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COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA: IMPACT, CONTAINMENT AND INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper as a historical study, focused on the epistemology of COVID-19 in the Nigerian Healthcare System, its effects and responses. The main objective is to have a full grasp of the knowledge, features, mode of its spread and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian households and the entire national economy as well as the response of both the government and the entire people of Nigeria, this refers to the efforts in containment of the virus and the concomitant lockdown. This study adopted the conventional content analysis method and traced the origin and knowledge of the operations of the virus, noting its devastating effect on Nigerian households. The study found out that the mode of the spread of the virus, posed a very serious medical and health challenge to the Nigerian medical and health workers as their facilities were not only inadequate but were in short supply with near absence of state-of-the-art equipment. The government response was limited to mere preventive approach without full knowledge of the transmission mode of the virus, as the medical team were not prepared to handle a large-scale pandemic issue due to limited knowledge, thus the shallow response but that they were also overwhelmed in almost all the States. The study therefore, recommended that the response of the government should not only be limited to food hand out as palliatives but should go beyond that to include, proper research on the virus, stimulus package and tax relief for businesses as response, reduction in cost of prices of such commodities as petroleum products, power and energy supply, improved welfare packages for the Civil and Public servants despite shut down of schools and government offices.

Key words: *COVID-19 Pandemic, Containment, Food palliatives, Lockdown, Research need, Responses.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The deadly Coronavirus with its shortened acronym as COVID-19 became classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) following its global spread beginning from Wuhan, China. Sheikh and Rabin (2020) and Intermountain Healthcare (2020) agrees with Encarta (2009) that a pandemic is an epidemic that spreads over multiple countries, it further explains endemic as something that belongs to a particular people or country while an outbreak is a greater-than-expected increase in the number of endemic cases. The Coronavirus disease which is a pandemic, practically crippled the global economy leaving the less developed countries as the most affected and vulnerable in the aftermath of its devastation. The containment efforts by the Nigerian government, other bodies or strategies involved in the containment and

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the spectrum of the efforts and the effect of the attendant lockdown, form the scope upon which the paper rests. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered strain of coronavirus. The spread of COVID-19 according to WHO (2020) is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person with the virus that causes the disease coughs, sneezes, or exhales. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, but quickly fall on floors or surfaces. Furthermore, one can be infected by breathing in the virus if such a person is within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then touches the eyes, nostrils or mouth. COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected persons would usually develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization. The most common symptoms according to Sheikh and Rabin (2020) include: difficulty in breathing, fever, dry cough and tiredness. However, there are fewer common symptoms such as aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste and/or smell, rash on skin or discolouration of fingers or toes *et cetera*.

1.1 Objective

To have a full grasp of the knowledge, features, mode of spread and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian households and the entire national economy as well as the response of both the government and the entire people of Nigeria.

2. LITERATYRE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: Mode, Features and Spread

The COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is part of the worldwide pandemic of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This according to Sheik and Rabin (2020) is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first confirmed case in Nigeria according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) cited in Wikipedia (2020) was announced on the 27th Day of February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus. Similarly, on the 9th Day of March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen.

On the 28th Day of January, 2020 according to Wikipedia (2020), the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) assured citizens of the country of its readiness to strengthen surveillance at the five international airports in the country to prevent the spread of disease. The government announced the airports as: Enugu, Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Kano and the Abuja-FCT. In addition, NCDC also announced that it had set up a Coronavirus group and was ready to activate its incident system if any case emerged in Nigeria. Wikipedia (2020) noted that on 31st Day of January, following the developments of Covid-19 Pandemic in mainland China and other countries worldwide, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a Coronavirus Preparedness Group to mitigate the impact of the virus if it eventually spreads to the country. This came on the heels of WHO listing of Nigeria among other 13 African countries

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identified as high-risk area for the spread of the virus.

Nigeria according to the World Bank Brief (2020) was among the first Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to identify Covid-19 (Coronavirus) cases and began implementing strict measures to contain the spread of the virus. At the same time, crude oil which is basically the mainstay of the country's foreign exchange earner, saw prices plummeted by about 60% following the spread of the global pandemic. Owing to the fact that the oil sector accounts for the bulk of Nigerian government revenue, the collapse in prices started having profound implications for the national economy.

Accordingly, the Federal Government became confronted with the simultaneous challenge of combatting the public health crisis of the pandemic alongside trying to bolster a weakening economy. Given the mounting evidence that the social and economic impacts of these twin crises are likely to be significant, the government started ramping up policy interventions that can help mitigate such negative impacts in the midst of the stringent measures taken to curtail the spread of the virus. Alleviating the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis became vital for preventing poverty from deepening and increasing in Nigeria; before the crisis as posited by the World Bank Brief (2020), approximately 4 in 10 Nigerians were living below the national poverty line, and millions more were living just above the poverty line, making them vulnerable to falling back into poverty when shocks occur.

Consequently, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Policy Brief (2020), efforts to contain the spread of the virus have been underway since the days of the pandemic in Nigeria. A National Covid-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan was adopted to serve as blueprint for a whole-of-Government response. This was done to provide the Federal Government (FG) with timely evidence to guide the policy response, this multi sectoral plan is a new high-frequency survey known as -the Nigeria Covid-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey (COVID-19 NLPS) was initiated. This survey as identified by the World Bank Brief (2020), is to be implemented by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) with technical support from the World Bank. It was also designed to measure and monitor the economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 crisis by tracking households' welfare and behaviour every month over a period of 12 months. The survey has a panel structure, such that it follows a representative sample of Nigerian households to assess how key indicators that may underpin the overall policy response are changing over time.

As the reality of the Coronavirus pandemic began taking its toll on Nigeria, federal authorities, like the rest of the world began cancelling events, flights, and virtually everything that requires social, official, religious and other similar gatherings including closing of malls, shops and markets. The impact of these measures according to Ayoade (2020) which was aimed at reducing the spread of the virus also hit the national economy. In the course of time, these impacts became clear that it has the potential that could cripple fragile economies like that of Nigeria and the economies of most other countries globally.

Ayoade (2020) pointed out that Nigeria's economy was already declining in the advent of the pandemic as it largely depends on oil exports. The oil markets have been on a downward trend as Covid-

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19 has crippled demand. Fuel prices fell and recorded 18-year low trading at less than US$22 per barrel and it is not expected to recover anytime soon. Similarly, Kwaw, Andam, Hyacinth Edeh, Victor Iboh Karl Pauw & James Thurlow (2020) noted that national GDP declined sharply during the lockdown period, and that Nigeria will experience recession during 2020. More specifically, the lockdown policies reduced Nigerian GDP by US$11 billion or 23% during the period. They further estimated that depending on the nature of economic recovery in the second half of 2020, GDP will be between 6% and 9% lower compared to the levels of GDP that were expected during 2020 prior to the onset of COVID-19.

In addition, our estimated contraction of the economy is consistent with global projections of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank. Despite being exempted from many of the government's lockdown policies, we estimate an 11% decline in agri-food system GDP (US$1.6 billion). We also estimate a temporary 9%-point increase in the national poverty headcount rate, implying that there were 17 million more people living below the poverty line during the lockdown period. (Kwaw, Andam, Hyacinth Edeh, Victor Iboh,2020)

As posited by KPMG Business Impact Series (2020), the rapid outbreak of the Covd-19 presents a combination of globally alarming health, economic, business and commercial crisis that the world is grappling with. In addition to the significant human impact being felt. As viruses know no borders, these impacts continued to spread. In fact, KPMG Business Impact Series (2020) further noted that 94% of the Fortune-1'000 across the globe, and businesses in Nigeria have been impacted and are already seeing Covid-19 disruptions. As is expected, the Covid-19 threat will eventually fade, as the Ebola, Zika, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) viruses have in recent years. However, the social-economic impact will still be felt long after the virus fades.

That there has been collateral damage arising from this pandemic cannot be denied. According to UNDP (2020), the "United Nation's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the Covid-19 Crisis" warns that,

The Covid-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent. Assessing the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on societies, economies and vulnerable groups is fundamental to inform and tailor the responses of governments and partners to recover from the crisis and ensure that no one is left behind in this effort. Without urgent socio-economic responses, global suffering will escalate, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods for years to come. Immediate development responses in this crisis must be undertaken with an eye to the future. Development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by the choices countries make now and the support they receive.

UNDP (2020) further stated that, the United Nations has mobilized the full capacity of the UN system through its 131 country teams serving 162 countries and territories, to support national authorities in developing public health preparedness and response plans to the Covid-19 crisis.

UBS Journal of Business and Economic Policy
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Associated and related to the above is that persons suffering non-communicable diseases were receiving little or no attention even when such could lead to fatalities. WHO survey shows that prevention and treatment services for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were severely disrupted, partially or completely since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The survey, which was completed by 155 countries during a 3-week period in May 2020, confirmed that the pandemic has global impact while affecting low-income countries like Nigeria, the most. Furthermore, as evidenced from the survey, more than half (53%) of the countries surveyed had disrupted services for hypertension treatment; 49% for treatment of diabetes and diabetes-related complications; 42% for cancer treatment, and 31% for cardiovascular emergencies. Rehabilitation services were disrupted in almost two-thirds (63%) of countries, even though rehabilitation is key to a healthy recovery following severe illness from COVID-19. Also, of concern is the fact that health officials were reassigned to support the containment of the pandemic. For instance, in the majority (94%) of countries responding, Ministry of Health staff working in the area of NCDs were partially or fully reassigned to support COVID-19. (WHO News Release, 2020)

The socio-economic response will be one of three critical components of the UN's COVID-19 response, alongside the health response, led by WHO, and the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, this will be for an initial period of between 12-18months. As the technical lead for the socio-economic response, the UNDP and its country offices worldwide in close collaboration with specialized UN agencies, are working to assess the socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on economies and communities for regional and country analyses.

Whereas the Federal Government directed cessation of movement for 14 days effective March 30th in Lagos, the FCT and Ogun states, which UNDP Policy Brief (2020) as of March 2020 noted as accounting for 72% of the cases, there were similar efforts of imposing restrictions on inter-state movement as well as intra-state movement, apparently to enable them buy time for the recommended measures including for testing, isolation and contact tracing to be implemented. This could as well be seen as the beginning of the lockdown of the country that ultimately locked down the economy.

While the lockdown was not to stop the virus, it was a welcomed act to balancing non pharmaceutical interventions such as economic package to reflect the local realities. This is because the number of locales needing or requiring economic packages continued to increase in the face of a dwindling fiscal space. As put forward by the UNDP Covid-19 Briefing (2020), in Lagos for instance, with as many as 78% of the population living in rented dwelling combined with 65% of the population relying on the Electric Distribution Company popularly called NEPA as their only source of electricity and energy, lockdowns will need to be supplemented with more than just food.

2.1.2 COVID-19 Impact on Nigerians

What began as a health crisis with grave impact on populations, within days become an economic and fiscal crisis with a high risk of negative social implications. Indeed, the economic impact of the pandemic could cultivate conditions for disgruntlement and social unrest. Similarly, pandemic has a bearing on the social fabric of society, for

UBS Journal of Business and Economic Policy
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instance, stress induced by economic losses often resulted in visible cracks where incidences of once socially unacceptable norms become more frequent. WHO News Release (2020) points out that evidence suggests that health related pandemics have the potential of increasing the risks of domestic violence, violence against care givers and health workers due to the serious stress levels that the pandemic places on patients as well as abuse and exploitation of women and girls that need to be protected as these women and young girls who are vulnerable might suffer abuse from men by way of sexual exploitation and battery together with the vulnerability of the aged men and women whose body immunities may have been weakened by age constrain etc, as a result of the government stay at home directive occasioned by the lockdown. Furthermore, frustrations resulting from economic losses could also play into existing regional and ethnic fault lines within Nigeria, as was exposed in the end-SARS protest in which ethnic sentiments were being employed as the master mind of the destructions of businesses and property by the protesters.

While analysing the potential impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's North-East region, the UNDP COVID-19 Policy Brief (2020) posited that the stealth of the virus in the extremely congested living conditions and interacting with a population characterised by high prevalence of comorbidities, including high incidences of chronic malnutrition and endemic malaria coupled with the current measles, cholera and Lassa fever outbreak, can result in serious implications on containment efforts in the region as well as throughout the country. This is in line with the position of WHO Health Sector Bulletin (2019) which noted that the already bleak outlook together with a Covid-19 outbreak could severely hamper the capacity of humanitarian actors to serve affected communities by impeding supply chains and resulting in fatal delays of delivery to the 7 million people in need of humanitarian relief, the result to be expected in such situation could only be a significant numbers of collateral damage.

Furthermore, according to UNCTADStats (2020) the decline in oil prices by 55% between the end of 2019 to March 2020 is one of the most serious economic shocks that Nigeria has faced in its memory. Similarly, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI, 2019) posits that the oil sector contributes 65% and 90% to government and total export revenue respectively. As crude oil prices dipped in March of 2020 to USD30/barrel as against budget projection of USD57 per barrel within the 2.18mbpd, it translates to some 48% decline of expected revenue, so also did export revenue decline with a combined effect of 0.55% points drop in Gross Domestic Product-GDP. (2020 UNDP, Covid-19 Policy Brief 1)

In all of these, the gross domestic output is at the receiving end, as Nigeria's GDP before the crisis was below USD1 per day for an average citizen and a country that is already in debt and facing Coronavirus pandemic crisis without external shock, because, according to the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission meeting on March 23rd, 2020, where the federal government distributes revenue to States and Local Governments from the proceeds of crude oil, it lamented of low revenue owing to the fact that crude oil benchmark has fallen.

While the GDP continues to fall, the presidential lockdown remained in full force. The consequence had adverse effects on the economy of the country. Most private organizations including the media laid-off workers and the few that remained

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had their staff salaries slashed especially in the private sector. Hotels closed and yet counted losses for maintenance, while staff, most of whom as breadwinners, were laid off since March 2020. The effect no doubt has a great impact on paying their bills and managing their families as people's purchasing power drastically dropped due to no money in circulation. In addition, the price of goods skyrocketed. Many essential products like water and food items doubled in price due to panic buying and hoarding as supplies could not meet the demand. For instance, A loaf of bread which is for the common man, formerly sold between N300-N350 Naira then sold for N400-N450. Similarly, a basket of tomatoes that was sold for N500-N600 before the Coronavirus pandemic ranges between N1'700 and N1'800. Likewise, a kilo of meat increased in cost from N1'000 to N1'500 on the average. A bag of sachet (pure) water that is essential in every home doubled in price from N100 to N150 to N200. Ironically, before the Coronavirus pandemic, 100 ml of hand sanitizer which practically became a daily requirement was sold at N350 but in the course of the pandemic sold at triple its initial cost. (Ayoade, 2020) & (world bank, 2020).

In like manner, the cost of transportation increased. As a result of the social distancing measures, it became mandatory for vehicles used in public transportation to reduce the number of passengers carried at a time. Due to this requirement, few commercial drivers plying the road increased the fare to meet the shortfall of the limited numbers it conveys per time. Business owners, especially small businesses that survive on daily sales, could no longer meet their daily family needs due to the lockdown that led to the closure of shops including micro, small and medium enterprises that do not provide essential services. KPMG (2020) posits that Nigeria's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) account for 96% of businesses and 84% of employment, posing a severe risk to small businesses. The impact of the pandemic on small businesses is leading to low turnover and laying off staff. As the lockdown in cities and towns was being enforced, it could be expected that due to the precarious nature of many livelihoods, up to two thirds of the population would only have a few days until their food stocks would be exhausted and this could result into severe coping mechanisms that would become widespread, further undermining lockdown measures and public order.

Against the foregoing and taking the North-East region of Nigeria into consideration, UNDP (2018) notes the region as a volatile area owing to insurgency, banditry and other actions of criminality. Therefore, the effects of COVID-19 on the North-East region is such that its negative impact on the Peace and Security conditions of the region could be catastrophic as it risks further eroding of an already fragile social fabric and in turn undo the gains made in deepening foundations for peace and stability in the region. Accordingly, WHO (2019) has adduced three possible scenarios that could play out in that region thus:

First, evidence has demonstrated that violent extremist groups have used moments of disasters-natural or otherwise-to either enhance their recruitment through propaganda aimed at exploiting marginalized portions of the population. It could also exploit security vacuums that are created as the government diverts attention towards containing the outbreak or as outbreaks occur within the various entities of the security infrastructure.

Second, a complete lockdown without protection measures for vulnerable

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populations in a conflict-setting where social bonds are weak might trigger civil unrest and exacerbate communal conflicts thus contributing to an undetected spread of the COVID-19 disease and impeded containment. This could manifest in two different ways; in the form of rise in criminal activity and unrest among communities who cannot access livelihoods support and/or clashes with the police or military should they be used to enforce the lockdown and adopt a heavy-handed approach.

Third, the lockdown might disrupt peacebuilding efforts by humanitarian and security actors in this fragile context. Community level peacebuilding, social protection and early recovery measures could be compromised as a result of the spread of COVID-19 into the communities and the restrictive measures to contain it will most likely disrupt these interventions with the likelihood of relapse into violence.

One important area that should not be overlooked arising from the restriction in movement before easing of the lockdown is the cyber space. This is because while the lockdown lasted, both businesses and customers were compelled to opt for digital channels and platforms as alternatives in performing operations and transactions. The increase in internet and mobile app adoption also created an opportunity for increase in cyber-attack efforts particularly through social engineering. According to KPMG (2020) agree with Phishing (2020), there has been rapid growth of infrastructure by cybercriminals used to launch COVID-19 themed spear-phishing attacks since mid-February, and these attacks continue to underscore the impact of cyber risk on businesses particularly in the face of this pandemic. Some of the major strategies employed by these cyber attackers according to KPMG (2020) are explained in details as follows:

i. Business disruption: Data correlated across several threat intelligence platforms show that there has been an upward trend in attempted Covid-19 themed malware and spam campaigns. There have been several phony advisories purporting to provide updates on Covid-19 spread, health updates, fake cures, leading to malware download and ransomware attacks. Some of these attacks if successful could lead to unavailability of critical systems and data.

ii. Fraud: COVID-19 themed spear-phishing attacks have lured customers and employees to fake websites seeking to collect customer banking details, credentials of critical systems such as Office 365. There have been cases of impersonation of bank staff in order to lure unsuspecting customers to give out sensitive information such card details, one-time-passwords (OTP), etc. in order to perpetrate fraud. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) fraud is also a key risk area, where a cyber attacker claims to be the CEO or CFO of the organization and is under high time pressure to get an important payment through.

iii. Critical data breach: The remote working arrangement, which for many organizations is ad hoc; and was never fully planned has increased the risk of loss of sensitive business and personal data. The key risk factors include use of personal devices with limited or no security protection for business, inadequate awareness amongst staff, inadequate remote access security for critical systems. Breach of business and personal data can lead to reputational damage as well as regulatory sanctions.

UBS Journal of Business and Economic Policy
1 (2) June, 2023
https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/index.php/ubsjbep
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iv. Third-party failures: As organizations across the world adopt remote working arrangement, there is a widening of the attack surface due to third-party risk. Many vendors providing support for critical services also have their employees provide support to clients from home, while some have to engage ad hoc staff to perform services due to unavailability of certain employees. The impact of third-party failures may lead to business disruptions, data breach, amongst others if not properly managed.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study relied on the conventional content analysis method while tracing the origin of the disease, the containment efforts of government and the impact of the lockdown.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Response to COVID-19

In a country mostly characterised by insecurity, some which of regions are of fragile populations with competing health and developmental challenges, key policy options in the face of a pandemic such as COVID-19 becomes a necessity. There has to be clear response mechanisms that must be enacted and anchored within a nexus of the humanitarian space and development. All existing and ongoing humanitarian and peace building programmes certainly will require to be further enhanced, sustained and scaled up such that no sooner that the pandemic slows down, stabilize or wind down, recovery programmes are launched.

As part of response to COVID-19 in the education sector, new ways of teaching and learning emerged or emphasized where they had previously existed. These included teaching and learning on-line via the internet using the computers of varying kinds such as laptop, desktop, palmtop, internet enabled phones and other hand-held devices, these brought about the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities. Also, some television and radio stations organized some educational programmes to keep the students busy and learning at home, so that the children can be kept safe during the period of the pandemic. (Omeodu, Charles-Owaba, & Abuge, 2021)

The UNDP COVID-19 Policy Brief (2020) recommends the following as some intervention and response policy.

1. **Safeguard of Security Infrastructure**

The potential risks associated with an outbreak within the security infrastructure are grave. Thus, efforts to minimize any risk are crucial towards ensuring that military strongholds are not compromised. Some of the options to be taken into consideration include:

i. Suspension of security personnel rotations, including home leaves and change in duty stations, to avoid inadvertent importation of Covid-19 into police and military facilities as well as prisons/correctional facility and detention centres;

ii. Set up testing, quarantine and isolation centres within military barracks and camps to ensure full capacity for clinical management of confirmed and suspected cases;

iii. Tailored sensitisation programmes for security personnel emphasizing key hygiene messaging as well as on how to flag signs/symptoms. This will also create confidence within the security forces that their well-being is prioritized. This messaging can have additional benefits as security personnel will be better equipped

UBS Journal of Business and Economic Policy
1 (2) June, 2023
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Official Journal of UNIZIK Business School, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

to relay information on preventive measures to citizens.

2. Continuous Monitoring

Although the initial restrictions of inter and intra state movement as a result of the lockdown has been lifted in the phased easing of the lockdown, there is the need to ensure proper surveillance to ensure that there will not be a resurgence capable of reigniting another wave of the pandemic.

3. Keep Supply Chains Intact

One of the key potential adverse impacts of the spread of the virus is the disruption of supply chains including essential food and medicines. This is notwithstanding the fact that medicaments had free passage throughout the lockdown period, evidence however show that there were delays running into days by perhaps overzealous security personnel who delayed or even detained such movements. This situation obviously disrupted medical supplies. This situation has changed very little since inter-state movement was lifted, therefore, it is important to continue supply of medicine and other essential goods uninterrupted since it would be critical to save the lives of citizens recovering from the effect of the pandemic and more importantly, the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in regions where they exist and other vulnerable populations from the pandemic.

4. Step Up Resource Mobilisation

Humanitarian Needs Overview (2020) posits that with food insecurity potentially on the increase by as high as 90% together with 60% of most the North-East states population already requiring humanitarian need, the potential spread to the North-East requires a coordinated and heightened response. This is bearing in mind that the pandemic has impacted the donor countries the most while stretching their fiscal spaces. It has become known how this will impact humanitarian and development funding. Nevertheless, given the fiscal constraints Nigeria and most other fragile economies face, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) could consider debt payment moratoriums and soft loans to meet urgent financing needs as support to the fight against Covid-19.

5. Step Up Humanitarian Support during Emergency

In the event that there is another wave of the virus outbreak and spread, or there are other emergency situations and food insecurity situations worsens, humanitarian agencies need to prepare for emergency food distribution for the affected populations. Securing adequate amount of food supplies and strengthening logistic arrangements including food air-drop as option may become priority concerns. In urban areas, where a large number of people may lose their income sources and may need assistance, distribution sites need to be set up as quickly as possible for quick registration and on-the-spot handout of a minimum of 2-months emergency food and nutrition assistance package. Targeting criteria will need to be more inclusive than in previous efforts of humanitarian assistance programmes, in order to prevent possible unrest and preserve order in the distribution sites.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The question in the minds of people at this point in time as a result of this pandemic would be, how would communities and national economies bounce back in a sustainable manner as to recover from the crisis. The economic distress associated with the pandemic, health implications especially to the most vulnerable in the community, strain on service delivery

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infrastructure and the societal cost in terms of well-being have been found to be enormous. Nevertheless, MSMEs must be supported with tax relief as well as stimulus packages such as cash hand out to support trading or business capital which must have been deeply depleted as a result of lockdown, the need for cheaper cost of energy cannot be over emphasized same as the need for honorarium aside of salary to teachers and those in the public service especially those in the frontline such as medical and health workers to help them take care of their families.

Any post-COVID-19 recovery strategy will need to re-establish the conditions for a quick return to a path of economic growth, improved social contract, and overall human development that can foster more inclusive societies in the future. The survivors and others who are directly affected by the disease must be assisted through clearly defined public policy to regain their dignity while at the same time provide support to those households that were most affected to recover their livelihoods. This will require investment in innovative approaches for restoration of the health systems; including sensitization of culturally sensitive communities, as well as building measures that integrate recovery of lost livelihoods. Similarly, with regards to conflict ridden areas, a conflict-sensitive approach that will be critical in the identification of risk and opportunities to ensure that strategies do not worsen existing or latent fragility, but rather help strengthen social cohesion if possible and where necessary. More specifically, there should be support to farmers so as to grow more food that can bring about food security. In addition, incentives can also be extended to businesses and enterprises such as tax reduction and tax holiday. In like manner, medical practitioners especially, those in the front line, have to be adequately provided for in terms of continuous training in handling large scale pandemic, hazard and call allowances and with Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), while the populace, should be provided for their wellbeing and wellness with adequate food handout as palliatives on regular basis and other items that could enhance hygiene such as sanitizer, face mask etc where necessary. It is also recommended that more health workers be engaged such that NCDs are not relegated or abandoned as a result of paying more attention to a large- scale pandemic.

One of the major findings in this paper is that the pandemic has exposed the inadequacies of the health sector and have also shown how fragile this sector is, particularly, the tertiary health institutions. The political elite who have done very little to strengthen the health sector seems to be at the receiving end of corona virus pandemic. This is basically because cross border migration was impossible owing to the lockdown which affected air travel, as such they have been unable to travel abroad for medical tourism to such countries where health care and medical facilities are more robust and considered to be better managed. Consequently, a number of political leaders in Nigeria notable among which is Abba Kyri (Chief of Staff to the President) among others who contracted the virus lost their lives because of medical inadequacies. Howbeit, a lot of people that contracted the disease survived within the limits of available resources in the isolation centres across Nigeria as medical doctors and other medical practitioners were at their best as they demonstrated ingenuity in supressing and curing of the virus with local formulations.

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