

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION IN UGANDA

Dynamics & Turbulence in the Manufacturing Industry...

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UGANDA POST THE COVID-19 TIMES: PROS AND CONS IN REBOOTING OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

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The effects of the novel corona virus have been globally felt and its impacts on the on the economy have struck deeper than economies have ever fathomed in tides of time. Many countries around the world came to terms with the fact that they partially had to sacrifice their economies to prevent the large scale alarm that would erupt from the uncontrolled and untamable prevalence of the pandemic and hence Lockdown became the new normal. Much as it comes with its advantages, lockdown has consistently proven its down side because of its halting nature and effect to a given country's backbone economical activities, industrialization schemes and social capital mechanisms.

Africa was hit as hard and in the wake of it, a number of countries responded by following the example set by the affected states taking draconian measures to save lives and whatever they could. As the world continues to battle the pandemic however, one thing remains a surety, livelihoods must continue and survival has to be put at the fore front whilst the economy supported by a number of interventions Manufacturing being part and parcel is not left limping.

As economic dynamics have shown in the past, Uganda's manufacturing sector has consistently occupied an important part in its economic development strategy as a country having fought in itself through the African peasant production and non-African estate production over its years of successive development at a time when Uganda's economy was predominantly dependent on cotton and coffee as its key agricultural products. Since then Uganda has learnt the idea of rejuvenating itself and taming its neighbors into the harmony of Trade as a regional intervention to widen markets hence draw more into its economical quiver. This model has consistently been employed until a time were more needed to be done but yet the novel Corona Virus a global pandemic had already knocked at the country's doorstep.

Taking the matter by the hand, the government considered a complete lockdown of its boarders inhibiting all social movements save for the truck drivers supposedly carrying Industrial Cargo and essential material and raw materials to run the industries. Perhaps, its according to the classical theory of international trade that embarks on a country specializing its exportation of products on which it has a comparative advantage and importing those on which it has a comparative disadvantage in order to maximize economic efficiency within a multi-national trade without artificial barriers to free exchange of goods that Uganda had continually pursued the ease of truck transportation along its boarders even when a number of these appeared to be themselves the cause of increased COVID -19 cases that contribute to the country's cumulative cases database.

Because of the nature of the paradox that the pandemic has come along with, if the country's Manufacturing Industry has to get to its feet again, a number of important questions need to be asked in such a time when countries that had not earlier on locked their borders are moving towards this direction while those that earlier on set up lockdown measures still live up to them having seen the advantages it has caused towards curbing the pandemic's spread. Firstly, Is imports substitution a viable possibility in cases where a number of macro industrial raw materials are purely required to run the industrial processes yet the country does not have the capacity to produce substitutes itself? Additionally, if this is not the case, what is the fate of such manufacturing facilities in aspects of their production, what are the possible measures that should be taken to help them reboot even when the countries of their feedstock supply still hold lock down of the boarders. What's the possibility of arrangement of negotiations that can be made with states of mutual trade interests in relation to wavering transportation of essential raw materials amidst the pandemic crisis? Secondly, Is the rule of thumb that the quantity of manufactured goods imported indicate the market potential for domestic production behind boarders true? And if it is so, how will this be worked around in light with

the government plan of implantation of favorable policies to see the domestic production through.

Even if all the answers were possibly got and the required/necessary interventions made, even if all models of the multi sector rebooting were today possible, the government is still faced with a question of how to strike the balance between human rights, thrusting economic development ad industrialization progress through mutual support with supportive policies, tax waivers but also pinning on the issue of support of the livelihoods in the particular manufacturing settings to limit exploitation post the COVID-19 times just so to attain a Sustainable Livelihood development framework. hence attain a healthy win-win environment.