

Leadership Policy Response through COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comparative Study of Six Sought Economies of the World

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Abstract: *Leadership has a significant role in driving out their nation and people from all forms of economic, social, political, health crises etc; COVID-19 pandemic ruthlessly pushed the countries to extreme health and economic catastrophes. This is specifically visible in six sought economies, including US, UK, New Zealand, China, Bangladesh, and India. Although all these nations went through the COVID-19 infections but their leadership dealt with the pandemic differently. Consequent upon, few countries succeeded in minimizing the adversities of a pandemic while others suffered excessively. There was a significant role of political leadership that helped countries like New Zealand, Bangladesh, and China contain the pandemic's excessive wrath. While the other countries' administrations like US, UK, and India acted reactively, its people suffered overwhelmingly. In this context, the present study intends to examine what form of respective leadership prevailed in these nations and the kind of strategic approach respectively they adopted to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The study based on official data observed that the countries whose leadership adopted proactive strategic discourse have succeeded to minimize the negative influence of COVID-19 upon their people than the leadership of nations which followed reactive strategic discourse.*

Keywords: Pandemic, COVID-19

1. Introduction

Leadership is a relatively distinctive approach to deal with any phenomenon. Factually, leaders hold skills and abilities to sail companies through turbulent times to attain success and influence people. Accordingly, leadership has remained the center of attention in COVID - 2019 times, as the situations were quite daunting and demanding a somewhat unique way out. Understandably, different leaders reacted variedly to issues hosted by the pandemic according to their understanding, perception, and vision. Within the corporate sector, the vast majority of leaders did nothing except pursuing a wait - and - watch approach and allow things to happen without pushing any strategic leadership intervention. While outside the corporate sector, predominantly political leadership did their best to deal with the Pandemic complexities. Nevertheless, they largely failed to sail their nations and people through the extremities of the COVID-19. They lacked the vision and could not anticipate its fallout from the right perspective. Moreover, such leadership did not behave proactively and often acted in haste. They created a colossal fear psychosis in people's minds about the COVID-19 and caged them in their homes. Consequently, their state and people suffered physically, economically, socially, academically, and psychologically. The countries registered a sharp decline in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They slipped into a deep economic recession with a whopping rise in unemployment, a fall in consumer demand, investment, and savings. Nonetheless, they pushed sizable financial inducements to stabilize the economy, yet all in vain. While on the political front, such nations also witnessed the people's wrath, who demanded the step down of their leadership. Nevertheless, some exceptional world leaders prompted their leadership vision in the right perspective and succeeded in minimizing their country men's sufferings. They thought out of the box and craved appropriate strategies through a collaborative

leadership approach. There appeared close and robust synchronization between the various units of the state. They inculcated serious, positive and proactive behavior among the masses and achieved their cooperation and support to fight the pandemic. Accordingly, this study makes a maiden attempt to study the response of leadership to COVID19 in select nations, including US, UK New Zealand, India, Bangladesh and China. Of these six nations, the first three countries that were seriously affected by the COVID-19 include USA, UK and India and the nations which were moderately affected are New Zealand, Bangladesh and China.

2. Research Method

This paper is analytical based on secondary data pertaining to some prominent parameters of health and economy including the COVID deaths, COVID recovery cases, Gross domestic product, unemployment and leadership discourse in terms of proactive strategic approach.

Objective

The central objectives of the paper are as under

- To study how the leaders of six nations respectively responded to the health and economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic
- To examine their strategic discourses to tackle the adversities of COVID-19 in their nation
- To study and understand as to why the nations have failed/ succeeded to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic on the basic health and economic domains

3. Analysis and Discussion

The study undertakes the analysis and discussion on the each domain separately as under

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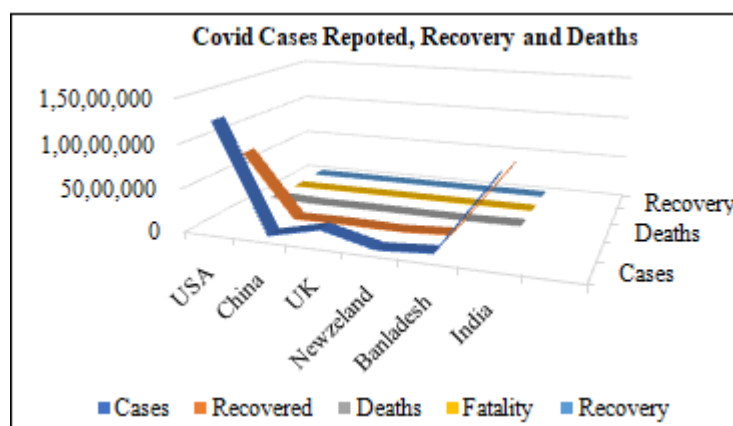
COVID Cases Reported, Recovered Fatality and Recovery

The COVID-19 has leashed ruthless face and inflicted huge troubles for the people in 208 countries. It has killed around 5 lakh individuals around the globe and more than two lakh people are fighting for their lives in various health centres

due to this disease. However, the people have also recovered from this contagious disease. The data relating to COVID 19 of six prominent nations of the world is presented in the following table to understand how as to why such figures have mounted or contracted in each sample nation.

Table 1: COVID-19 Cases Reported, Recovered and Deaths

S. NO	Country	Cases	Recovery	Deaths	Fatality %	Recovery%
1	USA	1, 24, 50, 666	7403847	261740	2.1	59.5
2	China	86, 431	81481	4634	5.4	94.3
3	UK	14, 93, 383	135000	54626	3.7	90.4
4	New Zealand	1663	1648	25	0.01	99, 09
5	Bangladesh	445281	360352	6350	1.4	80.9
6	India	90, 95, 806	8521617	133227	0.01	93.68



The COVID-19 infections primarily originated in China and in a very short span of two to three months reached to almost in the entire world. In some countries, it affected markedly, while in others it infected moderately and still in few countries very negligibly in view of their population, amount of health infrastructure and preparedness. Of the six sample countries, it is evidently clear that US has both high number of COVID-19 cases reported and low recovery rate as compared to the other countries. While, on the other side New Zealand has the insignificant number of COVID-19 cases reported and with high recovery rate. The recovery rate is also somewhat good for china, India followed by UK and somewhat quiet displeasing for Bangladesh. The official data about the COVID-19 pertaining to fatality and recovery hints that US has largely unsucceeded to contain the COVID-19 infections due its poor leadership proactiveness and less symmetrical strategic approach. It is widely reported that US President wasted weeks early on downplaying the virus. He has stubbornly clung to a fantastical belief that the virus will simply “disappear”; he banned many travelers from China but squandered the time the move bought him by failing to set up an adequate testing and tracing program; he encouraged states to reopen ahead of his own Administration’s guidelines; and he has repeatedly cherry-picked statistics that make the situation in the U. S. look far better than it is in reality, most recently in disastrous interview with Axios on HBO released Aug.3, in which he mischaracterized the U. S. death rate from the virus. Then there were the masks. Experts say that one of Trump’s most significant missteps was his refusal until recently to be seen in public wearing a face covering. It’s established science that wearing a facial covering significantly reduces the spread of COVID-19, and a pre-existing culture of mask-

wearing in East Asia is often cited as a central reason that many places in that region were able to quickly control their outbreaks. But in a country without such an existing norm, it’s incumbent upon leaders-political and otherwise-to model that behavior. When Trump appeared in the White House briefing room on April 3 to announce recommendations from the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that every American should wear a cloth face covering, he undercut the advice of his Administration’s own experts by emphasizing that mask-wearing would still be “voluntary” and that he personally wouldn’t be doing it. Trump, a man long obsessed with self-image, continued to mostly reject masks until a visit to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on July 11, at which point more than 130, 000 Americans had already died of COVID-19. Trump has since softened on mask-wearing somewhat, following pressure from allies. While as the New Zealand has done entirely reverse to contain the disease. The leadership of the country was totally in sink with all other key departments to deal with the COVID-19. There was full synchronization among various units of the New Zealand leadership. The country rolled out robust COVID 19 control measures. They placed the ban on the foreign tour and travel and ensured that incoming tourists are put to quarantine and travelers are effectively monitored. They undertook a comprehensive COVID-19 contact tracing programme and established wide scale testing labs. This helped the nation to identify the COVID cases quickly and stopped further spread of infection. The county had started to make preparations to deal with COVID-19 infections right from early January 2020. The leadership had directed the ministry of health to put in place sufficient number of beds with ventilators in hospitals with deal the emergency. Thus the

country was fully geared up to tackle the COVID-19 with the active support and courageous vision and proactive approach of its top leadership. Similarly, china was swift to contain the virus despite of the fact, it is widely believed that COVID-19 is a china virus. The county clamped down the Wuhan city for 76 days and restrained inflow and outflow of the people to the city, it created ten thousand hospital within weak for quarantine of COVID patients and created extensive contact tracing programmme. Across the country, 14 000 health checkpoints were established at public transport hubs. School re - openings after the winter vacation were delayed and population movements were severely curtailed. Dozens of cities implemented family outdoor restrictions, which typically meant that only one member of each household was permitted to leave the home every couple of days to collect necessary supplies. Within weeks, China had managed to test 9 million people for SARS - CoV - 2 in Wuhan. It set up an effective national system of contact tracing (Al Takarali N. S, 2020). By contrast, the UK's capacity for contact tracing was overwhelmed soon after the pandemic struck the country. As the world's largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment, it was relatively straightforward for China to ramp up production of clinical gowns and surgical masks. Moreover, the Chinese readily adopted mask wearing. "Compliance was very high", said Chen. "Compare that with the USA, where even in June and July, when the virus was surging, people were still refusing to wear masks. Even in late September, President Trump still treated Joe Biden's mask - wearing as a weakness to be ridiculed". Moreover, drones equipped with echoing loudspeakers rebuked Chinese citizens who were not following the rules. The state - run Xinhua news agency has released footage taken from the drones. "Yes Auntie, this drone is talking to you", one device proclaimed to a surprised woman in Inner Mongolia. "You shouldn't walk around without wearing a mask. You'd better go home and don't forget to wash your hands". In the UK, 150 000 people were permitted to attend a horse racing meet in mid - March, 10 days before the country went into lockdown. In August, 460 000 Americans congregated in Sturgis, South Dakota, for a motorcycle rally. Contrarily, the UK's response to COVID was somewhat very slow. The leadership in UK were indecisive and were not knowing what to do and how to go for the immediate response. The lockdown measures were put in place some weeks too late to alleviate the rapid spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS - CoV - 2). For all epidemics, the earlier the measures are put in place to restrict transmission, the smaller the total size of the epidemic and the concomitant morbidity and mortality. By the end of April, 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK showed signs of suppression as daily reports of cases began to enter a slow decline. The UK Government's delay in implementing physical distancing measures centered on how long the population would

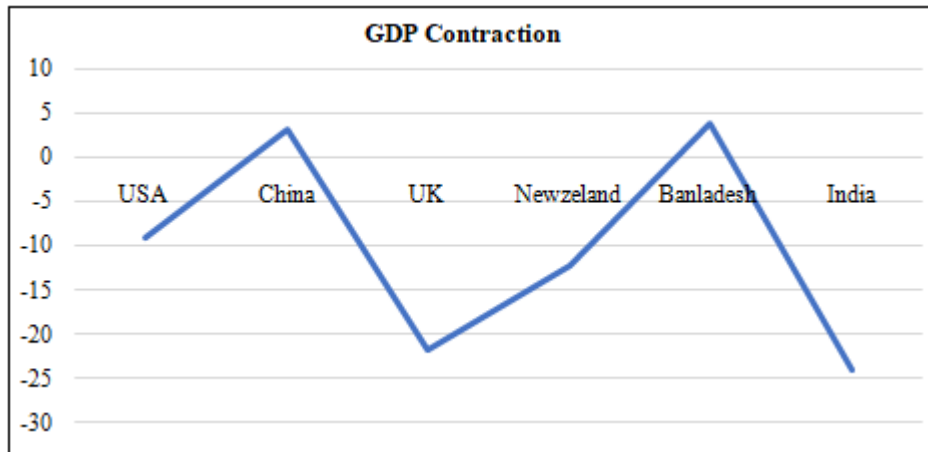
tolerate strict lockdown measures and on an ill - defined and dangerous notion of the creation of herd immunity by natural infection. This delay resulted in the UK having one of the largest epidemics of any country at this stage of the pandemic, when judged both by cases per head of population and mortality per case of infection. Nonetheless, the increase in COVID-19 cases, the leadership shifted its focus to restore economic position and bring the country out of the recession. In Bangladesh the number of COVID 19 infection cases is quiet low and the leadership is also not fully geared up to deal with. Due to some favourable conditions the nation feels not somewhat disturbed. The awareness among the people relating to COVID is also very low. The leadership of Bangladesh seems less frightened to COVID-19 and as such they have not pushed any major strategic discourse to deal with it. While India is facing the wrath of COVID seriously around 9% of its population is attacked by COVID. The leadership of the country has done lot to contain the disease, however, they have failed considerably. Initially, the country was lacking quarantine space, hospitals, ventilators and as such the growth of the disease picked up rapidly. The country pushed variety of anti COVID-19 measure but most them were done in haste which proved counterproductive. The leadership here did not acted proactively and had not a clear vision how to tackle the COVID-19. Consequent upon, the COVID-19 infections have turned into community transmission stage as is the case of US. However, they did much better than US and UK to deal with COVID-19.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is the hall mark indicator of economic condition of a nation. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the GDP of all the nations slipped down due to the halt in economic activities. The continuous lockdown reduced production of goods and services coupled with fall in consumer demand, investment and saving. The continuous lockdown in major economies pushed the world into a state of recession including India, UK, USA, New Zealand and not china, Bangladesh and as can be seen from the table No 2 given below

Table 2: GDP Contraction in Six Nations

S. No	Nation	GDP shrank from April to June 2020 in percentage	Financial Package induced in economy	Job loss due to COVID-19
1	USA	- 9.1	\$ 3 Trillion	20.6 million
2	UK	21.7	£30 billion	02.6million
3	New Zealand	- 12.2	NZ458.5 billion	01.85 million
4	China	+3.2	RMB 4.8 trillion	5.00 million
5	Bangladesh	+3.8	\$588 billion	01.7 million
6	India	- 23.9	\$ 2 billion	06.6 million



It is evident from the above table No.2 and graph that all the sample nations recorded negative GDP growth except china and Bangladesh. These two sample nations registered a positive GDP growth during the COVID-19 lockdown period. This is predominantly due the fact that china undertook strong fiscal and monetary measures and pumped financial package of around 4.7 percent of GDP in the economy to boost consumer demand, spurt investment and tighten the economic slackness. China announced an estimated RMB 4.8 trillion of discretionary fiscal support to economy on areas: (i) on epidemic prevention and control, (ii) production of medical equipment, (iii) accelerated disbursement of unemployment insurance and extension to migrant workers, (iv) tax relief and waived social security contributions, and (v) additional public investment. The leadership of the china gave additional guarantees for SMEs of RMB 400 billion (0.4 percent of GDP) and fee and tariff cuts of over RMB 900 billion (0.9 percent of GDP) for usage of such items as roads, ports, and electricity. Moreover, according to IMF Policy Response to COVID-19 report (2020), it unrolled huge number of monetary measures including (i) liquidity injection into the banking system via open market operations (ii) expansion of re - lending and re - discounting facilities by RMB 1.8 trillion to support manufacturers of medical supplies and daily necessities, micro - , small - and medium - sized firms and the agricultural sector and 25 bps (re - discounting facility), (iii) reduction of the 7 - day and 14 - day reverse repo rates by 30 bps, as well as the 1 - year medium - term lending facility (MLF) rate and targeted MLF rate by 30 and 20 bps, respectively, (iv) targeted RRR cuts by 50 - 100 bps for large - and medium - sized banks that meet inclusive financing criteria which benefit micro - and small - sized enterprises (MSEs), an additional 100 bps for eligible joint - stock banks, and 100 bps for small - and medium - sized banks to support SMEs, (v) reduction of the interest on excess reserves from 72 to 35 bps, (vi) expansion of policy banks' credit line to private firms and MSEs (RMB 350 billion), and (vii) introduction of new instruments to support lending to MSEs, including a zero - interest "funding - for - lending" scheme (RMB 400 billion) to finance 40 percent of local banks' new unsecured loans and incentivizing them to further extend payment holidays for eligible loans by subsidizing 1 percent of loan principles (RMB 40 billion) to put the economy on the trajectory of growth. The leadership of the country designed a comprehensive roadmap to bring the economy on growth trajectory.

Similarly, Bangladesh also announced series to measures to repair its damaged economy due to COVID-19. The Bangladesh government announced a Tk.50 billion (about USD 588 million) stimulus package for exporting industries to be channeled through a refinance scheme operated by Bangladesh Bank. The amount of the loan was increased in July - August by an additional Tk.60 billion following pressure from factory owners. Loan proceeds will be used to pay worker salaries, primarily through mobile financial services, and the scheme is expected to benefit close to 4 million workers for a four - month period. The Prime Minister announced the allocation of Tk.21.3 billion under a housing scheme for the homeless, Tk.7.6 billion for poor people having lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, Tk.7.5 billion to provide health insurance for government employees most at risk, and a Tk.1 billion bonus payment for government doctors and health workers treating COVID-19 patients. The Prime Minister also announced that the government would cover Tk.20 billion in interest payments on behalf of 13.8 million loan recipients negatively impacted by the national shutdown. With these sweepi fiscal and monetary injections, the country succeeded to record a positive growth. Moreover, the country witnessed highest remittances during the COVID-19 period that established the economy further and pushed it to attain positive GDP 3.8 (IMF Policy Response to COVID-19 report, 2020). While India, New Zealand, UK and USA totally failed to neutralize the negative impact of COVID on its GDP during the first and second quarter of the pandemic nonetheless, the nations induced range of fiscal and monetary measures and pushed hefty financial packages. This was specifically due to their wrong policies and reactionary behavioural approach. However, the New Zealand government despite succeeded on health front to contain COVID- 19 in the country failed excessively on the economic front. The economy of the country contracted by 9.8% till the quarter second of fiscal year 2019 - 2020. The country announced a fiscal package of 9.8% of its GDP totaling NZ458.5 billion, out of which the total amount includes the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, of which NZ\$14.1 billion have been set aside as contingency for a possible second wave. Announced fiscal measures include: (i) healthcare - related spending to reinforce capacity (NZ\$0.8 billion or 0.3 percent of GDP); (ii) a permanent increase in social spending to protect vulnerable people (total NZ\$2.4 billion or 0.8 percent of GDP); (iii) a wage subsidy to support employers severely affected by the impact of COVID-19 (NZ\$14.8 billion or 4.9

percent of GDP); (iv) income relief payments to support people who lost their jobs (NZ\$0.6 billion or 0.2 percent of GDP); (v) a permanent change in business taxes to help cash flow (NZ\$2.8 billion or 0.9 percent of GDP); (vi) infrastructure investment (NZ\$3.8 billion or 1.3 percent of GDP); (vii) transport projects (NZ\$0.6 billion or 0.2 percent of GDP); (viii) a temporary tax loss carry - back scheme (NZ\$3.1 billion or 1.0 percent of GDP); (ix) support for the aviation sector (NZ\$0.6 billion or 0.2 percent of GDP); (x) a tourism recovery package (NZ\$0.4 billion or 0.1 percent of GDP); (xi) a government housing program (NZ\$0.7 billion or 0.2 percent of GDP); and (xii) school infrastructure upgrades (NZ\$0.2 billion or 0.1 percent of GDP). The government has also approved a NZ\$0.9 billion debt funding agreement (convertible to equity) with Air New Zealand to ensure continued freight operations, domestic flights and limited international flights. The New Zealand government also provides loans of up to NZ\$100, 000 to small businesses that employ 50 or less employees - until the end of 2023. In addition, the government announced temporary removal of tariffs on all medical and hygiene imports needed for the COVID-19 response (IMF Policy Response to COVID- 19 report, 2020). Similarly, India also registered whooping negative GDP. Here it is pertinent to mention that during the pre COVID 19 period India was experiencing slowdown in its economy, the COVID-19 lockdown accentuated the worst economic plight of country. The government pushed variety of fiscal and monetary measures to restore the ailing economy, yet the failed to derive the dividends from such policy measures. As per the IMF Policy Response to COVID-19 report (2020) the fiscal support measures include above the above line measure spending 3.2% of GDP and below the line measures designated support to business about 5.2% of GDP. In the early stages of the pandemic response, above - the - line expenditure measures focused primarily on social protection and healthcare. These include in - kind (food; cooking gas) and cash transfers to lower - income households (1 percent of GDP); wage support and employment provision to low - wage workers (0.5 percent of GDP); insurance coverage for workers in the healthcare sector; and healthcare infrastructure (0.1 percent of GDP). The more recent measures that were announced in October and November include additional public investment (higher capital expenditure by the central government and interest - free loans to states, of about 0.2 percent of GDP) and support schemes targeting certain sectors. The latter includes a Production Linked Incentive scheme targeting 13 priority sectors and is expected to cost about 0.8 percent of GDP over 5 years, a higher fertilizer subsidy allocation benefiting the agriculture sector (0.3 percent of GDP) and support for urban housing construction (0.1 percent of GDP). The position of economic condition in UK was equally worse like to that of India and New Zealand, despite the fact the country took swift measures to improve deteriorating economy. The UK government announced economic packages in the shape of tax and spending measures to support households and families during the health emergency include: (i) additional funding for the NHS, public services and charities (£48.5 billion); (ii) measures to support businesses (£29 billion), including property tax holidays, direct grants for small firms and firms in the most - affected sectors, and compensation for sick pay leave; and (iii) strengthening the

social safety net to support vulnerable people (by £8 billion) by increasing payments under the Universal Credit scheme as well as expanding other benefits. The government has launched three separate loans schemes to facilitate business' access to credit. Together with the British Business Bank the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to support SMEs and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme to support bigger firms, which carry an 80 percent guarantee for loans up to £5 million for the former and up to £300 million for the latter. In addition, the government has put in place the Bounce Bank loan scheme for SMEs with 100 percent guarantee for loan amounts up to £50, 000. It has also deferred VAT payments for the second quarter of 2020 until the end of the financial year and income tax payments of the self - employed by six months. The government will pay 80 percent of the earnings of self - employed workers (Self Employment Income Support Scheme, SEISS) and furloughed (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, CJRS) employees (to a maximum of £2, 500 per employee per month) initially for the period March - May. For furloughed employees, the scheme has been extended until end - October. Moreover, to support the international response, the government has made available £150 million to the IMF's catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (PRGT) and provided a new £2.2 billion loan to the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (to help low income countries respond to COVID-19 (Policy Response to COVID-19 IMF Report 2020). The situation in USA was no way different than the UK, India and New Zealand. The US leadership initially didn't support the uniform move to lockdown the economy. It allowed the free movement of people and didn't banned the social and political gatherings. The president of US and people of US had a belief that the COVID-19 would not disturb them at all, as they believed that their nation is capable to deal with it effectively. Nevertheless, the same proved hoax. The US got extensively damaged by COVID- 19. About 15 million people lost their jobs and business suffered heavily. The President Trump issued executive orders mostly to address the expirations of certain Coronavirus reliefs provided by previous legislations. These included i) using \$44 billion from the Disaster Relief Fund to provide extra unemployment benefits; ii) continuing student loan payment relief; iii) deferring collections of employee social security payroll taxes; and iv) identifying options to help renters and homeowners avoid evictions and foreclosures. The government also announced US\$321 billion for additional forgivable Small Business Administration loans and guarantees to help small businesses that retain workers; (ii) US\$62 billion for the Small Business Administration to provide grants and loans to assist small businesses; (iii) US\$75 billion for hospitals; and (iv) US\$25 billion for expanding virus testing. Further, the government in total provided an estimated US\$2.3 trillion (around 11% of GDP) Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economy Security Act ("CARES Act") . The Act includes (i) US\$293 billion to provide one - time tax rebates to individuals; (ii) US\$268 billion to expand unemployment benefits; (iii) US\$25 billion to provide a food safety net for the most vulnerable; (iv) US\$510 billion to prevent corporate bankruptcy by providing loans, guarantees, and backstopping Federal Reserve 13 (3) program; (v) US\$349 billion in forgivable Small Business Administration loans and guarantees to help

small businesses that retain workers; (vi) US\$100 billion for hospitals, (vii) US\$150 billion in transfers to state and local governments and (viii) US\$49.9 billion for international assistance (including SDR28 billion for the IMF’s New Arrangement to Borrow).

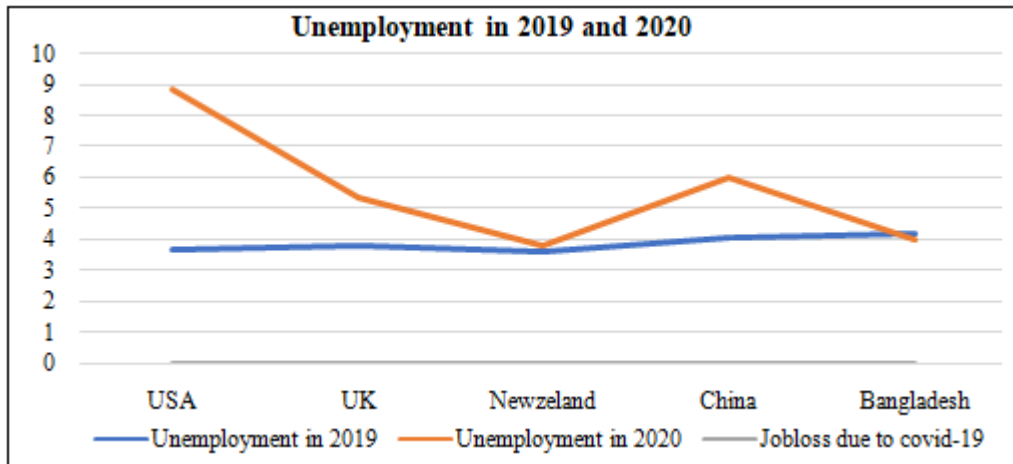
Unemployment

COVID-19 forced the countries to announce lockdown and as such the unemployment and underemployment in all the 208 countries increased. The people working in private sector including self employed business men lost their jobs and earning capacity. The unemployment and job loss

scenario of selected sample nations is given in table No 3 as under

Unemployment and Job Loss in Six Nations

S. NO	Nation	Unemployment in 2019	Unemployment in 2020	Job loss due to COVID-19
1	USA	3.66	8.89	20.6 million
2	UK	3.82	5.37	02.6million
3	New Zealand	3.60	3.80	01.85 million
4	China	4.07	6.02	5.00 million
5	Bangladesh	4.19	4.00	01.7 million
6	India	3.80	6.67	06.6 million



As can be seen above in the table N0.3 and graph that unemployment is fairly low in the Bangladesh in the post COVID-19 however, it is pertinent to mention that a critical number of the workforces have recently become jobless while others are at the danger of losing jobs because of corona virus shutdown (ILO, 2020). According to the estimation of Trading Economics (2016), the number of employed Persons in Bangladesh will be around 57.00 Million by the end of 2020. Akther (2020) says that the poorer section of the society is the worst victim of the economic meltdown. The informal workers mainly rickshaw - pullers, transport workers, day - laborers, street - vendors, hawkers, construction laborers, the employees of hotel, motel and restaurants are the main victim of corona virus because they have lost their way to acquire bread and butter and faced difficulty to lead a happier life with their family (Kefayet, 2020). Besides, this formal job loss, the country has seen job loss in abroad especially in gulf countries where around 1.50 lakh employees have returned due to COVID-19. Whereas the job loss was fairly high in US due to the fact, the country has seen widespread lockdown of industries followed by massive growth of COVID infections. Consequent upon, a large number companies locked up their units and laid off their work force. The US jobs report for April brings sobering, if not unexpected news: The country has lost 20.6 million jobs since mid - March, resulting in an unemployment rate of 14.7%, a level not seen since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The number of jobs lost more than doubles the number seen in the 2007 - 2009 than Great Recession, when 8.7 million Americans lost jobs. Before the pandemic, the United States marked a 50 year unemployment low in February, with just 3.5% of Americans unemployed. According to USA Today, of the 20.6 million jobs lost, 18 million are expected to be

temporary when the pandemic recedes. Similarly, the job loss was no way insignificant in China. As per the official data around 5 million people lost their jobs especially in the unorganised sector. Consequent upon, retail sales of consumer goods dropped by 20.5%, fixed asset investment fell by 24.5%, industrial production shranked by 24.5% and they country may not be able to achieve targeted growth. This hints that China experienced significant contraction of production, distribution and consumption due to COVID-19 pandemic. While as the job loss is somewhat low in New Zealand and UK. These two countries also recorded fall in consumer demand and investment. Nonetheless, the Bank of England predicts that due to consistent job loss the unemployment in UK may rise 7.5% by the close of the 2020. The panorama would be no way different in New Zealand. Although, the unemployment rate has fallen, yet the underemployment has enhanced in the country indicating the loss of reasonable working hours and earnings. This has largely affected the GDP of the country. The scenario of job loss is whooping in India around 6 million people lost their jobs especially engaged in private sector. The unemployment rate has skyrocketed to a staggering 27.1% since the beginning of the lockdown, especially in metropolitan cities. Almost all the labor and wage earners lost their earning opportunities and were forced to live in hunger and starvation.

4. Findings

- 1) The countries experience rise in COVID cases, fall in GDP and rise in unemployment
- 2) The countries were not ruled by less emancipated leadership

- 3) The leadership of the countries acted reactively and not proactively.

5. Conclusion

The study found that the political leadership in six countries predominantly failed to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Their myopic, less visionary and reactionary approach unleashed irrelevant policy measures to deal with the situation caused by the pandemic. Consequent upon, the people went through major health and economic.

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