

**COVID 19, SECURITIZATION AND THE NIGERIAN STATE: A POLITICAL-ECONOMY PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Political-economy as an approach and theory gives a better and clearer insight of human society in relations with different social structures that functions its effective running. The class analysis in the society and its effects brought about the social responsibility of the state, and the underlying forces and motives behind government policies, actions and inactions of phenomenon of the COVID 19 pandemic and the attendant mystery that surrounds it in Nigeria. The COVID 19 pandemic has exposed the structural and deep systemic weakness, specifically Nigerian political economy and security challenges. The attendant revelation showed how there could be unequal relations between the leaders and citizens in the distribution of palliative measures within the polity during the rampaging period of covid19 pandemic. Measures to combat the rate of the spread saw the society being locked down; hence many sectors of the economy could not function except for essential ones. Consequently many people were deprived of their means of livelihood. The paper therefore examined the political economy of COVID 19 and the attendant security challenges in Nigeria. The study concluded based on the findings that there has been a problem from the Nigerian leaders to separate politics from economics, considering political bankruptcy in Nigeria and direct interference of investible capital out of the society. This had played fundamental roles of restricting the possibilities of growth and development both in Nigeria and indeed Africa.*

**Key words:** *Political- economy, Poverty, Securitization, COVID-19, Food Security Economic inequality*

**Introduction**

The breakout of pandemics is not unfamiliar in history. Small Pox, Asian Flu, Cholera, Black Death, Plaque of Justinian, Antonine Plaque, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDs) and Ebola have resulted to huge fatality globally (Cornelius & Nguyen, 2020; Mihoko & Chughtai, 2020; Ferguson, Cummings, Fraser, et al, 2006; Mills, Robins & Lipsitch (2005). Often, while

pandemics lead to social upheavals and large scale mortality, it on the other hand leads to novel reorganizations and re-ordering of social life within the affected societies (Osah & Adewumi, 2020). The Corona virus Disease (COVID 19) that swept over the globe since the beginning of 2020 has exposed the structural and deep systemic weakness within the global, African and specifically Nigerian political economy (Abodunri, 2020).

In the specific case of Nigeria, one can be certain on the extent of the spread due to the paucity of tests conducted, poor national economic recovery plan, disorganized society in terms of poor national identity management scheme, inability to take care of the over 80 million poor Nigerian, reliance on oil revenue yet unable to utilize the revenue to solve national problems of healthcare (Campbell, 2010; Adelegun, 2009; Human Development Report, 2002).

At the moment, many national governments are combating the spread of the virus with a mixture of measures which included the limiting of local and international travels, imposition of total or partial lockdown and maintenance of social distancing and other protocols (Osah & Adewumi, 2020).

The pandemic which has a higher fatality rate than other types of Flu and which has an incubation period of 1 to 14 days, including community transmission through droplets from coughs, sneezes and also through contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, does not have any effective cure or vaccine yet. In the wake of the pandemic, the global economy has already entered into a recession mode, leading to the shutting down of public and private enterprises including educational institutions and attendant loss of jobs. Studies on the emergence, nature and spread of Corona virus disease are quite extensive and for want of space and time, cannot be captured in this study as other studies have taken care of that. The objective of this present study is to examine the political economy perspective of COVID 19 in Nigeria.

### **COVID19 and Poverty**

It is evident all over the world that economic inequality is rapidly increasing in the majority of countries. In fact, majority of persons are poor, while only few are well-to-do. The World Economic Forum has identified this as a major risk to human progress. Extreme economic inequality and political culture are too often interdependent. Left unchecked, political institutions become undermined and governments overwhelmingly serve the interests of economic elites to the detriment of ordinary people, this is seen in the erection of Covid 19 infrastructures and the depletion of the nations' treasuries.

The political class and administrators plundered the economy under the guise of providing palliatives. Realistically speaking, extreme inequality is not inevitable, as the lower class were left out in the scheme of things. This economic inequality is damaging and worrying for many reasons: it is morally questionable; it can have negative impacts on economic growth and poverty reduction; and it can multiply social problems (Anifowose, and Enemu, 2015).

From the forgoing the issue of the political economy theory comes to play as the way and manner palliative measure initiatives have been handled. The believe is that a particular section of the Nigerian society is relatively poor and hence should receive more help than the others. Thus, in many countries, extreme economic inequality is worrisome because of the malicious impact that wealth concentrations can have on equal political representation. When wealth captures government policymaking, the rules bend to favor the rich, often to the detriment of everyone else. The consequences include the erosion of democratic governance, the pulling apart of social cohesion and the vanishing of equal opportunities for all (Adekanye, 2007). Unless bold political solutions are instituted to curb the influence of wealth on politics, governments will work for the interests of the rich, while economic and political inequalities continue to rise. As United States Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously said, "we may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but we cannot have both".

The concept of the culture of poverty may help to correct misapprehensions that have ascribed some behavioral patterns of ethnic, national or regional groups as distinctive characteristics. Reflecting on the influence of political economy of poverty Gilpin (1987) defined political economy thus:

The parallel existence and mutual interaction of ‘state’ and ‘market’ in the modern world create ‘political economy’...In the absence of state, the price mechanism and market forces would determine the outcome of economic activities; this would be the pure world of the economist. In the absence of market, the state or its equivalent would allocate economic resources; this would be the pure world of political scientist (Gilpin, 1987: 8).

However, this exclusive dichotomy between economy and politics is now seen as deeply unsatisfactory in many countries, especially in Nigeria today as the rejection of meritocracy is sharply eroding its fragile unity. According to Reed (2004), to effectively manage the political economy of poverty, the following three analytical standards have been suggested:

1. Analyze and document the dynamic between poverty and the environment at the local level in selected communities and localities;
2. Establish linkages between the local poverty-environment dynamics and factors originating at sub national and national levels;
3. Analyze the influence of economic policy, institutional arrangement and ecological factors across the local, sub national and national levels.

In addition, government should be clear in introducing the three assumptions presented below underplaying the intervention processes:

1. The poor are generally relegated to the margins of national political processes and have comparatively negligible influence over factors that shape their lives. Therefore, fundamental change in their political influence is needed to improve their livelihoods and promote sustainable natural resource management in rural areas.
2. Strengthening the influence of the poor requires active interventions so that they can compete effectively in markets and influence policy and institutional dynamics at the local, sub national and national levels.
3. Building alliances, partnerships and stronger working relations between the rural poor and urban institutions and individuals, government offices as well as international organizations and agencies, is central to changing the relative influence of poor people on matters that affect their lives. Though varying from locality to locality and country to country, these assumptions seemed to hold true throughout the course of the interventions initiated by country partners.

### **Poverty, Economic Growth and Income Distribution**

The policy of poor economy has been defined as “occurring when an individual experiences significant capability deprivations for a period of five years or more” (Hume and Shepherd, 2003: 6). The distinguishing feature here is extended duration, people who remain in poverty for much of their life course. In most cases chronic poverty is generally passed on to subsequent generations. Capability deprivations are here seen as multi-dimensional, going beyond the usual income and consumption measures, to include tangible and intangible assets, nutritional status and indices of human deprivations (Hume and Shepherd, 2003: 1-17; Agbibo, 2012). In another perspective, Dauda (2016) averred that poverty emerges when individuals are incapacitated in accessing adequate shelter, water, food, amenities and services that can enable them to perform their duties effectively in conformity with the principles and beliefs of the society. Corroboratively, Yunus (2016) stated that the poor are individuals who are deprived of food, shelter, health, facilities and freedom to achieve the inherent potential of their capabilities which are apposite to their existence and wellbeing.

Interestingly, some measure of economic performance and the standard of living of the population are used to indicate poverty. These include the poverty Gap Index or Income Gap Index which measures the shortfall or gap between the average income of the poor and the poverty line, the Gini Index measuring the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within a population deviates from a perfectly equal distribution, the Human Development Index (HDI), using longevity, knowledge, and income as data, combines measurement of purchasing power with measures of health and educational attainments to indicate progress or retrogression in human life. Some others are GNP

per capita, the purchasing power of real GDP per capita, etc. In a more succinct form, UNDP (2017) presented the global dimensions, indicators, deprivation thresholds and weights of the multi-dimensional poverty index in the table adapted below:

**Table 1: Multi-dimensionality of poverty**

Dimension	Indicator	Deprivation thresholds	Relative weight
Health	Nutrition	Any adult or child for whom there nutritional information is malnourished	1/6
	Child Mortality	Any child has died in the household within the last five years.	1/6
Education	Years of Education	No household member has completed five years of schooling	1/6
	School Attendance	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which they would complete class 8.	1/6
Living Standard	Cooking fuel	The household cooks with dung, wood or charcoal	1/18
	Sanitation	The household’s sanitation facility is not improved (according to SDG guidelines)	1/18
	Drinking Water	The household does not have access to safe drinking water (according to SDG guidelines) or it is improved but shared with other households.	1/18
	Electricity	The household has no electricity	1/18
	Floor	The household has a dirt, sand or dung floor	1/18
	Assets	The household does not own more than one radio, TV, telephone, bike, motorbike or refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck	1/18

Source: UNDP Poverty Index (2017)

Deductively, a country’s poverty line represents the value of basic food and non-food needs considered essential for meeting the minimum standard of living with the society. Therefore a nation’s poverty rate is the percentage of its population living below its poverty line. Regrettably about 70 percent of Nigerians live below the poverty line (Taiwo & Agwu, 2016).

The links between poverty, economic growth, and income distribution have been studied quite extensively in recent literature on economic development (Agwu & Taiwo, 2016; Agwu & Kadiri; Dauda, 2016; Yunus 2016). From the various studies poverty can be alleviated if at least two conditions are met: economic growth must occur or mean income must rise on a sustained basis and; economic growth must be neutral with respect to income distribution or reduce income inequality. The pattern and stability of economic growth also matter. On the one hand, traditional capital-intensive, import-substituting, and urban-biased growth induced by many government policies has generally not helped alleviate poverty in many economies but has added to poverty increase. However, agricultural growth where there is a low concentration of land ownership and labor-intensive technologies are used as almost always helped reduce poverty in the agrarian economies. The implication of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Nigerian economy was felt tremendously with government imposed lockdowns to flatten the curve of spread of the virus, which had prevented farmers to fully engage in farming activities as well as restrictions of transporters to convey agricultural products to the cities particularly in the months of March, April and May 2020. Trans-border restrictions of goods and services also no doubt took its toll and will take some time before relief would be felt even though border closures are now lifted.

The burden of political economy of poverty is further observed in economic inequality, also known as income inequality, wealth inequality, gap between rich and poor, gulf between rich and poor and contrast between rich and poor which all refers to how economic metric are distributed among individuals in a group, among groups in a population, or among countries. Economists generally think of three metrics of economic

disparity namely: wealth (wealth inequality), income (income inequality), and consumption. The issue of economic inequality can implicate notions of equity, equality of outcome, and equality of opportunity.

### **Securitization of COVID 19 and Security Challenges**

The COVID 19 destabilized the already ailing security structure in most countries including Nigeria (Osah and Adewunmi, 2020). Nunes (2020) submitted that COVID 19 confirms the dynamic securitization of global health and thus, the pandemic has been framed in the background of a threat to the people's lives and the regular functioning of the societies. In other words, COVID 19 constitutes not only issues of bio-threat, biosecurity and safety concerns but a hydra-headed threat which has created a 'new normal' in the overall functioning of the society and the economy. Therefore seen from this perspective, the relevant question is, is the present economy and society in Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the world configured to withstanding the security challenges of COVID 19?

Indeed state institutions and officials are not secured from the threat constituted by COVID 19. In the specific case of Nigeria, the virus has shown dexterous ability to penetrate security cordons around 'Very Important Persons' and public office holders as many state governors and very highly placed individuals both in the public and private sectors have been diagnosed positive of COVID 19. In this case, this report can arguably say that COVID 19 is a leveler of sorts. However, Nunes (2020) disagrees with this perspective by stating that vulnerability to the threat posed by COVID 19 is unequal. Indeed, it is specifically submitted that:

Vulnerability is an unequal political relationship by which certain groups - defined in terms of gender, identification, race, sexual orientation and age among others, as well as in their various intersections are systematically exposed to impoverishment, illness, and death (Nunes, 2020, p3).

The vulnerability of countries of the world to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic in relation to the level of preparedness to a health care crisis is unequal. For example, a very high developed country has an average of 55 hospital beds, over 30 physicians and 81 nurses per 10,000 persons; compared to 7 hospital beds, 2.5 physicians and 6 nurses per 10,000 persons in a least developed country, as are the cases in Germany, Sweden, Austria and the United Kingdom; and Niger, Central African Republic, Burundi and Yemen respectively. However, in the specific case of Nigeria, it is an average of 3.8 physicians, 15 nurses, 0 hospital bed per 10,000 persons and 3.6% expenditure on health care delivery (United Nations Development Programme Data Story, 2020).

This explains the collapse of the public health infrastructure as a result of the three decades of neoliberal economic reforms inspired funding. This means that the limit placed on foreign travels by countries because of the COVID-19 has constrained both the elite and the poor masses to the use of domestic health infrastructure (that hitherto was non-existent) and which sometimes resulted in death arising from previous health complications such as diabetes, stroke etc.

### **Lockdowns and Increase in Crime**

One of the measures put in place initially to stifle the spread of COVID 19 was the imposition of total lockdowns. In Nigeria, the Federal Government announced the first total lockdown in the month of March 2020 and it covered Lagos state, Ogun State and the Federal Capital Territory which were the epicenter of the virus. The imposition of lockdowns naturally means that people will not be able to go about their normal economic endeavors. Furthermore the Federal Government also placed a ban on domestic flights and inter-state road travels.

It must be noted that with the benefit of hindsight, the lockdowns imposed in Nigeria were largely a copy of similar approaches in other parts of the world. However, the policy did not take into cognizance the specificity of the Nigerian precarious situation. Indeed while most of the industrialized countries were able to tap into the reserves of cash and material resources to fund the lockdowns, the distribution of palliatives in Nigeria to cushion the effect of the lockdown was at best, haphazard and far between. Therefore in places where lockdowns were imposed in Nigeria, there was sharp increase in armed robbery and rape. The rest of this section shall examine the rise in rape and robberies during the lockdown.

In the case of robberies, there were reports of the terrorization of several neighbourhoods in Lagos by a notorious gang called the ‘One million boys’. Anecdotal evidence shows that majority of the members of the ‘One million boys’ are the regular social miscreants and street urchins who had hitherto derived income from touting, petty theft and political strong-harming in the Lagos underworld (Authors’ interview, 2020). Thus the imposition of lockdown led to the disappearance of their sources of income and hence the adoption of brigandage. Furthermore, the existing State security network seemed to be overstretched as it was both policing and enforcing the lockdown of a population that was prioritizing going out to earn a living over starvation which may consequent upon compliance with lockdown. Therefore many communities in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states had to implement adhoc, self-help and local vigilante systems in the form neighbourhood watch at night time to defend their communities against marauding brigands (Author’s interview, personal communications with select community Land-Lord and Tenants Association in Mushin, Iyana-Ipaja, Oworonsoki and Ibadan, between 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2020).

Another criminal activity which increased during the lockdown and which may be connected to it is rape. Indeed the months of April and May, there was increase in the reports of rape in the Nigeria. In a newspaper report, it was submitted that the Nigerian Police recorded 717 rape cases between January and May 2020 (Premium Times, 2020). At the moment, evidence linking the spike in rape cases and COVID 19 lockdown is still anecdotal. However one cannot rule out the possibility of this relationship.

Following the rape incidents, is the increasing rate of cyber-crime which has had many citizens receiving text messages and phone calls from purported “palliative givers” either from the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) or from one’s commercial bank, about being eligible to receive certain amount of money as palliative to cushion the effect of the lockdown as a result of the spread of COVID-19; and were asked to confirm their accounts for proper documentation. One of such was the case of a respondent in Port Harcourt Rivers State and according to her, “I received a call from ‘Sterling Bank’ that government wants to credit citizens’ account ₦30,000 and that I should confirm my account, the moment I did, the only ₦3,000 in my account disappeared” (Authors’ Interview, May 2020).

The NCDC and the commercial banks consistently cautioned citizens not to give in to the ploy of these cyber fraud stars, as their intent is to defraud innocent and vulnerable citizens, nothing that no such gestures are being undertaken by either the NCDC or the commercial banks. It is instructive to note that cyber-crime is aided by advancement in information and communication technology. Cyber-crime is the use of special applications in computers and other hardware devices with the aid of the internet by technically skilled persons, to commit crimes. Such crimes range from illegal download of music files to stealing millions of money from online bank accounts. These crimes are committed mostly in the banking, e-commerce, education, entertainment and security sectors of the society. Cyber-crime is a challenge to most modern societies especially as population increases and rapid urbanization takes place, unemployment rates move beyond single digits, corruption becomes embedded in the conduct of public and private transaction, quest for wealth increases and inadequacy of security infrastructure and competence to enforce cyber laws. It is no doubt that the advent of globalization and rapid advancement in information and communication technology has simplified businesses and interaction every area of human life, but societies now contend with the issues of cyber terrorism, cyber fraud, cyber stalking, wiretapping (Telephone fraud) and fake web-sites. All of these result in money loss, insecurity, low productivity, loss of reputation and vulnerability of the ICT infrastructure and networks (Makeri, 2017; Omodunbi, et.al, 2016 & NDIC, 2019). So since the lockdowns restricted citizens from carrying out their normal daily routine of livelihood, the cyber fraud stars were (are) not restricted in any form, as they switched online taken advantage of the online media platforms which did not have any restrictions, to perpetrate their heinous crimes. Again this was made possible since many businesses, meetings, government functions, educational activities and other transactions moved online fully as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Food Security and Food Supply Chain Breakdown**

Food security is one of indicators of human security in the socio-economic development of any country. Undoubtedly, the role food plays in the wellbeing of mankind cannot be downplayed; it remains a very basic necessity for human survival. According to Omonona and Agoi (2007), the worry for food security and nutritional wellbeing in any society rests on the roles played by human elements in economic development. In this sense, there is need for state managers to pursue viable policies and programmes that will ensure food security.

As observed by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations at the World Food Conference of 1974, food security means the “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in food production and prices”. Again at the World Food Summit of 1996 in Rome, a more complex definition of food security was adopted to mean that “food security at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life”. However a working definition of food security is that food security exists “when all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life”. This means that there should be sufficient food available at all times, there should be sufficient and sustained food supplies through local production at moderately steady levels, it should be accessible to those in need and ensures that there is effective and adequate storage to avoid spoilage (Akinyetun, 2018). Arising from these definitions are four components of food security – availability, access, utilization and stability. So for a nation to be deemed to have satisfactorily achieved food security, these components must be present.

According to Elegbede and Matemilola (2017) and Akinyetun (2018), the challenges to food security in Nigeria are have been identified as:

- i. Insufficient product where the arable land in Nigeria is fixed and with the increasing population of the country stretching beyond the available land for residence. This challenge is further compounded by the underdevelopment and underfunding of the agricultural sector that has remained less industrialized;
- ii. Gender inequality is a driving force of food insecurity in Nigeria. It is no doubt that the role women play in food production, processing, distribution and marketization is very profound. Yet women have less access to agricultural assets, inputs and services; relegating them to bearing and raising children and the elderly. It is suggested that reducing gender inequality and recognizing the contributions of women to agricultural development, will enhance food security, reduce hunger and poverty and ensure sustainable development;
- iii. Policy inconsistency and corruption has characterized almost every government that has ruled the Nigerian state; and because every government wants to leave a blueprint in governance, they invent new policies to drive their own agenda that sometimes are not in the interest of the state, so as a result there has been frequency in policy changes and poor performance of agencies assigned to implement food and agricultural policies, thereby leading to serious setback in food production and distribution;
- iv. Conflicts and civil unrests have contributed largely to food insecurity particularly in the northeast and northcentral, as a result of Boko Haram terrorist activities and farmer-herder conflicts. These have caused population displacement and limiting food production and also constraining market and trading activities;
- v. natural disasters and climate change constitute factors affecting food security in Nigeria. While drought and famine grossly affect food availability, excessive rain and flooding have significantly impacted on food prices.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has been a major challenge to food availability. The lockdown and curtailment of interstate travel by the Federal Government of Nigeria severely affected food security. Although the

government categorized farming and those associated with the food industry as ‘essential services’ that are exempted from the lock-down, it appears that the implementation of the Presidential directives was carried out in breach, as many farmers were not allowed to travel to distant farms or were made to pay exorbitant tolls to security agents at the various interstate borders. For instance in an interview conducted by the authors’ with farmers and transporters at Ogbomoso, there was blanket prevention of transportation of farm produce across state borders by the security agents except huge bribes were paid (Authors’ interview with Farmers and Transporters at Taki, Ogbomoso, 10th August, 2020).

In addition to the above, reduction in the number of market days in prime urban markets in Lagos, Ogun and Rivers states and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) meant that many perishable farm produce, especially groceries ended up spoilt in the farms and houses of the farmers and traders. In a telephone interview with some pepper farmers from Benue at the Regional Pepper and perishable food market at Shasha near the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, majority of the ‘tomato-jos’ and pepper growers from Benue-plateau area said that they have incurred significant debts due to the spoilage of their produce during the COVID 19 lockdown. Also, plantain sellers in the popular Ahoada market in Rivers State recounted how they incurred huge loss resulting from their bunches of plantain getting rotten because of the closure of the markets (Authors’ interview, in Ibadan and Ahoada on May & August, 2020).

The existing food supply chain in the country had been affected negatively by the COVID-19. The World Bank has advised that with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries and organizations need to exert considerable efforts to keep agricultural safety running, ensure that the markets are well supplied with affordable and nutritious foods so that citizens can have access and purchase food despite restrictions in movement and income loss. As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens, disruptions in local food supply and other stocks affecting food production and loss of income and remittances, are building strong anxieties and food security risks in many countries. Households are cutting down on their food quantity and quality consumption as a result of higher retail prices combined with reduced incomes (World Bank, 2020). The table below shows some of the lessons learned about food system policies from other crises – food price crisis (2007-08), avian flu (2008) and Ebola (2015).

**Table 2: Summary of lessons learned from investment, public policies and advisory work**

Response	Global Food Price Spike (2007/8)	Avian Flu 2008	Ebola (2015)
<b>Investments</b>	Support to agriculture input markets to ensure the next cropping season	Invest in well targeted systems for prevention and control of animal diseases	Prioritize food supply to affected regions
<b>Policies</b>	Fiscal measures and budgetary support are necessary but not sufficient to address food system disruptions	Allow for free trade to avoid knock on food price volatility effects	Keep local food markets and borders open to facilitate surveillance and information dissemination
<b>Advisory</b>	Budgetary support needs to be accompanied by policy dialogue and analytical work	Support appropriate compensation to farmers to achieve policy goals	Assess impact on affected populations to reduce recovery times

Source: <https://blogs.worldbank.org>

The lessons gleaned from the table above can be applied to the current COVID-19 pandemic. In effect, first, short-term budgetary support can cushion fiscal constrains to ensure food availability, but they are not enough to guarantee food security and food supplies for the short to medium term, hence the need to go beyond budgetary support. Second, open markets and open borders are necessary in keeping local agriculture inputs and food markets open to ensure food supply and stable prices. This will sustain health surveillance and information diffusion in areas where communication is difficult (Arias, 2020).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the forgoing, it is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic is not the first that has hit the world, but it is a new form of pandemic with very high mortality risk, affecting even the well advanced healthcare systems. Unfortunately, the healthcare system in Nigeria and most parts of Africa are not robust enough to manage the complexities of the pandemic as shown in the UNDP Data story, 2020. Based on the findings also, there has been a problem of leadership in Nigeria in separating politics from economics, considering political bankruptcy in Nigeria and direct interference of investible capital out of the society. This had played fundamental roles of restricting the possibilities of growth and development both in Nigeria and indeed Africa.

The links between poverty, economic growth, and income distribution have been pointed out as argued by the various scholars cited (Agwu & Taiwo, 2016; Agwu & Kadiri; Dauda, 2016; Yunus 2016). Poverty can be alleviated if at least two conditions are met: economic growth must occur or mean income must rise on a sustained basis; and; economic growth must be neutral with respect to income distribution or reduce income inequality. The pattern and stability of economic growth also matter. On the one hand, traditional capital-intensive, import-substituting, and urban-biased growth induced by many government policies has generally not helped alleviate poverty in many economies but has added to poverty increase. The implication of the Covid-19 pandemic effect on the Nigerian economy will therefore be felt tremendously with lockdowns which has prevented farmers to fully engage in farming activities as well as restrictions of transporters to convey agricultural products to the cities. Trans-border restrictions of goods and services also no doubt has taken its toll and will take some time before relief would be felt even when the border closures are lifted.

The Nigerian government must therefore demonstrate capacity in providing real leadership for her people. In doing so, priority attention must be paid considerably to the health, security and economic sectors of country. The health sector must be adequately equipped by way of increased budgetary provisions in order to cater for possible complex health issues; ensure equal income distribution so that the poverty level in the country will be reduced. This will involve having both short term and long term economic recovery plans that will place the country on the trajectory of stability and progress in terms of economic growth. Again there is need for the government to pay close attention to the security of its citizens by putting measures in place that will ensure that the lives and property of citizens are protected. This will involve security sector reforms that will mitigate and eliminate the security threats encountered by both the government and its citizens. Cyber security was most vulnerable during the pandemic and continues to be vulnerable because of its porosity occasioned by advancement in technology; this was because of the restriction of movement imposed by the government of Nigeria. So the Nigerian government must brace up with the demands which globalization and technology revolution has brought it. This will involve over-hauling the entire security architecture, most especially cyber security to take care of the nation's virtual territorial integrity.

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