

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS A THREAT TO AFRICAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Disease outbreak or any form of pandemic is not strange to the global community. However, it is the management techniques and control that mostly concern the international community, especially the World Health Organization (WHO). The coronavirus (COVID-19) which began in the city of Wuhan, Hubei, China in late 2019 spread to every continent on the globe. The pandemic did not just cause disruption in the global order, it also had a profound impact on economy, peace and security across the globe. This paper seeks to examine the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's security and development, with Nigeria as a case study. The paper argues that the outbreak of the pandemic exposed Africa's unpreparedness in managing emergencies, which the pandemic exemplified. While most of the developed countries had in place policy measures to control the spread of the virus, Africa as a vulnerable continent with poor health sector and limited economic resources was unable to roll out effective preventive measures. Africa was initially presumed to be immune to the COVID-19, but the upsurge in the number of those who tested positive and the number of casualties became worrisome. For Nigeria, the pandemic has impacted negatively leading to criminal activities, insecurity, economic crisis, unemployment, job cuttings, food crisis and high cost of living. The lockdown measures imposed by Nigeria further disrupted the educational system where access to virtual learning is really non-existent. The paper concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic should be a lesson for Africa, including Nigeria. Therefore, Africa needs to promote local research initiative, home grown management strategy and investment in local technology in order to combat or control future outbreak of global pandemics.*

**Key words:** *Nigeria, Covid-19 Pandemic, Africa, Security, Development*

### INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease that has plagued the world population over the months from December 2019 till date. The virus was first discovered amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The pandemic has been the greatest health crisis and global challenge since the Second World War (UNDP, 2020). The escalating problems of constant and continuous death since the emergence of COVID-19 from China and the damaging effects the pandemic has injected into nations, resulting from the challenges of combating the pandemic, are of great concern to governments and citizens throughout the world. The pandemic exposed humanity to suffering coupled with the fact that no immediate medicine was available to address it. It generated socio-economic insecurity which exposed governance incapacitation globally. As of 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2021, the confirmed cases globally are 4,314,455, and the death rate was nearly 2.6million across the world (Statista, 2021).

It is a well known fact that the emergence of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has created global challenges in social, political and economic development landscape that are likely challenge the sustainability of the development that has been achieved globally. These results are brought by the lockdown of national economies that many countries across the world embarked on as a measure to contain the spread of the virus (Khambule, 2020, p. 98). For Africa, the situation is precarious and challenging as there are inadequate and shortage of health care facilities and other social welfare policies meant to alleviate the suffering of the vulnerable. Beyond health risks, COVID-19 has devastating effects on African security and development. As a matter of fact, more than half of urban Africans live in informal settlements where vulnerable

conditions persist and are magnified by limited or no access to social services such as water and sanitation, with many urban areas of the continent having overcrowded residences (Duerksen, 2020).

Like other African nation, the Nigerian situation was critical. The consequence of not having a national social welfare programme became evident during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020. Thus, the pandemic has impacted negatively leading to the criminal activities, insecurity, economic crisis, unemployment, food crisis and high cost of living in Nigeria. It is against this background that this paper interrogated COVID-19 pandemic and threat to African security and development, using Nigeria as a case study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The outbreak of COVID-19 is having an unparalleled global impact. The pandemic is a general world health predicament of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and one of the most severe challenges humanities have ever witnessed since the second World War. The pandemic had a huge impact on the economy, the environment and human activities, such as agriculture, transport, health, industry and education. Africa was not spared from the pandemic. It is glaring that governments across African continents have faced health, infrastructural and humanitarian challenges to contain the spread of the disease and mitigates its impact on human security. For Nigeria, measures deployed by the government could not ensure human security as a result of weak institutions and lack of social protecting policy.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

In order to clearly understand this paper the following concepts are necessary for clarification: COVID-19 pandemic, security and development.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

The term or concept of a pandemic is a disease that spreads over a large area, country, continent and globe, and can be transmitted from human to human (Samal, 2014). A pandemic is characterised by a high rate of attack causing social and economic disruption. It is a disease associated with novel variants of existing organisms like antigens in influenza, viruses, HIV/AIDs and plague (Morens, Folkers & Fauci, 2009).

However, coronavirus otherwise known as COVID-19, is a strain of the coronavirus family; a viral disease with a highly infectious agent that replicates inside the living cells of an organism, with symptoms of mild to moderate acute respiratory distress syndrome ultimately leading to death in most severe cases (Fu et al., 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) named the coronavirus infection a worldwide pandemic due to the pace at which the disease has caused and is still causing significant death toll and morbidity. For African Union (2020) COVID-19 is an airborne communicable disease transmittable through contaminated droplets from one person to another. The droplets often above 1-micron diameter are "emitted from an infected person through sneezing, coughing, and talking (African Union, 2020, p. 4).

### **Security**

There is no consensus on the meaning of security. However, the ongoing debates can be categorised into two. They are traditional or state-centric and non-traditionalist approach. The traditional security paradigm refers to a realist construct of security in which the referent, object of security is the state. For almost half a century, major world powers entrusted the security of their nation to a balance of power among states (Morgenthau, 1966). In this sense, international stability relied on the premise that if state security is maintained, the security of citizens will necessarily follow. On the other hand, the non-traditionalists have attempted to broaden the

meaning of security to include such issues as economic, environmental, social, feminist, and other threats. The non-traditional approach is also known as human security approach.

The justification for the human security approach is said to be that the traditional conception of security is no longer appropriate or effective in the highly interconnected and interdependent modern world in which global threats such as poverty, environmental degradation, and terrorism supersede the traditional security threats of interstate attack and warfare. The UNDP (1994) Human Development Report's definition of human security argues that the scope of global security should be expanded to include *threats* in seven areas; economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. Quite obviously, traditional (national security) and human security are two sides of a coin-both coexist and relate symbiotically. Without human security, traditional security cannot be attained and vice-versa.

### **Development**

Development is a concept that is widely used across disciplines in respect of its meaning, definition and operationalisation. Development from an economic point of view is aptly defined as "the improvement of peoples" lifestyle through improved education, incomes, skills and employment (Banerjee, Gertler & Ghatak, 2002, p. 318). For Sen (1999) development is a broader concept by focusing on the concept of freedom. He sees development as an integrated process of expansion of substantive freedom. Among the most important of these freedoms as observed by Sen (1999) are freedom from famine and malnutrition, freedom from poverty, access to health care and freedom from premature mortality. Thus, it is only when problems of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, political unrest, and gender inequality are reduced to the barest minimum that the society can be referred to as developed. It is on the basis of this that Reyes (2001) argued that development is understood as a social condition within a nation, in which the needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of natural resources and systems.

This paper therefore seeks to link the concept of COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on African security and development; especially in Nigeria. This is because there is a strong relationship between the concept of security and development. Thus, individual and community security are an important dimension of development.

### **The Evolution of COVID-19 and its Global Outlook**

Coronavirus 2019, also called COVID-19, was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The outbreak of the disease was initially reported to the World Health Organisation on 31 December 2019. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. On 11 March 2020, it was declared a global pandemic after the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009 (Ehigie, Ucho & Mase, 2021, p. 91). It is pertinent to note that by January 30, 2020, 9692 confirmed cases and 15,238 suspected cases was reported around 31 Provinces and cities in China.

The National Health Commission of People's Republic of China alluded in her preliminary report for the diagnosis and treatment of pneumonia caused by novel coronavirus that asymptomatic cases play a critical role in the transmission process and that respiratory droplets and contact with index cases are the main transmission routes. Thus, close contact with symptomatic and asymptomatic cases with this silent infection are the main transmission routes of COVID-19 infection. The common symptoms of COVID-19 have been identified as fever, dry cough and tiredness; this make the recognition and treatment of coronavirus highly confusing. Though uncommon, other known symptoms include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, or a rash on skin or discolouration of fingers or toes. Many people with underlying health challenges such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart and lung problems, and cancer are at higher risk of the disease.

The virus has spread to over 155 countries, causing severe morbidity and mortality since its emergence in 2019. As per the latest update of WHO as of 28<sup>th</sup> of December, 2022, the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases was 651,918,402 cases globally. Fatalities have reached 6,656,601 (WHO Coronavirus Dashboard, 2022). The results also indicate that 268,999,461 confirmed cases are from Europe, 185,198,746 are from Americas, 104,339,037 are from Western Pacific, 60,724,442 are from South-East Asia, 23,216,356 are from East Mediterranean and 9,438,999 confirmed cases are from Africa. This partly explains why COVID-19 appears to have attracted more global attention in terms of sensitisation and lockdowns than the previous cases.

Beyond the health-related risk, the degree of economic crises caused by COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented. There is no doubt that it has left dramatic rippling effects across the global economy, significantly constraining the level of economic activities in every region of the world (Copenhagen Economics, 2020). In addition, the global value chain disruptions that complemented the spread of the virus led to businesses all over the world facing sustainability challenges, particularly labour-intensive services such as aviation, tourism and hospitality industries (ILO, 2020a). The social distancing regulations meant that economic activities that are labour-intensive had to halt their operations as workers were barred from going to work, with those in the informal economy included in the economic activities barred from taking place. The inevitable lockdown regulations resulted in ripple effects in many economies, particularly countries that do not have sufficient domestic resources to mitigate vicious outcomes (Khambule, 2020, p. 99).

### COVID-19 in Africa

The first coronavirus case in Africa was recorded in Egypt on 14 February 2020. Since then, 52 countries have reported cases. Initially confined to capital cities, cases are now reported in a significant number of countries, and in multiple provinces (OECD, 2020). As at November 18, 2022 the number of confirmed cases in Africa amounted to around 12.7 million and caused 257,984 death. The African countries with the highest number of infections at the time of writing this paper are South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Algeria and Nigeria (see Table 1). Also, the full scope of the pandemic remains unknown, but the fatalities in Africa is worrisome.

**Table 1: Showing Data on Highest Number of Deaths from Countries with COVID-19 in Africa as at November 18, 2022.**

S/N	Country	Number of Deaths
1	South Africa	102,371
2	Tunisia	29,266
3	Egypt	24,613
4	Morocco	16,283
5	Ethiopia	7,572
6	Algeria	6,881
7	Libya	6,437
8	Nigeria	3,155

Source: Statista <http://www.statista.com/1170530/coronavirus-deaths-in-Africa>.

From table 1, it was observed that the outbreak of COVID-19 in Africa has resulted in high rates of deaths from the pandemic. As at today, the cases in Africa remain low compared to other regions. This can be attributed to both the average age of African citizens, which is the lowest globally, and factors relating to the continent's climate; although this has been challenged by some medical experts. However, Africa appears to have comparative advantages when it comes

to COVID-19. One advantage is its demography. Africa is the youngest continent in the world, with a median age of less than 20, and it currently seems that younger populations appear to suffer milder symptoms than older people, who have a significantly higher risk of contacting severe symptoms (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2020).

Beyond health risks, the COVID-19 shock to African economies is coming in three waves: (i) lower trade and investment from China in the immediate term; (ii) a demand slump associated with the lockdowns in the European Unions and OECD countries; and (iii) a continental supply shock affecting domestic and intra-African trade (OECD, 2020, p. 1). Although, most African governments implemented measures to encourage social distancing focusing on border and travel restrictions, school closures, and bans on large gatherings, the crisis however affected Africa's growth through domestic and external channels, with a significant impact on the well-being and number of people living in poverty. Unlike the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the global nature of the current pandemic and the recent export restrictions on COVID-19 related medical supplies adopted by European countries, the United States, and India, are negatively affecting Africa (OECD, 2020, p. 8). Thus, the emergence of COVID-19 has imposed a threat on health, economy, security, and social relations in the continent. The impact is huge and increasing in low and middle-income countries, especially in Nigeria with over 202 million population (World Bank, 2020).

### **COVID-19 and Its Impacts on Security and Development in Nigeria**

Nigeria like any other African countries was not spared from the impacts of the pandemic. Nigeria, as a busy migrant – receiving, transit and sending countries, was and is vulnerable to COVID-19. The country is open to international trade and migration and is not out of danger of the spread and harmful impacts of COVID-19. Just like the Ebola epidemic of 2014 was imported through Lagos airport, as a result of international travels, by a Liberian government official who came into the country aware that he had Ebola, Nigeria recorded her index case of COVID-19 through an Italian citizen on 27 February 2020 (Akanle, Otomi & Nwanagu, 2020, p. 228). The Italian citizen proceeded to a factory in Ogun state. With 58 contacts under follow-up, the case was dubbed an index case.

As a measure to contain the spread of the pandemic, the federal government announced the partial closure of the country's borders and social activities, while a stay-at-home order in line with the Quarantine Act of 2004 was imposed. Also, the Federal government of Nigeria as of 19 March 2020 restricted entry into Nigeria for travellers from high incidence countries (with over 1,000 cases domestically) to China, Italy, Iran, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Japan, France, Germany, United States of America, United Kingdom, Netherlands and Switzerland. The Nigerian government also followed the WHO's initiatives of social distancing, hand washing, use of alcohol-based sanitiser, face mask wearing, and other initiatives to restrict the spread of the pandemic. However, the steps have had little impact on Nigerians because people appear to disobey government rule even when they are given government assistance, such as palliatives, which were given to some designated poor citizens to keep them at home and comply with the lockdown rules.

Following the non-compliance of the people to stay at home, the spread of the virus has continued to evolve rapidly across the country as people engage in geographic mobility in the course of their daily living. As of 3 December 2022, Nigeria has recorded more than 266,381 confirmed cases and 3,155 deaths have been recorded (<http://covid-19.ncdc.gov.ng>). Table 2 shows that Lagos, Federal Capital Territory and Plateau are having the highest number of cases.



**Table 2: Total Cases of Three States with Highest Cases in Nigeria**

State	Population Estimate	Total Confirmed	Total Discharged	Total Death	Active Case
FCT	4,413,500	5,169	1536	50	3583
Lagos	14,365,332	18,138	15231	202	2705
Plateau	4,200,400	3,118	1954	37	1127

Source: NCDC, Nigeria <http://covid-19.ncdc.gov.ng>

Apart from the impact of the pandemic on health related issues, spillovers from the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated a threat to Nigeria's security and development vis-à-vis its effects on education, income, unemployment, insecurity, crime and poverty. A few of the impacts can be discussed as follows:

### **COVID-19 and Security Threats in Nigeria**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, security challenges has been a major concern to the Nigerian state. The issue of insurgency in North Eastern Nigeria has been a long one dating back to 2006 by the so-called group named "Boko Haram", which claims to be one of the largest and deadliest militant groups in Africa. The group has conducted terrorist attacks on religious, political groups, local police, military and civilians (Ejogba, 2006). It is glaring that the outgrowing rate of insecurity in Nigeria amidst COVID-19 is so devastating and has also given bad name to the country. The outbreak of the pandemic has posed many security challenges as government-imposed restriction and banned on some daily activities and closure of some important sectors of the economy. The closure of borders has lead to constant attack by Boko Haram on innocent citizens; since there is no means to get aid in terms of food and relief materials.

More importantly, the inability of the government to provide social security during the pandemic generated security issues of rape cases and sexual assault. The most trending part of the cases is Uwa, followed by that of a student named Vera Uwaila that was raped in a church that lost her life to it and that of another student named Barakat in Ibadan; that was also raped and killed (Alfakoro, 2021, p.3). Since the government-imposed lockdown measure to curtail the spread of the virus, many residents of Lagos and Ogun states have been complaining on daily bases of attacks by hoodlums in their various localities. In Lagos state, a criminal gangs referred to as One Million Boys, looted shops locked up. It was reported that law enforcement agencies killed about 18 people in a bid to enforce the lockdown regulations (BBC News, 2020). Tade (2020) has observed that one of the emerging and unintended consequences of lockdown, aimed at curtailing the spread of COVID-19 in most African countries, is violent criminality, murder kidnapping, domestic violence (gender-based violence), and growing cyber-crime among other criminal activities. There was a surge in gender-based violence as family members were locked down and there was no way to meet their financial needs; frustration resulted on the part of the men thereby resulting into violence on their partners. In Lagos, Ogun and Abuja, gender-based violence skyrocketed from 60 to 238 between March and April 2020 (Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta, 2020). Also, 23 out of 36 states in Nigeria experienced reported cases of gender-based violence, a monthly increase of 149% (Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta, 2020).

In addition to displacement, there was food scarcity as a result of the movement restriction which prevented farmers from going to the farms. This has hampered agricultural activities and heightened the risk of acute food insecurity. With agricultural production being highly labour-intensive in Nigeria, shortages of workers due to the lockdown compromised farming activities including land preparation, planting, crop maintenance, crop growth, harvesting, transporting and storing food.

#### *The Impact of COVID-19 on Nigerian Economy*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of lockdown initiative, the pandemic has had significant socio-economic effects on Nigerian economy. Due to lockdown all domestic flights, railway service, bus, truck, and vehicles transports are suspended with special exemption to those associated with essential commodities. Thus, the COVID-19 spillover to the Nigerian economy is visible. The most visible and immediate spillover was the drop in the price of crude oil, which dropped from nearly US\$60 per barrel to as low as US\$30 per barrel in March. During the pandemic, people were no longer travelling and this led to a sustained fall in the demand for aviation fuel and automobile fuel which affected Nigeria's net oil revenue, and eventually affected Nigeria's foreign reserve (Ozili, 2020, p. 8). Noting that Nigeria's 2020 budget was pegged on the presumption of oil selling at US\$57 per barrel, this plunge dragged the 2020 budget into a large deficit.

The pandemic also affected unemployment rate in Nigeria. Statista (2021) shows that, the unemployment rate in Nigeria was approximately 7.6 percent in 2020. This is relatively high when compared with the rate of unemployment in 2015 when it was 4.31 percent. Also, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic affected women emotionally and economically. The women informal workers experienced stresses in managing to fend for their families despite the risk the pandemic constituted to their lives. The burden of caring for household sky-rocketed, particularly the care for the sick and extended family members with limited resources, coupled with the fact that women did not have access to government palliatives COVID-19 compounded the economic hardship on women in the informal sector as they earned less particularly in the rural economy (Adebayo, 2021, p. 56).

As the upsurge of COVID-19 continue in Nigeria, the informal economic operators became one of the most affected victims of the various policies meant to flatten the curve of the pandemic because of their vulnerability. The restriction of movement affected their businesses as many could not move to sell their good and render services. The incomes of the informal economic operators were relatively affected during the lockdown.

The experiences of the IEOs during the lockdown are not limited to their businesses but affected their socio-religious and other activities. The precarious situation resulted in the loss of income, destructions of goods, hunger, fear of the unknown, and intimidation, among others (Samuel, 2021, p. 23). The implication of this is rising poverty among Nigerian populace. While it is true that the poverty level in Nigeria was relatively high even before COVID-19, it is a fundamental fact that, the level of poverty in Nigeria became relatively higher with the advent of COVID-19. This is particularly due to the measures put in place to prevent the spread of the virus to other parts of the country where there was none hitherto. Those in the informal economy, wage labourers, the marginalised, the elderly, the unemployed and the disabled were most affected by the vicious socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

#### *Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Nigeria*

Dorn et al. (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has a peculiar dissipating impact on education in Africa and other countries through decreased level of education, broaden existing divide in learning access and outcomes and school dropouts. The education sector was also negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Prior to COVID-19, Nigeria accounts for one in every five of the world's out-of-school children. About 10.5 million children aged 5-14 years in Nigeria were out of school and only about 61% of 6- to 11-year-old children receive primary school education in a regular basis (UNICEF Nigeria, n.d.).

While Nigeria is battling with underlying educational challenges that have kept the country behind in getting young people ready for the dynamic workplace, COVID-19 impacts further exacerbate this problem (Eze, et al., 2021, p. 4). Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria announced the closure of all institutions of learning. In this vein, the lockdown of schools has responsible for the inconsistent academic calendar, a gap in learning, obstructed international education academic of conference cancellation and

increasing unemployment in the education sector (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020). As the federal government ordered all schools to be shut down in Nigeria, a high percentage of school-age children were locked out of school, particularly public schools. Private schools engaged their students in teaching and learning processes via online which are not available to the public schools. Most of the public schools found it difficult to migrate online due to lack of resources like electricity and internet services (Adebajo, 2021, p. 57).

Furthermore, the impacts are likely to widen the gaps in education quality and socio-economic quality following the school closures in the country. This is because a lesser percentage of learners who are in the urban areas, who are likely to hail from higher-income families, stand more chance to access during school closure through technology, leaving behind the majority of learners from poor homes and underserved rural and suburban areas of the country (Eze, et al., 2020, p. 5). Also, many public universities could not cope through e-learning due to epileptic power supply as well as irregular and poor internet connection. Apart from the poor virtual learning environment, academic and non-academic staff require more training to be efficient in the current ICT-driven education economy. In addition, learning within the homes created a big challenge for learning; as some students depends on parents' educational attainment and other commitments, leaving a greater percentage of the learners' population behind (Eze, et al., 2021, p. 5). This however affected the role of education as a vehicle to human development in Nigeria.

### **The Government's Responses to Mitigate COVID-19 in Nigeria**

The Nigerian government responded to the health hazards posed by COVID-19 with different policy initiatives. One of the policy option was the ban on international flights and closure of Nigerian borders. In addition, government prohibited mass gatherings, limiting people's movement, lockdowns imposed, interstate travel banned, and offices, clubs, and services considered non-essential closed. Also, the Nigerian government and its different agencies initiated several health care modalities, economic, security, and social responses to contain the disease and its impact on society. One of such government social initiate is the government – funded ₦500 billion (Naira) COVID-19 crisis intervention fund and enhanced support to states for critical health care expenses.

The Nigerian government also took a bold step to implement an emergency measures such as the release of disaster relief funds. For instance, ₦5 billion (Naira) was released by the federal government as special intervention fund and ₦10 billion (Naira) to Lagos state government (Amzat et al., 2020). The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development was tasked with implementing palliative measures across the country. Some of the measures included the disbursement of four months grants of ₦20,000 (Naira) to the poor and vulnerable people who registered in the National Social Register. Beyond these measure, the government also donated food items to state governments for onward distribution to citizens and continued the school feeding programme by giving more than three million households food items through the primary schools their children are enrolled in. Also introduced was a one-year moratorium on loans and the reduced interest rate on intervention loans from 9% to 5% (Adebajo, 2022, p. 57).

More importantly, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a Presidential Task Force (PTF), with the mandate to coordinate and oversee Nigeria's multi-sector inter-governmental efforts to contain the spread and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide overall policy direction, guidance, and continuous support to the National Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) at the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and other Ministries and government agencies involved in response activities, and ensure their coordination towards a single set of national strategic objectives, among other things (Onyishi, et al., 2020, p. 14). Thus, the government responses and policy initiatives was to intensify measures of dealing with the pandemic and relieve hunger and social distress of the Nigerian citizens.



### **The Limits and Challenges of Government Responses**

In the first instance, low level of information from the federal government to the Nigerian people led to the quick spread of COVID-19. As a matter of fact, initial information on the source, the symptoms and possible spread of the pandemic was insufficient and scanty. The news of the pandemic spread in other countries, especially China and the United States of America, occupied the airwaves. However, the seriousness and the necessary information from the Nigerian government was speculative (Samuel, 2021). The information were not enough to prepare the minds of the vulnerables and the local communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the errors and loopholes of the Nigerian social protection system. In spite of the Nigerian government's initiative of strengthening the Social Safety Net through an increase in the number of cash transfer beneficiaries such as N-Power volunteers and sundry traders enjoying small and micro loans through the Market Moni and Transfer Moni Schemes, it was observed that a majority of the urban poor including, artisans, labourers, petty traders, street vendors, cart pushers and waste pickers are not captured by the schemes, thus leading to their further impoverishment and exclusion in COVID-19 urban government policy in Nigeria (Onyishi, 2020). In addition, the responses of government in ensuring human security provisioning were not impactful due to inherent contradictions in the political systems such as nepotism, mismanagement, absence of a framework for welfare administration, lack of correct data base of population, distrust of political leaders, weak state capacity among others (Adebajo, 2020).

Similarly, the lockdown imposed by the government resulted in the halting of social and economic activities with a detrimental impact on Nigerian economy and labour market. Some government agencies and non-governmental organisations took bold steps in providing palliatives in the form of monetary donations, food rations and other supplies. However, these gestures commendable as they may seem have rarely focused on informal workers, a notable failure is implementing the goal of the global campaign on urban governance which is to improve the quality of life in cities, especially for the poor and marginalised, through improved local governance (Onyishi, et al., 2020, p. 14). Therefore, the failure of government to plan for local economic development in Nigeria undermines the efforts to effectively address the plight of those in the informal economy during the pandemic lockdown. Nigeria can hardly go beyond the rhetoric of high sounding policy statements but low performance in terms of attaining development goals of human security, including good health and reduced poverty levels and, in particular, effective good governance (Yagboyaju & Okoosi-Simbine, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The outbreak of COVID-19 brought nations worldwide on their heels, as many countries responded swiftly to a disease they were not expecting. The pandemic did not just cause disruption in the global order, it also had a profound impact on economy, peace and security across the globe. Although the number of COVID-19 cases and fatalities in Africa appeared comparatively low than in other world regions, the shock of the pandemic had disastrous impacts on the continent's already strained health system, which later turned into a social and economic emergency. For Nigeria, the impacts of coronavirus are evident but predominantly noticeable in the economy, health and social life. Generally, the responses of government across African continent in ensuring human security provisioning were not impactful due to absence of a social welfare framework. Thus, the pandemic did not only affect the social life of Africans citizens, but also threatened African security and development. There is a need for African government to promote local research initiative in order to combat or control future outbreak of global pandemic. In addition, an innovative social policy within the context of social protection system should be designed by a framework for economic and social stabilisers in the face of any crises.

**Recommendations**

It is naturally and also a call of duty to provide certain recommendations on the central place of planning and policy initiatives in addressing any future outbreak of a pandemic in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular. Consequently, the following recommendations are made in the course of this study:

1. There is an urgent need to act on the lessons learnt from the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 and address the specific weaknesses of Africa's health structures. Therefore, government should improve health systems and citizens access to it.
2. Government should ensure that deliveries of critical humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups during pandemic are monitored and are not hindered.
3. A fiscal policy and investment response strategy require a combination of domestic resource mobilization in collaboration with external donor agencies with effective management and proper accountability.
4. African governments should explore new strategies for diversifying African economies by limiting their dependence on external funding.
5. African governments should prepare for early detection mechanisms of outbreak of any diseases, by strengthening health systems and social protection coverage.

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