3. *Tourism, hospitality, and aviation*

According to the United nations, “tourism provides livelihoods for millions of people and allows billions more to appreciate their own and different cultures, as well as the natural world. Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities on all continents” (united nations, 2020 d, p. 2).

The World Travel and Tourism Council have warned the COVID-19 pandemic could cut 50 million jobs worldwide in the travel and tourism industry, and Asia is expected to be the worst affected. When the outbreak will be over, it could take up to ten months for the industry to recover (Folinas &Metaxas, 2020, p.07)

The International Air Transport Association (IATA, 2020) has predicted that the coronavirus will reduce global airline revenue by \$29.3 billion in 2020, arising from a contraction in global air demand. (Folinas &Metaxas, 2020, p.07)

According to the United nations, “tourism came to a standstill in mid-March 2020. International tourist arrivals decreased by 56 per cent in the first months of the year, with numbers in May down by 98 per cent” (united nations, 2020 d, p. 6).

The first action taken by the Algerian authorities was the flight cancellation to

china by the national airline company on February 3, 2020 (Lounis M., 2020b, p. 2). By closing borders and restricting flights, the tourism industry is greatly affected. the tourism sector is very sensitive and easily affected by global crises. The crisis that started with the emergence of COVID-19 became the focal point of travelers, even when it was still in local dimensions. (Uğur & Akbıyık11)

The pandemic has confronted the hospitality industry with an unprecedented challenge. Strategies to mitigate COVID-19 outbreak such as lockdowns, social distancing, home confinement, travel and mobility restrictions have resulted in temporary closure of many hospitality businesses and significantly decreased the demand for businesses that were allowed to continue to operate. Almost all restaurants operate restricted to delivering orders. Travel and home quarantine restrictions issued by the authorities have sharply reduced hotel business and its revenues (Gursoy. & Chi 2020).

4. *Food sector*

coronavirus pandemic is universal crisis that affected food sector. “The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are now threatening the food security of billions of people” (Zurayk, 2020). People all over the world are more afraid of hunger a pandemic may cause than the

pandemic itself. This is the reason why people in many countries are crowded into long queues to buy and store as much food as possible, for fear of a food crisis or any kind of food shortage. For example, Algeria witnessed a significant increase in the demand for basic food commodities, especially semolina, flour, dry grains, pastries, sugar, oil and milk, due to families' fears of food scarcity. This leads to the appearance of negative selfish behaviors in panic situations such as over buying of food items that can harm the social cohesion of society in general.

According to (Siche, 2020, p.6), “food demand and thus food security are greatly affected due to mobility restrictions, reduced purchasing power, and with a great impact on the most vulnerable population groups. as cases of contagion increase, governments take more drastic measures to stop the spread of the virus, also influencing the global food system”.

Countries and citizens are not affected equally by the pandemic. Developing countries are expected to suffer disproportionately because of their pre-COVID-19 situation. This lead to serious health and economic implications in Africa (Willy et al., 2020). “The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates that the COVID 19 pandemic has the potential to push 29 million Africans into extreme poverty” (united nations, 2020c).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has warned that COVID-19 threatens the livelihoods of 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy- nearly half the global workforce. In the first month of the crisis, it is estimated that informal workers lost 60% of their income. Workers in Africa and the Americas have been hit the hardest with an 81% reduction in both regions (United Nations, 2020b, p. 2).

Algeria faces humongous threats with regard of food security, since it imports of grains represents 79%. Algeria has witnessed during the past years an increase in the level of dependency on the world food market, for several reasons, including increased consumption and the inefficiency of agricultural policies and economic governance. (Mouloudj, Bouarar &Fechit, 2020, p 167) Algerian authorities should design Legislations and programs to support those in need especially the poorest who may not survive a health or economic crisis. For example, homeless people are unable to find safe shelter and are highly exposed to the danger of coronavirus. Workers in the informal sector, who earn low wages, people without access to running water and refugees will also suffer from both the coronavirus pandemic and hunger.

5. *Coronavirus and School Closures*

The outbreak of Coronavirus negatively affected educational activities worldwide. it leads to closures of schools in many countries in an attempt to contain the spread of the pandemic. “It created serious disruptions in academic activities, as well as in career plans”. (onyema et al, 2020, p111)

Algeria like many other countries has temporarily closed all educational institutions (schools and universities) starting from March 13 as a precautionary measure, in an attempt to contain the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic. “unplanned school closures can cause severe problems for students, educators, parents and the society at large. it could lead students to idleness which might result in youth involvement in crimes, loss of interest in learning, and poor academic performance” (onyema et al, 2020, p111).

The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education recommended the use of distance learning programs and the open educational platforms that universities can use to reach learners remotely and reduce education disruption. however, the absence of online learning platform in educational institutions, in addition to the young age of the learner, in schools, makes the possibility of distance education impossible.

technology can help in mitigating the implications of school closures, but it cannot replace the important effect of students – teachers’ face-to-face interactions. In addition, most students do not have the technologies to support online education, which makes it difficult to implement distance learning technology during school closures (onyema et al, 2020, p112).

According to the UNESCO (2020a), school closures carry high social and economic costs for people across communities. These include:

- Interrupted learning: Schooling provides essential learning and when schools close, children and youth are deprived opportunities for growth and development.
- Poor nutrition: Many children and youth rely on free or discounted meals provided at schools for food and healthy nutrition.
- Confusion and stress for teachers: teachers are often unsure of their obligations and how to maintain connections with students to support learning.
- Parents unprepared for distance and home schooling: especially for parents with limited education and resources.

- Challenges creating, maintaining, and improving distance learning.
- Gaps in childcare: especially for working parents.
- High economic costs: Working parents are more likely to miss work when schools close in order to take care of their children.
- Rise in dropout rates: after the opening of schools.
- Increased exposure to violence and exploitation.
- Social isolation: many children and youth miss out of on social contact that is essential to learning and development.

6. CONCLUSION

This article discussed the socio-economic implications of coronavirus on Algerian society. It reveals that the coronavirus outbreak affected social and economic well-being of most people. The outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting all segments of the Algerian population especially vulnerable one including people living in poverty, homeless people, elderly persons, persons with chronic diseases, and pregnant women. Because there is no treatment yet of this disease, prevention and rational social policy are the best options. "If the social crisis caused by coronavirus is not properly addressed through social policy, the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment... in the medium and long term" (Ozili, 2020).

The coronavirus outbreak in Algeria has many socio-economic implications. First, the change in family life during the pandemic, because of the home

confinement, concerning the spread of domestic violence against vulnerable people such as women and children, and high rates of children's exposure to digital technologies may affect them negatively. Second, coronavirus school closures carry high social and economic costs for people across communities. Third, the tourism industry is greatly affected because of borders close and restrict flights. Forth, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted food sector threatening the food security of billions of people. Finally, we can say that the Coronavirus outbreak can create severe socio-economic implications that can harm society and economics in general.

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