

## COVID – 19 PANDEMIC EFFECT ON ASEAN

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### Abstract :

In this paper I am augmenting on ASEAN Organization and Covid – 19. ASEAN member states have responded it with different policies based on their domestic socio – economic, security and political circumstances. The member of ASEAN organization country Singapore, Philippines , Malaysia , Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia. Corona virus covid 19 – South east asia is seeing a rapid growth in the number of confirmed cases. I am studying also in this paper and provides a summary of the socio-economic impact, challenges and policies and responses employed by the asean members state to mitigate. The bad effect of the pandemic.

### Key words :

ASEAN, World Organization, Regional Organization, Covid- 19

### Introduction

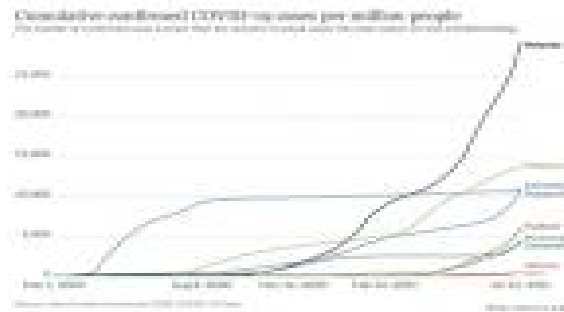
Southeast Asia is struggling to contain the spread of COVID-19 amid a resurgence driven by the Delta variant, leaving national governments with no capacity to spare on neighboring countries. At the same time, ASEAN faces a trust problem due to the intangible nature of regional cooperation, and capacity issues associated with the prolonged deadlock over the selection of a special envoy to deal with the political crisis in Myanmar. Nevertheless, the potential for future regional cooperation after the health crisis subsides is within view.

### National or regional actions?

In March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. This lent urgency for ASEAN governments to come up with a regional response to serve multiple needs: primarily to reassure the respective populaces in ASEAN countries, and to coordinate across multiple sectors to address health, information, financial, and security aspects of the pandemic. Prior to March 2020, COVID-19 had been viewed largely as a domestic, and at most bilateral, matter. In fact, this emphasis on the domestic nature of the response would prevail up to the convening of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 in July 2020 and even well beyond the establishment of the COVID-19 Response Fund and the adoption of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework at the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020. The discrepancy in regional and national-level actions probably stems from the way in which the pandemic affected each ASEAN member state. The pandemic’s threat to regional economies propelled ASEAN to mobilize its regional health governance mechanisms, which had been developed and tested since the SARS and Avian Flu outbreaks in 2003-04. Even so, the rapidity with which infections spread across communities and borders, and the severity of the respiratory illness, took a heavy toll across the region. The economic impact of the pandemic was further compounded when the world started locking down, slowing global economies, disrupting global and regional supply chains, and affecting employment, consumption and investment around the world.

### COVID-19 responses in ASEAN

Most of Southeast Asia managed to avoid the brunt of the pandemic for most of 2020 by swiftly closing borders and restricting movement. Data visualization from Our World in Data shows the spread of the pandemic across communities and countries in the region (Fig 1) and the intensity of various Southeast Asian countries’ responses to COVID-19 (Fig 2).1 This “Stringency Index” for Southeast Asian countries is based on the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. It reflects common policy responses in ASEAN member states, ranging from public information campaigns and movement restrictions, to the closing of schools, workplaces and public places, as well as near-total lockdowns, strict contact-tracing, quarantine and reporting requirements, as well as domestic and international travel controls.



The graphs show that as a first response to the pandemic, most ASEAN countries reacted by adopting highly restrictive measures during the period from March to May 2020. Many people have attributed the initial successful containment of the virus in the region to these hard measures. However, these containment strategies were not so successful when faced with new virus variants amidst efforts to reopen economies. Indeed, infection figures rose in most ASEAN countries at different times in 2021. The Government Response Tracker has also developed a number of other indices to track policy responses not reflected in these charts, such as those related to testing, contact tracing, healthcare and vaccine investment and measures to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, including income support and debt relief, which may or may not include access to or support from the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund.

#### **Vaccination challenges, resurgence and a hindered recovery**

Vaccination against COVID-19 is a core part of national policies and responses to the disease. Authorities view vaccination as the means to a triple protection: to prevent the disease itself, reduce the risk of transmission, as well as to keep the national healthcare system from being overwhelmed. While governments rushed to secure vaccine doses to inoculate entire populations, the cost of the vaccine has also led to an imbalance in access and distribution not only among countries, but also among communities within countries. Vaccination programmers globally largely follow a phased approach by age, after prioritizing those on the frontline confronting the disease on a daily basis. This has also been the approach adopted by ASEAN governments. Several ASEAN states had rolled out vaccination programmers by March 2021. At that time, regional analysts started predicting a V-shaped or W-shaped economic recovery for Southeast Asian countries. However, shortly afterwards, new variants of the virus and a resurgence of cases in several ASEAN member states delayed hopes of declaring the region open for business or returning to pre-pandemic activities. Across the region, the uncertainties of COVID-19 virus mutations, the drawn-out duration and the rapid and extensive spread of the pandemic strained public health and public communications systems, adding to perceptions of slow responses and frustrations over the limited capacity to stem the rising number of infections and deaths in several ASEAN countries.



The varying stages and efficacy of responses to the pandemic in each member state reflects the diversity of ASEAN in terms of governance, resources available to deal with the

pandemic's multi-faceted challenges, health system resilience and capacity, and public trust. Singapore stands out as a leader in vaccination, implementation of stringent measures to prevent and trace the spread of new variants and infections, and in sharing medical equipment and supplies to fellow ASEAN members such as Indonesia and Myanmar. In Myanmar, a devastating third wave of COVID-19 has compounded the humanitarian crisis catalyzed by the military coup on 1 February 2021. The military junta stated that it would continue the vaccination programmed started by the National League for Democracy government in January 2021, but implementation and reporting of new cases has been patchy at best, and a major wave of infections has overwhelmed the health system by mid-2021. Public trust in government efficacy to manage the COVID-19 stresses on the economy and society have also played out in different ways. The political relevance and survival of leaders in Thailand and Malaysia have been largely affected by their COVID-19 response performance. The performance approval of governments in Indonesia, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos and Cambodia do not seem to have been adversely affected. In the Philippines, which had imposed "one of the world's longest and strictest lockdowns", the economic recovery outlook lags behind the projected recoveries of Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. Many important regional health governance mechanisms were also employed as components of ASEAN's collective response to the pandemic. High-level ASEAN meetings, at both ministerial and summit level, discussed regional measures, not just in the health but also in economic and social sectors, to tackle various aspects of the pandemic. In addition to the COVID-19 Response Fund, the establishment of the ASEAN Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases in November 2020, as well as the ASEAN Emergency Operating Centre Network for Public Health Emergency and the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre, contributed to the regional response, facilitating timely and accurate exchanges of information, and technical support and expertise for laboratories in member states. ASEAN also took on the "infodemic" challenge, and deployed the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre to combat misinformation and fake news, as well as disseminating important information on preventive measures to minimize and stop the spread of COVID-19.

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