

**AN ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK YEAR 2020**

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Abstrak

Pandemi COVID-19 yang pertama kali ditemukan di Wuhan, China, berdampak signifikan terhadap kondisi sosial ekonomi China. Penelitian telah menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh luas dari virus yang ditularkan manusia ini membawa respons penting terhadap perilaku China, termasuk aktivitas domestik dan internasional. Republik Rakyat Tiongkok tidak hanya dianggap mempunyai virus karena perilaku masyarakatnya yang terbiasa memakan daging mentah, tetapi juga meningkatkan sentimen terhadap masyarakat Republik Rakyat Tiongkok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kondisi Republik Rakyat Tiongkok pada masa pandemi tahun 2020, tanggapannya, dan capaian yang diperoleh. Berdasarkan tinjauan literatur dan bukti dari data primer, termasuk namun tidak terbatas pada Organisasi Kesehatan Dunia, penilaian dilakukan untuk menjawab tujuan penelitian. Analisis kasus implikasi sosial politik dan ekonomi Republik Rakyat Tiongkok dari pandemi COVID-19 menunjukkan bahwa dalam situasi yang menantang, pemerintah Tiongkok yang dipimpin oleh Partai Komunis Tiongkok, CPC telah memberikan upaya yang besar dengan segera memberikan perbekalan alat kesehatan, fasilitas, dan pencegahan penyebaran untuk menghentikan penurunan kerugian sosial ekonomi yang dialami RRT. Melalui kerja sama dan lockdown pemerintah, RRT berencana memberantas penyebaran virus tersebut ke seluruh dunia.

Kata Kunci: COVID-19, Lockdown, Pandemi, Republik Rakyat Tiongkok, Kondisi sosial ekonomi, Organisasi Kesehatan Dunia.

Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak, which was first founded in Wuhan, China, has significantly impacted China's socio-economic conditions. Research has shown that the widespread influence of this human-transmitted virus brings a crucial response to People's Republic of China behavior, including domestic and international activity. Not only has People's Republic of China been deemed to have the virus suspected because of the society's behavior toward eating raw meat, but it also increases the Chinese sentiment subjected towards the Chinese population. This study aims to investigate the People's Republic of China's condition during the pandemic in 2020, its response to it, and the achievement it gained. Based on a review of literature and evidence from primary data, including but not limited to the World Health Organization, an assessment is done to answer the research objective. The analysis of the case of the People's Republic of China's socio-political and economic implications of the COVID-19 outbreak demonstrated that in a challenging situation, the Chinese government led by the Communist Party of China, CPC has given its tremendous effort by an immediate response on medical supply, facility, and spread prevention to stop the decline in socio-economic loss experienced by PRC.

Through the government's collaboration and lockdown, PRC planned to eradicate the virus from spreading worldwide.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Lockdown, Pandemic, People's Republic of China, Socio-economic condition, World Health Organization..*

INTRODUCTION

The current status quo on COVID-19 outbreak victim shows a significant inclining revealed case throughout world's hemisphere (Fatton Robert, 2023). This outbreak that is no longer an epidemic but becoming a global pandemic show a critical condition, particularly to the instability of world's socio-political and economic conditions (Leach, MacGregor, Scoones, & Wilkinson, 2021). The first infected patient that was found in Wuhan, China made the government inspected the city and largely, the country (He & Zhang, 2022). The outbreak spread not only in China or Asia Pacific particularly, but also other continent like America, Europe, and Africa (Deyshappriya, Sammani, & Minuwanthi, 2021). When the case of infections spread and massive number of denizens infected revealed, as a country with the largest population in the world and one of the most significant global economic power located in Asia Pacific made it becomes a caution for other countries to be aware of the outbreak. Surprisingly, the case number grow up to 1.773.084 globally as per 13th of April 2020 reported by World Health Organization and 2.124.824 as per 17th of April 2020. However, on 18th of March 2020, China has declared that no new case was found on the country, made many people relieved, becoming the first infected country to report this, and said to only wait for the curative measures (Zhang, Li, & Chen, 2020). Hence, the outbreak has contributed to the condition change of the state's socio-political and economic situatio(Žuk, Žuk, & Pluciński, 2021) n. Thus, the reserach will deliberate an analysis of People's Republic of China's socio-political and economic implications of COVID-19 outbreak, especially in the year 2020.

The research will contribute to a comprehensive explanation on the influence that the COVID-19 outbreak has given towards China in the field of socio-political and economy by breaking down and covers several key aspects explanation, which are; China's condition, a brief historical background of COVID-19 outbreak, analysis of socio-political and economic sectors, current solution done by China, and the success case of managing the outbreak. It will be profoundly asserted in the research that the socio-political and economic sector and its harm could spread towards another fields of state in which, the case becoming more urgent and crucial to be solved directly (Young, 2021). It is important to understand that the outbreak in China as the first detected patients found from this country has delivered global attention whilst the development of vaccine is still on the research. Thus, as many controversies on the outbreak happen, even targeted towards China, the research is purposefully to create the understanding on COVID-19 implications towards socio-political and economic condition in China and it will be a better off condition when people could have more fact checks on the problems that China also face through the declining socio-political and economic situation(Shmushko, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

In ensuring that the research has been carried out with credibility with valid proof of data, there has to be an empirical analysis brought to provide a reliable source that is based on facts and not opinion. Therefore, the research method covers the supporting details of the data collection as the variable of observation done in this research (Chou &

Lu, 2022). Therefore to elaborate on the condition of China, the data has been collected through legitimate sources of news and articles, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency's official website(Qiang, 2019). At the same time, the explanation of COVID-19 historical and progression data have been retrieved from news articles that directly report and become society's first source of information (Late & Kumpulainen, 2022).

In addressing the observation, analyses have been brought through an in-depth literature review from journals, such as; "Economic Impacts of Wuhan 2019-nCoV on China and the World, Journal of Medical Virology (Foster K. Ayittey et al.) and "Impacts of Social and economic factors on the transmission of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in China" (Yun Qiu, Xi Chen, and Wei Shi), official government statement, and news article. The social-political and economic implications have been explained through reliable sources such as news and journal articles, also used to elaborate on China's immediate solution and its achievement in fighting against COVID-19 (Radu & Popescu, 2022).

Overall, the research method has been done qualitatively through profound observation and analysis by obtaining facts and data from literature such as journals, news articles, and official government statements from primary and secondary sources. It is carried out through comparison, observation, and analysis. Those methodologies were sufficient to answer the purpose of this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Chinese Sentiment

The moment when the first COVID-19 infected patients found in Wuhan City, China has made many controversies in the origin and source of the virus (Worobey et al., 2022). Many has suspected that the outbreak was originated from China, though Chinese officials have denied the claim, even resulted to clash between United States and China in recalling the source of COVID-19. The Chinese sentiment from United States as the rivalry of PRC for almost a decade due to Trade War conflict has escalated the “mock-calling” due to this phenomenon. As the origin of the COVID-19 is still on the investigation and has sill have many suspects, United States official explained that it could be from Chinese laboratory in Wuhan that develop the virus as the engineered biochemical weaponries and could be a threat (Bodner, Welch, & Brodie, 2020). Realizing that, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Lijian Zhao expressed that even US army could also be the suspect to bring the outbreak when they attended the World Military Games in Wuhan in October 2019. After this both accusations towards another the US president, Donald Trump also said that this is a “Chinese Virus” or Wuhan Virus”, not because he is racist but he explained because it is originated from it. Many argue that the move of Trump by saying the statement of COVID-19 as a “Chinese Virus” will increase the tension that has been there between both countries.

It can be analysed that since COVID-19 official declaration on its origin is still being on mitigation, it couldn't be directly accused to one country or another, because if so, it would put influence on the diplomatic relations between the countries. The sentiment to Chinese people in US could escalate as the government, the state leader declared to said so. The sentiment could worsen the condition that both countries may relate, for example in the Trade War conflict (Wei & Clegg, 2020). That is to say, the effect of the sentiment will not stop only to this case, but also to the other countries related case (Garcia & Berton, 2021). The United States moves to say such thing, could made more racist perspective towards anything related to China, for instance, like its people

and products. This could influence the public's opinion, especially for those who are supporting Trump extensively. As another factor seen, that US is one of the world leading country and media's spotlight is easily looking at, made US voice in the international community be a crucial direction to see such situation. When the tragedy escalates the tension between US-China, if China does not accept the calling, and believed that they do so, the domino effect of such tension could spread to another types of conflict like Trade War, even to South China Sea dispute that China and US are involved in. It is indeed important to note, that this kind of sentiment could ruin countries bilateral or multilateral ties by China and its cooperating country, for example, like the cut of Official development Aid of Japan to China in 2018 after almost 40 years being given was stopped, not only because China's rising economic power, but the growth of Chinese sentiment in Japanese society. In another case, Australia had also banned the Chinese product, Huawei 5G in August 2018 due to national security reason and could made an impact of the future Chinese exported product to be harder in entering Australia because of this perception or rising sentiment. Therefore, the growth of Chinese sentiment is prone to the proliferation of conflict and to the relations of China towards another country.

The worst thing is, when both countries have lost their control and the situation becomes uncontrollable, war could also happen, particularly due to both countries possessing a strong military power, attainment of nuclear power, and the prestige of being 2 super power country. This condition will create more instability not only for both countries, but the rest world's hemisphere. In the first stage, it might advocate each ally to side by their side and backup such help towards them, for instance, like imposing sanction or embargo. However, the tension and sentiment should be kept under their own perspective as it hasn't been found and wrong accusation shouldn't be the alternative in the case. The socio-political problem that China face due to the Chinese sentiment growth could hamper China's diplomatic relations to another country and disrupt the plan that has been set by China to be politically accepted by many countries, considering that communist ideology country was an issue back in history. The lobby that China tried to do through investment and such, would also be ruin, when the "racist sentiment" growth and spread to more country in the world.

2. Push of Behavioural Change

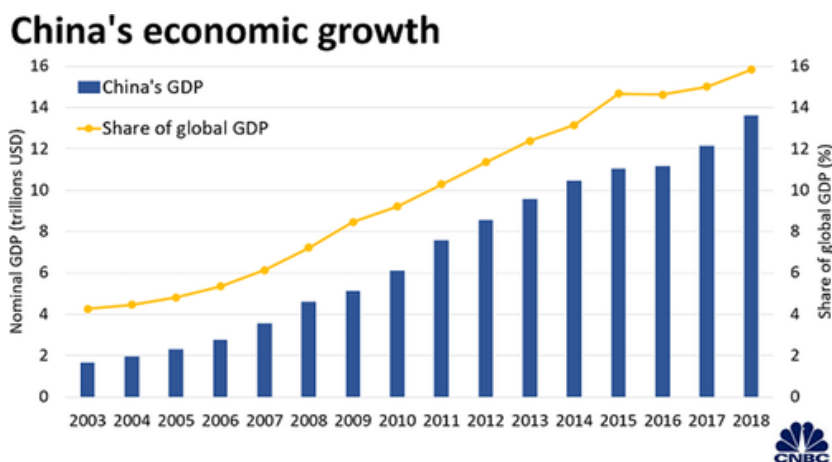
As it is well-known that Chinese tradition is very strong implemented within the people and the culture embodied is respected amongst the nation, Chinese' culture that for some people may not be familiar often times get accused for becoming the source of COVID-19 outbreak. It may be seen that many of Chinese social behaviour to eat wild animals and raw meat might be extreme and unusual in many countries. However, the behaviour of the people hasn't been claimed to be harmful, before the outbreak infected patient was found as the workers of Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, Wuhan City, China. Aside than that, scientist explained that the COVID-19 that similarly causing symptom of pneumonia type disease comes from bat raw meat which Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market was also selling. This has become the claim for many people to say that the outbreak is originated by the culture of Chinese people to eat raw bat meat. If that is true, then the change of behaviour might be answer of stopping this kind of virus. However, this argument was supported through the phenomenon of SARS outbreak in 2002 until 2003 that was originated from China that was caused suspected to be similar by the cause of COVID-19 outbreak, which is raw animal meat.

Both of the reasons are seemingly to be coherent to explain that it might be the source of the current deadly virus. Many activists have condemned the wildlife trade as

food and push Chinese society to change their behaviour from eating wildlife animal as food. They warn this behaviour to stop for the prevention of such repeated case in the future. Some has also state that China doesn't learn from the past outbreak of virus from Guangdong Province in 2002. It explained that the moment of twice occurrence of the similar virus should be an enough lesson to teach the society in changing it behaviour of trading wildlife raw meat as food due to its danger, or perhaps, plausible danger it may possess. Therefore, in 24th of February, the Chinese government permanently ban the trade of wildlife meat trade as food and would criminalize such act through the amendment of China's Wildlife Protection Law in the National People's Congress. It can be analysed that the behavioural change on something with good purpose might be done and save more lives, however, the society' habit change as the socio-cultural aspect of their life might be eradicated. This is to say, that even though it is still suspected that the market in Wuhan as the source of COVID-19, the cleanliness and hygiene of any food and anything should be kept priority. It is proven that this shift might endanger the Chinese people's culture and social condition, but as a wider and better security, added by the research that has been conducted, it is a better off condition if the ban on wildlife raw meat trade being banned.

Economic Implications

Aside than the socio-political implications, the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak has also brought a significant implication towards the economic sector in China. As it has been reported by many media, China has decided to do a lockdown on several cities including Wuhan and Chibi. The lockdown of parts of China might bring a very significant impact on their economic growth, particularly for Wuhan that holds many economic significant trade centre and business core in China. Wuhan itself holds the major local steel and vehicle builder for the nation and export supply, including more than 300 factories of global leading and best 500 corporations such as Microsoft, German Software company-SAP, and many more. Showing its significance, the sole GDP growth of this particular part of China has been recorded to surpass the national GDP with 7.8% against 6.1% national'. Therefore, Wuhan had brought a significant contribution in delivering China becoming the 2nd world largest economic power. Because if not, the condition like the status quo shown where companies with expatriates have to evacuate back their employee and halted the business until the lockdown is over. 11 of the lockdown Chinese provinces which are accountable for the creation of more than two-thirds of vehicle in the nation, in which those provinces are also supplying automobile parts to the carmakers in several countries like US, Europe, and South Korea. And it is predicted, if these companies are stop operating until 10th of February 2020, they will lose more than 350.000 units of its production. Not only that, more than 70.000 cinemas and theatres are closed down, making no movie industry work in this period of town since the people are strictly prohibited to have their outdoor activity and have the interactions with outside world. As IMF has stated that China contributes to 39% world's economic growth, and currently its sole economy has been 8 to 9 times larger than the year of 2002 when first SARS outbreak was found, it is predicted that the economic loss would be even larger than US\$40 billion in times of SARS back then. This would bring damage to the China's national economy, even the world since the companies and people are not working. Especially when the China's economic growth is currently growing -6.8% making it the worse contracted decrease of China's economic stability through decades comparison.



Not only that, the closing border for visitor, particularly tourism sectors operation including the stop flights, especially when in this time, they are going to celebrate the Lunar New Year celebration where visitors are usually in its peak season. The lockdown caused the cancelled of flights, the stop sales of new year' accessories, and making the small vendor has no income. The tourism sector has also been affected very much by the strict close border for China's territory. Hence, it is analysed that the big development of China in becoming the high GDP country can't be separated from the society's income and the economic transaction and flow in the country. The moment when the societies are doing nothing, the moment when the country's economic stability begin to hurt and crippled down. In addition, the unavailability of the people mobilization from and within cities to have transaction, decrease the supply of goods that needs to be delivered, particularly to the declining farming and industry production, especially agriculture and manufactures for basic necessities.

If the condition of COVID-19 becomes worse or in another words the spread becomes larger and wider inside China, the economic disruption and turmoil would happen due to the stopping economic flow in big provinces as a significant economic contributor. As many events have to be postponed or even cancelled, the source income for small society's gone and big projects would give revenue and profit and the end of the day, making the situation worse and economic problem like inflation or instability could happen. This is due to the need of more imports than the export that they could do due to the lockdown and shutdown of industry.

China Direct Solutions

1. Medical Support

In tackling such issue, it is not only the push of stopping the source of the outbreak to behavioural change and the mitigation on the original outbreak source, but it is also in regards to the curative measures that should be directly taken in handling infected patients before it spreads to wider range. That is to say, the medical support should be the priority provision before the death rate increase. It is recorded that in China, 4.632 people have died until mid-April 2020. The number was accumulated throughout months since the COVID-19 spread and would be worse if the medical support provision was not given. After realizing the rapid spread of COVID-19, the Chinese government directly made a 6 days-built hospital which are Huoshenshan Hospital and Leishenshan Hospital in respective 2nd and 6th of February 2020 to open where 4000 workers were ordered to work and meet the deadline by the Chinese government officials. As it is also learnt from the previous MERS and SARS case that the outbreak has been deadly in the past years, building medical infrastructure and health support including health workers, as 63%

Wuhan health workers were also infected recorded in February 2020 made the facility provision becomes significantly important.

Not only that, stadiums and convention centres were transformed into health care for more than 14,000 COVID-19 patients and supplied by the Chinese People Liberation Army and the other provinces with approximately 42,600 medical staff to Wuhan City and Hubei Province to help managing the risk of COVID-19 and curing the infected patients with different symptoms. It is true that the development of the virus that adjust and adapt to human body condition has evolved the virus not to be detected when it infect someone. Therefore, people with no symptoms might be infected by the virus as well. Thus, the government becomes more responsive in handling the issue. The Chinese National Petroleum Corporation has also been changed into producing medical protective equipment inclusive to masks, protective clothing, and ventilators. While the medical worker is being supplied and equipment is being transferred, China has also invested billions in the scientific research of finding vaccines for the virus and made an expert team with China-WHO Joint Mission in combating this outbreak.

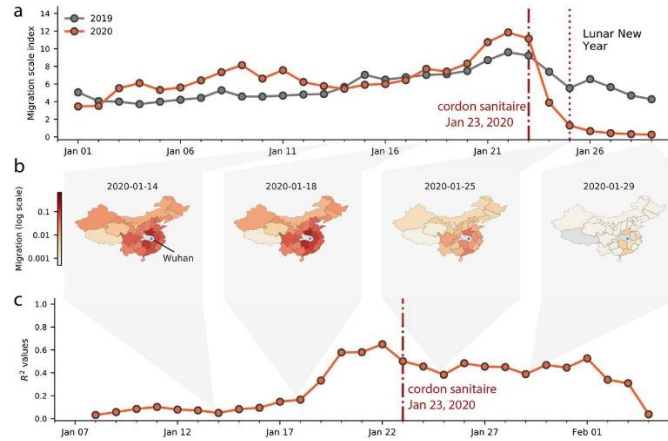
From the situation it is indeed important for government officials to take a direct action in combating the outbreak of COVID-19 from spreading. Such support may be very crucial as the virus transmitted from human-to-human interaction. The case of China building new hospitals with a short period of time seems to force people or workers to work and push their limits. However, for the national security, the authoritarian style of leadership by Xi Jinping made the medical support in supplying medical equipment and transfer of doctor and medical workers from one province to another made it responded quite quickly realizing that the massive number of population comprised in China making it more urgent if it spreads larger and larger.

2. Outbreak Spread Prevention

Not only a responsive medical care and direct curative measures should be done, but preventing it from continuing to disrupt global stability should also be done. Therefore, China has done several preventive measures to restrain the virus spread from one to another. Chinese officials have recommended World Health Organization to announce the outbreak as a global pandemic and emergency considering the rapid spread it has shown. However, the WHO postponed the declaration of COVID-19 as a global emergency until January 30th 2020. Since then, the alert has been exposed by the worldwide community and countries are taking preventive measures to avoid COVID-19 entering their country. From travel ban until locking down the countries when it shows a significant urgency on COVID-19 infected victims. Announcing the outbreak as the global emergency helps other country to take measurement and calculation on the reserve they could do if the outbreak begins to worsen the condition. Not only that, the other preventive directions that has been provided by Chinese officials to its society is to keep the contact of outsiders and other people, as well as to wear protection equipment and masks when it is forced to go outside. That is to prevent the droplets and virus it may contained.

In addition to the prevention, the famous lockdown that has been done by the government officials have also enacted to provinces in China to prevent mobilization of the virus towards another territory. This is to keep reminding the society on the social distancing and physical distancing to one another. This is being enacted due to the mobility of Chinese society in the country that show a rapid spread of the virus that has infected more than 80,000 people nationally, as shown in the picture below to explain the growth and decrease of the mobility of people in China, particularly from and to Wuhan

city. And as the part of this new announcement by the government, the Chinese Government encouraged and appeal to the society to stay at home; mass gatherings discouragement; cancelled or at least postponed large public activities and events; and closed all the related mass gather places like schools, universities, government offices, libraries, museums, and factories.



Achievements in Status Quo

The outbreak has spread and affect most of the world' state and made a chaotic situation through panic and spread of mislead information. Many countries have done their best in solving the issue through scientific research and other effort. However, the pandemic keeps on found and confirmed to be spread by the increasing of infected patients in many countries every day. This is to say, that as the growth began to incline, the pandemic epicentre has been shifted from China and this was the start of China's so-called "achievement" in combating the virus. In March 19, it is found that the vital death case of COVID-19 outbreak victim has been increased and becomes more sensitive in Italy as it surpassed the death case from China with 3.405 cases. However, in March 28, the epicentre has been shifted from Italy to United States as it surpassed the infected victim with more than 83.000 cases. Since then, China keeps on showing more successes and achievement in combating the outbreak spread inside the country until they can finally declare that no other transmitted outbreak is happening in their country and that they just need to wait for the curative progress in March 18. There are many achievement that can be learned from China's study case in combating COVID-19 outbreak which are; the fast response identification and provision of health care for the outbreak in the early time, where in the early time, the kits were still not available and the report was being done sequence to WHO faster. At the early time the society's screening was depended on laboratory nucleic acid sequencing analysis, and it was very costly. However, the National Medical Products Administration of China took a direct action to fasten the work of biotech companies to develop detection kits in China and supplied 2 weeks after. This time was a more immediate action as opposed to the previous SARS case when it took couple of months for China to identify and years for HIV case in 1980.

It has also implemented the utilization of technology through several things, like big data managed by the government and made an immediate control called "one map, one QR code, and one index" which allows the society to track themselves regularly and report the case to the government, so the new case will be easily detected and taken care faster. The QR code aims to tell the individual regarding their health status and the free movement for them, especially after the lockdown was eased, so they track themselves easily. This program was also launched to determined priorities of business to be

reopened in China, which healthcare centre and health-related facilities are prioritized. The direct collaboration that has been done by the government in managing the supply of necessities to prevent shortage and price escalation, as well as direct cooperation with health experts made the government achieve the success that the country obtain currently. After all these efforts, it is seen that the achievement and successes of China in daring to ease the lockdown, declaring the “no new local spread of COVID-19”, and the fast tracking and tracing the outbreak map have been attain with collaboration and creative response by the Chinese officials. However, the successes would be further enhanced when the number of cured patients could be higher and showing more progress in the future.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 outbreak that was firstly found in China and spread vastly throughout the nation making it the first epicentre before it shifted into Italy then United States has brought such a chaotic situation and difficult times for China, particularly in socio-political and economic condition. It is shown that as China in the decade was famous with problems and conflict with another countries such as US in the case of Trade War or some South East Asian countries like Vietnam, Philippines, and many others in the case of South China Sea, newly found COVID-19 really could destabilize the China’s position in the global hegemony, especially as it’s still on its rise in becoming the second largest economic state in the world surpassing Japan. There are several indications of cause by the outbreak towards China’s socio-political and economic aspect, such as the increasing tension between US and China that could hamper the other conflicting issue related to China as US power possessed in the international community, especially in persuasion. There has also been the push of behavioural change to the Chinese society by the activist, making the amendment on its legislation that banned the wildlife raw meat trade as food by the Chinese government through National People’s Congress, where this tragedy has eliminate one of the cultural aspect and social habit of the Chinese society. Aside than that, the economic decline faced by China within -6.8% contraction due to the virus made it loss many economical contribution such as the lockdown that influence the tourism aspect, particularly in the biggest event of Chinese people, Lunar New Year, the stop of workers that hamper the GDP of the household, and the Wuhan stop operating its companies and corporations that predicted to lost more than SARS outbreak had done to China. These conditions have severely affected China. However, under the immediate response of Chinese government under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central China could retribute the sacrifices and tremendous paid it gave, through a comprehensive and contributed action in curing and preventing the spread of the COVID-19, as well as the provision on new 2 built hospital and supply of protection equipment, masks supply, and transfer of medical workers it helped the condition’s betterment as time goes by. As the fight through struggle has been strived by Chinese collaborative actors like government officials and society, restoration and recovery has been quickened shown by the achievement it has gained. After the ease of the lockdown, China will continue to enhance the socio-political and economic loss faced in times of the COVID-19 spreads as the virus see no national borders and differentiates no race.

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