



**FINAL REPORT**

**RAPID CITIZENRY ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT COVID-19 MEASURES**

**June 29, 2020**

## COVID-19 SURVEY ON THE CITIZENRY FEEDBACK

### Background

The spread of the corona virus has been on the rise all over the world as countries struggle to put in the necessary measures to contain it. Since March 12, 2020 when the first two cases of the COVID-19 were recorded in Ghana, the government has since outlined a series of measures to identify the infected, trace contacts and treat on one hand and on the other to protect the quality of life of the rest of the citizens. Some of the measures amongst others comprised of closure of borders, partial lockdown, keeping of social distancing, compulsory wearing of nose masks, use of hand sanitizers and washing of hands with soap under running water. This rapid assessment is the first of two citizenry and civil society surveys. This, as the first, assessed the awareness and effectiveness of these measure in containing the spread of the virus. The assessment tool was deployed using google forms survey online platforms. Below are highlights of the findings.

### Key findings

- The president's periodic address to the nation has been the major source of information on the government's response to the pandemic.
- Awareness of governments measures was high even though there were huge violations of some of the restrictions put in place.
- The role played by the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in the fight against the COVID 19 pandemic was not obvious.
- The public was of the view that governments restrictions were adequate to contain the spread of the virus and should not have been relaxed.
- Low transparency and accountability of the COVID 19 fund and its related expenditures.

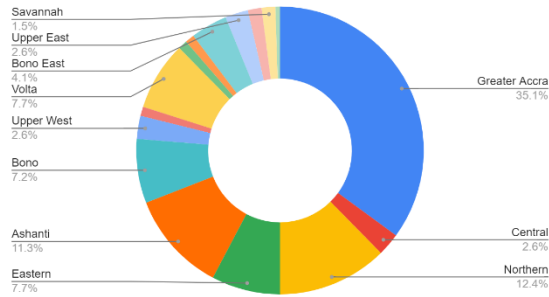
As the spread ranges on, this is a call on government to revise its strategy on how best to contain the spread and improve the quality of life.

### SECTION 1: BIODATA ANALYSIS

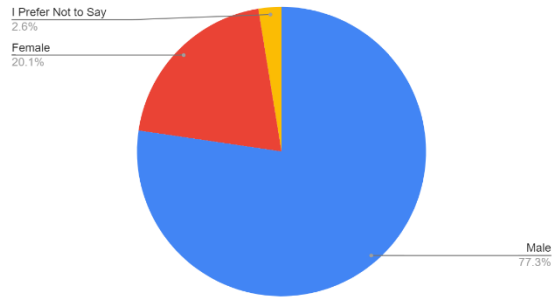
A total of 186 people shared their opinions about government's response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Out of this number, 79 percent were males and 21 percent were females. The data showed that a little over half (59.4 percent) of the respondents fell between the ages of 30 – 49. Again, in this age bracket 82.24 percent were males and 17.76 were females. This comprised largely the working group who obviously are the breadwinners of their families and were very concerned about the impact of COVID 19 on their socio-economic lives.

**Figure 1: Biodata**

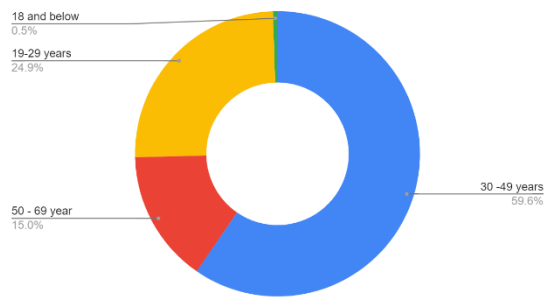
**REGION OF RESPONDENTS**



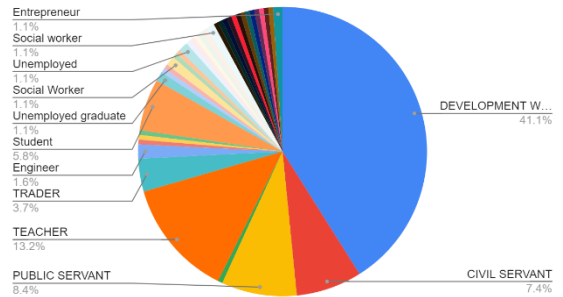
**SEX**



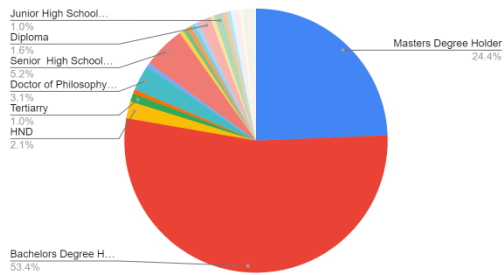
**AGE**



**OCCUPATION**



**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**



**Source:** Online Survey 2020

**Limitations of the Research**

The low response rate is because this was a rapid assessment that primarily sought to gathered feedback on the policy measures. The subsequent validation meeting and engagement with our membership however gave credence to the findings. Hence, there findings in this report are not meant to be generalized but to provide indications on some actions that can be taken to address emerging trends with COVID-19 related measures.

This report therefore has provided a lot of learning that has informed the currently on-going nationwide survey to solicit citizenry feedback on the impact of the Government of Ghana COVID-19 policy measures.

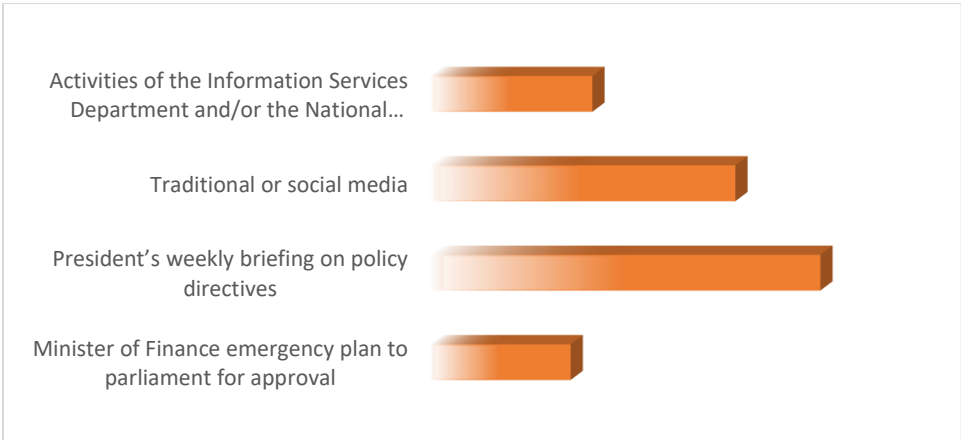
**SECTION 2: PUBLIC AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**Data Presentation.**

**2.1 Channels of Information**

The data showed that 98.4 percent of the respondents were aware of the various measures that the government had put in place to contain the COVID 19 pandemic. 86.7 percent were made aware of government measures through the periodic national address by the President of the Republic of Ghana. Social media (Facebook & Twitter) was also a significant source in making the public aware of the measures with 68 percent of the respondents alluding to this.

**Figure 2: Source of Information on Government Measures**



**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

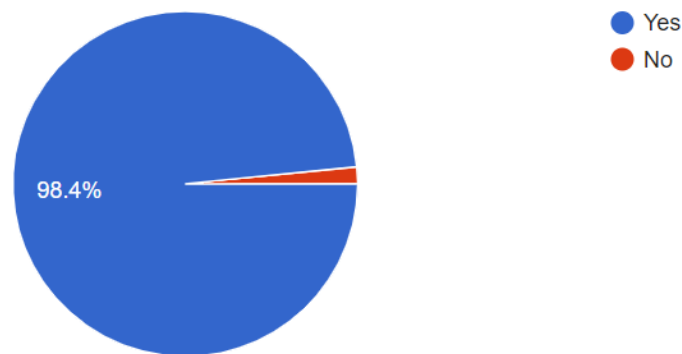
Owing to the high demand for news on COVID-19 and the fact that there is always a penchant for politicization of national issues and fake news, it is not surprising that the President's media briefings is the primary source of information on measures to fight the pandemic. As observed, the content of the Presidents briefings has tended to shape the conversations in the media, academia and the public. The data suggests that the various channels being used by the government to sensitize the public on the measures has been effective. However, this is true within the urban areas and where a significant majority of the respondents within the age bracket of 19 – 49 access information through social media and mass media. Therefore, the significance of social media platforms (Facebook & Twitter) and traditional media (TV and Radio) in making information available to the public cannot be overemphasized. Most traditional media channels seamlessly use social media platforms to disseminate their programmes and hence are able to capture this section of the population lots attention.

<sup>1</sup> The incidence rates of COVD-19 has been high in the urbanized areas in Ghana thus far. Hence the initial focus on the survey in urban areas.

## 2.2 Awareness and Adherence of COVID 19 Safety Protocols

The data showed that more than 98.4 percent of the respondents are aware of the various measure's government instituted. 90.8 percent of the respondents are aware of the social distancing protocol while 92.4 percent are also in the know of the compulsory wearing of nose masks protocol. Moreover, handwashing and use of sanitizers were easy to comply with by the population. The analysis showed that the enforcement of the handwashing was being aggressively pursued within the MMDA's. Most of the MMDA's, religious and political actors had distributed veronica buckets in their localities and hence the case for hand washing had become an important measure. In spite of all these, Ghana's positive COVID 19 cases have jumped from 2 cases to over 18,000 cases in 14 weeks.

**Figure 3:** Awareness of COVID 19 Safety Protocols



**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

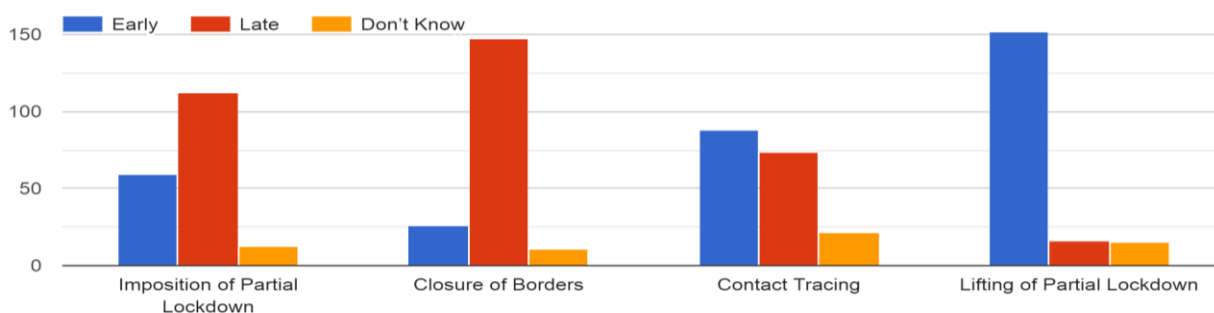
The compulsory wearing of nose masks and observance of social distancing were difficult measures to adhere to. Thus, compliance is low. According to the data, 59.9 percent of the respondents are aware of at least one measure their MMDA's have put in place to fight the pandemic. The data also revealed that the MMDA's are not enforcing the wearing of nose masks and managing human traffic within the market areas.

## SECTION 3. EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

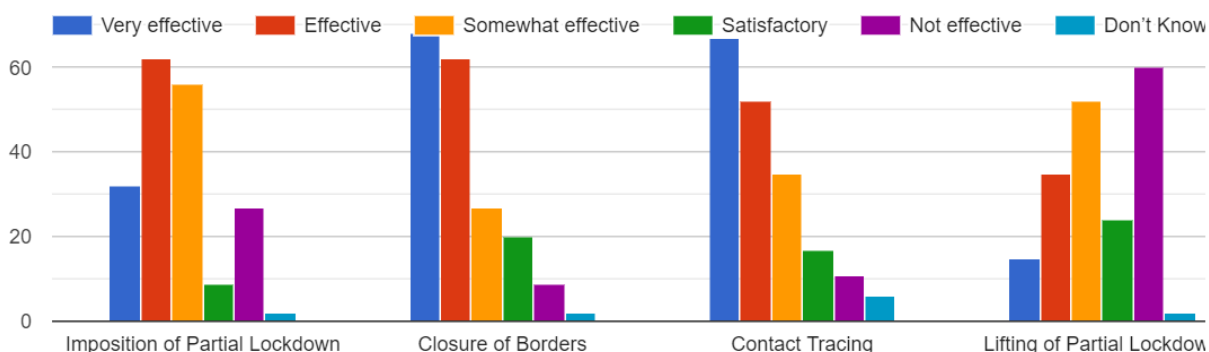
### 3.1 Effectiveness of COVID 19 Restrictions

Generally, majority of respondents agree that the imposition of the Partial lockdown was effective even though it came rather too late. An earlier decision could have reduced the rate of spread and made effective the contact tracing procedure. Again, its early lifting was not effectively done. From the data, 82.9 percent of the respondents indicated that the lifting of the partial lockdown was an early call. On April 22, 2020, a few days after the Government of Ghana lifted its partial lockdown on the two Metropolitan Areas of Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi, the total number of positive cases was 1279 with a positivity rate of 1.45<sup>2</sup>. There was a steady rise in the number of positive cases (4700 cases by May 10, 2020) over the next few days.

**Figure 4:** Timeliness of Measures to contain the virus



**Figure 5:** Effectiveness of Measures to contain the Virus



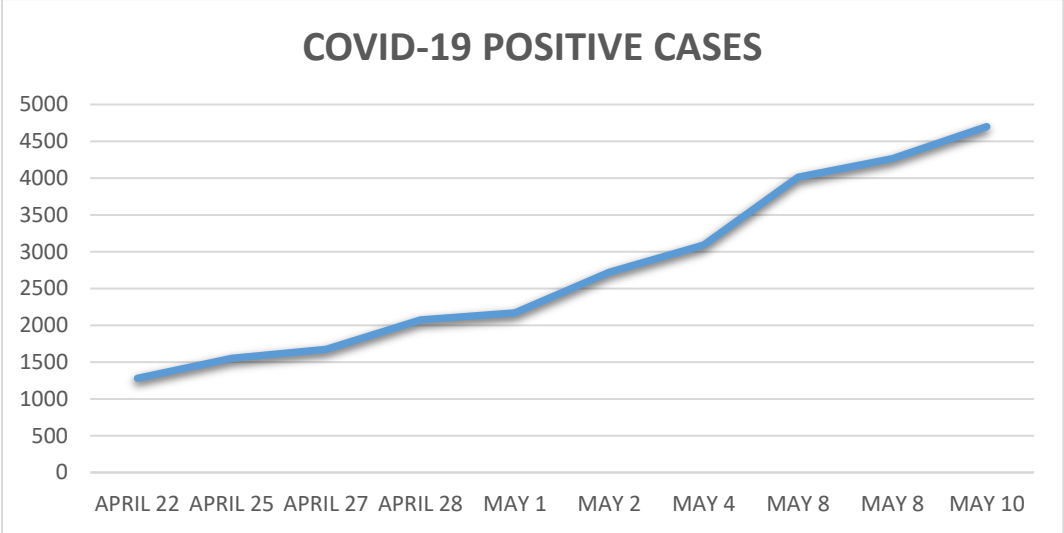
**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

Over two thirds of the respondents indicated that the closure of the borders to reduce imported cases was executed late in time. However, 70.2 percent respondents in total indicated that the closure of borders and contact tracing have been very effective as a measure to manage the spread pandemic. On the effectiveness of the partial lockdown, only 32 percent of the respondents

<sup>2</sup> <https://ghanahealthservice.org/covid19/archive.php>

indicated that it was, with 31 percent of the respondents indicating that the lifting of the partial lockdown was not effectively done.

**Figure 6:** Number of COVID-19 positive cases in Ghana (April 22 - May 10)



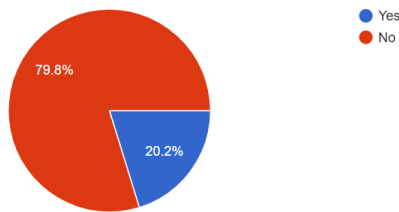
**Source:** Ghana Health Service, 2020

The reasons given for the partial lockdown were to contain the spread and to enable contact tracing to be effectively done. The fact that the incidence rate increased after the lifting of the lockdown perhaps attests to the not surprising assertion by the majority respondents that the executive decision to lift the partial lockdown came rather too early. The general opinion as expressed is that, an earlier decision of lockdown before cases were recorded could have reduced the rate of spread and substantially made effective the contact tracing procedure.

### 3.2 Public Buy- in into Safety Measures

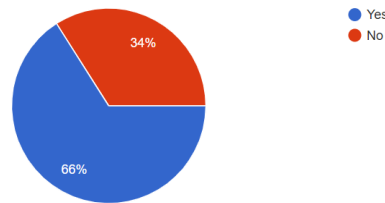
The data showed that 65.8 percent of respondents agree with the notion that the measures put up by government are adequate to curb the spread of the virus. 79.3 percent of the respondents would not want a relaxation of the measures put in place by government. According to the data, 92.5% of the respondents indicated that regular hand washing with soap under running water, social distancing and the use of hand sanitizers should be maintained respectively. A review of the data showed that 33.1 percent of the respondents wanted a relaxation of the ban on social gathering. This falls well below the average, and though not representative, this is a considerable percentage that may have implication on compliance. The findings indicate an across the board acceptance and stands to reason that community support and buy in is high, a sign that is good for policy adherence and cooperation.

**Figure 7: Relaxation of Measures on COVID-19**



**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

**Figure 8: Adequacy of Measures**



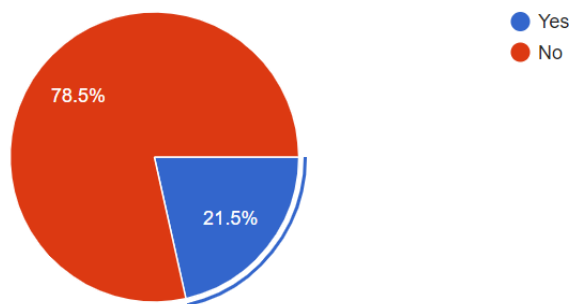
**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

## SECTION 4: Transparency and Accountability of COVID 19 fund and Expenditures

### 4.1 Information Dissemination on COVID-19 Related funds and Expenditures

From the data, 78.5 percent of the respondents think that government has not been transparent with information flow on funds being accessed to fight the COVID 19 pandemic. Less than half (44.2 percent) of the respondents were unaware of the sources of funding being explored by government to fund COVID 19 related expenditure neither did 78.8 percent of the respondents know how it was being used. As the survey has shown, awareness of the governments measures was heightened by the Presidents national address through several media platforms. Therefore, if respondents do not have information on the COVID 19 fund and its use, It raises concerns about inherent issues of transparency, political capture and perceived corruption which could build up should there not be significant change in providing updates on the inflows and outflows of the COVID-19 fund.

**Figure 9: Has Government Been transparent about COVID-19 related expenditures**



**Source:** Online Survey, 2020

## Policy Recommendations

- The spread of the virus is at an alarming rate; hence government must step up its effort in enforcing the protocols to contain the spread, including re-instating where necessary measure that have been relaxed.
- Government should support the MMDA's with the required logistics and involve community leaders in contact tracing and enforcing the safety measures such as wearing of face masks and social distancing.
- Information on contributions and disbursement of the COVID-19 fund is low, hence government should be made public how much the fund has accrued, its sources, expenditure and the interventions it has spent on.
- Need to initiate voluntary testing schemes going forward. Government must encourage individual, religious bodies and corporate entities to go for voluntary testing.
- The centralization of measures however further heightened the average Ghanaians disconnect with the local governance structures. People may not appreciate and hence differentiate between the actions of the local governance authorities and this have implication on the <sup>3</sup>functionality of the District Emergency Health Committees.

---

<sup>3</sup> At the Validation Meeting held with CSO actors, feedback from the districts gives indication that some of these committees may not be fully operational. Reasons given range from the lack of resources to the lack of clear leadership at the district level.