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Appraisal of Socio-Economic and Political Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on Residents of Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic determines public health, presenting the biggest threat since the Second World War. All continents, except for Antarctica, are active in battling the pandemic. As other socio-economic and political problems are arising from this crisis, the pandemic cannot only be attributed to health issues. Every nation affected by this pandemic may witness a destructive or ravaging social, economic, political and psychological backlash that may leave long lasting scars. The World Bank has projected a decline in remittances of \$110 billion and 800 million people will not be able to meet basic needs this year, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) forecasting that over 195 million people will lose their jobs. In managing this pandemic, there is a need for strategic planning by a government organization through the development of long-lasting policies that will help minimize the impact on individuals and nations. Previous experiences of epidemics such as Ebola, HIV, SARs, TB and Malaria will therefore be valuable in the development of policies that can help to mitigate the socio-economic and political impact. The solution may lie in contacting the most vulnerable through crowd sourcing to provide them with food, in particular life necessities. Expanded social security may also be an important step in that direction for the disadvantaged and the disabled.

Keywords: Pandemic, global health, strategic socio-economic and political impact

Background to the study

The emergence of Corona Virus, which is an arguably unparalleled catastrophe in human history has disrupted social, political, and economic development in

virtually all nations of the world. The disease also commonly known as novel coronavirus or COVID-19 has spread speedily globally, escalating human disaster and severe economic hardship (Ciu *et al.*, 2020). By 1 September 2020, more than 25,509,135 cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide, including more than 850,902 deaths. In Africa, 1,253,066 cases were recorded with a death toll of 29,811; in Asia, 7,040,471 cases were recorded, and 141,169 deaths were reported, while in America, 13,508,242 cases were registered, and 469,897 deaths were reported; in Europe, 3,677,025 cases were reported, with a death toll of 875,000.

The pandemic has ravaged most areas of Europe and the United States and is now spreading through much of Africa. As at May 2021, over 194 million people were infected worldwide, and over 4 million people were killed worldwide and in Nigeria over 170 thousand people are infected and about 2 million have died (World meter, 2021). Countries have been forced to lock and close their borders, i.e., land, air, and sea, and people have been forced to remain home for the first time in more than 100 years to stop the spread of the pandemic given that there is no curative or preventive vaccine available update now that there are vaccines. The spread of the disease has impacted the global economy and infrastructure, transport, manufacturing, tourism, diplomatic shuttles and ties, sport, international conferences, and so on. Nigeria joined the other countries facing the challenges posed by COVID-19 on 27 February 2020 after having confirmed its first case. Since then, as in other parts of the world, the nation has been struggling to find ways to tackle this epidemic, which has since been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (2020).

Development in the world's population, health care, and political activities depend on the level of the market, government policies, inter-state transport of goods and services, hospitality, education, financial services, health care, and the health center (Obi *et al.*, 2020). Indeed, for all aspects of social welfare, socio-political progress, economic growth, and health development are sacrosanct. This is because, with its evolutionary variables, the secret to job development and promotion and wealth growth is typically tapped. It is not surprising that each country sees and works as she plans for the achievement of socio-political, economic, and healthy growth. Progress of some sort is a product for social welfare that is because economic activity involves an embedded variable that is required to adjust the behaviour pattern and governance structure of the company.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting financial crisis present immense challenges, raise many dangerous problems and face many monetary, health, and political challenges. These are both national topics, but they have a significant effect on the local level. The global epidemic of the Covid-19 pandemic has ravaged the political, social, environmental, and economic systems of the planet. The world's largest economies are on the brink of collapse, like the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, and many others. On top of that, global financial markets have been destroyed, and oil prices have fallen sharply.

This article sets out recommendations for approaching the evolving pandemic literature Covid-19. This will serve as a focal point for both government and NGO organizations to make the most of the return to normal following the Covid-19 pandemic from a socio-economic point of view, a policy (policy) point of view, and health action that could be taken to resolve the pandemic. Implementation of policies not only minimizes the number of COVID-19 deaths and accidents, immediate health issues, and public health risks but also retains and fund short-term corporate grants. Using the qualitative research method, this paper will assess the socio-economic and political implications of COVID-19 pandemic on the Nigerian citizens; a study of Enugu State.

Government's existence is for the sole purpose of preservation of human lives and properties. In his social contract theory, John Locke (1689) proposed a social contract theory through the establishment of a legitimate authority to protect lives, property and liberty of those who lived within the state. In respect to this, government has the responsibility to ensure a conducive environment for economic efficiency, growth and stability through protection of private property and lives. When the government conscientiously and thoroughly provides the enabling environment, the citizens will invest their resources and energies in productive process for the overall development of the country (Ismail & Imoughele, 2015; Meyer & Meyer, 2016).

In developing societies such as Nigeria, where socio-economic issues which include poverty, unemployment, low income, inequality, poor housing, ineffective health facilities, epileptic power supply, bad road, inflation, etc are present (Adeniran & Sidiq, 2018; Kyambalesa, 2009), the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic may further aggravate the already low socio-economic livelihood where more than half of the population live below international poverty line of US \$1.25 a day (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2015; World Bank, 2014). Empirical studies in Nigeria have shown that covid-19 caused Nigeria to face declining remittances and export demand, total GDP fell by 23%; during the lockdown agricultural-food system gross domestic product fell by 11%; household income fell by 15% leading to a 9% point increase in the national poverty rate (Andram, Ede, Oboh, Pauw & Thurlow, 2020; Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020).

Conceptual review of COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis that follows it pose massive socioeconomic challenges. Both crises are global, but have profoundly local implications. The emergence of the COVID-19 plague worldwide has truncated the world's political, social, economic, religious and financial systems. The biggest economies of the world like the USA, China, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and many more were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Moreover, global financial markets have plummeted and oil prices have risen sharply. Many economic and financial analysts have also cautioned that the global economic and financial system is deteriorating.

For example, according to Obi *et al.* (2020) the IMF's managing director Kristalina Georgieva said that the recession was "at least as bad as or worse than the Global Financial Crisis. The managing director explained that the Corona-virus safety measures such as lock-down strategy has limited many businesses, including trade, interstate travel to buy/sell and supply goods and services, hospitality industries, higher institutions and high schools, decreases in revenue for the governments, the bunks' loss of jobs, domestic violence and regular robbery. There is also a possibility that ordinary workers' jobs are lost because shut-down indicates that businesses will not be able to pay employees as a consequence of this.

Historical conditions of COVID-19

In terms of human society, the pandemic is not a new phenomenon because it has taken place at different points in human history (Ferguson *et al.*, 2020). As many human accidents and disasters have occurred in the past, the risk in the pandemic has gradually increased since 2000 according to Madhav *et al.* (2017), this can lead to an increase in viral conditions in animals. Several earlier researches, including that done by Garrett (2007), Keogh-Brown *et al.* (2008) show that pandemic production was severe, and recently Madhav *et al.* (2017); Fan *et al.* (2018) findings are corroborating their findings. Likewise, Ferguson *et al.* (2020), a member of the COVID-19 response team at the Imperial College in London, agreed that the Spanish flu pandemic had been the most extreme since 1918.

Barro (2020) stated that while total mortality could not be decreased by non-pharmaceutical therapies conducted during the 1918 flu pandemic in Spain, they noticed that for covid-19 the average duration of suspension and prohibition at public meetings was just 36 days, while the average duration of quarantine/isolation was 18 days. These estimates were very low compared to the number of days of the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918 this is as a result of advances in public health and mitigating policies at play.

Nigeria is not exempted from the world-wide pandemic of corona-virus caused by sever acute respiratory syndrome. In Nigeria the first confirmed positive case of corona-virus was with an Italian citizen in Lagos and it was announced on the 27th of February 2020. The second positive case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State on 9th of March, 2020, this case was with a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen.

Pandemics may have a major adverse impact on economic growth, at least in the short term. According to Jonas (2013), the consequences may include (i) preventing reactions following social distances, (ii) Lower direct costs (e.g. medical and hospital costs), (iii) Higher indirect costs (loss of labour, production), and (iv) offsetting and cascading effects (compensation of facilities, interruption of travel). For example, Jonung and Roeger (2006) estimate that, due to supply and demand, the possible global pan-electricity effects (compensation of facilities, interruption of travel).

COVID-19 has serious health consequences for the elderly due to previous pandemics. But lock-down strategies are more nuanced than previous ones, affecting international supply chains and global patterns in production and consumption. As a result, there was greater volatility and economic pressure on the financial markets. Higher causes and higher household debt over this period also mean that short-term are worse than previous pandemics (Boissay & Rungcharoenkitkul, 2020).

Evaluation of COVID-19 pandemic

The contextualization of COVID-19 data is important before considering potential political, socio-economic and government responses. The scale of the pandemic cannot be appreciated without these findings. Trusted, time-based information provides the world with knowledge on the spread of disease and its effects on people's lives around the world and the efficacy of counter-measures (Ritchie *et al.*, 2020). Three key actions are the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and (iii) the number of recorded COVID-19 deaths.

These statistics are provided by several local, regional and national health ministries around the world. The database offers numbers and visual maps of COVID-19 cases worldwide, which can be accessed by the Science and Technology Center of John Hopkins University. For China, cases are registered at the provincial level, at the municipal level in the United States, Australia and Canada, and the national level in all other countries (Dong *et al.*, 2020). Based on WHO data, the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and ECDC confirm the results.

Confirmation of Results (CFR)

According to these figures, the CFR is the number of deaths reported divided by the total of confirmed cases and is used for the measurement of the death rate of COVID-19. Recent studies have shown that there are significant errors in the evaluation of the number of COVID-19 cases. Silverman *et al.* (2020) will show that these ILIs can be a useful indicator of COVID-19 events using CDC data on influenza-like illnesses (ILIs).

The authors conclude that the number of ILI patients has increased in March 2020. In the early stages, these disorders cannot be accurately classified as COVID cases due to lack of screening tools. It is suggested by the authors that an increase of 8.7 million fresh cases of COVID-19 may have occurred between 8 March and 28 March. The figure shows that about 80 percent of COVID-19 cases have never been registered in the US.

Social separation is difficult to calculate against the spread of measurement of the virus. We found in the literature that there are three key quantification methods: i) population mobility approaches, ii) proxy modelling, and iii) indexing. Metrics and interventions rely on data on the spread of diseases and the execution of policies. People's movement depends on their perceived patterns of travel. Mobility metrics have been widely used to interpret patterns

of mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two months (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020).

Mobility data is more nuanced, available regularly and can be used to analyse the impact of social differences on other areas such as housing compliance and employment (Gupta *et al.*, 2020). It also provides useful knowledge of human behaviour. For example, "Safegraph" data show that social interaction has deteriorated sharply and rapidly in the United States well before foreclosures have been carried out (Farboodi *et al.*, 2020).

Economic development

The core concepts in this paper have been considered necessary and unavoidable. To avoid misunderstandings, the purpose here is to describe the context in which it has been used. Besides, the word can be contextualized in cultural, economic, systemic and ideological terms (Chair, 2013). Key terms were mentioned in the introduction to this article. It is all a matter of description and analysis. It is important to consider the effect that the approaches used to handle COVID-19 have on the social well-being of society as a whole.

First of all, however, the concept of economic development should be discussed and, thus, economic growth can be explained, since the two terms should not be used interchangeably. Economic growth is a component of economic growth (Enojo & Obi, 2016). Economic growth is an increasing willingness to meet the demands and needs of industrial overtime. They are traditionally measured as the percentage increase for the actual Gross Domestic Product or real GDP. Economic development refers to the total number of goods and services produced in the economy over a season of time or one year. Economic growth can therefore be seen as improving the quality of human life by increasing capital revenues, reducing poverty and increasing individual economic opportunities.

Furthermore, better education, better health and safety, conservation of natural resources, a clean climate and a richer cultural life are often defined. Moreover, economic development may generally refer to ongoing, coordinated efforts by policymakers and communities to improve living standards and economic health in a given region. It is also possible to refer to quotas and systemic changes in the economy. Such initiatives may include the development of human resources, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, sustainable growth, social inclusion, health, protection, literacy, etc.

Moreover, the connection between economic activities and social life is socio-economic development. The NEPAD declaration means the continuous improvement of human well-being and living standards in socio-economic growth (Obi *et al.*, 2020). The goal of socio-economic development is to raise the living standards of the majority of people and to allow all people to improve their skills. The concept, therefore, clarified how socio-economic growth requires not only quantitative expansion but also, as development

continues structural change in society and the economy. Political, cultural, economic and structural change is part of this. There are socio-economic components; the level of agricultural development, the level of industrial growth, urbanization, education, revenue generation, transport and communication, etc. (Obi *et al.*, 2020).

Isyaku and Obi (2018) were of the view that progress is being made as poverty, inequality and unemployment are reduced or eliminated in the country. If all three variables are taken into account, the culture will evolve, but these three variables will not evolve in culture. Finally, socio-economic development is a phase in which the population has access to quality education, better health care, proper accommodation, good drinking water and good sanitation, good access roads and equal distribution of the nation's wealth would ensure the basic requirements that are required if a decent life is to exist.

Socio-economic political-health consequences in Nigeria

It is crucial to value the economic transmission chain which negatively affects the economy by shocks to understand the possible negative economic consequences of COVID-19. There are three main transmission channels according to Carlsson-Szlezak *et al.* (2020a) and Carlsson-Szlezak *et al.* (2020b). First of all, the immediate effects of the decrease in demand for goods and services.

Long-term anti-pandemic and social differences may reduce consumer confidence by keeping consumers at home, conservative spending on choice, and negative longer-term economic prospects. Second, there may be indirect influence of shocks and their impacts on the real economy and financial markets. Household incomes may decrease, savings may rise, and consumer spending may continue to decline. The third involves supply disruptions, which would adversely affect supply chains, labour demand and jobs, with COVID-19 shutting down production leading to long lay-offs and rising unemployment. In particular, Baldwin (2020) analyses the predictive shock under which economic actors are holding back. The author notes that this is typical of unstable economic climates, as financial and business transactions are less secure. The epidemiological characteristics of COVID-19, consumer and company behaviour towards setbacks and government policy responses ultimately determine the strength of the effects. The recent economy is a dynamic network of interrelated parts: the employees, companies, suppliers, consumers and financial intermediaries." Gourinchas (2020) summarizes the economic effects that they are just other people's jobs, clients, lenders, etc. Strong interdependence and specialization of productive activities will result in chain breakdowns and circular flows.

Baldwin (2020) outlines the influence of COVID-19 on the income stream of the nation. First, households are not paid, and their income and savings are therefore decreasing. Reducing savings lowers assets and as a result, capital resources, ultimately. Second, households are reducing their import requirements, thereby reducing their income and exports from the rest of the

world. Third, supply and demand instability is affecting both home and overseas supply networks. Fourth, both past shocks and COVID-19 shocks have resulted in a decline in productivity and a reduction in the use of production factors.

Macroeconomic impacts

In the course of the evolution of COVID-19 pandemic, several research studies have customarily tried to assume about its economic effects. In a relatively conservative, non-linear scenario, pandemics such as COVID-19 have often been characterized as close to widespread exogenous shocks. Using the cost-of-disaster index, the author found that incidents over three months would lead to a 12.75 percent decrease in US industrial production, a 17 percent decrease in service employment, a continuous decline in air travel and macro-economic activities at different times.

The renewal rate of Jordà *et al.* (2020) is to be calculated from the 14th century to 2018 (real return on safe assets arising from private equity supply and demand in a non-inflationary environment). A pandemic could lead to a negative decline in real natural interest rates. Indeed, as a result of surplus capital per unit of employment (i.e. shortages of labour used), investment demand is decreasing, although savings flow is increasing for precautionary calculations or the replacement of lost income. The authors note that the true natural rate stayed low for 40 years, down to 1.5 per cent in 20 years.

The analysis could not however, be sufficient with historical data. Baker *et al.* (2020b) was of the view that the variability of COVID-19 has increased significantly and there are no similar comparisons between histories. The authors propose that forward-looking uncertainty indicators should be used to measure their impact on the economy due to the pace of change and the need for timely data. The authors estimate that the COVID-19 shock causes GDP to fall by 11 per cent in a year in the fourth quarter of 2020 based on a Real Business Cycle (RBC) model. According to scientists, the COVID-19 is responsible for more than half the shrinkage. Coibion *et al.* (2020b) empirically assessing macroeconomic household standards in the United States conclude that lock-downs are more likely to result in lower demand, unemployment, low inflation expectations, higher volatility and lower mortgage payments than in COVID-19 infections.

The role of global supply chains has been explored by other researchers. The quantitative framework is used to model the global lockout for Bonadio *et al.* (2020) as labour resources for 64 countries are diminishing. The authors argue that the overall decline in real GDP is a dramatic decrease in economic activity, mainly due to disruptions in global supply chains. Elenev *et al.* (2020) model the impact of COVID-19 on the productivity of workers as a decrease and on the supply of labour, which ultimately adversely affects the revenue of the company which may lead to the surge in corporate bankruptcies that could lead to a drop in sales and the resulting non-payment of debt service bonds. COVID-19 also leads to a loss of competitiveness in a streamlined business

model (Cespedes *et al.*, 2020). The authors expect an intense circle due to a loss of competitiveness which results in a decrease in collateral rates, which in turn reduces lending volumes and thus leads to a decrease in employment and competitiveness. As a result, COVID-19 is compounded by “a catastrophic era of joblessness and asset expense.”

The economic effects of shocks, such as pandemics, are usually determined by total time series, including industrial production, GDP growth, unemployment, etc. These data sets are only available after a season, usually months or until the end of the quarter. Conversely, there were COVID-19 shocks in real time. Lewis *et al.* (2020) suggest a Weekly Economic Index (WEI) built with ten economic variables to monitor the economic impact of COVID-19 in the U.S. to analyze its economic impact more frequently. According to the survey, the WEI decreased by 6.19 per cent between 21 March and 28 March.

This results from a decrease in consumer interest, a rise in energy rates, an increase in unemployment, insurance claims and other factors. Likewise, the economic consequences of social distance activity with three high-frequency indicators (electricity usage, nitrogen emissions, and mobility records) are measured in Demircuc-Kunt *et al.* (2020). The authors found that, in countries across Europe and Central Asia, the level of social distance measures in the period from January to April decreased by 10% in economic activities (mediated by electricity consumption and emissions).

Socio-economic consequences

Social distanced labour market, mental health and stability, ethnic inequities and the positions of the women and men were affected by steps to lock them. Although the environmental effects are possibly good, a thorough study is still important.

Labour market outcomes

Several empirical works have shown the effects of covid-19 on working hours and job loss (Adams-Prassl *et al.*, 2020; Béland *et al.* 2020c; Coibion *et al.*, 2020a; Kahn *et al.*, 2020). In the USA for instance unemployment increase was reported to be occasioned by covid-19 policies such as social distancing and lockdown (Rojas *et al.*, 2020). Gupta *et al.* (2020) in their research took into account the differences between timing of business closures and the stay-at-home laws/policies of different states in the USA and were of the opinion that US employment rate fell by about 1.7 percentage points for every additional 10 days that a state has a stay-at-home mandate in the period from March 12 to April 12. Corroborating their findings their findings Coibion *et al.* (2020a) found that unemployment/job loss in the US is more serious than one might predict based on the rise in the number of claims for unemployment insurance (UI), which is to be expected given the decrease in UI coverage ratio regimes in the US. They also estimate a sharp decline in long-term job rates leading to

an increase in 'discouraged workers' (unemployed workers who have stopped actively looking for work and are withdrawing from the workforce).

In South Korea where there were no government imposed lockdowns, Aum *et al.* (2020a) in their findings noted that without lockdown an increase in infections leads to a decrease in local employment. This number increased for countries such as the US and the UK, where mandatory lockdown measures were imposed.

Alstadsaeter *et al.* (2020) studying the impact of covid-19 in Norway noted that the pandemic has a clear socio-economic demarcation as the financially susceptible population which includes parents with young children was disproportionately affected. In the same vein, Adams-Prassl *et al.* (2020) found that in the US and UK apart from employees who could not perform their jobs from home who were more likely to lose their jobs, others were younger people and those without college education. Likewise, Yasenov (2020) outlined such vulnerable group as those groups who are low skilled, younger adults, and immigrants who are mainly concentrated in occupations that were not usually done from home.

Analyzing the heterogeneous effects between occupations and employees in the US, Béland *et al.* (2020c), they opined that occupations with a higher percentage of employees working from home were less affected by COVID-19 and occupation with relatively more employees working close to others were more affected. They also see jobs less affected, which is listed as "less vulnerable to disease." This result may be due to the number of key employees. These results mean that employees may fairly be expected to change their careers in the short or medium-term or that students prefer different professions.

Kahn *et al.* (2020) show that since the second week of March 2020, US businesses have reduced drastically the number of vacancies for jobs. The authors note that the number of employment opportunities decreased with the number of unemployment applications increasing. She said that there were no substantial variations between states that witnessed the pandemic spread to others, or that they were extending home-based orders to others, in particular in the labour market's downturn (presented by reduced vacancies in jobs and increased demands for unemployment benefits). The findings also inferred that there was a significant decline in the number of vacancies in all sectors and occupations, except for front-line, educational, important retail and other occupations.

Working from home is becoming increasingly common with the application of social distancing steps. The extent to which such social distancing policies hinder economic activities depends largely on corporations' ability to sustain business operations from workers' homes Alipour *et al.* (2020), Papanikolaou and Schmidt (2020). The increased number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 workers (2020) is correlated with a substantial rise in the number of people transitioning to remote work and a decline in the proportion of employees employed in the U.S. Interestingly, the authors note that people

who work from home prefer to demand an interface to the user rather than people who are still working in industries that provide critical services.

The feasibility of homework as tested by Dingel and Neiman (2020) note that 37% of jobs can be completed at home, depending on the extent to which the role requires personal contact. The work characteristic variables for the home (HBW) and the face-to-face (F2F) interactions, as defined by Avdiu and Nayyar (2020), differ depending on three key dimensions, i) temporally (short- to medium-term); ii) the key vector of influence (work supply and demand) and iii) the related margins of change (intensive or wide-ranging).

They claim that low HBW capability and F2F connections (e.g. career, research and technology services) may be the least affected by labour supplies in industries. However, high HBW and high F2F experiences in industries and occupations are likely to suffer from negative productivity shocks. In the context of lockdown restrictions, for example, high school and school professors can teach online via web applications. This teaching process, however, is not as interactive as traditional classrooms. Since lock-down restrictions are removed, low HBW capacity and low F2F (for example production, transport and warehousing) industries will recover relatively rapidly. Personally protected equipment (PPE) and other acceptable measures will minimize the risk of infection by physical proximity. Low-HBW and F2F sectors (e.g. housing and food services, arts entertainment and recreation) will possibly recover more slowly because customers may be afraid of petrification, for example, in cinemas and restaurants.

From a commercial perspective, temporary closures, the (perhaps permanent) loss of production workers and vacancies that have been characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity among industries have a major short-term impact. Bartik *et al.* (2020) examine a few firms in the USA and reveal, as opposed to January 2020, that most have temporarily shut their stores off and reduced their staff. The surveyed businesses were not positive about the performance of the federal government's CARES Act loan program. Campello *et al.* (2020) find that employment losses in highly concentrated labour-market industries are more severe (that is to say, where hiring is based on few employers), than in non-tradable sectors (e.g. manufacturing, healthcare) and companies with limited credit.

Hassan *et al.* (2020) differentiate between industries of the United States and the world in their trend of market resilience heterogeneity. Based on income call surveys, they indicate that some businesses anticipate more market opportunities in the face of global uncertainties (e.g., medical supply firms or those whose competition is negative following the COVID-19 outbreak). Barro *et al.* (2020) assess redistribution of the workforce in response to pandemic-induced demand (e.g. increased jobs of delivery firms, fast food chains/restaurants, technology companies).

Health outcomes

In various studies the impacts of the pandemic on physical health and death have been recorded (Gildstein and Lees, 2020; Lin and Meissner, 2020), also there are studies documenting an exacerbation of illnesses such as mental well-being (Brodeur *et al.*, 2020c; Davillas & Jones, 2020; de Pedraza *et al.*, 2020; Tubadji *et al.*, 2020). The effects of COVID-19 plague on health care in the United States are reported by Chatterji and Li (2020). The authors note that the number of out-patient visits for weeks 12 to 18 April 2020 decreased by 67 percent compared to the week of previous year. This can adversely affect people with chronic disorders in particular.

Lu *et al.* (2020) note that social distancing or incarceration interventions would likely affect psychological wellbeing as a result of lack of access to basic services, racial discrimination or exclusion, economic deprivation, dissatisfaction and misinformation discontent among neighbours or other classes. She found that keeping a positive attitude would help reduce depression (in terms of perceived severity and reputation in real-time notifications as well as trust in social distance measures). Cognitive inequalities linked to the distribution of public death toll figures are often influenced by the population's mental wellbeing (Tubadji *et al.*, 2020).

Béland *et al.* (2020b) shows that older people and working persons who have not finished high school show decreased mental health with the use of the Canadian Perspective Survey Series. Their study also indicates a worsening in mental health among those who did not lose employment as a result of COVID-19, as well as the unemployed. Etheridge and Sptig (2020) are documented a rapid mental health decline with far larger effects on women using UK panel results.

Blocking policy implementation has also been detrimental to the population's mental health. The demand for psychological assistance (through phone calls) is increasing due to blockades placed in Germany (Armbruster & Klotzbucher, 2020). Authors suggest that these calls, such as isolation and depression are mainly triggered by psychological issues.

Brodeur *et al.* (2020a) show that during the first weeks, in the nine Western European countries and the United States of America, the strength of the quest for "boringness" and "solitude" exploded. COVID-19 containment measures have wide public support, according to Fetzer *et al.* (2020). Some respondents claimed, however, that health policies were not being complied with by the public and the government did not respond enough. Their connection to poor mental health is important. When governments act aggressively, the view of governments and other people, enhancing mental health, has shifted.

Environmental outcomes

It is projected to have a significant environmental impact due to global forfeiture and a drastic decline in economic activities (Almond *et al.*, 2020; Cicala *et al.*, 2020). He *et al.* (2020) suggest a substantial improvement to air quality due to lock-in initiatives in China. In the weeks after the obstruction,

the air quality index and particulate matter concentrations (PM_{2.5}) fell 25 percent, with stronger effects in the coldest, richest and most developed cities.

Almond *et al.* (2020), following the COVID-19, focused on air pollution and emissions of greenhouse gasses in China. While emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) have fallen significantly, emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) have not been reduced. PM 2.5 emissions have fallen by 22% for China as a whole, but ozone levels have risen by 40%. These adjustments indicate that air pollution is not explicitly diminished due to the economic downturn. The reduction in car journeys is due to a decline in the volume of nitrous oxide (NO_x) emissions.

The causal effects of 'safer homes' air pollution policies in the US provinces were studied by Brodeur *et al.* (2020b). They noted that 'safer housing' policies have lowered air pollution in populous provinces (measuring as PM_{2.5} emissions) by almost 25 percent. The health and safety advantages of decreased travelling in and energy usage by vehicles in the United States are the subjects of Cicala *et al.* (2020) due to stay-at-home policies. The authors opine that both pollution and energy use reduction contribute to more than 360 deaths per month.

The Enugu State experience

Enugu State is surrounded in the south by Abia State and Imo, Ebonyi State to the east, Benue State to the northeast, Kogi State to the northwest and Anambra State to the west.

COVID-19 is a new kind of Corona viruses that causes illnesses such as common cold, severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) (Centers for Disease control and prevention, 2020, WHO 2020). It is an infectious disease that spread mainly through contact with an infected person either through dribble or spittle or release from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes (Nigeria Centers for Disease Control, 2020; WHO, 2020).

Since Enugu State's economy is mainly dominated by informal workers, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (lockdown, movement restriction, social distancing and interstate travel ban) affected the political, psychological and socio-economic livelihoods in the state and Nigeria in general. To ease the negative effects of the pandemic, the state and philanthropic individuals and groups gave palliatives though to a great extent did not satisfy the objectives due to poor management, human right violations as well as inadequate fiscal policy.

To enforce the COVID-19 safety measures, the rights of the citizens were abused. The security agents who were to enforce the lockdown, movement restrictions according to national human rights commission [NHRC] (2020) used excessive force which led to the death of some citizens of the state. Also the NHRC (2020) listed the Nigerian Police, Army and Correctional Services (formerly Nigerian Prisons Services) as top most in being responsible for

human rights violation during the periods of the lockdown and movement restrictions.

Amnesty international (2020) and NHRC (2020) records show that during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, gender-based violence and abuse such as domestic violence which included spousal and parental child abuse increased.

Strategies to combat COVID-19 pandemic

It is needful to take a cue from other pandemic situations and speedily make or develop alternatives to solving or controlling the spread and effects of covid-19. In respect to this, it is not just the issue of reducing the disease spread but also on how to execute the alleviation and restraint measures, to control it in such a way it will be culturally and economically acceptable and achievable. There is need for immediate incentive for solidarity and stigmatization avoidance at the same time instilling trust, social accountability and encouraging group to group support after the epidemic.

To actualize this may not be close due to rapid spread of confirmed cases, therefore the governments need to intensify efforts to reach out to her people through constant awareness creation to inspire and mobilize them as the nation faces a collective threat. Policy options are influenced by several factors among which are inadequate health care system, a large section of the population with pre-existing conditions and weak political will that have strained public trust. To address this issue, the study has suggested some of the proposed policy options as follows:

Coordinate action on health emergency preparedness

A more practical approach is crucial in this regard. In harmonization with the UN, it is advised that the Government speedily secure adequate essential health equipment needed for testing, quarantine and medical care. Temporary hospitals/quarantine centers could also be equipped and designated as emergency centers. With strong political will these emergencies will be complemented by the enforcement of directives issued by government at all levels.

Ensure pro poor shut down strategies

Very significant pressing actions in terms of managing the spread of the virus are actually (i) the control of borders (as the virus is an imported one), (ii) discovery of cases, (iii) isolation, and (iv) social distancing. It is important that the Government acts instantaneously and fast. The spread of the virus follows a significant circulation which invariably indicates that avoiding one case today will have a significant positive implication on the number of cases in the future. Preventing one case today could mean as much as preventing four times as many cases in the next month.

That notwithstanding, total shutdowns will have to be complimented with social protection mechanisms, which involves momentary or one-off cash

transfers, food and wage subsidies, subsidized sick leave and unemployment benefits, to cushion against the resulting loss to livelihood opportunities to those who are most vulnerable. A pro-poor shut down is recommended because it enables continuation of essential businesses and livelihoods, but prevents group gatherings, may help the Government in controlling the limited health care resources for those who need it the most while limiting panic buying at the time.

Mobilize additional resources

The Government in partnership with local and foreign organizations like the UN, donors and the private sectors should make intensive efforts in mobilizing internal and external resources including from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank (WB). Establishment of a Nigeria COVID-19 Response Trust Fund should be considered immediately.

These could help improve the coordination and realization of the preparedness, mitigation and response measures outlined in the NCDC's Incident Action Plan and also act as a cushion to other social and economic shocks.

Risk communication to the public

Communication gap has the possibility to impede or slow down the fight against COVID-19. There is need to beef up public knowledge through awareness and sensitization campaigns to properly educate citizens on the gravity of the disease and implications on measures that incorporate recovery of lost livelihoods. A conflict-sensitive approach is important to the identification of risk and opportunities to ensure adopted approach(s) do not worsen existing (latent) fragile conditions, but rather help strengthen social solidity if possible different age groups and people with compromising health conditions. Proper communications styles may be of importance in taking these messages to the rural communities whose response may not be as effective as one would expect in this critical time.

Given the cultural values and norms that define social connectedness as a vehicle for building resilience, there must be a need to ensure context-specific approaches in communicating the alleviation measures. In this regard, collective engagement and messaging through community influencers, custodians of faith and traditions is of necessity.

Conclusion remarks

COVID-19 has affected the level of overall economic activities in the study areas, including the government policy decisions concerning lock-out, social distancing, travel restriction, interstate travel interdiction, the shutting down of markets, hotels, retail/betting shops, banks, worship centres in the period covered by the survey. The consequence is the fact that the COVID-19 lockout strategy is worse than the new one unless it is lifted completely before September.

The repercussions of COVID-19 on commercial activities in the state and the publicly declared residence policy and the restriction of the movement of 'social distancing', which have caused the shutdown of trade activities, have also been negative for the Enugu state economy. Our findings show that the economic situation is harmed by reducing the level of general economic activities and by harming revenue and supply prices. On the other hand, the public health crisis triggered by coronavirus gave many policymakers a chance to carry out meaningful public health reforms.

Recommendations

- i. The government should of necessity organize to procure adequate essential health equipment needed for testing, quarantine and medical care including health personnel. Temporary hospitals/quarantine centers should also be equipped and designated as emergency centers and as close to the risk areas.
- ii. There is need for the government to diversify the economy by promoting the informal and agricultural sectors, facilitate infrastructural development to evade economic recession that will follow post COVID-19 pandemic.
- iii. There should be proper monitoring and managing of borders as the virus is an imported one to avoid COVID-19 cases sneaking into the state.
- iv. The government should implore proper measures to create public awareness and sensitization to properly educate citizens on the severity of the disease and implications on measures that integrate recovery of lost livelihoods. Therefore, the study encourages proper communication measures to take these messages to the rural communities whose response may not be as effective as one would expect in this critical time.

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