

**Assessment of the Socio-Economic Effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria**

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### **Certification**

This is to certify that this thesis was carried out by **Micah Olufemi ONI** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/001813**, student in the Department of Politics & International Relations, Faculty of Management & Social Science, Lead City University, Nigeria and has not been previously submitted.

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## **Dedication**

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty.

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I want to express my sincere and unending gratitude to God Almighty for seeing me through the period of my study at Lead City University. I sincerely appreciate Lead City University, Ibadan for creating a platform and institution for acquisition of knowledge for self-reliance hence I am one of the thousands that are beneficiaries.

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## Abstract

Due to the global lockdowns following the COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in employment losses for the expatriate community and the closure of financial institutions like banks and money transfer companies, a major fall in remittance inflow to the country is anticipated. Social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions forced Southwest States, Nigeria a decrease in the workforce across all economic sectors and caused many jobs to be lost. Schools have closed down, and the need of manufactured products has decreased. The food supply has also seen a great demand. It is for this reason that the research seeks to assess the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was drawn from reports from the Nigeria. The research relied on secondary sources of data. Thus, the research instruments used for this were textbooks, journals, newspaper, reports, editorials, magazines, and articles. Secondary data gathered were analysed and presented using exploratory analysis and descriptive analytical explanation is given to the secondary data obtained for the study. Findings revealed that COVID-19 had a severe impact on economy, enterprises and industries on all sizes, resulting in reduced incomes for vulnerable macro and micro-economies and the risk of job losses and lost incomes for thousands of low-paid worker in Southwest States, Nigeria. It was also revealed that Nigeria imports are decreased due to pandemic and this has fiscal and unemployment adverse implications. It was found that the private sectors were critical in supporting the government in fighting the health crisis and addressing the subsequent socio-economic turmoil in Southwest States, Nigeria. It was recommended that there is an urgent need for Nigeria to form a combination of monetary, fiscal and financial markets measures to help economies and businesses to cope with this spread of virus and crisis environment.

**Keywords:** Socio-Economic Effect, COVID-19, Southwest States, Nigeria

**Word Count:** 285

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## List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
API	Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NCDC	National Centers for Disease Control
NICD	National Institute for Communicable Diseases
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
WHO	World Health Organisation
SARS-CoV2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
ACE	Angiotensin Converting Enzymes
HEPA	High Efficiency Particle Arresting
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
TCM	Traditional Chinese medicine
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
IDH	Infectious Disease Hospital
NCAA	Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
PTF	Presidential Task Force
SGF	Secretary to the Government of the Federation
NBA	Nigerian Bar Association
NPS	Nigerian Pharmaceutical Society
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
VAT	Value Added Tax
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
ECMO	Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
CoPREP	COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer

SIP	Social Investment Program
NSR	National Social Register
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BVN	Bank Verification Numbers
FIRS	Federal Inland Revenue Services
RSSFDCRR	Real Sector Support Facility-Differentiated Cash Reserves Requirement
SIP	Systematic Investment Plans
LHP	Learn at Home Program
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
FME	Forensic Medical Examination
NSR	Normal Sinus Rhythm
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
CACOVID	Coalition Alliance Against COVID-19
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
SORMAS	Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System
FCT	Family Centered Treatment
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
SARS	Special Anti-Robbery Squad
CSOs	Chief Security Officers
S4C	Spaces for Change
WRAPA	Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative
NHED	Network for Health Equity and Development
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
FGDs	Focus Group Discussion
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
EFA	Education for All
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
AVATT	African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team

VP	Vision 2020 Program
UNO	United Nations Organization
NDLEA	Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NLPS	National Longitudinal Phone Survey
SLHS	Speech, Language, and Hearing Science
INTERPOL	International Police
PMS	Premium Motor Spirit
NLC	Nigerian Labor Congress
TUC	Trade Union Congress
MAN	Manufactures Association of Nigeria
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
PDP	People Democratic Party
PAYE	Pay as You Earn
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
ILO	International Labor Organization
CGT	Capital Gains Tax
PIT	Personal Income Tax
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
LCCI	Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry
YONY	Year-on-Year
NECA	Nigeria Employers Consultative Association

## Chapter One Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

In December 2019, just as the country was seeking to take a break from the many unpleasant news headlines and enjoy the upcoming Christmas season, a shocking topic caught the nation's attention; the news of the rapidly spreading Coronavirus in Wuhan, China. While some Nigerians believed the pandemic was too far away to get into the country, or that if it did, like the Ebola virus, it would not survive; others believed that because Nigeria had long-standing travel and trade links with China, the pandemic would inevitably get into the country. Finally, in late February 2020, Nigeria reported its first verified case in Lagos, following which it spread to other states of the country. Prior to the pandemic, the Nigerian economy was unstable, as the country was already dealing with non-COVID-19 related insecurity, falling oil prices, trade restrictions, and public deficit issues, on top of long-standing development challenges like inadequate fiscal economic policies, unemployment, and inflation.

The world is currently dealing with the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic which as actually held the economic and political situation of most country at ransom. The pandemic is one of the events that have significant impact in contemporary history. However, COVID-19 have spread to more than 216 states around the world and induced the most economic downturn since the great depression<sup>1,2</sup>. Corona Virus was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and has since caused massive mortality<sup>3</sup>. While attempts are underway to curtail the spread of disease, which is almost completely caused by human-to-human transmission, it has resulted in over 253,607,037 cases, 5,109,306 deaths, and 229,324,278 have recovered<sup>4</sup>.

COVID-19 was labeled a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, due to its continued global spread all over the continents. The virus is a zoonotic infectious

disease that may spread from human to human or from animal to human<sup>5</sup>. When transmitted by humans, it can cause significant respiratory problems. The most common clinical signs and symptoms include lethargy, a temperature of 39 degrees or higher, a dry cough, dyspnea, exhaustion, and myalgia, and in extreme situations, COVID-19 infection can result in renal failure, severe pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, and even death<sup>6</sup>. What then is corona virus?

Corona virus, from the family of virus (others include SARS, H5N1, H1N1 and MERS), is a contagious respiratory illness transmitted through the eyes, nose, and mouth, via droplets from coughs and sneezes, close contact with infected person and contaminated surfaces. It has an incubation period of approximately one to fourteen days has been said by, fever and shortness of breath, and it is diagnosed through a laboratory test. The contagion could lead to severe respiratory problems or death, particularly among the elderly and persons with underlying chronic illnesses.

Some infected persons however, are carriers for the virus with no symptoms while others may experience only a mild illness and recover easily<sup>7</sup>. As there is currently no cure or vaccine for the COVID-19; medical treatments are limited to supportive measures aimed at relieving symptoms, use of research drugs and therapeutics.

Nigeria had 32,588 confirmed cases and death rates of roughly four million. The first case of COVID-19 was identified in on February 27, 2020 when an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria returned from Milan. The incident was confirmed by the Virology Laboratory of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, a member of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Controls Laboratory Network<sup>8</sup>. The Nigerian government has mounted responses causing against the pandemic to further reduce the spread of the virus and treat infected people. Even though the country is facing

various health issues, the central attention is likely to be primarily towards effective containment of this unprecedented pandemic. The country's responses to the pandemic are expected to have impacts on healthcare system and medicine security is not an exception. Access to medicine is an important component of good health systems and with uninterrupted access to medicine, improving the health outcome of the population is likely to be achieved. Nigeria is blessed with over 200 million populations and the health issues in this resource-limited setting are on the rise and the need to respond to the pandemic remains imperative<sup>9</sup>.

Despite limited resources, national health authorities have been making efforts to ensure effective containment of the pandemic. However, what remains a concern is that as the health threat of the pandemic continues to grow, other health issues and related interventions and programs are likely to be deprioritized. Currently, some of the issues facing responses to COVID-19 pandemic in many African countries including Nigeria are limited conducive isolation centers, diagnostic insufficiency, violation of the stay-at-home order, limited hospital capacity, congested cities, and family clustering among others. As the stakeholders continue to address these issues, it is important that other health-related needs are prioritized including uninterrupted access to medicines during this pandemic. Nigeria is highly dependent on other countries for its medicine needs. About 70% of the medicines use in Nigeria and most other African countries are imported from China and India<sup>10</sup>.

The country also relies on other countries for active pharmaceutical ingredients, equipment and other resources needed for medicine manufacturing. As COVID-19 confirmed cases and mortality continue to raise, this dependency on foreign countries for medicines, API and other needed resources for drug manufacturing remain a major concern. Although the local drug

industry has experienced some growth over the years, the country still falls short in local drug manufacturing for its needs<sup>11</sup>.

Disruption in access to medicines in Nigeria remains a threat to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals especially goal 1, 3, 8 and 9, which seeks an end to extreme poverty, ensure good health and well-being, promote sustained, inclusive economic growth and productivity, as well as sustainable industrialization. Boosting the pharmaceutical local drug manufacturing can contribute to the country's GDP by exporting some of the locally made herbal remedies to other countries. Some Nigerians due to superstitions and ignorance of the science behind the infection prefer only to pray even violating the social distancing rule by attending churches or mosques during the lockdown and use anointing oils, talisman, herbs or rituals to prevent contracting and spreading the virus<sup>12</sup>. Some also use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to spread fear, project fake news concerning the source of the virus, promote prejudice against China, incite panic buying, proffer fake cures and undermine medical advice, deliberately or ignorantly. They opined that lockdown, self-isolation and social distancing are "un-African" solutions to the pandemic<sup>13</sup>.

The pandemic economic effect with similar heaviness is an esoteric experience. Inequalities are entrenched and existing vulnerabilities have not been revealed. The unusual virus's appearance in December 2019 will live in infamy for all time. Since then, it has the potential to turn into one of the hardest tests humanity has ever faced, with enormous potential to claim lives, devastate healthcare systems, and bring about long-lasting socioeconomic change. The COVID-19 pandemic causes the world economy to experience its worst downturn since the Great Depression, according to the IMF Report from 2020. Following the warning from Oxfam International's 2020 study that the COVID-19 Pandemic might cause half a billion people to fall

into poverty In rural and urban settings, 40% of households lack any economically engaged adults between the ages of 15 and 54; these households are also more likely to receive remittances<sup>14</sup>. However, the COVID-19's rapid spread across nations has forced many governments, including Nigeria's, to take unanticipated steps to contain the epidemic. These actions have caused significant travel and mobility restrictions, the temporary closure of many enterprises, and financial market instability, including the disruption of remittance channels.<sup>15</sup>.

The nation's fragile economic situation was aggravated by the government's regulatory efforts to stop the virus' spread. As a result, the GDP growth rate fell below 4% in early 2020, to 1.87 and -6.10 percent in the first and second quarters respectively, reflecting a drop by 0.23 and 8.22 percentage points below the 2.10 and 2.12 percent recorded in 2019, Q1 and Q2<sup>16</sup>. The economy eventually recovered by the third quarter of 2020, but was immediately sent into a tailspin by the end of the fourth quarter, when the country was hit by the second wave of the pandemic, which proved to be more lethal than the first. Total GDP in 2020 was reported at 432.29 billion from 448.12 billion in 2019. In the first quarter of 2021, GDP was recorded at 0.51 percent, The Q1 2021 growth was slower than the 1.87% growth rate recorded in Q1 2020 but higher than 0.11% recorded in Q4 2020, indicating a gradual but steady growth. Based on the premise of projected recovery in crude oil output and price levels, real GDP growth in 2021 is expected to increase to 2.5 percent and will only return to its pre-pandemic level in 2022, according to the IMF<sup>17</sup>.

The COVID-19 outbreak caused bankruptcy in Southwest States, Nigeria as many well-known brands in many industries as consumers stay at home, and economies are shutdown. The short-term impact of COVID-19 is immediately and effortlessly felt, due to the widespread lockdown and social distancing measures globally. This is the background against which the COVID-19

pandemic is playing out. The research focuses its attention on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria as a result.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The year 2020 was welcomed by a deadly viral outbreak called Coronavirus disease, previously known as 2019- novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). In the past decades, one could have heard of how dangerous it is to be virtually reliant on medicine supply from other developed state to cure a deadly disease. Nonetheless, no action was taken because, it seemed to many that the global trade system was operational and Nigerians as well as citizens of African countries appear to have sufficient supply of the medications required at quite appealing cost. In 2020, this apprehension has revolved from an imaginary problem to an actual challenge that might have consequences for millions nationwide due to COVID-19 pandemic.

In Southwest States, Nigeria, most people employed outside the agriculture industry work in the informal sector; Such workers have been hit particularly hard by COVID-19, since their work generally cannot be completed remotely, and because the majority are either self-employed or work for small businesses that are unable to provide support during the pandemic. We should all be paying attention to how COVID-19 is causing human suffering throughout the world. But we are economists, not medical professionals, and COVID-19 is unquestionably contributing to the global spread of economic hardship. However, the Nigerian government has formulated a partial lockdown, which has primarily affected public institutions like schools and universities as well as office-based enterprises. The COVID-19 has an effect on all of Nigeria's key economic sectors, including transportation both domestically and abroad.

Due to the global lockdowns following the COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in employment losses for the expatriate community and the closure of financial institutions like banks and

money transfer companies, a major fall in remittance inflow to the country is anticipated. Social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions forced Southwest States, Nigeria a decrease in the workforce across all economic sectors and caused many jobs to be lost. Schools have closed down, and the need of manufactured products has decreased. The food supply has also seen a great demand. It is for this reason that the research seeks to assess the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The central focus of this research is to assess the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the research are to:

- i. examine the effect of COVID-19 on Businesses, International Trade & Export and Employment in Southwest States, Nigeria
- ii. determine the socio-economic Costs and impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the vulnerable populations in society
- iii. examine the socio-economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in Southwest States, Nigeria
- iv. examine the policy interventions to cushion the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How does COVID-19 affect Businesses, International Trade & Export and Employment in Southwest States, Nigeria?
2. How has COVID-19 pandemic affected the socio-economic costs and impacted the COVID-19 vulnerable populations in society?
3. Does COVID-19 pandemic have socio-economic implications in Southwest States, Nigeria?

4. Which policy interventions cushioned the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Southwest States, Nigeria?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The central focus of this research is to assess the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria. The outcome of this study will be useful for international, regional and state health institutions in Southwest States, Nigeria. In particular, the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) will find this study useful with their operation. In addition to that, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant stakeholders in the health sector will definitely benefit from this research. However, the study will be of immense benefit to the Nigerian government to effectively mitigate the health crisis and economic hardship battling the country. The study is significant as it provides relevant information to health practitioners in Nigeria. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge and aid further research study on COVID-19.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

When the index case of COVID-19 was discovered in Nigeria the National Centers for Disease Control (NCDC) were promptly engaged to track its contacts. The outbreak of the virus has caused more damage than good which make the citizens of the country in consideration lose their jobs. However, the scope of the study shall be confined to assessment of socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Southwest States, Nigeria. The study will cover a period of 5 years which is from 2016-2021.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study recognizes some limitations. Dependence on secondary data sources might introduce data quality concerns. Data availability and accuracy could be impacted by pandemic-related disruptions. Time limitations might curtail in-depth longitudinal analysis. The specific scope

might restrict generalizability. Contextual factors unique to Nigeria, like cultural and economic aspects, may affect the study's broader relevance. The evolving nature of the pandemic might influence the timeliness of findings. Acknowledging these limitations enhances the study's transparency and provides a comprehensive understanding of potential constraints inherent in the research approach.

### **1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms**

**Corona virus:** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. In other words, the viruses are a family of viruses that cause illness in humans and animals. Coronaviruses are relatively simple structures, and their form helps us to understand how they work. They are spherical and coated with spikes of protein. These spikes help the virus bind to and infect healthy cells.

**Socio-economic:** This refers to the position of the citizen of Southwest States, Nigeria on the social economic scale, which is determined by combination of social and economic factors.

**Globalization:** This refers to the ways in which development in one region can rapidly come to have significant consequences for the security and wellbeing of communities in quite distant regions of the globe.

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## **Chapter Two Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **2.1.1 Globalization**

The style of information dissemination throughout the world this time has made the word globalization a common process of bringing the whole world together. Globalization has changed dynamics of the world and has brought a lot of positive development to the growth of the Earth at large. As it stands now the information of any event at any part of the world gets to Nigeria or any other part of the world in a very short time. Therefore, globalization has come to improve the process of communication and advancement in technology. The fast movements of goods and services, economic liberalism, scientific inventions and discoveries have reduced the large world to a global village. Nigeria as a developing country cannot shy away from globalization, since the country has been exposed to both the negative and positive effects of globalization.

The history of the concept of globalization seems blur but it was reported that François Perroux, a French Economist and Theodore Levitt German American economist were the first to use the term in their writings<sup>1</sup>. For instance, Francois Perroux in 1960s used the word mundialization which also translate literarily to worldization. It was the later that popularized the concept of globalization and bring it into mainstream business audience in 1980s<sup>2</sup>. Since its usage, the concept of globalization has inspired competing definitions and interpretations from various scholars, policymakers, diplomats and policy analyst.

Globalization as a concept refers to the ways in which development in one region can rapidly come to have significant consequences for the security and wellbeing of communities in quite

distant regions of the globe<sup>3</sup>. As much as there seem to be an understanding of the concept, that theme of globalization has in the last three decades become the key topic of the social sciences.

Nevertheless, globalization is probably more feared than understood. Inasmuch as it has its positive side, it also has some negative effects in some aspects. It is important to view globalization as a major tool that helps in the spread of COVID-19. is also seen as interregional flows and networks of interaction within all realms of social activity from cultural to criminal on different regional levels from global to local<sup>4</sup>. Globalization must be understood as a dialectical phenomenon, in which events at one corner of the earth often produce divergent or even contrary occurrences at another. This means that globalization is an overwhelming forces that transverses sovereign states, regions, territories and continents. This is in agreement with the view of a prominent scholar who first coin the word ‘global village’ depicted in his writing a sense of closeness that time and space was drastically minimized<sup>5</sup>.

Globalization is a strong force today because of the rise of global communication, especially the internet. This has made people to feel the connection across the world more strongly and speedily. Globalization is an obstacle to the concept of social theory. It requires a re-thinking of the concept that there are cultures comprised as different bounded entities. It questions regarding the taken-for-granted formula of culture as well as nation-state<sup>6</sup>. Is globalization simply Westernization or Americanization, or does it intermix all societies, developing brand-new commonness? There is nothing else people in background that has actually from another location gone to the degree of connection as we have currently and also have actually experienced globalization as a result is a threefold procedure and also not largely economic climate.

The continuous rise of China as a world power, the further globalization of terror through global terror network and the financial crises of 2018 that was felt at a global scale across borders have

more than ever influenced every aspect of human life in every corner of the planet. After the World War II, there was a new dawn in the 1970s launch of satellites, making communication instantaneous throughout the world. This became a turning point in our civilization and global connectedness. Globalization is a contradictory and also inconsistent procedure since its initiation over the previous thirty years. Globalization definitely draws some powers far from the country yet at the very same time globalization lowers. It produces brand-new pressures for neighborhood identification, for neighborhood splitting up as seen in Catalonia and also Scotland<sup>4</sup>. The concept of globalization requires an interaction with the altering ramifications of spatiality as well as temporality, with space-time compression, a raised price of circulations of individuals, items as well as signs around the globe, as well as the non-linearity of these procedures. It needs re-thinking the idea of culture, its boundlessness and also procedures of development, and also the partnerships in between social systems worldwide.

The interpretations of globalization vary and also usually include several social procedures. Globalization has actually been recognized as well as merged otherwise with internationalization, universalization, Westernization, supra neoliberalism, Americanization, as well as territoriality<sup>7</sup>. Particularly, globalization has actually commonly been dealt with as if it were efficiently the like the growth of capitalist markets. The conflation of globalization and also industrialism is purposeless since it does not permit the relevance of any kind of social connections aside from capitalist ones as well as, additionally, prevents evaluation of the political activities that could be helped with by the boosted international inter-linkages that could be against the development in power of international companies.

It is preferable to have a meaning that is minimal in the sense that it does not describe the operations or include the causality. This is beneficial because it avoids confusing the causes of

globalization with their meaning and gives rise to the possibility of more than one wave of globalization for a variety of reasons. This process of increased thickness and frequency of international social communications regarding local or national ones is referred to as globalization. This understanding closely follows the viewpoints of numerous other academics<sup>9</sup>. A more comprehensive definition of globalization is one that characterizes an improvement in the spatial organization of social relationships and also purchases, evaluated in terms of their extent, impact, strength, and speed, resulting in interregional or transcontinental circulations as well as networks of work, communication, and the exercise of power. As a result of globalization, four types of changes become apparent:

1. It involves extending social, political, and financial initiatives beyond political boundaries, regions, and continents.
2. It encourages the growth or accumulation of interconnection, i.e., the exchange of information about work, finances, investments, travel, society, religion, language, and more.
3. As the development of international systems of transportation and interaction increases the rate of the diffusion of ideas, products, information, resources, and also people, it is possible to link the expanding extensity and strength of global interconnectedness to an acceleration of international communications and procedures.

As global communications' reach, power, and speed increase, so does their impact, to the point where even the smallest local developments can have significant global repercussions and distant events can have very significant effects elsewhere.

The distinction between national and international affairs becomes increasingly hazy in this way. Globalization is a transformative process in which both the environment as a whole and the parts of the process change. The size of relational and connection networks, the volume of activities

and flows through these networks, the pace of exchanges through time, and the influence of these phenomena are among the differentiating factors.

Another interpretation of the term "globalization" is "the very simple flow of information and also modern technology, career, funding, services, items, and people." Additionally, it is an enlargement of the free economic system, which broadens perception of the world and of time and space on a global scale<sup>12,13</sup>. This demonstrates that globalization improves the sense of place within the global environment through fundamental restructuring and also reconstruction of the global economic situation, plan, and environment in a complex context<sup>14</sup>. In this sense, the debate over globalization has evolved into an ideological one that promotes adjustment as well as comprehension of the need to adapt to a new global order. According to the Swiss Economic Institute's KOF Globe Globalization Index, there are three ways to quantify globalization: financial, social, and political<sup>15</sup>.

Globalization represents an institutional and societal change, manifested by an increase in cash in-flow, technology, and labour, which result in the expansion of business corporations on a global scale<sup>16</sup>. A similar account was put forward by some scholars when they pointed out that, globalization connotes an acceleration and intensification of global integration and interaction amongst persons, organizations, and constituted authorities such as the governments of different economies which affects individuals' welfare, economic growth, socio-cultural systems and national development on a global scale<sup>17</sup>. Globalization has to do with amplifying social interrelationships of individuals, organizations, and nations to obtain mutually beneficial situation through integration of businesses, technology, finances as well as labor across national frontiers or internationally.

Stages	Eras	Bases	Attributes
Stage 1	1880-1890	Transportation through rail and ocean	Automated production of products as well as trading across national frontiers
Stage 2	1900-1930	Invention of electricity and steel	The materialization of American and European extracting and manufacturing industries
Stage 3	1948-1970s	End of World War II and General agreement on tariffs and trade	The emergence of US multinationals, the emergence of triad nations as well as branded products and the subsequent effort to minimize trade barriers
Stage 4	1980 till Date	Information and communication technology, privatization, consultancy and automation	Increased in foreign direct investment in least developed countries, enhanced technological and transportation tools, improved worldwide media and branding

**Table 2.1: Stages of Advancement of Globalization<sup>18</sup>**

The table above briefly explains a graphic picture of the phases and trends in globalization over several decades. This progression began from the 1880s - 1890s which experienced rapid transportation through rail and ocean. Subsequently, the invention of electricity and steel took center stage between 1900 and 1930s. However, the end of World War II and general agreement on tariffs and trade tend to depict globalization between 1948 and 1970s. Lastly, advancement in information and communication technology, privatization, consultancy and automation, demonstrates globalization in recent times.

Globalization is the enhancement of the spread of communicating across the globe. Due to the fact that the world is a global village with the head of globalization, makes it easier to access various means of transporting people and goods from different places across the globe which has failed the rapid spread of the virus globally. The COVID-19 epidemic has generated a distinct set

of pressures for the conduct of globalization and international business. It is important to determine how much the epidemic has sped up the changes that were already underway in recent years, not if there would be an impact. According to the author, we need to understand the underlying dynamics of people, organizations, and global competition in order to determine whether the pandemic will exacerbate existing social divisions or whether people, organizations, and competition can strengthen the forces of cohesion that are essential for closing gaps and bridging the distances that become apparent during the process of globalization. For this reason, the author focuses on tying together three subtopics — people, organizations, and competition — to the pandemic in order to better comprehend the effects that this accelerant has on globalization and international trade.

Economic systems, institutions, groups of people, and cultures are becoming more interconnected and interdependent as a result of globalization. A more globally interconnected world results from the transnational exchange of wealth, technology, people, and information<sup>19</sup>. The cracks that have appeared in politics and economics have garnered a lot of attention in the present discussion of globalization, especially as it relates to the pandemic. Given the rhetoric and realities being played out among national politicians and business leaders, this emphasis is not surprising. However, in this context, we should not undervalue the crucial part that individuals play in fostering cohesion amongst various communities that are increasingly colliding as a result of globalization<sup>20</sup>.

People can cross borders in a variety of ways, including as economic migrants migrating from one economy to another, as expatriate workers, as part of family reunion processes, or by enrolling in a school in a nation other than their own. There has been a wealth of research on the movement of people across borders and the resulting disruptions and life changes that

immigrants must make. Immigrant-friendly nations frequently proudly portray themselves as multicultural. However, both from a societal and a personal perspective, the road to multiculturalism is far from straightforward.

People frequently perceive immigrants as a danger to the status quo. Conflicts in value systems arise when perceived dangers are present when cultures and values from various groups vie for supremacy. As a result of being exposed to a new environment, immigrants are under pressure to adapt. Individuals who are assimilating into a new culture must balance their desires and capacities to preserve their own cultures with their desires and capacities to integrate into the cultures of their new countries<sup>21</sup>.

A bicultural person exists when this process is balanced. Since negative sentiments toward immigrants rise when there is recognition of a clash of cultural homogeneities rather than a rise in tolerance for cultural variation, this process of bi-culturation is crucial. In times of economic or political hardship, such as what has been occurring during the epidemic, negative attitudes can be shown by aggressively hostile sentiments and behaviours<sup>22</sup>.

There have been several unprovoked attacks against people who appear to be Asian in the United States, Australia, and Europe, as well as in Asia with regard to minority groups in their cultures, according to stories in the popular press since the start of the pandemic<sup>23</sup>. In terms of hostility by the in-groups against out-groups of recently immigrated persons to a country, the pandemic intensifies a widespread bias against immigrants in this way. The degree of bias faced by immigrants is influenced by social aggregates and ethnocentrism<sup>24</sup>.

A regrettable result of the epidemic has been an increase in violence and a decreased acceptance of particular immigrant ethnicities, but there are ramifications for global trade beyond this initial result. Through the idea of identity and the crucial role that immigrants play in bringing

coherence to corporate groups scattered across cultures, this second layer of consequences is related to international business. The challenge for immigrants is to adjust to their new environment while yet feeling a bond and sense of belonging to their home country. The identification and attachment problems outlined above are a result of this strain. With the spread of the pandemic, immigrants have fewer reasons to remain in the country where they experience overt hostility. The social links and connections that, on a personal level, enable globalization deteriorate, which worsens already frail political relationships and international communication. The result is not just a weakening of the power of globalization; the normal benefits of immigration to global business are also in peril. It is commonly recognized that immigrants connect business communities. For instance, diasporas might help close institutional gaps or encourage FDI flows back to the country from which they moved<sup>25</sup>. However, there will be variations in the cohesion-related benefits of immigrants and diasporas, and certain diasporas will attract investment more successfully than other diasporas<sup>26</sup>. Thus, immigrant communities can serve as crucial links between home and host countries. However, if this connection weakens, the success of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) process may be in jeopardy. This risk arises as a result of the vital role that immigrants can play in uniting cross-national societies and the unique information flows that their ties to their common country permit<sup>27</sup>.

It is simple to overlook how the pandemic, increased aggression, and decreased acceptance of immigrant groups, particularly in the context of protecting jobs and businesses of local nationals, can have significant repercussions even with this clear evidence of the crucial role that immigrants and diasporas play for the conduct of international business and the process of globalization<sup>28</sup>. Aggression can lessen a person's affinity for their nation of origin.

With this decrease, there will be less of a chance for the social tightness and mutual understanding that result from the millions of people who study, work, and start new lives abroad. There will be a weakening of the underlying social structures that must remain cohesive in order to support long-term international commercial relationships<sup>29</sup>. A challenging challenge for our academic community will be how international business and the international business community respond to these changes in individuals.<sup>30</sup>.

### **2.1.2 Origin of COVID 19**

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV2) is what caused the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19), a global pandemic that started in the Chinese province of Wuhan. (1) According to the WHO COVID -19 Dashboard, there were 6,663,204 confirmed cases worldwide as of 6 June 2020, and there were more than 392,802 fatalities. With nearly 1,857,772 cases and 107,911 deaths, the United States has the most confirmed cases, followed by Brazil and Russia with 614,941 and 458,869 respectively<sup>31</sup>. Since the beginning of pandemic in China, 84,620 confirmed cases and 4,645 fatalities have been documented. As of today (6 June 2020), there have been 236,657 cases and more than 6,642 deaths in India. This pandemic has caused a global lockdown, a chokehold on the economy, and the destruction of human life<sup>32</sup>. Around the world, researchers and medical professionals are attempting to find a potential treatment for this deadly illness.

The Huanan seafood market exposure, which was frequent among the early cases fueling the SARSCoV2 outbreak in China, has been identified as the virus's point of genesis. However, there have been conflicting stories circulating on social media around the world that claim the virus was unintentionally released from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, leading the U.S.A government to launch an investigation, the findings of which have not yet been made public<sup>33</sup>.

SARS-CoV-2's coding sections share a genomic structure with bat-SLCoVZC45, batSLCoVZXC21, and SARS-CoV, according to phylogenetic study and virus genome analysis. These bats are Chinese horseshoe bats found in the Zhejiang province of China. (5) With 96.3% sequence similarity to the Bat CoV RaTG13 sequence, which is corroborated similar findings by performing a comprehensive genome evolutionary analysis of the SARSCoV-2<sup>34</sup>. Additionally, no bats are sold in the Hunan seafood market, and in December, the majority of bat species hibernate. As a result, even if bats may be the SARS CoV2 virus' natural reservoir, the risk of SARS CoV2 spreading from animal to human is still present if it originated at the Hunan seafood market.

SARS-CoV-2 belongs to the Coronaviridae family and the Nidovirales order. The family has two subfamilies, Coronavirinae and Torovirinae, with members of the former being split into four general categories<sup>35</sup>.

- (a) Alphacoronavirus contains the human coronavirus (HCoV)-229E and HCoV-NL63;
- (b) Betacoronavirus includes HCoV-OC43, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome human coronavirus (SARS-HCoV), HCoV-HKU1, and Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV);
- (c) Gammacoronavirus includes viruses of whales and birds and; (d) Deltacoronavirus includes viruses isolated from pigs and birds. SARS-CoV-2 belongs to Betacoronavirus together with two highly pathogenic viruses, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV. SARS-CoV-2 is an enveloped and positive-sense single-stranded RNA (+ssRNA) virus<sup>36</sup>.

SARS-CoV-2 is considered a novel human-infecting Betacoronavirus . Phylogenetic analysis of the SARS-CoV-2 genome indicates that the virus is closely related (with 88% identity) to two bat-derived SARS-like coronaviruses collected in 2018 in eastern China (bat-SL-CoVZC45 and

bat-SL-CoVZXC21) and genetically distinct from SARS-CoV (with about 79% similarity) and MERS-CoV. Using the genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2, RaTG13, and SARS-CoV (11), a further study found that the virus is more related to BatCoV RaTG13, a bat coronavirus that was previously detected in *Rhinolophus affinis* from Yunnan Province, with 96.2% overall genome sequence identity. A study found that no evidence of recombination events detected in the genome of SARS-CoV-2 from other viruses originating from bats such as BatCoV RaTG13, SARSCoV and SARSr-CoVs. Altogether, these findings suggest that bats might be the original host of this virus<sup>37</sup>.

However, a study is needed to elucidate whether any intermediate hosts have facilitated the transmission of the virus to humans. Bats are unlikely to be the animal that is directly responsible for transmission of the virus to humans for several reasons<sup>38</sup>.

- (1) there were various non-aquatic animals (including mammals) available for purchase in Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market but no bats were sold or found;
- (2) SARS-CoV-2 and its close relatives, batSL-CoVZC45 and bat-SL-CoVZXC21, have a relatively long branch (sequence identity of less than 90%), suggesting those viruses are not direct ancestors of SARS-CoV-2; and
- (3) In other coronaviruses where bat is the natural reservoir such as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, other animals have acted as the intermediate host (civets and possibly camels, respectively). Nevertheless, bats do not always need an intermediary host to transmit viruses to humans. For example, Nipah virus in Bangladesh is transmitted through bats shedding into raw date palm sap<sup>39</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Transmission of COVID-19

Infected secretions or big aerosol droplets are most commonly transmitted through close or direct touch. The virus can survive on surfaces in nature and spread fomite for up to 4 hours on copper, 24 hours on cardboard, and up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel surfaces<sup>40</sup>. However, because the corona virus interacts to the ACE 2 receptor found in the epithelium of intestinal lumen, there is a chance that it could potentially travel via the fecal-oral route<sup>41</sup>. Researchers found SARS-CoV-2 virus nucleic acids in the feces and anal swabs of COVID-19 patients. There have been no cases of vertical transmission from mother to child in breast milk, vaginal secretions, or pregnant women. Additionally, recent data suggests that asymptomatic people may transmit the infection<sup>42</sup>.

The role of the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in propagating disease is unclear. Many initial COVID-19 cases were linked to this market suggesting that SARS-CoV-2 was transmitted from animals to humans. However, a genomic study has provided evidence that the virus was introduced from another, yet unknown location, into the market where it spread more rapidly, although human-to-human transmission may have occurred earlier. Clusters of infected family members and medical workers have confirmed the presence of person-to-person transmission<sup>35</sup>. After January 1, less than 10% of patients had market exposure and more than 70% patients had no exposure to the market. Person-to-person transmission is thought to occur among close contacts mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Fomites may be a large source of transmission, as SARS-CoV has been found to persist on surfaces up to 96 h and other coronaviruses for up to 9 days<sup>37</sup>.

Whether or not there is asymptomatic transmission of disease is controversial. One initial study published on January 30 reported asymptomatic transmission, but later it was found that the

researchers had not directly interviewed the patient, who did in fact have symptoms prior to transmitting disease. A more recent study published on February 21 also purported asymptomatic transmission, but any such study could be limited by errors in self-reported symptoms or contact with other cases and fomites<sup>42</sup>.

Findings about disease characteristics are rapidly changing and subject to selection bias. A study indicated the mean incubation period was 5.2 days (95% confidence interval (95%CI): 4.1–7.0). The incubation period has been found to be as long as 19 or 24 days, although case definitions typically rely on a 14-day window. The basic reproductive number ( $R_0$ ) has been estimated with varying results and interpretations.  $R_0$  measures the average number of infections that could result from one infected individual in a fully susceptible population<sup>34</sup>. Studies from previous outbreaks found  $R_0$  to be 2.7 for SARS and 2.4 for 2019 pandemic H1N1 influenza (26). One study estimated that that basic reproductive number ( $R_0$ ) was 2.2 (95% CI: 1.4–3.9) (13). However, later in a further analysis of 12 available studies found that  $R_0$  was 3.28. Because  $R_0$  represents an average value it is also important to consider the role of super spreaders, who may be hugely responsible for outbreaks within large clusters but who would not largely influence the value of  $R_0$ . During the acute phase of an outbreak or prepandemic,  $R_0$  may be unstable<sup>38</sup>.

In pregnancy, a study of nine pregnancy women who developed COVID-19 in late pregnancy suggested COVID-19 did not lead to substantially worse symptoms than in nonpregnant persons and there is no evidence for intrauterine infection caused by vertical transmission. In hospital setting, a study involving 138 COVID-19 suggested that hospital-associated transmission of SARS-CoV-2 occurred in 41% of patients. Moreover, another study on 425 patients found that the proportion of cases in health care workers gradually increased by time. These cases likely reflect exposure to a higher concentration of virus from sustained contact in close quarters<sup>39</sup>.

Outside China, as of February 12, 2020, there were 441 confirmed COVID-19 cases reported in 24 countries (6) of which the first imported case was reported in Thailand on January 13, 2020 (631). Among those countries, 11 countries have reported local transmission with the highest number of cases reported in Singapore with 47 confirmed cases<sup>36</sup>.

#### **2.1.4 Control and Prevention Strategies and its Implications on Socio Economy of Nigerians**

COVID-19 is clearly a serious disease of international concern. By some estimates it has a higher reproductive number than SARS (27), and more people have been reported to have been infected or died from it than SARS (67). Similar to SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, disrupting the chain of transmission is considered key to stopping the spread of disease. Different strategies should be implemented in health care settings and at the local and global levels.

Health care settings can unfortunately be an important source of viral transmission. As shown in the model for SARS, applying triage, following correct infection control measures, isolating the cases and contact tracing are key to limit the further spreading of the virus in clinics and hospitals<sup>37</sup>. Suspected cases presenting at healthcare facilities with symptoms of respiratory infections (e.g. runny nose, fever and cough) must wear a face mask to contain the virus and strictly adhere triage procedure. They should not be permitted to wait with other patients seeking medical care at the facilities. They should be placed in a separated, fully ventilated room and approximately 2 m away from other patients with convenient access to respiratory hygiene supplies<sup>20</sup>. In addition, if a confirmed COVID-19 case requires hospitalization, they must be placed in a single patient room with negative air pressure – a minimum of six air changes per hour. Exhausted air has to be filtered through high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) and medical personnel entering the room should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gown, disposable N95, and eye protection. Once the cases are recovered and discharged, the

room should be decontaminated or disinfected and personnel entering the room need to wear PPE particularly facemask, gown, eye protection<sup>38</sup>.

In a community setting, isolating infected people are the primary measure to interrupt the transmission. For example, immediate actions taken by Chinese health authorities included isolating the infected people and quarantining of suspected people and their close contacts. Also, as there are still conflicting assumptions regarding the animal origins of the virus (i.e. some studies linked the virus to bat while others associated the virus with snake, contacts with these animal fluids or tissues or consumption of wild caught animal meet should be avoided. Moreover, educating the public to recognize unusual symptoms such as chronic cough or shortness of breath is essential therefore that they could seek medical care for early detection of the virus. If large-scale community transmission occurs, mitigating social gatherings, temporary school closure, home isolation, close monitoring of symptomatic individual, provision of life supports (e.g. oxygen supply, mechanical ventilator), personal hand hygiene, and wearing personal protective equipment such as facemask should also be enforced<sup>39</sup>.

In global setting, locking down Wuhan city was one of the immediate measure taken by Chinese authorities and hence had slowed the global spread of COVID-19 (74). Air travel should be limited for the cases unless severe medical attentions are required. Setting up temperature check or scanning is mandatory at airport and border to identify the suspected cases. Continued research into the virus is critical to trace the source of the outbreak and provide evidence for future outbreak<sup>40</sup>.

#### **(a) Social Distancing**

In order to reduce or stop the spread of a disease within a community, social distancing is a preventative and control strategy used to limit or avoid contact between people who have a

disease and those who do not. The World Health Organization advises keeping at least one meter (3 feet) between you and other people<sup>41</sup>.

**(b) Hand Hygiene**

It is essential to regularly practice good hand hygiene to avoid contracting COVID 19. Like all coronaviruses, SARS-COV-2 contains a lipid envelope that, when washed with soap, can separate the envelope's fat, making it difficult or impossible for the virus to enter human cells. Therefore, compared to other preventive measures, washing your hands with soap and water is by far the most effective weapon<sup>41</sup>.

**(c) Use of Facemask**

In line with WHO Medical masks are defined as flat or pleated surgical or procedural masks that are fastened to the head with straps (others are fashioned like cups). In order to balance high filtration, acceptable breathability, and, if desired, fluid penetration resistance, they are put through a series of standardized tests (ASTM F2100, EN 14683, or similar)<sup>41</sup>.

One of the prophylactic strategies that can stop the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viral illnesses is wearing a surgical mask. But wearing a mask by itself is insufficient to offer an acceptable level of protection; additional steps must be taken. Whether or not masks are worn, the greatest adherence to hand cleanliness and other IPC precautions is essential to prevent COVID-19 transmission from person to person.<sup>41</sup>

A surgical mask only offers "one way protection" and stops droplets from spreading from the wearer's sneezing and coughing to the surrounding areas. The N95 specialist respirator, which is technically a good fit mask blocking the entry of droplets and so lowering the possibility of contracting the illness, is required of medical professionals caring for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19<sup>27</sup>.

#### **(d) Use of Chloroquine or Hydroxychloroquine**

A common antimalarial medication called chloroquine prevents viral infections by raising endosomal pH, which prevents the fusion of viruses and cells. Additionally, this medication prevents SARS-CoV cellular receptors from being glycosylated, which reduces virus-cell binding. HCQS has the same mode of action as chloroquine but a superior safety profile, making it a more advantageous medication. Both of these medications have demonstrated immunomodulatory effects and the ability to decrease immunological factor induction, which may help lessen the severity of coronavirus sickness. Particular caution should be used while administering CQ and HCQ to individuals who have a QTc > 500 ms since they can cause arrhythmia and extend the QT<sup>38</sup>.

On day 6 of the treatment, hydroxychloroquine combined with azithromycin also demonstrated a significant reduction in viral load and a much shorter average viral carrying time. Numerous trials are currently being conducted to investigate the impact on both prevention and treatment. In India, the ICMR has approved the use of hydroxychloroquine as a prophylactic for high risk individuals (asymptomatic healthcare providers caring for suspected or confirmed COVID 19 patients, and asymptomatic household contacts of cases with laboratory confirmation)<sup>39</sup>.

#### **(e) Use of Convalescent Plasma Therapy**

As COVID 19 infection causes the body to produce antibodies, the plasma of recovered patients has been used to treat seriously ill COVID 19 patients. It is covered by the investigational product regulation even if the FDA has not authorized it. Convalescent plasma will be tested in a clinical trial for the treatment of COVID-19 patients, thanks to approval from India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)<sup>42</sup>.

**(f) Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatment**

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is a distinct diagnostic technique that uses a systematic approach, a wealth of historical literature, and a variety of historical resources. It develops a course of treatment based on symptom-based diagnosis, a strategy that modern medicine is increasingly emphasizing. National and provincial guidelines recommend TCM as a significant therapy option for COVID-19, and it is widely used. The primary pathophysiology of COVID-19 is linked to a "epidemic virus," according to TCM theory, and it falls under the category of a "dampness plague." The disease is caused by a "state" of cold and dampness, and the key to the disease's progression is "stagnation of qi"<sup>43</sup>. In order to shorten the duration of a fever, alleviate symptoms, stop the advancement of the disease, lower mortality, and help with rehabilitation, the appropriate treatment at the early stage focuses on reducing dampness, and the strategy focuses on eliminating dampness, releasing lungs, and expelling harmful components. The COVID-19 TCM treatment was separated into a medical observation time and a treatment period according to the 7th edition of the China National Clinical Guideline. Following a stage of recovery, the latter is further subdivided into four forms, including mild, intermediate, severe, and critical<sup>43</sup>.

**(g) Vaccination**

The WHO's strategies for infection prevention and control state that standard precautions for all patients, which are also suitable for public prevention, should include hand and respiratory hygiene, the use of the proper PPE, safe injection techniques, safe waste management, clean linens, environmental cleaning, and sterilization of patient-care equipment<sup>40</sup>. The best chance of stopping the pandemic may be a COVID-19 vaccination, and front-line healthcare workers as well as other vulnerable people who are more likely to become infected need these vaccines the most. Currently, scientists are working hard to create such a vaccine. With the help of

multinational alliances and government initiatives, 115 vaccine candidates are now under development, with a number of them having already entered clinical trials. Inactivated vaccines, genetic engineering subunit vaccines, adenovirus vector vaccines, nucleic acid vaccines, and vaccines using attenuated influenza virus as vectors are the current five technological approaches used in China to develop COVID-19 vaccines, according to the country's National Health Commission<sup>43</sup>.

The S protein, which appears as a spike-like structure on the surface of coronaviruses. In order to adhere to the surface of human cells and to drive the virus through the cell membrane, the S protein is believed to be the essential molecule that interacts with the ACE2 receptor. This facilitates virus infection and membrane fusion to host cells. Other vaccines are created using the S protein, with the exception of inactivated and attenuated viral vaccines. Virus vectors harboring the S gene may be used to express the S protein in vivo, and the generated protein would stimulate the production of certain antibodies that could prevent the virus from entering cells. These methods are anticipated to block the virus from replicating and from attaching to human cells, resulting in immunological protection<sup>44</sup>.

While vaccination delivery by injection is the most common method, there are other cutting-edge strategies. To stimulate the body to produce antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the fingertip-sized microneedle array vaccine PittCoVacc from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, for instance, delivers spike protein pieces into the skin; INO-4800 uses the CELLECTRA hand-held smart device to deliver DNA into the host's cells; and Symvivo COVID-19 products are presented as oral lyophilized gel-capsules<sup>40</sup>.

Different technological platforms have unique traits in terms of the rate of research and development, the length of the production cycle, the equipment requirements, etc. Clinical

investigations are still needed to assess and compare the efficacy, stability, and safety of vaccination candidates. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global emergency, and the scale and pace of the reaction are unparalleled. However, a lot of the work is still undone. The prospective success rate for developing vaccines, according to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, is about 10%. The vaccine candidates may not be safe or efficacious at any stage of research<sup>41</sup>.

Neutralizing antibodies significantly increased at day 14 and peaked 28 days post-vaccination, according to a recent study conducted in Wuhan on the safety, tolerability, and immunogenicity of a recombinant adenovirus type-5 vectored COVID-19 vaccine. The T-cell response peaked at day 14 post-vaccination. To ensure that promising vaccines can be produced in adequate numbers and fairly distributed to all impacted areas, particularly low-resource countries, strong international coordination and cooperation between research groups engaged in vaccine research and development will be required. SARS-CoV-2 is a novel virus of zoonotic origin that began spreading among humans, most likely in late November 2019, and to which the population lacks an existing level of immunity that is able to stop or limit the virus's spread<sup>44</sup>. This makes the need for a prophylactic vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 all the more urgent. The herd immunity barrier for SARS-CoV-2 is approximately 67% assuming a R0 of 3. This suggests that once the proportion of people who have developed immunity to SARSCoV-2 approaches 0.67, the infection will begin to decline. It is unethical to gain herd immunity through natural infection because doing so will result in millions of deaths worldwide. Additionally, the unregulated spread of SARS-CoV-2 will swiftly paralyze our healthcare systems, raising fatality rates from all causes in addition to COVID-19. Due to this and the fact that developing an effective vaccine

will take at least 12 to 18 months, it will be crucial to closely follow the WHO's recommended preventive measures and to maintain social distance<sup>42</sup>.

The duration of protective immunity is a crucial factor that deserves attention. The duration of protective immunity is still unknown. Although low antibody titers were detected in all patients after roughly 15 months, prior investigations have shown that neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV persisted for a period of time between several months and two years. The 229E coronavirus, which causes the common cold, has also been associated with a decline in antibody titer, although this antibody titer was insufficient to guard against reinfection. If this is the case for SARS-CoV-2, protective immunity will wane over time, and herd immunity will not be achieved without repeated vaccination<sup>45</sup>.

#### **2.1.5 The Emergence of COVID-19 in Nigeria**

On February 27, 2020, the Infectious Disease Center in Yaba, Lagos State, Nigeria, verified the first case of COVID-19. A Turkish airline from Milan, Italy, brought an Italian national to Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos at 10:00 p.m. on February 24, 2020. The following day, the Italian paid a visit to his company's location in Ogun State and made an appearance at the staff clinic. The on-call doctor was highly suspicious of the virus's presence. As a result, he recommended the Italian national visit the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), where the COVID-19 status was verified<sup>46</sup>.

The Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) began tracking down "Persons of Interest," which included everyone listed on the manifest of the airline that brought the index case to Nigeria as well as individuals who were in close proximity to the index case while they were in Lagos and Ogun State. After a two-week period, a cluster of cases was found in Lagos and Abuja; this was acknowledged to be the beginning of the virus's spread across the country. Beginning on

March 23, 2020, the Federal Government, through the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), prohibited international commercial flights entering the nation. On the same day, Nigeria reported its first death; the victim was a 67-year-old male returnee from the United Kingdom who had already been treated for underlying medical conditions before passing away. In Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, the death took place<sup>47</sup>.

In response, on March 29, 2020, the Federal Government of Nigeria authorized the closure of all non-essential services (companies and industries) and the restriction of people's freedom of movement in Lagos State, Ogun State, and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. The majority of state governments imposed limitations on public gatherings and interstate travel. On May 4, 2020, the Federal Government subsequently allowed a gradual lifting of the lockdown in the previously restricted states. The Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) report that, the training of the rapid response teams across the 36 states in Nigeria was concluded in December 2019. On January 28, the NCDC further revealed that a Coronavirus Group had been set up to activate its incident system to respond to any emergency. Additionally, the NCDC worked with 22 states in Nigeria to activate their emergency operations centers to manage and link up with the national incidence coordination centers<sup>44</sup>.

Although the government had strengthened the surveillance at the airport since January 2020, Nigeria recorded its COVID-19 index case that was imported from Italy, on February 27. This raised concerns about the effectiveness of airport surveillance and, by extension, the country's general preparedness. The index case (an Italian) had visited some other states of the federation before testing positive for COVID-19. The pre-COVID-19 preparedness was grossly inadequate. Nevertheless, the onset of COVID-19 sent waves of panic across Nigeria, like in every other country. Due to globalization, the health risk of communicable diseases could be pandemic<sup>45</sup>.

Trade and travels facilitate the flow of people, who incidentally could move, carrying a health risk (in this case: the coronavirus). From one imported index case, many countries (including Nigeria) face tremendous health challenges with multiple cases and deaths. Since the first index case in Nigeria, the number of cases has been increasing, although at a snail pace due to public health interventions. Upon the detection of the index case, the NCDC activated a multi-sectorial National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to oversee the national response to COVID-19. Subsequently, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) for coronavirus control was inaugurated on March 9, 2020. The PTF announced that travelers from 13 COVID-19 high-risk countries had been restricted from entering the country. The Port Health Services and NCDC monitor the self-isolation of returnees from the affected countries from then onward. The concern from several quarters was that the ban on high-risk countries would have taken immediate effect. By the time the ban took effect, the nation had recorded more imported cases. Unfortunately, most of those who arrived in the country did not comply with the 14 days self-isolation recommended by the NCDC<sup>46</sup>.

According to the NCDC, all of the verified COVID-19 cases that occurred in the nation between February 27 and March 17 (the first 30 days) were brought in by travelers who had just returned from abroad. As of March 27, one month after the first case, ten states in Nigeria had 81 clinically confirmed cases. Three patients had fully recovered, and one death was reported. At this time, Lagos State had the highest number of cases (52; 64.2%). By April 5, the number of positive cases had increased exponentially to 232. The death toll had risen to five, and 33 persons had recovered while states with positive cases in Nigeria totaled 14. The nationwide spread of the virus led to the Federal government of Nigeria effecting certain measures to contain the virus. The available information on the virus and the welfare of her citizenry were guiding beacons in

periodic restrictions to maximize containment. Educational and Religious institutions were the first bodies restricted before containment measures extended to non-essential services. The Federal Government with the aid of different ministries and governmental agencies put up a formidable response in the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria<sup>46</sup>. Leading the frontlines is the Federal Ministry of Health; the ministry is tasked the formulation and implementation of policies related to COVID-19 in Nigeria with collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies. The Federal Ministry of Health through its Accreditation Committee is involved with inspection of public and private treatment centres for COVID-19 confirmed cases. Furthermore, the ministry handles the training guidelines and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution for frontline workers for this novel disease. The ministry is strongly supported by the Presidential Task Force for the Control of the COVID-19 (PTF) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease and Control (NCDC)<sup>47</sup>.

President Buhari set up a 12-member task force to champion the battle against COVID-19 in the country. The Task Force is chaired by the Secretary to the Federal government, Mr. Boss Mustapha and Dr. Sani Aliyu is the National Coordinator of the Group<sup>46</sup>. The task force's mandate is to create a workable National Response Plan that would be revised on a daily basis as requirements change. The strategy must follow international best practices while taking into account the local circumstances prevailing in the country. The Task Force has been given six months to fulfill its mandate<sup>47</sup>. Moreover, the Nigeria Centre for Disease and Control has been given the mandate to lead preparedness, diagnosis and response to outbreaks of COVID-19 in Nigeria. The parastatal publishes regular updates on reported cases, discharged cases and deaths related to COVID-19 via its website and social media channels. The mission of the NCDC is to protect Nigerians' health through evidence-based prevention, integrated disease surveillance and

response programs, using a single health strategy, driven by research and led by a professional workforce<sup>48</sup>.

The initial performances of the various institutions and agencies of the Government showed the ill-preparedness to combat the virus but the subsequent responses have been phenomenal. This is evident in the containment of the ongoing pandemic spread in Nigeria that began February, 2020. Although, the spread potential is yet to be properly estimated, containment strategy has proven quite effective. A major contributor to the spread worldwide was increased travel, modern transport networks made it easy for travelers to transmit the virus; hence, the ban on inter-state travel was an appropriate containment measure. Due to the nature of the symptoms, only people who have been tested can be easily identified as infected<sup>49</sup>. The test results have shown a rising number of people confirmed to have COVID-19. Though a significant number of people recover from the infection, the greater concern lies with those who are yet to be tested. The ease of transmission coupled the rate of interaction amongst the populace indicates that the confirmed cases are merely a small share of the actual numbers. This is demonstrated by the rate of newly confirmed cases by the day. According to the daily reports provided by NCDC, Lagos State with the highest population density in Nigeria has been recording the largest number of confirmed cases<sup>50</sup>.

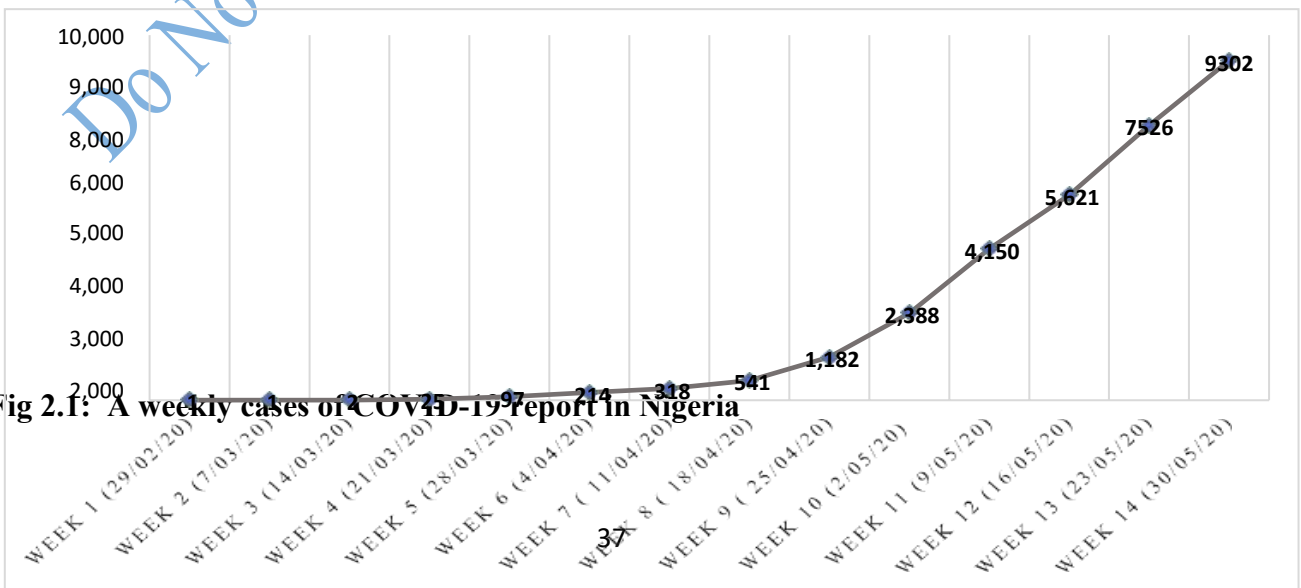


Fig 2.1: A weekly cases of COVID-19 report in Nigeria

**Source: NDDC**

The viral population in Nigeria rapidly grew exponentially after the confirmation of the COVID-19 index case there (Fig. 2.2). There were a total of 25 cases reported in Nigeria by the end of the virus' fourth week there. Further investigation of the confirmed instances showed that 20% of confirmed cases had close contact with COVID-19 patients, and 76% of COVID-19 cases had travel history outside the country. The remaining 4% of confirmed cases were categorized as having no epidemiological connection and having insufficient data<sup>51</sup>.

As a result, the NCDC issued guidelines requiring returnees from high-risk nations to stay in isolation for at least 14 days. This implied that the bulk of confirmed cases in Nigeria were returnees from epicenters. Beginning on March 23, 2020<sup>52</sup>, the federal government halted all international flights into Lagos and Abuja. The choice was made in an effort to stop the virus from spreading across the country. Only three States of the Federation, including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, had COVID-19 cases reported as of March 21, 2020: Lagos (19), Ogun (2), Ekiti (1), and Abuja (3). All geographical regions of the nation had at least one confirmed COVID-19 case by the end of the fifth week. As a result, there were restrictions on interstate travel as well as a complete lockdown (lockdown) in Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja. The NCDC had to boost testing of suspected cases as a result of this trend. As a result, the agency expanded its existing laboratory collection across the nation by adding a modular laboratory at the University College Hospital in Ibadan, Oyo State, while also announcing the establishment of six more in the upcoming weeks<sup>53</sup>.

The effectiveness of the lockdown in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun State was seriously questioned because residents in each state appeared to have been reluctant to abide by the restriction. The corruption that permeates our society is said to have defeated the ban on inter-state travel. Given

that Nigeria is the epicenter of global multidimensional poverty<sup>101</sup>, elements of society have considered the promise of palliatives (cash transfers and the delivery of relief supplies) as a big failure. As a result, crime rates rose in some areas of Lagos and Ogun States. Other Federation states did not strictly adhere to the idea of social distance, and several did not forbid religious gathering<sup>54</sup>.

As of the end of the eighth week of the virus's presence in the nation, there had been a total of 541 cases reported; this indicated a considerable increase of around 64% over the number of confirmed cases as of March 21st, 2020. According to an inquiry into the confirmed instances, 34% of COVID-19 cases had prior international travel, and 37% of confirmed cases had close contact with COVID-19 patients. No epidemiological connection and insufficient data were assigned to the remaining 29% of confirmed cases. This demonstrated that "community transmission" was gradually taking place in Nigeria. This was demonstrated by a decrease in the percentage of confirmed cases that had recently traveled outside of the nation and an increase in the percentage of confirmed cases that were classified as having no epidemiological relationship and having incomplete data<sup>55</sup>.

#### **2.1.6 Nigeria's Effort at Tackling Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic**

The worldwide human race is seriously threatened by the coronavirus illness (COVID-19) pandemic. Countries all around the world have created and implemented plans and methods to prevent and slow the development of this disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) created and developed the worldwide measures, policies, and protocols. These international rules and pandemic-fighting tactics are the results of many scientific studies and investigations. However, the WHO recommendations are based on China's experience, which is where the pandemic began, rather than on results of international statistical and empirical studies.

Therefore, it was assumed that countries would abide by these rules and alter them to suit their individual needs<sup>56</sup>.

However, there has been any effort made in Nigeria to adapt and customize the WHO recommendations. The Nigerian government created a Presidential Task Force (PTF), which is headed by a lawyer by trade in the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF). Although the PTF includes the ministers of health and the environment, among others, this does not indicate how seriously the country's political leadership is taking the pandemic in hand. The others are merely political appointees of the President, with the exception of the National Coordinator, the Director General of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and the Minister of Health, all of whom are physicians by training. The PTF is therefore not technically ill-equipped to handle the mission of combating the novel epidemic due to its composition.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, the PTF's strategy in Nigeria has been to "copy and paste" the WHO principles without making any attempt to adapt or alter them in light of the needs, values, and characteristics of the nation's sociocultural environment. Evidently, the political leadership in Nigeria lacks the capacity for serious and critical thought. In its current form, the PTF lacks the technological and knowledge-based expertise to combat this unprecedented epidemic. This is due to the lack of scientists (particularly in the field of microbiology, which is the core area of expertise on viruses), pharmacists, medical scientists, academics (who are by nature core researchers), and other professional organizations like the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Pharmaceutical Society (NPS), Religious Organizations, Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), etc.<sup>55</sup>.

This is based on the rationale that combating the coronavirus illness (COVID-19), a unique pandemic, calls for an integrative and multidisciplinary strategy. Once more, it has been asserted

that COVID-19 is an invisible enemy to humanity; hence, only physical science(s) or political bureaucracy can overcome such an opponent. The majority of Nigerians consequently have fundamental doubts about the veracity of COVID-19 because of the PTF's unsuitable composition. There is a misconception that COVID-19 is a Nigerian fraud. The absence of true specialists to adequately inform the populace of the facts and regulations is a major factor in this lack of faith in the PTF. Due to this, Nigerians have found it difficult, if not impossible, to follow the rules of the PTF, which include<sup>56</sup>.

- i. Frequently washing hands with soap and water
  - ii. Using hand sanitizer with a 60 percent alcohol base
  - iii. Social exclusion
  - iv. Orders to stay in one's home versus
  - v. Compulsory wearing of mask
  - vi. Self-isolation
  - vii. Ban on interstate travel
  - viii. Closure of schools
  - ix. Closing of religious institutions
  - x. Lockdown in full in several states
  - xi. No hand-shaking
  - xii. Border closure
  - xiii. Flight cancellations
- i. A critical look at all the guidelines released by the PTF as a means to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic will reveal that all these are imported or copied ideas from WHO and other countries. There is none of these that is indigenous to Nigeria and do not in any way

reflect the country's sociocultural situation or value. We will pick few of these guidelines and show how these cannot work in Nigeria<sup>56</sup>.

- ii. Frequently washing your hands with soap and water: This is not feasible in Nigeria, where over ninety-eight percent (98%) of homes and buildings lack access to water, let alone running water from the faucet. The Nigerian government has not implemented any practical water supply plans and has not taken the subject of providing water to the public seriously. Therefore, the question is: where will Nigeria's over 98% population get running water? Every home or residence has running water in the nation(s) where this will function. Only the political elite and the wealthy few in Nigeria can afford to have running water in their houses<sup>56</sup>.
- iii. Self-isolation: In Nigeria, it is improbable to practice self-isolation. This is due to the fact that there are typically five or more people living in each room due to the housing crisis. So how is self-isolation conceivable in Nigeria given the severe housing shortage there? This is only a method that works and is effective in a culture that values individualism. In Nigeria, communalism is the cultural pattern or standard. Recently, the Federal Government ordered a thorough lockdown of Kano after the index case was reported, and there was an immediate rise because of the cultural way of life of the Kano people<sup>5</sup>. This serves as an illustration of this culture<sup>56</sup>.
- iv. Social Distancing is a rule of behavior in which people keep their distance from one another, keeping at least two to three meters between them. This is because to the high contagiousness of COVID-19, which spreads from person to person. The social distance rule is intended to slow the pandemic's spread. The social and working situations in Nigeria, however, were not created to adhere to this societal norm. Such a rule will be

incredibly challenging, if not impossible, to follow in Nigeria. This isn't because Nigerians break the law; rather, it's because their sociocultural context forbids it. Recently, there were enormous crowds in banks and bus stops in Lagos, Abuja, and Port-Harcourt, indicating difficulty enforcing the social distancing guideline<sup>56</sup>.

- v. Stay-at-Home Order: The stay-at-home order was created to limit the residents' social interaction and, as a result, the transmission of the virus. But only places with a social security system in place can make this work. It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to keep such a significant percentage of the population at home without any palliative or social safety nets in Nigeria because the bulk of people depend on daily revenue to survive. Any attempt to compel those who completely rely on daily income for their life can lead to additional socioeconomic issues, such as the "hunger-virus" that Nigeria experienced during the complete lockdown in Abuja, Lagos, and Ogun States. During the lockdown, the government was intended to make palliatives available to the populace, but this did not happen. The social register was a concern, and the government and its agencies also had problems with corruption and other issues<sup>56</sup>.
- vi. Ban on Interstate Travel: The interstate travel ban was put in place to stop the coronavirus from spreading from one state to another. Despite the ban on interstate travel, the governors of the several states have been traveling from one state to the next. This is a blatant instance of executive lawlessness, demonstrating that the restriction only applies to individuals and not to governors, who are intended to set an example for the populace. Therefore, these Governors pose a significant threat to the virus' ability to spread. The residents were influenced by their constant movement to continue breaking the travel prohibition law and spreading the infection. The country's political structure and

institutions do not sustain the restriction on interstate travel. This is due to the immunity clause in the Constitution, which exempts the President, Vice President, Governors, and their appointees from any criminal liability while serving in their respective offices. Security officials stationed to enforce the interstate travel restriction accept bribes and let people pass regardless of whether they are infected with the virus or not. It was almost like a government-established corporate endeavor that encouraged corruption.

From the above analysis, it is evidently clear that the Nigeria's effort at tackling the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is not a product of deep and critical thinking. Also, there is no evidence of any research(es) carried out in Nigeria by the PTF or instituted by it to know the nature of the virus and the various methods of its spread in the country so as to develop a research-based and knowledge – based approach towards curbing it.

#### **2.1.7 Socio-Economic Effect of COVID-19 in Nigeria**

The COVID-19 is a global pandemic whose wide spread has resulted in a downturn in global economic activities. Various countries of the world have been affected in different ways and different control mechanisms have been deployed to manage the situation. The nature of the virus makes it difficult to detect, hence, it is difficult to estimate the actual number of people infected. Nigeria is perceived as an urbanized population with about 49.66% of the population resident in the rural areas<sup>53</sup>. There are 5.9 and 4.9 people in the typical rural and urban household, respectively. Urban areas have successfully implemented social distancing while rural areas live in close proximity to one another and would find it difficult to do so. The rural households are labor-rich and obtain a significant portion of their income from the provision of labor services<sup>52</sup>. Due to rising expenditure and reduced income, the economic slump causes additional annoyances. The population distribution also shows that older people, who are thought to be the

group most susceptible to the disease, are disproportionately concentrated in rural areas; as a result, a disease outbreak there would be disastrous because it would significantly raise the death rate. Until a suitable vaccination is available, each country has implemented its best apparent steps to address its contextual needs. Although there have been significant efforts to ensure the time period is cut in half, the accelerated estimated time frame for its effective dissemination is between 12 and 18 months<sup>57</sup>.

The severe humanitarian crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic is coupled with the possibility of upsetting societal and economic issues. The path to any potential escape appears perilous, which is made harder by epidemiological ambiguity, the political establishment's lack of readiness, and pre-existing circumstances in the country's macroeconomic system. The main source of income for the nation is oil, which is currently moving south on the international market. Due to this, the national budget for 2020 has been revised downward and will suffer significant losses to its education and health budgets. The oil price benchmark has also been slashed from fifty-two dollars to about forty dollars by the National Assembly. This panic economic measure of the Federal Government has been followed by fourteen states as at Monday 8th June, 2020. The oil price benchmark has also been slashed from fifty-two dollars to about forty dollars by the National Assembly. This panic economic measure of the Federal Government has been followed by fourteen states as at Monday 8th June, 2020<sup>58</sup>.

This shows that there has not been a coordinated, strong, or efficient reaction to the nation's economic catastrophe brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. The political leadership's lack of imagination will have more severe socioeconomic ramifications, and COVID-19's effects will persist longer and may completely devastate Nigeria's socioeconomic system. The Nigerian project and its social and economic recovery plans are in danger of losing public support and the

support of the international community<sup>59</sup>. The debates over the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which the then-Nigerian despot, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, believed to be the only solution to Nigeria's economic problems, in 1986 have also strained relations between the country's political leadership and the populace. This situation is demonstrated by the Federal Government's persistence on providing food to schoolchildren during the pandemic, even though all of the nation's schools have been shuttered<sup>58</sup>. In any given rich, productive society, health is paramount, and disease and panic can drastically reduce or even halt output, consumption, leisure time, travel, and the general well-being of the populace. Health crises like "the Ebola virus in West Africa," "the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome" (MERS) pandemic in Korea," and the development of "COVID-19" have socio-economic effects in addition to their effects on national and worldwide health. For instance, during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2013 and 2014, "direct taxes on companies, VAT receipts, and indirect taxes" all significantly decreased throughout the sub-region. Additionally, there was a significant decline in confidence among both domestic and foreign investors, which "led to financing gaps of more than US\$600 million over two years." These had an equal impact on all sectors and had long-term consequences for "Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone." Additionally, the "economic loss due to SARS was estimated to be in the figure of \$40 billion" despite the infection of more than 8000 persons and the death of roughly 800 people. Because of consumer anxiety over the virus's "ease of transmission in public settings," the impact was significant<sup>59</sup>.

As a result, the incidence of the COVID-19 is increasing exponentially with the following notable effects on Nigeria's economy, social interactions, and public health:

i. High Unemployment: COVID-19 pandemic is certainly creating high unemployment in the country due largely to drastic reduction in economic activities caused by the coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. The unemployment situation was already bad in Nigeria before the emergence of the pandemic, but this is going to be made worse due to general lull in economic activities and the lockdown. The impact of this is going to be mostly on the private sector of the Nigerian economy<sup>60</sup>. Commercial banks in the nation began a massive round of layoffs, but the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had to step in to stop the process. So the question is, how long can this intervention continue? Such intervention has a limit because businesses cannot keep employees they won't be able to pay. In the nation, there is no legislative framework in place to safeguard workers in this way. It is now anticipated that the unemployment rate will increase by 42.5% and the youth unemployment rate will increase by 58.6% as a result of COVID-19. According to the UNDP assessment on Nigeria released in June 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic will cause around thirteen million individuals in the nation to lose their jobs in 2020<sup>60</sup>.

ii. Population Growth: The country's population will inevitably grow as a result of the entire lockdown, the stay-at-home order, the travel restriction, the curfew, the closure of schools, the closure of religious institutions, etc. There will inevitably be intimate family ties that result in sexual behaviours when families are forced to stay inside and engage in no serious activities. Increased sexual activity will undoubtedly lead to more unintended pregnancies, which will raise the country's birthrate. Due to the lack of exact population data, which are currently estimated to be around 200 million before the pandemic, this will undoubtedly make planning in the country more difficult<sup>60</sup>.

iii. Domestic violence: During this pandemic era, domestic violence will undoubtedly escalate. Couples and families will make new discoveries about certain unpleasant behaviors or traits if

they are forced to stay indoors together. Domestic violence will increase in frequency as efforts to curb these new behaviors are met with resistance. Such recently identified unpleasant actions may potentially destroy households<sup>60</sup>.

iv. Sexual crimes: Thoughts of the adults will be preoccupied with what they see around them because they are forced to stay indoors for extended periods of time without any significant activities to occupy them, leading to an increase in sexual crimes including rape, incest, harassment, etc. There will be emotional appeals as a result of the forced stay at home, which will increase neighbor interaction. In this way, the proverb "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" will be objectively supported. There will inevitably be some emotional tensions and trickery brought on by the physical proximity, accessibility, and availability. Sexual crimes will rise as a result of all of them. The amount of pedophiles exposed during this lockdown serves as proof of this<sup>60</sup>.

v. Higher Incidence of Poverty: Prior to the pandemic, Nigeria was formally acknowledged as the world's center of poverty. With the current limitations, lockdown, and remain at home orders, the nation's poverty situation is only likely to become worse. The majority of Nigerians works in the unorganized sector of the economy and are completely dependent on daily wages. Due to the pandemic's disruption of this regular economic flow, there is a significant rate of poverty in the nation<sup>60</sup>.

vi. Reduced Tax Revenue: The coronavirus epidemic has serious effects on trade and the world economy. Numerous economic operations in the nation are also disrupted. Government revenue will drastically decrease as a result of these interruptions. Due to the fact that all businesses have closed, there will be little money left over to cover taxes. So, the government won't be able to access any unpaid direct or indirect taxes. The global oil price scenario would result in further

revenue declines for the Nigerian government, as was already mentioned. This might make it more difficult for the government to fund social infrastructure projects like building roads, paying for education, providing water, and so forth. This is evident in the Buhari Presidency's rushed and foolish decision to take out huge loans that it will not be able to repay during its term, which would cause a wide range of issues for the nation and have deadly economic repercussions down the road<sup>60</sup>.

vii. Increased Insecurity: It is certain that the country will experience increased insecurity as unemployment and poverty rates rise. Hunger and frustration among many young people will fuel these new waves of criminality and overall insecurity. Our reasoning in this regard is supported by a recent demonstration by the Northern Youths Forum against insecurity in Katsina state, the President's home state.

viii. Psychological Trauma: The high rates of poverty, unemployment, and sexual assault will lead to dissatisfaction, loneliness, and other negative emotions that could result in suicidal thoughts, mental illness, and violent outbursts.

ix. High Inflation Rate: The forces of supply and demand will inevitably result in a higher inflation rate. Because few businesses are creating and few farmers are planting, the demand will exceed the supply, which will lead to inflation. No one would be exempt, thus Nigerian citizens will undoubtedly take the brunt of it. If wages aren't rising and businesses are failing while consumers are forced to pay above-average prices for goods and services, this could further impoverish the populace, which would then cause frustration and additional health risks<sup>60</sup>.

x. Recession: The Nigerian economy was already extremely fragile and prone to it, largely as a result of poor economic management, bad economic policies, a lack of innovation on the part of political leadership and policy makers, policy somersaults, persistent policy inconsistencies, and

nepotism in the recruitment of human resources, which was supported by a visionless president. Generally speaking, the self-induced causes that would cause Nigeria's economy to enter a recession for the second time during the Buhari administration include the political leadership's and policymakers' inability to be proactive and constructively think beyond the box<sup>60</sup>.

xi. General Decline in GDP: The COVID-19 epidemic has a negative impact on every area of the nation's economy. The entertainment sector has been seriously impacted. The significant loss that would be experienced during this pandemic phase may prevent the tourism and hospitality businesses from recovering<sup>60</sup>.

xii. Lack of research development: One important area to which Nigeria has not given enough emphasis is research development. The epidemic makes this already awful condition much worse. The main cause of the pandemic's ineffective control has been the nation's inadequate funding of research. The funding for universities and other research institutions is insufficient. This is demonstrated by the absence of testing laboratories in the nation. Only two laboratories in the entire nation could be used for COVID-19 testing prior to the pandemic. Due to the country's universities and research institutions being evacuated in a panic, this pandemic will undermine the nation's potential for research and development. The country's capacity for preparedness and prevention will suffer from this lack of research development. The reliance on policies created and developed outside the country without modification to or customisation for Nigerian peculiarities or circumstances is another way that the country's lack of research development is manifested. In contrast to the billions of naira supplied to SMEs, the CBN only offers 550 million naira in research grants. This is not the top priority for a nation that wants to prosper. This demonstrates how seriously lacking in originality, critical thinking, and the ability to take initiative by thinking outside the box government leadership is<sup>60</sup>.

xiii. Pressure on Health Care System: Pressure on Healthcare System: The COVID-19 patients who need hospitalization as a result of the pandemic undoubtedly put "immense and unprecedented pressure on the countries underinvested healthcare system" (UNDP, 2020). The country had about 12,455 cases as of the 9th of June; however there were only about 5,000 beds available. This is utterly insufficient. This is a blatant example of governmental leadership that prioritizes medical tourism over investments in the healthcare industry and quality education. During this pandemic, the underfunding of the health sector during the previous 50 years will be clearly visible.

xiv. The Nearly 60% Drop in Oil Prices One of the most devastating economic shocks Nigeria will experience is the 55 percent drop in oil prices between January and March 2020. This is especially true given that the oil sector accounts for 65% to 90% of government revenue and all export earnings, respectively. Given that the 2020 budget projection was predicated on a price of US\$57 per barrel and output of 2.18 million barrels per day, a price decline or price fluctuation between US\$29 and US\$42 per barrel would result in a 48% reduction in expected monthly revenue. In particular, this will result in a \$10 billion decline in fiscal revenue and a \$19 billion decline in export revenue (UNDP, 2020).

xv. Pressure on the Naira: This effect has been present since February as a result of the 1.0% decline in the informal market's exchange rate, which has exhibited a greater decline since the Naira was selling at N450 per dollar on the parallel/black market. Remittances, which made up 80% of the Federal budget in 2018 and affect people's livelihoods and spending habits, could be more severely negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic's effects on jobs and financial transactions in developed economies. This will have a negative impact on the economy and the general well-being of the population.

xvi. Collapse of the transportation industry: The interstate travel prohibition, the stay-at-home order, the curfew, etc. all have a detrimental impact on the transportation sector. Due to the broad protocols provided to stop the coronavirus's spread, the aviation industry is most negatively impacted on a national and international level.

### **2.1.8 Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic**

Even the most advanced healthcare systems are unable to handle a significant inflow of seriously ill people into their emergency departments, as the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated. It was extremely difficult for Italy, which has 3.2 hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants compared to 2.8 in the United States, to meet the demands of severely ill patients who were admitted to hospitals quickly. As a result, follow-up appointments were postponed, wards were rearranged to accommodate COVID-19 patients, and elective or semi-elective surgical operations were cancelled or delayed.

Implementing regional aid is essential to avert this large flood to emergency rooms in a potential second wave. To find sick people and enable contact tracing, several nasopharyngeal swabs and serological testing should be carried out in the area. Patients with minor symptoms or carriers who are asymptomatic could thus remain at home under the supervision of health professionals, decreasing the need for clinic visits. Hospital access restrictions will conserve resources, ensure that they are available to people who truly require them, and lower the danger of exposure. The Italian government has made the decision to expand the number of nurses in the area, increasing the ratio to 8 nurses for every 50,000 people. To aid patients at home, specialized continuing care units (Italian, urban search and rescue) have been developed<sup>61</sup>.

In addition, there would be a 70% increase in ICU beds and a lesser extent in sub-ICU beds. In the event of epidemic peaks, 600 beds will be made available for portable constructions. In the

interim, more ventilators, ECMO machines, and personal protective equipment are required. The number of people with positive RT-qPCR nasopharyngeal swabs is currently used to estimate the prevalence of COVID-19, but the actual frequency is likely substantially greater. IgG anti-SARS-CoV-2 testing may help identify exposed individuals and asymptomatic carriers, providing more accurate case counts and fatality estimates as well as a useful tool to manage the restarting phase<sup>62</sup>.

Indeed, phase two will provide challenges to all nations in a relatively short amount of time. We could not, however, consider serological positivity as a "license" to end social distancing practices and the use of protective devices until the impact of the neutralizing antibodies detected by all the various methods and the antibody serum levels required for people to be fully protected against reinfection are known. Following that, it will be crucial to maintain social isolation throughout this second phase, which continues to be the principal preventive approach in the absence of a vaccine and potent antiviral medications. Social alienation implies a fundamental restructuring of our society and way of life<sup>63</sup>.

Every opportunity should be taken to engage in smart working and remote work. In the event that this is not practicable, social distance and safety precautions (protective gear, hand hygiene, disinfectants) must be offered at work. Due to the ban on mass gatherings, businesses like restaurants, cafes, theaters, and other similar establishments will have to lay off staff, which will have negative social effects and exacerbate poverty. For such workers, welfare is crucial<sup>57</sup>. To offer instruction and safety for their pupils, schools and institutions will need to restructure. All students will need access to the Internet, which should be made available so they can further their education and, if necessary, take tests online<sup>57</sup>.

Finally, in order to get through this trying time, communication is crucial. To raise public knowledge and encourage adherence to new norms, national authorities must send forth clear statements. The COVID-19 pandemic has put an unprecedented amount of strain on our healthcare systems and highlighted once more the crucial role that laboratory medicine plays in stopping the spread of novel transmissible diseases. Networks of COVID laboratories have been established almost everywhere in the world to meet the unique requirements of citizens and patients, and they will continue to be crucial during the restart of social and professional activities. Laboratory medicine has traditionally been regarded as an essential component of the decision-making process that supports 70% of clinical decisions; in the COVID-19 era, this contribution may be even higher and close to 100% because decisions like patient admission, isolation, and/or discharge are taken based on laboratory results<sup>64</sup>.

The COVID-19 epidemic has exposed the flaws in our healthcare systems, which were ill-equipped to deal with an enormous flow of patients who needed respiratory support very quickly. Health officials were compelled by this emergency to halt all non-urgent medical treatments and transform wards into ICUs or sub-ICUs. However, the pandemic has inspired the scientific community to band together in an effort to combat this unique pathogen<sup>61</sup>. The virus was isolated, sequenced, recognized, and genetically defined within a few days after the first instances of unidentified pneumonia were reported. Because of its evolutionary connection to SARS-CoV and coronaviruses that resemble SARS in bats, it was given the moniker SARS-CoV-2. Molecular and serological assays were created and added to regular diagnostics based on its genetic characteristics. Additionally, a number of vaccine methods have been created or are in the process of being created, and studies are being conducted or will soon be started to evaluate

their efficacy. The availability of a preventative vaccine is essential since SARS-CoV-2 currently lacks an efficient and targeted antiviral therapy<sup>65</sup>.

### **2.1.9 Policy Responses to COVID-19 Health Crisis: Costs and Impacts**

#### **The Health Crisis**

The first case of COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was diagnosed on February 27, 2020, in Lagos State, Nigeria (NCDC, 2020), and was specifically linked to an Italian traveler who had arrived in Nigeria on February 25. The second case, involving a Nigerian citizen in Ogun State who had direct touch with the Italian, was confirmed on March<sup>32</sup>.

#### **Response to the Health Crisis**

Nigeria tested roughly 2,500 samples per day for COVID-19 in June 2020 (Dixit et al., 2020). Due to limitations in the supply of testing kits, facilities, and staff, only 50% of this capability was actually used. Only 138,462 people out of Nigeria's 200 million people had undergone viral testing as of June 30, 2020, or 0.07 percent of the population. In comparison, in South Africa, where more than 1.6 million persons out of a total population of 58 million people had the virus tested on them, more than 3.26 percent of the population had done so<sup>66</sup>.

Only 350 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and 350 ventilators were available in Nigeria prior to the epidemic. However, 100 more ventilators were purchased in April 2020. The American government also contributed 200 extra ventilators (Federal Ministry of Health, 2020). Additionally, ICUs have been made available in numerous states across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones<sup>67</sup>.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) created a Level 3 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in February 2020 to guarantee a coordinated emergency response to the virus. The National EOC was already on alert mode prior to the coronavirus's appearance in Nigeria. It kept

an eye on how the virus was spreading in other nations and started getting ready in case it made its way to Nigeria. The NCDC had nationwide health worker training during this time. More than 13,000 healthcare professionals have received case management and infection prevention and control training from NCDC since the first confirmed case (NCDC, 2020)<sup>68</sup>.

The NCDC had established EOCs in 23 Nigerian states before the epidemic. Since the initial case was confirmed, these centers have remained the state level's focal point for coordination.

State governments have also set up isolation facilities to give COVID-19 patients the appropriate medical attention and social isolation. Along with working with and receiving support from the African Centre for Disease Control, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the West Africa Health Organization<sup>69</sup>, the NCDC has also deployed quick response teams throughout the states of Nigeria. Additionally, under the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Project (CoPREP), the Nigerian government gave money to each of Nigeria's 36 states as well as the Federal Capital Territory to aid in the virus's containment and mitigation efforts. By offering technical know-how, diagnosis, and case management in the 36 states of Nigeria, CoPREP intended to increase the ability to detect the virus. Among other things, it sought to improve response capability by training frontline healthcare professionals<sup>70</sup>.

The government may have found a homegrown treatment for the coronavirus, according to a May 2020 announcement from the Ministry of Health. A study team from the University of Jos asserted to have a herbal cure for the coronavirus. The principal investigator asserted that herbal therapy assisted COVID-19 patients in recovering from the virus<sup>71</sup>. The NCDC maintained that no local therapy for the virus had been discovered or adopted by the Nigerian government, despite the ministry's admission that proposals for local treatments for the illness had been received and sent for examination.

The COVID-19 herbal remedy had also been shipped to Nigeria from Madagascar. The Ministry of Health declared that testing on the effectiveness of the herbal medicine was ongoing during this time. But it was discovered that the medication was ineffective at treating the coronavirus<sup>69</sup>.

### **Initial Government Reaction**

Although the first COVID-19 case was reported in late February, Nigeria did not see an outbreak as quickly as other countries of the world. This was primarily owing to the government's quick introduction of public health measures, which simultaneously prevented further importation and local spread of the virus.

A multi-sectorial national emergency operation center under the direction of the NCDC was activated following the initial case finding. Rapid Response Teams (RRT) were then sent across the nation, and each state was given responsibility for lead contract tracking and other health response tasks inside its own borders. In response to the second incidence, on March 9th, the Federal Government established a Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19, which was tasked with collaborating with NCDC to develop vital and consistent standards for combating the pandemic at the federal level. The PTF started issuing guidelines for policy right once with the intention of limiting the virus's spread across the nation. The four categories listed below provide broad descriptions of these rules<sup>72</sup>.

1. **Lockdown:** At the end of March, three states that were early foci of the outbreak—Lagos, Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory—were put under a federally sanctioned state of lockdown. In order to stop the spread, some state governments enacted lockdown measures, and in April, the federal government expanded the federally-sanctioned lockdown to Kano State.

2. **Closing of Schools:** All secondary, primary, and postsecondary schools across the country were ordered to close by the government.
3. **Travel Ban:** In mid-March, the 15 nations with the greatest number of cases were subject to a travel ban. Operating ceased nationwide at all domestic and international airports. Nigerian interstate travel was likewise prohibited.
4. **Closed Border:** All air and land borders were shut down for a preliminary four-week period. In addition to this, the government stepped up contact tracing and public health initiatives. To coordinate contact tracing and enhance passenger surveillance when they enter Nigeria, the National Rapid Response Team (NRRT) was established. Nigeria used a focused approach to contact tracing, focusing on people who had recently returned from abroad and the people they had been in contact with. Within 14 days, this method resulted in the making of 30 to 40 follow-up contacts for each instance.
5. **Exemptions:** In order to accommodate necessary services for facilitating the flow of food across states and across the nation, the government established some accommodations.

**Table 2.2 Exemptions to Response**

Response	Exemptions
Lockdown	Healthcare professionals; food processing, distribution, and retail businesses; and petroleum distribution and retail businesses companies engaged in the production, transmission, and distribution of electricity; private security firms

School closures	None.
Travel Ban	A needs-based system was used to award special permissions.
Closed Border	Seaports

**Source: Presidency, Federal Republic of Nigeria Presidency Report<sup>73</sup>**

### **Sequence of actions**

There were three lockdown phases during the time frame of this report. The phases are listed below and will be referred to as phases 1, 2, and 3 in the remainder of this report.

#### **Phase 1: total lockdown**

In three federation states—Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja—the federal government declared a countrywide lockdown that would last for one month on March 29. All movement was prohibited during the lockdown in the aforementioned states, with the exception of necessary travel and services, such as the delivery of food, fuel, relief supplies, goods, and personnel on critical duty. On April 27, the federal government imposed a two-week lockdown in Kano State, prolonged the lockdown in the aforementioned states for another week, and declared an ongoing nationwide curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., starting on May 4<sup>73</sup>.

#### **Phase 2: Partial Lockdown I (8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew) April 4–June 1**

The administration started to gradually lift the lockdown on May 4. Movement was allowed at this time; however there was a curfew at night from 8 pm to 6 am. Schools, borders, and interstate travel restrictions all remained in place<sup>73</sup>.

### **Phase 3: Partial Lockdown ii (curfew, 10pm - 4am) June 2 - September 3**

From June 2 through September 3, the second stage of the partial lockdown was in effect. During this time, the national curfew was changed to 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. Minor adjustments to address concerns about the economy, society, and health was made while maintaining the existing reaction phase. Government offices reopened with condensed hours, and banks were allowed to resume regular operations. With permission granted to leave courses early so that they could restart before school-leaving exams, the gradual reopening of schools got underway. Despite the reopening of interstate rail service, most airports and borders remained closed<sup>73</sup>.

### **Phase 4: Partial lockdown iii (curfew, 12 pm - 4 am) September 4 - November 30th**

With adjusted curfew hours between 12 am and 4 am, the third stage of the partial lockdown got underway. Aviation services were restarted after all official restrictions on travel within the nation were abolished. The usual working hours of both the public and private sectors were reinstated. All schools were permitted to reopen, and it was suggested that university, secondary, and elementary school reopening be done gradually and in waves. At the same time, no in-person classes or engagements were permitted at any daycare facilities<sup>73</sup>.

#### **2.1.10 Social-Economic Measures Against COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic's effects on societal and economic consequences in Nigeria were among its most notable and immediate effects. The virus and the related policy steps taken to stop its spread have serious negative consequences on all industries and market categories. These effects endure even after the lockdown. Unfortunately, those most at risk—students, women, small business owners, daily wage workers in both the formal and unofficial sectors, as well as vulnerable individuals—were the first to feel the effects. For these populations, the combined

consequences of the pandemic's severity and the ambiguity of daily life posed a threat to further entrench and grow the number of individuals living in poverty.

### **Responding to the Socio-Economic Crisis: Sources, Context, Strengths and Challenges**

The federal government implemented a variety of short-term actions to capture some of the shocks to students, individuals, firms, and the economy as a whole in order to lessen some of the socio-economic effects. Several ministries worked in collaboration with state governments around the country to coordinate these efforts on a national scale. The government's social-economic policies are divided into two groups in this section: income, employment, and livelihood support, and education sector support. Delineate, work, and livelihoods were some of the strategic mitigation measures put in place to support income, while education was another. The advantages and disadvantages of equity and accessibility for the most vulnerable individuals were also discussed.

#### **Income, Employment, and Livelihoods**

Among these are a conditional cash transfer program, social protection and in-kind assistance, a CBN credit facility worth USD 129.95 million (NGN50 billion), and tax incentives for MSMEs. The government announced a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme on April 1st that would provide the poorest and most vulnerable households with monthly payments of 51.58 USD (NGN 20,000) for a period of four months commencing in April<sup>74</sup>. The President's Social Investment Program (SIP), which was implemented in 2016 as a component of the CCT program, extended the CCT. The National Social Register (NSR) was used to identify the poorest and most vulnerable individuals in Nigeria (primarily living in rural areas), and payments of 12.90 USD (NGN 5,000) were made to these individuals bimonthly. The CCT is supported by a total of three sources:

1. Former President Sani Abacha's wealth was seized from Switzerland for USD322 million (NGN 122.7 billion).
2. A credit from the World Bank for USD 500 million (NGN 190.6 billion) to manage the project for six years, from 2016 to 2022.
3. National SIP of USD 1.289 billion (NGN 500 billion), included in Federal Government budgets from 2016<sup>75</sup>.

The NSR's poorest and most vulnerable households were found using a three-stage targeting procedure based on geographic targeting, community-based validation, and proxy-means testing (PMT). A scant 2% of the nearly 80 million Nigerians living in extreme poverty were represented by the 2.6 million families in the NSR prior to COVID-19. Given the rural skew of the first NSR, the government announced plans to increase coverage by 1 million households during the first month of the lockdown. The following criteria were established for choosing the people or families to be covered:

1. Urban low-income people or households with a balance in their accounts of no more than USD 12.90 (NGN 5,000).
2. People in Nigeria who routinely top off their phones with between USD 0.26 and 0.52 (NGN 100 and 200)
3. Persons with disabilities and those who work a regular job<sup>76</sup>.

The administration moved quickly to announce the increase in the magnitude and frequency of CCT payouts as well as to start actually doing so. Families enrolled in the NSR began receiving payments from the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry on April 1 (two days after Phase 1 of the lockdown commenced) for a total of 51.58 USD (NGN 20,000) (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Although the CCT program was timely, its comprehensiveness, targeting, and coverage fell short of expectations<sup>76</sup>.

The first difficulty is that, given the breadth and complexity of the issue, the CCT was tiny. Nigeria spent too little on the CCT program, at 0.00017% of GDP, both before and during the pandemic. The entire amount allotted per household was also insufficient to meet the demands of a family of 5, which makes up the typical household size in Nigeria<sup>71</sup>. The majority of Nigerians who live in extreme poverty are also not included in the NSR, which is used to designate fund recipients. Around 2.6 million houses in the NSR are home to around 11 million people. Unfortunately, this barely scratches the surface, especially given that, prior to COVID-19 and the lockdown, it was estimated that 87 million Nigerians were living in poverty<sup>77</sup>. Due to the lack of access to employment, the epidemic and consequent movement restrictions are likely to have increased that number. As an illustration, the NBS reports that in Lagos State, approximately 5.5 million individuals are employed in the informal economy, which accounts for around three-quarters of the state's 7.5 million laborers. Even if these cash transfers were only available to beneficiaries in Lagos State, with 5.5 million people in Lagos alone taking care of the needs of at least 75% of the 13 million non-working population, they are unlikely to make a significant effect<sup>75</sup>.

Heeding to the public outcry that the NSR did not truly capture the most vulnerable people affected by the lockdown, on April 13, the government announced plans to expand the NSR by including an additional one million households based on the criteria mentioned above. However, the process was shrouded in mystery as the government failed to disclose any necessary details of the program or the process of profiling new households. Confirmation of the expansion did not come till August 2020, when the ministry announced that the NSR had been expanded to 3.7

million households (15.5 million individuals) as of June 2020 (three months after the most profound impacts of the lockdown had been felt)<sup>76</sup>. The government announced plans to expand the NSR by incorporating an extra one million homes based on the aforementioned criteria on April 13 in response to public uproar that the NSR did not adequately account for the most vulnerable individuals who were affected by the lockdown. The procedure, however, was cloaked in secrecy because the government refused to provide any essential information about the program or the method for profiling new families. The NSR was expanded to 3.7 million households (15.5 million people) as of June 2020 (three months after the most significant effects of the lockdown had been noticed), according to a government announcement made in August 2020. As just 19% of Nigeria's population lives in poverty, this growth was minuscule in terms of its scope and breadth.

The second problem is with the targeting. It was ill-advised to use the NSR to determine who would receive the CCT. Their strategy involved using the NSR to identify the 30% of households with the lowest incomes in the states with the worst rates of poverty, the bulk of which had little to no impact from the first lockdown<sup>70</sup>. As was previously indicated, three of the most urbanized states in the nation experienced the federally authorized limitation on travel, indicating that the impact of the lockdown would be skewed toward the urban poor, particularly those who engage in urban informal sector economic activities. The overwhelming majority of people in this population work for a living on a daily or weekly basis, either as an employee for another person or as a micro or small business owner. People in this cohort fall into the category of those who were most susceptible to the negative economic shocks associated with COVID-19 because their sources of income are more directly correlated with the vagaries of the market on a daily basis<sup>70</sup>. Unfortunately, this group was mainly left out of the prospective beneficiary pool.

The success of the program was also hampered by some other structural problems. Digital payments are challenging in Nigeria since there is not a reliable information management system or extensive data based on undocumented labor. People had to physically accept the funds as a result; because to movement limitations, many NSR residents who were supposed to receive compensation were unable to do so. On a governance level, the government's failure to provide key information about the intervention constrained the possibility of accountability. Furthermore, no data is gathered on a national scale regarding the effects of the transfers made during the lockdown, and it is unknown who is receiving the money. The government's capacity to learn from and enhance its social protection programs is constrained by the lack of data collection and intervention monitoring<sup>73</sup>.

#### **Social Security and In-Kind Assistance**

At various lockdown stages, the federal government also created and carried out a variety of in-kind social protection support programs.

#### **Reduction in the price of fuel and electricity**

The cost of petrol was reduced in March from USD 0.37 to USD 0.32 (NGN 145 - 125). (Olisa, 2020). A further decrease to USD 0.28 (NGN 108) occurred in May. A further suspension of the new power rate payment till 2021 was made by the Nigerian power Regulatory Commission (NERC) in April. One of the reasons given for the suspension was the effect of COVID-19. Both directly through the cut and indirectly through its influence on lowering other living expenses, these reductions were timely and a good step toward decreasing the effects of the lockdown. These cuts were less likely to directly affect the poorest and most vulnerable households, nevertheless, given Nigeria's electrical problems. About 97 million Nigerians, the vast majority of whom live in rural areas or urban slums, have not yet been connected to the electrical grid

(Energy Central, 2020). It is clear that the poor and the vulnerable did not benefit from these reductions given the correlation between vulnerability and access to energy. The poor and disadvantaged use substantially less fuel directly; similar to how electricity is used. Therefore, lowering fuel prices would only have an indirect positive impact on them through other means, such as decreased transportation expenses or improved food security. However, those channels were also impacted by other market forces because of the particular difficulties of COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdown<sup>77</sup>.

The government eliminated the long-standing price cap on gasoline prices (fuel subsidy) in June 2020, which led to a spike in petrol prices that reached a peak of USD 0.43 (NGN 162) in December 2020<sup>76</sup>. The new electricity prices' implementation, which had been temporarily halted in April, was resumed in September. For all clients with a power supply longer than 12 hours per day, the electricity cost rose from USD 0.079 (NGN 30.23) to USD 0.16 (NGN 62.23) as a result of the elimination of the electricity subsidy<sup>77</sup>. The removal of the fuel and electricity were induced by the crash in global prices, which caused a decline in government revenues over the year. Again, given the connection between fuel and electricity prices and cost of living, these increases are poised to indirectly impact the poor and vulnerable households through transportation, increase in food prices and general cost of essential services<sup>77</sup>.

### **Food Provision**

The federal government declared on April 8 2020 that 77,000 metric tons of food would be given to disadvantaged households in the three impacted lockdown states<sup>69</sup>. The procedure, however, was hampered by a lack of accountability and openness at the time, and the distribution modalities were not made clear<sup>71</sup>. Nigeria experienced a severe food crisis as a result of the lockdown due to decreased incomes, a lack of food, and an increase in food costs. 72% of

Nigerians were most concerned about the closure due to hunger, according to a survey conducted during the first week of the lockdown<sup>77</sup>. 40% of respondents expressed concern about a lack of food for the poor, 21% expressed concern about hunger-related deaths, and 5% expressed concern about rising food prices. Given the severity of the situation, 77,000 metric tons of food would probably not be enough to meet the demands of a sizable number of those who were undernourished. At several occasions, it was claimed that state politicians had taken control of the food palliatives<sup>65</sup>. It was discovered that many state governments had been stockpiling COVID-19 food palliatives in October 2020. During the lockdowns, food supposed to be distributed to homes throughout numerous states in Nigeria was discovered as citizens overran many government-owned warehouses.

### **Subsidised Housing and Solar Provision**

Finally, the government unveiled the Mass Housing Program (MHP), a USD 818.3 billion (NGN 317.29 billion) initiative to address the housing and electrical needs of vulnerable households during the pandemic. It was discovered that the strategy has two tracks: track one will require building 300,000 homes across the nation in a year, while track two will use existing institutions to develop an additional 25,515 dwellings across the nation in the same time frame<sup>76</sup>. For 5 million homes in Nigeria, the program also recommended installing Solar Home Systems (SHS). The USD 5.93 billion (NGN2.3 trillion) National Economic Sustainability Plan (a bounce back plan for Nigeria) authorized by the Federal Executive Council on June 24 will provide funding for the MHP. Despite being well-intentioned, these programs were not promptly implemented; therefore they had no effect on individuals during the various lockdown phases. As a result, the advantages will manifest later<sup>78</sup>.

## **Business Support**

Loans, tax breaks, renegotiated conditions of current loans, and additional targeted help for companies in the health sector were all offered to MSMEs.

CBN tax relief and credit scheme. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) stated on March 23 that households and SMEs affected by the pandemic could access a targeted loan facility worth USD 128.95 million (50 billion NGN) (CBN, 2020). Through the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF), the credit facility was funded. Businesses may receive up to USD 64,475.48 (NGN 25 million) through the fund, while qualified households may access up to USD 7,737.06 (NGN 3 million) (CBN, 2020). Additionally, the CBN declared regulatory forbearance for the restructuring loans, a one-year moratorium for CBN intervention facilities, and permission for other financial institutions (OFIs) to consider restructuring loan terms and tenor for pandemic-affected firms and households<sup>79</sup>.

The funds are available to firms and households affected by COVID-19-induced restrictions and are gender-neutral, which is a major strength of this credit. The lending facility is available for low-income families up to USD 7,737.06 (NGN3 million) per person and for affected companies up to USD 64,475.48 (NGN25 million) per person (CBN, 2020). The main issue, however, was that this loan facility was only intended for the legal urban sector and had no bearing on the unofficial sector<sup>80</sup>.

At best, the application processes are restrictive; at worst, they are exclusive. Poor households and enterprises in the informal sector have limited access to formal credit facilities because of their lower levels of literacy and lack of access to financial services. The applications are made available online through a portal; therefore all prospective applicants must have access to a phone, computer, and internet capabilities as well as the navigational skills to use the portal. This

restricts access to this opportunity for the households and enterprises that are the poorest and most vulnerable<sup>81</sup>. Additionally, the application must include Bank Verification Numbers (BVN), business registration documents (for businesses), and a business plan with convincing evidence of the pandemic's negative effects and the opportunity that the funding will provide. These requirements present significant obstacles for workers in the unorganized sector who want to take advantage of the package. This poses a number of problems, principal among which is that only around 40% of Nigerians have access to bank accounts, which are necessary to obtain a BVN. In addition, obtaining a BVN necessitates possessing a legitimate form of national identification, which 21% of Nigerians—including the most marginalized and vulnerable—do not now possess. Businesses in the informal sector are instantly excluded by the requirement of a business registration document. The business plan component muddles the lines of accountability, allowing people to be denied a loan depending on how someone evaluates their plan<sup>82</sup>.

The loans are not interest-free, and access to them also needs proof of collateral in the form of property documents or moveable goods listed in the National Collateral Registry. Many low-income households, enterprises, and the informal sector are left out due to limited communication about the loans' availability and how to receive them<sup>81</sup>.

### **Tax Relief**

The Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) announced a tax relief plan that included delaying tax filing deadlines, waiving late returns penalties for personal or corporate income taxpayers who pay their tax liability early, suspending field audits, giving all Nigerian businesses that keep their employees a 50% tax rebate from 1 March to 31 December 2020, and being lenient with taxpayers who have trouble obtaining FOREX to settle their tax liabilities<sup>82</sup>.

The benefits of the tax exemptions and refunds provided by FIRS are only available to enterprises registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act, demonstrating yet another urban formal sector bias. This measure does not promote the informal sector, which contributes 65% of Nigeria's GDP and employs 80% of the labor force, despite being important and advantageous to formal sector enterprises<sup>83</sup>.

### **Supporting MSMEs directly in the health sector**

The CBN said in March that it had extended credit facilities totaling USD 257.9 million (NGN 100 billion) to help businesses in the health sector prepare for the challenges posed by the pandemic. Pharmaceutical and medical product distributors, healthcare service providers, makers of health products, and logistical services are all eligible for this credit program. The program is scheduled to operate from April through December 31, 2020<sup>73</sup>, and it covers all of the goods and services they offer. The Real Sector Support Facility-Differentiated Cash Reserves Requirement (RSSFDCRR) of the CBN provided the funding for this plan<sup>84</sup>. The government declared on May 8th that pharmaceutical businesses would be exempt from import duties for six months on items including ventilators, test kits, personal protective equipment, thermometers, disinfectants, and basic medical supplies<sup>81</sup>.

The intervention in the health sector emphasizes the programs' tilt toward the urban formal sector. Credit assistance for the health industry and import tax waivers for pharmaceutical enterprises did not immediately benefit the informal sector because the health sector is an extensively regulated and standardized field and the absence of health insurance policies characterizes the informal sector. In essence, because of the nature of informality in the nation and the lack of knowledge about the composition of the informal sector, the government was unable to provide

any help that was specifically designed to match the informality landscape and address the difficulties being faced<sup>84</sup>.

### **Education Sector Support**

Over 35 million children faced obstacles from attending education due to the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 on the Nigerian educational system. The impact has been worse for impoverished and vulnerable kids, reaching beyond just access to education.

### **School Nutrition Initiative**

Prior to the pandemic, pupils in public schools in Nigeria had access to daily meals through school feeding programs, which were financed by the federal government and put in place in 2016 as part of the government's SIP to assist feeding 24 million schoolchildren. According to estimates from the World Food Programme, Nigeria's domestic schools feeding initiative currently serves daily meals to over 9 million pupils in over 40,000 public schools. This effort not only feeds school children, but also gives them access to vital healthcare services like immunization. In order to lessen this, the government kept on the school-feeding program throughout the shutdown of the schools; the program cost more than NGN523.3 million<sup>85</sup>.

The administration proclaimed the continuance of the initiative but did not define the procedures for carrying it out. There is currently no concrete evidence of how the meal provisions have affected students. There are a few factors that stick out and can be used to assess how accessible this measure is. First, word of the availability of food ration came only after the closure of the schools. As a result, a sizable portion of families with school-age children would have been ignorant of the continuation. Second, some areas were to be where the daily meals might be obtained. Numerous vulnerable households would not have been able to use it because they had

enough transportation to go there or were afraid of being hassled on the road due to the restrictions on movement enacted by the security operatives in several states<sup>86</sup>.

### **Learn at Home Program (LHP)**

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) created a Learn at Home Programme (LHP) with support from UNESCO and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to lessen the impact of school closures on learning for Nigerian pupils. The FME strengthened state radio and television education programs through the LHP, developed virtual learning platforms, distributed links to e-learning resources, and provided printed take-home materials for students' activity books, worksheets, and assessment cards<sup>87</sup>. The learning mitigation measures did not offer precise steps for dealing with child learning disruptions or bridging the infrastructural and digital literacy gap. The LHP directions listed on the FME website are ambiguous and do not specify how the learning requirements of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children would be served during the shutdown. Students from vulnerable households who lacked access to either low-tech or high-tech distance learning technologies, adequate electricity, or the necessary learning support from a household member had few opportunities to learn during the lockdown, despite the government sharing learning platforms and making learning accessible through radio and television. This has exacerbated already-existing disadvantages and increased learning gaps among vulnerable kids<sup>88</sup>.

#### **2.1.11 Impacts, Gaps, and Challenges of Mitigation Response**

While these mitigation efforts demonstrate the national policymakers' concern for the poor, a review of the relief measures/mechanisms' modalities reveals significant shortcomings that made the government's response less equitable. These challenges are centered on the flaws and information gaps that were present throughout the formulation and application of the mitigation

measures, which led to inadequate accessibility and impact for those most impacted by the COVID-19 shock.

### **Targeting**

The lockdown immediate effects were disproportionately felt by those who engaged in urban informal sector economic activities, such as (but not limited to) street trading and vending, micro and small scale manufacturing, repair and service provision, home-based enterprises, and unofficial employees of formal enterprises (earning daily/weekly wages). The affected lockdown states include three of Nigeria's most urbanized states. Although the government moved quickly to build a number of support programs, the data reveals that these programs were created without a complete grasp of how the crisis would affect them<sup>89</sup>.

The poverty-focused CCT was ineffectively targeted since it was disproportionately distributed to rural households, who were less likely to suffer adverse effects from the lockdown's immediate effects than the urban poor, who saw its full effects first. Even though the NSR's coverage of urban poor households was expanded, the CCT still only covered a small percentage of families. Due to major targeting flaws in the NSR used to target support, many of the poorest households will not have been reached despite the expansion. According to every field survey participant, neither the NSR nor the CCT were available to them<sup>73</sup>.

Targeting problems also result from a lack of knowledge about Nigeria's significant informal economy. Because there is no comprehensive dataset on MSME units and their employment characteristics, it is clear that there is a lack of trustworthy statistics on this important economic sector. This shortcoming makes it more difficult to direct assistance programs toward those who are most in need during this crisis. It restricts the government's capacity to help those working in the unregistered informal economy. As a result, the majority of government aid programs

focused on the formal economy while covering only a small portion of workers in the unofficial economy.

Poor targeting causes inherent flaws to unintentionally create obstacles that exclude the most vulnerable demographics. The majority of respondents to the field survey (98%) who acknowledged knowing about government assistance noted that they were unable to get it because of the assistance's restrictive terms and restrictions. Those that fulfilled the requirements said the application procedure was difficult<sup>89</sup>.

Women were substantially harmed by this inadequate coverage as well. The enormous informal sector and the gender norms that are ingrained in the social fabric of the country probably hampered the effectiveness of these policies in reaching those parts of the economy that needed help the most, despite the gender neutrality and apparent universality of the programs. The informal sector's disadvantaged households and enterprises have limited access to formal credit facilities due to lower levels of literacy and banking services<sup>90</sup>.

### **Delivery Channels**

Our field survey revealed important results, including the importance of delivery methods for intervention programs. This applied particularly to the educational field. Given Nigeria's low literacy rate and infrastructural issues, the government's accessible distant learning modalities, including low-tech options (TV, radio), and high-tech ones (internet), faced difficulties for assuring equitable and high-quality learning. Evidence from the NLPS 2020 and field survey indicates that distant learning is probably going to make educational disparity for the most vulnerable groups worse, especially for kids from lower socioeconomic origins and those living in poorer places<sup>91</sup>.

The wide digital divide and poor levels of digital literacy in Nigeria made remote learning programs more difficult to access. The structural disadvantage of Nigeria's lack of inexpensive energy, reliable internet connection, and proper educational tools made it difficult for the most disadvantaged citizens to receive government assistance. The outcomes of the field survey provided support for this. The findings show that lower income families and less educated parents were less likely to use digital gadgets and the internet. Additionally, they stated that even if given access, they lacked the abilities to make use of the learning tools. The absence of proper tools and infrastructure was cited by 60% of students as the biggest obstacle to learning. They also stated that they lacked access to the best working environments and educational resources to support at-home learning<sup>92</sup>.

Due to these obstacles, even though various high- and low-tech distance learning choices were tried, they did not significantly improve student outcomes. The NLPS 2020 results show that only roughly 8.5%, 16.2%, and 21.6% of students, on average, used mobile learning apps, watched educational television shows, and listened to educational programs between April and July. In the same period, only 16.8% of pupils were reported to have finished their professors' assignments. Only 39% reported a household member had helped them with their studies or reading, and more than half had not done any independent reading or studying. According to the results of the field survey, private school students were more likely than students at public schools to have used distant learning during the closures<sup>93</sup>.

The delivery system established for the poverty-targeted support schemes was also deficient because of incomplete data on intended recipients, a deficient database, and deficient digital payment mechanisms. For instance, beginning during the first week of the lockdown, the CCT and food rations were distributed in person at designated sites. On the one hand, getting to the

pickup place would have been difficult at best and potentially deadly at worst considering how strictly security authorities enforced the lockdown. On the other hand, the danger of disease transmission during collection was likely to be increased by this delivery approach<sup>90</sup>.

### **Inadequate support schemes**

Many of the assistance programs put in place in response to COVID-19 fell short of fulfilling basic requirements, helping struggling families and businesses, or lessening the learning loss brought on by the closing of schools. For instance, despite the CCT's expansion, only about 13% of the most vulnerable people benefited from it. Additionally, the CCT benefit only made up around 13% of a typical household's monthly expenses. As a result, it would have been challenging for families to survive even if they had access to the CCT<sup>92</sup>.

The problem was attributed, among other things, to insufficient consultation with relevant parties. In the field survey's education questionnaire, 50% of respondents said they were aware of the numerous distant learning initiatives offered by the government. However, only 10% of respondents thought the tactics worked. The majority claimed that the government had not given enough thought to how they would be able to use the programs being used. Nearly all respondents who acknowledged government initiatives claimed that the recommendations made for utilizing existing options were ineffective. Eighty percent of those surveyed stated that the government did not make any resources accessible to support the remote learning initiatives they made available<sup>94</sup>.

90% of the teachers surveyed said that neither the decision to close schools nor the process of creating a COVID-19 education contingency plan involved their participation or engagement. The percentages for parents and students were just as high, representing 93% and 90% of all parents and students polled, respectively. All of the participants who said that the government

had contacted them said that they had received information on COVID-19 and the reasons why schools had to close, but that they had not been involved in any way in the creation of distance learning programs<sup>92</sup>.

The foundation of power and accountability relationships between decision-makers and the most vulnerable and underprivileged members of society is the absence of consultation with key stakeholders. The politically powerless and frequently lacking in resources poor and vulnerable people in Nigeria are unable to reject bad policies. We asked everyone who filled out a field survey questionnaire if they were interested in working with the government to make interventions better. 70% of respondents said "no," with the majority explaining that they either didn't know how to or didn't think it would have the intended results<sup>95</sup>.

The government's capacity to handle such a crisis is another factor in the inadequacy. One of the main concerns was that the government's reaction effort was obviously poorly planned and that the necessary parties were not consulted or included in the process of drafting the response strategy. Although majority of the respondents to the education questionnaire for the field survey believed COVID-19 to be a significant threat, most stated that the government had not adequately planned for the effects and repercussions of the school closures<sup>96</sup>.

#### **2.1.12 Private Sector intervention in Mitigating the Socio-Economic Consequences of COVID-19 in Nigeria**

In order to reduce the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in Nigeria, a number of government actions relied heavily on the help of the business sector. Particularly, the private sector offered two types of assistance: collaboration with the public sector and technology advancements.

### **Private-public partnership in policy responses**

The Coalition Alliance Against COVID-19 (CACOVID), an alliance made up of the CBN and Deposit banks as well as important stakeholders in the private sector (such as the Aliko Dangote Foundation), was established in March 2020 in response to the funding challenge that Federal and State governments are facing as a result of the dual shock caused by COVID-19 and the drop in commodity prices<sup>97</sup>.

CACOVID is a private-sector task force developed in partnership with the federal government, the NCDC, and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The overarching aim of CACOVID was to support the government's effort in combating COVID-19 in Nigeria. The task force contributed by pulling resources across industries to provide technical and operational support to the government while providing funding and building advocacy through various awareness campaigns. The task force mobilised USD 104 million (NGN 39.6 billion) and channelled the funds toward supporting the health, socioeconomic and misinformation crises. The coalition developed an accountability framework to establish trust: KPMG was engaged as bookkeepers, while Messrs, Ernst and Young were engaged as auditors. In collaboration with the federal government, the NCDC, and the World Health Organization (WHO), the private sector task force CACOVID was created. CACOVID's main objective was to assist the government of Nigeria in its fight against COVID-19. The task force made a contribution by bringing together resources from diverse businesses to support the government technically and operationally while giving money and fostering advocacy through various awareness efforts. The task committee raised USD 104 million (NGN 39.6 billion) and used the money to address the crises in the areas of health, socioeconomics, and misinformation. The partnership created a structure for

accountability to build confidence, and KPMG was hired as bookkeepers and Messrs. Ernst & Young as auditors<sup>98</sup>.

**Support for the health crisis:** The partnership set up and outfitted medical centers across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Creating testing, isolation, and treatment facilities as well as providing Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and molecular testing labs was all part of this. They supported the frontlines' training of medical personnel and provided beds and medical supplies. The coalition also covered the logistical costs for ambulances and a portion of the Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System (SORMAS) for contact tracing<sup>98</sup>.

Additionally, CACVOID introduced a screening tool (CACVOID) that asked users to complete a 5-stage questionnaire in order to learn about their prior medical history, recent travel experiences, symptoms, and exposure to any verified cases. Users of the tool receive a result from the screening that either instructs them to isolate or get in touch with the closest response center. By November 2020, CACVOID had provided funding for the construction of 39 isolation centers that were completely functional in all 36 states and the FCT. These isolation centers were essential in bolstering the government's attempts to combat COVID-19, along with the other medical supplies and equipment provided by the federal and state governments<sup>98</sup>.

**Support for the socio-economic crisis:** The coalition stepped in with a palliative plan that involves distributing food aid to all of Nigeria's states in order to lessen the decline in household consumption brought on by low incomes and high food prices. Bags of rice, sugar, salt, pasta, and other essential food necessities were distributed as part of this<sup>98</sup>. The alliance committed USD 60.28 million (NGN 23 billion) to buy food for 10 million individuals in 1.7 million homes (based on a benchmark of 6 people per household). A 10 kg bag of rice, a 5 kg bag of garri,

semovita, or maize flour, one carton of pasta, two cartons of noodles, five kilos of sugar, and one kilo of salt were expected to be given to each family unit that was given access to the food<sup>99</sup>.

The local governments and wards handled the distribution of the food relief program, which was aimed at the poorest and neediest people. They developed a formula for determining which communities within states had the highest concentration of vulnerable families. Within those communities, they prioritized the most vulnerable individuals, such as the disabled, widowed, and those who lived in conditions of squalor. Each state's state and local governments were cooperatively involved, and they leaned on local government officials' expertise for identifying purposes. The state governments, which were in charge of the actual distribution, were given the food aid directly. The motivation for CACVOID's decision to use the state government as its distribution channel was the presumption that they would be the ones with the most knowledge about and interaction with the most vulnerable individuals. For its part, CACOVID established a communication team in each state with the responsibility of following up and reporting on what had been done by the states as well as a monitoring and evaluation team to make sure that the donations reached the intended recipients<sup>100</sup>. According to CACOVID, as of November, it had spent USD 75 million (NGN 28.7 billion) on purchasing food supplies and distributing them to 1.7 million homes nationwide.

**Support for the misinformation crisis:** In order to prevent the virus from spreading further in urban and rural areas of numerous states, including the four states under the federally imposed lockdown, CACOVID launched a grassroots awareness campaign in June. The goal of the awareness campaign was to dispel myths, emphasize the value of face mask use, social separation, and other recommended safety measures. The awareness drive's second phase, which was implemented in September and was guided by the first phase's implementation lessons, took

place. Additionally, CACOVID distributed face masks and other safety items to locals in the locations where they conducted campaigns. CACOVID used outlets from print, television, radio, and social media to spread information<sup>101</sup>.

### **Technological Innovations**

Technology advancements that tried to lessen COVID-19's negative impacts and take advantage of benefits were the second way the private sector intervened. COVID sped up private sector innovation in Nigeria's tech sector by creating expansion prospects in a variety of fields that had previously received little funding or attention. Prior to COVID-19, the public was mostly unaware of the majority of the digital platforms that were used to support social and commercial activities during the lockdown and thereafter. However, COVID-19 has served as a catalyst, encouraging new investments, growth of existing inventions, and adaptation of existing technologies to address contemporary issues<sup>102</sup>.

Naturally, the health tech sector attracted the most attention and saw rapid expansion during this time. Health innovations like Gerocare, which offers a subscription-based service and uses real-time mobile technology to give geriatric care at home, became more well-known and famous. Additionally, investment interest in the industry increased. Another such is Wellvis Health, a telemedicine platform that links medical professionals with Nigerians who are geographically cut off from hospitals. During this time, Wellvis Health developed a digital assessment tool that enables users to determine their viral exposure and offers suggestions for the following steps<sup>102</sup>.

Wellvis Health provided the NCDC with the data they had collected, enabling them to generate accurate estimates for planning requirements. GloEpid is a contract monitoring tool created by Tech4Dev, a platform that equips African communities with digital skills, and it leverages telecom data from smartphones, GPS, and Bluetooth connections to track the movements of

people who may have been exposed to the virus. The Ventures Platform Foundation and CCHub are two tech hubs that have urged health tech businesses to create cutting-edge solutions to aid the fight against COVID-19<sup>102</sup>.

Beyond the health industry, tech start-ups expanded into all other sectors. In the wake of the epidemic, e-learning systems like the Mobile Classroom (PUNCH, 2, an indigenous mobile learning platform that allowed all people across all school levels to learn without making eye contact, gained popularity. The FME and UNICEF teamed up with them in November to provide each subscriber three months of free lectures as a thank you for the traction the platform had gained during the school closures<sup>102</sup>.

There was a lot of invention and adaptability in other industries as well. For instance, online markets were modified to extend their reach in order to lessen the impact of market closures. Jumia Nigeria, an online retailer, launched the "stay safe with Jumia" campaign to advocate for contact-free delivery of prepaid shipments throughout the nation<sup>101</sup>.

### **Equity Consideration in Private Sector Responses**

Although the general public has applauded the corporate sector for its efforts to reduce the effects of COVID-19 for Nigeria's most vulnerable citizens, there are still many lessons to be learned about creating an inclusive society. Although the private sector's interventions seem to be properly planned, it is impossible to determine how much of an overall impact they had on eradicating poverty and lowering inequality after they were put into place. The government's implementation decision as the means of distribution for some of its donations, such as the palliatives, is an essential criticism of the private sector initiatives, particularly through CACOVID<sup>94</sup>.

In addition to the deposit money banks in Nigeria who provided sizeable donations to assist the CACOVID fund, as was already mentioned, CACOVID's founding members also included them. Banks might have directly reached out to and assisted the most vulnerable people in their existing banking database given that they had direct access to many disadvantaged people. Compared to the state government's provision of palliatives, which CACOVID provided, this would have had a more immediate effect. To prevent employment losses, one specific bank, Access bank, announced compensation reductions across the board. This declaration was made a month after it made a USD 2.6 million (NGN 1 billion) donation commitment to aid the government's fight against COVID-19. Even though this support was required, the salary reductions came at a crucial time and had an impact on people at all income levels. The bank might have supplemented and supported the payment of employee salaries during such a precarious moment with the funds it directed toward the CACOVID fund instead of doing this in an effort to avert job losses<sup>91</sup>.

The employment of the state government as the distribution system for the food palliatives has come under question in light of the discovery of the CACOVID food palliatives, which were intended to help the most vulnerable people and were discovered during the END SARS rallies. In October, five months after Phase 1 of the lockdown relaxed, the palliatives that were supposed to be provided during the first two phases of the lockdown were found in warehouses located around Nigeria. Numerous stories about the unequal distribution of palliatives based on political and sectarian prejudices appeared in local media prior to this revelation<sup>103</sup>.

In terms of the technological innovations, given the required infrastructure (e.g. telephone, electricity, internet connection) to be functional, the barrier to entry for vulnerable people was

high. This was true for distance learning, with evidence showing that most of the benefit and adoption was concentrated on high and middle-income households.

### **Civil Society Organisations**

Nigeria's civic society mobilized to assist as the COVID-19 outbreak spread across the country. CSOs had an impact on the lives of people and communities affected by the pandemic and the government's policy decisions to stop it. CSOs in Nigeria served as frontline responders and human rights activists, enforcing government openness and giving food and hygiene supplies to the weak. Below, we give a brief overview of Nigeria's varied range of civil society activity.

**Monitoring and defending cases of human rights violations:** As was already mentioned, lockdown enforcement in Nigeria was linked to an increase in homicides and cases of gender-based violence by police. One of Nigeria's leading advocates for civic space, Spaces for Change (S4C), oversaw a national initiative to track, record, and evaluate the government's response to the pandemic (Fund for Global Human Rights, 2020). S4C started a number of programs to stop government repression and protect the rights and work of human rights advocates both during and after the pandemic<sup>104</sup>.

To track intrusive measures, S4C formed a tracking team, and they recorded their results in an online database. They disclosed a number of police- and state-instigated violations of human rights through this database, including the murder of a cab driver in Cross River state for transporting people without masks. S4C established a helpline to offer victims of abusive government activities legal support. They secured police bails, provided legal representation through the helpline, and petitioned other organizations tasked with stopping violations of human rights. S4C also launched a communications campaign to share important health information, and engaged stakeholders to guide international advocacy. Additionally, S4C started a

communications campaign to spread crucial health information and involved stakeholders to direct global advocacy<sup>104</sup>.

A civic-tech organization called Citizen's Gavel aims to speed up the delivery of justice using technology. They support this effort by enhancing and expanding the remote legal assistance they offer to victims of human rights violations. During the epidemic, the Legal Defense and Assistance Project (LEDAP) expanded the resources available to the court system for vulnerable criminal defendants and inmates.

CSOs also worked to promote accountability and transparency over the government's decisions in response to the crisis, and its use of funds. An example is, Connected Development, a grassroots organisation focused on strengthening local communities by building citizens' capacities to hold the government accountable. Using their social accountability platform, ifollow.money.org, they tracked and provided information on the status of donations made toward the fight against COVID-19 and how they were used. Armed with this information, they urged transparency for the government and invited citizens to use the platform to monitor spending and demand for improved health and socio-economic services. The usage of finances by the government and its decisions in response to the crisis were also the subject of CSO efforts to promote accountability and transparency. As an illustration, consider Connected Development, a grassroots organization that works to develop local communities by empowering people to keep their government responsible. They tracked and gave details on the usage of donations contributed to the battle against COVID-19 using their social accountability platform, ifollow.money.org. Armed with this knowledge, they pushed for government transparency and invited residents to utilize the platform to track spending and demand better socioeconomic and health services<sup>105</sup>.

The Socio-economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), among other organizations, worked to ensure accountability and transparency in how the government used COVID-19 monies. Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) collaborated with the ministry of women's affairs, a coalition of women's rights organizations, and others to inform the public, demand basic necessities, and safeguard women and children from harm. The COVID-19 response systems were monitored and supported by Network for Health Equity and Development (NHED) at the state and federal levels, and Nigerians were made aware of the situation<sup>106</sup>.

The propagation of false information in the wake of the pandemic was a significant but ignored problem. A number of CSOs intervened to control the infodemic, fostering positive behaviours and minimizing the potential harms brought on by false information (MacArthur Foundation, 2020). A fact-checking campaign on COVID-19 was started by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), which also provided information in the widely-spoken local languages of Nigeria. Public health movies in Nigerian languages were created by the Akin Fadeyi Foundation. Through traditional, social, and political leaders who typically hold positions of authority and trust, infodemic disseminates information in local languages<sup>106</sup>. Across Nigeria, private persons launched voluntary activities. They provided food, sanitary items, and other necessities through these activities.

### **2.1.13 Social Arrangements and Governmental and Citizen Trust**

The majority of those who responded to the field poll and those who took part in the FDG said they agreed that the government's first decision to suspend schools and limit movement was vital to stop the virus's spread. There is evidence, nevertheless, that some government acts over the course of the months have simply worked to destroy any initial trust that may have been

established during the early stages of government policy response. Some significant deeds and occasions stand out.

**Low levels of trust before the epidemic events:** During the FGDs held in Abuja, one resounding observation was that the people had no expectations of the government because they had been let down repeatedly in the past. Instead, all participants urged the commercial sector, civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and well-meaning Nigerians to come up with ways to support them when asked for suggestions on what could be changed to enable better access to social protection. In general, individuals' trust in the government—which wasn't particularly high to begin with—has sharply decreased<sup>107</sup>.

**Implementing mitigation and response policies with little stakeholder input:** Unfortunately, the entire lockdown that was imposed in the four states without proper warning or assistance led numerous vulnerable populations—mostly workers in the informal sector—to break the lockdown regulations. The government did not interact with enough stakeholders while creating the relevant mitigating responses to lessen the impact of the lockdown to make sure that they would reach the individuals who would be most impacted<sup>108</sup>.

For instance, all of the instructors who answered to the questionnaires during the field survey stated that neither they nor anyone they knew had been informed by the government prior to the announcement of the school closings or the available distance learning options. Before implementing the mitigating techniques, the government would have known that teachers lacked the necessary skills to deal with the difficulties of remote learning if they had performed the necessary due diligence. The field survey teachers who conducted distant learning reported dealing with a wide range of problems. Teachers, particularly those employed by public schools and those who live in underprivileged areas, claimed they lacked the skills necessary to assist

remote learning in any format, whether it be through low-tech or high-tech means. According to 43% of the teachers surveyed, they did not teach in any capacity while the schools were closed. Only 4% of the teachers reported using high-tech tools to facilitate learning during the closures of the schools. More than half of the teachers reported that they lacked the necessary resources or a suitable infrastructure to support distance learning. Before the epidemic, 89% of the teachers claimed that they had not received adequate training on integrating technology into their classrooms, and 64% claimed that they had not received any training support during the school closings<sup>108</sup>.

Some of the actions taken at the height of the lockdown also had the direct effect of lowering citizen trust. For instance, the administration declared its decision to put off an electricity price increase that was earlier intended to go into effect during the lockdown months. Despite having a pro-poor mindset, the lockdown had such a devastating effect on income levels that it would have been difficult to even pay the former electricity rates. Workers polled on the ground confirmed this, with more than half of them admitting that during Phase 1 of the lockdown they could hardly afford basic meals. Electricity was therefore a far-off notion. However, in stark contrast, Ghana, which is typically used as a standard with Nigeria, gave subsidies for electricity to help citizens as part of their social palliative measures<sup>108</sup>.

Police violence, demonstrations, and the revelation of CACOVID treatment options: Security personnel became harsher during Phase 1 of the lockdown, which led to 18 known fatalities. Interactions between residents and security personnel grew as the lockdown transitioned into curfews and as the latter tried to impose the curfews. Police accountability in Nigeria has been called for again in light of the police killings and their methods for enforcing the lockdown and curfew. Peaceful demonstrations were held all around the nation, and participants told tales of

their interactions with police officers while calling on the government to act. Unfortunately, security personnel killed at least 45 protesters in Nigeria as a result of the demonstrations<sup>109</sup>.

The most major cause of mistrust and rage among the populace was unquestionably the discovery of the CACOVID food palliatives, which were intended to benefit the most vulnerable people, during the END SARS protests. When the palliatives were found in Nigerian warehouses five months after the lockdown was lifted, it was believed that the administration was corrupt and insensitive to the country's economic plight. This was in conflict with the deaths associated with the protests, which heightened public mistrust of the administration.

Power has been distributed inequitably through many different channels, and vulnerabilities have grown. Vulnerability has significantly grown as a result of COVID-19-related income and employment losses. By escalating the unequal allocation of power, this loss of jobs and income worsens poverty. The FDG participants have indicated profound psychological effects as a result, including a sense of voicelessness and helplessness<sup>110</sup>.

#### **2.1.14 Emerging Issues and Lessons of COVID 19 Pandemic**

One of the biggest economic crises to hit the world since the Great Depression has been brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic, and all indications are that the economic consequences will last much longer than the health crisis. The shutdown and the global economic recession will have a negative economic impact on all economies. A third factor, the drop in commodities prices that came before the lockdown measures, however, had a greater impact on Nigeria. The pandemic has put the country in a precarious position given the pre-COVID-19 conditions, which included declining per capita income, high inflation, and an excessive reliance on oil.

If current policy trends continue, the economy is predicted to recover slowly. Nigeria's real GDP growth is anticipated to turn positive again, at 1.5%, according to predictions from the

International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, it is unlikely that real GDP would return to its pre-pandemic levels before 2022. The chances of recovery are slim because a second wave is still possible in the near future. Oil prices have started to climb dramatically as a result of developments on the COVID-19 vaccination front, the slow reduction in shale production in the United States, moves by OPEC and Saudi Arabia to limit oil outputs, and good developments in these areas. Therefore, fiscal income and oil proceeds may increase over the long run, barring the occurrence of a second wave that necessitates comparable lockdown measures as before. However, due to inward-looking policies, it is anticipated that non-oil sector development would continue to be weak. Despite a potential medium-term rebound brought on by increased oil prices, the nation's excessive reliance on exporting raw materials is risky, as the past year has demonstrated. Some difficulties and lessons that go beyond the national economy are revealed by the evidence<sup>111</sup>.

**A crisis of uneven impacts:** Some Nigerians have been more negatively impacted by the COVID-19 situation than others. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable individuals and households who were already having difficulty before the pandemic are the most affected. Women, households with low incomes, and non-conforming workers were the most impacted demographics. Workers in the informal sector were more vulnerable since they had few employment safeguards and little recourse to social protection. A population with previously limited wages has also been greatly impacted, especially the MSME sector, which employs women and other disadvantaged individuals. Because they had to stay home from work during the lockdown to take care of their children before the schools reopened, some women suffered particularly severe repercussions. Due to current policies, preexisting disparities are expected to endure and worsen as a result of the pandemic's disproportionate effects<sup>112</sup>.

**A crisis with long-lasting impacts:** The effects of COVID-19 on inequality and poverty in Nigerian society are grave and rife with uncertainties. The labor market has been severely impacted, with the urban informal economy suffering particularly badly. The epidemic would probably lead to significant reductions in formal employment in Nigeria due to the country's contracting economy and disrupted demand and supply chains. These budget cuts will probably push a lot of individuals into precarious employment and raise the proportion of those who work in the informal economy. Women and young people who are more prone to precarious work will be particularly impacted.<sup>113</sup>

As the effects of the school closings persist, Nigeria would lose progress achieved in achieving Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG 4). According to the field poll, teachers and parents were in agreement that the extended school closures will increase the dropout rate. Despite the fact that schools had been open for more than a month at the time of the field surveys, many parents stated that their kids had not yet started back at school due to the pandemic's depressing impact on their incomes. Most teachers agreed that widespread use of technology would be a good result of the pandemic; however, they cautioned that it could present significant challenges for the most marginalized students, potentially exacerbating inequalities. This response was common among parents from lower social income groups, especially those who lived in restricted areas without good school options<sup>115</sup>.

The majority of the teachers also expressed concern that future cohorts of graduates would lack the necessary skills because of the lost learning that occurred during the lockdown, which would lower educational standards. Schools had been reopened for roughly 6 weeks at the time the surveys were taken, and both teachers and students claimed that the majority of what had been taught during the term prior to closures had been forgotten by the pupils. Despite the fact that

most schools assigned students to the courses they would have been in had the epidemic not occurred, they were forced to start teaching from the previous year's curriculum. 20% of the teachers who responded to the study said they had already noticed a decline in educational standards. They were concentrating on staying up with the current year's curriculum while catching up on outdated materials. The number of youngsters who are not in school is also probably going to rise. Almost all of the moms who participated in the FGD stated that they were unable to send their kids back to school because they could not afford the tuition or other expenditures associated with attending classes<sup>116</sup>.

**An urban-poor crisis:** The consequences of the pandemic have been disproportionately felt by urban low-income individuals and households, particularly those engaged in the informal sector. It has become clear throughout this period that pre-existing safety nets and social protection programs have mainly excluded this demographic, making it very challenging to provide for and target them during the crisis.

**A crisis of uneven and ephemeral responses:** Although the government swiftly put in place a number of support programs, the response has largely fallen short and been distributed unevenly. Social safety nets have mostly helped the rural poor, while business support programs have completely ignored the most vulnerable group of MSMEs that operate in the informal economy. Workers in this industry weren't specifically targeted in any way. Since they cannot rely on social insurance or programs that target the poor for assistance, this population is especially vulnerable to shocks due to the lack of social protection. Furthermore, the programs have been sporadic, sometimes serving as last-minute emergency fixes without proper institutional or legal frameworks to guarantee long-term social security for those employed in the informal economy.

No indication exists that the government is drawing the correct conclusions from the crisis by prioritizing the recovery of the economy over reshaping it to be more inclusive<sup>118</sup>.

**An information crisis:** The response of the government to COVID-19 was hampered by a lack of sufficient information, preparation, and strategy. Lacking a defined long-term strategy, the first response to impose lockdown measures and close schools was hindered by the fact that it was a straight imitation of responses in wealthy nations. The government responded in this way without taking into account the specific circumstances of Nigeria, including its limited financial capacity to offer adequate support to keep people alive during the lockdown, provide access to education for impacted students, and its lack of knowledge and information about the population that would be impacted by their response. The ineffective monitoring of the financial support's best usage is another flaw in the current approaches.

Stakeholder conversation is essential to gathering information in the absence of data. Unfortunately, they failed to consult with or obtain the essential feedback from important stakeholders or scheme users when developing and administering the socioeconomic support programmes. Government policy responses and corresponding mitigation actions were hampered by the government's poor utilization of evidence and open societal discourse<sup>119</sup>.

#### **2.1.14 Policy Implications**

The lack of effectiveness of mitigating measures taken to address the socioeconomic effects of the epidemic could exacerbate poverty and inequality in Nigeria. The effects are already noticeable and will persist until deliberate action is taken. Social protection must be developed around any health measures as the possibility of a second wave increases. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for constructing strong national social protection systems, setting up social protection floors, and covering employment in all forms. It has also identified

inadequacies in Nigeria's social protection institutions. Because of their awareness of these inequalities, policymakers are now considering what place social protection should have in their socio-economic models. Longer-term social protection and support policies ought to be a component of more comprehensive, integrated plans to encourage equitable growth. Social protection, when designed and administered properly, can support more thorough recovery plans and policies that simultaneously address systemic socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Although mobilizing the necessary resources will be challenging, the cost of inactivity would be costly for the nation.

**Context-specific solutions:** Response methods in this developing stage of the crisis and recovery need to be context-specific and take into account current inequities to offer inclusive solutions.

Data collection and increased dependence on social dialogue are essential: It is essential to gather information on various demographic segments and comprehend how this crisis and potential future crises may affect them in order to offer targeted help. Data are essential since no one approach to dealing with the effects of such a circumstance is better than others. The government will base its choice of strategy, among other things, on the information and data that are readily available. Given its limited fiscal space to implement effective social protection measures and the various alternatives available to provide, target, and distribute support, this is essential for Nigeria. Making the most of the information available will therefore be crucial<sup>114</sup>.

**Building permanent structures for the informal sector:** Increasing the government's ability to assist and change the informal sector is a top goal. Even if it is vital, any immediate financial and technical assistance for struggling companies and people will not, by itself, increase their capacity for long-term resilience. The crisis may revive the frequently contentious calls for

ensuring greater formalization as a long-term plan to better handle the needs of the informal sector<sup>115</sup>.

However, it will be necessary to stay away from the theoretical formalization argument and concentrate on practical ways to create lasting institutions that offer long-term support and increase resilience for this significant area of the economy. The ultimate objective should be to increase the informal sector's capacity for resilience, preparing it for potential crises and enabling it to make a greater contribution to the economy. This will entail reconsidering traditional notions of formality and approaching formalization with the goal of boosting the incomes of the working poor rather than mandating formal business registration and taxation of unregistered enterprises. Four pillars in particular can be used to build resilience: providing legal and social protection, developing fair taxation and appropriate regulatory policies, enhancing group savings and mutual insurance programs, and emphasizing ways to boost productivity, earnings, and economic contribution<sup>119</sup>.

The education industry needs to be revived and recovered: Prior to COVID-19, Nigeria's educational system was dealing with its own epidemic: a woefully insufficient and unequal system that taught far too little to a small number of kids. Both short-term and long-term effects of the epidemic on education are disastrous. It is crucial to focus a concerted effort on bolstering the resilience of education institutions and reducing some of the effects. However, the learning crisis that existed prior to the pandemic (earlier) must not be overshadowed by the pandemic-induced catastrophe. As the epidemic garners attention, policy will concentrate on the flaws in the education system that has been brought to light by the pandemic, with a strong emphasis in the near future on expanding ICT for learning. Unfortunately, this imprudent strategy might cause Nigeria to have misguided objectives for another ten years or more. Instead, the country

should concentrate on the FACTS approach, a clever and simple method to make up for the anticipated learning loss and reform Nigeria's educational system<sup>120</sup>. Below is a summary of the FACTS procedure:

1. **Fundamental skills:** Emphasizing reading and comprehension (in the language of the learner's local environment) and math is essential to enabling kids to study in succeeding grades and prepare them for careers beyond school.
2. **Assessments:** It is essential to conduct a mix of routine, low-stakes formative assessments at the school level and national school surveys in order to collect feedback that guides quick, focused, and locally pertinent replies.
3. **Curriculum Alignment:** Matching teaching and instructional support to students' current learning trajectories will be the key to Nigeria's learning recovery. Regular school-level examinations have the advantage of providing data that enables schools to adjust their curricula as necessary<sup>121</sup>.
4. **Technology:** Due to socioeconomic inequalities and subpar infrastructure, educational technology cannot be used in isolation in Nigeria. Policymakers must start thinking about alternative learning options as this second wave of the virus spreads by collaborating with research and development partners to rigorously test the efficacy of blended learning approaches that are tailored to various regional contexts, aligned with various profiles of disadvantaged learners, and compatible with under-resourced learning environments.
5. **Particular aspects of exclusion** In order for Nigeria's educational system to recover inclusively and fairly, as well as lay the groundwork for future advancement, it is imperative that vulnerable students' needs be given priority. Working together with groups that are tackling the most difficult local issues in the country is one method to accomplish this.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

A theory is frequently viewed as a "untested suspicion or guess" in the absence of supporting data. A well-supported explanation of a feature of the natural world that can include laws, hypotheses, and facts is what scientists refer to as a theory. A theory is an all-encompassing, rational explanation for a variety of phenomena. As a result, theories are succinct, consistent, organized, prognosticative, and broadly applicable, frequently integrating and generalizing a large number of assumptions. The persuasive case that human behaviour is dynamic and best assessed within context and time does not change the reality that a human behaviour cannot be described, explained, or predicted.

### **2.2.1 Conspiracy Theory**

Conspiracy theories are an effort to blame a small, powerful group for unfortunate or catastrophic events. In other words, it serves as an explanation for circumstances that raise the possibility of a conspiracy by some malevolent and powerful groups, many of which have political goals. It is assumed that elites play a significant role in both kindling and resolving political conflicts in modern society. The theorist argues that when evaluating political conflict like terrorism, national political power conflicts must be taken into consideration. In the past, conspiracy theories have been closely linked to bigotry, witch hunts, war, and genocide<sup>121</sup>.

The abundance of conspiracy theories that emerged in the wake of the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the more than 2,000 books on the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy serve as examples of this reality<sup>121</sup>.

Conspiracies usually seek to alter the foundation of established institutions, violate rights, breach established agreements, usurp political or economic authority, or breach established agreements.

Conspiracy theories contend that key social and political events and conditions were the result of

a covert agreement between two or more powerful individuals. In a research, residents of New Jersey were asked questions about ten conspiracies. The study found that although some people had many worldviews, others had none. According to the study, this can be explained by the fact that conspiracy theories are a part of a monological belief system, which is a growing and self-sealing web of ideas that support one another<sup>121</sup>.

It is almost impossible to explain the rise of armed conflicts and the attacks of these groups without taking a close look at the dynamics and loci of power in society, given that elites hold a significant amount of political power in society. In this way, Nigerian society is also not an exception. Following the initial reports of the COVID-19 epidemic, conspiracy theories started to surface, many of which were fueled by existing tensions within and between organizations. For instance, from the beginning of the epidemic, some people thought that COVID-19 was intentionally produced by the Chinese in order to wage war against the USA (or vice versa). Others thought that COVID-19 was a hoax or that left-wingers were exaggerating it in an effort to harm Donald Trump's reelection campaign as the pandemic spread<sup>122</sup>.

These theories still exist, and recently, a vocal minority of people opposed to the government's order to wear masks to prevent the virus from spreading to Western countries have protested what they perceive to be a direct attack on their civil liberties by powerful authorities. Conspiracy theories assign horrible activities to clandestine, powerful groups in an effort to explain significant events and circumstances. The psychology research on this topic has grown significantly over the last 15 years, and it now argues that people are led to conspiracies when their fundamental psychological needs are not met. The first set of requirements is epistemic, such as the desire to suppress inquiry and avoid uncertainty. For instance, research indicates a

link between the prevalence of conspiracy theories and a lack of information as well as the need to identify patterns and significance even when none exist<sup>123</sup>.

During a pandemic, people's psychological needs are probably going to be disproportionately unfulfilled. The high amount of uncertainty causes people to feel nervous and afraid about their futures and the futures of their loved ones. They are looking for information to assist them in comprehending important questions about the outlook for the approaching months. Due to the complexity of the information landscape, people frequently encounter conflicting information. One week residents are exhorted to "eat out to support" their neighborhood restaurants, and the following week they are instructed to stay indoors. Additionally, people have endured protracted periods of social isolation (and in many cases, they still do), which restricts their access to social assistance that can enhance their physical and mental health. They worry that the actions of powerful outside parties, such as governments, are making matters worse.

Conspiracy theories are usually complicated, vague, and resistant to disconfirmation, making it difficult to address their impacts. People who oppose the wearing of masks have been protesting all throughout the US, frequently accompanied by anti-vaccine activists and "anonymous" backers who believe that Republican President Donald Trump is leading the fight against the Democrats because they are the hub of a pedophiles ring. People who embrace conspiracy theories are more likely to be convinced to act on them and do more damage as they become more enmeshed with the organization. Conspiracy theories are a major driving force behind such social movements, which could lead to acts of violence and terrorism<sup>124</sup>.

### **2.2.2 Theory of Essenism**

The theory of Essenism was propounded by Heinrich Graetz. The reason that education is regarded as the cornerstone of development is that it serves as the "conveyer or vehicle employed

in the transmission of cognitive activities from one generation to the next." The three Hs—Head, Heart, and Hand—are trained as part of this process. Nations all around the world have made significant investments in these essential facets of human development because of the value and necessity of education. However, the mindset that guides a nation's educational system determines the extent of the benefits that education may provide. Based on this, the philosophies that guide educational systems around the world are created to accommodate man's dual physical and spiritual natures. Under this division, there are two schools of thought: idealism, rationalism, and existentialism, which focus on the spiritual aspects of life and are expressed in ethics, law, and other non-empirical studies or disciplines, on the one hand, and naturalism, empiricism, pragmatism, and positivism, which seek to accommodate and enhance the physical nature of man on the other.

According to essenceism, man is at the center of everything that happens on earth. The goal of essenic philosophy is to create a fully realized human personality. This is so because no facet or component of human nature is disregarded. Through essenism, man fully develops as a physical and spiritual being. One can start discussing other aspects of development once human personality has fully matured. This is due to the fact that human growth is a prerequisite for the development of any nation. This is due to essenism, which, according to its definition, is "a combination of physical and spiritual dimensions of man into a whole that will create a distinctive system of character and culture for the Nigerian State through education." This combination will aid the nation in its developmental process and endeavor, helping it to avoid the mistake of western civilization, which lacks the spiritual component and was more preoccupied with the material (physical) dimension of progress, which has resulted in various tragedies, notably COVID-19<sup>126</sup>.

The essential problems raised by the aforementioned are: Why did western civilization fail so miserably to generate COVID-19? Why couldn't science and technology give the western world the predicted utopia on earth and put a stop to COVID-19? Despite the acknowledged power of science as human cognitive activity, why is COVID-19 referred to by the WHO as an unseen enemy of mankind? The fact that western civilisation utterly disregards the spiritual side of development will become clear when you give thoughtful answers to these questions. The divine inspiration that turned technology from an "ark" to a "tower of babel" is essentially cut off by this carelessness. And this is where the physical or mundane knowledge disaster and dearth reside, making it difficult for man to effectively develop a long-term solution to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Since God created man, only divine guidance that enlightens human spirit can result in knowledge that practically addresses man's physical issues. It is only via essenism, which offers a form of education that puts man at the center, that one can uncover, define, interpret, and apply the fundamentals of man's latent power and potential. This is what distinguishes man as a "homo sapien" from other animals. The reason why man is superior to other creatures and objects is because of his spiritual intelligence and inspirational understanding, which enable him to be pro-active and quickly respond to pandemics. The ability of man to successfully combine the physical and spiritual realms elevates him beyond all other creatures and gives him control over the planet as well as the mental capacity to comprehend and tame SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)<sup>127</sup>.

This gives us a true representation of what it means to be a guy. It is the motivation behind or core of his creation. Additionally, the spirit enables man to worship God, which is another aspect of his creaturely nature. God is a spirit, according to the Bible, and those who worship Him (man) must do so in spirit and in truth. As a result, man's ability to defeat and subjugate COVID-19—

and even comprehend what it is and its traits—lies in his spirit. The ability to know God's plan and enter His mind to find all the answers to his (man's) problems, including COVID-19, which scientists and medical professionals have referred to as the "unseen enemy" of man, is what makes man look like God—not in terms of physical appearance but in terms of spiritual knowledge. Man's ability to produce discoveries is made possible by this access to the divine storehouse. Therefore, in terms of essenism, the mind serves as the focal point through which man views God and nature<sup>128</sup>.

The relevance of essenceism to human destiny as understood and practiced by the Nigerian man has to be considered in this context. This is based on the idea that every individual is a mystery to himself. He decides who he is and makes an effort to comprehend who he is and what makes him up, which means he has the potential to decide why he is where he is and where he is heading. With this information, man will be able to decide how to live his life and how to evaluate the world around him in light of who he is and what his fate has planned for him. This will present his ontological foundation in its entirety and give the context for his social interactions with other men as well as his origin and creator. Realizing and comprehending man, his origin, and what nature anticipates of him will influence, determine, and transcend him, but they will also find tangible expression in his society, economy, ethics, medicine, science, religion, and the entirety of his cultural life or pattern. This comprehension fosters a life of harmony and a form of communion between man and his Creator. Man will reach the unity of reality thanks to this harmony since he will turn into a little version of reality that can be seen and felt<sup>129</sup>.

It is essential that our educational system be restructured and built upon a strong foundation that will naturally reflect the essence of man on planet earth if we are to have a sound social system and culture in Nigeria that will allow us to be proactive, creative, and in a position to solve our

national problems. This will inevitably influence and inspire people to develop a functional sensibility based on the fundamentals of their lives, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to meet their needs and address all of our social ills, including COVID-19. Through essenism, the spiritual and physical aspects of existence as they relate to human nature will combine to produce an educational system that will benefit Nigeria and give the nation a fresh new educational system. The educational system that results from this will enable our leaders, policymakers, and the general populace to have access to scientific knowledge that they can use in their daily lives. With this information, Nigerians will be better equipped to jointly address COVID-19 as a national issue<sup>129</sup>.

to develop an innovative and sound educational philosophy that is focused on Nigeria's unique species of science and medicine, which must be developed and planted in Nigeria's fertile essenism, which is the foundation for human existence on planet earth. The process through which Nigerian scientists and medical professionals would learn to comprehend and value the metaphysics underlying science and medicine. These human cognitive activities will be able to be more creative as a result of this new understanding and realization, which will allow them to deal with COVID-19 more successfully and avoid going on strike during such a national emergency. The scientific, medical, and technical advancements in Nigeria must be based on a system of education with elements that are compatible with the metaphysical underpinning and cultural quirks of that country. In this way, the nation can always develop its own approaches and solutions to the socioeconomic, political, and existential issues that she faces rather of waiting impassively for imported concepts and solutions that frequently are never useful for our requirements<sup>126</sup>.

Any attempt to introduce a philosophy (idea, knowledge, solution) that is foreign to the people's way of thinking, logic, and metaphysics will be detrimental to the people's cultural foundation, and any science, medicine, and technology (solution) that develops under such a system will not be able to satisfy such a system, will not be able to satisfy the people's basic needs, and can never be effective. Fulfilling a man's dual demand for the physical and the spiritual is undoubtedly one of his basic requirements (and that of Nigerians). Therefore, the physical-spiritual man must be the center of knowledge and expertise for education, science, medicine, and technology. To create education, research, medicine, and technology that will adequately satisfy the human natural essence, the physical and the spiritual parts must be ideally integrated. This integrated approach to knowledge, science, and technology will help prevent man from destroying reality, which he is a part of and represents<sup>127</sup>.

### **2.3 Review of Empirical Studies**

More than 500,000 people have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of millions have lost their jobs, and trillions of dollars' worth of wealth has been destroyed. Additionally, the sickness has far from reached the end of its course; thousands of additional people could succumb to it. It should come as no surprise that there is a great deal of interest in the creation of a vaccine, with more than a hundred initiatives currently underway worldwide. Many seem promising and one or more may succeed, maybe more quickly than the usual several years or longer it takes to introduce a vaccine. Any medical professional will verify that immunizations are not a cure-all. They are but one weapon in the medical toolbox.

No vaccination can be anticipated to give everyone who receives it a full or enduring immunity. Millions of people will oppose vaccination. There is also the stark reality that there are almost eight billion adults, children, and other species on the world. It could take years, not months, to

produce and distribute eight billion doses (or multiples of that if more than one dosage is required) of one or more vaccines. The current global roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations is neither comprehensive nor well-planned<sup>130</sup>.

While the rest of the globe is far behind, many nations are already giving out boosters. Africa has gotten far too few vaccinations from the global supply, despite the critical need to raise vaccination rates. Africa has only gotten roughly 540 million (or about 6% of all COVID vaccinations) and administered 309 million doses out of the more than 9 billion vaccines manufactured as of this writing, while having 17% of the global population. Only 10% of Africans have received all recommended vaccinations. In other words, there are over 1.2 billion Africans who have not received even a single dosage of the vaccine, and if things continue as they are, a large portion of Africa may not be immunized until 2023<sup>131</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps in our continent's ability to guarantee access to essential medicines, vaccinations, and medical innovations. More precisely, it has brought attention to the serious flaw in vaccine production as a whole: Prior to COVID-19, Africa generated less than 1% of the vaccinations it needed, importing more than 99 percent of them but using more than 25% of the world's vaccines. The problem is now with unequal distribution rather than supply. The worldwide vaccine output has been rising at a secure rate, about 1.5 billion doses per month, despite the severe vaccine supply crisis in Africa. Over 1.2 billion doses might be made available for donation by the G7 alone by December 2021. To make sure that the vaccines get to the areas that need them the most, Western nations should consent to transfer their huge stockpile of unneeded vaccines to COVAX. Additionally, COVAX should collaborate with the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), which has pooled resources to

purchase vaccinations for its member states, to ensure the best allocation and distribution of vaccines<sup>132</sup>.

This global health crisis is the ultimate moral litmus test for how well the world can cooperate. Furthermore, charity is not the answer; the pandemic won't end until it has ended everywhere due to the emergence and spread of variations. Africa cannot and must not be excluded from the discussion about vaccination. The expense of not vaccinating everyone is also financial. According to a recent research by The Economist, sub-Saharan Africa will suffer the greatest economic losses owing to poor vaccination rates, accounting for 3 percent of GDP from 2022 to 2025. Given the possibility of harmful mutations that could impair the effectiveness of vaccines, such vaccination disparity is not only unjust but also epidemiologically incorrect. Africa may therefore end up being the COVID epicenter<sup>132</sup>.

Numerous Nigerians have been negatively impacted by the country's chosen developmental path, and macroeconomic growth has come at the expense of civil liberties, food security, and the wellbeing of Nigerians, particularly among rural communities, according to qualitative research<sup>115</sup>. The study will next go through important economic data for Nigeria, the political environment at the time, and discussions of inequality and poverty. Since 1994, Nigeria has witnessed rapid economic growth, with an estimated 2019 GDP growth of 9%. At the same time, the standard of living for Nigerians has increased. Child mortality has decreased by two thirds, and enrollment in primary schools is almost universal, while there is still a significant problem with school dropouts. The substantial emphasis on domestic policies and efforts, according to a 2020 World Bank assessment, has greatly improved access to services and human development metrics. Nigeria created and launched the Vision 2020 Program (VP) social protection program in 2019 with assistance from the World Bank and other partners. More than a million people

have benefited from the program throughout the years, with women making up half of the beneficiaries<sup>133</sup>.

Nigeria's agricultural sector is rather sizable. It accounts for 29% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product and 80% of its foreign exchange. Two-thirds of the population is directly employed in agriculture, while more than 80% of people depend on farming for subsistence. In addition, 78% of all informal laborers in Nigeria are employed in the agriculture sector. While the World Bank and other international donors have lauded Nigeria's green revolution, which was launched in 2016–2018, as a success story, the reality in Nigeria's rural areas has typically not been favorable. While farmers have been integrated into a market-oriented system where they have limited negotiating leverage, food insecurity has worsened. While the services sector accounts for roughly 47.8% of GDP, other developing sectors like industries provide 16.2% of GDP and 9% of employment. The majority of the country is rural, with Abuja serving as both its capital and its economic hub. Over 94% of all jobs in the nation are in the informal sector, which is primarily responsible for this trend in rural-to-urban migration. Informal is thought to account for 97.2% of urban employment in Nigeria<sup>134</sup>.

The prevalence of informal employment raises concerns about good working conditions and the bargaining strength of Nigeria's labor. The problem of employees' negotiating power is particularly crucial in the context of COVID-19, where answers have severely impacted people's jobs and livelihood strategies. This is because it is connected to the leverage and voice workers can have in the design of COVID-19 solutions. Furthermore, given that government assistance has largely been directed at urban areas, the rising food insecurity in rural areas raises concerns about the farmers' ability to withstand COVID-19<sup>135</sup>.

Crime in Nigeria has greatly decreased as a result of COVID-19. According to the United Nations Organization (UNO), COVID-19 will have a significant impact on crime, security, and the rule of law. Reaffirming the above assertion, Transparency International has discovered that, amidst the pandemic, organized crime has actually been on the rise. The Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) is still arresting drug traffickers who have continued operations despite lock down. Security agents who have turned checkpoints into cash cows provide some clue as to how this happened. Cybercrime has also increased through the sale of fake medical products online. This is corroborated by United Nations Office on Drug and Crime World Wildlife Report which observes that falsified medicines in the wake of COVID-19 is an emerging threat for security and public health in Nigeria. As an intervention, UNODC continues its support to Nigerian Correctional Service with protective kits for COVID-19 prevention in Custodial Centres in Nigeria<sup>136</sup>.

Similarly, a researcher opined that one of the emerging and unintended consequences of lockdown, aimed at curtailing the spread of Corona virus in most African countries, is violent criminality, murder, kidnapping, domestic violence (gender-based violence), and growing cybercrime among other criminal activities. This is in tandem with the findings of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime (2020) which depict that cyber scams, fraud, disinformation and other cyber-enabled crimes will become a growth industry, as people on lockdown kill time online. In Nigeria, there are reports of human rights violations while enforcing lockdowns as over twenty persons have been killed by the police<sup>137</sup>.

A researcher concluded there was looting of shops, robbery, and killing by security forces, in Lagos Warri, Aba, Umuahia and other cities during lockdown. While there was remarkable decrease in crimes compared with the preCOVID-19 period, the lockdown did not deter trouble

makers from engaging in violent acts, such as armed robbery, police violence, and kidnapping. The State is also being accused of leveraging on the pandemic to commit what can be termed ‘palliative fraud’ and COVID-fund fraud<sup>138</sup>.

In another development, Automated Credit Application Processing System (2020) found these trending during the lockdown in Nigeria: Between 30 March and mid-April, following the beginning of lockdowns, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recorded extrajudicial killings and abuse of power by the Nigerian security forces. Some people were killed by law enforcement agents for allegedly not complying with containment measures. In the same period, the NHRC recorded 33 incidents of inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as 27 incidents of unlawful arrest and detention recorded in areas under lockdown or movement restrictions, as well as intimidation and arrest of journalists<sup>139</sup>.

According to the World Bank before COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, 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. A researcher observed that total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell 23% during the lockdown. Agrifood system GDP fell 11%, primarily due to restriction on food services. Household incomes fell by a quarter, leading a 9% increase in the national poverty rate. This is in tandem with the findings which show that, the impact of COVID-19 on poverty in Nigeria has been especially disastrous. The downturn in Nigeria’s economy due to COVID-19 affected a large number of people and worsened the impact of COVID-19 on poverty in Nigeria<sup>140</sup>.

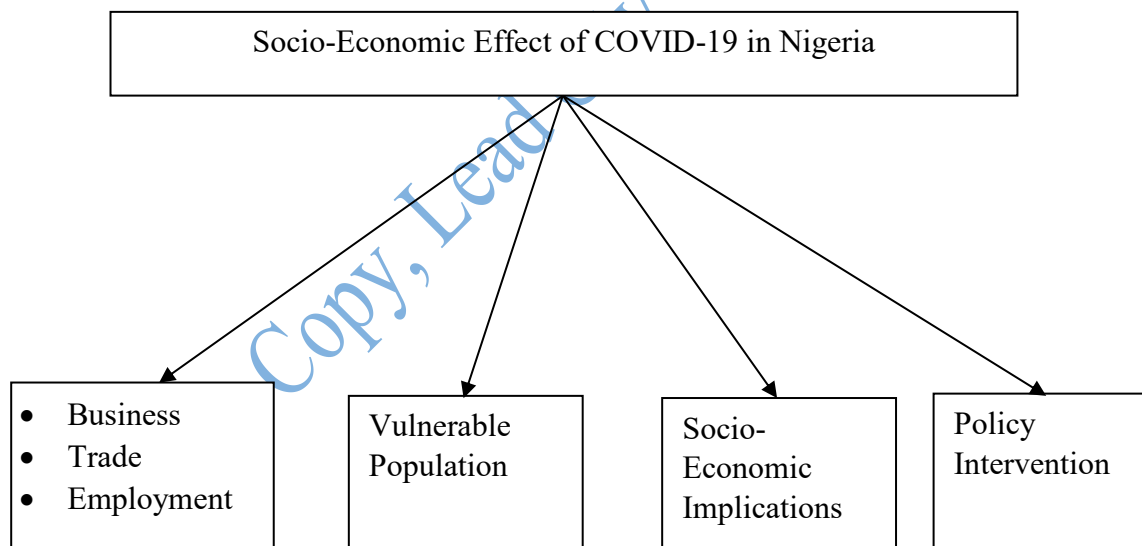
COVID-19 pandemics and its corresponding and necessary measures to curtail the spread namely lockdown and restriction of movement, has affected almost all spheres of human existence with unemployment not being an exception in Nigeria. Many people especially in the

private sector either lost their jobs or not being paid their salaries as long as the first phase of lockdown lasted. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) where most of our youths are engaged was badly hit by the pandemic, the resultant effect of which is unimaginable as we shall see later in this piece. This is in tandem with the findings of a survey of 3,000 businesses (formal and informal sectors conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics and the United Nations Development Programme which showed that a third of Nigeria's workers were out of job in the fourth quarter of 2020 due to the pandemic<sup>141</sup>.

Before COVID-19, Nigeria's unemployment rate was already sky high at 23% while underemployment stood at 16%, according to a 2018 report by National Bureau of statistics (NBS). This has worsened with the pandemic. The implication is that more Nigerians, especially in the lower middle class, could potentially be forced to live below poverty line. Similarly, according to the report of COVID-19 survey by National Bureau of Statistics, out of the 1,950 households surveyed on a nationally representative sample, 42% of the respondents who were working before the outbreak were no longer working the week preceding the interview for reasons related to COVID-19<sup>134</sup>. According to data from the National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS) conducted every three months since March 2020, job turnover dramatically surged in April but stabilized by the end of August (Nigeria Development Update, 2020). At another level, it was found that unemployment rate rose from 8.53% in 2019 to 9.01% in 2020. This is in tandem with the submission of the United Nations Development Program as presented by the National Bureau of Statistics (2021), the vast majority of business operating in Nigeria suffered business closure, change in hours of operation and change in operational costs, among other unemployment-driven circumstances<sup>141</sup>.

In a survey, it was found out that unemployment rate among young people, ages 15-34 years is 30.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020, up from 26.7% in the preceding quarter due to the COVID-19 shutdown measures. This corroborates with another findings who found that, as the virus continues to ravage the world, businesses are shutting down and people are losing their jobs or put on “Stand by” without salaries, which has affected negatively on the employers, employees, their families and others that depend on them. Similarly, a researcher argued that the pandemic has taken the world unaware, unprepared and left a number of people dead and businesses shut down leading to severe economic consequences. These consequences had not spared rising unemployment rate in Nigeria<sup>142</sup>.

## 2.4 Conceptual Model



**Figure 2.2:** Conceptual Model showing Socio-economic effect of COVID-19 in Nigeria

**Source:** Researcher, 2023

This first arrow involves investigating the impact of the pandemic on businesses, international trade, and employment in Nigeria. The "Micro-Level Impacts" branch of the model represents this objective. The interactions within this branch illustrate how disruptions caused by COVID-19 have led to changes in business operations, trade patterns, and employment dynamics. Businesses may have faced closures, supply chain interruptions, and changes in consumer behavior. International trade could have experienced disruptions due to border closures and reduced demand. Employment patterns might have shifted with remote work becoming more prevalent and job losses were occurring in some sectors. This aims to provide insights into the specific challenges faced by these sectors and how they have adapted to the new reality.

This second arrow focuses on assessing the socio-economic costs of the pandemic on vulnerable populations within Nigerian society. The "Vulnerable Populations" branch in the model captures this objective. It encompasses understanding the economic hardships faced by marginalized communities, informal sector workers, and individuals with limited resources. This also examines the adaptations made by these populations to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic. The model's interactions reflect the relationship between socio-economic costs, vulnerability, and the support mechanisms in place to assist these groups.

The central element of the model, "Socio-Economic Implications," corresponds to the third arrow. This arrow involves analyzing the broader impacts of the pandemic on Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. It considers how the micro-level impacts discussed in first arrow and the vulnerability assessments from the second arrow collectively contribute to shaping the country's overall socio-economic trajectory. The "Socio-Economic Implications" element serves as a bridge connecting the specific impacts and challenges to the broader consequences for the nation as a whole.

This fourth arrow focuses on evaluating the policy interventions implemented to mitigate the socio-economic effects of COVID-19. The "Policy Interventions" branch in the model addresses this objective. It encompasses the design, implementation, outcomes, and effectiveness of policies aimed at minimizing the pandemic's adverse impacts. The interactions within this branch illustrate the dynamic cycle of policy responses, from their formulation to their real-world effects. This aims to provide insights into which policy measures have proven effective and offer recommendations for improving future policy responses to similar crises.

## **2.5 Summary of Gaps in the Literature Reviewed**

The existing literature predominantly discusses the macro-level socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in Nigeria. However, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific impacts on businesses, international trade, and employment sectors. Further research is needed to provide a nuanced analysis of how these sectors have been affected, including adaptations and innovations in response. While some studies acknowledge the vulnerability of certain populations, such as informal sector workers, the literature falls short in comprehensively addressing the socio-economic costs and impacts on these groups. There's a gap in research that delves deeper into the challenges faced by marginalized communities and individuals with limited resources, as well as the effectiveness of support mechanisms.

The reviewed literature tends to isolate the analysis of micro-level impacts, vulnerability assessments, and policy interventions. However, a gap exists in synthesizing these components to provide a holistic understanding of the broader socio-economic implications of the pandemic in Nigeria. A comprehensive view of how these factors interact is needed to guide effective policy-making. While some studies mention policy responses, the literature lacks comprehensive evaluations of the effectiveness of these interventions in mitigating the pandemic's socio-

economic effects. There is a gap in understanding which policies have yielded desired outcomes, and the reasons behind their success or limitations.

Many studies draw on global or regional data, but there's a gap in research that deeply contextualizes the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 within Nigeria's unique economic, cultural, and political landscape. Further investigation is needed to understand how global trends intersect with local realities. The existing literature often focuses on immediate impacts, leaving a gap in understanding the potential long-term consequences of the pandemic on Nigeria's socio-economic trajectory. Investigating how changes prompted by COVID-19 might persist post-pandemic is essential for informed policy-making.

Addressing these gaps through your research will not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge but also provide valuable insights for policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners seeking a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

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### **Chapter Three**

#### **Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The form and method of investigations that are designed in order to gain answers to research questions and to control variation are referred to as research design. A research design is in this sense, incorporates both the organization and method for performing a study<sup>1</sup>. The research adopts the exploratory and descriptive research design. The choice of these research design is because it enables the researcher to be inventive in order to obtain the maximum insight into the theme of the topic. It also helps build a framework for future study, which might have a definitive design. Descriptive research on the other hand systematically describes facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, event or area of interest as factually and accurately possible, in order to provide answers to questions asked by the problem under investigation. For this reason, descriptive research design is a critical investigation of events, their development, experiences of past.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

It is vital to note that the study's population was not picked at random. It is decided by the problems of the research. Since the research use the secondary data for its analysis, the population of the research will be the selected countries of the study. Hence, the population of the study are citizens of Southwest States, Nigeria.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The samples for this research were respondents derived from the population of the study highlighted above. The sample size of the study was drawn from reports from the Southwest States, Nigeria.

### **3.4 Description of Research Instruments**

The research relied on secondary sources of data. Thus, the research instruments used for this are textbooks, journals, newspaper, reports, editorials, magazines, and articles. These instruments were studied diligently in the course of the research and logical conclusions were drawn.

### **3.5 Reliability and Validation of Research Instrument**

The consistency of the findings of the study is founded on the significant research and examination of the information gathered. Reports from various domestic, regional, and international organizations and agencies were studied in tandem with the research question. The researcher also consulted the project supervisor to ascertain the validity and reliability of these reports. Thus, the researcher ensured that the reports from the secondary conform to what it was designed for.

### **3.6 Administration and Method of Data Collection**

Sources targeted for this study are newspapers, magazines, books from library, documents from government agencies specifically from health institutions in the country under consideration, specific topic related articles, literature, annual reports, published statistics from research organizations, and so on. The research of relevant authors and statistics from regional and international institutions were also studied critically

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Secondary data gathered were analysed and presented using exploratory analysis and descriptive analytical explanation is given to the secondary data obtained for the study. Thus, the use of this method of analysis is conversant with the straightforwardness with which it summarizes, exposes and interprets relationships within a specific data by qualitative description.

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#### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1.</sup> R. A Giri. *Mixed-Methods Research: A Discussion on its Types, Challenges, and Criticisms*. Journal of Practical Studies in Education, 2(2), 2021, 25-36

2. B. M. Asenahabi, *Basics of Research Design: A Guide to Selecting Appropriate Research Design*. International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches, 6(5), 2019, 76-89

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## Chapter Four

## **Results and Discussion of Findings**

### **4.1 Effect of COVID-19 on Businesses, International Trade & Export and Employment in Southwest States, Nigeria**

#### **4.1.1 Effect of COVID-19 on Businesses**

The COVID-19 epidemic in Southwest States, Nigeria has forced a large number of businesses and establishments to close, causing an unexpected disruption of business in numerous industry sectors. The supply chain, the workforce, cash flow, consumer demand, sales, and marketing are just a few of the short-term problems that retailers and brands must contend with individual electricity Companies raised prices on invoices as a result of their reliance on gasoline imports from other nations<sup>1</sup>. Price adjustments in all services therefore have significant ramifications for all of Nigeria's business sectors<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to its impact on public health, coronavirus disease 2019 has caused a major economic shock. The pandemic had already caused massive dislocation among small businesses just several weeks after its onset, approximately 25% of businesses had temporarily closed and nearly all of these closures were due to COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. Business owners have been shocked with challenges of their businesses to include irregular running of businesses, work methods and possible financial constraint on Companies with uncertain of the future<sup>3</sup>.

The COVID-19 is likely to cause bankruptcy for many well-known brands in many industries as consumers stay at home and economies and shut down. This is not only having consequences for the economy; all of society is affected, which has led to dramatic changes in how businesses act and consumers behave<sup>1</sup>. The only major industry that did not experience a significant decline in the number of business owners was agriculture. Due to COVID-19, there was a significant drop

in the number of business owners in the industries of transportation, restaurants, hotels, and construction<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4.1.2 COVID-19's Effects on Export and International Trade**

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused a global economic downturn. It was worse than the worldwide economic catastrophe for 2020. As a result of the substantial increase in new illnesses and the implementation of containment measures, economic harm is spreading to all nations<sup>5</sup>. The pandemic is expected to cause a steep 3% worldwide economic contraction in 2020, which would be a worse scenario than the financial crisis. There might be a 70% drop in output alone in the tourism industry

Although the current impact is more short-term than long-term, COVID-19 is having an increasing impact on Nigeria's economy. However, the impact's medium- and long-term effects are still unknown. These short-term effects on the economy may result in slower long-term growth and make recovery more challenging (Bank of Nigeria, 2020). Due to COVID-19, Nigeria's imports have fallen, which has negative fiscal and employment effects because import tariffs account for about 80% of the government's overall revenue while inland revenue accounts for about 20% of that revenue<sup>4</sup>.

Nigeria's exports, which primarily consist of livestock and its byproducts, are likely to decrease dramatically as a result of interruptions in global supply chains and the implementation of worldwide quarantine regulations. The overall value of exports in 2019 was \$212 million, which is less than the total value of imports in the same year, resulting in a \$361 million deficit<sup>4</sup>. According to the most recent IMF forecast, when compared to the base year of 2019 total export value, emerging and developing nations' export volumes are expected to shrink by 9.6%. This suggests that Nigeria's total export value will drop to 191.4 million<sup>5</sup>.

### 4.1.3 Impact of COVID-19 on Remittance Flows

Over the years, the Nigeria culture of trust has created a well-functioning money transfer business which has allowed Nigeria-lander's in Diaspora to send money back home. In the old days migrants from Nigeria used to remit money to their relatives either via international bank transfers<sup>4</sup>. The volume of remittances received in Nigeria in 2018 was \$1.4 billion which is equivalent to 51% of GDP. This makes one of the most remittance-dependent economies in the World. Annual remittances are estimated at \$1 billion approximately 38% of Nigeria's GDP. The indirect impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria as a result of the virus' effects on importing countries and countries of residence to the Nigeria diaspora is yet unknown<sup>3</sup>. In almost 40% of rural and urban homes, no one between the ages of 15 and 54 is employed. Additionally, remittances are more likely to reach these households. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, households without any economically engaged individuals are around three times more likely to receive remittances in both urban and rural locations.

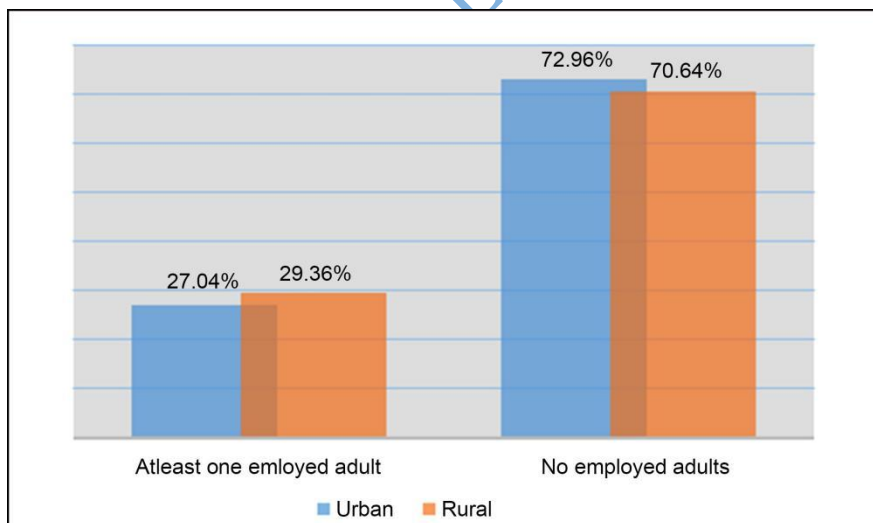


Figure 4.1. Households with & without employed adults receiving remittances<sup>5</sup>.

Due to COVID-19, a decline in remittance levels has already been noted, which worries the locals in Hargeisa, Nigeria. There are a number of causes for this, including the unwillingness of senders to physically visit stores and outlets, which is a popular way to transfer money, as well as the challenges money transfer companies encounter when transferring physical cash from agents in diaspora settings to their headquarters in Dubai because of flight restrictions.<sup>6</sup> The pandemic is causing a decline in remittances. Remittance-receiving nations are under lockdown or other restrictions<sup>5</sup>.

#### **4.1.4 Impact of COVID-19 on Employment**

According to International Labor Organizations, 2020, the crisis has already transformed into an economic and labor market shock, impacting not only supply but demand consumption and investment<sup>4</sup>. However, the Nigerian government has imposed partial restrictions and lock downs on the vast majority of businesses and economic activities in the country, forcing thousands of people to lose their jobs and raising the unemployment rate, for instance, by forcing the closure of both public and private schools, sports and entertainment venues, and centers for social interaction<sup>5</sup>. Providers of private and public employment services have been placed under a severe stress test as demand for their services sky-rocketed in the first few months of the crisis while their capacity was severely constrained by the need to curtail face-to-face contact with job seekers<sup>4</sup>.

In urban areas, most working adults are found in the services sector (67.8%) as well as wage employees (71.4%). However, working adults in rural areas are divided almost equally between services (48.9%) and agriculture and livestock activities (40.4%). Wage employees in rural areas are mainly found in services with less than 5% working in agriculture and livestock activities.

Services include shop assistants, demonstrators, hairdressers, barbers, beauticians, housekeepers, cooks and other catering services workers and extra<sup>6</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have an effect on local residents' household economies in addition to the national economy. In Nigeria, its deadly effects are already being felt. Daily wage earners have been severely impacted; many of them currently have nothing to live on and cannot feed their families. As a result of the lockdown, hunger, malnutrition, and other issues that have long afflicted Nigeria are likely to get worse. However, because people need to work in order to survive, they cannot stay at home and are therefore much more concerned about their jobs than they are about the COVID-19 outbreak.<sup>7</sup> While some businesses have managed to survive the COVID-19 response, others are finding it more difficult. Authorities have asked people to stop the viral outbreak, which has had a negative impact on Nigeria's hotel industry<sup>8</sup>.

#### **4.1.5 Impact of Fiscal Measures (Policy)**

COVID-Worldwide economic activity has been hampered by the 19 pandemic. The virus has impacted government finances in addition to affecting employees and businesses<sup>5</sup>. Government spending is low compared with Nigeria's GDP and dependent on import flows. The 2020 budget includes expenditures of \$245 million (approximately 10% of GDP) at current exchange rates, 95% of total revenue is domestically sources and more than 50% of that comes from taxes on imported goods<sup>6</sup>. According to the IMF, in 2020, the volume of imports into developing nations is forecast to fall by 8.2%, while the volume of exports into those same nations is expected to fall by 9.6%<sup>4</sup>.

Due to the ban on livestock and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Nigeria is currently unable to access international bond markets and is therefore unable to use its excellent fiscal position to attract financing to invest in development.<sup>7</sup> Imports and exports will

both be significantly reduced in volume if the pandemic's uncertainty persists (Bank of Nigeria, 2020). As imports are Nigeria's main source of income, this will lower the country's trade-related revenues<sup>7</sup>. Although the measures being implemented now are likely to have a significant impact on the volume and makeup of expenditure, no official announcement of a revised budget has yet been made<sup>6</sup>.

## **4.2 Socioeconomic Costs and Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic affecting Society's Vulnerable Groups**

While informed at the time, the government's phase 1 response (complete lockdown) came at significant socio-economic costs to the nation, with a disproportionately negative impact on Nigeria's most vulnerable communities. These policies had an effect on access to jobs and means of subsistence, as well as to education, food security, and learning opportunities. The following are a few of the socioeconomic costs:

### **4.2.1 Human Rights Violations**

The adoption and enforcement of lockdown policy ultimately turned out to be lethal and divisive in Nigeria. To carry out the lockdown order in the Federal Capital Territory and many states with state-imposed lockdowns, security agents, military, and paramilitary forces were specifically called upon. The implementation of Phase 1 of the lockdown exacerbated problems with corruption and violations of human rights both inside these institutions and across the country, despite an increase in inter-agency collaboration between the police and other institutions.

Eight reports of extrajudicial killings were directly connected to the enforcement of the lockdown regulations between March 30 and April 15, the first two weeks of the lockdown, and they resulted in eighteen deaths<sup>9</sup>. This is stark when compared to the COVID-19 virus, which was responsible for only eleven deaths nationwide<sup>9</sup>. Other types of human rights breaches that

were brought on by corruption, abuse of authority, overuse of force, and disregard for national and human rights legislation were also documented throughout the monitoring period. They include thirteen cases of bribery and extortion (profiting from the lockdown), thirty-three cases of torture, degrading and inhumane treatment, twenty-seven cases of violation of the right to freedom of movement, unlawful detentions, and arrest, nineteen cases of unauthorized property seizures/confiscation, and thirteen cases of sexual abuse<sup>10</sup>.

Some of these incidents not only violated human rights but also contributed to defeat the aim of the lockdown. When interstate travel was prohibited during Phase 1 of the lockdown, security personnel (the police and military) were accused of taking advantage of the situation by demanding money from drivers in exchange for passage at set checkpoints<sup>11</sup>.

#### **4.2.2 Social Unrest and Crime are on the Rise**

Due to challenges associated with the lockdown and inmates being released from prisons in all jurisdictions, there was initially an increase in crime and unrest in the states that were under lockdown. 200 persons are said to have been detained within the first two weeks on suspicion of raping and robbing young girls. In response to the rise in local crime, particularly in residential neighborhoods, locals in those areas formed spontaneous vigilante squads to protect themselves.<sup>11</sup>

During the first month of the lockdown, there was also an uptick in other types of criminal activity. According to information from Interpol's headquarters, scammers have created fake websites, e-commerce sites, and social media profiles that advertise the sale of COVID-19 medical items. Because of the lockdown, the INTERPOL unit in Nigeria was put on high alert in April 2020 due to an observed and anticipated rise in organized crime<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, there was a surge in terrorist activity throughout the various lockdown phases. The Nigerian terrorist

organization Boko Haram used the pandemic as an opportunity to propagate false information, stating that COVID-19 was brought about by "evil," and that their brand of Islam was the anti-virus<sup>11</sup>. Open Doors also stated in late April 2020 that Boko Haram had begun to considerably increase their geographic reach. Extortive crimes like kidnapping for ransom increased. Nigerian kidnap-for-ransom occurrences rose 30% in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, according to Control Risks

The limits on movement during Phase 1 of the lockdown confined vulnerable people to their attackers, which resulted in an increase in spousal and child abuse across multiple states. Since the lockdown started at the end of March, according to the Domestic and Gender abuse Response Team, which is managed by the Lagos state government, there had been an upsurge in allegations of sexual and domestic abuse.

March<sup>14</sup>. The team averaged 13 new calls each day, and by the end of March, there were 390 reports. Comparatively to the months prior to the lockdown, the total number of cases of physical child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence climbed by 60, 30 and 10%, respectively. Even though the lockdown limits were loosened in May, this spike persisted during the other lockdown periods, and many businesses and educational institutions remained shuttered until September 2020. Additionally, the increase was influenced by people's financial struggles both during and after the total lockdown<sup>15</sup>.

#### **4.2.3 Deeper and more severe poverty**

People who were just over the poverty threshold were dragged farther below it as a result of the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown, and those already below it were pushed even lower. About 12.6 million Nigerians entered extreme poverty between 2019 and 2020, with COVID-19 accounting for a sizable percentage of the new extreme poor<sup>16</sup>.

#### 4.2.4 Impact on the Vulnerable's Basic Needs, Income, and Labor Market Results

The lockdown procedures caused a decline in economic activity in all sectors and industries of the economy, which increased unemployment rates. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate grew from over 23% in the third quarter of 2018 to over 27% in the second quarter of 2020. This represented a rise in real unemployment of 4 percentage points and in total unemployment of more than 17%. Youth and female unemployment, however, grew dramatically when compared to the male unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for women increased by five percentage points, and the rate for young people increased by 5.2 percentage points. The percentage of men without a job grew by 2.6 points<sup>17</sup>.

Due to lost wages, unemployment, and underemployment brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent policy actions to stop its spread, many people have fallen into poverty, especially those in the informal sector and the lowest income quintiles. As of July, the first three rounds of the NLPS 2020 poll showed that 11% of respondents had not worked since mid-March, and that 39%, 36%, and 14% had been able to find employment again in April/May, June, and July, respectively. This was substantiated by the field survey, where 27.5 per cent of respondents reported that they had experienced unemployment due to COVID-19, with 17 per cent of the total respondents reporting that they were yet to find suitable employment as at the time the surveys were conducted. The most affected workers were those operating in food services (28.8 per cent) and the wholesale and retail sectors (11.6 per cent), which are highly informal. By June 2020, 45 per cent of Nigerians surveyed had simply stopped working. This was supported by the field survey, in which 27.5% of respondents said that COVID-19 had caused them to lose their jobs, and 17% of all respondents said that they had not yet found adequate employment at the time the surveys were performed. Workers employed in the extremely casual food service

(288.8%) and wholesale and retail (11.6%) industries were the most impacted. The NLPS 2020 reports that by June, 45% of Nigerians polled had simply given up their jobs<sup>18</sup>.

Losses in labor income were widespread at the family level. Eighty percent of NLPS participants reported having lost some of their income. The fall in household income was particularly severe for those engaged in non-farm activities. 93% of those who responded to the field survey at the time the study was conducted claimed that the lockdowns had reduced their pre-existing revenues by at least 50%. Compared to 86% of respondents from the official sector, this represented 95% of informal sector respondents<sup>18</sup>. A certain level of income loss was reported by every single respondent who worked in the industries of agriculture, fisheries, poultry, food service, construction, and domestic labor<sup>18</sup>.

Two things are evident from the field survey and NLPS 2020 data. To curb the spread of the virus, Nigerians must first abide by the regulations established by the government. Second, individuals who were most badly affected by the pandemic have taken longer to recover. Phase 1 of the lockdown had a detrimental impact on livelihoods even after the economy began to partially open in May 2020<sup>18</sup>.

The NLPS study found that, as of June 2020, 60% of those with official urban occupations had quit their jobs, compared to 40% of people in rural areas. 30% of field survey respondents who identified themselves as employees in the informal sector, as opposed to 20% of respondents in the formal sector, stated that the lockdown had resulted in their loss of employment. According to those who self-identified as business owners in the field survey, their company is family-run, therefore if a business shuts down during the lockdown, significant household members presumably lost their employment as well<sup>18</sup>.

The first stage of the lockdown, according to many of the respondents to the field survey who identified as business owners or self-employed, had a negative effect on their activities. Even though they had returned in May, by October or November they still weren't fully recovered. Most respondents admitted that they had entirely or partially lost contact with their customers. In the wholesale and commerce sectors, more than 80% of business owners claimed that the lockdown had damaged their supply chain, and they have yet to get back to the pre-COVID-19 situation<sup>18</sup>. Particularly in the industrial and service sectors, respondents noticed an increase in the cost of the raw materials and accessories their businesses required. The strong demand for hand sanitizers, face masks, and antimalarial drugs, however, has led to improved customer support, according to a small number of respondents who work in the health sector's wholesale and retail trade. According to the NLPS 2020, 36% of households had to shut down their nonfarm businesses, 21% observed a fall in output prices, and 45% of households reported witnessing an increase in business and farming inputs<sup>18</sup>.

It is critical to note that the impact on the agriculture industry was not small, per the NLPS 2020, as workers in the industry reported suffering a sizeable loss in income and employment. This is due to two factors. First, due to the lockdown, farmers who live far from their farms—especially those in urban areas of Nigeria—would not have been able to access them. Second, the impact on farmer profits from the disruption to the national supply networks<sup>18</sup>.

According to the COVID-19, the age group of respondents with the highest unemployment rate was made up of young people between the ages of 18 and 25. The lockout, however, was reported to have had a considerable negative impact on respondents' incomes by a clear majority of respondents across all age groups examined (more than 90% for all age groups). The first wealth quintile—those making less than the federal minimum wage of USD 78.70 (NGN

30,000)—saw the highest declines in income, at over 80%. However, all income categories reported a decrease in income<sup>18</sup>.

Food insecurity increased during lockdowns, and the effects are still seen today. Despite the fact that the major lockdowns mostly affected urban areas rather than rural areas with active agricultural production, interstate movement restrictions, panic buying, and border closures caused food shortages and increased prices<sup>18</sup>. There is proof that the COVID-19 outbreak has made a substantial proportion of Nigerians severely hungry and impoverished. More than 80% of the households questioned by NLPS 2020 claim that they were unable to purchase basic foods during Phase 1 of the lockdown due to a lack of funding<sup>18</sup>. More than half of respondents (51%) reported that their food consumption had significantly decreased during and after Phase 1 of the lockdown compared to the period prior to COVID-19, and 81% of respondents who said their ability to eat was restricted said it was because they didn't have enough money to purchase food. In contrast, 19% of respondents said it was because there was just no food to buy (scarcity brought on by restrictions on interstate and intrastate travel)<sup>18</sup>.

Food inflation increased steadily between March and September, which decreased households' ability to purchase essentials. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), food prices increased by 0.52 percentage points between July 2020 and August 2019. According to NLPS 2020, 85% of families cited price increases for necessities. 55% of households reduced their food intake as a result of income fluctuations. Even those respondents who did not experience a loss in income reported eating less as a result of rising food prices. Everyone who responded to the field survey said that since March, they had to alter their food consumption.

### **4.3 Socio-Economic Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Southwest States, Nigeria**

The United Nations agencies issued warnings as the COVID-19 pandemic raged, saying it might undo decades of progress made in eradicating unnecessary child deaths. New mortality estimates that were announced on September 9, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the World Bank have caused concern. According to reports from these organizations, the pandemic's impact on child and maternal health care had a negative impact on the under-five mortality rate, which reached a record low of 5.2 million in 2019. According to the sources, this development tragically put the lives of further millions of people at risk. In Southwest States, Nigeria during the time period under consideration, the UN also declared that protecting education from attack was urgently required in order to rebuild public trust in schools as safe havens for students and teachers<sup>20</sup>. This remark is made in light of the fact that COVID-19's prolonged school closures in Southwest States, Nigeria had a minimal impact on the lives of roughly 46 million primary and secondary students. Globally, the number of children under the age of five who died decreased from 12.5 million in 1990 to 5.2 million in 2019. However, preliminary simulations conducted by Johns Hopkins University in the United States in May 2020 indicated that an additional 6,000 children could perish per day as a result of Coronavirus disturbances<sup>21</sup>.

Due to the neglect of other diseases and the ensuing increase in mortality and morbidity, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused a decrease in life expectancy globally. For the avoidance of doubt, life expectancy is the average number of years that members of a population can anticipate to live, as opposed to lifespan, which is the longest period of time that any individual member of the species can survive. Even if longevity hasn't changed much, if at all,

since the turn of the 20th century, the world's life expectancy has increased by more than 40 years as a result of a combination of scientific advancements and public health initiatives that reduced infant mortality. Despite this, medical professionals agree that the global coronavirus pandemic is significantly raising morbidity and mortality rates in Southwest States, Nigeria and other populations. In Southwest States, Nigeria and other parts of the world, an increase in mortality may result in a decrease in life expectancy. According to medical professionals, the COVID-19 pandemic has overtaxed health systems, which could raise morbidity and mortality in addition to the direct effects of COVID-19 infections. The potential exists for life expectancy in Southwest States, Nigeria to stagnate or decrease as a result of these increases in mortality, both direct and indirect<sup>22</sup>.

According to the World Bank, Nigeria's average life expectancy in 2020 would be 54.8 years, up from 54.0 years in 2019 (a 0.58 percent rise). However, it is important to remember that this is a projection from the United Nations Organization (UNO) and does not account for the effects of the COVID-19 coronavirus disease. The life expectancy in Southwest States, Nigeria was 54.49 years in 2019, 54.18 years in 2018, and 53.73 years in 2017, indicating an improvement from the values of 0.84 percent in 2016, 0.83 percent in 2017, and 0.58 percent in 2018 and 2019 respectively. As a result, COVID-19's effects may lead the final estimates for 2020 to slightly decline. Due to the low case fatality rate for COVID-19 that was documented in Southwest States, Nigeria, which is only approximately 2%, the rise may not be significant. However, with a life expectancy of 54.80 years, Nigeria has one of the lowest rates in Africa, while Tunisia, another African nation, has a life expectancy of 76.79 years<sup>23</sup>.

Strong signs point to 2021 being difficult for many tenants across the nation as COVID-19 pandemic effects start to show up economically and there is a chance that it will lead to strained

social relationships, especially between landlords and tenants, as some tenants may not be able to renew their rents on time when they are due. Several rent default disputes between tenants and landlords may lead to legal disputes and evictions. As opposed to the UK and the US, where rents are renewed on a monthly or quarterly basis, this will be the case due to the tenancy/rent structure of the housing sector<sup>24</sup>. Due to the fact that the majority of Nigeria's middle class pays rent annually, tenants may not feel the burden right now. In addition, it's likely that the majority of those who have lost their jobs or had their income or salaries reduced did so before the outbreak. Consequently, it may still be possible to reduce tension right now, at least through the end of the year. Tenants may ask for a moratorium because most businesses have been negatively impacted and some people may have lost their jobs. A lot of tenants will undoubtedly find it challenging to pay rent in advance as they formerly did due to the status of the economy, it is a fact<sup>25</sup>. The Federal Government approved a fairly significant increase in the price of gasoline at the pump from N148 to N162 per litre as well as the power tariff in order to further address the economic realities because it was no longer able to borrow money to subsidize public utilities<sup>26</sup>. The rising cost of food and transportation due to the revision of the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) has further exacerbated the economy's problems. The Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), the Trade Union Congress (TUC), and a number of other stakeholders, including the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), are opposed to it on the grounds that since there is no electricity, it is unlawful for the government to charge Nigerians for electricity that is not used. It is well known that without a generating set, every household appliance in Nigeria, including the refrigerator, freezer, electric cooker, etc., is utterly useless<sup>27</sup>. Nigeria is one of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with the most costly petroleum products and the sixth-highest energy cost in Africa due to tariff increases in two

important sectors. In the future, only residents of the OPEC Community would spend more on premium motor spirits (PMS) than Nigerians, including those of Ecuador, Congo, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In Southwest States, Nigeria, PMS costs at least 26 times more than it does in Iran and Venezuela. It is also three times more expensive in Nigeria than it is in Sudan, another Africa 's oil-producing country while in Angola, a country declared as one of the most expensive to live, PMS is about fifty per cent cheaper than in Southwest States, Nigeria<sup>28</sup>.

According to a study on the COVID-19 lockdown's economic impact conducted by the Copenhagen Consensus Centre and the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), the policy costs Nigeria over \$373.5 billion. The study also found that moderate social isolation and school closure policies implemented by the federal and state governments reduced deaths by 12,000 while preventing 102,000 deaths from COVID-19 and another 17,500 deaths from better HIV treatment. The research did point out that because COVID-19 deaths are likely to be those of older people whereas deaths from the other causes are probably those of younger people, more life-years would be lost than gained. If schools were closed for nine months, each child would lose nine months of instruction. This, according to the analysis, would increase each childless person's productivity in later life. The total projected social cost of school closures in Southwest States, Nigeria is pegged at \$5.7 billion, which represents the current value of lost income for more than 25 million students over the course of the next 50 years<sup>29</sup>. A moderate social distance costs Nigeria's economy \$373.5 billion in total, or approximately one full year's worth of GDP. The analysis came to the conclusion that mild social isolation and school closures could save roughly 12,000 lives at a net cost of \$372.5 billion in reduced life expectancy in the

future. The cost-benefit analysis reveals that the benefit is significantly outweighed by the cost. Three cents of social gain will result from every dollar spent<sup>30</sup>.

The UNDP believes that social distance requires a certain amount of geographical freedom because it is difficult to implement this strategy in areas of Nigeria's urban centers that are highly inhabited. This is due to the fact that social segregation will be challenging to enforce in crowded Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in the country's far north as a result of the insurgency. Additionally, the very safety nets needed for recovery and healing run the risk of further fracturing communal ideals. Health-related pandemics may also raise the dangers of spousal abuse, child abuse, and exploitation of women and girls, particularly caregivers. Economic loss frustrations may also exacerbate Nigeria's existing regional fault lines<sup>31</sup>. Since the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak, it has been a nightmare for many families trying to access routine medical services in the Federal Capital Territory and the majority of State capitals. Many have lost loved ones as a result of hospitals turning away patients out of concern for COVID-19. Unfortunately, both the Federal and State Governments own the majority of the implicated healthcare facilities. For instance, the efforts to contain COVID-19 overwhelmed the health care system in Rivers State, which is home to the majority of international oil firms, because Rivers State University Teaching Hospital devoted its medical staff and facilities to the Pandemic's containment. As a result, surgeons at Rivers State University Teaching Hospital decided to postpone elective surgeries for a while and focus primarily on urgent surgical situations. While treating patients with common illnesses such respiratory tract infections, coughs, fevers, and pneumonia, healthcare providers reported dread and anxiety that they would get the virus. Facemasks and other basic safety equipment were completely insufficient at the beginning. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, very few people have visited hospitals, unless they are critically ill,

since they too do not want to get the virus while they are there, according to information from the out-patient department<sup>32</sup>. Generally speaking, due to the enormous burden COVID-19 has placed on health care services, the lethal virus is now present in almost all of the states in the nation. As a result, health professionals and their states' governments are in a terrible situation as they struggle to manage the deadly sickness successfully alongside common illnesses.

According to a study, COVID-19's severe impact on crucial Nigerian economic sectors may cause listed businesses' profits to decline and negatively affect dividend payouts by as much as 60%. This is true since lockdowns were implemented in several states of Nigeria during the first quarter, which restricted operational activities. A slowdown in economic activity and a sharp reduction in crude oil prices also had an impact on public and private sector revenues, reducing both capital expenditure and purchasing power. To mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 issue on business operations, some publicly traded businesses changed their dividend pay-out and revised policy<sup>33</sup>. Following the evaluation, dividend payments were either postponed or canceled in order to reduce the impact on the company's bottom line and maintain cash flow. Commercial chicken, egg, and catfish farms reported losses in the billions of Naira as a result of the COVID-19-induced lockdown, which also had an impact on the hospitality and social sectors of the economy. The losses were primarily caused by their failure to sell enough of their goods to make a profit. For instance, the closure of schools, social enterprises, and places of worship sparked socioeconomic issues that resulted in employment losses and negatively impacted, among other things, the flow of resources, debt repayment, food security, and income security<sup>33</sup>. For more than five months, hotels, event venues, nightclubs, bars, and other businesses were closed. Funerals, weddings, and birthday parties, as well as the related industries of clothes designers, event planners, caterers, confectioners, and food sellers, were all impacted. There are 1,032

hotels, event venues, bars, foodservice companies, restaurants, and clubs operating in the unregistered sector in Lagos alone<sup>34</sup>.

Following the COVID-19 epidemic in the nation, the Federal Government ordered the closure of all educational institutions on March 19, 2020, for a period of about five months, in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The decree was issued by Minister of Education Mallam Adamu Adamu. As Nigeria entered a series of lockdowns and shutdowns in response to the risks posed by the deadly Coronavirus, what had initially seemed to be a brief stay at home for schoolchildren transformed into a prolonged and forced holiday<sup>35</sup>.

Although the disruptions of educational activities are not unique to Nigeria, they have highlighted the shortcomings of the educational system in the nation, particularly the gap and growing inequalities in the country's education with children and students in rural and underserved communities being shut out because they lack the facilities and equipment to help them transition into the new learning system. The issue is made worse by infrastructure issues, particularly with regard to power<sup>36</sup>. Even while several states attempted to implement online courses to keep students busy during the lockdown, particularly those enrolled in public secondary institutions, the difficulties of this endeavor were obvious. For instance, while students in Nigeria's private secondary schools and universities could attend lectures online and do homework from the comfort of their homes, their colleagues in public institutions were simply left to their fate. However, these young people need a variety of useful skills for the modern job market<sup>37</sup>.

The effects of the pandemic are somewhat visible in the foreign exchange rate, which has declined by 1.0% since mid-February 2020; nevertheless, the informal market predicted a greater decline in the value of the Naira. Therefore, it came as no surprise when the Central Bank of

Nigeria (CBN) changed the exchange rate to N380 for \$1 on March 20, 2020. Informal reports claimed that the Naira was trading at N380 per dollar on the parallel/black market a week before the CBN's official announcement. Remittances, which in 2018 made up 80% of the Federal Government's budget, could be more significantly impacted by the Naira's depreciation, which would have an adverse effect on people's lifestyles and spending habits.<sup>38</sup> For instance, a country that is a net importer of food experienced a shortage of consumer products as a result of disruptions to imports and local supply as a result of lockdown. Nigeria is a net importer of basic foodstuffs, hence prices and availability of vital products have recently increased dramatically<sup>34</sup>. The situation of insecurity in several states of the nation was also exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Rivers State case offers important supporting evidence in this regard. While many Rivers State residents praised the Rivers State government for its firm, focused, and primarily in the best interests of the Rivers people fight against the Corona Virus. The Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, took decisive action to enforce government decisions made to stop the spread of COVID-19, but it was reported that the Etimete Hotel in Onne and the Prudest Hotel Alode in Eleme were still open despite Executive Order 6 closing down all hotels in the State<sup>35</sup>. The People Democratic Party (PDP) Youth Leader and a group of thugs attacked the Task Force members who were at the hotel to prevent it from working, severely injuring them. As a result, the Governor demolished the two hotels in accordance with the provisions of "Executive Order 6" and to safeguard the Task Force established by the government to enforce the Order. Some people viewed the Governor's move as "imperial and offensive." Governor Wike defended his decision by saying that the two hotels in Eleme were demolished in accordance with the regulations in effect<sup>35</sup>.

Despite the fact that Governor Wike announced additional measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the State on May 7th, 2020, including a 24-hour lockdown on the Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas, which went into effect in accordance with Executive Order No. 6, the State borders continue to be repeatedly violated by security personnel who permit, and in some cases, personally aid, individuals with risky COVID-19 status into the State. For instance, despite the federal government's limitations on interstate travel, the State COVID-19 Task Force apprehended a lorry carrying live livestock on May 7, 2020, with 22 people inside<sup>36</sup>. Similarly, on May 8, 2020, the Task Force stopped eight more trucks carrying 200 people who were being smuggled into the State from the Northern regions of the nation between loads of grain. The following vehicles, including the Howo Truck with Registration Number 608 XA (Adamawa), the DAF Truck with Registration Number PKM 48594 AX, the Truck with Registration Number KBK 336 AX, and the DAF Truck with Registration Number MUB 20 YH (Adamawa), were seized and had their ownership forfeited to the State. Some of these vehicles were scheduled to be auctioned by the Deputy Sherriff of the State High Court. Later, the lockdown in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor was reevaluated to permit inhabitants of Rivers State to restock their supplies<sup>35</sup>. The Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Councils' complete lockdown was extended by the State Security Council from Sunday, May 14, 2020, at 8 p.m. until further notice. Meanwhile, residents of the state were urged to abide by established COVID-19 protocols, particularly the requirement to wear face masks and the closing of land, sea, and air boundaries and entry routes. In order to stop the spread of COVID-19, the Rivers State Government closed all borders on March 26, 2020, and ordered that nobody enter or leave the state. Security organizations manning the border posts continued to allow quick movements into and out of the state. Truck drivers at Mbiama, a border town that connects Rivers State with

Bayelsa State, as well as at another location that connects Rivers and Abia States, disclosed that security operatives charge each truck driver between N50,000 and N80,000 to allow them to enter or exit the state. Aba-Ndele border crossing, Ogoni/AkwaIbom border crossing, and Owerri/Port Harcourt border crossing are other border crossings where security personnel have engaged in criminal activity. Despite the security officers' extortion, the truck drivers waited in line at the border for two to three days before they were allowed to cross following protracted talks<sup>37</sup>.

#### **4.4 Policy Interventions to Cushion the Socio-Economic Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic in Southwest States, Nigeria**

The Federal and State Governments implemented a lockdown of economic activity, with the exception of critical services, to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Federal Government has taken steps to help Nigerians, including providing relief supplies, maintaining the school feeding program during the crisis, and granting a three-month repayment moratorium for all Trader Moni, Market Moni, and Farmer Moni loans<sup>38</sup>.

The President further ordered that a similar ban be applied to any loans made by the Bank of Industry that were supported by the federal government. The president instructed the development financial institutions to engage these development partners and negotiate concessions to reduce the pains of the borrowers for on-lending facilities utilizing funds from international and multilateral development partners. The president also ordered that conditional cash transfers for the upcoming two months be given out right away for the most needy members of our society. In the upcoming weeks, the internally displaced individuals will also receive a two-month food ration<sup>39</sup>.

Additionally, the House of Representatives enacted the stimulus package Bill in March 2020 with the goal of, among other things, boosting the faltering economy and preventing employee furloughs. The Bill offers income tax credits to firms who keep workers between March 1 and December 31, 2020<sup>40</sup>, excluding upstream petroleum employers, at a rate of fifty percent (50%) of yearly Pay as You Earn (PAYE). A remission of import taxes on items like personal protection equipment and medical equipment was part of the second inducement. The government has established the "Extended Special Public Works Programme," an employment program that it has been vigorously promoting and that aims to offer relief to the nation's unemployed citizens. The government's goal with this program was to temporarily hire one thousand people (1000) from each of the nation's seven hundred and seventy-four (774) Local Government Areas during the dry season<sup>41</sup>. It is pertinent to mention at this point that the program, set to begin in October 2020, is not new to the situation in Nigeria as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) developed it in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) in the middle of the 1990s. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Development and Technical Labor Department claims that industrialized countries used such programs during the Great Depression to immediately address the crushing poverty at the lowest level of society, which typically bears the brunt of such economic upheavals. Additionally, it was successfully employed in colonial Africa to mobilize the public to work on other labor-intensive infrastructure projects in order to promptly respond to circumstances like drought and hunger<sup>40</sup>.

The Rivers State administration has made an effort to offer incentives to citizens in an effort to lessen the negative economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak. In order to buy up all the produce from Rivers State farmers and fishermen, Governor Nyesom Wike established a food purchasing committee, which was presided over by Dr. Tammy Danagogo, Secretary to the State

government. N2 billion was also made available for this purpose. A team for the delivery of palliatives to Rivers State people was also established, under the direction of Desmond Akawor, the PDP's chairman for Rivers State. However, the majority of Port Harcourt citizens, the state capital, voiced concerns about the government's plan, claiming that they were left out, while those who did claim benefits bemoaned the fact that the packages did not provide enough food for them and their families to last for three days<sup>34</sup>. Along with giving people tax breaks and incentives, the government also waived 50% of all assessed Capital Gains Tax (CGT) until December 2020. The governor's announcement to suspend all taxes on the informal sector for 2020 was the most significant of all, as this sector was the hardest hit by the pandemic of the COVID-19 negative economic effects. Market stalls, hair and barbershops, mini-markets, kiosks, mechanics, artisans, drivers of passenger vehicles (taxi and buses providing town services), welders, tire vulcanizers, and all related small companies were among the informal sector workers who benefited from the tax break<sup>37</sup>. The State also suspended all local government taxes and levies for the 2020 tax year, with the exception of the tenement rate, and issued a warning that no one should take any levies from Rivers residents who are barely making ends meet. In addition, owners of schools, hotels, pharmacies, hospitals, and other related enterprises received a 20% discount on all Personal Income Tax (PIT) assessments for the year ending December 31, 2020. Similar to this, between March 2020 and September 2020, the Lagos State government changed its tax laws at least three times as part of efforts to lessen the burden on taxpayers in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The government specifically announced in March a three-month extension of the annual tax return filing date beginning on March 31, 2020. The administration once more extended the deadline from May 31, 2020, to June 2020 toward the end of May 2020<sup>42</sup>.

Additional tax breaks and incentives were also announced by the government for businesses and individuals in the State. These included the possibility of allowing outstanding debts to be paid in installments to help with potential cash flow issues for tax payers, the elimination of late payment penalties for PAYE obligations that were due between March 2020 and May 2020, and the elimination of late filing penalties for the 2020 annual tax return; Increased payment channels to make tax payment easier, simpler, and more convenient for everyone, and adoption of video conferencing as the default mode for conducting Tax Audit Reconciliation Committee (TARC) meetings in accordance with social media trends. Grant of tax credits of twenty percent (20%) of cash and kind donations made for COVID-19 by resident individuals to Lagos State government for the 2021 Year of Assessment only subject to a cap of thirty-five percent (35%)<sup>43</sup>.

Additionally, in June 2020, the Enugu State Government gave tax breaks and incentives to taxpayers and other groups of people in the State to lessen the consequences of the devastating coronavirus epidemic. For businesses and institutions doing business in the state, the due date for submitting Form A for Employees and Annual Returns pursuant to Sections 41(3) and 81(1-3) of the Personal Income Tax Act (PITA) 2011 as amended has been extended to July 30, 2020.

From January through December 2020, all sections are allowed a waiver of the fine and interest assessed for the late payment of PAYE deductions. a 50% discount on all payments for the 2020 assessed Land Use Charge.50% off all Capital Gains Tax (CGT) assessments from September 2020 through December 2020. Owners of hotels and schools will receive a 50% discount on all personal income tax assessments submitted for the 2020 tax year. a 50% reduction in all payments for the 2020 Land Use Charge assessments. The offer is only valid through December 31, 2020. When the Land Use Charge for 2018 and 2019 is paid by December 2020, the penalty and interest are waived<sup>45</sup>.

Despite the waivers, local government council representatives in Enugu State continue to travel around in buses to seek payment from store owners for a variety of fees, including the Container Permit, Environmental Development Levy, Business Premises, ESWAMA Fees, and Caption Rates.

The Plateau State Government provided certain inhabitants with palliatives, including maize, rice, toothpaste, toiletries, and noodles, to help control the COVID-19 outbreak. The majority of inhabitants argued that the palliatives provided did not even account for one percent (1%), citing an incident in which Jos North Local Council gave yam tubers to an entire town. The majority of people feel powerless and dissatisfied because it can be difficult to find one meal per day. Additionally, the government has launched a stock investing center as part of its preparation for the economy after COVID-19. Additionally, the administration and Max Airline agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) so that the airline would fly to the state three times per week, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday<sup>46</sup>.

The tragic paradox is that most people have yet to notice the effects of the government's pandemic containment measures. The performance of the real estate sector was weak even before the COVID-19 pandemic and entered a recession in the third quarter of 2019 (Q3-2019) due to fragile macroeconomic conditions and weak demand for commercial and real estate assets, coupled with a low level of investment, according to comments made by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on the Second Quarter's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Although the COVID-19-induced lockdown and social distance rules made it impossible for real estate players to engage and transact with clients, most real estate activities were suspended as a result, according to LCCI, despite the sector's contraction of 21.99% in Q2 2020. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently

released its Second Quarter (Q2-2020) Gross Domestic Product (GDP) report, which revealed that Nigeria's GDP actually decreased by 6.1% (year over year) in Q2-2020, ending a three-year trend of modest but positive growth rates since the 2016 to 2017 recession. According to the report, Q2 2020 performance fell 8.22% from Q2 2019's performance (2.12%), and Q2 2020 performance fell 7.97% from Q1 2020's performance (1.8%)<sup>47</sup>.

In addition, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently released the "Abridged Labour Force Survey under COVID-19" for August 2020, which provided a breakdown of the unemployment rate in the nation after a 20-month interval. It showed that 21, 764, 617 people were unemployed, with Imo State having the highest rate at 48.7%. According to the data, the unemployment rate for the relevant time period increased by 27.1% from the 23.1% seen in the third quarter of 2018. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that the number of employees in the Nigerian banking sector had decreased by 9,866 over the previous year as part of the chosen Banking Data Q-2020. This indicates a 9.5% Year-on-Year (YONY) decrease in the number of banking industry employees from 104,364 in Q2-2019 to 94,498 in Q2-2020. The survey also showed that the banking sector's contract workers were the most negatively impacted by the exodus of workers, with a 7.321 percent drop in personnel from 42,263 in Q2-2020. According to the data, the number of contract employees reached an all-time high in Q2 2020, having doubled from Q1 2017's total of 20,237, but then fell by 3,083 in Q3 and then increased by 2,170 in Q4. According to the research, there were 2,247 fewer junior employees working in the banking sector in Q2 2020 than there were in Q2 2019, when there were 39, 980 junior employees, a 5.6% year-over-year decline<sup>48</sup>.

The number of employees in the junior staff category reached its peak in Q4 2017 with 41,398 and was relatively stable from the first quarter of 2018 till it rapidly decreased until Q2 2020.

The number of senior staff members in the banking sector decreased by 324, or 1.8% YONY, from 17,943 in Q2 2019 to 17,619 in Q2 2020. The number of employees in this category of bank workers peaked in 2017-Q1 at 20,483 and fluctuated before declining significantly from the end of 2019 to Q2-2020. The survey also showed that, out of the four staff categories in the banking industry, only the number of people employed in executive positions increased over the study period. In a similar vein, the number of Executive staff increased by 14.6%, or 26 more people, from 178 in Q2-2019 to 204 in Q2-202. This group of bank employees peaked in the third quarter of 2018 but fell by 35 in the second quarter of 2019 to 178, remaining stable between the third and fourth quarters of 2019, before rising by 24 in the first quarter of 2020<sup>48</sup>.

A rise in unemployment typically indicates a growth in the number of job seekers, which can happen when persons who were previously not in the labor market decide to do so and begin looking for employment or when people who were already employed lose their jobs. It frequently combines the two of these<sup>48</sup>. These depressing numbers undoubtedly reflect the harm that the COVID-19 outbreak and oil price collapse have done to the economy. Chevron, a large American oil company, stated it would restructure significantly and lay off at least twenty-five percent (25%) of its workforce as a result of an evaluation of its manpower needs in light of the ongoing transformation of the business environment. The fact is that low oil prices have hurt oil corporations' profits, forcing them to undertake significant budget cuts<sup>47</sup>. According to the NECA, this statistic represents 50% of Nigeria's projected 205 million people and a 10% increase over the 40% of Nigerians who were expected to be living in extreme poverty in October 2019 according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). According to the NECA research, 15% of the world's population today lives in extreme poverty, with Nigeria accounting for the majority of those individuals<sup>49</sup>.

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## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The arrival of COVID-19 caught Nigeria and its leadership unprepared and further exposed the fragility of her socio-economic sectors. The impacts of the pandemic on the country derived from actions or policy interventions by the government (Federal and State) such as bans on certain types of activities especially, bans on religious gathering, marriages and other social events, closure of borders (both national and international), state lockdowns or social distancing discourage economic gathering; closure of firms and institutions including schools (both private and public schools) were measures taken proactively to avoid infections. However, business closures resulted in the loss of wages for workers in many cases, especially in the informal sector of the economy where there is the absence of paid leave. These policies affected all sectors of the economy – the health sector, manufacturing, the oil and gas sector, retail and other services, trade and transportation, education, security and others with or without an actual break. These, in turn, translated into reduced income both through the supply and demand sides.

It is highly plausible that these short-term socioeconomic implications can result in reductions in long term growth. For example, school closure resulted in lost opportunities to learn for students but more vulnerable students lost opportunities to learn as they may not return to the educational system due to prolonged periods, especially for girls who became pregnant. School closures also have a large cost in terms of lost future productivity that outweighs even the most optimistic benefits. Efforts must be made to address poverty just as there is an urgent need to improve the health care sector. We have shown that there has been a steady increase for some time now in the rate of unemployment which needs to be tackled positively.

The best way to fight the increasing poverty in Southwest States, Nigeria is to invest heavily in the education sector for the Nigerian child. This has become more important now than ever in the context of the emerging new normal that places greater emphasis on technology and other modern methods of imparting knowledge. There is also an urgent need for a total overhaul of the education sector to prepare the army of youth with modern skills that would usher them into the digital economy. While they should be made to go through vocational and technical education in well-equipped and fully funded institutions to prepare them for more job-ready skills, new courses such as robotic and coding should be introduced early in the country 's education curriculum to prepare the students for jobs of the future.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

COVID-19 is expected to have a severe impact on economy, enterprises and industries on all sizes, resulting in reduced incomes for vulnerable macro and micro-economies and the risk of job losses and lost incomes for thousands of low-paid workers. The increasing spread of COVID-19 across countries has prompted many governments including Southwest States, Nigeria to introduce unprecedented measures to contain the pandemic. However, the government of has imposed partial restrictions on vast majority of businesses and economic activities in the country as a result of banning social gathering and closed all Schools, Universities, Sports Centers and Kat tea shops.

Southwest States, Nigeria imports are decreased due to pandemic and this has fiscal and unemployment adverse implications. After the outbreak of COVID-19, a significant reduction of remittance inflow to the nation has declined due to the Global lockdowns that brought the loss of jobs for the Diaspora community and the closure of financial institutions such as banks and monetary transfer operators. Social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions forced a

decrease in the workforce across all economic sectors and caused many jobs to be lost. Schools and Travel and Tour Agencies have closed and the need of commodities and manufactured products has decreased.

The food supply has also seen a great demand due to panic-buying and stockpiling of food items. Partial restrictions and the closure of some business sectors forced thousands of people to lost their jobs and increase the unemployment rate, for example, the social distancing and movement of restrictions measures brought to close both public and private schools, sports and entertainment centers. Providers of private and public employment services have been placed under a severe stress test as demand for their services sky-rocketed in the first few months of the crisis while their capacity was severely constrained by the need to curtail face-to-face contact with job seekers.

Daily wage earners have been badly hit; many have nothing to live on now and are unable to buy food for their families. On the other hand, people are unable to stay at home without their work for their survival, thus they are concerned much more about their job rather COVID-19. The government of Southwest States, Nigeria is currently unable to access internal bond markets and so is unable to utilize its strong fiscal position to attract finance to invest in development due to livestock and the impact of pandemic. This is also reduced the government revenues from the trade activities particularly imports, which is the greatest source of revenue in Southwest States, Nigeria.

The consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigeria's economy is one that the country will have to grapple with for years to come. The policy response will go a long way in determining how long it would last. If it is late, weak or uncoordinated, the devastating consequences would last longer. However, if the response is prompt, effective, strong and coordinated, it would be

less devastating. This is late time the government to reset everything as the world has become standstill for a few months due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Southwest States, Nigeria National COVID-19 Task force does not plan, rethink, redesign, and restructure everything to combat the pandemic and protect its citizens and micro and macro-economic sectors.

Although the government responded quickly to COVID-19, the pandemic has tested its capacity to manage such a large-scale economic crisis. The government imposed the lockdown, school closures and other emergency restrictions hurriedly with inadequate preparation and no consultation with appropriate stakeholders. Consequently, this has had a detrimental effect on the Nigerian society at large but pertinently on the nation's most vulnerable people. While the government offered support in response to the downturn in economic activity and other effects of the emergency restrictions, these support schemes were often inadequate, failing to consider the needs of the most affected and vulnerable groups. In particular, people working in the informal sector, who felt the immediate effect of the movement restrictions as it upended their livelihoods, could not access most support measures because they mostly targeted and recognised formal labour. For the education sector, the distance learning options available take cognisance of the enormous digital divide in literacy and access to infrastructure, inherent in the country. As a result, distance learning options were exclusionary, especially for the vulnerable and marginalised students.

The private sector was also critical in supporting the government in fighting the health crisis and addressing the subsequent socio-economic turmoil. CSOs also intervened, focusing on mitigating the impact of the government's lockdown and restriction policies and plugging holes in the government's responses. The absence of digital inclusion, adequate infrastructure, and financial inclusion explain some of the observed lack of inclusion of the private sector interventions (as

with the government intervention). Unfortunately, these were pre-pandemic issues that were magnified and aggravated by the pandemic. A key lesson lies in addressing these different dimensions of exclusions as they tend to amplify both existing inequalities while creating new ones.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

There is an urgent need for Southwest States, Nigeria to form a combination of monetary, fiscal and financial markets measures to help economies and businesses to cope with this spread of virus and crisis environment. For framing appropriate action plans and policy, it is significant to know the specific issues that businesses and the public in general are facing recently. However, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1) As a way forward, the immediate focus on the nation should be on measures to contain the spread of the disease COVID-19 and to treat the individuals infected. The ability to stop its spread and treat the sick will have very positive consequences on the economy.

2) The time has come to focus on developing the local economy with the hope of having a nation that is dependent on local goods rather than over-dependence on importation. At this time of COVID-19, Southwest States, Nigeria should learn lessons and start producing cash crops, finished goods like toothpick, face masks, ventilators and extra for a locally.

3) To save the economy, companies and other industries relieving or laying off workers of their job is not the solution to the problem; holistically viewed it creates another problem. However, it is important to emphasize the importance of employers' loyalty and there should be more of negotiation than relieving employees of their jobs.

4) As we all know, there are large number of people who lose their jobs in many sectors like the retail, hospitality, travel and tourism, construction industry and transportation Companies, etc.

so the government is required to provide incentives for short or long term solutions such as tax payment extensions, subsidies, loans or cash funding and other financial assistances to employers to keep workers until COVID-19 problem.

5) There is a need to provide relaxation in the factory compliances to enable the industries to continue operation even in few laborers over longer work keeping in mind the healthier and save environment. Social distancing is followed in this and can bring a positive outcome. If required health concerns and lockdown decisions must be followed strictly.

6) There is a need to raise expenditure on public health to maintain adequate supplies to manage the problem of COVID-19; medicines, medical kits for the medical professionals, masks, gloves, more health clinics, more hospitals, etc.

7) There is a need to provide income support to SMEs, Tourism, Hospitality, Education and low-income households. Farmers should be supported by giving Minimum Support Prices for their harvests. There is a need to provide relief programs to those farmers who have lost their output due to this pandemic, unseasonal rains and weather harshness.

8) The government of Nigeria must implement certain measures to contain the rapid spread of the COVID-19 disease including full closure of borders, in-bound traveler quarantine, passenger limitations, etc.

9) The Central Bank of Nigeria must issue directives to local Public and Private Banks encouraging them to ease credit access and lending to Small and Medium sized businesses and low income individuals by relaxing stringent credit conditions, policies, procedures and processes.

10) A large inflow of money may bring severe liquidity risk to the stability of the financial system and enhance the economy of the nation. Therefore, The Central Bank of Nigeria must

critically watch and control the outward flow of foreign currency funds from the country to abroad.

#### **5.4 Suggestion for Further Research**

The research suggests the following for further research

1. Digital Transformation in Education During the Pandemic: Impacts and Lessons Learned
2. The Role of Government Policies in Mitigating Economic Vulnerabilities: A Comparative Study
3. Gender Disparities in Workforce Resilience and Recovery: An Analysis of COVID-19's Impact

#### **5.5 Contribution to Knowledge**

By examining the effect of COVID-19 on businesses, international trade, and employment in Nigeria, this research provides a nuanced understanding of the specific challenges faced by various sectors. The identification of sector-specific vulnerabilities, adaptations, and innovations offer valuable insights for policy-makers and industry leaders seeking strategies for resilience and recovery.

Furthermore, delving into the socio-economic costs and impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable populations holds significant societal relevance. This aspect of the study acknowledges the uneven distribution of the pandemic's effects, shedding light on the plight of marginalized communities, informal sector workers, and low-income individuals. The analysis of existing social support programs' effectiveness in mitigating these impacts can inform policy adjustments to ensure more inclusive protection mechanisms.

Examining the broader socio-economic implications of the pandemic will uncover lessons for both Nigeria and the global community. This exploration can contribute to the formulation of strategies that enhance preparedness and response mechanisms for future crises.

Additionally, the investigation of policy interventions aimed at cushioning the socio-economic effects of the pandemic will provide an evidence-based assessment of their efficacy. By evaluating the design, implementation, and outcomes of these interventions, this research can offer valuable insights into the qualities of effective policy responses.

Overall, the proposed study's contribution to knowledge lies in its holistic approach to understanding the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19 on Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. The findings have the potential to guide policy decisions, inspire innovative solutions, and foster resilience in the face of future crises. By offering a data-driven narrative of challenges, adaptations, and policy effectiveness, this research is poised to significantly enrich the scholarly discourse and offer practical insights that shape Nigeria's socio-economic trajectory in the post-pandemic era.

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**APPENDIX**

*Do Not Copy, Lead City University, Nigeria*

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### Background Data

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- BSc in Politics and International Relations 2012
- SSCE – Omolaja Sodipo Memorial Anglican School 2008

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### **The University Compliance Certification**

This is to certify that this thesis written by **Oni Micah Olufemi** with matriculation number LCU/PG/001813 of the Department of Politics & International Relations, Faculty of Management & Social Science, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria is in full compliance with the approved university format and style.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

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