

Politico-Administrative Perspective of COVID-19 in Nigeria: A Looting Model Towards Destruction Of Human Resources (HR) in A Dysfunctional Society

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic created huge crisis management assessment indices among nations globally. This has distinguished progressives from retrogressive nations. The COVID-19 index case arrived late in Nigeria than many other countries. Yet, the COVID-19 crisis management posed by the national government is chaotically loaded with politico-administrative inefficiency and ineffectiveness due to senseless elite looting and corruption. When other nations are busy fighting COVID-19, Nigeria politico-administrative elites are busy looting, lying, and covering up evidence. The looting further exposed the dearth and decay of infrastructure and social services in the country, especially in the critical and worst hit sectors by COVID-19 known as the public health and safety, and the socio-economic institutions. Data gathered secondarily were descriptively content analyzed. Theoretical framework implicit in the work is elite theory. Findings exposed that the politico-administrative elite mismanaged COVID-19 in Nigeria thereby making the masses angry; doubtful of the reality of COVID-19 existence as evident in massive flagrant disobedience of the second wave of lockdown declared by the federal government. The paper argued that Nigeria will be worst after COVID-19, not because of the disease, but because of the elite bad governance.

Keywords: politico-administrative, COVID-19, looting, elite, HR

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Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic broke out in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. Research reveals that the pattern of transmission is from human to human (Riou and Althaus, 2019) with symptoms of the infected people such as cough, fever, breathing difficulties, and respiratory issues (World health organization (World Health Organization, 2020a). The symptoms of COVID-19 usually manifest after two weeks of contracting the disease thereby making it easy for infected people to spread the

disease to others unknowingly (African News, 2020) leading to low report of COVID-19 cases and deaths, with major causalities on the younger and elderly ones, especially those suffering from pneumonia and bronchitis diseases (Centre for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), 2020). In the bid to contain the spread of COVID-19, national governments imposed lockdown of all non essential services, resulting in people forcefully staying indoors and working from homes where necessary and possible.

The Department for International Development (2020) noted that African countries at large locked down and adopted containment measures like non-pharmaceutical interventions such as washing of hands, testing, contact tracing, isolation, and treatment. Despite the global shut down of socio-economic activities except essential services and enforcement of containment measures, the disease according to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020) spread from China to 180 countries as of 3rd June, 2020, infecting 6.5 million people, and leading to the death of 383,000 people across the globe. As of 18th July, 2020, data from Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2020a, 2020b) depict that the continent had recorded 701,573 cases, 14,937 deaths and 369,120 recoveries. Therefore, in the share index of COVID-19 cases, 5% of all cases reported in the world took place in Africa (World Health Organization and African Union Member States, 2020). With these figures, the fatality of COVID-19 is better not imagined, if national governments Nigeria inclusive did not enforce lock down policy measures to contain the spread of the disease.

After declaration of lockdown policy measures to contain the spread of the disease, majority of Nigerians could not bear the challenges of staying indoors in a country that has no stable electricity supply, no running water, poverty capital of the world, poor internet access with affordability issues, shanty settlements and dirty environments, scarcity of food as majority of the national population depends on scouting out their daily earnings and living from going out to fend for themselves daily, etc. All these complicated the trauma associated with the lockdown thereby making governments, corporate organizations and good spirited individuals to provide palliatives in the form of food items, cash, sanitizers, etc. in the bid to cushion the plights and suffering of the people. However, the manner and the approach upon which different governments allocated and distributed food items, cash, testing materials, face mask, etc. were perceived to be fraudulently lopsided and characterized with looting by government officials who hoarded food items and relieve materials as evident in the exposition orchestrated by the #End SARs national protest in which various government stores where they hoarded the items were discovered and protestors broke into across different states; hence the hungry and angry masses violently carted away food items and other materials therein since they were hoarded without justifications whereas people are dying daily as a result of hunger and other avoidable deaths that claimed so many lives in Nigeria. All these governments' shenanigans and perceived insincerity and looting in the mismanagement of COVID-19 in Nigeria are what the paper investigates.

Methodology

The method implicit in this study is qualitative research approach, that leveraged on secondary data collected from textbooks, journal articles, online materials, media reportage on COVID-19, etc. to content analyze how the politico-administrative elites mismanaged the pandemic, thereby unleashing untold hardship and misery that complicated the plights of the venerable during COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria. Hence the mismanagement of COVID-19 further harmed the national population that constitutes the human resources which provide the workforce at the macroeconomics level of the society, thereby jeopardizing the informal sector of the economy that constitute the

largest number of workforce as the highest employer of labour in Nigeria, hence making post COVID-19 recovery plans difficult and unrealistic.

Theoretical framework: Elitism

Elite theory surfaced and gained momentum in social science literature in the 19th Century after the prominent works of political scientists like Vilfredo Pareto (1935) entitled “*The Mind and Society*”, Gaetano Mosca (1939) entitled “*The Ruling Class*”, Robert Michels (1911) captioned “*Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*”, and Thomas Dye (1975, 2000) entitled “*Top Down Policymaking, and Understanding Public Policy*”, respectively. All these works point at how society and inherent social structures are created and conditioned by the elite class as tools for smooth ruling of society, in furtherance of acquisition of power, wealth, fame etc by the elite. Through these acquisitions and consolidations by the elites, the masses are controlled and directed, using the instruments of public policies, social structures, and bureaucracies such as Nigeria politico-administrative elites demonstrated in the manner they handled COVID-19 pandemic.

Elite according to Hara Das and Chouldbury (1977) generally referred to those occupying top echelon positions in society, serving as the anchorage for manning social structure in government, religion, culture, economy, politics etc. Elite shape and influence mass opinion and direction of society by determining public policies and associated issues (Dye, 2000; 1975) such as COVID-19 depicted how the politico-administrative elites rid the masses and misuse common treasury of the nation to the extent of sowing seed of mistrust in the people thereby making them disregard COVID-19 dangers as a mere political gimmick from the elite class. The looting style of leadership adapted by the politico-administrative approach to the COVID-19 pandemic made majority of Nigerians to flout COVID-19 containment measures and disregard updates coming from the NCDC on the ground that the disease does not proportionally exist in Nigeria in the magnitude claimed by government through its agency known as NCDC. The NCDC in Nigeria being a professional government health agency is a non political elite class whose relevance in Nigeria health sector is brought to lame light by COVID-19. Mbah (2014) identified non political elite as those who are at the top of non political structures of a society, whose actions are considered relevant in a political system. NCDC is administrative elite bureaucratic structure perceived by many Nigerians as corrupt government agency for propagating lies by carelessly increasing figures of indexed cases about COVID-19. Majority of the masses do not care about COVID-19 existence in Nigeria due to what they believe about the bad leadership styles of the politico-administrative elite class in mismanagement of the disease, which according to Nwofia, Ugwu, and Onah (2018), is through public policies which “represent the interest of elites but are foisted over the masses through the intermediacy of the bureaucracy.”

Life revolves around a few important cycles. The life cycle of man driven by public policies is simply controlled according to Dye and Zeigler (1990) by preferences and choices and values made by the ruling elites. Despite this, politico-administrative elites in Nigeria hold the people at ransom by looting the public treasury thereby undermining and underdeveloping human resources and the three worst hit sectors by COVID-19. The three sectors are in shambles especially the health sector, resulting in preventable deaths of citizens who constitute valuable workforce at the macroeconomics level of national development. The politico-administrative elites looted the funds budgeted for health sector and human capital development, because they take solace in medical tourism in Europe, America, and Asia. But COVID-19 abruptly stopped international flights or travels hence medical tourism ceased and COVID-19 and other commonly treated illnesses in developed societies which

they run to for cure due to lack of its facilities in Nigeria killed the elites in numbers amidst lockdown. There is a widely held assumption in Nigerian that COVID-19 killed more elites than the masses, which according to Onyeji and Adejumo (2020) led to Premium Times profiling elites who died from COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Nigeria before COVID-19

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19, Nigeria has been in bad shape and always in news for wrong doings, both at home and abroad. Reports from credible international organizations always present enough data evidence against Nigeria as a fragile state occasioned by corruption and leadership failure (Fund for peace, 2019; Corruption Perception Index, 2018; Global Terrorism Index, 2020; Human Development Index, 2019; World Poverty Clock; 2018). Thus the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic that is ravaging the world, especially the health, safety, and socio-economic sectors identified as the worst hits (WHO, 2020b), are no doubts the backbones upon which the lifecycle of human activities on earth revolve have further exposed Nigeria politico-administrative leadership looting style. This no doubt is grossly affecting every other sector of the Society negatively. However, the first index case of COVID-19 was reported in Nigeria on the 27th of February, 2020 (Wikipedia, 2020; Ezeah, 2020). Nevertheless, the gross and harsh impacts of COVID-19 occasioned by maladministration is evident in the results of the mismanagement of the lockdown policy in Nigeria that tripled hunger, hardship, suffering, organized street theft, increased non COVID-19 deaths etc on the already impoverished national population.

Following the lockdown policy measures to contain the spread of the pandemic despite the fact that majority of the citizens are poor and survives on daily bread scavenged out from the streets, markets, schools, worship centres, entertainment centres, etc. the government mishandled the lockdown and was unable to fairly distribute palliatives to Nigerians. This further shattered the majority of the populace whose tomorrow is not guaranteed in terms of what to eat, if they do not go out to fend for themselves. Report from the Federal Government of Nigeria (2020) affirmed that Nigerian economy is predominantly made up of informal sector economy such as road side mechanics, street vendors; artisans, petty traders etc whose businesses were shutdown without creating alternative plans for survival thus subjecting them to hunger and all kinds of plights. Therefore, Nigeria having overtook India to become the poverty capital of the world according to the survey reports released by the Brookings Institution, using The World Poverty Clock Index (Brookings Institution, 2018; Adekunle, 2018; Okogba, 2019) due to the elites' corruption and incompetency as a result of the failure of leadership in all strata of national life (Achebe, 1983), has been further demonstrated by the chaotic, wicked, shattered, and senseless approaches adopted by the elites in looting the commonwealth of the nation dry in the antics of fighting COVID-19.

Furthermore, COVID-19 exposed nations across the globe, thereby separating progressive nations from retrogressive nations. Governments all of the world are saddled with the same responsibilities of protection of life and property, and provisions of welfare (enabling environments) for the people. In line with the paramount exigency of the above purpose of the existence of government all over the world, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) in Chapter 2, entitled '*Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy*', captured succinctly in Section 14 2(b) that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." Therefore, the second focus of this paper among other things is to examine (expose) the lootings of the Nigeria government officials and the consequent failure of the government to provide the primary responsibilities (security and welfare) within the time frame of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Politico-administrative perspective of COVID-19 looting patterns in Nigeria

The politico-administrative duties of a state are encapsulated in the functions of the political and administrative elites saddled with the secular leadership in every society. These are the two main actors upon which state leadership revolve on. That is, the politicians and the administrators who interdependently work cooperatively to ensure the achievement of state objectives. Notably, the ill conceived and blurred line between politics and administration was cleared long time ago by Woodrow Wilson (1887) politics-administration dichotomy published in the *'Political Science Quarterly'* which other writers like Goodnow (1990) leveraged on to argue that politics and administration are two separate and distinct fields that should not be muddled up for whatsoever reasons. Thus, he further averred that politicians should focus on making public policies or "expressions of the will of the state" whereas administrators should focus on the "implementations of the public policies" made by the political class. Therefore, whatever a government does or chooses not to do as a definition of public policy (Thomas Dye, 1984) is perfectly within the ambits of the politico-administrative exigencies of the state. Hence, the inability of any government to take good and timely decisions and execute same reasonably or otherwise is not a justification to fail the people as evident in the 'silence and conspiracy approaches' to public needs and offices in Nigeria, as demonstrated by the elites in mismanaging COVID-19.

In the domain of politico-administrative realities of COVID-19 pandemic, it is the politicians (executives and legislature), who declared lockdown policies, received billions of philanthropic cash and materials as palliatives donated by private and corporate individuals/organizations, decided how to distribute it fairly or lopsidedly, refused to hold their cronies/colleagues/friends accountable for squandering and looting the money etc. Whereas the administrators working with the political class also allegedly connived to entrench systemic maladministration that paved way for the smooth and senseless looting and diversion of materials meant for distribution to the people in order to cushion the impacts of what Nigerians called the 'Corona Hunger Virus Disease (CHVD-19)' depleting the masses whose outdoors oriented means of livelihood have been stopped as a measure to contain the spread of COVID-19. A tip of the ice berg to the 'Corona Hunger Virus Disease (CHVD-19)' in Nigeria is embedded in the report of the study conducted by Lagos Food Bank Initiative, a nonprofit organization, which indicated that three (3) out of the seven (7) of the 20 million Lagosians (i.e. population of people living in Lagos state) cannot feed themselves under normal conditions, let alone amidst COVID-19 two weeks lockdown and subsequent extensions (George & Houreld, 2020). Similarly, Bernard (2020) attested that COVID-19 in Nigeria is a disease of hunger based on the reality that hunger became a more dangerous plight in Nigeria than the disease (COVID-19).

Moreover, at the wake of the first two-week lockdown declared in Lagos and Ogun states in the Southwest Nigeria by the president on March 30th, being the first COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria, both states and FCT were shutdown while normal life activities continued skeletally and uninterruptedly amidst fear in other states. However, when it was time for distribution of COVID-19 palliatives, the Federal Government started sharing cash palliatives and food mostly to the north (Irekamba and Olatunji, 2020) where lockdown was declared later than that of the Lagos and Ogun states, thereby ignoring Lagos and Ogun states that were suffering lockdown policy measures until later following public outcry. Isaac (2020) affirmed that palliatives claimed to be shared to the vulnerable members of the society by governments were politicized and hijacked by politicians thereby making it hard for the palliatives to get to the poor. Okon (2020) reported that "lamentation and bitter wailing in Lagos and parts of the country as Nigerians complain that the stimulus packages announced by the Federal and Lagos State governments to cushion the effects of the lockdown

imposed on some States and the Federal Capital Territory to contain the further spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have not been sincerely deployed.”

Surprisingly, the cash palliatives were distributed unfairly and in contradictions to COVID-19 guidelines for safety, as people were publicly gathered in different occasions without strictly adhering to the physical social distancing, or wearing face mask to receive cash palliatives and food items. The paucity of palliatives brought to communities ended up in tears for many, as some people resorted to fighting their way through thick crowds in order to get some food items. Palliatives were chaotically distributed with no form of transparency and accountability. No proper record of who gets what and where. Therefore, The Action Aid Nigeria (2020) reported that an anti-corruption consortium called ‘Upright for Nigeria; Stand against Corruption’ had joined millions of Nigerians calling the federal government to publish amount of monies and materials donated by Nigerians and names of citizens that receive them as palliatives. Even the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), a part of the Social Investment Program (SIP) of the federal government that the number of beneficiaries alleged to have increased due to COVID-19 could not be accounted for till date.

When COVID-19 cases surged in Nigeria, the president again declared a total national lockdown that put an end to interstates travels and movements of non essential goods and services. To enforce the ban on national interstate travel/movement, Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was massively deployed to ensure compliance by guarding the roads. Shamefully, the policemen deployed on the borders were compromising as usual and were collecting bribes from recalcitrant motorists/commuters smuggling businessmen and individuals who go about doing their normal non essential businesses. The Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike publicly accused the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Adamu Abubakar in the state for illegally and corruptly sabotaging the lockdown efforts by collecting money from companies and issuing them permit to work, move around, and consequently release them when arrested (Nseyen, 2020).

Eye witnesses accounted that the police were granting travelers access to and fro after collecting bribe between 1-2 thousand naira per vehicle, and in some cases per head, leading to spreading cases of COVID-19 increasingly penetrating states, local governments, and dangerously at community levels were there were no single case prior to the lockdown. When Nigerians were shouting and reporting cases of the policemen at borders compromising the ban on interstates journey, the perpetrators in most cases were neither arrested nor prosecuted. Rather, the accused policemen instead of being investigated and consequently penalized if found culpable were merely removed from the particular duty posts alleged to be compromising at, while a few others were transferred to other police stations, except one notorious COVID-19 bribery case according to Soji-ojo (2020) that involves 40, 000 naira where a police man was extorting bribe from a motorist who filmed him with camera without his being aware. This case could not be swept under the carpet easily by the authorities because of the video evidence that awashed social media.

In a matter of three weeks, COVID-19 lockdown became unbearable to the citizens due to the unplanned indoors and the Nigeria realities of no food, no water, no electricity, no security, and the general ‘no nothing’ on the ground to withstand the social exclusion of citizens. Hence their emerged another COVID-19 plight in Nigeria mentioned earlier as ‘Corona Virus Hunger Disease (CVHD-19)’ that is hitting hard on the masses. Consequently, the Corona Virus Hunger Disease led to the outbreak of sudden attack by a robbery gang based in Lagos state, with the codename ‘One Million Gang’, who was going from house to house, and street to street robbing people, breaking shops and carting away food stuffs and other valuables. The One Million Gang according to BBC report created

unrest and tension in Lagos admits COVID-19 pandemic as boys and vigilante groups in neighborhoods braced up to foil their attacks and keep awake at nights (Nduka Orjinmo & Ajoke Ulohotse, 2020).

To mitigate the effects of the ‘Corona Hunger Virus Disease-19 (CHVD-19)’, and for it not to degenerate into another unknown worst situation like the robbery activities of the organized One million Gang squad in Lagos state, rich individuals and corporate businessmen, philanthropists, profit and non-profit organizations, religious bodies etc donated billions of naira that was handed over to the Federal Government of Nigeria to distribute to the venerable Nigerians. However, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19, headed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development coordinated by the minister, Sadiya Umar Farouk, in most cases were in charge of the distributions to Nigerians. Allegedly, the minister and other elites lopsidedly shared a paltry sum to parochially selected zones based on ethno-religious sentiments that favour the Northwest and North East regions more than other zones as always the case in sharing national cake in Nigeria especially in the present regime of president Buhari that started from 2015 till date. There were neither clearly established parameters nor templates for sharing COVID-19 palliatives in Nigeria; rather governments at all levels were chaotically disbursing cash palliatives and some food items, leading to massive despair among the populace. Following this corrupt pattern of distribution of the donated cash palliatives, Nigerians began to lament, talk tough, and questioned the criteria and modalities for sharing the cash palliatives based on face-to-face contacts and unsatisfactory bank transfer by sending credit alerts to a few beneficiaries selected without generally approved metrics before the public. Ezeah (2020) remarked that there is a strong indictment on the government for politicizing COVID-19 palliatives. Similarly, All Africa (2020) reported that corruption and diversion of COVID-19 meager palliatives characterized the distribution in Enugu state, even in some churches.

When the Committee from the Federal House of Representatives summoned the Ministries and agencies responsible for distribution of palliatives to account for the cash palliatives donated by Nigerians with that of the government, the ministries could not reasonably and satisfactorily defend the Ministries and the monies collected. The Committee also summoned 5 Agencies under the Federal Ministry of Health to give detail explanation on how they spent more than 10.78bn collected from the PTF for the management of COVID-19 (Tordue, 2020). The Committee asked for documented evidence showing how much was donated and who and who benefited from the distribution and the accused Ministries and agencies could not provide reasonable documented evidence whatsoever. Thus, the Committee declared a further step to probe the offices for corruptly and allegedly looting/mismanaging public funds especially amidst COVID-19. Magically, within few days, the office building of the Accountant General of the Federation supposedly to house details of donated funds and how they were expended was engulfed by fire.

Sahara Reporters (2020) noted that “while many have been linking the fire incidents to a ploy by some government officials to embezzle funds donated to the country to tackle the outbreak of Coronavirus, others have claimed that the fire incidents were deliberately caused to hide some top secrets by persons in high positions in the country.” By fire burning down the office of the Accountant General of the Federation, the case/probe has been technically dead and closed having frustrated the panel/committee. Yet, Nigerians have not heard anything serious like setting up another panel/committee to probe what almost every Nigerian believed that the fire that engulfed the building was a deliberate script acted to stop the probe and exposition of other looting crimes going on in the

government. This is Nigeria looting style in response to COVID-19 pandemic. What a people! Sahara Reporters (2020) noted that 3 government offices such as the office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, Corporate Affairs Commission and Independent National Electoral Commission have all been gutted by fire within 10 days. Iroanusi (2020) reported that the MD of NDDC, Prof Pondei while facing the Nigerian Senate in allegation for corruptly looting 40 billion naira acknowledged that he illegally distributed 1.5 billion naira to the staff of the Commission as palliatives. When other serious nations across the globe were busy fighting COVID-19, Nigeria was exception. Rather, everywhere you go, it is a case of probe or summon or trial of COVID-19 looted funds.

The masses also oppressed themselves. How? Instead of uniting to ask questions and to agitate and protest the senseless looting and lies peddled by the politico-administrative elites to cover up their wickedness against the state and the people, they cashed in on the advantage of the lockdown to engage in panic buying and stock piling up food stuffs, thereby leading to artificial scarcity as some refused to sell while others doubled and tripled the prices of households' commodities. Sellers claimed that production and supply chains are cut off thus arbitrarily creating galloping increases in the prices of food items on daily basis. Certain elites in communities were oppressing their people, for they were alleged of hoarding palliatives brought by good spirited individuals to share to members of their communities. COVID-19 looting case in Nigeria is a case of dog eats dog. People were looting within their levels.

Government unpreparedness and chaotic early mismanagement of COVID-19 in Nigeria

According to the data released by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the first index case of COVID-19 was reported in Nigeria on 27th February 2020 with consequent geometric increases in figures of infected persons that stood at 323 with 10 deaths as at 13th April 2020 (Wikipedia, 2020). The fragile health system in Africa is a serious threat (The Economist, 2020) and failure of governance in Nigeria is frustrating medical and social efforts in tackling the spread of the COVID-19. Following the rot in Nigeria health care system, basic COVID-19 combatant tools such as testing kits, testing centres, isolation or quarantine centres, drugs, expertise knowledge, environmental preventive measures like availability of running water for washing hands, face mask, compliance to physical social distancing, contact tracing ability and mobility, motivation of health workers who are the front liners in the fight against COVID-19 are adequately lacking and generally weak in Nigeria. Ezeah (2020) noted that distributions of the COVID-19 palliatives in Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria, is chaotic and uncoordinated, as evident from youths struggling and climbing trucks to cart away food items.

WHO (2020c) advised that a key strategy to combating COVID-19 is to test, identify and isolate positive cases. Yet, the Southeast Nigeria with 5 states and estimated population of more than 20 million persons did not have access to any COVID-19 testing centre in the geopolitical zone until when a specialist health institute or centre in Ebonyi state was converted to a COVID-19 testing centre. Prior to the establishment of the testing centre in Ebonyi state, samples from suspected cases in the Southeast zone were collected and transported to Edo state in the Southwest zone with mileage enough that the sample may possibly die or seriously altered by temperature, time and long distance journey on the way thereby dangerously affecting results. Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (2020) declared that access to testing is a major priority in the fight against COVID-19 through "test-treat-trace" response strategy. Yet, 20 states in Nigeria, as at 23 May, 2020 did not have access to testing laboratories, making Nigeria to take back sit in testing capacity compared to what is obtainable in other Africa countries (All African News, 2020).

Also, the practice of telemedicine that is rooted in ICTs with huge potentials to resolve healthcare challenges both in developed and developing countries enhances provisioning of accessible, high quality, and cost-effective health care services. Therefore, telemedicine leveraging on ICT has the capacity to provide better healthcare solutions prior to and amidst COVID-19, but the services of telemedicine is almost non existence in Nigeria given the low Internet availability and inaccessibility prevalent in Nigeria. In Nigeria, small aspects of telemedicine can only exists in urban centres and state capitals which have the least of the national population, thus the majority of the citizens are restricted from accessible telemedicine because of myriad of issues in the availability and utilization of ICT and its accessories in developing countries. Proper utilization of telemedicine provided ample opportunities to navigate the COVID-19 crises both in health, economic, and other sectors of the society since the use of ICT does not contravene lockdown policy and social distancing measures put in place across the globe to contain the spread of the virus. Evidently, modern health care sector depends on progressive breakthroughs in the applications of technologies in all aspects of human health. The modern technologies deployed in health sector are ICT driven tools with professional efficiency. These are apparently lacking in Nigeria.

Hence approaches to tackling COVID-19 in Nigeria is chaotic and unprofessional, leading to proliferation of cases which according to Centre for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) (2020), a person can be infected and stay for weeks without any symptom thereby infecting others unknowingly. With the sudden surgical rise in number of infected people as new cases are recorded daily in Nigeria, Ohia, Adeleye & Tauseef (2020) noted that the virological characteristics of COVID-19 assumption that survival ability of the pathogen in sub Sahara Africa is low has been refuted and warnings ignited of possible spread due to close economic ties with China are proven realities. Thus people should be careful to protect themselves, family members, colleagues, and loved ones through compliance to the guidelines released by the WHO, NCDC, and the Ministry of Health. The COVID-19 compliance ethics of wearing face mask when in public, regularly washing of hands with running water, sanitization, physical social distancing, and the lockdown – staying indoors and not coming out as a result of the shutting down of international, national, local, and street movements of persons that brought the world to a standstill lack genuine compliance from the people due to their mistrust on the government approach, leading to the disregard of instructions given to contain the spread.

The best of Nigerian professionals in all sectors of human endeavours are abroad. Thus, ‘brain and skill drains’ are optimal in every sector of Nigerian economy, as the best hands and heads jet out to overseas in search of greener pastures, where pay and conditions of services are highly rated among the best practices in the globe. Insufficient human capital, regular industrial action, poor facilities, etc increases the crisis of poor health services in Nigeria. Raw evidence to this is medical tourism which Nigeria profiles among the highest globally as a result of collapsed health sector. Medical tourism is so high that more than five thousand people leave Nigeria for abroad monthly in search of quality health services and about \$1.2 billion US dollars are lost from the economy yearly due to medical tourism (Eme, Uche, & Uche, 2014) and below the mark up per cent. Sadly, greater percentage of the little cash budgeted for health sector when released often end up in the bank accounts of politicians and top health care professionals serving as leaders in various capacities such as the medical directors, Chief radiologist, chief nurse, chief surgeon, etc. The dilapidated status of health sector in Nigeria is due to the obvious maladministration that is occasioned by corruption ravaging the sector.

The politics of COVID-19 in Nigeria is underscored between Kogi state government and the NCDC as The Cable (2020) reported that NCDC declaration of two COVID-19 cases in Kogi state was rejected by the government of the state and consequently described as ‘a beautiful fraud’. The government of Kogi state publicly stated that there is no COVID-19 case in the state, yet the NCDC is pressurizing them to declare cases of COVID-19, to enable them profit from the federal government allocated funds slotted to fight COVID-19. The politico-administrative elites of the Kogi state specifically the Governor, Yahaya Bello was publicly in verbal war countering NCDC coming to impose COVID-19 cases in the state when there is none, as a corruption of the highest order. A popular survey exposed that Nigerians lacked confidence in NCDC over COVID-19 cases. The manner with which NCDC allegedly handles cases of COVID-19 suspects, arbitrarily declares increases in the figures of cases, forces suspects into isolation centres made Nigerians lost total confidence in the NCDC over the COVID-19. In summary, people believe that it is not every case declared by NCDC as COVID-19 is a COVID-19 case, thus occasioned by fraud and corruption among the politico-administrative staff of the commission and other state agencies. Cases of doctors bribing their superiors to be drafted among COVID-19 team is replete, even cases of suspected people with COVID-19 symptoms who got quarantined were allegedly filmed and circulated in social media as they are partying; celebrating; dancing, hugging, drinking, and making noise everywhere in the quarantine camps thereby showing how petty, untrustworthy, and unconcerned both the educated and the uneducated population of the country take Nigerian government unserious and their so called fight against COVID-19.

Implication of COVID-19 mismanagement to human resources

People are the most valued asset (Eze, 2005; Abah, 2007; Armstrong, 2009; Schultz, 1981) both at the level of national or organizational workforce. It is the national population that drives the economy at the macroeconomics level for national growth and development. Hence whatever negative destruction that happens to a people invariably jeopardizes their personal and collective progress. Therefore, the lives lost from hardship imposed on the people in Nigeria as a means to enforce lockdown and contain the spread of COVID-19, and the general plight, shock, emotional trauma, stress, etc that the people especially the venerable were subjected to have a huge negative undertone that undermines the restoration and/or recovery of the economy in post COVID-19 Nigeria. The workforce of the national population has to be in good health, mind, and spirit to deliver quality services in their workplaces daily, thereby engendering speedy economic development and recovery in post COVID-19 era. Therefore, the human resources are the backbone for national growth and development, but unfortunately the same human resources are the most threatened and harmed by COVID-19, especially the politico-administrative effects of mismanagement of the pandemic by the governing elites whose positions in society enable them to make decisions and implement same in tackling the pandemic.

Therefore, efforts to put the economy back to track in post COVID-19 Nigeria society in which the federal government is sharing survival funds, granting soft loans to SMEs, etc has to be complimented with programme of actions that will identify the real poor in the society in order to motivate and revive their deplorable psyche occasioned by the plights enmeshed in by the COVID-19 lockdown that shattered them without survival alternative plan. The venerable poor are to be encouraged to brace up and take life serious again, because what they witnessed in COVID-19 from the hands of the government erodes their confidence and trust on the governments’ ability to protect and provide welfare to them, as the primary responsibility of the government as contained in Section 14 2(b) of the constitution of Nigeria (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The mismanaged COVID-19 welfare packages in form of palliatives – food, cash etc created a deeper

sense of hopelessness and nothingness in the people thereby making them to believe that politico-administrative bad governance in Nigeria being perpetrated by the elites persist unchanged, even in the face of a global pandemic proportion with predictable threatening massive death catastrophe capable of destroying lives in millions. For any system to thrive the people must have strong faith, trust, and confidence in the social system and structure of governance, to enable them work hard with commitment and reward that build national prosperity. But in Nigeria, the reverse is the case, as the people are often de-motivated by the looting leadership style that prevails in the country.

Human resources in Nigeria prior to COVID-19, during, and post COVID-19 lockdown are in shambles resulting in constant underdevelopment of Nigerian-state. This is evident in so many studies and surveys by reputable international organizations that exposed Nigeria in various dimensions of anti-human capital development such as: UN Human Capital Development Index of (2019) that ranks Nigeria low with HDI of (0.539), Global Terrorism Index (2020) that ranks Nigeria the 3rd most terrorized country in the world, Bloomberg report (2021) that ranked Nigeria with 33.2% unemployment rate positioning Nigeria to become the second highest country with unemployment rate in the world, Brookings Institution (2018) study revealed Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world, Fund for Peace (2019) survey ranked Nigeria the 14th in the hierarchy of fragile/failed state across the globe. All these negativities imparting on the human resources development abilities and potentials coupled with COVID-19 politico-administrative mismanagement are making recovery strategies of the government and the self-help efforts of the people impossible, thereby making live in post COVID-19 Nigeria worst.

Nigeria economy just like every other African economy is made up of predominantly informal sector of artisans, traders, workmen, laborers, roadside businessmen and women, etc whose daily earnings accrue from self employment and by extension engaging few others thereby contributing immensely to the economic growth and development of their nations (Duerksen, 2020). Hence, the poor and those rendered venerable by locking down their means of daily earnings without alternative plans are located within the SMEs that constitute the informal sector of the economy (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2020). Therefore, adequate means to locate and properly identify their business challenges in order to empower and stabilize their businesses shattered by COVID-19 is paramount if Nigeria economy is to speed up in response to the post COVID-19 recovery plan.

Conclusion

The rottenness of the politico-administrative system of governance in Nigerian society caused by the governing elite jeopardized the lives of the venerable poor members of the society, who are supposedly to be protected and provided with COVID-19 palliatives. But unfortunately billions of naira donated by individuals, corporate bodies, and governments to fight the menace of the pandemic were looted, diverted, and hoarded by the elites thereby depriving the venerable poor ones access to food, cash, and other material benefits meant for the poor as palliatives but never get to majority of them. Decayed infrastructure, lack of basic social amenities, and near absent of social services made life unbearable to Nigerians who were suffering in their homes during lockdown due to lack of electricity, water, food, inability to subscribe for Internet services or buy data, etc complicated the challenges associated with staying indoors at homes. The ways and manners the politico-administrative elites mismanaged COVID-19 created a wrong notion, negative image, general ill perception/conception, leading to misguided public assumption that COVID-19 in Nigeria may not be real as presented by the government, and that if it is real at all, does not exist in the proportion the government claims through NCDC. All these contributed to the masses not listening to the government's instructions on the second wave of COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria, as people were

flouting the law everywhere that even the government read the public mood and could not enforce serious arrest and trial over noncompliance to the second wave of COVID-19 lockdown. As usual, the people are feeling ignored, deceived, and neglected once again following mismanagement of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the politico-administrative elites.

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