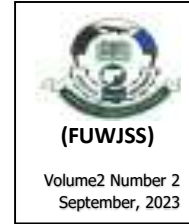


# COMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL DISTANCING AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The coronavirus popularly referred to as COVID-19 pandemic which broke out in 2019 took the world by storm and altered human social and economic life in both the advanced and developing nations. At its outbreak, people had to grapple with the reality of the social and economic changes which it ushered. In explicating these changes, this paper interrogates the implications of social distancing and COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The paper specifically examines how framings of social distancing complicated and confused government policies and social interactions at abating the spread of the disease in Nigeria. Evidence for the paper emerged through primary and secondary sources and the social distance theory forms the theoretical lens through which analyses in this paper were based. Findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the pathetic nature of the Nigerian healthcare system. Also, social distancing restriction imposed by the respective state governments and the federal government of Nigeria as a means of curbing the spread of the virus created food crisis as there was the absence of any meaningful palliative from the government. The paper concludes that the Nigerian State would still be negatively impacted in future pandemics except social structures within the Nigerian society are strengthened to withstand shocks of uncertainties and emergencies.

**Keywords:** Social structure, COVID-19; Pandemic; Distancing; Post-COVID

## Introduction

There are numerous accounts of pandemics throughout human history that have affected the world over time, including the Spanish Flu of 1918, the Russian Flu of 1889, the Fiji Measles of 1875, and the Cholera Pandemic of

1817 (Tarikh, 2022). Many people believe that pandemics are new to humanity because of the prolonged but less frequent pandemic outbreaks. There are narratives of various endemic and pandemic waves in pre-colonial Africa and Nigeria, as well as respective indigenous responses in those societies (Morgan, 1978). For instance, the infrastructure for modern treatment that developed in Nigeria under colonial authority was unable to curb the spread of pandemics like the Spanish Flu and the Bubonic Plague between 1918 and 1924 (Tnbenberger et al, 2008; Vazquez-Espinosa, 2020) . As a result of the rising casualties, many families and societies in Lagos and other regions of Nigeria, for instance, have to turn to the usage of traditional herbs to combat the problem (Tarikh, 2022). About 199,325 deaths in Nigeria were attributable to the Spanish Flu (Tarikh, 2022). Epidemics including chicken pox, smallpox, and black pox outbreak were reported in various parts of Africa throughout the colonial era. These had significant historical ramifications for both the contemporary and conventional healthcare sectors. The two major pandemics that have continued to push the healthcare system and its infrastructure on the continent to their breaking point are Ebola and COVID-19, together with their related variants (Obi-Ani et al, 2021). Additionally, the COVID-19 related restrictions have further revealed how too dependent Nigeria and other African countries are on the West for many economic requirements and healthcare facilities. While certain African nations were praised for their work in combating Ebola, in other instances, African medical advances and breakthroughs against COVID-19 have either been disregarded or come under intense international scrutiny (Ramalan, 2020). Nigerians were unable to travel overseas for medical treatment because of the restrictions occasioned by the pandemic, and collapse of the world economy. However, it should be quickly noted here that the high mortality rate experienced cut across different parts of the world irrespective of the level of advancement in medical facilities. Thus, this paper interrogates the implications of social distancing and COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

### **Social and Economic Relations during Pandemics**

Though the coronavirus is recent in its outbreak, it is not bereft of scholarly works. Respective studies in Nigeria have attempted at exploring the weakness of the government institutions in responding to the crises created by the COVID-19 pandemic (Eranga, 2020; Ezeibe et al, 2020; Obo-Ani et al, 2021; Ayogu and Egbara, 2021). These studies exposed the pathetic nature of the Nigeria healthcare system, the poor palliative measures by the government and the politics of vulnerability, and political distrust on the part of the governed and the spread of COVID-19 (Eranga, 2020). Conversely, this current study attempts to interrogate the implications of

social and physical distancing and COVID-19 on Nigerian society at large. The Latin word corona, which means "crown," is the source of the term "Corona Virus," also known as COVID-19. The virus's microscopic characteristics and outward appearance, which included a fringe of enormous, bulbous surface projections that resembled a solar corona or halo, served as the basis for this taxonomy (Almeida, 1968). Therefore, Corona Viruses are a group of RNA (ribonucleic acid) viruses that infect mammals and birds and cause sickness. They can cause respiratory tract infections in humans and birds that range in severity from moderate to severe. Some common cold instances in humans (which are also brought on by other viruses, primarily rhinoviruses) are milder than others, which can lead to SARS, MERS, and COVID-19 (Feigin and Cherry, 2017). The World Health Organization (WHO) has condensed some of the severe and mild COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.who.int/emergencies>, 2020). The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, or a rash on the skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but only have very mild symptoms.

WHO (<https://www.who.int/emergencies>, 2020) also pointed out clearly how viruses spread from one person to another. It asserted that people can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are relatively heavy, do not travel far, and quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets from a person infected with the virus. This is why it is important to stay at least 1 meter) away from others. These droplets can land on objects and surfaces around the person such as tables, doorknobs, and handrails. People can become infected-by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

Deducing from the above, Corona Virus in the context of this study is a peculiar disease that mostly affects elderly, people with health conditions and animals' respiratory systems, occasionally resulting in their deaths. The worst worldwide health crises and death toll have been brought on by it, thus been the worst enemy of humanity in the twenty-first century. It affected the global economies adversely when respective governments locked down human economic activities to minimize interaction and intermingling as preventive precaution.

The Greek words pan, which means "all," and demos, which means "the people," are the origin of the word "pandemic" (Qiu, Rutherford, Mao, &

Chu, 2017:3). Therefore, a pandemic is defined as a widespread epidemic of an infectious disease that affects the entirety of a nation or one or more continents simultaneously (Honigsbaum, 2009). The term "pandemic" is now used to refer to a variety of epidemics, including those that are "spread or occurring widely throughout a region, country, continent, or globally" and "over a very wide area and typically impacting a large proportion of the population" (Morens et al., 2009). WHO (2011a) was more forthright in arguing for this position when it noted that pandemic influenza is a situation in which a new and highly pathogenic viral subtype, one to which no one (or few) in the human population has immunological resistance and which is easily transmissible between humans, establishes a foothold in the human population, at which point it rapidly spreads worldwide.

Extrapolating from the aforementioned definition, a disease is considered to be a pandemic when the following are discernable: It affects a larger geographic area, especially the entire world; it infects a significant number of people; it is frequently brought on by a new virus or a new strain of a virus that has lain dormant for several years; the disease spreads swiftly in humans and can result in a significant number of deaths; and it frequently causes social discontent, disruption, economic loss, as a result of the need to restrict the disease's spread. These characteristics have been met by COVID-19, making it a pandemic illness. It has killed about 6,941,095 people worldwide (WHO: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, June 2023), in both developed and developing nations, endangering the peaceful coexistence of humans and impeding socio-economic progress.

The idea of development refers to a shift or improvement in the average person's level of living over time. When this shift does not adversely affect the standard of living for the next generation, it becomes sustainable (Adikpe, 2011). The Brundtland Commission introduced the phrase and came up with the definition of sustainable development that has since become the most frequently cited: development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission cited in Adikpe, 2011). Extrapolating from the aforementioned definitions, this essay views sustainable development as a resource-use strategy that attempts to satisfy human needs while protecting the environment so that these needs can be satisfied not just for the present but also for future generations (Adikpe, 2011).

### **Historical Perspective of Corona Virus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

The coronavirus (COVID 19) originated from the China's Wuhan Province and spread to practically every corner of the world with extremely serious repercussions in all walks of life. A COVID-19 case was first

certified in Nigeria at Lagos State, by the Federal Ministry of Health. The outbreak began in China in December 2019, and by February 27th, 2020, the first case was reportedly confirmed in Nigeria. An Italian national employed in Nigeria returned to Lagos, Nigeria, on February 25, 2020, after visiting Milan, Italy. He was verified by the Lagos University Teaching Hospital's Virology Laboratory, which is a component of the Nigeria Center for Disease Control's Laboratory Network. The patient was treated at the Infectious Disease Hospital in Yaba, Lagos, and was clinically stable with no significant symptoms (National Disease Control Centre, 2020).

In Oyo State of Nigeria, the pandemic began with the arrival of a 42-year-old male UK returnee who boarded the Virgin Airline through Muritala Muhammed International Airport on 12th March 2020. He was picked up by his driver and drove straight home to Bodija Ibadan. He immediately went on self-isolation but developed symptoms of fever with two temperature readings of 37.9 and 38.2 on 13th March 2020 (Ishola, Ityonzughul, and Gbamwuan, 2020). A laboratory sample of his nasopharyngeal swab was collected on 16th March 2020 and the result came back positive for COVID-19 on 21st March 2020. The Federal Ministry of Health was notified of the outbreak (Usman *et al*, 2020). Since that time many cases of pandemic were discovered deleterious effects while Lagos, Ogun and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja were the first flash points the virus was widespread (Eranga, 2020). The first COVID-19 outbreak in Africa was recorded in Egypt on 14 February, 2020 (WHO, 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Social Distance Theory, used in this study, contends that controlling the distance between and within groups is crucial to halting the COVID-19 pandemic's progress in Nigeria. The idea of social distance as a theoretical concept first appeared in George Simmel's *The Sociology of Space* (1908), in which he described the "geometry of social activity." In his opinion, social distance is a nuanced understanding of sociality as a type of "distance" that can be taken literally or metaphorically. Simmel discusses the origins of social distance theory and his vision of it in a different work titled *The Stranger*. Simmel's American pupil Robert Park and his colleague Emory Bogardus at the Chicago School of Sociology eventually modified the idea in 1933 (Ishola, Ityonzughul, and Gbamwuan, 2020). According to Bogardus, social distance is a function of the effective separation between the members of two groups. Social distance research focuses on individuals' emotional responses to other people and groups of people. Accordingly, he views social distance as fundamentally, a gauge of how much or little empathy a group's members have for another group.

Reluga (2010); Ishola, Ityonzughul, and Gbamwuan, 2020) note that social distancing practices are behavioral changes that aimed at preventing disease transmission by lowering contact rates between susceptible individuals and infected individuals who may transmit the disease. This is in recognition of how social distance can mitigate transmittable epidemics. In public sectors, civil servants (workers) of levels 1 to 10 were instructed to work from home as against the convention of coming to office within the official hours of 8 am - 4 pm Mondays to Fridays. In a similar vein, there were restriction on inter-state movements while markets days were restricted with social distancing observed when markets were opened. Despite these measures to mitigate the spread of the virus, compliance was a major challenge largely due to the quest of the urban poor and informal workers who depend on daily earnings interactions to survive (Onyishi et al, 2020). This practice can be used to curb the COVID-19 epidemic from spreading in Nigeria. The main flaw in the idea, though, is that the advantages of social distance rely on how much people utilize it. This is because people are sometimes reluctant to bear the costs associated with social isolation, which might limit its efficacy as a control strategy (Ishola, Ityonzughul, and Gbamwuan, 2020). But it is impossible to overstate the significance of social isolation brought on by mildly contagious diseases. This is a result of its tactical use in stopping the spread of epidemics until a vaccine is widely accessible. However, social distance becomes mostly irrelevant in highly contagious diseases if there is no vaccination. The applicability of this theory to the present study is due to the mechanism of transmission of COVID-19, which involves handshakes, bodily contact, coughing, etc. Social distance may be a useful preventative tool.

### **Global Social and Economic Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

All facets of human cultures around the world have been affected by the effects of the Corona virus. Firstly, the epidemic caused a global population decline. The number of deaths caused by the epidemic was astonishing. Regardless of their backgrounds, the virus afflicted a large number of people, both the wealthy and the poor. Physicians and other health professionals, who were thought to have a better understanding of the virus and preventive measures, also perished. Therefore, the death toll was not specific to any one profession or gender. The developed nations of the world with modern medical facilities, including the United States of America (USA), China, Germany, Japan, and Russia, among others, have been mostly affected as they loss inhabitants at a higher rate than less developed nations (Okonjiet al: 2021)Disappointingly and agonizingly, the affected individuals in the developing countries lacked an effective healthcare system and were unable to travel for medical treatment in the developed nations due

to the global society's stranglehold on the practice of required social distance. Patients suffered and some died in both developed and developing nations alike. The pandemic's death toll in 2020 is shown in Table 1 herein.

**Table 1: COVID-19 Statistics (as of 15th May 2020)**

Countries	Confirmed cases (Total)	Confirmed deaths (Total)	Recovery cases (Total)
Global	4,626,487	308,610	1,757,282
US	1,484,285	88,507	326,242
Spain	274,367	27,459	188,967
Russia	262,843	2,418	58,226
Egypt	11,228	592	2,799
South Africa	13,524	247	6,083
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>5450</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1,320</b>

Source: Worldometer.12. Note that there may be unconfirmed cases that were never reported to the public health authorities.

The higher rate of mortality in advanced countries, when compared to Third world countries, is shown in Table 1 above. It demonstrates that there were 4, 626, 487 confirmed instances of COVID as of May 15, 2020, of which 308, 610 patients passed away and 1, 757, 282 recovered. This shows that the number of fatalities at this point was lower than the total number of afflicted people. Additionally, it demonstrates that Nigeria had the fewest patients while Russia had the most instances. After the aforementioned time frame, the pandemic persisted in many other nations, particularly the more developed ones. Thus numerous cases of the pandemic have been found after this time, just as significant as of the time of this investigation. For instance, World Meters (2022) show 603, 127 recovered patients, 6,549, 984 deaths, and 623, 268, 472 instances of the Corona Virus. This suggests that the pandemic is still present in developed nations.

The COVID-19 problem had an extraordinary impact on education. Thus made it more difficult to achieve educational objectives and has disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable and less fortunate people (United Nations, 2020). The epidemic has caused the greatest upheaval to the educational system in human history. Nearly 1.6 billion students across 190 nations and all continents were afflicted by the pandemic (Ibid). 94 percent of students worldwide were affected by school closures and other learning spaces, with the percentage rising to 99 percent in lower-income nations. United Nations (Ibid), which elaborates on the pandemic's effects on the educational field, is more forthright when it states that:

The education disruption has had and will continue to have, substantial effects beyond education. The closure of educational institutions

hampered the provision of essential services to children to children and communities, including children's access to nutritious foods, affecting the ability of many parents to work, and increasing the risk of violence against women and girls. As fiscal pressure increases and development assistance comes in under strain, the financing of education could also face major challenges exacerbating massive pre-COVID-19 education funding gaps. For low-income countries and lower-middle-income countries, for instance, that gap has reached a staggering \$142 billion annually and it could now increase by up to one-third.

An internal document (KDU/R/15/013B/074, August 28, 2020) released by the Registrar of one of the Universities in Western Nigeria exposed the disastrous impact of the epidemic on the education sector *inter alia*:

It was initially believed that this unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic would only last for about 2-3 months, but the reality on the ground has necessitated that the economy cannot be grounded, as such, life has been returning to the New Normal. As a result of this, the University Management wishes to appeal to all members of staff to resume fully formally starting on Tuesday 01 September 2020. Please kindly note that the half salary currently being paid now will continue until full recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic, which would be when it is believed that the economic situation of the University would have improved.

This serves as an example of the struggles university staff, particularly those at private universities, contended with as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Registrar (Ibid) ends by emphatically expressing that the University management is aware of the immense suffering that everyone must be going through. Despite the pain the pandemic has inflicted, it has initiated advancements in the educational field as innovative methods including online, radio, television, and take-home packages, were developed to assist training and continuity in the sector. Solutions for distance learning have emerged. Similarly, the World Literacy Foundation argues that the Coronavirus brought electronic learning culture as well as other methods of educating students at home. For instance, some state governments in Nigeria including Kwara, Ogun, and Lagos had used local media platforms like radio shows to connect with students in outlying areas. The governments could further this initiative by giving students in underprivileged and vulnerable communities solar-powered educational gadgets, such as the tablets utilized in the Sun Books initiative, preloaded with offline academic resources. Notwithstanding, the above innovation was also encumbered with some hiccups. This particularly applies to the children and youth who lacked the resources or enabling environment to access learning. Contributing to the challenges of innovative learning, an anonymous who is also a private school owner laments that:



It is a struggle to find 1 out of 10 of my parents that have a smartphone and is online. Some that have a smartphone don't stay with their children. The children are with their grandparents. I have thought of sending the children printed worksheets but I surely cannot sustain it because of cost as parents cannot pay anything right now. They are struggling with hunger. For now, honestly, I am open to other suggestions that can help me keep them busy till after the lockdown. It seems we will be at home for a while. I sincerely hope that my school can survive this. The reading culture declined during the school lockdown. In the words of Terzungwe since March 2020 all Nigerian schools were closed down to contain the spread of the virus. Throughout this period I stop reading and I did not learn anything new. Even if school resumes and we are promoted to the higher class, I will not be academically sound; I had already missed a lot and if we are to continue the same class where we stopped before the pandemic it will be a waste of time. We have already been delayed. Staying at home was so boring since there was no way to travel because everything was locked down. (Priavte School Owner, Nigeria, 2021)

Furthermore, the closure of schools resulted in the suspension of internal and external examinations, and it attendant effect of reduction of investment in education. It also resulted in the suspension of conventional teaching and learning in schools, thereby making it challenging for many students, particularly those who lived in remote areas, to access online learning resources.

The effects of COVID-19 were also noticed in the agricultural sector. At the height of the epidemic, the efforts to stop its spread within nations and across international borders have impeded the flow of food supplies to markets and customers (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereafter refers to as OECD, 2020). Lockdowns and the limited/restricted movement of people across borders were factors in the lack of labour or workers in the agricultural sectors of various nations. One such instance is the reasonable reduction of labour available for the fruit and vegetable sector in numerous European countries as a result of the enacted travel restrictions among the European Union (EU) and the closure of the Schengen area (OECD, 2020). While highlighting the negative consequences of the lockdown (caused by the epidemic) on the agriculture, the OECD (2020) claims that lockdowns and limits on the mobility of people are also affecting the provision of key food (supply), safety, quality, and certification checks, including those that are required to facilitate trade, such as physical inspections of goods to certify compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary requirements (SPS). Moreover, additional checks may be required in response to new biosecurity arrangements for the sector, implemented in response to COVID-19. In some cases, the relaxation of standards to meet domestic food needs calls into question the objective of

such measures in terms of health and safety versus the protection of domestic industries.

The aforementioned information provides some insight into the fact that during the pandemic, food was scarce and of poor quality. The amount of food that was readily available also raised the cost or was on the rise as a result of the impact. As of April 2020, food inflation rose to 15 percent compared to 14.7 percent in December 2019 (<https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/impact-covid-19-food-security-nigeria.html>). As a means of curbing the widespread in hunger, the Federal Government of Nigeria reserved specific days and times for the opening of markets, allowing citizens to at least purchase foodstuff. Even those with money experienced hardships because their preferred food option was occasionally difficult to find.

Apart from agriculture, the pandemic equally harmed the entertainment sector, causing several concerts/shows closures. Orunoye & Ahmed (2020:36) aver that COVID-19 affects every aspect of life across the globe. These range from the postponement of many social and cultural events, and games and sporting events, to the shutting down of institutions and centres of learning and international borders. The severity of the impact of COVID-19 varies across different sectors. Following these effects, there was a lot of postponement and cancellation of events as demonstrated in the following tables.

**Table 2: List of Canceled/Postponed Live Events and Concerts in Nigeria During the Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020**

S/N	Title of the Concert or Tour	Venue and Date Canceled/Postponed
1	Asa Lucid Tour	Eko Convention Centre Lagos on 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2020. Congress Hall Transcorp Hilton Abuja, 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
2	Brymo Blasphemy Live Concert	Terra Kulture Lagos
3	Sinach Live Concert	Eko Hotel and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2020
4	Kidakudz Homecoming, Abuja	Central Park Abuja, 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
5	Blessing Tangban Live Concert	Abuja, 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2020

Source: <https://www.allevents.ng/en/blog/how-coronavirus> Accessed on 30-09-2020.

The table briefly summarizes some of the few live events postponed in Nigeria in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus. The organizers' revenue generation experienced a complete decline. Ace comedian Francis Agoda, also known as I Go, Die, was a victim of the comedy industry's decision to postpone his 25th Anniversary concert, which was scheduled for 12th April 2020. The seasoned comedian made the following announcement on all of his social media channels that this period calls for concern and sober

reflection, it's a moment of trying times. I cannot be celebrating now, as cases of coronavirus disease continue to be identified in many countries... I feel for those affected globally, for sake of my fans, brothers, sisters, and all those kept in isolation globally, because of coronavirus, I share their pain, and my partner@Primeviewlable has decided to postpone this celebration (Njoku, 2020).

To further illustrate other canceled comedies and theatre stage play, table 3 summarizes our underpinning arguments. The resultant effects are that while the performers at such events missed the fortune, the fans on the other hand were shelved getting entertained.

**Table 3: List of Canceled Comedy and Theatre Stage Play in 2020**

S/N	Title of the Event	Venue and Date Canceled/Postponed
1	I Go Dye Standing Kinging with the King	Best Western Homeville GRA, Benin, 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
2	General Speaking with Chuks D General	Congress Hall of Transcop Hilton Abuja, 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2020
3	The Alhaji Play	Terra Kulture Lagos, every Sunday in March (1 <sup>st</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , & 29 <sup>th</sup> )
4	Things Fall Apart Stage Play	Export House Maintama Abuja, 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Source: <https://www.allevants.ng/en/blog/how-coronavirus> Accessed on 30-09-2020.

The table suggests that what was occurring in the comedy and music industries was also occurring in the cinema industry. This industry produced a significant amount of jobs and tax revenue for the government. Cinemas made 3 billion naira in the first half of the year 2019, and 1.2 billion naira in July and August of the same year, according to *The News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) (Aguda, 2020). The Cinema Exhibitors Association of Nigeria (CEAN (2019) supports this position by stating that "Nigeria spent approximately 7 billion naira to attend movies in the cinema. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the significant revenue generated by the film industry alone in 2019 could not be attained in 2020". It seems the hardest affected in this sub-sector were the owners of movie theaters and pay television viewing centers. Cinemas were shut down and families were compelled by the government to stay at home due to social distance regulations. Pay-TV broadcasters were also censored to rerun shows across their channels by maintaining the social distance rules. Considering the fact that most Nigerians adore watching live football as an example of sports media, the pandemic invariably compelled the organizers to postpone their events until everything was under control. This had attendant adverse consequence on

small movie show halls or viewing centers around the nation which closed down as well.

Filmmakers, actors, and actresses voiced complaints about how their programs were impacted negatively by the government's lockdown and social distance regulation, which were imposed as a repel measure against the epidemic. One of Nigeria's film producers, OmoniOloli, expressed regret about having to halt production on his new TV show, "Last Year Single" (Augoye, 2020). While some movie makers chose to offer their films for free on websites like YouTube. For instance, KayodeKasum's 2018 film "OgaBolaji" had a free YouTube premiere (Augoye, 2020). With the availability and use of vaccines and other palliatives, there was hope for a return to normalcy. Shaheen (2021) put it succinctly that optimistically, with the vaccines being administered at a successful rate, it may not be too far off when museums, venues, and other performing centre can open. In the meantime, the entertainment industry needs to assess its path of recovery, as well as advocate for its importance both economically and culturally. Additionally, the COVID-19 under consideration resulted in the closure of places of worship all over the world. Due to the pandemic, many religious leaders and worshipers loss their lives and to lessen its effects, places of worship were shut down. Consequently, worship services were held on many social media websites around the world and on television which led to the propagation of the concept of religion on the screen. The government prohibited large-scale church worship primarily to stop the virus infection from spreading.

### **Social Distancing, Sectorial Response and Post-COVID Nigeria**

The Federal and State governments of Nigeria adopted several measures in response to COVID-19. These measures include but not limited to social and physical distancing and lockdown. The implication of these measures was that schools and other public places of physical interactions were closed down to prevent widespread outbreak of the virus (Samuel, 2020). This measure wrought in by the virus introduced novelty into our educational system after initial hiccup of total closure of both public and private schools. Social distancing brought on by the COVID has introduced e-learning and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in school and work place respectively. Many Nigerians developed a technology obsession to keep up with international norms, and both the public and business sectors scheduled meetings using tools like Zoom and Skype. Initial hiccups were experienced while carrying out these without being properly orientated. This has shown Nigeria's technological vulnerability. The way for Nigeria is to beef up its technology sector and individuals too should procure their gadgets and put them in constant use to master their operations. This would

reduce human stress in times of pandemics and even in the post-pandemic era.

Nigeria should create agricultural strategies such as offering farmers modern farming inputs and storage facilities that will allow it to feed its population during pandemics like COVID-19. The policy could increase the nation's food production and sufficiency and also prevent post-harvest losses of crops, particularly perishable ones like mango, pepper, plantain, banana, onions and other staples like garri (or cassava flour) and yam. To avoid extortion by the middlemen or foodstuff distributors, pricing of foodstuff and other consumables should be controlled and regulated. In this regard, the national government should establish a Task Force composed of representatives from civil society and, if possible, the armed forces to accomplish this regulatory mechanism.

Nigeria should lessen its reliance on imports of goods and services. Nigeria should continue to rely on domestic products and services in the post-COVID period since doing so would help to lower the high cost of imported items. The entertainment sub-sector should adopt a more digital strategy to draw and gather people without necessarily physically encountering them at the event; instead, they should be processed for online gate price payment. Less money would be lost for the entertainment event organizers or planners if this are done while those who enjoy watching various sorts of entertainment would be accommodated.

Finally, our health facilities should be upgraded to world standard that could care for all cases of ailments in post-COVID times as the pandemic obviously exposed the lamenting poor stage of facilities in our health institutions nationwide. This could save the nation humongous amount especially of foreign currency spent on medical pilgrimages overseas.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill as it halted socio-economic activities which the respective states grapple to recover from in post COVID times. Its outbreak took the world unawares while the mortality toll was fatal even more in the technological advanced nations with improved medical facilities. This probably explains the strange nature of the virus with its associated variants and symptoms that seem to resist all forms of medical expert prescriptions. In Nigeria in particular, it exposed the vulnerability of the nation's socio-economic institutions to shock caused by the COVID, as citizens were virtually neglected by the government to fend for themselves without appreciable palliatives, even in the midst of the lockdown and social distance regulations. Though the COVID's mortality rate is far lower in Nigeria compared to countries of Europe and America,

however its impact health-wise, educationally, agriculturally and socially are more severe in Nigeria than those other nations. Therefore, Nigeria should take the experiences gotten from such effects as a signpost for societal development in the post-COVID era. Otherwise if Nigeria could not strengthen her structural imbalances it may likely suffer more in the face of future pandemics or similar occurrences.

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