THE AFTERMATH OF THE RECENT ADVERSITIES IN THE COUNTRY
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In the early quarter of the year 2020, the entire world had been hit by the outburst of the global pandemic affecting all the disciplines and the entire human race. All individuals of different socio-economic status, sex, nationality and age, from all walks of life, felt the strong blows of the virus; none of us were exempted. Prior to this ‘quarantine’ era, the African swine flu outbreak had been brooding fear among us as it was not contained yet when the first case of the COVID-19 was found out. Just as we were trying to get back on our feet from the predicaments the pandemic had caused us, a series of strong typhoons struck the country leaving thousands of Filipinos devastated. The typhoons stole decent homes, properties, lives from many Filipinos and our hope for a better tomorrow was crushed even more. Indeed, 2020 had truly tested our strength and faith in almost everything. Looking at their effects on politics, there were two sides of the coin – the positive and the negative.

For the ugly truth of its aftermath, we witnessed how crucial leadership is in these uncertain times. The situation made us see leaders who are very deserving of their positions. We were able to pinpoint which is which. We saw the leaders who are responsible and persistent to go out of their way to alleviate the situation and perform their duty. Some promises were fulfilled while a lot remained futile. On the contrary, we saw leaders whose words remained as mere words. Some lash out of other political personalities without admitting their shortcomings as leaders. To top it all, we have seen our government cripple media, who has a vital role to play in this difficult time, to its very core. We saw that selective justice exist in our land. This is evident when a politician disobeyed safety protocols without being castigated and punished after. On the other hand, when a commoner was said to do such thing, the government behaved aggressively. Even our call for transparency which resonated on the first weeks of the crisis was up until now answered.

Due to these anomalies and impartiality, we lost our faith in some our leaders.

Nonetheless, the brighter side of this was that all of these things, good or bad, served as an eye opener for all of us. It heightened our critical thinking skills. It afforded us the awareness of our rights and everything our government owes us. Hopefully, for the next election, all of our
learnings will come in play for us to better see aspiring leaders whose actions are far better than their words.

The pandemic crisis alongside natural calamities worsened the quality of education in the Philippines. I believe distance learning, the deemed most suitable modality in this situation, is another term for ‘mass promotion’ particularly in the basic education. It can never sufficiently substitute for a face-to-face class discussion. Lack of devices to ride on with the blended learning scaffolded by online learning also hamper millions of Filipino learners experience equitable opportunities to acquire the essential skills and competencies. In fact, as others claim, many learners nowadays are merely passing and not learning.

Moreover, the opening of classes despite the pandemic created a digital divide given the fact that a lot of our leaners do not have the device and access to internet. Admit or not, equity and access to quality education is far-fetched in these trying times yet us, teachers keep on tiring ourselves in an attempt to least make our learners learn something and make this school year fruitful.

Our school had been experiencing a massive scarcity in terms of the modules during the first months of the school year 2020 – 2021; thus, there is a need for us to print on our own. The worst part is that there is also shortage for the needed materials for printing so we had to spend from our own pocket. Yet for the quality of teaching and learning, I must say each of us in our school is exhausting all our efforts, time and resources to deliver what is due to our learners. We conduct online classes once in a while and if the learners cannot afford to join the synchronous class, we send to them our self-made video lessons or videos available online. If they still cannot afford to watch these videos then we try to reach them through text messaging and phone calls.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health and sanitation. This raised our health consciousness to a high level not just with our physical health but with our mental health as well.

Frequent sanitation has also been normalized. To adhere with the safety and health practices and ensure access to decent work and the protection of labour rights in all industries, alternative work arrangement was implemented. These assured employees of their economic stability while working at the comfort of their home.

The Philippines has been a remittance-dependent country given the large number of our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) worldwide. However, many OFWs were laid off their
job leading to a regress on our remittance record. Aside from this, our tourism was completely affected as there had a complete restriction on travel. Apparently, economic growth decline as a consequence of ECQ. As Basilio (2019) in his study entitled “Bouncing Back in the New Normal through Countryside Development and Agricultural Resilience” recorded, manufacturing, construction, transportation and storage were the main contributors to economic progress mostly affected by the ECQ.

85% of businesses were forced to close depriving a lot of Filipino workers of their source of income. This made route to booming of online business in the country enabling Filipinos to get by. Barter is also of the schemes rose to fame in this crisis which alleviated the situation of Filipinos.

According to a new report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2020), the Philippine economy is forecast to contract by 7.3% in 2020 amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic before growth returns to 6.5% in 2021. The economy is expected to rebound in 2021 as the outbreak is contained, the economy is further opened, and more government stimulus measures are implemented.

Reference: