Social and Economic Effects of Covid-19 in Malawi and Implications for Policy Makers

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Introduction

• Cabinet Committee on Covid-19: March 8
• State of national Disaster: March 20
  • Closure of schools
  • Restrictions on public gatherings
• First Covid-19 cases in: 2 April 2020
  • - 3 cases (Lilongwe)
  • Borders closed
• Failed attempt to introduce lockdown
• Presidential elections 23 June 2020
• New regulations gazetted 7 August 2020
• Status as of 10 September 2020:
  • 5,655 cases
  • 176 fatalities, 1,796 active cases, 3,683 recoveries)
Research Studies on Covid-19

- GLD/IPOR Covid-19 Survey (n=4,500)- May-June 2020 (telephone)

- IPOR/OSISA national Covid-19 survey (n=1,346), May-June 2019 (face to face)

- This presentation draws on data from the IPOR-OSISA survey
Findings…

➢ knowledge of Covid-19
• Unanimous knowledge among the citizens (99.9%)
• 7/10 people think Covid-19 is a serious problem, only 2/10 underrating it

Knowledge of Covid-19

How severe are most cases of Covid-19?

Question: Have you heard about COVID-19, which many people also refer to as coronavirus? How serious of a problem do you think the COVID-19 pandemic is for Malawi?
Are Malawians afraid of Covid-19?

• Most Malawians (8/10) expressed fear that Covid-19 is a serious problem in the country (83%)

• A two thirds majority of Malawians (64%) are afraid of getting Corona Virus

• Mostly men, rural dwellers and people from the southern region are afraid of getting Covid-19 (66%)

Question: How worried are you about getting COVID-19? Would you say you are
Are Malawians afraid of Covid-19?

- Two thirds of Malawians are worried that a member of their household can get Covid-19 (65%)
- Above half of Malawians (56%) are worried that they can die from Covid-19 pandemic
- Mostly men (60%), rural people (58%) and people from northern and southern regions (60%) are seriously worried of dying from Covid-19
- About two thirds of the citizens feel there is a high probability of them getting infected with Covid-19 in the near future (63%)
Fear of getting Covid-19 by gender, locality and region

Question: How worried are you about getting COVID-19? Would you say you are
Fear of dying from Covid-19 by gender, locality and region

Probability of being infected in the future

Question: How worried are you about dying of COVID-19. Would you say you are

Question: Do you think that there is a chance that you will become infected with corona virus or COVID-19 in the future? Do you think that is almost certain, likely, just a small chance or no chance at all?
Findings...

➢ **Attitudes towards Covid-19**

- Majority of Malawians (97%) are willing to go for Covid-19 testing if they show signs and symptoms or exposed to anyone suspicious.
- Two thirds of Malawians (63%) are ready to wear face masks.
- Majority (92%) are ready to practise hand washing / sanitizing.
- About three quarters of Malawians are also ready to practice social distance from those infected (73%).

**Question:** Covid-19 symptoms include fever, a dry cough, shortness of breath and tiredness. If you had these symptoms at this time, how willing would you be to be tested if you have these symptoms.
Findings...

- **economic impacts of Covid-19**
  
  - Majority of Malawians (80%) say their households are economically hit by Covid-19
  
  - About half of Malawians (46%) lament of serious economic impacts.
  
  - Urban dwellers (86%) in serious economic problems compared to the rural folks (79%)
  
  - Those with high levels of education are economic challenged compared to those with less education
Findings …

Negative economic impact of Covid-19 at the household level by locality and education?
Findings…

➢ economic impacts of Covid-19

• majority of Malawians (87%) are worried that the Covid-19 Pandemic has negatively affected the economy of the country.

• about 6 out of the 10 (58%) seriously worried that the Covid-19 pandemic has left Malawi’s economy in tatters

• unfortunately, a plurality (63%) of Malawians have no confidence in the way government was managing the situation

Question: Are you worried that your household’s economic situation will be negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Would you say you are
Worry over the negative impact of Covid-19 on the National economy

- Not worried at all: 5
- Not worried: 7
- Worried: 28
- Very worried: 59
- Don't know: 1
- Total Worried: 87
Policy implications

- Perceptions of the severity of Covid-19 matters in enforcing regulations
- There is interest to go for Covid-19 testing
- Use of trusted institutions in prevention and management efforts
- Reflection on the survival measures in prevention planning / provision of alternative measures
- Government legitimacy is fundamental (DPP VS MCP)