

## Globalisation of Disease: The Political and Socio-Economic Impact of Covid-19 in Enugu State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Globalisation is the integration of the universe into a uniform world order. This ideology of globalism includes politics, economy, environment, wars, security, culture, health etc. The merits of globalisation are many, so do the demerits. The constant web of interaction among state and non-state actors across international borders has heightened among other things the transmission of diseases from one country to another. The speed at which the corona virus spread across the globe within months of its outbreak in Wuhan China has added to the numerous demerits of globalisation. The COVID 19 pandemic has affected the economy and social wellbeing of individuals, firms and even countries. Nigeria has gotten a fair share of the impact of this dreaded disease and the attendant negative consequences on her political, social and economic activities. This paper analyses the impact of the disease on the socio-economic spheres of the Nigerian state within the framework of globalisation. We made use of the secondary source of data gathering and qualitative analytical method for this research. The paper argued that the interdependence of states and societies has worsened an already depressed and struggling Economy of the Nigerian State. Relying on the dependency theory as our theoretical tool, we inferred that COVID-19 has further devastated the already bad socio-economic condition of Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Globalisation, Integration, Dependency, Economy, State.**

### Introduction

The corona virus otherwise known as Covid-19 has become a global concern for everyone. The dreaded disease originated in Wuhan China in December, 2019 as the epicentre. Since then, the world has been battling to contain and combat the spread of the virus and its consequences. Many countries of the world have had its citizens infected with the disease. The worst hit countries include Italy, United Kingdom, Brazil, Spain, China, India, Iran and the USA to mention a few. These countries have recorded substantial number of mortality since February, 2020. The USA alone has recorded the highest number of infected confirmed cases and death so far followed by India and Brazil (The New York Times, 2020).

The novel virus (COVID-19) came from the family of corona virus. Other viruses in the family include SARS, MERS, Ebola, AIDS and others. These viruses attack the respiratory system

thereby bringing its victim down with acute or chronic respiratory syndrome. The virus is contagious and could be transmitted through the eyes, nose, ear and mouth from droplets of infected persons when they cough or sneezes. Also, surfaces can be contaminated by droplets from infected persons (Armin, Saeid, Farzaneh, Ali, 2020). The incubation period of the covid-19 virus takes about 14 days of which the infected person begins to show symptoms such as dry cough, fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat, reddish eyes and so on. Although, from several studies conducted, symptoms of covid-19 are non-specific. The virus is diagnosed when samples of an infected persons is collected and subjected to intensive laboratory examination (Olapegba, Ayandele, Kolawole, Oguntayo, Gandi Dangiwa, Ottu, and Iorfa, 2020).

The infection rate is very high and could possibly lead to death. Among persons who die of this disease are the elderly who have underlying ailment such as diabetics, obesity, heart disease, kidney and liver problems, etc. This is because the system is already inflamed and the virus capitalises on these ailments or inflammations of an already weakened immune system and destroys the body further by killing its victim faster than one can imagine. It has also been reported that people from other age bracket have died from the virus. It is worth noting that some infected persons carry this virus without showing any symptom (asymptomatic). Others may present mild symptoms and may recover with simple treatment. It has also been noted that there is a minimal or low infection rate among children and even if there are, they show a milder symptoms (WHO/China Joint Mission Report, 2020).

In this regard, some preventive measures have been spelt out by WHO and government of individual countries to be observed and adhered to as a measure to curb the spread of the virus. This include, washing of hands for about 20 minutes, using of hand sanitizers, wearing of face masks, self isolating and quarantine, cough or sneezing into disposable tissue paper, maintaining social distancing and more importantly staying at home. Social distancing refers to an effort targeted at decreasing or interrupting an infectious disease within a population by minimising physical contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals, or between population group with high rate of transmission and population group with no or low level of transmission (ECDC Report, 2020).

Globalisation of disease is the process where infectious diseases are spread rapidly around the world just as information, goods and services, capital and people flow in and out across geopolitical boundaries thereby allowing infectious diseases to spread rapidly around the world

(Daulaire, 1999). The rise in urbanisation and the incorporation of the world economy has aided global interconnectedness (Wu & Perrings, et al, 2017) cited in (Shrestha et al, 2020). In this way, trade and travel has contributed immensely to the rapid spread of infectious diseases. Modern modes of transportation have allowed more people and products to travel far and wide at a faster pace. With the use of air travel, people are able to go to foreign lands, contract a disease and not have any symptoms of illness until after they get home, and having exposed others to the diseases along the way (Rodrigue, Luke and Osterholm, 2008).

Saunders-Hastings & Krewski (2016) posits that, going by history, most pandemics have been observed to have spread through the movement of people from one geographical area to another. For instance, the transmission of the bubonic plague was from China to Europe through trade routes; the Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo also spread to most African countries through land and air travels. Also, traces of the spread of viral diseases has been linked to soldiers and war veterans e.g. the HIV/AIDS virus. Also, the movement of armies in the First World War facilitated the spread of the Spanish influenza flu of 1918 killing about 50 million people worldwide (Martini and Gazzaniga et al, 2019).

The transmission of global diseases has been made possible through globalisation and this has significant implications on global and regional economies. Pandemics, such as the covid19, however, should not only be measured or defined in terms of mortality but also by its impact on the livelihood of people generally. This gave the impetus for the writing of this paper.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The outbreak of this deadly virus is placing an overwhelming burden on the healthcare systems and healthcare workers who are on the frontline combating the virus. In order to ensure calm and maintain a healthy and safe social environment at the outbreak of the virus, it was necessary that the governments of the world enforced policies such as the economic lockdown and the principle of social distancing in hopes that citizens would feel safe within their homes as the social unit of the society. The government and the people of the world could not envisage an enormous hardship on the people ranging from death, uncertainty, emotional distress, hunger, insecurity, food shortage, hike in prices of goods in the market, fear, poverty and so on. Therefore, the study intends to uncover the consequences of the viral outbreak to the socio-economic aspects of the Nigerian economy with special regard to Enugu State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be addressed in this paper.

- (i) How has globalization contributed to the spread of covid 19 in Nigeria and other parts of the world?
- (ii) What is the any impact of covid 19 pandemic on socio-economic conditions of Nigerians in Enugu State?
- (iii) What possible solutions can be proffered to mitigate negative impacts of covid 19 on socio-economic conditions of Nigerians in Enugu State?

### **Research Objectives**

- a) To find out how globalization has led to the spread of covid 19 in Nigeria and other parts of the world.
- b) To ascertain if there is any impact of covid 19 pandemic on the socio-economic conditions of citizens of Enugu State
- c) To proffer solutions to the problems associated with covid 19 and its impact on the socio-economic conditions of Enugu residents.

### **Theoretical Review**

For the purpose of this paper, the dependency theory will be appropriate for explaining globalisation of disease, the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 in Nigeria. The dependency theory is a neo-Marxist theory that was developed to explain world capitalist system. The proponents and scholars in this school of thought include Andre Gunder Frank (1967) introduced the concept of Metropolis and Satellites. Frank is of the view that the metropolitan West exploits the satellite countries of the Third World. In like manner, Immanuel Wallerstein (1970) based his theory of dependency on the concepts of core, semi-periphery and periphery. Walter Rodney (1972), a contributor to this school of thought made a very essential analysis and application of the dependency theory to the African situation. Other scholars within this school of thought include, Paul Bran (1957), Samir Amin (1957) etc. They contended that, it is only through the analysis of the capitalist system within the world economic system that the features of capitalism and its unusual economic expansion, development and underdevelopment of societies can be clearly understood (Idyorough, 2002).

The dependency theory emphasises the fact that global society has developed in an uneven manner dividing the global economy in core and dependent nations. The core being the developed or western nations such as USA, Europe, Japan, and United Kingdom while the dependent nations

are the Third World nations like Africa, Asia and Latin America. These periphery nations depend largely on the core or western economies for most manufactured or finished products where the core nations fixes the prices for both raw and finished products to the disadvantage and exploitation of developing economies. The ideology behind the dependency theory was to explain the exploitative nature of the western world over developing nations thereby making them dependent on them (West) for their development and growth.

Globalisation has made it that the economies of the Third World countries are being monitored, dominated, and controlled by transnational corporations who own and control the means of production. How industries are structured globally still has some related level of dependence on the centre exposing developing countries more during the pandemic. This is seen in the global economic integration and rigid power imbalances and making those at the bottom of the hierarchy vulnerable. Many manufacturing companies in developing countries rely heavily on companies in the Western world and being run and controlled by multinational corporations, therefore, as global demand grinds to a halt as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, many manufacturing companies and workers in the periphery are shutting down and workers losing their jobs. The West believed that Africa will suffer more casualties in terms of their poverty level, failing healthcare and dwindling economic system and high incidence of infectious covid-19 cases and death rate compared to the developed nations who have sophisticated medical equipments and vaccines to combat the virus but reverse is the case (Kvangraven, 2020).

Furthermore, using the dependency theory to analyse the Nigerian situation in terms of how globalisation and Covid 19 has impacted on the socio-economic conditions of the people, one can argue that Nigeria depend more on the western world for most of its consumables if not all, thereby increasing interactions with state and non-state actors. These interactions affects our economy, health, policies, education, laws, travels, technology, in fact, all social institutions in the society and has facilitated the rapid spread of the corona virus pandemic across geographical boundaries within the shortest possible time. Going further, the fall in the price of oil has affected our foreign earnings and reserves. The continued depreciation of the Nigerian (Naira) currency as well as severe debt and liquidity problems has caused untold hardship on the people since most imported goods are bought at a very high price leading to hike in prices of commodities in our local markets. The educational sector is not left as many schools in Nigeria were shut for quite a substantial number of months in which they resort to online method of teaching through the use of

technology such as handsets, internet, television and radio programmes to teach school children from primary to tertiary levels. The aviation, tourism, hospitality, transportation industries and other businesses were shut down and only operate skeletally and people were lockdown in their homes.

The covid 19 pandemic threw countries world over into a crisis situation. However, the challenges associated with it have made it terrible for developing countries. Therefore, the dependency theory is essential for understanding these global inequalities and imbalances with a view of coming up with sustainable results.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The study followed a qualitative research model, thus it applies a non numeric and a non statistical approach towards data collection and analyses. Data were sourced from secondary sources. The Expo-facto research design was used for the study because the study intends assessing how globalisation of diseases has impacted the socio-economic activities of Nigerians using the Covid-19 experience. The content was broken down to the appropriate subheadings.

The study was well deliberated under the following headings:

- i. Spread of the Virus to Nigeria and other parts of the World
- ii. Impact on the Economy
- iii. Impact on education
- iv. Impact on Social Life
- v. Religious Impact
- vi. Psychological Impact

### **Analysis and Discussions**

#### **Spread of the virus to nigeria and other parts of the world**

Covid-19 is transmitted through droplets during close unprotected contact between an infected person to an uninfected person. Human to human transmission occur mostly amongst family members who are closely related. The report from the WHO/China joint mission on Corona Virus Disease (2019) shows that transmission of the covid-19 virus is largely occurring in families. The first index case of covid 19 in Nigeria was recorded through an Italian tourist who came to Nigeria from Italy for business transactions. His first contact was in Lagos State. Passengers from the airline he boarded were all traced and quarantined. They were tested and some were found

infected already with the virus. It was also reported by many news channels that people from other countries of the world, especially United Kingdom, USA, United Arab Emirates and others started flying back into the country without adequate testing and monitoring whereby many of them were already infected with the virus. Some who knew they were carrying the virus went into hiding for the fear of being quarantined and isolated by the government. By virtue of this singular act, several people started contracting the virus and before you knew it, community transmission began spreading rapidly.

From the ongoing study conducted in some provinces in Guangdong and Sichuan provinces, it was revealed that 78% - 85% transmission occurred within the family. 2,842 identified contacts were traced in Shenzhen city in China, result shows that 88 persons who were close contact family members are infected with the covid-19 virus (WHO/China Joint Mission Report, 2020). The spread of the virus to other parts of China was considered to occur during population movement of people at the Chinese New Year known as Chunyun. At this point, infected individuals who are asymptomatic quickly spread the virus throughout the country with large concentrations in cities with Wuhan as the Epicentre.

Although, given the experience at Wuhan, a comprehensive and aggressive intervention mechanism has been put in place or implemented to limit or curb the spread of the virus. These include: aggressive contact identification and tracing, isolation and management, quarantine, and extreme social distancing all geared towards curtailing further community spreading.

Currently, there is no particular drug or vaccine for the treatment and cure of the corona virus (covid-19) as the world's scientists and researchers are working hard to develop a vaccine for the cure of the virus.

### **Impact on the economy**

The covid-19 pandemic and its attendant consequences have not left the Nigerian economy blossoming. The pandemic has put a severe pressure on the economy of the country. Nigeria is still grappling to recover from the economic recession she suffered in 2016 as a result of oil price crash and insufficient foreign exchange earnings, only to be faced with a heavier burden of a pandemic which affected oil price in the global market. Nigeria rely heavily on oil export and the covid-19 pandemic and oil war between Saudi Arabia and Russia has taken its toll on the global

demand for oil. Presently, there is a decline in oil demand which has also resulted in fall on oil price. The consequences of these have adverse effect on the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Nigeria's 2020 budgets indicates that the GDP is expected to grow to the rate of 2.93 percent and inflation rate at 10.8 percent but this projection is not realisable and cannot be reached as a result of the fall in oil price since the economy solely depends on oil.

The impact of this has been felt by everyone even those in government MDAs. Many workers' salaries were cut down; some were owed for quite a number/couple of months during the lockdown, pensioners' salaries and gratuities were not paid too, private companies, shops, banks, and many businesses were shut down thereby bringing untold hardship on the populace. Even, some states government are yet to implement the new national minimum wage of N30,000 to workers.

Many people in Nigeria are poor and a sizable number of them depend on daily income from sales of articles, such as sachet water, groundnuts, kola nuts, gala, and biscuits. Others work as transporters, food vendors, unskilled labourers, artisans and all sorts of menial jobs for livelihood. The hustling and bustling in the ever busy city markets have pipe down low as a result of the pandemic and lockdown imposed on the people and the country at large. The dwindling economy has not left anyone with full money in the pocket. Prices of commodity in the market are skyrocketing on daily basis; many people are faced with hunger and uncertainty for tomorrow.

### **Impact on social life**

The effect of the covid-19 pandemic cannot be over emphasised as it has done more harm than good. Who would have imagine that one day, we would all be confined in our homes, glued to our chairs in the name of lockdown as a means of fighting the corona virus pandemic. Travels are banned, businesses are shutting down, worship places are under lock and key, students and children of primary school age are at home; events and parties are cancelled, wedding ceremonies, burial ceremonies, visitations to tourist sites, friends and family members, town hall meetings and associations, night club parties, drinking bars and relaxation spots etc are put at a hold and so many other distortions in our day-today-day life and activities. The implication of this distortion is that there is a decrease in the quality of human relationship as everyone is forced to stay at home and maintain social distancing as a preventive measure against the deadly and rapidly spreading viral disease.



The pandemic has brought a very significant overhaul of our everyday life and activities. Husbands and wives who rarely have time for each other as a result of their busy schedules are not forced to develop intimacy as they sit at home together, parents are unarguably mandated to manage and deal with their children's excesses and so many other social changes in our lives.

### **Impact on religion**

In many societies across the world and in Nigeria, religious services and prayers are usually done with a sense of duty or willingness for the elderly to pass the tradition to their children. The reality shows that the modern European society are not actually as religious as the African society, but the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic has greatly influenced their way of life, in an ironical pattern. Many individuals do not attend Church services and do not pay attention to religious thoughts, but since the event of the virus, followed by the fear of infection and death the prayer habits of individuals have been aroused drastically, and many do engage into e-worship and prayer services organized by churches through social media platforms such as Youtube, Wechat, Facebook, Zoom etc.. However, in the face of illness and suffering, a significant change of attitude is observed, as evidenced by numerous testimonies of Italian doctors. Religious creeds and beliefs not only allow us to understand but they also influence the meaning of many events occurring in everyone's life. With this approach, faith or broadly understood spirituality is a force that helps to overcome mental crisis as well as facilitate adaptation to the disease or the restrictions resulting from it (Kowalczyk, Roszkowski, Montane, Pawliszak, Tylkowski and Bajek, 2020).

Some churches among the Pentecostals have reacted to the covid 19 pandemic from a conspiracy theory perspective, linking the event with the 5G network and the antichrist prophecy. In fact it sparked some kind of protest and riot in many nations across the globe which brought the church in direct opposition to the machineries of the state.

### **Psychological Effects**

The impact of covid-19 pandemic poses a great psychological distress and traumatic experience on people especially those infected and their families, neighbours, colleagues and community. The pandemic has created fear and panic across the globe coupled with information in the media and misinformation associated with the disease such as mode of transmission and treatment of infected persons is capable of putting the general public at risk of mental health distress (Abayomi & Rotimi et al, 2020).

The effect of the pandemic is overwhelming many government and countries of the world in that the political and socio-economic structure of the entire world is disrupted and crashing down thus, exacerbating intense psychological distress (Raviola, et al, 2020). The measures spelt out as a way of preventing the virus such as self isolation, quarantine, social distancing and treatment of infected persons can further pose a detrimental distress on the victim. Also, the loneliness caused by reduced social interaction and cohesion can pose a risk for several psychological disorders such as anxiety, drug use, insomnia, depression, hallucination, and trauma especially among vulnerable population like those with health challenges (Abayomi & Rotimi et al, 2020). The devastating effect could lead infected people and family members who are traumatised to nurture the thought of committing suicide since the infected person and any other person(s) whom he or she has come in contact with is expected to go into isolation and quarantine. To make matters worse, the infected person and those who come in contact with him is easily bundled up and whisk away to some undisclosed isolation centre for monitoring and observation (emphasis mine).

Rubiu and Wessely (2020) reported that excessive quarantine has the tendency to exacerbate anxiety which may also trigger other mental health problems. The victim may start feeling rejected, dejected, obsessive compulsive symptoms and mood swing, which will further lead to complicated health issue in the victim and the general public (Barbisch et al, 2015).

Psychologically, stigma associated with covid-19 poses a serious threat to the lives of healthcare workers, patients, and survivors of the disease (Sangeet Bagcchi, 2020). Stigma is the negative association, labelling, stereotype, and/or discrimination against a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In which case, they are treated separately, and/or experience loss of status as a result of a perceived link with a disease (WHO, 2020). Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease as well as their family, friends, caregivers, associates, colleagues, neighbours and communities they live in.

The covid-19 pandemic has sparked off social stigma and discriminatory behaviour against people infected with the disease or showing symptoms of the disease. As a result, social cohesion is affected and can encourage or spark off rapid spread of the virus since the infected person would not want to be identified and goes about infecting others. This can pose a serious health challenge as controlling the disease or outbreak could be difficult.

Fear of stigma could cause infected people to go into hiding so as to avoid discrimination or being taken to isolation centres while some in isolation centres run away from the centre to other private clinics or hospitals to treat themselves without even informing the health personnel that they are carriers of the virus and thereby infecting the health personnel. The fear of stigma could also prevent people from seeking immediate health care or discourage them from adopting healthy behaviour like getting screened, being tested and possibly quarantine.

To deal with the issue of stigma regarding the corona virus and people infected with the disease, there is need for people to adopt languages that respects and empower people in all communication channels, including the media because the way we communicate can affect the attitudes of others. Apart from that, there is need to build trust in reliable health services, show empathy with those affected as well as their family and caregivers, demonstrate a proper understanding of the disease and adopt an effective, practical and safe measures to keep people and their loved ones safe. An enabling environment is also necessary to allow people discuss openly and freely about the disease.

### **Effects of Covid-19 on Education**

Education is said to be the bedrock of any nation (whether developed or developing). As it is today, the covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected and disrupted the process of learning in the country as all schools in the country is shut down since 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 by Federal Ministry of Education. No classroom activity is going on since then. This has left most public and private schools to resort to online teaching through the radio and television, and other social media platforms such as WhatsApp and facebook. This however, poses a challenge to the vulnerable child, who resides in the rural area where access to modern communication gadgets and technology is minimal. They are handicapped and left behind since they are not equipped to adapt to the new learning methods.

The pandemic has exposed and unmasked the decadence and inequalities in the education sector where many children are out of school. As of today, Nigeria has the highest number of out of school children in the world (13.2 million) cited in (COVID-19 SEED cares blog news, 2020). There is no doubt that millions of primary and secondary school children are currently out of school as a result of the lockdown imposed by the government as a measure of curbing the virus. The

question now is, for how long will schools remain closed? How certain is it that the closure of schools will yield positive results towards fighting the spread of the virus? Are there concrete measures or mechanism established or put in place by government to provide alternative and adequate learning facilities and technology for pupils and students in our changing world that will carry every school child and students along?

Furthermore, if school closure is left to linger more, there is no doubt that this would deepen educational inequality between the urban and rural school children, children lower and middle socio-economic status and children with learning disabilities. This is because access to the internet for online lessons may not be afforded by parents from the rural areas and those with low level of income. To support this view, Digital 2020 Global Overview Report(2021) stated that about 60 percent of Nigerians do not have access to the internet. This will make learning difficult coupled with the deteriorating condition of our educational system.

### **Conclusion**

However, from the study above we noticed that the Spread of the Virus to other parts of the World was quick an unforeseen, the world had to fight a Virus they were not prepared for. And Awareness of the Covid-19 Virus is well spread among the people but we observe that it has gone viral before many governments took the right response. Effects on The Economy was harsh because it shut down production and distribution, the effects on Social Life was well noted, as individuals were isolated from their loved ones due to the lockdown policy as well as the social distancing policy. The Religious Effects was very dramatic and such that if not controlled would worsen matters as people feared it was the end of the world.

### **Recommendation**

The study was very resourceful in providing insights to the reality of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the socio-economic lives of the individuals; however it is appropriate that the following suggestion is made:

- i. It is appropriate that the government be honest to individuals on the origin of the virus, since they claim its the evolution of an existing virus, especially in a situation when the theory of evolution from the scientific perspective is actually unproven. Neither did the case study specifically justify such claims.
- ii. Secondly, the government could approach the scenario from a holistic perspective, the government in many underdeveloped countries primarily ensured that the lockdown policy and

the isolation policy was well implemented without considering other socio-economic needs of the people.

- iii. The government should develop a rapid response mechanism to the problems of outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, hence the government should work with stakeholders from other sectors of the economy to make life better.
- iv. The government should improve its research institutes to develop existing scientific capacity to efficiently manage such health emergency calls such as viral or disease outbreaks.
- v. The government should provide palliative to the poor with all the basic necessities of life, be responsible to citizens and control the cost of food in the market and finally, government should be transparent, responsive and shun corruption. All these will go a long way in cushioning the effects of the pandemic.

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