

Taiwan's Diminishing Success Against the Covid-19

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"It is mandatory to wear a mask inside. There will be no face-to-face education until 2021, and we should get used to online learning. We cannot turn back to the pre-pandemic version of life unless the majority of the people in the world are vaccinated." We are all accustomed to hearing these sentences due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this painful period, the whole world took some measures and implemented some strict rules to reduce social contact between people and prevent the virus from spreading. Although some countries were hit hard by the pandemic, some countries had less problematic issues related to the pandemic. Taiwan was one of the countries which had less dramatic death rates. However, recently, the country faced a burst, and there was an increase in Covid-19 cases. This text aims to discuss what is going on in Taiwan and the reasons for the spurt in cases.

Before moving to the details of the reasons for the increase in Covid-19 cases, it is essential to talk about previous measures of Taiwan. When China first announced that the Covid-19 virus spreads among humans, Taiwan took strict measures. For instance, the government did not allow foreigners to come into the country. Those who are allowed to travel to Taiwan were obliged to stay in quarantine for fourteen days. Masks were given to citizens, and it was mandatory to wear masks in places where there is intense human contact. The strict measures that Taiwan implemented were effective, and in April 2020, the number of Covid-19 cases was deficient, although the rest of the world was suffering from high case numbers and death rates. However, something has gone wrong, and in May 2021, the country faced an unusual increase in the number of infected people.

Now that the success story of Taiwan is explained, it is time to talk about the current situation. May 2021 onwards, more people are infected by coronavirus day by day. There are several reasons for this increase. First of all, pilots from Chinese Airlines paved the way to the rise in cases. When pilots arrived in Taiwan, they stayed at a hotel in quarantine just for three days, and the hotel housed the pilots who were supposed to remain in quarantine and other people who stayed there just as guests and were not in quarantine in the same building. After these two problematic issues, they announced that there were some Covid-19 cases from the hotel staff.

Secondly, a local Lions Club meeting was organized, and the former president of this club spent time in tea houses where there was no attention to social distance rules. Although he was a potential virus carrier, he met many people and caused the virus to spread among many people. Furthermore, people whose Covid-19 tests were positive did not immediately tell that they went to these tea houses. Therefore, it became difficult to make a good-working contact tracing and prevent the virus's spread.

Aside from these specific cases, the relaxed mood of the country, in general, was another reason for the outbreak in Covid-19 cases. That is, people behaved less carefully than before, and the country let down its strict barriers. For instance, the period for quarantine time was shortened. Also, fewer people continue to wear masks, and the government allowed mass meetings such as festivals. Moreover, hospitals did not test vast numbers of people even though they had some primary symptoms of coronavirus, such as fever.

Another factor that gave rise to the increase in Covid-19 cases in Taiwan was the problematic situation of vaccination. Since there were fewer infected people in the country initially, many people did not get vaccines. Also, people had some concerns about the possible adverse effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine and hence were not vaccinated. Additionally, the supply of vaccines was not sufficient for the majority of Taiwan's population. Although now more people are keen on vaccination, there are not enough vaccines.

To sum up, as a result of all these reasons mentioned above, Taiwan experienced a rise in Covid-19 cases. As a response to this upward shift, the government brought strict measures back. For instance, schools are closed for two weeks, wearing masks inside became obligatory, places such as clubs and bars are closed, and it is not allowed for foreigners to travel to Taiwan.