

COVID-19 Pandemic- Challenges and Opportunities in Nigeria

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has created enormous challenges for the people and economies around the globe and the fallout from this would permanently reshape our world as it continues to unfold. The new virus disease (covid-19) was unknown before it spread in Wuhan, China, in December, 2019 and it really dealt a blow to the world, particularly the developed societies. The impact of the pandemic can be seen across the sectors (Jones et al 2020). The paper highlights the challenges faced globally by all sectors during the pandemic and the underlying opportunities to fill existing gap in the system. The paper also, in a brief discourse, looked at what the situation was in the context of Nigeria. The paper underlines governments efforts and response towards containing and fighting the pandemic and ameliorating the effects of the measures undertaken by her to checkmate its spread through restriction of movement, lockdown and social/physical distancing. The paper concludes that the economy should be reformed and that government should advance to digital technology; that it is in everyone's interest that people who feel unwell should not check their pocket before they seek medical attention, that government should make policy of free health care, and do well to strengthen the weak institutions by investing in health care infrastructure, to improve on the health facilities and the ability of the national health system to withstand any future outbreak of contagious diseases.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, challenges, opportunities, Health care, Economy, Lockdown, Security

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemics can be said to be one of the most devastating in recent history. It will be remembered as the virus that stopped the world and the pandemic that took the world by surprise and held the economic social, political and educational industries of nations in a state of acute paralysis. No doubt, the world is being shocked by the covid19 attack, as this has explicitly had a very broad impact and posed a firm threat to almost all aspects of lives, particularly health and economy.

The Covid-19 crisis has affected societies and economics around the globe and will permanently reshape our world as it continues to unfold while the fallout from the crisis is both amplifying familiar risks and creating new ones, change at this scale also creates new opening for managing systematic challenges and ways to build back better. The World Health Organization(WHO) has established the status that Covid 19 is a pandemic that has attacked almost all countries in the world and this goes with a lot of challenges.

The pandemic has had far reaching effects on the global economy (Ozili and Arun, 2020). It affected the global travel business and tourism, national health care system, the food industry, waste management, event industry, education and global trade. Due to globalization, there are expectations of spillover effects to emerging and developing countries due to their dependence on developed countries for the importation of goods and service (Ozili and Arun 2020)

Indeed, the challenges of Covid 19 are enormous, as the impact of the pandemic can be seen across the sectors (Jones et al, 2020). Under the economic sector, Covid 19 has caused many losses due to cessation of production and sales as many organizations had to embark upon temporary lay off of their employees. Covid 19 has also, changed the organization performance such as, working from home (WFH) instructions for employees, virtual organizations control and supervision conducted by leaders which previously are only carried out by large organizations such as Google and Microsoft (Mustajab et al, 2020). Vulnerable sectors of the economy such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Hospitality and tourism industries, are already faced with the challenges of closure or heavy loss due to lock down in many countries (Sharma, 2020). In China's case, the first nation to go through the multiple stages of covid 19 pandemic, Joe made a report about Chinese tourism market under covid 19, which indicates the lodging and eateries are vacant as they are not getting customers (Koe, 2020). The transportation business is likewise encountering large misfortunes because of absence of travelers and the general economy of the nation has been affected fundamentally because of the development of covid 19. The pandemic and efforts to curb its spread, created both social and economic unrest in some countries. Like other countries, Jordanian government acted early March 2020, by ordering a nationwide lockdown to cushion the impact on the health care system, control spread and protect the population (Zeitoun, 2020).

The enormous challenge for health care sector lies in its ability to handle patients in need of urgent care with the existing infrastructure and limited safety equipment. Upgrading medical norms, massive testing campaigns, recalibration of public policies have been the way so far to counter this public health crisis (WHO, 2020b). Covid 19 is as much a health issue as it is a socio-economic problem. Its emergence has posed a big challenge to every facet of human life. The pandemic has led to several human deaths, job losses, death or closure of business and decline in revenue (Bisong and Ogwumike). This has left millions of people of nations across the world, with challenges of joblessness, poverty and poor health conditions. However this challenge is a shock therapy for many nations and organizations and is a valuable lesson to develop competitive advantage strategies to face and match future challenges. In real life situation, every challenge would trigger off opportunity, as every opportunity would encounter some challenges.

With total lockdowns and closure of eating places (cafeterias and restaurants) around the world to enforce physical distancing, there is a surge in demand for home delivery services of food and groceries which led to an increase in the generation of common packing plastic waste (Tenenbaum, 2020). Moreover, an increase in plastic packaging waste is expected from medical industries which with this opportunity are working hard to meet the demand for essential medical logistics worldwide (WHO, 2020d). The covid 19 crisis and its attendant restriction movement of people and border closure by many countries across the globe resulted to unprecedented challenges but not without opportunities. Nigeria and her people are no exception. The spillover problem of covid 19 is severe in Nigeria and caused suffering to citizens. This is because of weak institutions that could not adequately respond to the challenges, posed by the pandemic and the lack of adequate facilities and social welfare programmes that would have catered for majority of the poor and vulnerable citizens affected by the crisis (Ozili 2020). However, in the wake of the crisis, the pandemic also brought unprecedented profits to pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer inter alia, in the production of Hydroxy-Chloroquine, Vitamic C, "Agbo" and other trial drugs in the treatment of the novel coronavirus as well as challenged the health capacity of our health infrastructure as well as the readiness of the health professional globally (Bisong and Ogwumike, 2020). But the question arises about what the challenges and opportunities of Covid 19 pandemic are, for the nations and people across the world? This paper will attempt to highlight the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic or its crisis and the underlying arising opportunities with some insight into the case of Nigeria. The paper

would also recommend measures to be adopted to overcome future challenges as well as identify opportunities that would enhance socio-economic and educational sustainability beyond Covid 19.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

According to World Health Organization (WHO), the coronavirus disease (Covid19) is an infectious disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. It is a severe and acute respiratory disease which has since become the greatest pandemic in the past decade.

The Organization (WHO), officially declared the Covid 19 epidemic as a public health emergency of international concern, on 30th January, 2020, though the world has been grappling with coronavirus, Covid 19 since December, 2019. The new virus and disease were unknown before it is noticed in Wuhan, China in December, 2019.

Covid-19 or as termed SARS-COV2 in the medical circle, first appeared in the Wuhan city of Hubei province in China in December, 2019. Residents who lived in Wuhan had some link to a large sea food and live market which suggests that the mode of transmission of Coronavirus was from animal to person. The first known patient of Coronavirus started experiencing symptoms in Wuhan China on 1st of December 2019. Investigation conducted by the Chinese authorities in retrospect, confirmed identification of human cases with onset of symptoms in early December, 2019, while some of the earliest known cases had a link to a wholesale food market in Wuhan, some did not. Many of the initial patients were stall owners market employees or regular visitors to the market. Environmental samples taken from the market in December, 2019, tested positive for SARS-COV-2, suggesting further that the market in Wuhan City was the source of this outbreak or played a role in amplifying the outbreak initially. Wuhan market was closed on January 1, 2020 by the Chinese authorities. Since then, covid 19 has spread worldwide and has claimed millions of lives. Globally, as of 10.08 am CET, 17th November, 2020, according to WHO-Coronavirus Disease (Covid 19) Dashboard, there have been 54,558,120 confirmed cases as well as 1,320,148 deaths reported to WHO. For region, by region, according to WHO, confirmed cases are;

Americas -23,371,968, Europe-15,266,390, South East Asia -10,094,817, Eastern Mediterranean-3,611,671, Africa -1,404,954 and Western Pacific -807,579. Also, reported deaths as at date for the regions are: Americas -680,843, Europe 344,459, South East Asia – 155,024 Eastern Mediterranean-91,794, Africa -31,554 and Western Pacific-16,461. The worst hit region has been the Americas with 680,843 deaths. The United States of America specifically with over 10,933,918 confirmed cases, recorded the highest mortality with 244,411 deaths followed by Brazil with 165,798 deaths from 5,863,093, cases and India with 130,519 deaths from 8,874,290 cases. These figures are subject to charges every passing second (WHO COVID-19; 2020).

However, according to European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Covid 19 situation update as of 17th November, 2020, out of Africa's reported 47,627 deaths, the five Countries reporting most deaths are South Africa (20,314), Egypt (6,465), Morocco (4,850), Tunisia (2,389) and Algeria (2,168).

Meanwhile as at the above date according to ECDC, Nigeria with 65,305 Covid 19 Confirmed cases, recorded 1,163 deaths (ECDC, 2020).

3.0 COVID-19 PANDEMIC: GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 CHALLENGES OF COVID 19

The Covid 19 pandemic has been profound impact on the economy of countries across the world. According to a UNDP (2020) report "what began as a health crisis with grave impact on populations will within days become an economic and fiscal crisis with a high risk of negative social implications". The impact of Covid 19 on global economy has been well documented. According to Ozili (2020), the Covid 19 pandemic affected the global economy in two significant ways. Firstly, the spread of the virus encouraged social or physical distancing, which led to the shutdown of financial markets, corporate offices, business and events. Secondly the rate at which the virus was spreading and the heightened uncertainty about how bad the situation could get to, led to flight for safety in consumption and investment among consumers and investors (Ozili and Arun, 2020).

Writings on the challenges of waste management during covid-19, Mallapur (2020) laments that the pandemic has altered the waste generation dynamics, creating woes among policy makers and workers involved in sanitation. Many types of medical and hazardous waste including infected masks, gloves and other protective equipment, along with a higher volume on non-infected items of the same nature are generated during the outbreak (UNEP, 2020). Improper collection practices could lead to contamination of general municipal solid waste with the virus, which could pose a risk of transmission. In India, Neel (2020) observed that Punjab farmers started dumping vegetables due to curfew. He asserted that Covid 19 pandemic has crippled the food supply chains which are seen facing numerous challenges and ramifications. The fear caused by nationwide lockdowns in many countries has led to irrational stock piling of food and other groceries leading to disrupted food waste generation dynamics.

Contributing in his paper, Covid 19: Challenges and Opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Sharma (2020) tries to draw attention to the impact of the pandemic on the Small and Mediums Enterprises (SMEs) The author fears that the venerable sectors such as SMEs are already showing symptoms, like closing or heavy loss due to lockdown in many countries.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are characterized by limited financial and nonfinancial resources (Welsh and White, 1981). This makes SMEs more prone to the negative effects of environmental factors (d'Amboise and Muldowney, 1888, Welsh and White, 1981).

Like the rest of the world, Jordan has been affected by recent and ongoing Covid 19 crisis. According to Zeitoun (2020) in a study titled "Covid 19 Pandemic Challenges And Opportunities: The Case of Jordan, the pandemic and efforts to curb its spreads has created both social and economic unrest in the country. The Jordanian government acted early in March, 2020 by ordering a nationwide lockdown to cushion the impact on the health the care system, control the spread and protect the population. The author finds that almost 50% of non public sector employees work in the informal market and have no social benefits. The country's Syrian refugee population, the largest amongst the Arab countries, is around 1.1million according to official government numbers, poses a demographic challenge. Most of these refugees work without social protection and benefit. This presents a challenging landscape both socially, and economically, compounded by the structural difficulties already facing the economy before the pandemic.

In financial markets, global stock markets erased about US \$6 trillion in wealth in our week from 24th-28th of February, 2020. The S & P index also lost over \$5 trillion in value in the same week in

the US, while the s and p 500's largest companies experienced a combined loss of over \$1.4 trillion, due to fear and uncertainty among investors about how the pandemic would affect firms profit (Ozili and Arun 2020). The lockdown and travel restrictions imposed on movement of people in many countries led to massive losses for businesses in the events industry, Aviation industry, entertainment industry, hospitality industry and the sports industry. The combined loss globally was estimated to be over \$4 trillion.

The effect of Covid 19 pandemic was more severe on developing countries that have a weak public health infrastructure and non-existing social welfare programme. In Nigeria's case, the pandemic affected borrowers capacity to service their loans, which gave rise to non performing loans (NPLs) that depressed banks earnings and eventually impaired banks soundness and stability. There was spill over of drop in the price of crude oil, which dropped from nearly \$60 per a barrel to as low as \$30 per a barrel in March 2020. This year, global supply chain got shocks and importers shutdown their factories and closed their borders. Nigeria as an import dependant country was severely affected, as a result, witnessed shortage of crucial supplies such as pharmaceuticals, spare parts and furnished goods, particularly from China. As expected since Nigeria's major revenue comes from oil the fall in oil price to US \$30 per barrel affected the nation's budget and as such, a new budget based on the low oil price, was passed. Furthermore, the pandemic created challenges for the Nigeria stock market, as the major market indices in the stock market plunged, when investors pulled out their investments into so-called safe havens like US treasury bonds. Meanwhile leaders of organizations have their challenges too, arising from the Covid 19 crisis. They find it very difficult in managing work time in the wake of the lockdown condition set by the government who asks all organizations to employ their employees at home. This has forced the leaders of small and medium enterprises to take the decision to manage their organizations by scheduling work systems (shifting) and sometimes employees are objected to the shifting system because they have to do new scheduling for personal matters. In addition, for leaders of educational organizations, they feel challenged to manage their works time when they have to reschedule routine work, such as arranging teaching schedules for teachers, conducting performance evaluations and doing it with irregular time.

3.2 OPPORTUNITES ARISING FROM COVID 19 PANDEMIC

On The 30th of January, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the corona virus disease (Covid 19) epidemic as a public health emergency of international concern. Since its discovery in December 2019, in the Wuhan city of Hubei province of China, covid 19 has spread worldwide and has claimed millions of lives. It has led to job losses, closure of institutions and organizations shutting of businesses and decline in revenue across the world (Bisong and Ogwumike, 2020). However, except for the covid 19 crisis and challenges, some new opportunities are arising as well.

The General- Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation, Brussels, Belgium, Sharan Burrow, in her contribution to the world Economic Forum 'Insight Report titled "Challenges and Opportunities In the Post- COVID -19 World" opines that now, we are living through a period that can only be described as the greatest act of solidarity in history, as people give up civic freedoms to save lives. She observes that the technological and pharmaceutical industries across the world are benefitting from skyrocketing demand for their products, while other industries are seeking bailouts due to lack of resilience.

The effect of Covid-19, according to Burrow, has seen unprecedented deployment of government authority around the world. And many governments are experiencing a rise in approval and trust, but

added that given the existing huge trust deficit, there is no guarantee that this will last (World Economic Forum Insight Report, 2020).

In his own contribution in the World Economic Forum Insight Report, Rolf Alter, observes that the pandemic has for once, turned national governments as crisis managers. More accurately, their leaders and executive branches have taken the front seat in responding to covid 19 crisis. Though with the “great lockdown”, according to Alter, they forced 4 billion citizens to stay home, they have turned into pay masters of hundreds of thousands of private companies and workers, affecting 2-7 billion jobs financed by accumulating public debt beyond imagination just a few months ago. Central banks more than ever before stand ready to inject nearly unlimited liquidity to stimulate economic recovery.

Several governments in developed countries and even some developing countries, such as the United States, United kingdom and Nigeria, offer fiscal stimulus packages including social welfare payments to citizens while the monetary authorities offer grants, interest free loans and loan relief to help industries, companies or business during the pandemic, (Ozili, 2020).

The digital technology created opportunities, too. It plays a major role in driving recovery from the economic crisis generated by COVID -19 pandemic. This is more efficient in countries with robust and well-developed digital economy. Even as Nigeria is said to have a weak and underdeveloped digital economy, the digital technology helped many institutions, businesses and organizations to survive the effect of covid 19 crises. In fact, covid 19 crisis created an opportunity to enhance the countries digital economy which helped in supporting economic activities, social activities, educational activities and the development of good health care systems.

The covid 19 pandemic created the opportunity for some academic institutions in Nigeria to offer educational curriculum online, though it may not be from start to finish. Also many businesses, companies and organizations operated using the model “working from home”. E-commerce apps are now explored which enable online buying and selling, allowing buyers and sellers to make purchases and sales while staying in their homes. Furthermore, tele-health apps equally are on hand for health and wellness checks as this can allow individuals in all affected areas to take extra precautions to monitor their vital signs and learn how to reduce their risk of infections. Online delivery businesses use visual assistances to help ensure that goods purchased from online grocery stores are delivered when customers need them. Organizations and businesses that don’t want their works to travel or whose employees are comfortable taking trips can stay connected with team members, clients and prospective clients or customers around the world -using online video conferencing technologies(Ozili 2020). In the same token, covid 19 pandemic has made public and private organizations and groups to explore the new normal in organizing workshops, seminars and conferences, whether local or international. This is done by way of or as video conferencing and virtual conference- of which the mode of conference presentation would be through zoom or poster for participants with network challenges. Covid 19 has changed the organizations mode of operation and performance, such as working from home (wfh) instructions for employees, virtual organization control and supervision conducted by leaders, which previously are only carried out by very large organizations. However, this condition is a challenging therapy for many organizations in some countries but it offered a valuable opportunity to develop competitive advantage strategies and be able to predict the possibility of threats that occur in the future (MC. Kibben & Fernando, 2020).

4. COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA: AN INSIGHT

The covid 19 pandemic erupted quite abruptly and left very little time for countries across the world to ramp up medical preparedness in order to tackle the emerging challenges. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) in January 20, 2020, countries had already began making effort to ready themselves for any possible outbreak within their domains (WHO 2020). Nigeria was no such exception as the Nation Center for Disease Control (NCDC) took the lead in the training of the rapid response teams across the 36 states in Nigeria. This training was concluded in December, 2019. On January 28, the NCDC further revealed that a coronavirus group had been set up to activate its incidence system to respond to any emergency. Additionally, the NCDC worked with 22 States in Nigeria to activate their Emergency Operation Center to manage and link up with the National Incidence Coordination Center (Ihekweazu, 2020).

Despite this proactive measures by the government, Nigeria recorded her index case of the coronavirus in February 27, 2020 when an Italian national arriving the country through the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos, tested positive for the coronavirus. Upon the detection of the index case, the NCDC activated a Multi-sectorial National Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to oversee the national response to covid-19 as well as commenced contact tracing. Subsequently, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) for corona-virus-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 earliest cases of the COVID-19 as recorded by NCDC were mainly from the returning travelers. This was the earliest trend of the covid 19. (NCDC, 2020). Every state government in Nigeria toed the line of the federal government by inaugurating State Task Force on covid 19. The number of confirmed cases of covid 19 pandemic has been on the increase since it was detected in February, 2020. NCDC (2020) confirmed that community transmission of the virus as seen, set in as more cases continue to be confirmed across the country. Movement restriction or lockdowns was a popular strategy aimed at stifling this spread of coronavirus across the country. In the first three months of the pandemic, nations across the world went into lockdown as millions of citizens were restricted to their homes.

In Nigeria, this was also the case as state governments first took the initiatives to shut the land and air borders into their states. According to Amzat, Aminu, Akinyele, Ogundairo & Danjibo (2020), lockdowns were a vital response in controlling community level transmission of the virus.

Movement restriction was later adopted nationwide as a strategy to slow the level of community transmission. There was a lockdown in two states (Lagos and Ogun) and the FCT for four weeks, effective from March 30,2020, with restrictions on inter-state travels throughout the country (Muanya et al. 2020).

The lockdown affected every sector of the country. In the aviation sector, there was a ban on local and international passenger flight. In the education sector, schools including private and public universities were shut indefinitely. The banking sector was also affected as their hours of opening were cut down and customers were advised to use their online channels for cash transactions. The civil servants were initially asked to stay away from work and only after a while did they resume partially and only for workers from grade level 14 and above cadre. The lockdown also extended to the religious sector as there was an enforced ban on religious gatherings, sporting facilities, restaurants and bars, eateries, reduction of passengers in commercial buses to half capacity, with major food markets also closed in some states while others operated in line with NCDC guidelines on specific days and hours.

Furthermore, face mask was made part of the dressing, first in Cross River State in Nigeria when the State Governor Professor Ben Ayade through the Head, Task Force on COVID-19 and Commissioner of Health Dr Mrs. Betty Edu made it mandatory for all in public places, with the assertion that it had the capacity to prevent the spread of coronavirus (Premium Times, Friday, August. 21, 2020). Other measures adopted to contain the spread of the virus include the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), restriction of movement generally except for necessities including interstate, the closures of all air ports, cash payments, distribution of palliatives -assuage the hardship occasioned by the lockdown, massive public education on self-hygiene, washing of hand for a least 20 seconds in running water, use of hand sanitizers, social cum physical distancing inter alia.

5. 0 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA.

The covid -19 pandemic has created far reaching challenges for the people and countries across the world. According to Ozili (2020), the pandemic affected the global economy in two significant ways. Firstly, the spread of the virus encouraged social distancing which led to the shutdown of financial markets, corporate offices, businesses and events. Secondly, the rate at which the virus was spreading, and the heightened uncertainty about how bad the situation could get, led to flight to safety in consumption and investment among consumers and investors (Ozili and Arum, 2020). Nigeria is not immune from the global economic shocks of the covid-19 pandemic. As a fact, the economy which was just beginning to recover from the 2016 recession was badly hit by the ripple effect of the pandemic.

On the economy, the slump in crude oil prices was the major economic shock suffered by Nigeria during the pandemic. The decline in oil prices by 55 percent between the end of 2019 to March 2020, is one of the most serious economic shocks that Nigeria has faced in its memory, especially as the oil sector contributes 65 percent and 90 percent to government and total export revenues, respectively.

Ozili (2020) presented a more coherent analysis of the impact of the pandemic on the Nigerian economy. There are five ways through which the Covid-19 pandemic spilled over into Nigeria. One, the Covid-19 pandemic affected borrowers' capacity to service loans, which gave rise to NPLs that depressed banks' earnings and eventually impaired bank soundness and stability. Subsequently, banks were reluctant to lend as more and more borrowers struggled to repay the loans granted to them before Covid-19 outbreak. Two, there were oil demand shocks which was reflected in the sharp decline in oil price. The most visible and immediate spillover was the drop in the price of crude oil, which dropped from nearly US\$60 per barrel to as low as US\$30 per barrel in March. During the pandemic, people were no longer travelling and this led to a sustained fall in the demand for aviation fuel and automobile fuel which affected Nigeria's net oil revenue and eventually affected Nigeria's foreign reserve. Three, there were supply shocks in the global supply chain as many importers shut down their factories and closed their borders particularly China. Nigeria witnessed shortage of crucial supplies like pharmaceutical supplies, spare parts, and finished goods from China. Four, the national budget was also affected. The budget was initially planned with an oil price of US\$57 per barrel projection. The fall in oil price to US\$30 per barrel meant that the budget became obsolete and a new budget had to be formed that was reprised with a low oil price. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic affected the Nigerian shock market. Major market indices in the shock market plunged when investors pulled out their investments into so-called safe havens like US Treasury bonds. Stock market investors lost over NGN2.3 trillion (US\$5.9bn) barely three weeks after the first case of coronavirus was confirmed and announced in Nigeria on January 28, 2020.

As the outbreak intensifies, Nigeria's services, trade and financial sectors would suffer significant disruptions. Together, the three sectors contribute over 30% to GDP. Contraction in these sectors could result in significant job losses both in the formal and informal job markets. This could be a severe blow and could be a threat to instability as youth unemployment/underemployment is already high at 55%. The impact is already partially felt in the exchange rate which has depreciated by 1.0% since mid-February 2020 but the informal market indicates an expectation of a large depreciation of the naira. Amidst the pressure, on March 20, 2020, the Central Bank adjusted the currency to 380 per dollar in the parallel/black market. The impact of the outbreak in the advanced economics on jobs and financial transactions could have further negative impact on remittance, which in 2018 represented 80 percent of the federal budget, affecting the livelihood and spending patterns, which in turn could have a negative impact on the economy and wellbeing of the people. Similarly the second quarter of the 2020, according to Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), living standard was consequentially high with its attendant consequence on life expectancy, resulting from low income which leads to low saving and low investment. $F (In+Sa+Inv)$.

On the impact of coronavirus on security of the people, the pandemic has a bearing on the social fabric of society- stress, initiated by economic losses often resulting in, visible cracks where incidences of once socially unacceptable norms become more frequent. Evidence suggests that health related pandemics have the potential to increase the risks of domestic violence- with police reports in China and Nigeria showing that domestic violence tripled during the epidemic; violence against health workers due to serious stress levels that the pandemic places on patients; and abuse and exploitation of women and girls – especially care givers evident in the wanton cases of rape and molestation in Nigeria never in our political dictionary.

Furthermore, frustrations resulting from economic loss and wastage of our common wealth could also play into existing regional fault lines within Nigeria as the call for restructuring is reechoing. This is not unconnected to the lopsided intervention of the federal government in the distribution of palliatives, associated fraud in the cash transfer scheme, claims of prosecuting the school feeding programme under lockdown with 85 billion naira by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and related interventions with no appreciable impact to some sections of the country.

Restrictive non-pharmaceutical measures, for example isolation, social distancing and humanitarian situations will remain a key policy challenge. In such contexts, social connectedness is the currency that nurtures the much- needed resilience for communities to persevere in the face of crisis. As such, social networks and systems which provide support and regulate well-being are often weakened through restrictive non-pharmaceutical measures. Implementing isolation measures without taking regards of the local context can further exacerbate the situation, lead to stress disorders, mental health and in some cases protracted violence.

On the pandemic impact on public health, it has to place immense and unprecedented pressure on the country's underinvested and mismanaged healthcare system. Estimates indicate that around 20 percent of COVID-19 cases requires hospitalization and another 7.5 percent require intensive care. Not until the pandemic, most was no known about the NCDC and its laboratories if not its activity and existence.

In total there are 330 ICU facilities in the country, including 30 in lagos. Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) currently has five testing centers and treatment centers designated for covid-19. An isolation facility in Lagos is equipped with 100 beds but the capacity outside Lagos is very limited. Based on the recent assessment of eight treatment centers by WHO, a majority are not well equipped

and the capacity to respond is particularly weak in the north. The Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, designated as a treatment center, is still under construction currently with 2 makeshift beds although with some improvements. The spread of the virus as patients are transferred to treatment center, such as the one in Abuja could be intensified putting more pressure on the already weakened healthcare infrastructure.

It is not just the sheer number of cases that will need medical care over the course of the pandemic, vast amounts of cases will get sick at the same time which will rattle the healthcare system. It is unclear how many treatment centers there are in the country but based on the above projection, within 3-5 days, critical bed care capacity in the WHO assessed designated treatment centers could be exceeded. This could be compounded by lack of supportive medical equipment such as surgical masks, gloves (PPEs) and ventilators in adequate quantities. While the impact on the older population has been the greatest, especially in Italy where the average age in the fatal cases is 79, infection and hospitalization rates among the younger population are not trivial. Between Feb. 12th to March 16th, the United States Center for Disease Control reported that 2044 years old accounted for 29 percent, 20 percent and 12 percent of confirmed cases, hospitalized and ICU admissions, respectively. Based on these proportions, as much as 2600 young Nigerians could require hospitalization/intensive care.

6.0 ARISING OPPORTUNITIES FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

The Covid 19 crisis has affected the people and economy of the Country Nigeria, as it affected societies and economies around the globe and will permanently reshape our works as it continues to unfold. In the same token, Nigeria is no exception for the opportunity presented to the pandemic and its challenges. While the fallout from the crisis is both amplifying familiar risks and creating new ones change at this scale also creates new opportunity or opening for managing systematic challenges and ways to build back better (World Economic Forum Report, 2020).

There is a new found understanding and appreciation for essential public services, most especially health, but also education, care and social safety nets. The solidarity and compassion that individuals have shown one another bodes well for the degree of collaboration that will be needed between civil society and the public and private sectors to effect positive change. Behavioral changes resulting from widespread lockdown, suggests support for, and interests in, more sustainable consumption and mobility habits. This, alongside the implementations of green stimulus programme has the potentials to fundamentally and positively change the way in which, banks, schools, industries, economies and societies operate. More sustainable online and digital operating models beckon business, while an extension period of home marketing and schooling has provided an insight into the benefit offered by more technologically- enhanced ways of learning, working, transacting and producing, from telemedicine and logistics to the knowledge economy. History shows that pandemics can lead to renaissance in art and thinking, and in the 21st century this points to a new era for innovation growth and enhanced technology governance in the service of societal and environmental goals. (www.weforum.org/global-risks/report).

The covid 19 crisis spurred Nigerians into exploring digital technology in tackling the emerging challenges as this helped in supporting economic, social and educational activities as well as the development of good health care systems in the country.

The government of Nigeria and her functionaries, unprecedentedly and in a more determined effort to contain the scourge of the pandemic turned into crisis managers and took the front seat in fighting the pandemic. Government offered fiscal stimulus packages including social welfare payments and cash transfers to citizens while the central bank of Nigeria, more than ever before, offered grants,

interest free loans and loan reliefs to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) industries and business.

On a social level the pandemic has given rise to new behaviours including increasing personal hygiene, ramping up electronic transactions and adopting social cum physical measures. Social distancing is an unusual concepts for a country like Nigeria which typically promotes strong family relationships and social ties. However, considering the current situation the Nigeria population has begun to embrace the new lifestyle of social distancing and regular washing of hands.

A new normal is expected to be adopted as economic activity re-starts with a focus on public health as a priority. The market re-shaped in several ways and should benefit from the rise in future opportunities such as exporting agro-food and pharmaceutical products due to demand. The pandemic should drive policy reform to meet current challenges and get Nigeria to be prepared for others that may arise in the future.

Covid 19 pandemic presents an opportunity for Nigeria to upgrade and bring up her medical and health sector infrastructure and facilities to world standard. The economic and digital technology sector as well as the cuture agriculture value chain, should not be left out.

7.0 COVID 19 IN NIGERIA: A SITUATION REPORT

On the 13th of November, 2020, a total of 156 new confirmed cases and 1 death was recorded in Nigeria. As at date, (13-11-2020) 697,544 samples have been tested, but then, 64,884 cases have been confirmed; 60,936 cases have been discharged and 2,785 are active cases. Meanwhile, 1163 deaths have been recorded in the 36 state and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

The statistical break down of the 156 new cases reported from 11 states shows:- Lagos (70), FCT (22), Kaduna (18), Rivers (15), Plateau (11), Ogun (10), Bauchi (3), Katsina (3), Kano (2), Ekiti (1) and Osun (1).

A Multi-Sectoral National Emergency Operations Center (EOC), activated at level 3, continues to coordinate the national response activities of Covid 19 in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the state by state figure of confirmed cases is as indicated on the table below:

SN	STATE	NUMBER OF CASES
1	Lagos	22,268
2	FCT	6,344
3	Plateau	3,716
4	Oyo	3,590
5	Rivers	2,906
6	Kaduna	2,757
7	Edo	2,680
8	Ogun	2,094
9	Delta	1,816
10	Kano	1,759
11	Ondo	1,717
12	Enugu	1,332
13	Kwara	1,084
14	Ebonyi	1,055
15	Katsina	962
16	Gombe	938
17	Osun	937
18	Abia	926
19	Borno	745
20	Bauchi	744
21	Imo	648
22	Benue	493
23	Nasarawa	485
24	Balyelsa	414
25	Ekiti	341
26	Jigawa	325
27	Akwa Ibom	319
28	Anambra	282
29	Niger	281
30	Adamawa	261
31	Sokoto	165
32	Taraba	153
33	Kebbi	93
34	Cross Rivers	89
35	Yobe	82
36	Zamfara	79
37	Kogi	5
	TOTAL	64,884

Source: NCDC, 2020

8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper highlighted the global challenges of Covid-19 pandemic and the underlying arising opportunities. The paper also, looked at and did a brief discourse of the situation, in the case of Nigeria. It could be seen, from the enormous challenges that, no country, not even the developed ones could have been prepared for the corona-virus disease, covid-19. It really took the world by surprise, as it erupted quite abruptly and left little time for countries across the world to ramp up medical preparedness in order to tackle the emerging challenges. That the fatality rate is more in the developed societies which are noted for high standards, advanced technology, economy, facilities, science and medicine, remained an unsolved puzzle. Again, that the pandemic and its attendant restrictions on the movement of people, social/physical distancing and border closures across the countries of the world, posed serious challenges to the people and led to massive losses in every

sector particularly business, events industry, aviation industry, education industry, entertainment industry, hospitality industry and the sports industry, showed that it is a universal calamity which calls for the governments and their citizens, developed and developing countries to rise up to the occasion, and deal with the uncommon situation as well as explore opportunities arising there from, so as to get a little more ready for tomorrow.

This is not to say that developing countries have equal potentials, capacity and capabilities with the developed nations to deal with or respond to the challenges of covid-19 pandemic. The scope and severity of the economic crisis in Nigeria caused by the fall in oil price and the covid-19 pandemic, is a clear signal that the country's health care infrastructure and economy are all weak and that growth and development reforms are needed in Nigeria.

At this juncture, one recommends that, as of policy, government should introduce economic reform to diversify the economy and reduce over dependence on revenue from crude oil export. There is also the need to build a resilient socio-economic-environmental pathway to fight similar possible pandemics, and make advance towards digital technology which helps to drive digital economy. As noticed in Nigeria, her weak institutions could not adequately and effectively respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic as such, government should invest in health care infrastructure to improve on health facilities and the ability of the national health system to withstand the outbreak of contagious diseases.

The pandemic has shown that it is in everyone's interest that people who feel unwell should not check their pocket before they seek medical attention. So government should make free health care a national policy as it is quite vital for tackling pandemics. Given the interconnectedness between health and live hoods, all countries will also need to strengthen social safety nets to enhance resilience. Covid-19 has reminded the world that we need active, accountable, responsible leadership/ government to regulate markets, reduce inequality and deliver essential public services. And in order to better protect the most vulnerable segment of the population, government should consider implementing welfare programmes that better supports those in need. Furthermore, creating sustainable jobs and new occupations (future work) should be a priority in the public sector. This will enhance their skill sets to meet future demands and improved productivity.

In addition, government should evolve a vision that should focus on establishing a new industrial policy and evaluating and supporting the manufacturing sector's forward and backward linkages. This will help identify opportunities to enhance the value chain. Finally and in retrospect, the Nigerian government was wise to use fiscal and monetary stimulus package and palliatives as a partial solution to revive the falling aggregate demand during the pandemic. This should be sustained.

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