
**COVID 19 PANDEMIC, INSECURITY AND STATE FRAGILITY:
The Nigerian Experience**

BY

AWOFISAYO, Oladipupo Albert Ph.D

Department of History and Diplomatic Studies
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria.
awofisayooladipupo@gmail.com
+2348033813930

And

SALAU, Jamiu Adewale

Department of Political Science,
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria
jamiuadewale757@gmail.com
+2348127861871, +2348184796881

Abstract

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic which took the world by surprise had devastating effects on the economic, political and socio-cultural wellbeing of various countries in the international system. It has led to an increase in violent activities such as banditry, kidnappings, ritual killings, violent extremism, often championed by terrorist groups and secessionists agitations. It has particularly led to serious infractions on the Nigerian security architecture thus exacerbating the hitherto challenged security status of the country. The various security apparatuses have found it difficult to secure the lives and properties of the citizenry or to forestall the proliferation of insecurity thereby plunging the country into a state of fragility. This paper examined the spate of insecurity in Nigeria in the face of Covid-19 pandemic and its implications for state fragility. Guided by the state fragility theory, the paper adopted a qualitative and descriptive approach with reliance on secondary data from peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, newspaper articles, magazines, etc. The paper concluded that widespread poverty, hunger, lack of political will and government's inability to provide for the needs of the people occasioned by the pandemic, made crime more attractive to the people. As a result, the level of insecurity in the country has risen sharply and threatens to push the country towards acute state fragility. Based on this premise, the study recommended that Nigerian government should pay dire attention to the economic, political and socio-cultural deficits that precipitate crime, reform the security apparatuses and drive social inclusion, among others.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Violent activities, Insecurity, State fragility, The Nigerian experience

Introduction

According to World Health Organization, coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERs) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARs). A novel coronavirus known as COVID – 19 was identified on 31 December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. This is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. Based on this fact, China notified the “World Health Organization (WHO)” that, it was dealing with some suspicious cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei. The situation was soon established to be a novel coronavirus that was named “COVID – 19” on the account of its uniqueness.

The disease was said to have spread exponentially around the globe, to the extent that, as at February 24, 2020, there were 81,000 confirmed cases in over 28 countries in the world. In view of this outbreak, the World Health Organization (WHO) had to declare the pandemic i.e. COVID 19 as a global public health emergency requiring collective attention (Kandel et al, 2020). The first case of the disease in Sub-Saharan African was confirmed in Lagos State on the 27th of February, 2020. The index case was an Italian contractor in Nigeria returning to the country from Milan, Italy on the 25th of February, 2020 (Maclean and Dahir, 2020). He was tracked down, hospitalized and luckily recovered from the disease. Since this period, several other cases had been discovered around the country, Nigeria.

As the case was with the rest of the world, Nigerian leaders termed the pandemic by describing it as a war. Such a statement as mentioned in the speeches delivered on the pandemic by President Muhammadu Buhari, the federal government as a matter of urgency safety and security set up a Presidential Task Force on COVID – 19 and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to intervene and fight against the pandemic. Taking the foregoing into consideration, this paper also diseases the multiplicity of contexts from which COVID – 19 pandemic leads to insecurity and state fragility in the Nigerian experience.

Meaning of Coronavirus (COVID -19)

Coronavirus disease (2019) (Covid- 19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome, coronavirus 2 (SARS – COV – 2 formerly called 2019 –n (ov), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness caused in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China). World Health Organization (WHO) also describes coronaviruses as a group of viruses belonging to the family of coronaviridae, which infect both animals and humans. Human coronaviruses can cause mild disease similar to a common cold, while others cause more severe disease such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome – MERs and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – SARs).

It was initially reported to the “World Health Organization (WHO)” on December 31, 2009. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID – 19 outbreak a global health emergency. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID – 19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009.

A new coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans emerged in Wuhan, China. Signs and symptoms include respiratory symptoms, which include fever, cough

and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and sometimes death.

The concept of Insecurity

Insecurity is one of the most troubling issues in the world today, of which Nigeria is not left out. Over the years, the menace of insecurity has manifested in various forms across the country. For example, in the South-West geo-political zone, armed robbery is prevalent, in the South-South and South-east which is the oil-based areas, kidnapping is very common, in the North, robbery across the border coupled with Boko Haram insurgence is the security challenge.

Insecurity is a major concern for everybody in Nigeria and this has created a lot of fear and uncertainty in the society. Every region in the country is battling with various challenges of insecurity (Mahmoud & Madori, 2013) which include the activities of Boko Haram in which millions of lives have been lost and the increasing cases of kidnapping. In the last eighteen years, the Federal Government earmarked not less than N10 trillion for the defense of the territorial integrity and internal security of the nation (Falana, 2010).

The word “insecurity” has myriads of connotations. It signifies danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Beland (2005) defines “insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.” It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This implies that insecurity is an absence of peace, order and security. Achumba, Ighomeroho, Akpor (2013) also defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune.

The concept of insecurity according to Ali (2013) is “the state of fear or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection”. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic and social security. Insecurity connotes absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty and lack of protection.

In my opinion, insecurity is seen as a state of general breakdown of law and order, fear of rejection and abandonment, period of difficulty and instability in the society, lack of trust or confidence, threat or intimidation that the citizens of a country encounter. It could also be considered as a lack of safety or protection in the areas of health, foods, shelter, job, humiliation, burglary or theft, kidnappings and also environmental pollution and degradation.

Fragility and fragile states

A fragile state is seen as a weak or broken social contracts between the government and its people. United States Institute of peace sees state fragility as a complex issue that needs urgent attention. U. S. Institute of peace strives to address the challenge of state fragility through new approach to conflict prevention and by strengthening resilience that promotes a sound social compact between the state and society.

My view is that, a fragile state is a state that has failed in the area of its social responsibilities as a state.

The following are the features of a fragile or failed state:

- * Lack of trust in the state.
- * High rate of insecurity.
- * High rate of corruption.
- * Poverty and unemployment.
- * Political and economic unrest or instability.
- * Violation of human rights.
- * Poor socio-economic relations with countries of the world.
- * Inability to prevent and manage conflicts in the society.
- * High rate of inflation and lack of price control.
- * Environmental degradation and population.

Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: A Disease of Hunger

With a population of over 200 million people, Nigeria is one of the most populous black nations worldwide. As with the rest of the world, Nigeria is currently dealing with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, but in a somewhat different fashion. On Feb 27, 2020, the first official case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was announced. The patient was an Italian citizen, who had recently arrived in Lagos from Europe and who, a few days later, tested positive for the disease. In Ogun state, a neighbouring state to Lagos, another patient was identified and was discovered to have been in contact with the first patient. Since then, the situation has developed with more cases occurring, regardless of measures initiated by the state and federal government to combat the virus and return to normalcy. As of April 22, 2020 there were 873 confirmed cases, 197 recoveries, and 28 deaths. WHO has advised on several methods to help prevent spread of the virus and to save health systems across the world from a complete collapse- e.g, health washing, social distancing, and staying at home. However, Nigeria's health system before the pandemic was nearly non-existent. In most of the cities', health systems are completely dilapidated as they have not received adequate attention, and some government officials have contributed to health system collapse by encouraging medical tourism. The federal government of Nigeria enforced an initial 2-week lockdown on March 30, 2020, for three of 36 states (Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja) and, on April 13, 2020, extended it another 2 weeks. Shortly after the order was announced by the President, Muhammadu Buhari, there was an uproar among the citizens due to a myriad of concerns. Nigeria, in 2018, was announced by the World Poverty Clock to be the poverty capital of the world, with over 40% of its citizens living below the poverty line. Therefore, a large proportion of the population, especially in the commercial hub of Lagos, live on daily income with no savings to act as a financial buffer during the lockdown.

The prospect of staying at home could, therefore, lead to another problem: hunger, lack of social gathering, restrictions of movement. Several people, such as professionals, artisans, market men and women who live and work in the city, have commented on social media about how, despite being fully informed about COVID-19, they still cannot relate to it as much

as the hunger being experienced across the country. President Buhari promised the citizens some palliative measures, which include disbursing of funds and food items to those most affected. But the reality on the ground is a far cry from the promises made; only a small proportion of the population attest to receiving any support. A large number of citizens have disobeyed the lockdown order in the hope of making sales or trying to earn money through other services, but they were apprehended by the police. The combined effort of the police and the military to enforce the lockdown may have caused more deaths than the infection itself. As well as the other negative outcomes attributed to the lockdown, Lagos has seen a huge spike in armed robberies. One has to question whether these aforementioned negative effects override the reasons for the lockdown in the first place: to flatten the curve of infections. According to news from other countries in Africa, the situation in Lagos is almost a perfect mirror of the situation across the whole continent, with the exception of a few countries (eg, Rwanda), where governments have been able to enact effective solutions to the pandemic and provide palliative measures.

There are some positives to consider; the private sector, churches, and non-governmental organisations have provided a lot of support to communities across Lagos and the rest of Nigeria. They have facilitated countless distributions of food items to some of the most deprived areas of Lagos. Also, there is hope that the health sector will finally receive the attention it needs from the government in response to the lessons learned from this pandemic. Despite the socio-economic differences seen across Nigerian communities, there has been a sense of togetherness during this time. Irrespective of these positive aspects of COVID-19 and of lockdown, fears remain that the number of deaths as a result of lockdown measures will be greater than those due to infection. The Nigerian government must aim to protect its citizens and provide them with the necessary commodities or funds to help mitigate the consequences of this pandemic.

Covid-19 Pandemic and State Fragility in Nigeria

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), corona viruses are a family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARs) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)([World Health Organization, 2020](#)). The name Coronavirus was derived from the Latin word *corona* meaning crown or halo ([Martin, 2020](#)). The virus is named “corona” primarily because of the crown-like appearance of the virus under a solar. Since the outbreak of the virus in 2019 in the Wuhan province of China, there have been definitional mismatch and theorizations on the origin of the virus. Some are of the view that the corona virus was manufactured by the Chinese scientists as a biological warfare agent in an attempt to gain ascendancy over the US in the struggle for global [hegemony](#). However, scientists allege that the corona virus originated from animals and specifically bats and is transmitted from animals to man. The virus spreads through droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person can become infected with coronavirus by being in close proximity (within 2m) of an infected person ([Techlyblog, 2020](#)). The infection can also spread by touching a surface that an infected person coughed or sneezed on ([Techlyblog, 2020](#)). Signs and symptoms of the disease include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe

cases, infection could cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and sometimes death.

The first confirmed case of the covid-19 pandemic was reported in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020 ([Nigeria Center for Disease Control, 2020](#), p. 2) when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus. With this, the government began tracing all those who have had contact with the Italian and on 9 March, one of the contacts from Ewekoro, Ogun State tested positive to the virus. With increased returnees from affected countries to Nigeria the number of infected persons continued to increase which compelled the Nigerian Government to close its international borders and airports/seaports, and declared a stoppage of all academic, religious, political and social activities in order to enable the tracing and containment of the virus. However, between 27th March and 9 April 2020, the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) had reported total confirmed cases of 276, with 44 persons discharged and death record of 6 persons ([“Update on Covid-19”](#), 2020).

Remarkably, the fatality rate of the infection in Nigeria is remarkably low compared to other countries in the West and Eastern parts of the globe. For instance, while the virus was decimating Italians in their homeland, the Italian migrant who brought the virus to Nigeria has fully recovered and discharged. Notwithstanding, the Nigerian Government did not consider the internal political, economic and social dynamics alongside other unique environmental factors in adopting the Western approach to the containment of the deadly coronavirus. Based on the prevailing socio-economic and political deficiencies and limitations of the Nigerian environment marked by years of economic and social deprivations, Nigeria fits among fragile States.

To widen it with my view, Nigerian government in conjunction with NCDC put in place a proactive measure to contain the pandemic by establishing various isolation centres all over the country. The only challenge faced by the government was, there were no enough facilities on ground to curb the alarming situation called pandemic. And this made the case to be aggravated as the number of the victims of Covid-19 kept increasing including the death rate. In view of this, Nigeria was considered as one the fragile states in Africa, as Covid - 19 pandemic was concerned

Public Health Advisory on Covid-19: Nigerian Perspective

The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is a new strain of the virus that has not been previously identified in humans. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This is an updated advisory on COVID-19 which will be updated frequently to reflect new information and research emerging on the disease and its impact on populations.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) through the National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has continued to lead the national public health response in Nigeria with oversight of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 (PTF-COVID-19). The NCDC is also working closely with all states of the Federation to support their response activities to the pandemic.

Several measures have been instituted by the Federal Government of Nigeria through the PTF-COVID-19 together with the Federal Ministry of Health to curtail the spread of the disease and protect the health of Nigerians. This includes an initial lockdown of non-essential activities;

closure of schools; a ban on international flights etc. Nigeria is one of many countries that have commenced the gradual easing of lockdown measures initially instituted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to ensure a balance between preserving lives and livelihoods while addressing the socio-economic disruptions caused by the outbreak.

Further to reviewing the response nationwide, and with the conclusion that Nigeria is not yet ready for a full reopening of the economy, the PTF-COVID-19 announced the extension of Phase 3 of the Eased Lockdown for a period of four weeks, effective from 19th of October 2020. This is in line with amendments to address economic, socio-political and health considerations, and are as follows;

- Maintaining the current nationwide curfew from 12am to 4am;
- Opening of NYSC orientation camps;
- The gradual re-opening of all educational institutions in a phased manner;
- Maintaining the restrictions on mass gatherings outside the workplace to no more than 50 persons;
- Removal of the limitation on civil servants allowed to come to work with alternate day arrangements;
- Re-commencement of sporting leagues, in particular all outdoor activities such as football;
- Recreational parks, event centres and restaurants to open for outdoor service only while bars and night clubs shall remain closed;
- Mandatory use of non-medical facemasks in public spaces. **‘No mask, no entry. No mask, no service;**
- Maintaining **‘No Mask, No Voting’** policy with enforcement of guidance on conducting safe elections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NCDC continues to expand laboratories for the testing of COVID-19 and has commenced the use of GeneXpert across the country to scale-up testing. The current list of laboratories for the testing of COVID-19 in Nigeria can be [here](#). Through the “Take Responsibility Campaign” by the NCDC, Nigerians and residents in the country are urged to take greater individual and collective responsibility in preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Nigeria’s Diverse Insecurity Challenges: Pre – Covid 19 and During the Pandemic

Nigeria is faced with an unprecedented wave of different but overlapping security crises. These security challenges have gone beyond Boko Haram. Overlapping from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies, banditry, farmer – herder conflict, militant biafran separatists and so on. According to President Muhammadu Buhari, in 2018, he said Nigeria is facing “a state of emergency” as a result of ongoing insecurity in the country. The emergency is commonly understood as the threat posed by Boko Haram in the country’s Northeast.

Militant Islamist Groups (Boko Haram and ISWAP): Boko Haram and its offshoot the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) continue to be Nigeria’s most serious security threats. Violent events linked to these groups have roughly doubled since 2015, when the government launched a major offensive dislodging these groups from the territory they held. Since retreating from urban centers during that 2015 offensive, the groups have focused their

operations on the more desolate areas of Borno State - primarily in the rugged Sambisa Forest bordering Cameroon's northwest mountains (Boko Haram) and the *firki* ("black cotton") wetlands south and southwest of Lake Chad (ISWAP). From these secluded "hideouts," the groups have mounted a series of agile attacks and cross-border raids on towns and villages. This has been accompanied by a strategy of isolating the state capital, Maiduguri, through a series of highway attacks. By planting landmines, establishing permanent checkpoints, sabotaging the power grid, and [attacking highway travelers](#), Boko Haram and ISWAP have effectively cut Borno off from the rest of Nigeria. These militant groups derive significant income and military supplies from robberies and kidnappings carried out on the state's highways. This siege has inhibited food production and transportation and contributed to food prices increasing by 50 percent across Borno as at 2015.

Organized Criminal Gangs (Banditry and Kidnapping): Exploiting a security vacuum, criminal gangs in North West Nigeria have been behind a surge of kidnappings for ransom targeting boarding schools. In the last five years, the North West has experienced the [greatest concentration of kidnappings](#) in Nigeria. The ransoms collected through these mass abductions have become a means of business for these criminal gangs. [Mass kidnappings in Zamfara, Niger, and Katsina states](#) have emulated 2014's infamous kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram and have forced the government to respond. Government spokespeople deny paying ransom to secure the release of the children, but on-the-ground accounts contradict this. Moreover, [government officials may benefit](#) from the large amounts of cash used to secure hostages' release. As in the North East, kidnapping for ransom has made highways in the region too dangerous for travel, and airlines now operate short flights from Abuja to Kaduna.

Farmer – Herder Conflict: There have been violent disputes between nomadic animal herders and farmers in Nigeria for many years. But disagreements over the use of land and water, as well as grazing routes, have been exacerbated by climate change and the spread of the Sahara Desert, as herders move further south looking for pasture. Thousands have been killed in clashes over limited resources. Benue State, in the centre of the country, has recorded the deadliest attacks. Recently, seven people were killed when gunmen opened fire on a camp for those fleeing the conflict. Some have also blamed herders for kidnapping people and demanding a ransom. Mohammed Akdeef is one of many farmers to have fled their homes. The tension has led to some state governors banning grazing on open land, and thus creating friction with the central government. In 2019, federal authorities launched a 10-year National Livestock Transformation Plan to curtail the movement of cattle and boost livestock production in an attempt to stop the conflict. But critics say a lack of political leadership, expertise and funding, plus delays are derailing the project.

Militant Biafran Separatists: Revived Biafran secessionist activities have escalated in recent years which took place in 2021, leading to violent clashes between Nigeria's security forces and militia groups resulting in dozens of deaths. It will be recalled that, the militia group had been floating a radio network in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. More importantly, the group-the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) established what it calls the Eastern Security Network (ESN) in December 2020 to act as a paramilitary force in the region. Based on their

[rhetoric and goals broadcast on social media](#), this group seems more focused on mobilizing grievances against Fulani herders than advocating for autonomy in the region. ESN has declared that it will enforce a ban on grazing in the South East, stoking anti-Fulani sentiment. Nigerian courts have upheld IPOB's designation as a terrorist group like Boko-Haram.

Security Sector Attack Against Civilians: Police and military violence against civilians are a persistent impediment to sustainable peace in Nigeria. In 2020, nationwide "[EndSARS protests](#)", led by young people, transcended the country's religious, ethnic, and political divides and demanded an end to police abuses, particularly the dissolution of the unaccountable Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS). This division of the national police force was originally set up to address the problem of organized criminal gangs across the country. Over time, however, FSARS became known for extorting Nigerian citizens and committing human rights abuses. In a vivid illustration of this, security forces opened fire on EndSARS protesters in October 2020 to shut down marches and sit-downs across the country. While FSARS has been in the spotlight recently, Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) has regularly harassed and detained journalists with impunity, including invading a courtroom to re-arrest a defendant whom the judge had ordered be set free. When protestors or fact-seekers get too close to the levers of power and privilege, it is often the SSS - directly overseen by the president - that intervenes. Another unit close to the executive - the Presidential Guard Brigade - was revealed to have shot and killed dozens of Shia marchers from the Iranian-backed Islamic Movement in Nigeria in Abuja in 2018.

Piracy: Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is now the worst in the world, accounting for over 95 percent of crew members kidnapped. There were 35 recorded piracy events off the coast of Nigeria in 2020. These figures likely only [represent a fraction of the incidents](#), given that ship owners have incentives to downplay the risk to avoid increasing insurance premiums. The groups behind these attacks are shadowy, but a number of pirate enterprises are known to be connected to the armed groups that have for decades sabotaged pipelines and kidnapped oil workers in Nigeria's Delta (South South and South East regions). Groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) have been difficult to address through security operations alone due their decentralized and leaderless structures, local support, and their tactics of striking quickly and disappearing into the region's riverine labyrinth. Equipped with arms and speedboats and countered by oil companies spending millions of dollars on private security to protect oil infrastructure, some of these groups have begun venturing out of their swampland hideouts to board international ships in the Gulf of Guinea before [retreating to their coastal bases with kidnapped crew members to negotiate ransoms](#) paid from abroad.

Theoretical Pathway

Scholars have applied various contending theories subjecting the contemporary States to intense analyses. The contention has been pitted between the liberal and the Marxist theorists. The fragile State conception akin to the developing nations has further necessitated the theoretical expositions on the State. Poverty questions, structural violence, misgovernance, political economy and underdevelopment are key issues that could not be addressed by some

States, which have given them the labeling and epithets of fragile States system. This study, which is set to discuss the fragile State of Nigeria and the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic and its implication on the political economy requires an apt theoretical expositions. In view of this, the study adopted the post-colonial State theory.

The study adopted the post-colonial State as an abstraction and derivative from the [Marxist theory](#) of the State. The post colonial State theory advocates the body of knowledge, which is basically concerned with taking stock of the political, economic, social and historical effects and circumstances on the developing nations as a result of the European [colonialism](#) and [imperialism](#) in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is used to refer to the study of the attempt to transform, and otherwise of the previous colonized territories in the context of the dynamics of imperial conditions, Ashcroft argued that postcolonial theory emerged “from the inability of European theory” to deal effectively with the challenges and the varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing. This thought rejigged the neo-Marxists and dependency scholars to strengthen the debate of the post-colonial State perspective and buttressed the negation of the consequences of colonialism and imperialism on the developing nations.

Challenges and Intrigues of State Fragility in Nigeria

Some of the challenges in Nigeria at the onset of the pandemic were the problem of contact tracing due to false or wrong contact addresses given by people who came in from Europe and other parts of the world. There were also handful of COVID-19 patients who ran away from isolation centres in States like Delta, Oyo, Sokoto and Kano. This further puts the State COVID-19 taskforce to commence and intensify contact tracing and immediate decontamination (Punch news, May 5, 2020)

The fallacy by most Nigerians that COVID-19 was strictly associated with the rich *ab initio* and that, it was brought in from Europe, America, UK etc. by the privileged people and politicians remain a challenge in the community spread of the disease. The limited knowledge of the transmission of coronavirus disease among the general remains a huge challenge. Furthermore, the distrust of Nigeria citizens towards the government was another factor responsible for the increase in the community spread of COVID-19. Another school of thought was that the COVID-19 pandemic was a “phony”, as most Nigerians assume it is another avenue for the politicians to embezzle public fund or the tax payer’s money.

Some Northern Nigerian Muslims’ faithful went on rampage, when the Law enforcement agency disrupted their Jumat (Friday) service. In another development, there was a serious misconception by some Christian folks that COVID-19 is genetically engineered to drive in the Anti-Christ. Some are of the opinion that the pandemic will enable the agents of Anti-Christ to produce vaccine that contain microchips. These chips will serve as a means of identity (mark of the beast in the book of revelation) and at a later date will be used for buying and selling. This microchip was also tied to the current 5G network. The fears of most Nigerians as regards the actual figure of the COVID-19 positive cases as announced by the NCDC was a typical example of the drama played by the incidence in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as reported by Voice of America (VOA). In that country, the Coronavirus test kits used were described as faulty by President John Magufuli on 2nd of May, 2020, this was because positive results were said to have returned from Tanzania's laboratory test, on random samples taken from several non-

human samples, including samples from pawpaw, goat and sheep that were deliberately assigned human names and ages with unknown origin.

Inability of the government to quickly respond to the needs of the people for survival during the pandemic was also another challenge in Nigeria. Due to corruption on the part of the so called Task force, put in place by the government, the palliatives that were meant to go round the masses were hijacked and hoarded by some of the politicians. The interests of the masses were not protected at all. This resulted to breakdown of law and order by the hungry and angry citizens that threatened seriously the security of the state. On this note, as the rate of suffering during this period of pandemic persisted in the country, the citizens bust into the streets and located the various stores where these palliatives were kept and started looting series of food items for their sustenance. Because, as at this critical time, Nigerian citizens needed to survive and the looting was nearly all over the federation.

Conclusion

It is very obvious that, COVID - 19 Pandemic shocked the world, overwhelming the health systems of even high-income countries, in which Nigeria was not exceptional. Nigeria as a country hurriedly opened the economy, which sacrificed public health gains for temporary economic gains. This paper meanwhile, examined the meaning, and origin of Coronavirus in Nigeria and the world at large. From indications, it was found that, Nigeria as a country had failed during the pandemic in the areas of security, good economic and health policies to arrest the situation. Nigeria being a fragile state could not grant quick and adequate health facilities and proper allocation of palliatives to its citizenry.

However, some of the policy responses have weaknesses which could not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, which led to series of security threats in the country as robbery attack by hungry Nigerians and EndSARS protest by the Nigerian youths.

Recommendations

The following are recommended for further studies:

- Nigeria should stop being a fragile state by improving the economic and social wellbeing of her citizenry and also shun corruption as an impediment to national development.
- There should be a constant public awareness to educate young people to shun violence. And also, attention should be paid to social issues such as unemployment and poor education to deprive youths further going on rampage.
- Government should improve national security and prevent the threat of conflict spillover by ensuring that national security agencies are well orientated and guided in their operations.
- In terms of policy making, government should endeavour to make policy that will effectively respond and commensurate with the magnitude of the national problem.
- Government should provide adequate health facilities with regular funding across the federation to withstand any further health challenges.

References

Achumba, O. S. Ighomereho, M. O. M. AkporRobaro (2013). Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(2):79-99

Ali, A. D. (2013). Security and economic development in Nigeria since 1960. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(6), 1-7.

Amuwo, A. 2009. The political economy of Nigeria's post-military elections, 1999- 2007. *Review of African Political Economy*, 119: 37-61.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1989). *The post-colonial studies reader*. London: Routledge

Beland, D. (2005). The political construction of collective insecurity: From moral panic to blame avoidance and organized irresponsibility. *Center for European Studies, Working Paper Series* 126.

David, J.C (2022). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/2500114-overview>

Falana, F.(2015). Insecurity in Nigeria: Amenace to national development. *Premium Times*, [https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2015/07/17/insecurity-in-nigeria-a-menace-tonational-development-by-femi-falana/Retrieved on 20 October,2017](https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2015/07/17/insecurity-in-nigeria-a-menace-tonational-development-by-femi-falana/Retrieved%20on%20October,2017).

Kandel, N., Chungong, S., and, Jun Xing, A. (2020), "Health security capacities in the context of COVID-19 outbreak: an analysis of International Health Regulations annual report data from 182 countries", *The Lancet*, Vol. 395, Issue 10229 pp. 1047-53, March, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30553-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30553-5)

Lewis, P. 1996. From prebendalism to predation: The political economy of decline in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34(1): 79-103.

Maclean, R. and Dahir, A.L. (2020), "Nigeria Responds to First Coronavirus Case in Sub-Saharan Africa", *New York Times*, February 28, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/world/africa/nigeria-coronavirus.html>

Mahmoud, S. S. M. &Madori, (2013). Education problems and challenges in Nigeria:What to be done?<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/education-problems-and-challenges-in-nigeriawhat-to-be-done.htm> retrieved August 17, 2017, Daily Trust Publication.

Martins, I (2020). ["FG Sets up Coronavirus Preparedness Group"](#). *This Day Newspaper*. Retrieved 10 March, 2020.

Nigeria center for disease Control, Covid-19 guidance for schools in Nigeria. (2020). OECD Interim Economic Assessment “Coronavirus. (2020a). The world economy at risk” (p. 1).

Osumah, O., & Aghedo, I. 2011 Who wants to be a millionaire? Nigerian youth and the commodification of kidnapping. *Review of African Political Economy*, 38(128): 277-287.

Techlyblog. Protect yourself and your business against COVID 19. <https://techlyblogs.wordpress.com/2020/04/13/protect-yourself-and-your-business-against-covid-19/>. (Accessed 11 April 2020).

Update on covid-19. NCDC update on covid-19, April, 2020. www.ncdc.com. (Accessed 9 April 2020).

World health organization questions and answers. <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/questions-and-answers.html>. (Accessed 15 April 2020).

World Health Organization. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: Implications for infection prevention precautions. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations> (Accessed on July 10, 2020)