



COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA'S SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Studies on covid-19 pandemic and its impact around the world abound. However, none of these studies interrogated covid-19 pandemic in relation to its implications for security in Nigeria. This created deficiency in this area, which requires further examination and analysis. The aim of this paper is to examine the implications for covid-19 pandemic on economic security of Nigerians, especially women. The paper was underpinned by the world-systems theory which is vital in the understanding of how the manner of interconnectedness of Nigeria to the global capitalist system is

Introduction

The nature of security has changed over the years from the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which placed the issue of providing security exclusively at the doorsteps of nation-states to the stage where security is perceived as protection of individuals safety and safety of the state. From 1994, when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conceived of human security, which perceives security as a phenomenon that covers many areas of life such as food security, health security, environmental security, physical security, social security, state security, economic security, among other areas, anything that has posed threat to the welfare of the people is largely treated as security threat (Adeleke, 2021).

The foregoing shows that covid-19 pandemic is a security threat to the comity of nations, especially to countries that do not have adequate capacity to solve its own problems without relying on other countries for assistance. That aside, covid-19 pandemic brought about substantial decreases in economic activities, affecting a wide portion of the economy with some permanence in Nigeria. This resulted in the fall of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for at least two quarters. The covid-19 pandemic, which started in Wuhan, China negatively impacted on the global economy, especially on the developing economies like Nigeria and many other countries in the African continent. This is because the contemporary world is so interconnected to the extent that what affects a part of the global economy, especially the major economies of the world would have a spill-over effects on the other parts of the world.

Generally, Africa recorded its first covid-19 case in Egypt on February 14, 2020. Since that date, 52 countries in the continent have reported cases of covid-19 infection. From the beginning of the pandemic, infections were restricted to the capital cities, but it has now been reported in significant number of countries. On May 4, 2020, the total



responsible for the emergence and spread of covid-19 in the country and the inability of the country to tackle the virus without relying on the core countries for vaccine assistance. Data for the study were collected from secondary source and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that there was rise in the price of food, reduction in the level of domestic production, loss of jobs, reduction in the price of crude oil due to lockdowns that affected the manufacturing sector globally. It was further revealed the federal government cut down on non-essential capital spending to the tune of 1.5 trillion naira. Findings further showed that covid-19 pandemic adversely affected the wellbeing of Nigerian women, and their security because of their exposure to domestic violence and poverty. It was revealed that the government responded to the challenge by introducing lockdowns, credit facilities, food distribution, among others, but the pandemic still reared its ugly heads in the country. Among other things, it was recommended that the social welfare system in Nigeria should be strengthened to the level where it can significantly cater for Nigerians, especially women during future periods of global pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Security, Economic Wellbeing, Nigeria

number of confirmed cases of covid-19 cases had risen to 44,873 and resulted in 1,807 deaths. The African countries with the highest number of covid-19 infections as at the initial period were South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco. On April 17, 2020, World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that Africa could be the next epicenter of covid-19 infections. In the WHO best-case scenario, Africa could see 122 million infection, 2.3 million hospitalisation and 300,000 deaths. Most African states have implemented measures to encourage social distancing focusing on border as well as travel restrictions, school closures, and bans on large gatherings. Africa equally implemented a 21-day period of lockdown (Howard, 2020).

In Nigeria, the first case of covid-19 was recorded on February 27, 2020. The number of confirmed cases increased, making the government to respond to the pandemic by restricting movements of people on March 30, 2020 for an initial period of two weeks. Before the emergence of covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, the country was already contending with the challenge of weak recovery from the 2014 oil price shock, which reduced the country's Gross Domestic Product from 2.5 % to a meager 2%. Covid-19 has equally resulted in violence against women, massive youth unemployment, among other things, in Nigeria (Akpan, 2021). To combat the menace of the pandemic in the country, strategies such as imposition of curfews, partial lockdowns, enforcement of compulsory wearing of face masks, social distancing, compulsory vaccination against covid-19, cash transfers, food assistance, among other measures have been taken, but the pandemic continued to have a huge impact on the wellbeing of people, hence increasing the level of poverty and hunger in the country. Therefore, this paper is geared towards the examination of the implications for covid-19 pandemic on Nigeria's security focusing on the economic performance in the country with its impact on the wellbeing of the people.



Conceptual Review

Covid-19 Pandemic

Pandemic is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as a worldwide spread of disease. This shows that a pandemic is an occurrence of a disease that affects many people over a very wide area. On March 11, 2020, WHO reported that the covid-19 has spread across more than 100 countries and referred to it as a pandemic (WHO, 2020). However, it is important to interrogate the origin of covid-19 to enable us understand the history of the virus.

Covid-19 are usually found in cats, camels, and bats. the viruses live in animals, but do not infect them. However, sometimes, covid-19 could be transmitted from one animal species to another animal species, and may change in form or mutate as it moves from one specie to another. Eventually, the virus was transferred to human beings. It is believed that the first set of people that were infected with the disease are assumed to be traders who sold live animals, fish and meat in the market (Cleveland Clinic, 2021). However, the foregoing brief history of covid-19 did not show us the nature of covid-19 as presented by Shereen, Khan, Kezmi, Bashir, and Siddique (2020).

According to Shereen, Khan, Kezmi, Bashir, and Siddique (2020), covid-19 is a highly infectious and pathogenic viral infection, which is caused by severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2). It belongs to Coronaviridae family in the Nidovirales order. Coronaviruses are minute in size about 65-125 nm in diameter. The sub-group of coronaviruses family are alpha, beta, gamma, and delta coronavirus. Covid-19 brought about huge loss of human lives globally. However, the foregoing did not show the nature of covid-19 the emanated from China.

Cennimo (2021) defined covid-19 or corona virus disease 2019 as illness caused by a novel coronavirus. Covid-19 is equally known as severe acute respiratory syndrome, which is formerly known as 2019-nCoV. Covid-19 was first discovered in the city of Wuhan located in Hubei Province of China, The pandemic was first reported by the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, WHO declared the covid-19 outbreak a universal health emergency. Nevertheless, the definition of covid-19 by the author did not capture the incubation period of the virus as a study by Balkhair (2020).

Balkhair (2020) noted that covid-19 basically spread by droplets, and it can be easily be transmitted from one person to another person. The nature of the virus is that one infected person could infect more than 3 persons. The virus can be spread through asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals. the average incubation period of the covid-19 is 5 to 6 days before its symptoms could be notices, but in severe cases, it could take up to 2 weeks. With the emergence of covid-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China, the disease swiftly spread to other countries of the world with its vast implications on state policy and economy. The foregoing clearly showed that pandemic such as covid-19 affects huge number of people across time and space due its swiftness of transmission from one person to another.

Security

The concept of security has been defined by many scholars in many ways. According to Afolabi (2015), security is a dynamic concept that means different thing to analysts, policy-makers, scholars, and others across time and space. The author noted that some scholars perceive security as safety, happiness, peace and protection of human and material resources of individuals and



those of the state from attacks. Though the author defined security by bringing out its dynamic character, the definition did capture the two major perspectives to security like Ngwube (2013). According to Ngwube (2013), security is the capacity of a state to adequately guarantee the needs of the individuals as well as protecting the interests of the state. The author perceived security from human security and state security perspectives. While the former focuses on the guarantee of food security, health security, social security, and other aspects of human security, the later is focused on ensuring that the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad as well as the vital interests of the state. Nevertheless, though a study by Afolabi (2015) gave us a clue regarding the dynamic nature of security, it did not bring to the fore the contested nature of security like a study by Eroukhmanoff (2019).

Eroukhmanoff (2018) defined security from the perspective of securitisation theorists, hence the nature of security is highly contested because security is presumed to have positive or negative value. Since some people provide security, and some others are recipients of security, security provides the basis for disproportionate power relations amongst people in the society. For the author, security is divided into societal, military, environmental, and political security. The author made a huge contribution in the definition of the concept of the state by pointing out how it causes power disequilibrium in the society. This shows that security is linked to the structure of the global economy or capitalist mode of production, which has produced the bourgeoisies and proletariats in capitalist societies. However, the definition of security by Eroukhmanoff (2018) is slightly different with the definition by Akbar (2015), Ngwube (2013), and Afolabi (2015) by deviating from the realist and idealist perspectives to security.

Akbar (2015) defined security from traditional and non-traditional perspectives to security. While traditional perspective to security is aimed at protection of state and its institutions from external attacks, non-traditional perspective to security is anchored on the protection of individuals and the state from attacks. However, the definition of security by Akbar (2015) did not answer the question: security for whom? security for what? and security for who? which are vital in the understanding of the nature of security threats posed by covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

According to Adeleke (2021), traditional or realist perspective to security is provided for the state (security for whom?), and the value protected is state's sovereignty (security for what?). The source of threat to a state are state-actors and non-state actors (security for who?). On the other hand, non-traditional or idealist perspective to security is provided for the individual (security for whom?), while values to be protected include access to good healthcare, access to education, job creation, improvement in the quality of life of individuals, among others, (security for what?). The sources of threat to individuals include globalisation, diseases, state-actors (security from who?). In view of the foregoing, security is defined, in this paper, as the protection of individuals from anything that negatively affects their health, diseases, economy, psychology, liberty, self-esteem as well as protection of the state from loss of its cherished values.

Theoretical Framework

This paper was built on the world-systems theory of liberalism paradigm and systemic level of analysis. The theory developed from the writings of Immanuel Wallerstein in 1974. World-system theory is used in explaining situations where world economy is integrated through market instead



of political center in which two or more countries are interdependent with respect to certain necessities of life such as crude oil, food, and security. Related to this is the fact that the theory is useful in the understanding of how two or more countries compete for domination without the emergence of one single center of power that lasts forever (Mrtinez-Vela, 2001).

According to Reyes (2001), the central tenet of the theory is that the world is divided into core, semi-periphery, and periphery states. Advanced capitalist countries are the "core" while the less developed countries are the "periphery". The semi-periphery states are the newly industrialising countries of the world. The periphery countries are structurally constrained to experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status.

The theory is useful in the understanding of the level of global interconnectedness in the contemporary world driven by advances in science and technology, and how that affect the economic wellbeing of Nigerians. This is buttressed by the fact that in 2018 alone, over 4 billion people or nearly 60 % of global population travelled round the globe using commercial flights. In view of the foregoing, locally emerging viruses could quickly spread across national borders, hence posing serious global health threats (Balkhair, 2020). The speed at which covid-19 spread to Nigeria shows how interconnected the country is to other parts of the world. Due to the location of Nigeria in the periphery, it cannot introduce restrictions to combat the spread of covid-19 immediately it was discovered in Wuhan China because the country is largely dependent on China in terms of trade. However, the theory is weak in the understanding of the reasons for the spread of covid-19 in other core countries like the United States and United Britain.

Methodology

Data for this paper were generated from journals, official reports of World Health Organisation, and internet materials in order to clearly understand covid-19 pandemic and how it has affected the security of Nigeria. The study had content validity because only materials related to covid-19 pandemic and security in Nigeria were collected and analysed, while reliability of the study was realised by citing all scholars whose works were consulted in the paper appropriately. Data collected were analysed using content analysis which involved thematic presentation and analysis of data collected.

Implications for Covid-19 Pandemic on Economic Security of Nigerians

Covid-19 has debilitating impact on the economic life of Nigerians. During the hit of the pandemic (mid-February, 2020), Nigeria depreciated its naira by 1.0, but the informal market indicates an expectation of a larger depreciation of naira. In the midst of the pandemic, on March 20th, 2020, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) adjusted the currency to ₦380 per dollar. A week before the announcement, informal sources indicated that the naira was trading at ₦ 380 per dollar in the parallel or black market. However, by June 17th 2020, the value of naira devalued to ₦ 387.048. Similarly, prices of goods and services are equally affected which indicates the impact of the devaluation on domestic production (Rani, Sabri & Zulfikar, 2020).

With massive decline in the economic performance of the country, many organisations in the country, especially the private sector started experiencing declines in their revenues with its implications for job security of many workers in the country. Consequently, unemployment rate



increased because most graduates who had plan of getting a befitting jobs would have to stay home since most companies had to retrench their staff to reduce cost and still make profit at the long run. As the pandemic intensifies, Nigeria's services, trade and financial sectors continue to suffer huge disruptions. The pandemic equally had a significant impact on crude oil. As of March 18th, 2020, the price of crude oil dipped to US \$ 29.62 per barrel. Given the federal budget estimate for 2020 have pegged oil prices at US\$ 57 per barrel and production at 2.18 million barrels per day, if prices continue to remain at this level, it would translate to a decline in 48 percent of expected revenue from oil sales per month. This alone could reduce fiscal revenue by close to US\$ 10 billion and export earnings by \$19 billion. The decline in exports revenues is projected to have a combined impact of 0.55 percent points in GDP. The lack of demand could also reduce domestic oil production or supply in the short medium term (ECA, 2020).

According to Onyekwena and Ekeruche (2020), the deficit of 2.18 trillion naira affected the volume as well as the value of Nigeria's export since oil accounts for 90% of Nigeria's export. This resulted in the federal government cutting down on public expenditure by 1.5 trillion naira on non-essential capital spending. The restrictions on movement of people within the country and across international borders resulted in decline in exports. According to Nweze, Nnadi and Hubs (2021), covid-19 pandemic drastically reduced the demand for Nigeria's oil in the international oil market. Also, it was pointed out that the number of infested cases had significant correlations with economic activities from the perspective of trend analysis. Related to the foregoing is the fact that there is significant difference in the revenue collection between pre-covid-19 and post-covid-19 periods. This further support the central argument of this paper that covid-19 adversely affected the economic security of Nigeria, which further impinged on the wellbeing of ordinary Nigerians. Similarly, Ozili and Arun (2020) noted that the increasing number of lockdowns days resulted in monetary policy decisions and restrictions in international travels, which severely affected the level of economic activities and closing, opening, lowest and largest stock price of major stock market indices in Nigeria. On the contrary, the imposed restrictions on internal movement and higher fiscal policy spending had a positive impact on the level of economic activities, but the rising number of confirmed corona virus cases did not have significant impact on the level of economic activities in the continent.

The lockdowns resulted in reduced demand for Nigeria's exports with the greatest impact on countries with substantial participation in global value chains. More so, the infection containment measures in Nigeria resulted in significant reductions in the country's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows, tourism and, to some extent, Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) inflows. Initially, with lower infection rates, the direct impact on health systems and resulted expenditure for most countries in the region has been modest, however, as the pandemic continued, it changed rapidly. The stay-at-home policy in Nigerian states resulted in huge social and economic impacts on the government. This is because the government social's welfare system is too weak to effectively support the covid-19 associated lockdowns. Given the significant weight of informal sector in most Nigerian state's economies, there are many daily wage earners from whom complete shutdown essentially means no income, and no basic household necessities that sustain the livelihood of most of the poor (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2020).



More so, covid-19 pandemic lockdowns resulted in massive increase in food prices and penury in the country. Prolonged economic slowdowns in the country impacted negatively on the informal workers, slum settlements, and many other urban poor families, especially in Nigerian cities. Due to the devastating impact of covid-19, more than 10.9 million Nigerians would enter poverty by 2022 going by the number of people living below the national poverty line of about \$1 per day. In Lagos State alone, government's cash transfers benefitted 921,445 households from March to April 2020, but this was reduced to 400,734 households from November to December, 2020. This clearly showed that the cash transfer, food, and other assistance to government were grossly inadequate in meeting the needs of the people. Data from Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that from April to May 2020, only about 2% of households in the country had received cash transfers since the beginning of the pandemic, while about 12% had received food assistance. The data equally showed that more than 50% of Nigerians had ran out of food within the same period. By November 2020, only 0.6% of households received cash transfers from October to November, while 3.5% had received food assistance. Also, about half of the population of the country ran out of food within the same period (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The foregoing showed that covid-19 pandemic affected the entire globe including Nigeria given the level of global interconnectedness in the contemporary epoch. Though the pandemic started in Wuhan China, it speedily spread to all parts of the universe including Nigeria. In Nigeria, the pandemic adversely impacted on the economic prosperity of the country through reduction in its projected export revenues through crude oil export, which occurred due to reduction in the extent of production in the advanced capitalist countries due to covid-19 lockdowns. With the lockdowns around the globe, importation and exportation of production and even production at the local setting dwindled leading to loss of revenues, retrenchment of staff, and non-payment of salaries especially to teachers in some private schools in Nigeria, This negatively impacted on their wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of their family members. The shutdown of schools during the pandemic era adversely affected learning which could have harmful implications for educational development in the country. For the teachers, it resulted in loss of income, which could affect the quality of food they eat, which has direct implications for the health security of such households.

Implications for Covid-19 on Security of Nigerian Women

The informal sector plays a critical role in the economy of Nigeria as it contributed to about 67% to the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2017. Majority of the people that are engaged in this sector are women, so policies on covid-19 restrictions that affected largely the informal sector in the country affected more women than men. Markets are largely dominated by women as part of the informal sector of the Nigerian economy. Given the huge number of women that buy and sale goods in the various local markets in the country, the shutting down of markets during the pandemic largely affected their livelihoods and income level. Also, the service sector in Nigeria employs mostly women. Women are more likely to be employed as support staff, airline workers, cashiers, leisure and hospitality workers, receptionists, health and social workers, service attendants, among others. Through economic shutdowns and lockdowns, majority of them lost their jobs (Akpan, 2020).



The economic impact of covid-19 on Nigerians triggered violence against women during the economic lockdown epoch. Due to the compulsory lockdown coupled with increased level of poverty, especially amongst the urban poor during the period, the level of violence against women increased. According to African Center for Strategic Studies (2020), police report during the pandemic showed that domestic violence tripled during the period; violence against health workers due to serious stress levels that the pandemic places on patients and abuse as well as exploitation of women and girls, especially by caregivers. Frustrations resulting from economic loss also played into existing regional fault-lines within Nigeria. There has been a 20 percent increase in the number of rape cases in Nigeria during the covid-19 pandemic era. There had also been general increases in cybercrimes.

According to United Nations Women (2020), covid-19 lockdowns had impinged negatively on small businesses that bring food on the table of women, especially single mothers. Due to lockdowns, women who are domestic workers such as cleaners, caregivers, nannies, among others, lost their jobs and other protections. While everybody in the country was facing huge challenges arising from the pandemic, women bore the brunt of the economic and social fallouts of covid-19 in Nigeria. This is because women who are poor and marginalised, are exposed to higher risks of covid-19 transmission and fatalities, loss of livelihoods as well as increased violence. Okafor (2021) noted that 48 % of women in Nigeria were exposed to violence during the covid-19 pandemic. It was found that one-fourth of the women felt less safe at home during the pandemic. In Lagos State alone, a total of 3,193 cases of gender-related violence were recorded from January to December 2020.

Violence against women during covid-19 pandemic had psychological effect on them which affected their emotional security. The closure of markets resulted in economic insecurity amongst the women who largely play critical role in the survival of many families. The reduction in the income of women affected the income of many families, which invariably affected their health security through reduction in the quality of food such families eat.

Strategies adopted by Nigeria for Combating Covid-19 Pandemic

Many strategies were adopted by the Nigerian government to mitigate the impacts of covid-19 pandemic on Nigerians as well as ensure the security of the country at large. According to Mallun, Kadiri and Thompson (2020), the strategies are summarised as public health policies and socio-economic policies. The public health policies are as follows:

1. formulation of transportation and logistics involving international and domestic travel bans;
2. establishment of Presidential Task Force for covid-19;
3. closure of schools to reduce the spread of covid-19 amongst the students;
4. ban on mass gathering and religious activities involving over 50 people;
5. imposition of nationwide overnight curfew; and
6. enforcement of lockdown order in all parts of the country.

Mallun, Kadiri and Thompson (2020) equally summarised the socio-economic policies of government for combating covid-19 as follows:

1. adoption of economic stimulus measures such as loans, moratorium on debt repayment. The federal government equally created ₦50 billion credit facilities for affected households and Small



and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The government equally reduced the interest rates on loans from 9 % to 5%;

2. The government equally funded facilities to support few local pharmaceutical industries to procure raw materials as well as equipment to stimulate drug production in the country;
3. the government adopted fiscal policy which led to the reduction of crude oil benchmark from USD 57 to USD 30;
4. the government suspended new electricity tariffs to the first quarter of 2021;
5. the government equally placed restriction on the exportation of nose mask to ensure that there is no shortage of masks in the country; and
6. the government reduced the price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from N143/5 to N123.50 k per liter with effect from April 1, 2020. Despite the foregoing strategies, the price of PMS has drastically increased today. Also, covid-19 pandemic still spread in the country causing deaths, hospitalisations, economic declines, poverty, among others, but not to the level predicted by the West.

Conclusion

This paper examines the covid-19 pandemic focusing on its implications for economic security of Nigerians, especially women. It was argued that covid-19 pandemic is a security threat because of its impact on the economic wellbeing of Nigerians, especially women who form the bulk of participants in the country's informal sector. Therefore, it is concluded that unless Nigeria establish a robust and sustainable social safety nets to cushion the negative effects of future pandemics, Nigerians especially women would continue to be confronted by insecurity arising from poverty, violence against women, unemployment, among others.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the paper, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Nigerian government at all levels should develop its healthcare system to the level that the country can cope up with future pandemics without relying on the advanced capitalist states for help, which usually come with some conditionalities;
- ii. The social welfare system in Nigeria should be strengthened to the level where it can significantly cater for Nigerians, especially women during periods of global pandemic;
- iii. Nigeria should consider tightening its borders immediately any pandemic emerges with a view to protecting the Nigerians, especially women who are largely caregivers in hospitals;
- iv. Government at all levels in Nigeria should quickly identify Nigerians affected by covid-19 pandemic at the local level with a view to assisting them in rebuilding their businesses; and
- v. Government at all levels in Nigeria should equally identify all women who were abused during the pandemic with a view to rehabilitating them.

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