

Editorial

Special Issue on COVID-19 and Its Impact on Asian Economies

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The COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious global economic crisis after the economic depression of the 1930s. The multifaceted impact includes a fall in global economic growth, deceleration of trade, plummeting financial markets, larger fiscal deficits, tight global liquidity conditions, higher unemployment, and poverty. Moreover, as the Asian economies are well integrated with world markets, the pandemic has severely affected both the internal and external sectors. Thus, this special issue of *Asian Economics Letters* contains six papers on the impact of COVID-19 on Asian economies. These papers were invited through a special call for papers and selected following the journal's usual peer-review process.

The **first** two papers are on the COVID-19 pandemic and international trade. C.T Vidya examines changes in the world trade network before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and China's pre-eminence in world trade. She finds that the pandemic did not change the position of countries in the world trade network; however, it reduced trade density, interconnectedness, and connectivity. Similarly, the study finds that China maintained its pre-eminence in the world network even during the pandemic due to intra-regional trade. The second paper by Zainuddin, Khairuddin, and Hamidi analyze the impact of the pandemic on Malaysia's bilateral exports. They find that Malaysia's exports of capital and consumption goods increased with the pandemic. However, when the trading partners imposed a travel ban, the country's exports decreased.

The third paper by Oliyiye, Adetokunbo and Fasanya examine the impact of the pandemic on India's sectoral stock indices. They find that the pandemic affected the variance of the stock returns but not its mean, suggesting that while market volatility has been impacted returns have been immune. The fourth paper by Chundakkadan and Sasidharan

study the impact of the unconventional monetary policy adopted by the central bank of India during COVID-19 on the country's stock returns. Their findings show that the stock returns were higher during the days of the unconventional monetary policy announced by the central bank. They also find that unconventional monetary policy had a higher impact on the stock returns of firms that are financially constrained and dependent on bank finance.

The second last paper is on the responses of the Indian corporate sector to the COVID-19 outbreak by Bhadra and Ray. They find that the corporates adopted various strategies, such as focusing on operational continuity, reducing employee costs, and launching new products to survive the adverse effects of the pandemic. The last paper by Rajan, Sivadasan, Jayanth, and Batra analyse the impact of COVID-19 on migrant households in India from various perspectives, such as employment, source of livelihood, lifestyle, and coping strategies during the lockdown. They find that the pandemic adversely affected employment, consumption, food security, and livelihood of migrant households.

Although the above six papers covered various issues related to the pandemic and Asian economies, there are many dimensions of the impact of the pandemic yet to be explored. For example, one future direction can be to study the impact of trade restrictions imposed by countries during the pandemic, especially on medical equipment. The second direction can be to explore the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as its impacts on employment, inequality, poverty, migration, education, mental health, and the availability of resources. Finally, as many countries are still experiencing new waves of the pandemic, addressing the above research issues would help frame appropriate policies for a speedy recovery from the crisis.



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