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# COVID-19: Public support to handle and economic challenges

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# COVID-19: Public support to handle and economic challenges

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Abstract: COVID-19, which has become a world pandemic, has hit the economic sectors of countries in the world, including Indonesia. Indonesia's economic growth is predicted to be only around 2% or even 0%. This research was conducted to analyze how public support for government efforts to deal with COVID-19 and describe how the economic challenges faced. This research uses descriptive qualitative method by collecting data through in-depth interviews with several informants relating to public support for government efforts. Data collection is also done by searching for related documents online. From the research conducted, the government has the opportunity and strength to carry out initiatives to deal with COVID-19. Administrative support, regional government, business, political parties, including the opposition, and the people are tremendous. The problem is, the government's efforts and scenarios are not visible to anticipate the economic threats that are already in sight. This research wants to uncover the power of government in the form of public support in dealing with COVID-19, and remind the government, the economic challenges faced with the existence of COVID-19.

Keywords; Covid-19; public support; economic recession; banking mediation; creative economy.

## Introduction

Distribution virus popularly known as Covid-19 has become a world pandemic. The virus, first appeared at the end of 2019 and then in Wuhan, China (Lin et al., 2020). After that, the spread was so fast and massive to various countries in the world. In a matter of months, at least 103 countries have already contracted the deadly virus (Sohrabi et al., 2020). From time to time the number of infected victims has also increased, both expressed positive and unexpected, some of which have also been declared cured (Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). Not only dangerous to the health sector, Covid-19 also brings losses from the economic sector. The losses of countries affected by this virus are quite large (Issue, 2021), (Practice, 2020). Various efforts have been made by countries in the world to anticipate the various impacts of economic losses caused by Covid-19 (Wyman, 2020).

For the case of Indonesia, this virus is considered to be one of the factors inhibiting national economic growth. According to the government of the Republic of Indonesia, Covid-19's threat to the Indonesian economy could lead to zero growth (*Corona Gerus Ekonomi, BI Pangkas Suku Bunga Acuan 25 Bps*, 2020), (Jayani, 2020). Indonesia is one of the countries that also experienced the Covid-19 pandemic. After being declared a pandemic, the number of people infected with Covid-19 is quite high. That number, over time, has increased, with the number of distributions also broadening (Sholikah & Suni, 2020).

A large threat to the spread of the virus is of concern to the Indonesian government to address it immediately. Despite the indication of a number of people who assess the government is rather slow in detecting the possibility of an outbreak of Indonesia from the virus. This can be seen from the efforts of the government which previously even gave certain incentives so that the number of visits to Indonesia continues to increase in the middle of the Covid-19 container (Hidayat, 2020). However, from the beginning of March 2020, the Indonesian government began trying to localize so that the distribution of Covid-19 could be prevented. This research was conducted to describe how public support for government efforts

in dealing with Covid-19, and how the government responds to the economic challenges caused by Covid-19?

#### Method<sup>4</sup>

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews with various informants regarding their support for the government's efforts to deal with Covid-19. In-depth interviews are conducted for one week during online. Data collection was also carried out by searching documents related to economic challenges faced by the post Covid-19 government. Document search is also intended to obtain a variety of comprehensive information, so that steps and handling efforts can go well.

#### Result and Discussion

In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic The Government of the Republic of Indonesia undertook various efforts and measures, ranging from prevention, handling of infected victims, and recovery from the effects. These impacts include various sectors, health, economy, social, education and so on (Rozie, 2020), (*Materi Komunikasi Risiko COVID-19 untuk Fasilitas Pelayanan Kesehatan*, 2020). Government efforts to counter the spread of Covid-19 also received support from various groups. The regional government is swift in making detection and handling efforts (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020). As well as the private sector and companies as well as universities that carry out quarantine and relocation to employees who have a history of traveling from exposed countries (Wib & Ika, 2020). Many companies reduce activity in the office and corporate environment. As well as representatives of the people, sent a letter to the government to issue Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (PERPPU) to maintain stability in the management of the 2020 State Budget and Revenues and Expenditures (APBN)<sup>1</sup>.

Previously, religious leaders, especially the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/ MUI) had also expressed equal support for the government's efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 victims. Including fatwas that are considered extreme, namely eliminating pilgrimage and Friday prayer activities in areas that have experienced epidemics. Responses to these also vary, but most Muslims understand and abide by them. A number of mosques in areas affected by the Friday prayer epidemic were abolished<sup>2</sup>. There is also no opposition to the government in the face of Covid-19. Such as the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/ PKS) which has so far claimed to be the government's opposition, in the Covid-19 case supporting the government's efforts to resolve the issue (Redaksi, 2020).

The people's voices also simultaneously expressed support for the government's efforts in dealing with Covid-19. As stated by Mega Puspa Wijaya, a resident of West Java. "*I believe the Indonesian Government can and will be able to overcome Covid-19, as long as the government is serious and is responsible for carrying out various efforts to overcome the spread of the Corona virus. With policies that have been made, such as staying at home is one of the efforts in minimizing the spread of the Corona virus, so that medical staff can focus more on healing patients who are already positive. The government has also tightened its entrance to Indonesia at many points such as airports, ports and preparing adequate health facilities and even the government has formed a task force to accelerate the handling of Covid-19.*" However the government's efforts still need public support. As stated Siska Aprilia, one of the students in East Java. According to him, there needs to be synergy between the government and the community, so that the program carried out by the government in preventing the corona

<sup>1</sup> Press release Chief of Banggar DPR RI, March 23, 2020 "DPR RI Budget Agency Recommendations to the Government in Dealing with Covid-19 Countermeasure."

<sup>2</sup> Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Number 14, 2020 "The conduct of worship in the event of the Covid-19 outbreak."

virus runs smoothly. For example, the government policy prohibits going out of the house, and gathering in a crowd, must really be implemented by the community must comply with what the government recommends.

Large public support is the main capital for the government in managing the condition of the nation and the economy in general. What is the main challenge for the government at the moment is managing the public support into positive energy for future progress, especially in the economic sector. But this has become a big question mark, since the beginning of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia Srimulyani Indrawati has mentioned that Indonesia's economic growth is at zero percent (Suryowati, 2020).

Some of the problems that will become government homework after the Covid-19 pandemic, which need to be convinced by the government, that the government has the ability and has the right steps to be resolved. Including good faith from the government in involving all stakeholders, such as the business world, banks, government, academics, political parties and so on. The government from now on needs to prepare various policy scenarios, so that Covid-19 does not bring Indonesia's economy into the most difficult situation.

Stabilizing the rupiah exchange rate. Since Indonesia entered the Covid-19 pandemic country, the value of the rupiah has increased and is at its lowest position since 2020. This of course will become a problem when commodities and domestic needs still rely heavily on imports. While exports from Indonesia to other countries do not tend to improve (Ariyanti, 2020). Before Covid-19 attacked, Indonesia's economic growth was fairly low, pegged at approximately 5%. A growth rate of that size is predicted not to be very encouraging. Then since Covid-19 has become a pandemic in Indonesia, Indonesia's economic growth is predicted to be at a nadir. The bad news is certainly the main homework of the government. How to make it not come true. Need extra effort to make economic growth at least, can survive at 5%.

The government has a big responsibility to continue and complete infrastructure development, especially toll roads which are considered to be one of the drivers of economic growth. The involvement of the private sector in projects that are a priority of the government needs to be continued and encouraged. Other infrastructure projects that can encourage the growth of the real sector, especially in the fields of tourism, agriculture and maritime which are the focus of many citizens, need to be taken seriously.

One of the sectors hardest hit by the tightening conditions carried out by the government is the small and medium business sector and non-formal workers. Workers in this sector rely on income per day, which is used to meet daily needs. Then they are most vulnerable to the effects of government policies that narrow the activities of citizens that cause economic slowdown. Then the government needs to provide guarantees to workers in this sector to get back on their feet. The relatively large number of them in Indonesia will be an important factor in restoring the national economy (Indonesia, 2017).

In the context of maintaining the stability of the informal sector and small and medium businesses, the government needs to be a mediator with the banking sector. Informal sector workers and small and medium businesses need to get funding facilitation from banks, to restart businesses that have been closed because they are quiet and not interested. While on the other hand, banks are not so easy in providing business capital loans for this sector, because indeed workers in this sector are not too obedient administratively. It needs to be wise steps by the government in providing policies that would enable workers in this sector to get facilities from banks. If without loans from banks, it will be difficult for them to start a new business.

In general, in the midst of a bad situation, economic growth is very low, the real sector is also not running, it is necessary to have large investments both from within and outside the country. The government needs to prepare scenarios and steps that make it easy for investments that will enter Indonesia, or which will operate in Indonesia. Bitter pills will still be swallowed up, especially with policies that may not be populist in the eyes of some people who disagree.

But the most important priority is the revival of the country's economy, which is driven by large and equitable investment in various regions in Indonesia.

Important thing to do is that the government tightens state spending which according to President Jokowi is unnecessary. Routine activities that usually consume a lot of the state budget need to be reduced, diverted to the real sector and involve the public. As well as administrative and office expenditure needs to be tightly saved, including expenses for vehicle operations in government offices saved and diverted for project expenditures involving labor. It is also important not to give leeway for the procurement of operational vehicles and government offices, by utilizing and maximizing existing ones.

### Conclusion

Covid-19 is the main problem in various countries in the world. The number of sufferers exposed to the number is quite large, becoming a pandemic. Countries in various parts of the world suffer losses, including economic losses. Indonesia has become one of the economically devastated countries due to the corona virus attack. Indonesia's economic growth is threatened at the position of 0%. Indonesia has the potential to rise from the threat of Covid-19, with broad public support for prevention efforts by the government. The government precisely has more severe challenges than just overcoming the health sector, namely in the economic field. For the latter, the government does not appear to have a road map to bring Indonesia back to life, after Covid-19. If the government is late in handling it, it is not impossible if Indonesia will suffer economically. Need smart, careful and prudent steps.

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