

# COVID-19 and Job Loss: Implications for Peace and Security in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Job insecurity and abrupt massive retrenchment of employees in virtually all sectors of Nigerian economy in the wake of coronavirus pandemic has plunged the nations into a breeding ground for youths crisis and overall insecurity of lives and properties. As these threaten the peace and security of the land leading to dwindling fortune of Nigerian economy, it therefore calls for concerns among peace and conflict management experts to proffer lasting solution to these menaces. Hence, this paper is aimed at examining the effects of the novel COVID-19 pandemic on job losses as it affects the peace and security of Nigeria. Secondary method of data collection was used, in which reports, journals and internet based articles were reviewed and content analyzed. The paper reviewed both the natural origin theory and conspiracy theory of Coronavirus. Based on the literature reviewed, the paper revealed that the flare of the novel coronavirus in Nigeria has posed a serious threat to overall peace and security in the wake of lockdown and closure of businesses which by implication has forced numerous employees of about 42 per cent to lose their jobs in various sectors of Nigerian economy, and nearly 40 million Nigerians were projected to lose their jobs by the end of the year 2020-2021, arising from the fall in demand for and supply of goods and services, due to lockdowns, restriction of movement and social distancing measures among others were put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19. The paper also revealed that there was a ban on social and religious gatherings, social distancing, wearing of nose masks, lockdown and imposition of curfews, travel bans, stay at home policy among others, as measures to stop or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria. To cushion the effects of coronavirus on the economy of Nigeria, government provided both monetary and fiscal palliative measures for the most vulnerable, though the stimulus packages were commendable but ineffective for lack of appropriate parameters for its implementation. Arising from the above, it was recommended that for peace to reign, employees should avoid putting all eggs in one basket, and for unforeseen contingency such as this novel pandemic, employees should have extra source of income by going into side businesses like blogging, rentals, online advertisement, investment in stocks with high returns, writing e-books, investment in real estate, small-scale poultry or fish farming among others.

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## Introduction

In human history, the world was again thrown into a state of quagmire resulting from the strange infectious disease called, Coronavirus, which is ravaging and fast spreading through the entire nations of the world making it to be a global phenomenon but not until the recent discovered vaccine which seems to be mellowing down the upsurge of the pandemic. The novel Coronavirus forced the economic, political, religious and sociocultural activities of many nations to be under lockdown, in search of the solutions to contain the pandemic.

The implications of these lockdown include but not limited to crippling economic fortune resulting from the embargo placed on commerce and industries which led to loss of jobs, and its associated effects on peace and security in the land. Many were incapacitated and disengaged from their various places of works, and as a result went hungry coupled with the high cost of goods. The disgruntled populace resorted to protest and youth crisis which for instance culminated into #End Sars protest and other social problems threatening the peace and security of the nation.

The epic Covid started from the human fish market at Wuhan, China where bats, snakes, raccoon canines, palm civets, and different creatures are exchanged and afterward quickly diffused to around 109 nations. As indicated by Weiner (1987:31), the zoonotic cause of Severe and Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) isn't affirmed, in any case, grouping based investigation recommended bats as the key repository. Specialists state that SARS-CoV-2 started in bats. That is likewise how the Covids behind Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) really started. Nonetheless, SARS-CoV-2 took the leap toward people at one of Wuhan's outdoors "wet business sectors" where clients purchase fish, meat including live creatures that are murdered on the spot and available to be purchased.

Some wet business sectors sell wild or prohibited species like cobras, wild pigs, and raccoon canines. Swarmed conditions can let infections from various creatures to trade qualities. Now and then the infection changes to the degree that it can begin to taint and spread even among people. Researchers initially recognized a

human Covid which caused a typical cold in 1965. Soon thereafter, analysts found a gathering of comparable human and creature infections and named them after their crown-like appearance (Weiner, 1987:19).

Seven Covids can taint people. In 2002 the one that prompts SARS began in southern China and spread quickly to 28 different nations. By July 2003, in excess of 8000 individuals had been tainted and out of which 774 passed on of the infection. Albeit, a little episode of the infection just four additional occurrences were included in 2004. This Covid causes fever, migraine and respiratory issues, for example, hack and breathing challenges. The term 2019 novel Coronavirus was utilized by the World Health Organization (WHO) to allude to a Covid which on 29 December, 2019 influenced the lower respiratory parcel of patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China. The WHO reported that the 2019 novel Coronavirus is officially called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). Furthermore, the current reference name for the infection is Serious Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-Covid-2) (World Health Organization, 2020).

Coronavirus can be communicated by beads of body liquid, contact with a contaminated individual and different sizes of respiratory vaporizers which can spread at short proximity of 1, 2. SARS-CoV-2 brooding time is 3–7 days. The COVID-19 pandemic has spread quickly without hardly lifting a finger, tainting a large number of individuals and bringing the economies of the influenced countries to a nearby stop, as these nations have put severe limitations on movement to dodge the spread of the infection. As wellbeing and human cost increment, the monetary mischief is now apparent and speaks to the world's greatest financial stun in late decades (Chavis & Ganesh, 2020:91).

The development of irresistible Covid infection 2019 (COVID-19) brought about by outrageous intense respiratory Covid 2 condition (SARS-CoV-2) has represented a critical danger to Nigeria's economy, including the world over. Tested by this significant circumstances, Nigerians, through the rules set up by Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) took distinctive preventive measures to contain its transmission, for example, social distancing, isolating any speculated cases for at least 14 days, continuous hand washing, complete lockdown of the nation and wearing of nose veils among others (Ozili, 2020:22).

Other measures such as self-isolation or quarantine, ban on social gatherings and closure of markets taken to contain the spread of the disease have impacted negatively on business operations, sales and profits. Many Small and Medium Scale Enterprises have experienced demand and supply chains shocks during this pandemic. Demands for goods have reduced drastically due to lockdown and restrictions of movement. Additionally, the supply chains have been badly affected. For example, business organizations in Nigeria which import their goods from foreign countries especially China experience intense restrictions (Ozili, 2020:15). With the ban on foreign travels during this pandemic, the supply of such goods and the continuity of such businesses would be negatively affected. Needless to say, border closures have negative impacts on import and export businesses. These factors influence massive retrenchment of employees which could lead the affected employees into joining band wagons, kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution etc, throwing the nation into a mess of adverse insecurity and societal unrest.

Arising from the foregoing, can Nigeria come out remaining a peaceful and strong nation by fighting the effects of job losses and unemployment in the wake of trying to contain the spread of Covid 19 pandemic and other security challenges in Nigeria such as Boko Haram terrorism in the North-East, banditry and kidnapping in the North-West, the herder crisis in the North-Central, the violence activities of unknown gunmen in the South-East, and ritual killings in the South-West, Niger Delta crisis in the South-South and the demands of the victims of the recent #EndSars protest, and COVID-19 at the same time? These are the major peace and security questions crying for answers from conflict management scholars and practitioners amongst others. Hence, this paper is aimed at examining the implications of job losses occasioned by COVID -19 pandemic on peace and security in Nigeria.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The general aim of this paper is to examine the effects of COVID -19 on job losses and its implications on peace and security in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the paper are:

- i) To identify the measures put in place to reduce the spread of COVID -19 in Nigeria.
- ii) To examine the palliative to cushion the effects of COVID -19 in Nigeria.
- iii) To assess the effectiveness of the palliative measures on Nigerians.

### **Methodology**

Secondary source or method of data collection was utilized for this paper, in which recent journal and internet based articles on the pandemic among others were reviewed and content analysed in accordance with the aim and objectives of the paper.

### **Literature Review**

This paper is devoted to the review of relevant and related literature with theoretical orientation of findings. It

will therefore involves the analysis of reports, publications, journal articles, and internet based documented source materials among others that are relevant to the aims and objectives of this paper. Therefore, based on the objectives of this paper, the review of relevant and related literature will be analysed under the following subheadings:

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **COVID -19**

The concept of COVID -19, otherwise known as 2019 novel Coronavirus was utilized by the World Health Organization (WHO) to allude to a Covid which on 29 December, 2019 influenced the lower respiratory parcel of patients with pneumonia in Wuhan , China. The WHO reported that the 2019 novel Coronavirus is officially called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). Furthermore, the current reference name for the infection is Serious Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-Covid-2) (World Health Organization, 2020).

#### **Job Loss**

Job loss according to Gowan (2014), has to do with an adverse life event in which an employee has been involuntarily terminated from his/her job through no fault of his/her own. Job or Employment loss refers to work loss as distinct from transitory fluctuations in demand, due to fundamental systemic economic changes. These systemic shifts include technological advancement, shifts in foreign trading practices, changes in the location of operations, and changes in the structure of enterprise-based employment and organisation.

#### **Peace**

American military historians provided the most significant definition of peace. To them, peace refers to cessation of war or violence (Chambers, 2004). In other words the military fight wars to make or maintain peace; peace is not perceived in this context as a means to an end but an ultimate or ideal goal. Peace scholars, trained in multidimensional consideration of any issue, would consider this kind of definition of peace to be reductionist given the fact that peace can also be achieved by peaceful means and not through force only. On the other hand, a nation may not be witnessing war and yet it is not peaceful as the people live in fear, trauma and lack.

Galtung argues in some of his widely cited works (Galtung, 1958; 1967) that any peace achieved through the use of force as evinced in the above definition is “negative peace”. It is negative because it was forced down the throat of the people and not attained through any dialogue or peaceful process. Such a situation many not last or be sustainable as the people are simply responding to pressure on them to be peaceful. This kind of peace stands in contradistinction to what Galtung calls “positive peace”. This refers to peace attained through the removal of the causes of conflict or violence. In this case, the parties are taken away from the conflict situation because they no longer have the reasons to continue the hostility as their grievances have been addressed. For helping to deepen the understanding of the points made here, the Institute for Economics and Peace, a leading global think tank linking peace to other development.

Matrices present the following set of attitudes, institutions and structures as the pillars of positive peace:



1: Pillars of Positive Peace

Source: Institute for Economics & Peace. Positive Peace Report 2018: Analysing the factors

that sustain peace, Sydney, October 2018, <http://visionofhumanity.org/reports> .

In supportive of the concept of “positive peace” and opposed to “negative peace” Albert Einstein argues that peace “is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order – in short, of government” (Vesilind, 2005:43). This position rhymes with the pillars of positive peace provided above. It is also in tandem with the position of Martin Luther King, Jr., the famous American human rights activist, who said “True peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice” (Kin, 2008:83). Dalai Lama equally belongs to this school of thought by arguing that “Peace, in the sense of the absence of war is of little value...peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free” (Abraham, 1995:16).

From the foregoing, one could define peace as the absence of physical, psychological and structural violence with justice presence. In other words, there is peace when nobody is being subjected to physical attacks as the advocates of negative peace claim. More importantly, peace exists when the factors making for unhealthy human existence are removed and there is presence of justice.

### Security

Like “peace”, there are several definitions of the term ‘security’. The definition provided by Wolfers could be



used to illustrate the points of divergence and convergence of scholars on the matter. He defined security simply as 'the absence of threats to acquired values' (Wolfers 1952: 485). For reconciling this definition and others, all that is needed is to confront it with the following questions: absence of/from what or which threats? What, which and whose values? (see Baldwin 1997:5-26). As individual scholars attempt to answer the questions, they arrive at a myriad of context-specific definitions of security. A point of convergence in the definitions however is the belief that the state is the core provider of security. This kind of thinking started to get challenged following the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Analysts started to reason that though the state remains a central provider of security, state security is not a sufficient condition for human welfare.

If the state is safe and the human beings in it are not happy there is no security. This reasoning led to the emergence of the concept of "human security" which emphasizes that people have 'the right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair... with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.' (UNGA, 2012). The 1994 global Human Development Report (HDR) calls attention to two unique goals of human security: "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". A key aspect of the human security practice is "health security": a concept now used in several fields, including medical sciences, foreign policy and international relations, and development studies.

### **Incidence of COVID -19 Pandemic**

According to Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), on the 15th of August 2021, 541 new confirmed cases were recorded in Nigeria. Till date, 182503 cases have been confirmed, 167132 cases have been discharged and 2219 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The 541 new cases are reported from 13 states- Lagos (242), Akwa Ibom (94), Enugu (48), Oyo (48), Anambra (34), Rivers (19), Ogun (17), Ekiti (15), FCT (9), Kwara (7), Abia (5), Delta (2), and Niger (1). A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 2, continues to coordinate the national response activities.

### **Implications of Job Losses from Covid-19 on Peace and Security in Nigeria**

unemployment or job loss is an unintended traumatic life occurrence with a far-reaching effects on the entire lives of employees, ranging from physical, emotional and mental health effect including causing social problems such as increase in crime and criminal behaviours, poverty, deficient marital relationship leading to an increase in the likelihood of divorce in the country. Job loss is related to both short and long-term physical health declines, including poorer self-reported health, physical impairment, cardiovascular disease, increased number of reported medical problems, increased hospitalization, increased use of medical care, increased use of disability benefits among others (Gowan, 2014).

Losing job, especially if it is unexpected as brought by the scourge of Covid-19 pandemic can be emotionally harmful as well as detrimental to the overall peace and security of the affected individual and the nation's economy at large. You may feel a sense of disappointment, failure or hopelessness, especially if finding another job seems to be difficult. The loss of income and job security can lead to worry and anxiety and strain family relationships. An increasing rate of unemployment has adverse effects on the economy of the nation. For example, when unemployment increases, there is every likelihood that social vices among other criminal activities would also be on the rise and this portends a grave danger for the country's peace and security. Also, an upsurge in unemployment could lead to more hunger and poverty in the country.

Even before the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Nigeria on 27 February 2020, the country was facing different violent conflict situations. The deadliest of the conflicts include the Boko Haram crisis in the North East which according to the Global Conflict Tracker has led to more than 37, 500 deaths and displacement of over 2.5 million people within Nigeria and 244,000 refugees since 2009 (CFR, 2020:1). The other problems include banditry and cattle rustling in the North west, and the Niger Delta in the South South which has refused to abate despite the amnesty granted the militants in the region since 2009 (Albert 2019). All these crisis situations still take human lives and lead to human displacements, even across international borders. COVID-19 is simply a worrisome addition to all of these problems. The pandemic brought Nigeria to the stage of two kinds of unconventional warfare: the asymmetric war with Boko Haram and others and the invisible war with COVID-19. In order to defeat the two enemies, Nigeria needs to come up with its own kind of twin crises or "two-war" defense strategy.

However, some signs of what could happen later could be discerned from some unfolding scenarios. As Nigeria responds to COVID-19 in an age of Boko Haram crisis, the structural weaknesses of the country come out in different forms: people's lack of trust in their political leaders' capacity to solve problems altruistically; intrusion of unhealthy regionalism and idle religiosity in crisis management; high chances of monies meant for dealing with problems being stolen; and leaders telling so many lies that people no longer believe them.

Some Nigerians still do not believe that COVID-19 is real not necessarily because they are stubborn but do not believe in what their leaders say. Leaders that told lies in peacetime would find it difficult to be believed in war times. That is the present situation in Nigeria now. As the country contends with these deficit gaps in

governance, it faces a more daring clincher: the global crash in oil price making the country's economy needing international assistance. What kind of assistance can the country get when the so-called donor nations are equally faced by imminent global economic recession or even depression? These are the frontline peace and security issues.

### **Efforts Put in Place to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria**

Efforts at curtailling the further spread of the pandemic by different levels of Nigerian government are highlighted and briefly discussed as follows:

#### **1. Restriction of Movement**

The Federal and some State governments of Nigeria imposed restrictions of movement in the affected areas across the country to contain the widespread of the novel coronavirus. For example, in the Aviation sector, there was cancellations of flight, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) suspends all international airports to hinder the inflow of new cases of the virus into the country. In the education sector, students were asked to go and stay at home. Both Private and public schools including universities were shut down indefinitely. In the banking sector, senior staff were asked to work from home, while few branches were allowed for junior staff to attend to customers at a stipulated period of time and in line with the NCDC protocols (Taxaide Reports, 2020) According to the Taxaide Report (2020), the civil service commission suspended works for 14 days for remote quarantine of the workers while major food markets were partially put on hold, all religious and traditional activities were also banned during the upsurge of the pandemic. All sporting events were unconditionally cancelled. Whereas a 14-days nationwide stay-at-home lockdown policy was also enforced across the country starting from 30th of March, 2020 and curfews were also imposed in some States with acute and upsurge spread of the pandemic.

While critical areas exempted from the lockdown because of the essential services they render for the societal survival includes security companies, medical personnels and pharmaceutical facilities, journalists, food dealers, petroleum distribution and retail outlets, Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and telecom workers respectively.

#### **Entrenchment of Personal Hygiene and Precautions**

According to the Federal Ministry of Health and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in order to curtail the risk of diffusing the virus, the public has been advised to adhere to the following precautionary measures:

- i. Daily hand washing under running water and sanitizers, with soap.
- ii. Mouth and nose covering with goggles, and the use of toilet paper while sneezing and coughing.
- iii. And avoid physical contact with someone who has symptoms of respiratory distress such as coughing and sneezing.
- iv. Stop self-medication and report to the nearest health care facility when witnessing or learning either of the above situations.
- v. Healthcare staff were encouraged to follow traditional infection prevention and control steps regularly while visiting patients, including taking patient travel history(s).
- vi. Those who travel from abroad, especially China, who have no symptoms upon arrival, but who have a fever and cough within 14 days of arrival in Nigeria, should immediately embark on self isolation and contact NCDC on 0800-970000-10 among others (NCDC NEWS, 2020).

#### **Palliative Measures to Cushion the Effects of Coronavirus Outbreak in Nigeria**

In order to reduce the level of damages caused by the novel pandemic on the economy, Nigerian government at different levels have introduced different palliative measures and stimulus packages in the form of both fiscal and monetary palliatives to COVID-19 as reported by Taxaide Reports, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020, are broadly highlighted and explained as follows:

Establishing a 500 billion COVID-19 Investment Fund: What is the cash going to be utilized for? To improve medical services, subsidize programs by the Federal Government to help States in improving medical care facilities and support the advancement of a New Public Health Programmes (Taxaide Reports, 2020).

The Emergency Economic Stimulus Bill: On Tuesday, March 24th 2020, the House of Representatives passed the Emergency Economic Stimulus Bill, 2020, which looks to relieve the extreme monetary effect of Nigeria's worldwide pandemic. The bill is depicted as 'A Bill for an Act to accommodate Corporate Tax Relief, Suspension of Import Duty on Selected Goods and Deferral of Residential Mortgage Obligations to the Nigerian Federal Mortgage Bank for a predetermined period to secure business and soothe the monetary strain on individuals in light of the financial slump brought about by the COVID-19 malady episode.' The Bill's three (3) key needs and targets are: 1. Give representative occupation assurance, and corporate expense alleviation. 2. Give expansion to the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) of a ban of 180 days on contract installments. 3. Forgoing of import practice charges on every single restorative item.

The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP), one of the Social Investment Programs of the Federal Government comprising of TraderMoni, MarketMoni and FarmerMoni, and managed by the Bank of Industry (BOI), declared that it would disperse an aggregate of N5 billion to 500,000 little merchants across the nation (Taxaide Reports, 2020).

Nigerian President Buhari 's Approval of the Disbursement of Relief Materials To 3.6 million families: President Muhammadu Buhari reported in his location to the individuals of Nigeria on Sunday 12 April 2020 on the expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown that the current social register will be stretched out from 2.6 million families to 3.6 million family units in the following fourteen days. As reported by Taxaide Reports (2020), the Federal Government of Nigeria has offered N102.5 billion in financing to be made accessible for direct intercessions in the medical care sector.

Two-month Authorizing Expense Waiver to Broadcast Stations: The Federal Government likewise affirmed a two-month permitting charge waiver for broadcast transmission stations as a major aspect of endeavors to ameliorate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's transmission industry.

Increment in the Federal Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) Allocations and Moratorium on State Debt: Due to the noteworthy fall in worldwide oil costs President Muhammadu Buhari has consented to pull back the measure of US\$ 150 million from the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) Stabilization Fund to back FAAC payment in June 2020 (Taxaide Reports, 2020).

### **Tax Palliative Measures to COVID-19**

Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and Internal Revenue Service of Many States (SIRS) Palliative Steps to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19 on Industries and Taxpayers. The FIRS and a few SIRS have stepped in to alleviate COVID-19's effect on organizations and citizens also. A portion of the measures set up by the FIRS as noted by Taxaide Reports (2020) are as follows:

- i. Taxpayers can demand records on the web
- i. Late Returns Penalty (LRP) for citizens who pay early and record later has been suspended.
- ii. In contrast with the 21st day of the month, Value Added Tax (VAT) and Withholding Tax (WHT) were reached out to the last working day of the month.
- iii. Visits to handle reviews, audits, and observing is deferred until further notification.
- iv. Taxpayers confronting FOREX facing difficulties to counterbalance their liabilities may pay on the installment date in Naira at the common Investors and Exporters (I and E) Forex Window rate.
- v. Interest and punishments emerging from charge unfulfilled obligations coming about because of work area review, charge review and examination for the sum total of what duties have been deferred.

The Steps taken by the Internal Revenue administration of the states are as follows:

Augmentation of documenting date Annual Federal Income Tax (PIT) Filing Returns. For instance, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) stretched out the cutoff time for people to round out their yearly returns by 31 May 2020. Indeed, even the FCT-IRS has stretched out the cutoff time to June 30th 2020.

### **Palliative Steps Against COVID-19 Pandemic by the Central Bank of Nigeria ( CBN)**

The accompanying measures were set up by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to pad the unfavorable impacts of the Coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria as reported by Taxaids (2020):

Formation of a Targeted Credit Facility N50 billion (TCF): CBN dispatched the N50 billion TCF as one of the palliative strides to help families and miniature, little and medium-sized endeavors ( MSMEs) affected by the nation's novel Covid pandemic.

Moratorium Extension: The CBN gave an extra one-year ban on all vital reimbursements effective from March 1st, 2020.

Decrease in Interest fee by 44 percent: financing costs for all CBN intercession offices which produce results from March 01, 2020 have been reduced from 9 percent to 5 percent for a year.

Regulatory Forbearance: All Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) have been given leave by the Central Bank of Nigeria ( CBN) to consider impermanent and time-restricted rebuilding of tenor and credit terms for organizations and families generally influenced by the COVID-19 flare-up, particularly in the oil and gas, agribusiness and production sectors.

N100 billion Credit Support for the Healthcare Industries: The CBN has given N100 billion credit palliative to the medical care segment as a component of its means to reduce the effect of COVID-19. This is to improve the sector's ability to meet the expected rise in the need for medical care items and administrations. The program is additionally proposed to offer help to indigenous drug organizations and other worth chain in the medical care segment who intend to create or expand capacity.

CBN, Banking Committee Suspend lay-offs in Banks: In request to lessen and reduce the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and jobs, CBN instructed banks in Nigeria not to withdraw the services of any of their staff in whatever position.

Expansion of Deadlines By One Year For The Revised Minimum Capital Requirements For Microfinance Banks (MFBs): The CBN reached out by one year the deadline for meeting the least capital necessities for all MFB group.

### **Customs and Ports to COVID-19 Palliative Steps**

The Nigerian Ports Authority has requested all Terminal administrators to broaden the suspension of all pertinent consignment of terminal stockpiling expenses (demurrage) for an additional fourteen days with effect from April 13, 2020. During the period of COVID-19 lockdown, the Nigerian Shippers' Council requested delivery ventures to suspend demurrage with effect from March 30th 2020.

### **Available Funds from Foreign Organisations**

The International Monetary Fund has also approved a \$3.4 billion loan to assist Nigeria in curtailing the economic impacts of the novel pandemic.

In the bid to contain the widespread of the virus, the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) has approval from the World Bank for a Regional Disease Surveillance System ('REDISSE') in the amount of about US\$90 million.

### **How Effective are the Palliative Measures for Cushioning the Impacts of Coronavirus in Nigeria.**

As good and commendable the palliative measures and stimulus packages to the outbreak of COVID-19 by Nigerian government are, they are, however, a significant level or degree of groaning hounding the distribution pattern of the stimulus packages by the members of the public. For instance, Isaac & Ehiabhi (2020), revealed that there were wailings and bitter complains across the country especially in Lagos State where there is an escalations of the virus. Nigerians are complaining that the palliative measures proclaimed by the Federal and State governments were not fully deployed as planned and have not genuinely applied the consequences of the lockdown in some States and the Federal Capital Territories to prevent the further spread of the latest pandemic (Isaac & Ehiabhi, 2020). According to them, Nigerians are alleging that the process of deploying the stimulus packages to the masses had been politicized and its purpose jeopardized.

Though the Federal government of Nigeria had said that the stimulus packages were for the most vulnerable in the society, but unfortunately, there were no strict criteria for assessing the target beneficiaries of the most vulnerables and that makes the measures ineffective in the achievement of its aims and objectives.

### **Theories on COVID -19 (Origin and Causes of Coronavirus)**

Many theories are on the rounds trying to provide theoretical and sociological explanations on the origin of the novel coronavirus. However, the crux of the debate majorly dwell within the purview of where and how the virus actually began. Although commentaries on social media platforms and scientific paper publications have suggested that the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 emerging from a cell, originated in a virology lab in Wuhan, China. This claims however, has been accepted by almost all and sundry around the world. Very few believed that it emated from United State of America. But then, the United State of American authorities claimed and suspected that rather than a mistake or failed experiment, the pandemic was a bio weapon by the Chinese government meant to undo and undermine American position as world superior power.

Arising from the above, Chinese-US blame game on the origin of the coronavirus pandemic has fuelled many speculations and hypotheses, some of which are more plausible than others. But two hypotheses are considered as follows, on the basis of this paper:

- vi. Natural origin theory of Coronavirus
- ii. Conspiracy theory of Coronavirus (Social origin of the virus)

On these two theories scientists are divided; while some are in affirmative of its natural emergence, others are of the views that it is a weapon, or even if it is natural, the Chinese authorities have intentionally mismanaged it for some ulterior motives. The two theories are identified and briefly discussed as follows:

#### **1. Natural origin theory of Coronavirus**

According to World Health Organisation (2020), the Coronavirus is a zoonotic disease. Zoonotic disease are said to be diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans under natural conditions which have That is a major threat to human health. When the symptoms are serious, our lack of previous exposure means that humans do not have any sufficient antibodies to protect against the diseases. Latest upsurge in zoonotic diseases includes extreme acute or bird flu (2004), H1N1 or swine flu (2009), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS (2012), Ebola (2014-2015), Zika (2015-2016), and West African Nile (2019). Nearly a century of global trends suggest that outbreaks of zoonotic diseases occur more often according to the UN Environment Programme Report, (2016). The report also shows that zoonoses are real issues of global concern. The report went further to state that "On average, three new infectious diseases occur in humans per year and 75% of all emerging human infectious diseases are now zoonotic. From this scientific prediction since 2012, it is not surprising to the



scientists to have coronavirus pandemic in 2019-2020. However, what is surprising is the rate at which it spreads and kills people all over the world.

Natural origin theory of the virus is much suggested by a good number of scientists. According to these scientists, the virus naturally emerged as zoonotic disease in Wuhan in 2019. The scientists in Wuhan, a city in China, were engaged in bat coronavirus experiments involving the so-called gene splicing, and the virus then escaped and infected humans. Another version of this hypothesis is that there was a sloppy safety among laboratory personnel and a wild virus was released in procedures, likely in the collection or disposal of animals' specimens (Wuhan Municipal Health Pneumonia Commission (WMHC), 2020). Apart from the suggestion of contacts, the human might have been with wild animals with coronavirus, some have speculated on the social media outfits that human must have contracted the virus through familiar and frequent contacts or interactions with animals which is very common among the Chinese, Indians and Europeans in the recent time (WMHC, 2020). The social media space is replete with accounts of several marriage intercourse, sexual interactions and pets with or around wild lives among the Europeans and Asian people. The speculations hold also that the coronavirus is actually zoonotic as a result of these interactions. Some of the social media speculations hold that raw eating of wild animals as it is among Indian and Chinese must have been another means for contracting the virus. However, this particular theory which have scientific explanations and evidences is better believed more than the other speculations as discussed as follows.

## **2. Conspiracy Theory of Coronavirus (Social origin of the virus)**

The claims that the origin of coronavirus was artificial has been fuelled by sentiments and numerous social groups on social media outlets, blogs and even found its way on to PrimeTV in Russian State. These assertions have also been promoted by officials in government of China, the US and even around the world as a whole (Mark, 2020) in BBC News.

In Africa, particularly Nigeria, these claims have been more accepted by a good number of leaders, academics and religious frontiers especially the church leaders. The earliest body to assert the virus as artificial or man – made was the U.S government officials. They first of all saw the virus outbreak as a bio–weapon, engineered by the Chinese government against the hegemony of the U.S government. They eagerly took to this position because they have been in deadlock with the Chinese government in contention for the world power. It is also interesting to note that within the spheres of the conspiracy theory, the U.S has also been alleged to have initiated the weapon. Mr. Zhao Lijian, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, has repeatedly advocated and encouraged the notion that Covid – 19 could have originated in the United States. He maintained that the outbreak was created and released by American power through a Canadian researcher to China in order for America to accuse China for being responsible for it.

Another version in support of the conspiracy theory on the advent of the coronavirus averred that the pandemic is neither from China nor the US, but that it is orchestrated by some highly placed individuals in the developed countries, with a pre-planned idea of using the virus and its effects, and mode of vaccination perhaps, to depopulate the world, and as the solution or bid to change the world order from old to the new. This according to the theory was arranged to be actualized through the 5G network development. It is believed that the test run of the system in China seems to be malevolent to human body, leading to weak immunocompetency of the human body which is capable of making humans prone to Coronavirus infection (Wasim, et al, 2020).

Though artificial, conspiracy or social theory of coronavirus has fallen under attacks from the scientists and liberal minds because of its unscientific nature. But be that as it may, it is obvious from evidences also that there are human undertones to the advent of the pandemic, as there are claims that some State Governors announce its emergence to get palliative aids from federal government, internal/external bodies.

## **Empirical Review on the Effects of COVID-19 on Job Losses in Nigeria**

According to International Labour Organization (2020), as a result of the outbreak of the novel COVID-19 pandemic, the working-hour losses have worsened during the first half of 2020, reflecting the deteriorating situation in recent times, especially in developing countries. During the first quarter of the year, an estimated 5.4 per cent of global working hours (equivalent to 155 million full-time jobs) were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019. Working-hour losses for the second quarter of the year 2020 relative to the last quarter of the year 2019 are estimated to reach 14.0 per cent worldwide (equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs), with the largest reduction (18.3 per cent) occurring in the Americas.

A study carried out by Obiezu (2020:12), revealed that many people have been forcefully retrenched from their places of work as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, and many jobs are still in jeopardy in the nearest future. The pandemic has worsened the unemployment situation in Nigeria. For instance, the unemployment rate in Nigeria before the pandemic stood at about 22.9 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018; Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NSEG), 2019). However, resulting from the upsurge of coronavirus in the country, the rate of unemployment has been estimated to increase to about 32.8 per cent by the end of the year 2020.

Francis, et al (2020) reported that many employees in Nigeria are experiencing forceful retrenchments at their various places of works, as a result of the presumptuous challenges posed by the effects of coronavirus pandemic on both individuals and corporate entities in the economy. However, one can rightly posit that Nigeria as a nation may be experiencing the worst unemployment problem since independence, as hopeless employers cut down an unprecedented amount of their employees, resulting from the unimaginable damages caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic on their business enterprises. The period of economic lockdown increased and heighten the cost of living and expenses for employers, leading to forceful and unfortunate dwindling of their production and rate of returns. Beer parlours and refreshment centres were also shutdown, and that have rendered brewers to be nothing but redundant helpless folks at home.

A study by Ozili (2020) revealed that employers in the various sectors of the economy have withdrawn jobs offered to their employees in order to assuage the adverse effect of COVID-19 pandemic on their business enterprises. As a matter of fact, no sector of the economy was left unaffected by the novel COVID-19 pandemic, except the ones that are technologically driven and can operate on a virtual platforms.

There were reports from various angles of the nation that even majority of employees in aviation industries, hotels/guest houses, banking organizations, construction and manufacturing firms including media outlets have been massively retrenched. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), 42 per cent of employees in Nigeria may lose their jobs to the adverse effects of coronavirus, dwindling households income by 79 per cent in Nigeria. The Small and Medium Scale Enterprises' (SMEs) were not exempted from the worse hit from the effects of coronavirus pandemic as majority of shops were under lock and key while their employees automatically lost their jobs. It is then crystal clear that employers of labour have very little or no capacity to bear the damage or adverse effects caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

The income flow of majority of employers in the country had collapsed as most of them now depend on daily streams of income to keep the body and soul together, hence, they cannot afford to sustain or further engage their workforce. Worst hit of Covid 19 are business enterprises in catering services, rentals, decoration and event planning including musicals etc because social gathering were banned in the country. A lot of employees have been forced to stay at home with no pay packets pending till businesses pick up again (Francis et al, 2020).

A study carried out by Obiezu (2020:20) showed that organisations that disengaged their employees turned some of their workers to freelance staff with several others cutting down employees' pay packets or take home pays as a way of reducing cost to be free from forceful layoffs. Furthermore, in the education sector lost of jobs will only be obvious when schools are back on sessions, most especially private schools, as they were claims that some private schools stopped payments of salaries for lack of income. And so employees of private schools were not sure if they will be paid while on lockdown since they didn't go to work but some of the teachers were instructed to do lessons through video clips for the students on virtual platforms.

Although, those who work with Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) were not obviously affected by the lockdown solely because of the essential services they render for people in the country to cushion the pains and discomforts of forceful staying at home. Albeit, they still feared the post COVID-19 hullabaloo and the unpredictable looming economic recession that may erupt and which may have negative impacts on their jobs statuses.

### **Policy Implications and Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the literature reviewed in this paper, it is safe to posit that the novel COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria is undoubtedly a real challenge that has posed a serious threat to overall peace and security resulting from lockdown and closure of businesses which the adverse effects of it was massive retrenchment of employees and layoffs across the different sectors of Nigerian economy arising from the decrease in demand for goods and services, chocks in supply chain and restriction of movements among others. Generally, Covid-19 pandemic has social, religious, political and economic effects on the economy of Nigeria but the weaknesses in the response of the industrial, health, educational and political systems to the pandemic readily framed COVID-19 as a serious peace and security issue.

Though the paper revealed that the stimulus packages for the most vulnerable to cushion the effects of pandemic were commendable but ineffective for lack of appropriate parameters for its implementation. In concluding this paper, it is apt to enunciate that some difficult moments await Nigeria in the post COVID-19 years. The country needs to quickly put in place necessary policy frameworks for engaging with the situation to ensure adequate peace and security in Nigeria. This framework should draw from the following pillars of positive peace earlier discussed in this paper: (i) functional government, (ii) equitable allocation of state resources, (iii) free flow of information in a manner that could discourage fake news and hate media, (iv) the promotion of good relations between different Nigerian groups, (v) development of high level of human capital through sincere commitment to education development, (vi) guaranteeing different groups their social, economic

and political rights, (vii) rights protection, (vii) sincere and transparent anti-graft policies, and (viii) the provision of sound business environment for all and sundry.

### Recommendations

The outbreak of this pandemic has taught about the need for multiple streams of income. Many people have lost their jobs due to the novel pandemic, and some people who depend on one business as a source of livelihood are now regretting, leading to the increase in the level of frustrations among the people. And what happens under such situations is that people could fight one another along ethnic, political and religious lines as they compete for the little available social, economic, environmental and political resources in the land. There are more problems when the people unite to fight the leadership that makes life difficult for them.

Meanwhile, one of the significant lessons learnt from this pandemic is that relying on one source of income is tantamount to putting all your eggs in one basket and it could be disastrous when that source of income is lost. Having multiple streams of income is important because when one source of income is affected, there would be other source(s) to fall back on. For employees, it is advisable to build other sources of income that can be combined with their main jobs. For example, employees could go into businesses like blogging, rentals, online advertisement, investment in stocks with high returns, writing e-books, investment in real estate, website or application design, virtual assistant, small-scale poultry or fish farming among others.

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