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## **INTERROGATING THE RIVALRY BETWEEN STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICS AMONG NATIONS**

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### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the rivalry between sovereignty and globalization in the contemporary world order. It is a comparative study, descriptive in nature and employs secondary data. The study adopts **theory of power by Hans Morgenthau** to explain how differentiated capacities define nations and why globalization seems to supplant sovereignty in response to changes brought about by technological innovations and advancements. As a result, globalization has been in constant rivalry with sovereignty and sometimes violates the rights that nations have over their internal affairs. The study recommends that both sovereignty and globalization, though important in the modern world, should have the mode of their applications and limitations clearly defined in international law and dutifully respected by nation-states.

**Key Words:** Interrogating, Rivalry, Sovereignty, Globalization, International Relations, Politics

### **1. Introduction**

The principle of sovereignty of nation-states dominated the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and part of 20<sup>th</sup> century world with preponderance of exclusivity and respect for the conduct of nations. Since its inception, it prevailed and characterized international political arena for decades before the phenomenon suddenly succumbed to the emergent forces of globalization that crumbled the wall of sovereignty and opened access to connectivity among nations, especially in promoting causes, which are of general concern to humanity and overrides national purviews.

Although globalization seems to shatters the barriers that previously secluded national boundaries from external scrutiny, the recurring debates on sovereignty guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations Organization has been a thing of great concern. The parallel objectives of each concept in international relations have become prone to comparative study, to examine how either of the concepts shape or influence nation's attitudes toward one another in international relations, including evaluation of their polarity and what the adherence to one portends for the other. Meanwhile, it has lately become a rallying ground for scholarly debates amid inherent contradictions associated with their interpretations and application based on time and space. The attempt here is to analyze the contradictions.

Remarkably, the world, until lately, operated in a state of utter obscurity without much knowledge about the activities of each national government, what they portend to the global community, the intent of their technological adventures, development strides and attitude towards human rights. The obscurity analogy hinged on the concept of sovereignty, which the United Nations Charter provided in Chapter 1, Articles 1(2) but mainly in 2(4), (UN Charter, 1945; Makinda, 1996). From the dawn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the sovereignty shield that independent nations enjoyed seemed to abate. Thereupon, the world

gravitated to a global village, where human interactions and diplomatic relations among different nations through technology, governance, corporate alliance, economic integration, institutional interdependence, commerce and culture began to blossom with diverse potentials and limited restrictions.

Although national borders, airspaces, information communication technology, including world health, peace and security, buttress and stimulate the relevance of global village phenomenon, it is evident that sometimes, the aforementioned gateways portray a serious challenge to national or international security concerns. They revolve around the inherent widening porosity of international borders and the attendant violation of exclusivity of nations and the right of their sovereignty, particularly in domestic affairs as an independent country. States oftentimes suspect the veil of globalization or global village phenomenon, the threat posed by information communication technology to national security and breach of a nation's dignity through unwarranted interference in her domestic affairs.

In 2015, during presidential election in Nigeria, the government of the U.S led by President Barack Obama and UK led by Prime Minister David William Donald Cameron were alleged to have played key roles in the failure of President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Similarly, they also influenced the victory of the All Progressive Party candidate, Muhammadu Buhari in the election and successful takeover of government (Daniel & Nwabuighogu, 2018).

In 2017, Russia was accused of interfering in the 2016 presidential election process in the U.S, and the disputation presented an increasing version of violation of a country's sovereignty, (Sonam & Natasha, 2017; Masters, 2018; CNN, 2019). In the buildup to presidential election in the U.S in November 2020, there were accusations that Russia, China and Iran were playing obtrusive meddling roles to influence the outcome of the election. It was alleged that Russia was supporting President Donald Trump while China and Iran preferred Joe Biden, the candidate of Democrats, (Breuninger, 2020; Harris, et al, 2020). It is amazing that in some instances, external media platforms other than the national election management bodies presumptively declare election results. There are issues of interferences in the internal affairs of nation states that sometimes result in inimical espionage and hacking.

Several allegations relating to spying and hacking accounts of government institutions and prominent corporations in the U.S. and other countries further highlight the risk factors inherent in a compromised sovereignty hounded by the forces of global village phenomenon. With technological innovations, the pretext for globalization for many reasons has become a gate-pass for nationals of different countries to infiltrate other host country with disguised identity label and veiled mission. The process camouflages military, technological, economic and political superiority rivalry among nations. Even at that, the cases of foreign sponsored espionage soar, and many countries have learned to intensify efforts on local surveillance.

Espionage has taken on different dimensions and the primary goal is to compromise nation's sovereignty. It is committed either by foreigners, some of whom disguise as government or humanitarian workers, investors, researchers and even students, or through some hired local citizens who usurp their nationality to traverse the system unconstrained. Examples are two Iranian citizens that court jailed 10 years in prison for spying for Israel, Germany and the UK (AFP, 2020). An Israeli citizen was indicted for spying for Iran, and two Iranian, were arrested for allegedly spying for Iran in U.S. (Alexander, 2018).The

Agence France-Presse (AFP, 2020), including many other media platforms explicate the spate of espionage across different countries for adventurous reasons and it does appear that national security assets have always been the attraction. The case of Iran where espionage targeted her missile, nuclear, nanotechnology, medical fields, and information on contracts related to the central bank, Melli Bank and the defence ministry, illustrates this point.

Fundamentally, David & Nicole (2020), Nakashima & Dawsey (2020), discussed how the United States leadership enmeshed in contradiction in an attempt to blame or exonerate either Russia or China for the vast hack of the federal government and American industry. However, experts inside and outside the government of U.S. were on consensus that the attack was a cyber-security breach on a scale Washington has never experienced. The consequent finger pointing and blame games provoked mutual distrust and growing tension among the focal nations. It also increased national security alerts, to protect critical assets that anchor state's sovereignty. Meanwhile, the U.S has often vacillated over which direction to point accusing fingers when it reasonably suspects external meddling in her internal affairs. In the 2016 presidential campaign, for example, U.S alleged that the process was hacked. Russia and China became the scapegoat that shared the blames of interfering in the election.

Glaringly, the weird surreptitious activities across national boundaries in violation of states' sovereignty appear to encapsulate the spate of espionage, and disguised war against other nations, erroneously clothed in the regalia of 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), including several other incessant interferences in domestic affairs of countries. Admittedly, the purposes might not be far from covert intentions shrouded in globalization and smouldering penchant to muzzle national economies and by extension political spaces. Obviously, these acts seem to negate the notion of sovereignty of nation-states in favour of globalization and the ugly trend has become worrisome and seriously debated.

Against this background, some countries sometimes make move to safeguard their sovereignty especially since the coming into effect of social media and even the conventional media. One example suffices in Nigeria. Sequel to the controversies trailing #EndSARS protests and shooting at the Lekki Tollgate on 20th October 2020, a correspondent for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and particularly a United States-based Cable Network News (CNN), aired investigative reports that implicated the Nigerian Army and rattled the government. Akpan, et al (2020) reported how Federal Government and other pro-government interest groups that cautioned against external interference in domestic affairs frowned at any instigation of insurrection that portends danger for Nigeria's sovereignty.

Obviously, there are constant interference in domestic affairs of states from within and outside, and promotion of nauseating rebellion against governments in foreign countries by both internal and external media and other collaborative alliances. It inspires sentiments and stakes in enacting or promulgating certain legislations to censor social media operation/application against what government alleges to be breach of sovereign ethical norms. This has happened in China, Indonesia, North Korea, Malaysia and Nigeria where the public criticized, condemned and forced a crackdown on a bill that sought to criminalize some aspects of social media activities. In all these, sovereignty does not seem to address peculiar national questions with the rising culture of impunity in national life of individual nations, nor has globalization addressed the lopsided development index among countries in the globe.

Nonetheless, globalization or global village phenomenon finds solace in rallying round nations to seek solutions to problems (natural and artificial) that afflict humanity. Examples include the outbreak of viruses or epidemics, climate change, war, terrorism and banditry, development of nuclear weapons, etc, amid embedded politics of national interests. The issues directly pop economic progression for some countries and retrogression for others. Apart from largely predicating the interventions on the prescient of global unity, the underlining intricate politics crisscrossing centre-periphery stereotype and fierce competition among the developed economies has had far-reaching implications for the sovereign rights conferred on nations. The alliances provide access for some enemy states to hide under the toga of collective responsibility to understudy the military science of another country. Maftai (2015) cites the case of fight against terrorism, to show how the collaboration among countries transcends sovereign state borders. Although cross-border military patrol during such incidences tends to exemplify the notion of interdependence among sovereign states, however, the resultant collapse of national borders weakens security structures and disguises economic cooperation and technological networking for violation of state's sovereignty. It has proven a greater risk to the sanctity of sovereignty as enshrined in the UN Charter.

The foregoing background has brought to the fore, the very essence of examining the sanctity of sovereignty in the era of globalization. The study addresses the question of whether sovereignty of nation-states still matters in the present world order and the implications of globalization in sustaining the statuesque or bracing up with the realities of the new trends marked by brazen interference in the domestic affairs of nations in response to or in defense of explicit economic, strategic and political interests. The rationale is to establish the grounds for explaining why states do what they do and how the choice of what they do conforms to international treaties and conventions. It thus creates an insight into how the misuse of globalization and usurpation of sovereignty conflagrates the cord of sovereignty itself and complicates its legacies for the emerging power blocs in the international political arena.

The issues flood contemporary discourse in the international political scene and most national governments are perturbed that they no longer have control over their domestic affairs but all seems to have transmuted to a village square orchestra, which globalization has come to represent. It tantamount to juxtaposing sovereignty with globalization in incompatible stretches and thus needed a distinction.

## **2. Methodology**

This is a comparative study. It sourced information from secondary data, collected from internet materials, publications such as books, journals, official documents and other unpublished works. The study further used content analysis, based on critical scrutiny of the information gotten from the sources aforementioned; to draw insightful findings and make valuable recommendations. It highlights the trends in the observance of state sovereignty in the contemporary international politics and the threats posed by globalization that anchors global economic interaction in the emergent borderless system. It surveyed how the operations of sovereignty and globalization engage in rivalry and thereby creating conflicting understanding of the concepts.

### **3. Conceptual Discourse**

#### **3.1. Sovereignty**

Sovereignty has ubiquitous posture with varied legal connotations, political understanding, global perceptions and national reactions based on the type of actions taken to manifest or undermine it in state's internal and external relations. No particular definition seems to be comprehensive enough to satisfy the various views about sovereignty, thus resulting in a multi-disciplinary approach that recognizes the legal, political, strategic and economic dimensions of sovereignty as often conceived by scholars, diplomatic experts in international relations and officials of national governments. Parmar (2017), Singhal, et al (2013) in separate analysis, x-ray this complex nature of sovereignty and the constraining factors that hinder its exercise in international relations and politics. In furtherance, Bartelson (2006) contends that sovereignty from the lens of international law has become a controversial phenomenon especially from the way it is domesticated and exercised in the contemporary world. It thus railroad scholars to investigate how countries use and abuse it.

The modern state and state system bore sovereignty as a logical consequence of symmetrical valuation of nation's status in authority structure. Merriam (1900), Harrison & Boyd (2018:18) traces the development of sovereignty to the Treaty of Westphalia, which formed the bases for ending both the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) and the wars of religion. Westphalia was thus viewed as being instrumental to the establishment of the key principle of modern statehood, which is predicated on sovereignty. Parmar (2017:33) cites Glanville who reiterated that it "is repeatedly told ...that sovereignty was established sometime around the 17<sup>th</sup> century (at the Peace of Westphalia...) and, since that time, states have enjoyed 'unfettered' rights to self-government, non-intervention and freedom from interference in internal affairs".

Although the emphasis and application of the concept centered on the state at inception, subsequently, the meaning of sovereignty became susceptible to academic debates. However, Bartelson (2006:463) doubts how the sovereign state would remain the main locus of political authority in the future. The simple reason is that the challenges posed by the recurring rivalry in international relations replicate also in misconceptions of the domestic and the international spheres, which imposes new forms of political life that know nothing of state's sovereignty. It waters down the indivisibility and discreteness that characterize sovereignty and exposes individual nation-states to undeserving breach of its exclusive rights.

As a result, Biersteker & Weber (1996), Bartelson (2006) reemphasized the speedy erosion of sovereign principle in the regulation of most likely incidents of nonconforming state behaviours towards each other in international relations. It underscores the reason that in this era of globalization, which promotes liberal economy, military cooperation and technological integration of global village, many nations foreclose existing barriers to their economic activities and application of technology to undermine another state's seclusion and security. It has significantly compromised sovereignty and induced doubt about its relevance.

The foregoing disjuncture contradicts the assertion by Alain, cited in Kostov a (1999:99-100) that sovereignty applies to supreme public power, which has the right and, in theory, the capacity to impose its authority in the last instance. Undoubtedly, globalization has so much impact on many legitimate power holders, who are recognized to have authority over their definite territory. It is more so in a contemporary world system where the measure

of sovereignty has condensed to military, economic, technological and diplomatic powers that each country wields to prevent any untoward behaviour from its potential rivals at the international political arena. It defines the pattern of cooperation and collaboration.

It has assumed a new measure of authority and very problematic to comprehend despite that Pusca (1999), Parmar (2017); Hauriou & Gicquel (1980) share a dissimilar opinion, which suggests that lopsided partisanship in international relations conforms to the task of limiting state sovereignty or limitation of powers, in favour of international bodies. This also negates the perception of sovereignty by Maftai (2015:54) as the state supremacy and independence of state power in expressing its authority over the areas it has jurisdiction. For this reason, Austin (2017) concludes that sovereignty means independence, i.e. noninterference by external powers in the internal affairs of another state.

Therefore, international norms hinges on the principle of the sovereign equality of independent states, which results in the natural reciprocity whereby international law correspondingly excludes interference in domestic affairs of states and thereby establish universally accepted rules that regulate the mode of engagement between and among nation-states in the international arena(Austin, 2017; Morgenthau, 1948). The essence is to ensure the “existence of legal equality of sovereignty” (Chilea, 2007; Parmar, 2017) by mitigating inordinate competitive power politics and constraining unhealthy rivalry by states from developing into politics of might is right. Equality of sovereign status as guaranteed by law will naturally promote mutual respects for the ideals of sovereign integrity of nation-states.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is evident that sovereignty of any single state is the logical consequence of the existence of several sovereign states (Austin, 2017); hence, the need to examine not only how globalization wades in to distort the coexistence; or underscore the graduation of world to a global village but also spot its inherent rivalry with sovereignty.

### **3.2.Globalization**

The word “globalization” is derived from “**global**” and synonymous with “**universal**”. Global “concerns all parts of the world”, and universal denotes “what is common to all society; worldwide”. Starting from the etymological roots of the word up to the crystallizing intellectual perceptions underpinning international relations, globalization seems to lack consensus on its approach. It is not easily understood from skewed perspective tailored to underscore economic and trade liberation to which it has often been associated with in many academic analysis. Instead, later developments that characterize the nature of politics among sovereign states justified cognizance of its whole embodiments that transcend economic considerations to include political, strategic, military, technological and socio-cultural issues (Usman, et al, 2014). It works based on the principle of interconnectivity.

From this above cluster comes the conception of globalization as not being limited to commerce and information technology, which is confined to a national territory (Yeates, 2001; in Yalcin, 2018) but as encompassing in-depth comprehension of the dynamic character of the world system and the diverse background of the players (Robertson, 1992; Cuterela, 2012). It does not have any clear border but inclusive of virtually everything (Dwyer, 2015; Albrow & King, 1990), thereby uniting the world as a compact system where barriers to intimate interface among nations and cultures seem to disappear and where people freely contributes to world development without the previously existing national inhibitions.

What it presupposes is that globalization constitutes a multiplicity of linkages and interconnections that transcend the nation states (and by implication the societies) which make up the modern world system. It further defines a process through which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can come to have a significant consequence for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe (McGrew, 1992; Kuchta & Sukpen, 2012; Usman, et al, 2014). Similarly, it is a process, which generates flows and connections, not simply across nation-states and national territorial boundaries, but between global regions, continents and civilizations. It also engenders a significant shift in the spatial reach of networks and systems of social relations to transcontinental or interregional patterns of human organization, activity and the exercise of power.

The mere fact that it goes beyond national boundaries drags the question of states' sovereignty into every discourse on globalization and the notion is not entirely new. Retrospectively, the history of globalization is remote in origin and it only changes in dimension and complexity in each era. At inception, the dimension reflects mainly the economic drivers, which attracts prime attention in scholarly works, thereby neutralizing the socio-cultural, technological and political components that affect states' sovereignty in all ramifications. Resurgence of this formerly neglected aspect in academic discourse focuses on assessing the capacity of state authority and sovereignty of states in the era of globalization. Ironically, the fears about the push by globalization to displace sovereignty explain why some scholars make bold to argue that it is the sovereignty, which is most at risk from globalization (Clark, 1999; Mir, Hassan & Qadri, 2014). There is the belief that when forces of globalization displace sovereignty, it will no longer become strategic to occupy prominent space in international relations hinging on globalization but consigned to the periphery.

The interference becomes evident with the politicization of globalization, in which case, there is now political globalization. From this perspective, Steger (2003), Mir, Hassan & Qadri (2014) systematically weaved politics and globalization in an intricate relationship, whereby political globalization was taken to mean the intensification and expansion of political interrelations across the globe. This expansion fuels struggle among nations, which tends to negate the principle of sovereignty. Essentially, similar expansionist appetite originally substantiates the rationale for the European colonization spree in Africa and significantly influences external sponsorship of many uprising campaigns against several national governments, by using and relying on internal collaborators. It also played key roles in the spate of military interventions in civil governance and politics in most developing world, (Africa being the most hit), where the quest to control the political leadership and in extension the economic resources of each country in question were the major triggers.

Another example cited by Cuterela (2012) shows that globalization, in the sense of connectivity to the global economic and cultural life, brings with it a different order than what it was before. Each phase is characterized by changes in the goals of national interest and the developed capacity to pursue it in a state of rivalry with other competitor nations. The new order shields the capitalist vulcanization of economies of Africa and other third world societies on the pretext of globalization without respect of the principle of state sovereignty.

The violation is inherent in globalization, which involves the expansion of economic activities across political boundaries of nation states (Deepali Pal). It has produced quantum evidences to show that globalization endangers the social welfare states since it compromises

states' sovereignty (Deacon, 2007; Yalcin, 2018) and utterly circumscribes its efficacy and relevance in international relations and politics. Prior to globalization, capitalism lacked widespread influence over global economy. It also lacked much political influence over the dominated states, but dwelt on persuasion, which characterized Cold War era.

By implication, state sovereignty commanded huge respects in international relations and politics among nations. More so, states freely implemented national social policies without interference in the form of external impositions. This phase abruptly ended with the rise of globalization. In other words, globalization turned this anterior equilibrium upside down (Yalcin, 2018) and demeaned sovereignty significantly.

From all indications, the contemporary global events clearly amplify globalization and further decrease states' sovereignty and exercise of state authority within national boundaries. It has become worse in developing societies where external influences distort internal economic and development policies. Example is the World Bank, IMF and many donor agencies that determine their mode of financial and or development cooperation and collaboration with many sovereign states. Apart from attaching stringent conditions to their loans, grants, and aids, they also dictate how they participate directly (through Foreign Direct Investment – FDI) in the local economy and they rarely subject themselves to state authority.

A typical example is the case of oil exploration and the environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This has not witnessed corresponding compensation from the defaulting firms and government has not shown capacity as a sovereign state to take decisive action against any of the multi-national oil firms. It lends credence to the fact that while wealth and power of the multinationals seems to have increased significantly, neither they nor national governments have so much control over macro-economic forces as they would like. Environmental and technological risks have multiplied (Cuterela, 2012).

Meanwhile, the lopsided global economic division that cut across countries has remained important factor for the rivalry between sovereignty and globalization. In addition to the fact that it subjugates most disadvantaged nations without regard for their sovereignty, it explains how globalization fertilizes the operations of multi-national corporations and international capital organizations, and thereby influences the status of state sovereign. It also midwives syndromes of national poverty, dependency and underdevelopment.

It further makes the relationship between the substructure and superstructure shield no doubt that most of the countries in the third world where globalization has become a reformed capitalist system suffer internal dislocation. Once external operations usurp the substructure of the host country to compromise its basic rules, then, the superstructure correspondingly becomes vulnerable and supplanted. The national interest that drives globalization rarely observes or respects restrictions set to protect a states' sovereignty. It negates the essence of jurisdictional boundaries in international relations and lends credence to the fact that globalization flagrantly undermines the provisions of UN Charter and other international legal instruments.

### **3.3.The Roots of Globalization**

At inception, globalization was chiefly associated with economic variables and not with the other emergent components like political, socio-cultural, military and technological factors. The phases of this association cut across the era of imperialism, when European

nations annexed the economies of the third world that were at the rudimentary stages of growth before activating and transiting to capitalism, which tactically integrated global economy into lopsided relationships, ridiculously classified as either **“center–periphery”**, **“developed–developing”** or **“rich–poor”** nations. The harsh effects on the economies of many colonized nations provided perspectives for sharing different views about capitalism and the rationale for globalization. It worsened when most of these nations gained political independence but systematically tied to economic, military and technological dependences.

However, scholars usually trace the root of globalization to two distinct sources. The sources emanate from both the developments in the economy and revolutions in technology (Glazter & Rueschemeyer, 2005; Yalcin, 2018). Thus, globalization that related to technological development shares a tacit link with market economy, while the second aspect of globalization reflects an outcome of the capitalist progress. These sources have their roots entrenched in different historical epochs in human advancement. Essentially, classification of globalization falls under the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century category and post-19<sup>th</sup> century typologies. The first category encompassed archaic, proto-globalization and modern globalization. Remarkably, the late 20<sup>th</sup> century globalization is different from 19<sup>th</sup> century globalization, which gives five stages of globalization as Archaic, Proto-Globalization, Imperial, Modern and Altermondialist. The altermondialist kind of globalization was advocated in a propositional way by people like Vandana Shiva, with reference to a rural way of life in India, the Barefoot College and others who now extend their original perspectives and action to a global level (Petz, 2013). The essence was to export capital and consolidate monopoly operations through unequalled investment and command of market forces.

This phase of globalization was pronounced during the era of imperialism, thereby making imperial globalization distinctive as revealed with the Scramble for Africa and was focused on extending the concept of the nation states as created in the Peace of Westphalia, into that of Empires. Essentially, Petz (2013) explains that though imperial globalization is similar to proto-globalization, it is distinctive in that during proto-globalization, the concern was to trade and bring contacts together, but not to transform the cultures encountered to be identical to each other. Such a change happened in a “civilizing” process where contacted countries became the same as each other.

Some examples of cultural dislocation include when USA broke from the British Empire, via English democratic principles; the contradiction about France and its francophone Colonial Empire, with overseas Departments, and the Russification in Finland at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Cuterela, 2012; Petz 2013). The *Acquis Communautaire* in the EU was a case of such Imperial Globalization, although Modern and Altermondialist Globalization that happened at the same time also masked it. However, the political, economic, socio-cultural, military and technological roots of globalization emanated from the characteristics of the stages or categories of globalization and their respective influences on nations, either differently or in groups. Among the foregoing considerations, the economic aspect, mainly, necessitated the description of globalization in a narrow economic context.

The prevalent understanding about the dynamics of economic operation and the changing tide at the global level influenced this perspective. It assumed that the seed of globalization sprang up essentially when global economic activities started losing national contour. As a result, it gave way to an emergent economic order, including a new political

orientation. In particular, Mir, Hassan & Qadri (2014), Bairoch & Kozul-Wright (1996) support the economic driver's dimension of globalization. Their emphasis is that production and financial structures of countries became interlinked by an increasing number of cross-border transactions to create an international division of labour in which national wealth creation comes, increasingly, to depend on economic agents in other countries, and the ultimate stage of economic integration where such dependence has reached its spatial limit.

In other words, globalization characterizes an increased integration of international financial market, which is, higher level of foreign investments across borders, capital flow, foreign lending and joint ventures than before (Hebron & Stack, 2013; Marinescu, 2012b). As a predominant commercial concern, economic globalization manifests through increased capital flows, transnational flow of goods and services, a march towards global market and dismantling of national borders (Mir, Hassan, & Qadri, 2014). The above distinctions from differing perceptions depict two schools of thought, which include the proponents of globalization and critics of globalization (Amartya, 1970; Stefan, 2012; Marinescu, 2012a). Proponents see economic growth, expansion and development in general, as reflex of globalization, which is desirable and necessary for the good of human society, while critics, on the other hand, see globalization as detrimental to social welfare on a global or local scale.

On the part of the critics, globalization brought about increase in the vulnerability to external fluctuations, shrinkage in the stability of domestic economies, decline in domestic policy autonomy, and restructuring of governance are all accompanied by globalization (Yalcin, 2018). It substantiates the fact that in the sphere of political globalization, "States are changing, but they are not disappearing. State sovereignty has been eroded, but it is still vigorously asserted. Governments are weaker, but they can still throw their weight around" (Rosenau, 1997; Usman, et al, 2014). On the other hand, social globalization takes three forms, which include personal contact, information flows and cultural proximity (Deutsch & Welzel, 2016; Dreher, 2006; Usman, et al, 2014). Technologies have accelerated these new dimensions by dismantling the previous barriers that hindered communication. It is from the foregoing diverse areas that globalization found its present status in international relations and encompasses all manners of human activity in every field of endeavour.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework**

Politics among nations in the international arena revolves around struggle for power and balance of power, which defines the deliberate efforts by nations to dominate and control or resist one another, either directly through conquest and colonization or indirectly through technological, trade, military and economic advancements. The theory of power in international relations encapsulates these tendencies. In generality, Morgenthau (1948) surmises the complexity in the "Politics Among Nations". It provides elaborate explanatory framework that shows how politics among nations denotes struggle for power, or quest for diplomatic, political, military, economic and technological capabilities. Accordingly, international politics denotes "the struggle for power" and "power politics" (Sempa, 2015).

Invariably, the attention to struggle for power and power politics shows how various states value to occupy strategic position in order to exercise authority with the controlling effects in international relations. It makes the pursuit of political power an end-thing and very critical when tending to consolidate military, economic, technological and diplomatic powers

in international arena. In fact, the role that power play in every aspect of human life has made the struggle for power to become not only universal (Sempa, 2015), it is also compelling, irresistible and seriously sought after. The race for acquisition of power among nation-states for protection of their sovereignty has necessitated the balance of power strategy, adopted to neutralize any established unilateral hegemony. These are the thrust of the emerging trends.

In Europe, the balance of power approach seems to provide buffer against the frequent lust for territorial annexation or colonization. Therefore, balance-of-power theory emerged to explain European dynamics, which historical experiences refresh. In a related development, Paul, et al, (2005) discussed the indirect form of power balancing through internal mobilization that China pursues. The aim is to whittle-down the overwhelming influence of U.S. in global politics but there is doubt if China can build a true anti-U.S. coalition.

The interplay of these forces conforms to the principles of political realism in international relations, which significantly capture the actual behaviours of state actors other than mere speculation on what and how they intend to behave when in confrontation with another state. Interest is core factor in international politics; hence, states spare nothing in pursuit of its national interest, even when apparently opposed to interests of another state. First, it rationalizes globalization, and second, it incubates the negation of sovereignty of states in the supremacist struggle against the well-established international laws.

International law recognizes the disparities in the embodiments of national power such as geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy, and the quality of government (Deutsch & Welzel, 2016, Marinescu, 2012b; Sempa, 2015). Ideally, these different attributes represent great resource for universal wellness because no single country has the whole gifts. Nevertheless, diplomacy anchors the politics of survival in the midst of troubles. Depending on how countries apply diplomacy in international relations, it has the potential to make or mar national interest and global peace. For that reason, the posture of diplomacy is very important in international relations and for power contestation. Apart from the fact that diplomacy strengthens dialogue, conciliation, cooperation, collaboration and peace building, it as well serves as weapons for preservation of state's sovereignty, or for domination and exploitation of the resources of weaker states.

The reason is that a nation's diplomacy, "combines those different roles into an integrated whole; it gives them direction and weight, and awakens the slumbering potentialities of each state by giving them the breadth of actual power (Sempa, 2015). Diplomacy bolsters national interests while relating with other states. The interests could be either or combinations of economic, technological, strategic, political, military, investments and trade (Stefan, 2012; Stefan, 2012). The goal of each nation is usually to dominate, exploit and expand hegemonic control in violation of states' sovereignty and right of equality with other states. Therefore, the theory of power is apposite for understanding the rivalry between sovereignty and globalization, which concerns national interests and engages state actors in the game of wits. It has remained a decisive factor in international relations and politics.

## **5. The Multiple Faces of Globalization**

Globalization is no longer limited to economic sphere but has become all-inclusive action-plan to reorganize the world order. The economic significance of globalization derives

from the influence of robust economy in boosting a states' ranking in the international competitiveness and the monopolistic power of such economy to dwarf or absorb weaker economies that lack competitiveness. Major competitors in this guise are mainly the developed economies, which the U.S. and China seem to be on the lead. Technological invention and control of its alluring market has become the real driving force. Expansion in investment in technological development beyond border lines, with pools of partnership, collaboration and cooperation across national frontiers have threatened state sovereignty more than ever before and no country is considered to be free from the consequences, as exemplified below.

Sequel to the outbreak of coronavirus and the attendant economic devastations that lowered the flag of global economic prosperity, in which China was at the center of the controversy, the practice of globalization tended to usher a new phase of reordered world economy. The unimaginable effect on the U.S. economy and other European countries, including third world countries that supply raw materials for industrial production, destabilized the interconnectivity. The sudden disruption according to Ishaan (2020) incensed "President Trump and right-wing allies in the West to lambaste China for being the unfair beneficiary of the past couple of decades of globalization". The deduction attests to the type of expansive economic programmes undertaken by China across the length and breadth of national, regional and continental levels, which in some instances violate a country's sovereignty through subtle control of their government and economy by tying them to conditional grants and partnership.

There is a different variant in the case of U.S and Russia, especially with the frequent allegations that Russia has developed penchant for hacking the American system. The theory is that the Russians were trying to figure out whether they could get into the "supply chain" of software that would give them broad access to the array of systems that make America tick (Schmitt, 2020; David & Nicole, 2020). Meanwhile, a Harvard Law School professor, who worked in the Bush administration, admits that the United States conducts its own spying missions. In other words, America has carried out supply chain attacks, including against Iran's nuclear centrifuges and its missile program. It has been running them against North Korea for years (Goldsmith, 2018). It shows that the U.S. government lacks any basis to complain about the Russia hack, much less retaliate for it with military means, since the U.S. government hacks foreign government networks on a huge scale every day (Schmitt, 2020; David & Nicole, 2020). The rampancy of espionage being committed across nations and among the competing nations in particular, suggests that espionage has become an accepted norm in international relations. The reason is that it presents itself as a universal sin.

In contradistinction, President Joe Biden sees the logic as baseless. The idea, probably might stem from the indelible experience of 9/11 incident or the understanding that global power struggle naturally detests creation of porous security architecture that compromises surveillance over eventualities and possibilities that enemies may explore. For this reason, disrupting and deterring adversaries from undertaking significant cyber-attacks in the first place (Goldsmith, 2018) becomes a proactive strategy. This is because of potential danger that espionage constitutes to America's national security, economy and sovereignty.

The expose provides new vistas in the understanding of globalization and the underlying rivalry among nation-states and thereby challenges the benefits of globalization,

which bedim sovereignty. It portrays how the principle and practice of globalization influences state action and how their defense mechanisms shield degradation of sovereignty. The rivalries among the world economic giants have certainly unmasked the twist and complicity embedded in the practice of globalization. In addition, these rivalries tend to subdue or overwhelm the role of international organizations, as important actors in international relations. Meanwhile, international organizations are governed by international law. Some of those laws include the UNO Declaration on the principles of international law concerning the friendly and cooperation relations between the States, (Session XXV, 1970); the CSCE Final Act of Helsinki, 1975; and Charter of the United Nations (Maftai, 2015).

The lacuna in the exercise of sovereignty by States within international organizations gives a new dimension in the understanding of globalization, where competition between nation-state and organizational entities (Maftai, 2015) masked with globalization, promotes arbitrary norm that stands opposed to state sovereignty. There is increasing disagreements on the misunderstanding about how globalization protects or disparages the observance and respect for sovereignty in a polarized world. It is more so with the absence of mutual respects and extensive rivalry among nations competing for relevance, and often exhibit overzealous proclivity to monopolize the global economy. They usually confront those seeking in the same sequence to emancipate their fragile economy and polity from the cage of globalization.

These rivalries take many dimensions, predicated on the nature of issues forming the cluster. There are rivalries and suspicion between the US and Iran over uranium enrichment for nuclear weapons, the US – China rivalry over power position in international arena; the UK – China rivalry over new alliances in with her former colonies; the US – Russia rivalry over power bloc politics. Others are Palestine – Israeli rivalry over State of Israel and status of Jerusalem; North Korea – South Korea/Japan rivalry over military and economic alliances with some enemy states; and Middle East – Europe/America rivalries over economic control, oil politics and charges related to terrorism. Other forms of rivalries have deepened since the tortuous Brexit campaign; including the developed and developing countries Trojan, etc.

These antagonistic clusters portend economic and political somersault and the ripple effects frequently occur in the forms of diplomatic tussle, sanctions and other trade barriers targeted at weak countries that lack the wherewithal to compete with their foes. In essence, globalization has become a ploy to run down developing economies. Their borders become wide open for external bodies, whose activities undermine any internal stimuli to develop the infrastructure that is the key to sustainable economic development and human empowerment. The scenario is worsened when import substitution is not feasible and isolation from external encroachment relatively untenable. This has been the predicaments of most developing polities and economies that Africa is a good example.

## **6. Contending Issues Underlining Sovereignty and Globalization**

There are phenomenal increases in the breach of the principle of sovereignty in international relations. Hans Morgenthau's power analysis in international relation previously focused on political power merely because it coincided with cold war era. Wide range of issues now preoccupies the world. Political, economic, technological and military powers now aggregate to pose threat to sovereignty. Global advocacy for promotion of sovereignty of states have become the major stake in states' competition to dominate one another in

economic adventurism, military and technological supremacy, territorial annexation for political domination, economic alliances and exploitation. The trend refreshes the old tradition whereby most countries across geopolitical divisions desperately search for these instruments of power as means of establishing and showcasing their strength for eventual intimidation of their rivals. In that order, threats of war and sanctions, which sometimes occasion unwarranted remote control of vulnerable nations, usually end up in demeaning what sovereignty represents.

Sempa (2015) argued that Morgenthau expanded on this geopolitical vision and traced U.S. interests in Asia to the beginning of the 20th century with the Open Door policy that sought to keep China open for the competitive exploitation of all major powers. At first, a commercial policy, the Open Door evolved into a military and political policy that sought to ensure a balance of power in Asia. It dawned upon the American statesmen that any nation, European or Asian, that would add to its power the enormous power potential of China would thereby make itself the prospective master not only of Asia but also of the world. The relocation of the production sector of America to China sowed a new seed of economic competition.

For obvious reasons, this renewed trend in economic and political tussle exemplifies the activities and dispositions of countries branded as world powers, such as U.S., Russia, UK, China, Germany, etc, including the emerging reactionary forces like North Korea, Iran, etc. Their rebellious and aggressive postures tend to compromise states' sovereignty and endanger world peace. Instructively, Sempa (2015); Rasmussen (2014) separately analyzed Russia's military aggression in Ukraine, and the consensus is that it was in blatant breach of its international commitments and it was a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Generally, the quest that manifests in territorial annexation derives from economic expansionist policy. At no time has economic motivations collapsed national boundaries than now and globalization is the driver of this emergent trend lurking the cravings for economic survival among nations of the world.

Aside domestic maladministration that questions the rationale for states' sovereignty, the borderless clause defining globalization threatens strict compliance to state authority. Multi-national corporations and other organizations that engage in international business operate under the cover of international human rights bodies and several conventions/treaties that bind their host national governments and sometimes commit interference in political administration and domestic economic policies set by their host countries. When the affected country takes adverse measure in defense of its sovereignty, it attracts repercussion in the form of external interference, which veil national interests and largely undermines the right that a state has to preside over its internal affairs independent of external dictatorial influence. The case of border breaches leveled against Mexicans by Donald Trump administration and the threat to erect a demarcating wall at the expense of Mexico is an example.

No doubt, the universality of human economic, political, socio-cultural and religious rights and the collective mandate to protect them in any nation have resulted in external intervention in domestic economy and politics of countries against the principle of states' sovereignty. Ironically, most of these interferences occur in defense of national interests, usually defined in political, strategic or economic terms. These were the cases in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Liberia, etc. Political leaderships that are not promoting

liberal economic policies that allow external meddling in their political and economic practices are usually the victims. Many times, the accusations for terrorism, development of banned nuclear armament and overbearing national interests, prompting external interference becloud sovereignty. These were evident in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Crimea, etc.

The strategic national interests of nations are sometimes coloured in these pretenses, which in few cases, featured under the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) by the United Nations Security Council and the NATO ally. This conforms to the notion that sovereignty has no formal expression from the inception to talk about the exclusivity of a state or its inherent power to act independently. According to Parmar (2017:31), “the international system was not always arranged in terms of sovereign states. The medieval world knew nothing of national sovereignty”. Such obsolete medieval mindset and scenario filters into the argument that the world ought to be a global village where no event is entirely exclusive to a sovereign state. In fact, it makes the idea of global village or globalization becomes a threat to state sovereignty and breaches the United Nations Charter.

It is more so, with the spiraling revolutions in science and technology, especially the information communication technology, which bolsters a state capacity to spy other states, communicate what is happening within their boundary and invoke the angers of global community against the state. This is possible especially when a state (the victim state) is alleged to disrespects human economic rights of all nationals guaranteed by liberal economic policies inherent in the principle of capitalism. Moreover, the tendency for external interference that erodes states’ sovereignty also relates to neglect of security of people under its jurisdiction and commission of unwarranted extra-judicial killings. Added to this is when the leadership of the state harbours or sponsors terrorism within its territory or exports terrorist groups as ploys of war against adversaries. It also includes when a state reneges on the tenets of democracy, ignores international laws, treaties and other acts capable of endangering world peace and security but much so when it affects their economic interests.

## **7. The Impact of Globalization on the Economy and Sanctity of Sovereignty States**

The impacts of globalization on national, regional and global economy are diverse in nature and magnitude. The diverse effects directly associate with economic globalization itself, which is a process of rapid increase in the liberalization of international trade, investment, finance, and technological changes among countries (Torres, 2001; Bukhari & Munir, 2016). This perspective has condensed into contrasting schools of thought under which scholars emphasize the positive and negative impacts of globalization.

For example, Rodrik (1998), James (2005), Cammett & Bhagwats (2005), Milner (2018), Manolica & Roman (2012), Srinivasan (2002) have individually done incisive critique on globalization, with recent efforts based on many changes that frequently occur to further mystify the practice of globalization amid the colourations. The studies catalogued the advantages and disadvantages of globalization, especially the consequences of globalization on the sanctity of sovereignty. Thus, the pro and anti-globalists are lurked in the debate.

In one hand, globalization increases degree of openness of domestic economies, cross-border movement of goods and services, capital and technology, information and people, with an organization of economic activities, which straddles national boundaries. The three broad dimensions are international trade, international investment and international

finance. Three changes impart dynamism in the economy. First, the export earnings through liberalization of tariff and trade tend to develop export-oriented industries. Second, the foreign capital flow, mainly via multinational corporations (MNCs) brings technology to bear and, third, there is deregulation of financial sector so that cross border mobility of resources gets momentum. (<https://www.economicdiscussion.net/globalization/globalizaion-meaning-arguments-for-and-against/14211>).

The apparent silence on the inequities in these core indicators of globalization and the consequences on the disadvantaged economies and societies usually formed the rubrics of the critics. There are issues bordering on lopsided trade balance between the developed and developing societies and the values attached to the stock traded on by the two. The disparity jeopardizes the prospects of growth in the third world. In African economy, for example, multinational corporations with external interests, dominate its operations and policy thrust. It creates wide gap in economic inequality across sectoral divisions, spreading to personal income due to decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

In consonance, Bukhari & Munir (2016) contend that understanding the nature of, and linkages between, globalization and inequality is crucial because disparities abound in access to needs such as shelter, land, food and clean water, sustainable livelihoods, technology, and information. The assertion lends credence to the fact that many sovereign states are battling to survive amid abundant mineral resources, which external interests exploit at the expense of the natives. Illustrating the enormity of the inequality, Watkins et al., (2005) emphasized that increase in globalization is associated with rising income inequality in the world, where combined incomes of 500 richest individuals in the world are greater than that of the poorest 416 million, and 2.5 billion people (are) living on less than \$2 a day. What it means is that globalization re-distributes wealth and poverty but poverty outweighs wealth in impact.

Globalization also provides room for ruthless exploitation through alliances between the local petty bourgeois and the foreign comprador bourgeois. This exploitation captures the activities of those who brandish Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), including illegal immigrants and foreign economic scavengers who hide under liberal economic policies on trade and investment to undermine regulatory procedures for investment and conduct of business in their host country. One of the many examples in Nigeria is a case where the Zamfara State Police Command arrested two Chinese Nationals for allegedly engaging in illegal mining activities in the state (HassanWuyo, 2020). It is the same with crude oil bunkering and not in conformity with the established respects accorded to states' sovereignty.

In all ramifications, recent past witnessed rapid economic globalization, characterized by the supranational spatial integration of economies and societies (Stiglitz, 2002). This integration opens avenue for exploitation amid macro-economic expansion and declining micro-economic growth. Certainly, the impact of globalization is not evenly distributed among all segments of the society, especially the effect of globalization on employment and income (Watkins et al., 2005). It compromises state security and supports the fact that terrorism, cross-border crimes, smuggling, banditry and trafficking are on the increase because global wealth are in few hands while the greater number languish in abject poverty.

## 8. Measures Against Globalization

There are emerging approaches adopted to either curtail globalization or inspire outright resistance to its operations. The imperatives of sovereignty might have influenced the growing resolve by governments to safeguard the political, economic, security and technological prowess of their countries and allies alike from external incursion in utter breach of their sovereignty. One of such steps was termed “decoupling” (Tharoor, 2015), which implies that the United States could disentangle itself from reliance on Chinese goods and supply chains by a process. On the other hand, the posture or behaviour of U.S. strategists has also made China to quickly realize the importance of strengthening her internal markets as well as weaning off its reliance on supply chains anchored elsewhere.

In 2017, China was optimistic that it was fast breaking the chain of confinement in application of its blossoming high-tech and economy to push for a prime position in sovereignty state ranking. Consequently, the President of China, Xi, found globalization as a gateway to attaining enviable aspiration of becoming industrial giant in the world. This new awakening made him to portrayed globalization not as a threat, but as an inevitability (Crabtree, 2020). For every nation operating at the global arena, the global economy is the big ocean that one cannot escape from it. China will vigorously foster an external environment of opening-up for common development. Just as Trump was turning against the idea, China would act as steward of the existing global order. It would even help to remedy many of the problems that rapid integration had caused (Crabtree, 2020).

The idea is that China’s economic future would be shaped not on a flat vision of seamless integration with the West, but on two distinct circuits: one domestic, the other globally oriented (Adam, 2020). In essence, the diversification represents a radical new understanding of globalization and of China’s place within it (Crabtree, 2020). This protective and defensive measure is more conspicuous in the U.S, with extended influence on their allies whom they woo in defense of their corporate interests against common adversaries in the political, economic, technological competition and the implied war of supremacy.

Corroborating this counter measure aimed at dwindling trade exploits, Crabtree (2020) reports that back in 2016, President Barack Obama accused ZTE, China’s second-largest telecoms supplier, of selling U.S. technologies to Iran, thereby, crippling the Chinese company in the process. Trump escalated this approach, banning U.S. businesses from trading with dozens of Chinese enterprises, from state-owned giants to niche artificial intelligence providers with links to Xinjiang and its embattled Muslim Uighur minority.

Further measures introduced by government strategically limited China’s technology access, from its 2018 Export Control Reform Act. Many Western governments also acted to stop China from buying up advanced tech companies entirely, while also limiting academic collaborations with Chinese partners. For example, Crabtree, (2020) believes that the battle over TikTok was illustrative of this restrictive measure, which evidences how rapidly the U.S. has lowered the bar on what counts as a national security threat, a category that now includes not just critical 5G telecoms architecture of the sort provided by Huawei, but also jocular teenage social media platforms.

The implication is that the U.S. is strategically building up momentum to contain China the same way it contained the Soviet Union – by committing “the overall power of the United States to the containment of China. By making it clear to China that if it tried to

conquer India, for example, the United States would do whatever was necessary to prevent that from happening, including going to war (Sempa, 2015). Part of the reasons fueling the protective or defensive mechanism is that U.S. strategists are particularly opposed to China's doctrine of "military-civil fusion", which mandates that technologies acquired by China's private sector must be shared with its armed forces. The problem is that under such scheme, almost anything can potentially be seen as a dual-use technology, from nuclear equipment and renewable energy batteries to civilian aircraft, drones and autonomous vehicles (Crabtree, 2020).

It portrays an understanding that the mode of power contestation in international relations (in economic, technological, strategic and political frontiers) has further deepened the vertical and horizontal bifurcations concept of center-center, center-periphery and periphery-periphery groupings and compromised the integrity of sovereignty reserved for independent nations for safeguarding their states' politics, economy, technology, socio-cultural and religious practices from external interference.

It is worse now that globalization has torn the shield covering countries and rendered them vulnerable to external manipulation, if not control. It explains why economic integration under the garb of globalization favours country 'A' and disfavours country 'B', based on their potential for competitiveness. However, the negative influences of integration of global economy under whatever guise manifests mostly in the area of usurping states' sovereignty to advance national interests of one country against the other. Africa is in the midst of this storm; hence, it has preponderance of its stock in raw materials and not commodity products and relies on imports with variegated prices not determined by processes dictated by market forces but by the unilateral discretion of the monopoly firms.

## **9. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The foregoing analysis shows that globalization means different thing to different people. While some choose to focus on the economic perspective, others venture into the political dimension. However, each aspect of the discourse appears all-inclusive, thus dragging economic, political, socio-cultural, and technological components along. Support or opposition to globalization is a matter of which side of the coin that is involved in the assessment. For instance, Stiglitz, (2002) posits that the anti-globalist commentators argued that globalization has adverse effects on particularly poor economies due to the increase in within or between countries income inequality and there is need for government intervention to control the adverse effect of globalization on income. On the contrary, the pro-globalist commentators also argued that increase in income inequality due to globalization is a reasonable price to pay for the benefits of world integration and generally, it leads to reduce poverty and creating employment (Stiglitz, 2002).

This study went beyond the economic analysis to examine the implications of globalization on states' sovereignty. The essence is to corroborate the arguments by Usman, et al, (2014:611) that "globalization is part and parcel of the process of expansion across continents based on migration, trade, warfare, military alliances, conquest, exploration, colonization and technological advancement. Contacts among states, societies and people from Stone Age until now have knitted the world in the shape of interdependent patterns,

which attenuated and intensified overtime”. Meanwhile, one is quick to add that globalization negates the principle of states’ sovereignty in every ramification.

The findings of the study show that the conduct of globalization violates the principle of states’ sovereignty through many means including espionage, economic sabotage, and subversion of state authority, political conspiracy and meddling roles in election to manipulate the outcome and impose a stooge in leadership. It also involves politicization of stringent unfavourable economic policies, deliberate underdevelopment of the host economy through repatriation of capital, widening of poverty gap in the local economy through racial disparity between locals and foreigners in pay package and sponsorship of assassination and subversive actions against government unyielding to exploitation. It is a worse scenario in third world countries, which Africa is at the center.

It requires that government should intensify efforts in trade regulation to prevent globalization from stampeding their local economies into coma. This regulation implies investing in import substitution locally in partnership with foreign companies, where employment opportunities and distribution of equity share is in favour of the natives. Government should also be wary of loan offers, grants and the type of Direct Foreign Investment (FDI attracted to the country. Every multi-national corporation and businesses controlled by foreigners is driven by exploitation of the host economy. Not every assistance is worth honouring, especially the gambit called technological transfer. Conditional grants and loans tie a government to the dictates of the lenders and place the country in bondage.

In the case of Africa, there is need for economic integration and alliances to create values for their raw materials. Their economy should refrain from being import based and sustainable, their borders should not be too porous, and immigration policies tightened to avoid the continent becoming all-comers-affair for foreigners that are solely interested in digging gold and not sharing in the problems of the host. In addition, capitals should be invested in core infrastructure to boost the production sector, create employment opportunity and thereby reduce poverty margin in the continent.

The prize for liberty is war; it is evident that globalization has declared war against states’ sovereignty. Only proactive actions and stringent conditions that scale down the rampaging forces embedded in rapid technological innovations, and the effects on national security can mitigate its negative consequences. State must exist before globalization thrives and it must be a sovereign state.

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## **OPPOSITION POLITICS AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Precisely, democracy is seen as a political system that is characterized by periodic and free elections in which politicians organized into political parties, engage themselves in competitive polls to form government. After most of the recent elections, new types of nondemocratic government have come to the fore, competitive authoritarian regimes, in which autocrats submit to meaningful multiparty elections but engage in serious democratic abuse. These regimes have formal democratic institutions, but their leaders circumvent and ignore them so often that they cannot be described as democratic. This study seeks to assess and evaluate the impact of electoral democracy in Nigeria, especially in terms of the performance of the Opposition in 2019 general election, and make a projection regarding a vibrant democratic space that will go beyond routine elections to speak to the issues preoccupying the Nigerian masses. The study adopted the pluralist theory for its framework of analysis and relied on documentary method of data collection. In the analysis of data, the paper relied on the use of qualitative-descriptive tool and content analysis. It was established that there is deficiencies in the intellectual and ideological capacities of political leaders that often impact on the choices made by political parties and hence on the desire to extend a stay in office, despite the efforts of the opposition. The paper recommended among others that, democratic principles should be strictly adhered to by political parties during election, and that political parties should be embedded on shifting from political predatory metaphors of grievance, greed, forgery and griotism to embrace a new political patriotic dispensation of values, views, genuineness and vision.

**Keywords: Democracy, Election, Political Party, Good Governance, Opposition.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership succession is the problem facing Nigeria since independence. The system and period of transferring power from one government to another is always faced with tension, massive rigging, ballot snatching, and purloin of outright violence, aggressiveness in recent times, especially given the number of death resulting from post-electoral conflict, with that of 2019 adjudged (Sakue-Collins, 2017, Araba & Briamah 2015), the unscrupulous involvement of the security agencies and the worst method, the vote buying, which had really marred electoral democracy in recent time. There had been serious anxiety anchored on the fact that leaders are imposed. The problem then before the inception of democracy had been attributed

to the persistent interruption by the military, since 1960. With commencement of democracy in 1999, there was optimistic anticipation about leadership progression in the country, but this was invalidated, the results of all elections conducted were seriously accompanied by these anomalies. With the commencement of democracy, there was formation of political parties. The three main political parties during the First republic (1960-66) were seriously afflicted by ethnicity and were regionally based, with Nigeria People's Congress (NPC), National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and Action Group (AG) being more accepted and obtaining their support and administration patronage to people of the North, East and West respectively. Thus, only five political parties out of fifty political associations that applied for registration were eventually registered. These parties were the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) (Simbine, 2013). Taking the argument further and offering explanation to the events that culminated in the termination of the third republic, Simbine (2013) affirmed that: During the aborted Third republic, two political parties were registered and allowed to operate namely, the National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP). Thereafter, under the Abacha transition programme, eighteen political associations applied for registration as political parties, out of which five were registered, viz: The Congress for National Consensus (CNC), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN) and the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP). The noticeable economic failure and deficiency of distinct ideology made former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Bola Ige, to illustrate the parties as "five fingers of a leprous hand" Abdulsalami's transition programme fundamentally threw up three major political parties: Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (Momoh2013).

In the march towards the Fourth republic, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) initially approved provisional registration to nine (9) political parties in 1998 (Simbine, 2013). What became the three dominant parties in 1998 viz Alliance for Democracy (AD), Peoples Democratic party (PDP) and All Peoples Party (APP) later (ANPP) had huge military presence both in their formation and membership, particularly the latter two parties. The 1999 elections ushered in the Fourth Republic. Three political parties contested the elections. These were the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The political parties that had wanted to employ the emerging democratic order were 24 (Abdu, 2002). A most important attribute of the Fourth Republic is the large number of political parties, that principally do not seek to contest elections, but which are in more ways inadequate and personality serving in roles and interests. Though the number of political parties was 30 in 2002, 33 in early 2006 and 50 in 2007, only 16 fielded candidates in the 2003 General Elections while only 26 contested the 2007 General Elections. Even the parties that contested the elections were merely “sequential machines for electoral contests” (TMG, 2003).

Consequently the major parties, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) have been overwhelmed by profound internal crises, chaos, frequent tensions and mayhem manifested in factional struggle, exclusions and counter-expulsions, multiple executives and dual offices. Thus, while about 30 political parties contested during the 2003 elections, the number grew to 63 as the 2011 elections drew near. As of April 2013, only 25 political parties are accepted by the election management (Simbine, 2013). With the registration of the new political parties; All Progressives’ Congress (APC) which is a product of a amalgamation from the three major opposition parties: Action Congress of Nigeria, All Nigerian people’s party, Congress for progressive Change and factions of two other parties) People’s Democratic Movement

(PDM), Independent Democrat (ID) the number of the political parties still stand at 25. In 2019 general election registered parties were up to 91. In 2019 election, even the most radical of the opposition failed to go beyond what Celestin Monga has termed ‘slogans in line with populist illusions’ (Ngwane, 2014). In other words, altering emancipation desires into structured ideological values seemed an assignment ahead of the authority of the opposition parties. In view of the fact that the quest for political pluralism came down to the system of multipartyism, opposition parties are anticipated to be alienated from and autonomous of the ruling party, (Olukoshi, 1998). During the 2019 election, some opposition parties in Nigeria on the other hand alleged that the actual setback brazening out political change went afar of political party, emancipation requests, in that some of the politicians shove from one party to another unsystematically, but is an inclusive sanitization of the semi-authoritarian arrangement which the party in authority had appear to personified, with the approach of none always compliance with the constitution by the president and his cabals, unfulfilled promises of suppressions of actors of insecurity and unbalanced fight of corruption among others. To them structured ideological philosophy hinged on constitutional reforms and the putting in place of energetic democratic organizations, and restructuring, which is paramount is not adopted. With no clear constitutional stipulation on the status of opposition parties in Nigeria unlike country like Mozambique and United States of America, where the Opposition is considered as a government in waiting, opposition parties in Nigeria have through different electoral progressions given themselves a political distinctiveness. It has assumed the position of a ritual where, every four years people scamper around to participate in an ‘event’ (or festival) as though they are undergoing a cleansing process that automatically secure their wellbeing for the years ahead. Democracy, political participation, and election have been the subject of thorough rational discourse in current era. There was power of institution in the unconstruction of electoral democracy, and present substitute understanding of election as a

process-in-practice as opposed to ‘processes in theory Sakue-Collins, (2017). The role of electoral institution in Nigeria has been the subject of contention over time. From the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) of 1959 to the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) of 1960; the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) of 1978 to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of 1987; and, the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) of 1995 to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of 1998 till date, and still subsisting, the tale is all the same: plausible elections with doubtful processes and results leading to contestations, accusations and counter- charges, and occasionally violent conflicts. The numerous alteration of nomenclature nevertheless does not materialize to amount to change in approach, as recent political bustles and processes has continued to astonish spectators (Aribisala, 2015, Zaggi, 2015, Sakue-Collins, 2017) the conduct of these electoral umpires had marred electoral democracy and the authentic activities of the opposition party clinch to a new political patriotic dispensation of values, views, genuineness and vision. It is against this background that this study seeks to assess and evaluate the impact of electoral democracy in Nigeria, especially in terms of the performance of the opposition in 2019 general election, and make a projection regarding a vibrant democratic space that will go beyond routine elections to speak to the issues preoccupying the Nigerian masses.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY**

To construct a clear meaning of electoral democracy, there will be need to understand the concept democracy, without its ideologies there would not be elections. Normally, it is not easy to define or demarcate the concept of democracy mainly because of the varied methods as dictated by different nations. It is seen as “manifestly vague and flexible concept with contentious meanings” (Popoola, 2007). The word “democracy” has its remote origin in the Greek word *demokratia* (*demos*-the people, plus *kratia* (from *Kartos*)-sway, authority) meaning “the rule by the people”. The impression of this conveys a form of government where the people directly take decisions by themselves without representation as in the Greek

City State or indirectly by representation as it is presently, in most states of the world today. Speiser (1958), defined it as a free society in which government is based upon the consent of an informed citizenry and is dedicated to the protection of the rights of all; even the most despised minorities. The implication of this is that a government can only be free if it takes into consideration the views of all the constituent parts of the community. Taking another view of the matter in the Indian case of Thapper (1950), it was said that it allows for freedom of speech and the press laid at the foundation of all democratic organization; this is because without free political discussion, no public education so essential for the proper functioning of the processes of popular government is possible (Nwabueze, 1982). This is however, subject to the security of the state so that some degree of control is permissible in the interest of security, so long as it is reasonably necessary for that purpose. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides the basis for the operation of democracy in Nigeria by proclaiming equality, justice, welfare of the people as the primary goal of government dignity of human persons, and equality of opportunities. It follows from the above that there are certain minimum characteristics which a democracy ought to possess. (i) Sovereignty of the people which connotes that leader must do according to the people's wish and whatever the people oppose is avoided by the ruler. (ii) Equality of all members of the community to express a view on the way the society is being governed, irrespective of his/her standing in the society. (iii) Popular consultation and majority rule, that is, there must be an understanding that when the enfranchised members of the community disagree as to what ought to be done, the last word lies in some sense with the larger number and never the smaller. That is, the majority of the electorate and not the minority should carry the day. There is also the need for provisions of basic freedom for the citizen and political competition for power to be organized through political parties. The totality of the concept envisages that the society is organized in a way that no individual or a group of individuals will lord it over the generality of the people. This appears to be the bane of democratic rule in Nigeria where today the concept of political "godfatherism" has dominated the political landscape. This development negatively contributed to the stunted growth of democracy in Nigeria and fundamentally affected its sustenance, also affecting the elections in the nation, thereby not given credence to electoral democracy. There are complexities in the society which was the result of the spread of capitalism and industrialization and which led to modification of the practice of direct democracy as it was generally conceptualized (Abdulraheem, 2006). This led to what is now known as representative democracy. This is the defining mechanism for democracy as characterized by party politics and competition by way of election. Fukuyama (1995) defined

a democratic country as one that grants “its people that right to choose their own government through periodic secret ballot and multiparty elections on the basis of universal and equal adult suffrage”. The idea of representative government as epitomized by liberal representative democracy has been criticized for discriminating against the poor and does not allow the generality of the people to have control over their representatives. This position was championed by Toffler (1989) that: “Representative government does not change the structure of power. Nowhere do the people exercise the real political control. Election merely provides the illusions of equality and exercise of power. Elections are no more than reassurance rituals. Election takes place intermittently but the exercise of influence by the elites goes on uninterruptedly. Everywhere the gap between the representatives and the represented widens” (Abdulraheem, 2006). Ake, (1993). argued that the only democracy that will appeal to the masses in the continent must be: “a social democracy which goes beyond abstract political right and takes concrete economic and social rights seriously”, a democracy of empowerment which invests heavily in the upliftment of ordinary people so that they can participate effectively in governance and be more competitive in promoting their material interests. The critics also argued that cultural differences from where the idea of participatory or representative democracy developed and what exists in developing economies and that of the less developed countries is a major factor in its implementation. It was argued that there is nothing that can be regarded as democracy in general terms but rather democracy as dictated by the history of each society (Kuna, 1996, (AbdulRaheem, 2006). This was the view of Schumpeter (1942) when he posited: “Democracy is a political method, a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decisions and hence, incapable of being an end in itself”. Adedeji (1995) also shared this view as he contended that democracy is only a means to good governance. Two views have been expressed on the duty of representatives. The former is called theory of instructed representation or telephone theory of representation while the latter is the theory of uninstructed representation (Appadorai, 1975). The theory of telephone representation has been criticized on the ground that it is not possible for the representative to state all his total views because of time constraints. Deliberation in parliament is made ineffective because the representative has arrived at his final decision before deliberation commences. The approach is immoral in the sense that as the approach demands the sacrifice of others in favour of his views, it has the tendency of affecting the quality of legislation and it also emphasizes local interest. The other approach is also too loose where the agent becomes the principal and has total and absolute discretion to even compromise the position of his constituents. A balance

between the two extremes is what representative should be and since this is just a means to an end then, the best form of leadership today is still the representative democracy, (Wahab & Muhtar, 2010). It is paramount to note that without democracy there is no need for election. In the other way round without a free and fair election there is no true democracy, which means for there to be a good opposition in politics, there should be free and fair election in a democratic process. Araba & Braimah (2015) put this into perspective as follows: An election itself is a procedure by which the electorate, or part of it, choose the people who hold public office and exercise some degree of control over the elected officials. It is the process by which the people select and control their representatives. The implication of this is that without election, there can be no representative government. A closer look at election as a major plank in democratic process reveals three broad categories of distinct but inextricably linked activities: preparing the grounds and the enabling environment for equitable participation of all, as well as establishing the grand rules of the game; organisation, mobilisation and coordination of the participants; and the adjudication, regulation, legislating, and presiding over these processes. In fact there are three set of interrelated activities making up an election in democracy. This is in accord with Akindele's (2011) assertion that elections are not simply the events that occur on Election Day; rather it is the totality of activities and events before, during, and after voting. Obiyan & Afolabi (2013), & Ugbudian (2015) corroborate this by noting that elections are series of activities leading to voting as a selection process. Thus in studying election as a system in a democratic process, one ought to examine how the opportunities provided for at each of these stages are truly competitive. However, to lump these activities together and treating them as a single colossal method or distinct occurrence can only be done at the theoretical and practical peril of the society concerned. Furthermore, while election is almost generally accepted as a legitimate process or means through which citizens of a country elect and select their representatives in government, the institutional making/workings of this means is often neglected and the fact that, this means can be usurped institutionally to render the entire process illegitimate is something that has been conspicuously absent in political analysis on democracy (Udu 2015; Zaggi 2015). One truth that is evident is that, there is rare electoral democracy in practice that can bring about an effective opposition in politics

## **OPPOSITION POLITICS**

A group of people or political party in a multiparty political system that is opposed to or criticizes continuously the government or political party in power. In politics, the opposition comprises one or more political parties or other organized groups that are opposed to the government. It is the party that goes against another party. These in most cases do not agree to what the sitting government represents. The Network of Ethiopian Scholars (NES) Scandinavian Chapter, in her June 30, 2005 release, ‘put the opposition in a democracy in perspective’ argued that in a democracy, there are many types of people who ordinarily wish to stand for election, some may even be people who do not share the same world view. And once an election is held, which is regarded as free and fair, and a set of the people succeeded in persuading the majority public who got more votes than their competitors, it is a fact that those that lost the election have to live with the victorious ones within the period of the rule, as guaranteed by the constitution, and the losers must be ready to wait till the next election. The operative and operational position, hence, is “free and fair election”. This appears to be utopian especially in the less developed economies of the world. There cannot be any perfect election anywhere in the world because it is a human endeavour. There can however, be an election that can be regarded as generally representative of the views of the majority of the electorate. Where an election is characterized by rigging, manipulation, violence, vote buying, thuggery, inadequacy or insufficiency of electoral materials, substantial non compliance with electoral rules, it may be difficult to conceptualize the position of the opposition to such regimes. Despite the above flaws the study, assume that there must be opposition parties, whether the elections were free and fair or not, in the sense that, parties that could not grab the majority vote, announced as the winner or got the ticket after election is assumed as opposition. The opposition has a lot to do for the sustainable developments of the nation, by checkmating the party in power.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The pluralist theory is more germane in the understanding of the study and considered quite appropriate in this work. The theory of pluralism espouses diversity in a society containing competing unite of power. Important theorists of pluralism include Robert, A. D. (who wrote the seminal pluralist work, *Who Governs?*), David Truman, and Seymour Martin Lipset. In

pluralism, the central government acts as a mediator rather than an all-powerful position that rules unchallenged. This fits well in the original creation of the United States, where the Founding Fathers wished to move away from the very centralized, elite government of England. Pluralism encourages competition between groups as they try to come up with the best way to deal with issues, so the society continues to move forward. Although there is value to theory, it is not an official system recognized by the United States government. Pluralism is the theory that many different groups run a country, rather than individuals. Pluralism critiques direct democracy and instead puts power in groups, such as unions, civil rights groups, lobbies and coalitions. This theory does not necessarily mean that all groups are equal or have the same amount of power. Pluralism is especially relevant for the Nigeria, which has a decentralized government with many powers given to individual states, which then give powers to local governments to further decentralize power. Within each level of government there are also different branches that control different parts of the system so that no one person or group has too much power. Separation of power and the system of checks and balances is an essential part of pluralist theory. The central question for classical pluralism is how power and influence are distributed in a political process. Groups of individuals try to maximize their interests. Lines of conflict are multiple and changing as power is a continuous bargaining process between competing groups. There may be inequalities but they tend to be disseminated and evened out by the diverse forms and distributions of resources all over a population. Any change under this view will be dawdling and incremental, as groups have diverse interests and may act as "veto groups" to destroy legislation. The existence of diverse and competing interests is the basis for a democratic equilibrium, and is vital for the obtaining of goals by individuals. A polyarchy, a circumstance of open competition for electoral support within a significant part of the adult population, ensures competition of group interests and relative equality. Pluralists stress civil rights, such

as choice of expression and organization, and an electoral system with at least two parties. Three of the major tenets of the pluralist school are (1) resources and hence potential power are widely scattered throughout society; (2) at least some resources are available to nearly everyone; and (3) at any time the amount of potential power exceeds the amount of actual power. Finally, and perhaps most important, no one party is all-powerful unless proven so through empirical observation. An individual or group that is influential in one realm may be weak in another. Pluralists believe that with few exceptions power holders usually having a relatively limited scope of influence. It follows therefore that no one group or party is sufficiently powerful to control the context of Nigeria society grappling with corruption, insecurity, ethnicity, unemployment, and other socio-political cum economic issues, which are the major obstacles towards achievement of sustainable development goals. This is so because the complexity and multiplicity of ethnic group is compounded by an equal multiplicity and complexity of religious beliefs of the peoples of Nigeria (Ogunna, 1999). Applying the theory to the study, the opposition parties should form a coalition with the party in government and strictly act as a check that will balance the governance of the ruling party with any little position they grasp in any tier of government in Nigeria. It does not necessarily mean that a party must be in power to strictly adhere to democratic principles, by so doing there will be a shift during election of the mode of individual political party present for elective position, also despite all manipulations there will be room for more coalition in government, using the good works of the opposition as a parameter by the voters. Consequently there should be a shift from political predatory metaphors of grievance, greed, forgery and griotism from both opposition parties and the party in government. Being aware of the character of Nigeria state, of the party in government monopolizing every government agencies, including the judiciary, the Peoples Democratic Party, the major opposition party in 2019 presidential election could have used the finances used in court cases, in developmental issues, focusing on poverty

alleviation, youth empowerment, and education enhancement by so doing joining in tackling the problem in the society. This measure directly or indirectly will not only show case the opposition party but will curtail corruption, and bad governance. The party in power will have no option but to gear towards ameliorating hardship knowing too well that the opposition can take upper hand to woe the citizens with their good works if care is not taken. this positive attitude of giving way to the party that the electoral commission had announce as the winning party will go a long way in allowing the party in power to use government finance judiciously. The money that the party in power uses in court may directly or indirectly come from the treasury of government, these resources can be used for development. It is highly imperative to embrace a new political patriotic dispensation of values, views, genuineness and vision from both the party in power and the opposition parties for electoral democracy to prevail in a pluralistic society like Nigeria that need the pluralist theory to succeed.

### **ELECTION AS A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS**

Democracy normally can be seen ‘as a process of ruling unquestionably, well-established in the standard with the purpose of people in any society ought to have freedom to choose their own political, economic, social, and cultural structure’ (Makinda, 1996, Mesfin, 2008). Additionally, the concept of democracy is generally used to illustrate a political system designed to enlarge the involvement of average citizens in government the authorities of which are undoubtedly defined as well as limited. On the other hand, the naissance supports of a democratic political arrangement, whether considered brittle or conventional, remain unquestionably elections, which can basically be taken as the most serious and perceptive means by which all citizens can peacefully select or get rid of their leaders, (Anglin 1998, Mesfin, 2008). Categorically, elections are the major apparatus that ‘coerce or encourage the policy-makers to pay attention to citizens’ (Powell 2000, Mesfin, 2008). Definitely, the

winning political party of the elections, or ruling party, is envisaged as holding temporarily the mandate of the whole citizenry, in as much as it continues to win elections. Correspondingly, political opposition is held to be legal, justified and essential because there will basically be no real test of the proficiency of the ruling party without such opposition in elections.

Accordingly, elections need the existence of a multiparty system so that citizens create a political pronouncement by voting for the competing candidates fielded by different political parties sharing divergent visions and presenting diverse options. There is universal conformity among political scientists that one of the indispensable components in a vigorous democracy is the existence of lasting opposition that seriously verifies the day-to-day proceedings of the ruling party (Ionescu & de Madariaga 1968, Kiisa 2005). Actually, the ruling party tries to run the government so as to safeguard their verification and increase public support, being aware that if they fail to do so they may lose office. The opposition parties point out defects in the ruling parties' public policies and make substitute proposals, hoping that the voters will entrust them with power in the next tenure. 'The opposition, then, is basically a government-in-waiting' (Kiisa, 2005).

Consequently, in any political configuration, the democratic litmus test will be, by default, the peaceful swop of governmental authority by the opposition winning elections and constituting a government, and the ruling party quietly accepting the results and not responding with hostility, terrorization, forgery and unconstitutional, unlawful, partial court judgments. This has happened in 2015 general election where the ruling party acknowledged its defeat. Mainwaring (2001) noted, 'opportunities for new parties were constrained, not lawfully, but relatively as a product of the low turnover.' In 2019 general election many parties emerged and registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC),

These parties include: Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party ANRP, Accord A, Action Alliance AA, Action Democratic Party ADP, Action Peoples Party APP, Advanced Allied Party AAP, Advanced Congress Of Democrats ACD, Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party ANDP, African Action Congress AAC, African Democratic Congress ADC, African Peoples Alliance APA, All Blending Party ABP, All Grand Alliance Party AGAP, All Grassroots Alliance AGA, All Progressives Congress APC, All Progressives Grand Alliance APGA, Alliance for a United Nigeria AUN, Alliance For Democracy AD, Alliance for New Nigeria , Alliance National Party ANP, Alliance of Social Democrats ASD, Allied Congress Party of Nigeria ACPN, Allied Peoples Movement APM, Alternative Party of Nigeria APN, Better Nigeria Progressive Party BNPP, Change Advocacy Party CAP, Change Nigeria Party CNP, Coalition for Change C4C, Congress of Patriots COP, Democratic Peoples Congress DPC, Democratic Peoples Party DPP, Freedom and Justice Party FJP, Fresh Democratic Party FRESH, Grassroots Development Party of Nigeria GDPN, Green Party of Nigeria GPN, Hope Democratic Party HDP, Independent Democrats ID, Justice Must Prevail Party JMPP, Kowa Party KP, Labour Party LP, Legacy Party of Nigeria LPN, Liberation Movement LM, Mass Action Joint Alliance MAJA, Masses Movement of Nigeria MMN, Mega Party of Nigeria MPN, Modern Democratic Party MDP, Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy MRDD, National Action Council NAC, National Conscience Party NCP, National Democratic Liberty Party NDLP, National Interest Party NIP, National Rescue Movement NRM, National Unity Party NUP, New Generation Party of Nigeria NGP, New Nigeria Peoples Party NNPP, New Progressive Movement NPM, Nigeria Community Movement Party NCMP, Nigeria Democratic Congress Party NDCP, Nigeria Elements Progressive Party NEPP, Nigeria for Democracy NFD, Nigeria Peoples Congress NPC, People For Democratic Change PDC, Peoples Coalition Party PCP, Peoples Democratic Movement PDM, Peoples Democratic Party PDP, Peoples Party of Nigeria PPN, Peoples

Progressive Party PPP, Peoples Redemption Party PRP, People's Trust PT, Progressive Peoples Alliance PPA, Providence People's Congress PPC, Re-build Nigeria Party RBNP, Reform and Advancement Party RAP, Restoration Party of Nigeria RP, Save Nigeria Congress S.N.C, Social Democratic Party SDP, Socialist Party of Nigeria SPN, Sustainable National Party SNP, United Democratic Party UDP, United Patriots UP, United Peoples Congress U.P.C, United Progressive Party UPP, Unity Party of Nigeria UPN, We The People Nigeria WTPN, Yes Electorates Solidarity YES, Young Democratic Party YDP, Young Progressive Party YPP, Youth Party YP, Zenith Labour Party ZLP. These parties were restricted not forcefully rather by low supports of Nigeria core politicians or elites who could have made a great impart to the general citizens and finance these new opposition parties to greater height. Another structure of check may be power-sharing (Budge & Keman 1990). Power-sharing harmony is typically fashioned when the ruling party's assurance and authority are severely weakened even though it remains strong enough to implement control over the most significant institutions. These was seen in the 2019 general election where, All Progressives Congress (APC), produced the president but could not secure all the seats in the upper and lower chambers of the national assembly, the senate is made of both the ruling and the opposition parties, also in the South East where APC is not vibrant, the major opposition party the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP), clings almost all the governorship seat with another opposition party. This was due to the weakness of APC in the geopolitical zone and power was shared, there by the opposition party who was before the last dispensation the ruling party for sixteen years is struggling to be in power. The establishment of a power-sharing agreement has the benefit of bestowing numerous sort of authority to the leading party devoid of dishonouring the opposition. This could ease the ruling party's nervousness of losing all as well as dreading of impending retaliations, though, at the same time, it might lighten the opposition's concern that the ruling party might have somehow rigged the

elections as it is applicable in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria, PDP the core opposition party appealed in court querying the victory of the presidential candidate of the ruling party APC in the election. The critical aspect of it was that it proves to be more authentic and may additionally demoralize the already insecure faith of Nigerians in democracy. That also happened in Kenya after the 2007 elections, but only after the unanticipated post-elections confusion which killed 1 000 of its citizens, drove 300 000 from their homes and constituted a considerable setback for its image as Africa's show case of democracy and stability, (Afrobarometer 2006, Chege, Mukele & Kabebere 2007, Mesfin, 2008). Election happen to be a suitable way of choosing and changing political leaders because it is commonly understood to provide identical chance to citizens to vote and be voted for, in spite of constitutional constraints (Udu , 2015). Political leaders are to be elected by the people, via a structure presumably offering both the electorates as well as contestants unobstructed right to vote also to be voted respectively, and doing so within the framework of a level playing ground for all. Consequently guarantying level handedness of the different activities alongside with procedures is the burden of the democratic process, and the degree to which, individually and collectively, they are adjudged as balanced is the extent to which the legitimate reassign of political power is said to be democratic (Akindele 2011; Obiyan & Afolabi 2013). The impact of this development as an essential component of liberal democratic institution, which is unconstrained involvement, in any form, of all qualified adult members is the perfect nature of democratic arrangement. In addition, this method imbues the coordination of the authority to bestow and reassign legality from the people (the governed) to their elected government (the governors) (Osumah & Aghemelo 2010). The point is that to occasion difficulty of any sort to mass involvement or to a fragment of it thereof, is to place the practice against itself and this, in itself, is an atrocity to democracy or representative government. Araba & Braimah (2015) set this into viewpoint as follows: An election itself is

a formula by which the electorate, or part of it, select the people who hold public office and apply some measure of power over the elected officials. It is the method by which the people select and have power over their representatives. Connotatively without election, there can be no representative government. To bend this practice invariably means the government springing from it is automatically illegal to the point that it does not receive its endorsement from the approval of the people. Put another way, a process that destabilizes the right of a people to choose/select their representatives invariably dispute their authority to apply control over those representatives, since they have miniature or no say on who emerge or how they win. Equally, voted representatives conduct themselves with miniature or no sense of accountability to the people once they are convinced their endorsement is not from the people, but moderately attained from a tilted process. Connotatively every step in the process of electing representatives matters in a democratic society. Huntington (1991) noted that election is of “greater significance in all democratic regimes” to the extent that it, definitely structures the nucleus of democratic distinctiveness so that it is almost unfeasible to talk on the subject of democracy without election. According to him, a political system is democratic to the extent that its most powerful decision-makers are chosen through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which practically all the adult population is qualified to vote (Huntington 1991). Huntington upholds that this procedure of selection must be distinguishing in showing lack of nepotism and even-handed in the manner by which such selection procedure and its interconnected activities are carried out. Consequently it is not adequate for election to be periodic if its measures are not free from personal, parochial, and institutional prejudice. More so, the overall character of an election is the cumulative expression of the different interrelated processes leading up to it (Akindele 2011, Obiyan & Afolabi 2013, Ugbudian 2015). Consequently, election, appropriately understood, is the amalgamation of methods leading to the selection of political

representatives. Commencing from when the ban of political activities was lifted or the publication of beginning of political calendar, registration of political parties, registration and validation of voters, demarcation of electoral constituencies, accreditation of voters and actual voting, collation and announcement of results. Therefore beyond the theoretical view of the procedure, election is a sequence of pragmatic practices which is personified as voting, and concludes with the declaration of results and publication of winner(s). election critically as a key board in democratic method discloses three broad categories of divergent but inextricably linked activities: preparing the grounds and the enabling atmosphere for impartial participation of all, as well as establishing the wonderful rules of the game; organization, mobilization and harmonization of the participants; the adjudication, regulation, legislating, and presiding over these methods.

### **THE PASSIVITY OF OPPOSITION PARTIES IN DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT**

Most opposition parties concern themselves with what happens during elections and not what takes place between elections and after election. In other words, within the four years that span governorship, legislative and presidential elections, and the years that span local government elections, the opposition parties do not join with the population on issues of daily survival ( availability of power, fuel price hikes, inflation, water outages, unemployment, industrial action, restructuring, insurgency, insecurities, among others). Nor organize to fight continuously against appalling government policies (IMF policies, sub-regional or continental disaffection). This is multifaceted by the poor presentation of some of the elected opposition party representatives in local councils, states and the National Assembly. The unadventurous grasps that, notwithstanding the opposition parties in Nigeria in the 2019 election showcased. There is little place for democracy in Nigeria because of one-party dominance, restriction of civil liberties, rigging, monopolization of the means of social media cum security agencies,

dictation of judiciary proceeding cum judgment by the party in power, monetization of politics, marginalization of civil society and some geopolitical zones, detrimental economic indicators, unemployment, insecurity, inadequate reserves, external imbalances, continuous suffering of economic, non-restructuring, food shortages, and the burden of debt servicing. To quote Achille Mbembe, it is necessary for the opposition to define a real strategy towards a social struggle (social democracy and democratic development) that is adapted to the present Nigeria conditions (Mbembe 2004, Ngwane, 2014). It is crucial for the oppositions to identify genuine approaches gearing towards societal struggles, (societal democratic system as well as Nigerians development), also by the oppositions parties candidate in power in any part of Nigeria doing better than their counterpart the party in power (APC) in office or political position, whether in Senate, House of Representatives or governorship position. The opposition should have and adopt mandates that promote democratization in Nigeria.

The main parties in Nigeria had been almost the same in formation, strategy positions, manifestoes, philosophical receptiveness and approaches (Omotola 2009, Akubo, & Yakubu, 2014). There is no clear cut difference between the political parties in 2019 general elections, members can change from one party to another without ideological change. The core interest of such people is not to perform creditably in the opposition party but to seek position for re-election if been rejected by their party or been appointed into one position or the other. Accordingly the parties are not showing governmental policies for different visions and plans of governance and expansion but links, divisions, cliques, and associations for control and resource struggles, ‘Deprived of apparent ideological uniqueness and obligation, and subjective based political principles’ (Omotola 2009).

The parties missing in ideological content as a proposal for action, classification, enlistment, legitimization and inconsistencies supervision (Nnoli 2003, Akubo, & Yakubu, 2014), the

parties have bowed to money distinctiveness, support and aggression, away from principles and plans, perhaps with a few exceptions, the performance of the parties in terms of organization, functions, operations and management has been miserably reduced (Nwosu 2008). The parties are not autonomous and popular institutes, as they are short of essential liberal internal machineries, homogeneous policies and regulations for definite discussion and joint decision making. The parties being platforms for personal, sectional and patronage struggles and interests, have lacked a strong directive, controlling, disciplinary and unifying nucleus that holds together (Omotola 2009). This had made the opposition politics in 2019 election to be inconsequential yielding less positive fruit.

Whilst political parties are at the nucleus of de-democratisation in Nigeria, facts advocates that elections had been the weakest link in our search for democratic system in Nigeria (TMG 2003, Anifowose 2004, Ikelegbe, 2013, Akubo, & Yakubu, 2014). This principally arises from the fact that the agencies and groups that are approved to assist, organize and contribute in the elections have not taken the vocation with the best moral and specialized loyalty (ikelegbe, 2013). The political parties became vehicles for de-democratisation. They not just destabilized and prejudiced the highly damaged party primaries but they also determined its outcome. Ever since, internal party democracy and the selection of candidates have become a highly vexed issue. These group of people all constituted one-third of delegates (Momoh, 2013, Akubo, & Yakubu, 2014). These facts had made the opposition party to derail in competence and cannot compete favourably, with the party in power. Opposition parties need the association with advocate as well as the nitty-gritty of civil society. One of the most significant groups in the pro-democracy interest group is the campaigner elements in civil society, which include the human rights activists, minority rights groups, movements for the empowerment and participation of marginalized geopolitical IPOB, MASORB, NPC, women, youth forums and wing of various geopolitical zones, students and labour unions, the

religious bodies, and the media (Ake 2000). The oppositions in Nigeria did not built whole linkages with these groups in the 2019 elections. Yet it was the youth that gave power to succeeding opposition leaders turned Presidents in 2015 general election in Nigeria, in Senegal, like Abdoulaye Wade in 2000 and Macky Sall in 2012; it is the feminization of power policy that Paul Kagame of Rwanda survives on, (Ngwane, 2014).

### **THE BANE OF FACTIONALIZED OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP IN ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA**

Since the creation of opposition parties, attempts at instituting an identifiable, credible and consensual leadership and programme have failed. Unlike other African countries that have a clear leadership within the Opposition (Gabon, Zambia, Kenya, Mozambique, Zimbabwe), the case of Nigeria differs widely. PDP and its presidential aspirant Atiku Abubakar would have easily stood out as a rallying point as opposition leader owing to his Northern origin affiliation support, but he has been met with contempt for relatively ‘low performance of the party for sixteen years, the Northern-Fulani origin of the core opposition party presidential candidate, and the ruling party presidential candidate. Deficiency of designed Manifesto: To begin with, giving a manifesto would denote that an exact principle already exists within a political party. Nevertheless, such ideologies that would guide the well-planned manifesto do not exist in Nigeria. And even when they do exist, party members have little or no ideas of what their party stands for to allow them use such thoughts in winning the conscience of voters. Ojo (2008) articulated that it is embarrassing when candidates of political parties in Nigeria cannot engage in issues upsetting the people. emphasizing that such approach in a democratic system shows ineffectiveness and does not provide citizens the chance to make rational choices among parties and candidates. This is because there is no political

underpinning to use in determining the better choice, (Davis 2003 Ojo 2008, Adeagbo & Omodunbi, 2019).

Other notable complications in the process include the fact that the electoral successes of the incumbent party, the APC, were not popularly perceived to be a product of a clean electoral process. In most cases, the electoral processes were often stronghold, infused as they were by the abuse of the power of incumbency, disproportionate use of state resources, including security agents, national treasury, state-owned media, judiciary and so on. Another dimension of the problem relates to the fact that opposition parties too were unduly too fragmented and factionalized, making it difficult for them to organise as a genuinely attractive opposition and alternative government (Omotola, 2013; 2014).

In the circumstance, the urge to develop a formidable oppositional platform to dislodge the APC became very sturdy; hence the recourse of other opposition party dropping their ambition and presidential candidate ticket. It would be recalled that the APC was a product of the merger of the defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), and a breakaway faction of the All Progressive's Grand Alliance (APGA) led by Rochas Okorocha, the Governor of Imo State before 2019 election. Aimed essentially at supplanting the PDP, the emergence of APC as a mega party made the contest for 2015 more intense, these was the expectation from the oppositions in 2019 general elections. (Omotola & Nyuykonge, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

The paper revealed that despite the potential of democracy in ensuring smooth power transfer, the failure of political leaders to observe the rules guiding the process portrays democracy as an incompetent system. It also reveals that the majority of political parties did not believe in the ethos of democracy. The 2019 election in Nigeria had been characterized by a high scale of electoral malpractices, money politics, electoral violence and the use of ethno-religious divide in order to influence the voting patterns of the electorates. From all indications, the green tree of nationhood has not yet borne the yellow fruits of national cohesion. Perhaps a new democratic transition bringing all active forces together in the core opposition party (the People Democratic Party), could help chart a new course that would go beyond routine elections and usher in bold, creative and indigenous development programmes that resonate with human and infrastructural progress. But before then it would be necessary for the opposition in Nigeria to shed itself of its embedded and shifting political predatory metaphors of grievance, greed and griotism to embrace a new political patriotic dispensation of values, views and vision. Therefore, the paper has concluded that orderly transfer of power depends on the wishes of political leaders, and for succession to be orderly; the paper recommends that all the parties involved in the process of conducting political processes should be committed to the rules of the game.

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## **THE CHALLENGES OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

The outbreak of coronavirus in late December 2019 manifested profusely from the first quarter of year 2020, and left several countries in a state of disarray with serious impact on every facets of national and international life. The new strain of the coronavirus referred to as COVID-19, was either new to the scientists or to the medical practitioners. It explains the lapses in its management that stunned the world. Although no one anticipated the outbreak of such virus, however, the debates about its origin admixed with conspiracy theories preoccupied many countries and distracted attention on how to contain the virus from further spread with the accompanying fatality. Focusing on Nigeria, this study examined the management of COVID-19 in the country, especially, how political leadership braced up with the challenges. As analytical research, it relied on secondary data and applied content analysis for inference. It adopted “bounded rationality model” of decision-making theory to explain the challenges posed to decision-making under crisis or emergencies, and discuss how it affected the management of coronavirus in Nigeria. The findings show that there are glaring deficits of proactive leadership in the COVID-19 management in Nigeria. It resulted in most of the management guidelines introduced by government being copy and paste (imitation of what other countries adopted without comparing the differences in climate). The consequences were dissensions and remarkable poor public compliance behaviours. It requires that Nigerian leaderships begin to develop health infrastructure, human and industrial capacities that countries tap during emergency that confines nations to its territorial borders.

**Key Words: Challenges, Coronavirus management, Leadership questions, Nigeria**

### **1. Introduction**

In the last quarter of year 2019, precisely the month of December, the world was exposed to the outbreak of a new form of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). It originated from controversial source in Wuhan City in China and gradually spread to other countries (Okibe, 2020). Nigeria recorded her first index case on February 27, 2020. The index case in Nigeria was an Italian returnee to Lagos State (Ehanire, 2020). This was despite that government had strengthened surveillance at the airport since January 2020 (Amzat, et al, 2020). The importation of the virus into Nigeria affirmed the danger it posed to public health. The information about its quick spread, fatality and monumental consequences to public health attested to public anxiety, more so after the World Health Organization announced that COVID-19 was a pandemic (Ayomides, 2020). It imposed leadership challenges, which demanded that all nations should commence the process of exploring the containment and management strategies. The essence was to mitigate the initial weak responses, general leadership laxity and lack of coordination in the management of the COVID-19 in every

country. Hence, the profound shortcomings at inception shared in the blame for rapid spread of the virus on a global scale without proper control mechanisms.

Therefore, amid the spread, countries began to discover that the challenges posed by the virus were beyond the limits of any nation. The attendant dearth of medical equipment and facilities, lack of adequate spaces for isolation and treatment of confirmed cases, and humongous death toll warranted interdependence, collaboration and assistance among nations of the world, either from the developed or from the developing countries. Hence, both developed and developing nations found itself in almost the same disorganized and bizarre situation. Nonetheless, it was more palpable in developing nations and Nigeria in particular, which prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, depended so much on foreign medical trips with visible decay in her medical infrastructure. Extant cases include poor funding, institutional fragility, bad maintenance culture and management crisis that reflects in bad leadership and corruption in the system. The faltering in political leadership, more so towards the health sector, laid a sordid foundation and erected big stumbling bumps on the path to COVID-19 management in the country.

From the standpoint of the coronavirus saga, there are shared perspectives that combinations of factors relating to the newness of the virus strain (SARS-CoV-2), the “no-cure” declarations and the indecisive scientific explanations about its mutation, infection and prevention, unsettled many governments and led countries to apply incoherent methods in the management of the virus. It aggravated the allegations that WHO lagged in providing leadership and necessary guidance at inception, a lacuna that confused countries that looked up to it to mobilize requisite resources in tackling the global health emergency. Such leadership provides the needed direction and network for global cooperation and the specific uniformed approaches to adopt in the management of the virus.

Apart from the aforementioned lapses, there are also controversies over the origin of Covid-19 (Field, 2020), thus culminating in its contradictory association with 5G technology, bioweapon from human engineering in a Chinese lab, ploy to disrupt world order through microchip implantation and other figment of conspiracy theories linked with the virus (Okibe, 2020). The twisted dimension in the narratives significantly beclouded the required focus on early prevention and management of the virus. Accordingly, the virus leveraged on the vacuum and preyed on vulnerable populations of many countries in Europe, Asia, America and Africa. Notable in the list includes China, the United States, Italy, Spain, UK, Russia, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Nigeria, Ghana, etc.

The global figures of COVID-19 infections and fatality across the various continents as at June 19, 2020, painted a gloomy picture. The data presented by Oyeleke (2020) buttressed the assertion. Europe had 191,932 deaths from 2,489,195 cases, the United States and Canada had 127,145 deaths from 2,305,872 cases, Latin America and the Caribbean had 89,327 deaths from 1,887,950 cases, Asia had 27,563 deaths from 963,782 cases, the Middle East had 12,994 deaths from 618,797 infections, Africa had 7,538 deaths from 280,922 cases, and Oceania had 131 deaths from 8,817 cases. However, these figures that tripled by the day were not vehemently associated with lack of proactive COVID-19 management but merely assumed by critics and in some cases, by opposition parties to government.

The disparities in the figures of infections and deaths from the coronavirus in developed continents like America and Europe in spite of their cute political leadership,

resources, technological and scientific wherewithal to fight the virus, questioned the capacity of Africa to manage the virus amid the fact that much remained uncertain about the new coronavirus. The question of capacity stemmed from the globally acknowledged insensitivity of political leaderships in Africa to take issues seriously, the reign of corruption and maladministration, the vexing laxity on public health and safety, industrial decay and dearth of critical infrastructure to respond to emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic. The familiarity with these missing links seemed to support the vulnerability of Africa to the virus.

In addition, the novelty of the virus necessitated global concerns and many disturbing questions, even from among the experts that the public and government looked upon for its remedy. Field (2020) highlighted some of the frequently asked questions that revealed public apprehension about COVID-19. It was common to get perturbed about how SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, came about; what level of social distancing was required to tame the outbreak, what treatments would prove effective against COVID-19 and when vaccine for the disease would be ready. These questions were as important as the general concerns about what safety measures that would be germane for the virus.

Searches for answer to these questions cut across countries, especially in the developing nations that Nigeria is among the category. Although the inexplicable background to the virus heightened public anxieties, the disillusionment on the contrary resulted in haphazard response systems, including lockdown of airspaces, closure of country's borders and commercial activities, clampdown on public transportation systems, introduction of conflicting and often disputed safety measures like closure of social functions, entertainment and religious activities, and social/physical distancing. It also encompassed regular washing of hands, wearing of facemasks, and campaign for hygiene culture like maintaining clean environment, and sneezing into bent elbow. Others include the establishment of testing facilities, quarantine and isolation centers and commissioning of researchers to develop a coronavirus vaccine. Bill Gates (NewsWorld, 2020) corroborated the scary tale, and posited that, "the global picture and the US picture are both bleaker than I would have expected".

There are also glaring barrages of disjointed prescriptions (orthodox and unorthodox) for treatment of COVID-19 confirmed and suspected cases, which induced disparaging misunderstanding either among different countries or with the guidelines issued by WHO on clinical protocols relating to treatment of coronavirus. Instances include the campaign for Hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin, including other therapies like Chloroquine, IV Vitamin C, Interferon Alpha 2B (Bianco, 2020), and Madagascar's local herb mixtures – Covid Organics (Tih, 2020), with several other unverified claims of herbal solutions for cure of coronavirus that sprang up across many countries including in Nigeria.

These problems appeared to be global phenomenon, amid misconceptions about coronavirus (COVID-19) and defense mechanisms on its origin, the spread, containment and the treatment. It was therefore not particular about Africa or Nigeria, except that the trend showed variations in the quality of leadership in the management of the virus, in addition to the general socio-economic implications on the citizens. The cases of America, China, Russia, Italy, Spain, and other countries in Europe, aside internal criticisms, portrayed exemplary leadership in the management of COVID-19. The presidents of these countries visibly managed the frontline efforts, coordinating national response and some of them tested

positive to the virus. They wittingly and assiduously provided the requisite leadership in policies and action, while some of their contemporaries, especially in Africa but Nigeria in particular, seemed to appear docile, indifferent or exhibited lackluster attitudes that their proxy surrogates shielded.

Amid the initial disputed roles played by WHO for global protection against the virus, the COVID-19 management template either on policies or on strategic response actions developed by some countries in the western world became models that political leadership in many countries adopted, particularly in the third world. The inherent lacuna informed the need for incisive inquiry into the perceived dearth of proper and astute leadership that greeted COVID-19 management upon its outbreak in some countries that Nigeria is not an exception; hence, the objectives of the study include, to:

10. assess the nature of policies and strategic actions taken by the Nigerian political leadership;
11. examine the appropriateness of the policies and the consequent public response systems;
12. appraise public perception of COVID-19 and government reactions and directives; and
13. determine the role that government played in the management of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Fundamentally, analysis of the foregoing issues exposes what roles that government played based on the type of leadership it provided in the management of the virus. The form of proactive action and measures taken or adopted in response to the challenges posed by the terrific nature of the virus surmises the measure of leadership in the matrix. In other words, the leadership question involves examination of how government strategically engaged the citizens and managed their welfare demands.

## **2. Conceptual Review**

### **2.1. Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is widely believed to be a dangerous disease that presents differing symptoms from medical diagnoses. The diverse nature reflected in its definition as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 SARS-CoV-2, formerly called 2019-nCoV (CDC, 2020; Evans, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) posited that the most likely ecological reservoirs for SARS-CoV-2 are bats, but it is believed that the virus jumped the species barrier to humans from another intermediate animal host, which could be a domestic food animal, a wild animal, or a domesticated wild animal that has not yet been identified (WHO, 2020a). Accordingly, Shereen, et al (2020) contended that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

However, Yanping (2020) explicated the complex nature of the virus further and argued that SARS-CoV-2 belongs to a family of single-stranded RNA viruses known as coronaviridae, a common type of virus, which affects mammals, birds and reptiles. According to him, in humans, it commonly causes mild infections, similar to the common cold, and accounts for 10-30% of upper respiratory tract infections in adults. Obviously, certain differences in the manifestation of COVID-19 show that the symptoms generally vary based on the body chemistry and immunity (Okibe, 2020). This is because studies have not completely unraveled the complexity of the SARS-CoV-2 that medical diagnoses began to identify in humans after its outbreak. Although SARS-CoV-2 was classified as a pandemic, the term pandemic symbolized the criterion for the designation, which derives from the inherent capacity of a virus or disease to spread globally (Grennan, 2019; Okibe, 2020).

## **2.2.Pandemic**

There are many perspectives to the meaning and understanding of what is a pandemic and the distinguishing characteristics that mark it out from other forms of disease or virus. First, epidemic becomes a pandemic when it occurs worldwide, over a very wide area, crosses international boundaries and affects a large number of people (Harris, 2000; Qiu, et al, 2017). Second, a disease is classified as pandemic if it is a new and highly pathogenic viral subtype, which establishes a foothold in the human population, at which point it rapidly spreads worldwide (WHO, 2011). The remarkable feature is that it must be one form of virus to which no one (or few) in the human population has immunological resistance and which is easily transmissible between humans.

Evident in the foregoing definitions is the fact that pandemics occur when a disease becomes widespread as a result of the spread from human-to-human infection. Hence, Qiu, et al (2017) listed some examples of pandemics to include Spanish Flu, Hong Kong Flu, SARS, H7N9, Ebola, and Zika. The indicators include features like wide geographic extension, rapid disease spread, novelty, severity, high attack rates and explosiveness, minimal population immunity, infectiousness and contagiousness. These features are rife in coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and thus qualified for status of a pandemic.

## **2.3.Management**

The simplest way to understand management is to conceive it as a set of activities (including planning and decision making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical, and information), with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner (Griffin, 2013). However, management in the context of this study is considered from two distinct perspectives. Firstly, management refers to academic orientation acquired through learning process, whereby the emphasis is on theoretical analysis of organizational life. Secondly, management also refers to activity, involving decisions and actions that aim at achieving the stated goals of either formal or informal establishments. The study dwells on the latter perspective that is on the activity level or the practical dimensions of management.

Scholars hold different understanding of what management actually entails. In the views of Fayol (1949), to manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control. The listed underlining actions in the definition exemplify the

concerns of management, which further provides lucid explanations of the mandates and actions of management in every organization.

1. forecast and plan means to examine the future and draw up the plan of action;
2. organize means to build up the dual structure, material and human, of the undertaking;
3. command means to maintain activity among the personnel;
4. co-ordinate means to bind together, unify and harmonize all activity and effort; and
5. control means to ensure that everything occurs in conformity with established rule and expressed command.

In essence, management is the process of achieving organizational objectives, within a changing environment, by balancing efficiency, effectiveness and equity, obtaining the most from limited resources, and working with and through other people (Naylor, 2004). The explanation interrogates the correlation among the attributes that portray and measure effective management. How did Nigerians fare during the peak of COVID-19 that bore evidence of proactive management through productive engagement of the citizens? In other words, what management skills did the political leaders apply in the management of COVID-19 and how did those skills reflect in the notion of collective responsibility by integration of the citizens into the project for seamless achievements of the set objectives? This is where leadership question in Nigeria suffices for consideration based on other examples of leadership.

## **2.4. Leadership**

Leadership draws its meaning from roles played in positions of authority, the nature of power that the position exercised at different settings and how the process is recognized and legitimized through the consent of followers. From the perspective of the U.S. Army (1983) in a study of its performance evaluation, four interdependent and mutually inclusive factors influence leadership in every organization. The factors comprise leader, followers, communication and situation. They typify the notion of political system, and lend credence to analysis of COVID-19 management in Nigeria in particular, and the leadership questions from different contexts. Leadership portrays the divergences in behavioural expectations in the system and thereby explains how each factor influenced COVID-19 management in the country. A succinct explanatory expose by Sharma & Jain (2013) on the determinants of leadership indicate that a leader must possess innate capacity to inspire the followers and show good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. It requires having cordial relationship with the followers, ensuring lively communication system to bridge any gap in their interaction. It avails the followers the opportunity to understand the leader and jointly collaborate in efforts to overcome challenges presented by any situation.

The questions that these attributes readily invoke would culminate in investigating how the political leaders in Nigeria offered inspiring leadership that compelled their followers to share in their mission statements and actions on COVID-19 management and thereby produced a desired result. In other words, one would wonder how the Nigerian masses responded to government policies and actions tailored toward COVID-19 management in the country. Such incisive inquiry helps to ascertain how the action or body

language of the president and other sub-national leaders in Nigeria created sense of success or failure in COVID-19 management. This is against the backdrop of arguments by Sharma & Jain (2013:310) that, “leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent”.

### **2.5. The Relationship between Management and Leadership**

The discussions above show that management and leadership are generic terms (Kaehler & Grundei, 2019). Each of them explains the various perceptions about the organization of material and human elements in an environment. In the context of this study, management and leadership form the bedrock that anchors the analysis; in fact, both are tacitly linked and complementary. For example, management and leadership in the area of activity influence the state of a thing, through human discreet actions and behaviours with the aim of actualizing set goals. Furthermore, management and leadership share common features in virtually all the context of human activity and therefore synonymous.

In other words, management and leadership mutually influence others to put in the effort on what goals that have been set out to achieve – whether to create order or change; hence, managers are in the same category with leaders. Therefore, leadership is synonymous with management practiced well (Mintzberg, 2009). To a significant degree, managing and leading involve human action and the intendment of each activity is to influence people – the subordinates, and to make impact on both the populace and the environment. Thus, managing and leading is basically about influencing action.

In essence, management and leadership qualify for the activity that this study focuses on, which is the management of coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria and the leadership questions. It warrants the use of management and leadership interchangeably, especially for analysis of the thematic issues underlying the discourse except for where it clearly and expressly stated otherwise.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The study applied the “**bounded rationality model**” of decision-making theory, developed by Herbert Simon (1979). The bounded rationality model describes a decision maker who would like to make the best decisions but normally circumstances compel the decision maker to settle for less than the optimal decision that it originally conceived or envisaged. The assumption of the model is that a rational decision maker has never had full knowledge of any situations that necessitated some decisions made. It is more so with the nature of circumstances and decisions made for COVID-19 management. In this instance, Gigerenzer (2001) distinguished four principles governing decision-making. It emphasized that a decision maker is prone to having incomplete and, to some degree, inadequate comprehension of the true nature of the problem being faced or not being able to generate all possible alternative solutions for consideration before making decision. Furthermore, a decision maker is usually unable to predict accurately all consequences associated with each alternative decision for action; and thereby take any cause of action or decision based on some criterion other than maximization or optimization of options.

The implication of the contradiction of these rigorous processes, which the public and onlookers erroneously believe that a decision maker comprehends and manages with dexterity and proficiency, is that situations and issues concerned make decision-making process to vary and no one situation presupposes the other. It is most likely that decision makers may not be aware that problems exist, and even when they are, they may not search for all possible alternative solutions because of contingent factors that could take the forms of time constraints, cost and perhaps, the inability to process information. Apparently, Simon (1979); Rimamchaten & Abubakar (2018) acknowledged these challenges to lend credence to the fact that it might be possible that what decision makers generate at the end of the decision-making process is a partial list of alternative solutions to any identified problem based on their experience, intuition, advice from others, and perhaps even some creative thought.

The outbreak of COVID-19 presented leaders with similar situation. Many decision-making processes, not predicated on the knowledge of the nature of problem inherent in the virus, derived from creative thought and advice from others. It opened a floodgate of conspiracy theories that dominated discussions on COVID-19, with uncertainty in government decisions and disparaging fluctuation in the management approaches. Smriti (2015) imagined that the situation of a decision maker and the form of decision-made might determine the nature of decision-making process. It requires that the decision maker must be a rational thinker to be able to sieve out rational decision from the clusters of complex factors that present themselves for consideration. In addition, the process must be clearly articulated, determined and definite; it must be selective to align decision to existing problem, which means that the decision must be problem solving. There must be commitment towards its implementation with continuous evaluation of the process to ascertain any alternatives, and the results of the decisions taken.

In Nigeria, government intervention, including the activities of the NCDC, PTF and other committees constituted to participate in COVID-19 management revolved around decision-making that contradicted some of the activities listed above. External influences dominated most decisions on certain aspects of COVID-19 preventive and containment guidelines in Nigeria and they remained controversial because of the resultant difficulties in their domestication for ease of public compliance.

#### **4. Contending Issues in Global COVID-19 Management**

Studies of empirical cases about the outbreak of virus and other forms of diseases have shown that infectious disease can easily cross national borders of one country to threaten the economic, social, religious, political, or health conditions of other nations and sometimes, it could escalates to affect global stability. Essentially, Qiu, et al (2017) emphasized that there is debilitating and sometimes fatal consequences for those directly affected. The COVID-19 experience buttressed the fact that virus or disease has ranges of negative social, economic and political implications across national and international frontiers, amid politics of blame games. Any virus affects not just the mortality, but also the health-care system, animal health, agriculture, education, transport, tourism and the financial sector (Davies, 2013; Qiu, et al, 2017). These dastard consequences create indelible marks on

human existence and the environment, thereby challenging human ingenuity in effective crisis management.

Apart from the several impacts on the ecosystem, the overall effects on the thread holding a society is part of the reasons why scientists rate the coronavirus pandemic as one of the most serious public health crises in living memory. It brought the world to its knees, shutting down entire countries and causing an exponential spike in the disease and death rates (Deloitte, 2020). Despite the ineluctable challenges, the slug demanded proactive and systematic measures in the management of the virus, to avert prolonging the inherent devastating effects it unleashes on human life and the economy.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 presented new leadership challenges in every spheres of life. The remarkable difference from the previous pandemics or diseases is that the development differed from many historic health crises that occurred when the world groped in the dark without sufficient answers for many questions concerning human life and environment. In this era, according to Dettmann, Alpern & Stier (2020), transparency and technology are helping us watch and learn from one another, in order to emerge stronger in any challenging situation, including the outbreak of viruses, terrorism and climate change, etc. Each of these crisis calls for a collective efforts in leadership action.

Generally, a widely held assumption is that shared leadership action to redress any emergent global problem offers a window of opportunity to develop cohesive and inclusive regulatory policy frameworks at the national, regional and continental levels. Initially, COVID-19 management showed significant deviations from this collectivism in management approach. The activities at national and global scale naturally took different dimensions and differed in intensity and each reflected certain assumptions about the virus. Some focuses on managing either the conspiracy theories, rebuttal of the virus, the 5G network infrastructure and the mob attack, or the sudden clampdown on human rights. The government response usually reciprocated the emergent developments in the system, based on the peculiarity of leadership, political, socio-economic and technological challenges prevalent at the time.

Other COVID-19 management measures presented a symbol of universal significance through the adoption of an integrated global precaution mechanism and well networked management approach. For example, the traces of the origin of the virus to food market in Wuhan City in China, raised danger alert on seafood and animal meat consumed worldwide, especially bats. On that note, the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), and national food authorities sought more information on the potential for persistence of SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, on foods traded internationally as well as the potential role of food in the transmission of the virus (WHO, 2020a).

While a generalized management strategy and policy framework that characterized global coalition efforts against COVID-19 (such as the case cited above), made some impact among certain class in a society, it rarely affected some deeply rooted local orientation towards adherence to global safety prescriptions. The aberrant orientation rationalized the adoption of alternative local preventive measures by each government, in order to secure public cooperation and compliance. Part of the reason for the local alternative is that the uncertainty embedded in COVID-19 management, made leadership challenge to become a bit complex and consequently, leaders faced innumerable leadership dilemmas and conflicting demands, most of which did not provide plausible exits and solutions (Deloitte, 2020).

Across several countries, the experience in the roles of political leadership in the management of COVID-19 differs and this is despite certain challenges that they shared in common, which include bickering over the source of the virus, mutual suspicion among the key players in the international politics and economy, and the blame game that holds China in contempt. The dilemma nurtured the insistence that the virus has a veiled purpose, with the amplifying conspiracy theories that went viral. Yet, that perspective did not blend with the cases of skewed public perceptions that labeled the virus as a political hoax, with persistent denial that it is not a reality or in existence. Outside the inherent debates and finger-pointing smut, other domestic factors exerted significant influence over national leadership and the public reactions. The disjuncture affected the COVID-19 management process and created widespread implications that traversed all ramifications of national and international life.

Each country experienced peculiar situation on the issues relating to medical equipments, health infrastructure, personnel quality and institutional capacity. The outbreak of COVID-19 revealed their national and global shortages or scarcity, and narrowed the demand-supply chain. Countries struggled to contain shortages of ventilators and oxygen, including surgical mask, personal protective equipments, functional Intensive Care Units (ICU), testing kits and laboratory, equipped and functional hospitals, quarantine and isolation facilities and even funds for their procurements, where it is feasible. The observed disparities in their availability, access and effective utilization, caused the designation of some countries that lacked the facilities in their countries as being more vulnerable than the others are.

The designation created room for improvisation in some countries and consigned others that lacked innovation and ability to fabricate certain things locally, to beg for assistance. Nigeria ranked high among the disadvantaged countries due to bad governance, corruption, and lip service to the development of health system. The challenge presented an incredible scenario where people managed COVID-19 with almost nothing and where the leadership lacked inspiring vision and initiative. Without initiative, the preventive and management measures recommended by WHO and developed countries remained imperative. The lacuna that western induced prescriptions dominated, might lend credence to the absence of local content in the ban on travels, closure of international borders, wearing of masks, and restrictions in movements, social distancing, contact tracing, quarantine, isolation, treatment, regular briefing/updates and sensitization of the public for personal hygiene. Many of these preventive measures generated safety debates more than the protective roles ascribed to them.

On the issues of hygiene and hand washing, Evans (2020) argued that, “disease containment policies are much harder to implement in dense communities that lack running water”. There are claims that the wearing of facemask posed health hazards. Similarly, the prescriptions for the treatment of COVID-19 also appeared diverse in nature and background, and were not resolved either scientifically or medically. Social or physical distancing that enmeshed in ambiguity within the domain of cultural interpretation was in the same garb with restrictions in movement that breached basic human rights. Due to several lapses, these matrixes snowballed into cluster of blame game during their enforcements.

#### **4.1. The Dialectics of Blame Game in COVID-19 Management**

Different challenges enveloped the management of COVID-19 globally, especially in the areas of leadership, policy enforcement and compliance. Nigeria lagged profoundly in

these listed litmus tests. Policymaking operated on a single digit, whereby federal government seemed to sideline other tiers of government and non-state actors. Lack of integration of various inputs from stakeholders in the health sector mainly, ruffled the required broad based management approach on COVID-19 leadership. Enforcement action also lacked any synergy and often appeared conflicting with the programmes of the state and non-state actors. It made the COVID-19 leadership at all government levels to be somewhat clumsy, not decisive due to power delegation, haphazard chain of command and laborious reporting system. For a similar reason, the enforcement action suffered incidences of claims and counter-claims of nonexistence of the virus by some prominent personalities, the states like Kogi, Cross River with the attendant frequent bickering over the NCDC/PTF guidelines on COVID-19 preventions and treatments.

This impasse was happening and commonplace in Nigeria when some other countries affected by COVID-19 progressed towards developing systematic measures to contain the virus and manage the fallouts. China was the first to adopt preventive, containment and management measures before other countries followed suit. Similarly, Deloitte (2020) stated that India and Belgium were the only two countries that called for a lockdown at very early stages when they detected human-to-human contagion. Despite the awareness of COVID-19 spread, the developing countries especially Africa, found it hard to cope with lockdown or stay at home strategy as most of them depended on the daily income to survive (Pius, et al, 2020). Aside Africa, other countries lagged in varying degrees, in the enforcement of COVID-19 safety measures.

In each country, the citizens sometimes attributed the lapses in the COVID-19 management to failures of political leaderships and other times, the blame would shift to prevalence of utter confusion in the management of the virus at different instances because of its strange evolution and complex nature. Pius, et al (2020) argued that the control of COVID-19 has been very challenging because of its similar clinical manifestation with other respiratory infections such as the flu, common cold, and the fact that many appeared to be asymptomatic for many days even after been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The confusion also affected the symptoms of the COVID-19, which tolerated anti-malaria drugs for the cure. It made many people in Nigeria not to easily differentiate the virus with malaria.

Nigeria is not an exception in the exemplary leadership hesitancy observed in the management of COVID-19. Other countries suffered missteps and blames in the process of managing the virus. David & Peter (2020) alluded to inherent media contradiction on the attractive publicity on the COVID-19 management, especially by the U.S. State Department. They argued that inconsistencies in the characterization of the U.S. management strategy were evidences of muddled and confused scenarios, which depicted deficiency in contact tracing with weakness of regulations in the U.S. Thus, Bill Gates described the U.S. response to the coronavirus pandemic as not being apt, compared to other countries (NewsWorld, 2020). Thus, the faltering development in the U.S. depicts the fact that,

Our behaviour and contact tracing was not working well, we continued to have very large case spread, compared to Europe or other countries and it is embarrassing. The United States has had a tough time. We are not as tough on contact tracing or enforcing quarantine and compliance with mask wearing is far less than particularly

the countries in Asia. The tepid response in the U.S. to measures aimed to combat the coronavirus, such as mask wearing, was one reason why the country has the most number of cases in the world (NewsWorld, 2020).

The foregoing description of public response to COVID-19 management in the U.S. buttressed the report of other observers, which found that the apparent inability of the U.S. to show proactive response to the pandemic was disparaging. It acceded that the inevitability of such a pandemic as health emergency demanded that the country would have deployed its resources and used its advantaged position to address the problem (David & Peter, 2020). The position of the critics hinged on the fact that the U.S. has the potential to resist the spread of the virus early enough and the capacity to even mitigate its effects on her citizens but the leadership seemed to be distracted. FEMA (2020), cited in David & Peter (2020) argued that the uncertainty of what management approach to adopt and complexity of the virus based on scientific investigations, fostered delays in tackling the virus.

It engendered conflicts among the stakeholders and finger pointing as signs of party intrigues during a period of hyper-partisanship associated with national elections in the U.S. Thus, FEMA (2020) contended that party politics for the November 3, 2020 presidential election did not deter the government from taking action to combat the COVID-19. Hence, the leadership embarked on both fragmented and decentralized system-wide response to the virus. The holistic measure also involved strategic arrangements, which engaged all levels of government and non-state actors. To say the least, the operational framework in the U.S. signified astute leadership despite political rambling.

As a global pandemic, the challenges of managing the virus weighed heavily on leaders, amid rash of blame games. It proved a litmus test for Vladimir Putin of Russia, Emmanuel Macron of France, Boris Johnson of UK, Pedro Sanchez Perez-Castejon of Spain, Sergio Mattarella of Italy, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, and Angela Merkel of Germany. Each of them demonstrated substantial astute leadership. Andry Nirina Rajoelina of Madagascar, Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi of Egypt and Governor Babajide Sannwo-Olu of Lagos State in Nigeria, represented the African models. Several other examples in their folds offered leadership with patriotism and despite the number of infections, fatality and the blames; they remained resolute, undaunted and visible in the frontline providing leadership and coordinating efforts in the management of the COVID-19 in their countries.

Evident in their roles include sponsoring, funding or supporting several research interventions for discovery and development of COVID-19 vaccine, ensuring the safety and security of their citizens and proactively making policies that guaranteed adequate stimulus to reinvent the shattered macro and national micro economies that affected all sectors. Other motivational leaders also approved special relief packages for their citizens to cushion the effects of the pandemic on their sources of livelihood.

All the same, President Buhari of Nigeria and some likeminded State Governors preferred to be invisible in the frontline, remained in confinement for safety reasons and refrained from playing any active leadership roles in the management of the COVID-19. The leadership vacuum emboldened the appointed surrogates to issue COVID-19 guidelines under the shield of presidential directives. This was further accentuated by the confirmation that

some public officeholders, including the Chief of Staff to the President and perhaps the closest Aide, Abba Kyari, contracted the COVID-19 virus and died later. The president and some Governors rarely addressed the nation or their states on COVID-19 updates. It fuelled the misunderstanding between NCDC/PTF, some State Governments and National Assembly. The flop culminated in the allegation that government funds and external donations are mismanaged.

In addition, the apathy and divisions among the ruling class watered the public belief that some persons who occupied prime positions in government used the politics of COVID-19 to harvest the inherent economic and political opportunities for selfish aggrandizement. In one instance, many Nigerians alleged sharp practices in the activities of Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHDS), under Sadiya Umar-Faruk, which handled palliative materials, N20,000 cash transfer to poor and vulnerable households (Dixit, et al, 2020) and undertook school feeding programme when the country was on lockdown. A similar allegation focused on the activities of some law enforcement officers, mostly the Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), which observers blamed for compromising the strict enforcement of the lockdown order through extortion. Meanwhile, different Committees that various governments constituted either to manage the distribution of the COVID-19 palliatives or to secure the interstate community borders betrayed public trust and government mandates by the same extortion.

These monumental hullabalos raised leadership questions in the COVID-19 management in Nigeria and further doubted the policymaking and enforcement action process, which could not prove that either management or leadership in the fight against the novel coronavirus was successful. Based on the foregoing, it becomes apt to examine the COVID-19 management structure in Nigeria.

#### **4.2.The COVID-19 Management in Nigeria**

Preemptively, there were predictions by soothsayers, scientists and men of God alike, concerning the imminence of disease outbreak that would pose great danger to human health and environment. The consequent alarm aroused public and government attention, which made it possible that the outbreak of COVID-19 did not take the world unawares. Part of the earliest prescription on how to manage the virus came from the Emergency Committee of the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization. As Dixit, et al (2020) noted, all countries were advised to prepare for containment, active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of 2019-nCoV infection, and to share full data for prompt response actions. This advisory prepared ground for birthing other COVID-19 management strategies

Proactive COVID-19 management became most compelling in Nigeria following the announcement by the World Health Organization (WHO) on June 29, 2020 that there are over 380,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in African continent – with more than 181,000 recoveries and 9,500 deaths. According to Nseyen (2020), South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana had the highest reported cases on the continent. Nevertheless, the figures across continents and countries continued to triple amid lack of reliable management system

and the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC) drily responded to the global alert and demands for prompt action on COVID-19 management.

The attention and seriousness attached to issues about the virus started to manifest, particularly from March 9, 2020 when President Muhammadu Buhari inaugurated a Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 at the national level. Other sub-national leaders replicated the prototype in their states. This was done in an attempt to prevent the spread of the virus and thereby protect Nigerians from further infections. The Director General of Nigeria Center for Disease Control (Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu) and the Chairman of Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 (Mr. Boss Mustapha – The Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF), were directed to provide COVID-19 management leadership at the center while the committees at the state and local government levels collaborate with them.

The priority was to make requisite COVID-19 management policies, coordinate action plans among other stakeholders and implement national efforts at COVID-19 management. Consequently, the PTF appointed Dr Sani Aliyu as the COVID-19 National Coordinator. To expand their operational base, the PTF integrated the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) – (Dr. Faisal Shuaib), into the intervention programme. They jointly coordinated national and sub-national efforts geared toward mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. With time, it further expanded cooperation and collaboration activities to involve both state and non-state actors, including private citizens and community leaders. Their primary objective was mainly to create sustainable structures that would anchor the enforcement action, which included:

- Establishment of laboratories, isolation and treatment centers at selected locations;
- National daily briefing by the PTF for updates on actions taken/proposed for implementation;
- Coordination of actions for all categories of supports to the government at all levels;
- Detection of cases, contact tracing, quarantine, testing, isolation and treatment; and
- Erection of serious security checks at the external and internal border posts.

Essentially, some of the key government policy directives and enforcement actions observed in the implementation of the COVID-19 management in Nigeria appeared to merely replicate what other countries have experimented with minor differences. Included in the categorization are the following:

- Border closure along with international flight operations;
- Lockdown involving public services, school systems, worship centers and businesses;
- Inter-state border closure and restrictions in movement, except exempted goods and services;
- Management of palliatives – provided by government, corporate bodies and private persons;
- Appeal for local and international assistance and supports in finances and materials;
- NCDC guidelines on hand washing, sanitizer, facemask and social distancing; and
- Banning of social and traditional functions like wedding, burial, partying, nightclubs, etc.

The foregoing layers of policy guidelines and enforcement actions might dispel notions of fragmented, uncoordinated and reactionary COVID-19 management approach in Nigeria but it proved otherwise, by deviating from strategic organized leadership for prompt response. The policies suffered huge leadership setbacks during the enforcement and tended to frustrate the efforts to contain the virus.

##### **5. Challenges posed by COVID-19 Management Policies/Guidelines adopted in Nigeria**

Sequel to the unusual expanse of devastations that COVID-19 pandemic caused in developed world, which has technological and functional medical infrastructure, it dampened the spirit of most third world nations and resulted in an initial prediction that it posed precarious situations in Africa. It however negatively affected the COVID-19 management guidelines meant for public compliance. From among the Nigerian discerning critical mass, which listened to news from international media and followed up issues on the social media, they were quick to fault with COVID-19 management strategies in terms of policy guidelines and enforcement actions. It thus became evident that government merely copied and pasted most of the guidelines from the countries of primary origin to apply on Nigerians. No innovation blended with the local peculiarities of the country, to ease the grasp of the guidelines and elicit the compliance behaviours expected from the Nigerian masses.

The copy and paste trend failed to appreciate the enormity of subsisting systemic decay that characterize government insensitivity and corruption, or the gauge of official lies that show insincerity of government, including the citizen's distrust on government policies and actions. This was in addition to public ignorance about the virus due to inadequate information, poor orientation, and the imminent negative attitude that rebuffed COVID-19 preventive measures, which replicated western models.

The constraints outlined above, no doubt, influenced public perception and disenchantment about the COVID-19. While the NCDC/PTF copied the WHO prescriptions and other COVID-19 management approaches adopted by the developed countries, government failed to take a matching action. Insufficient procurement of medical equipments and consumables, slowed pace in the expansion of testing centers, quarantine and isolation facilities and unmatched manpower requirements also hindered the implementation. Dixit, et al (2020) had reported that at inception when the COVID-19 outbreak was announced, Nigeria had just 350 ventilators and 350 ICU beds for its entire population. It showed the precarious nature of the case and thereby necessitating the consequent efforts that culminated in the acquisition of additional 100 ventilators in April 2020, barely a month later.

Evidences of leadership failures and absence of clear management strategy outside the usual fire brigade service approach partly showed in the astronomical surge in the figures of infected persons since the second wave from the beginning of 2021, even when no sign proved the termination of the first wave. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the figures stood at 126,160 as total confirmed cases, 100,365 total discharged and 1,544 total deaths. This was despite the subsisting low testing of citizens, which still operate at a slow pace with very limited testing centers. Efforts have almost relaxed, if not dropped on contact tracing, quarantine and isolation, due to weakened institutions and disincentive to health workers over nonpayment

of their hazard allowances, and inadequate provision of personal protective equipments. It culminated in intermittent strike action at such critical moments in the nation's history.

Misinformation about COVID-19 in Africa affected the implementation of the government policies on its prevention, containment, treatment and management. Few examples include the publicized deaths and health dangers posed by wearing of facemask, the rumour of bribing President Andry Rajoelina of Madagascar by WHO, to secretly poison the Covid-Organics, which was a plot to stop Africa from developing its own cures (Mwai, 2020). It also includes the collaborative conspiracies of cabals in government to hang onto power, usurp the authority of the state by raising false alarm about COVID-19, and thereby enunciate policies and key decisions that manifest in corruption. It summed up the disparaging claim that COVID-19 is a hoax and does not exist. It hinders the seamless implementation of the preventive and curative policies of NCDC and PTF in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the global nature of the misinformation has made every government to contend with the phenomenon, by devoting time to educate her citizens to see the virus as potential threats to human life and economy.

Ironically, the persistent dearth of medical facilities in Nigeria despite several billions of naira allocated for emergency provisions of the facilities since the outbreak of the virus has made many Nigerians to doubt the sincerity of government that it actually meant to fight the virus. The mid-term reports by PTF in July 2020 outlined various activities taken by government to stop the spread of COVID-19 (UNAIDS, 2021). These activities appeared to be more pronounced in the media than in what could be sighted physically. Dearth of functional health infrastructure and complaint about poor equipments in Nigeria continued to be on the rise and under such deplorable condition, no workforce in the health sector would be strong enough to support a sustained national response to COVID-19. It created palpable fears about how government could manage exponential spread of the virus without serious checkmates due to absence of strong health institutions. The lapses forged a consensus that Nigeria would rarely implement any effective response to COVID-19 that guaranteed public safety.

The first case tests were the imitated prescriptions and self-help in treatment for COVID-19 has remained a problem. Unorthodox prescriptions like ginger, garlic, lime, honey, hot water, sunlight and other local herbs and roots therapies dominate the psyche of many Nigerians. They easily associated COVID-19 with familiar malaria symptoms like cold, catarrh, cough, bronchitis and difficulty in breathing, which are treated with Vitamin D3, Vitamin C 1000mg and the conventional malaria drugs. It compromised the safety measures prescribed by both WHO, the NCDC and local authorities and therefore, prevented people from seeking medical attention at the earliest time. Part of the reason was that many people took COVID-19 as the same thing with malaria. Chief Raymond Dokpesi buttressed this assumption when he asked, what is the difference between COVID-19, which is a virus, and malaria? (Egbas, 2020).

Some of the infected Nigerian leaders and other prominent personalities like Bala Mohammed (Governor of Bauchi State), Seyi Makinde, (Governor of Oyo State), Nasir El-Rufai (Governor of Kaduna State), Chief Raymond Dokpesi and Dr. Doyin Okupe, etc, described the drugs used on them for treatment of COVID-19 as not remarkably different

from malaria drugs. It significantly influenced other Nigerians to believe that unorthodox medicines related to malaria also cure the COVID-19 virus.

Enforcements of lockdown of the system, wearing of mask, social/physical distancing, closure of social and religious/worship centers, restrictions on movements, and hand washing, among others, proved a herculean task. The guidelines diametrically presented a twist that contradicted Africa's age long cultural practice on social bonding, intimacy, cooperative lifestyle, and thus made disengagement from one another difficult. Confinement of people to their homes also proved abortive because of peculiar economic challenges, which depended on daily income to survive. Frequent hand washing failed for obvious reasons. First, Nigeria is a poverty-struck society where there is empirical evidence of water scarcity in most urban and rural areas and government pay lip service to provision of this basic amenity. Second, the directive in many local setting was culturally misconstrued. Frequent hand washing for them, implies cleaning of palm marks, which represent a person's destiny blueprint.

From the global perspective, mass vaccination against COVID-19 is also mired in controversy embedded in conspiracy theory affixed on the COVID-19 vaccine. Rife also is the race among nations to control the global economic gains envisaged in early production of COVID-19 vaccine and the fears that there is no guarantee for any vaccine that took few months to produce. Aside the trended Bill Gates 'microchip' conspiracy theory (Goodman & Carmichael, 2020), production of vaccine has never been an easy process. There is common knowledge that in the past, it usually took between 10 and 15 years to produce a vaccine and the process are long and complicated (Uchechukwu mgemezu, 2021). This conclusion is in consonance with the experience of other pandemics that occurred in the past, which took quite long to develop the vaccines used to mitigate their spread and infection. The implication was that despite the remarkable improvements in science and technology, the public were not expectant that any COVID-19 vaccine would be ready in a shorter time. Therefore, the speed with which the vaccines were produced induced suspicion about their efficacies and fears about their after-effects on human system. The development increased public apprehension and perhaps concerns about public safety.

In the U.S. where the Pfizer vaccine originated, one reason that the start to the U.S. vaccination campaign has been so sluggish is that health care workers – among the first to be eligible – have proved more reluctant to get the inoculation than expected (Rowland, 2020). Some are concerned with the newness of the vaccine, others are worried about potential side effects, and the failure to get the virus under control has eroded their trust in the groups now urging them to take the shot: the federal government, politicians and their employers (Wolfe, 2021). Furthermore, there is also this deep-seated fear that COVID-19 vaccine changes a person's DNA (O'Sullivan, 2020).

Some reported alleged cases of health hazards linked to the vaccine, which health authorities in some countries subjected to investigation, lend credence to the fears. In Florida USA, it was alleged that Dr. Gregory Michael, a 56-year-old obstetrician and gynecologist in Miami Beach, received the Pfizer vaccine at Mount Sinai Medical Center on December 18 and died 16 days later from a brain hemorrhage. Grady & Mazzei (2021) reported that after receiving the vaccine, Dr. Gregory Michael developed an extremely serious form of a condition known as acute immune thrombocytopenia, which prevented his blood from

clotting properly. In both Brazil and Indonesia, it was equally alleged that the CoronaVac, the vaccine manufactured by the Beijing-based company Sinovac had an efficacy rate of just over 50 percent, far below the 78 percent level benchmark that the World Health Organization has said would make a vaccine effective for general use (Paddock & Suhartono, 2021; Wee & Londono, 2021). But government still import and vaccinate people with the low rated vaccine. These allegations have only marginal truths and preponderance of misinformation in continuation of conspiracy theories.

Although manufacturers rate the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines 90-plus-percent rates efficacy, it has not dispelled public questions about their qualities, efficacies and safety assurances. There are concerns that no vaccine produced in a hurry as observed in the case of COVID-19, which abridged time factor regulating vaccine discovery and production for general use, meets scientific rules. It is no doubt that criticisms and indifference to COVID-19 vaccine stemmed from this widely held suspicion. The Governor of Kogi State Nigeria, Yahaya Bello and Senator Dino Melaye publicly condemned COVID-19 vaccine as a ploy by the western world to kill Africans and dissociated themselves from any campaign by the government of Nigeria to key into the inoculation programme (Onyeji, 2020).

Although the above persons, as many others, preferred a local remedy, the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, (NPHCDA), Dr. Faisal Shuaib, explained why Nigeria has not been able to produce its own COVID-19 Vaccines in the country, attributing it to several years of inadequate investments in the health sector. It was the inadequacies of hospitals that triggered the alarm raised by the Director-General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, (NCDC), Dr. Chike Ihekweazu, that hospital capacity in several towns has reached a critical level, in terms of admitted COVID-19 patients (Uchechukwu mgemezu, 2021). The alarm buttressed the state of decay in health infrastructure; hence, the public concerns about the likely fate of COVID-19 patients if infections soared astronomically. If government could raise such alarm when the caseload of COVID-19 infection was relatively low, it indicated the readiness to abandon some infected COVID-19 patients whenever the caseload reached figures that eventually overwhelmed its carrying capacity. It provided sufficient insight into the peculiar situation in the country's health system, compared to other countries in Europe and America, which had large caseloads but strong health institutions to absorb the shock.

## **6. The Public Response Systems to the Policies/Directives**

Government, private sectors and individuals adopted several response measures that are unilaterally or multilaterally lax in nature, to comply or negate the implementation of all the proposed plans that aimed at defeating the coronavirus pandemic. Apart from denial that coronavirus exists, the poor state of health infrastructure generated dissent reactions from medical personnel over scarcity or unavailability of personal protective equipments, to safeguard healthcare providers. The shortages of material and financial requirements provoked protests among different categories of medical workers.

At the federal level and in most states, evidence-based policies such as social distancing and “test and trace” approaches have been implemented. However, implementation has happened on a base of weak health systems, sluggish emergency response, weak accountability systems, and fragmented data and information monitoring

systems. These weaknesses have led to implementation gaps (Dixit, et al, 2020). It resulted in poor adherence to the NCDC/PTD guidelines. People ignored warning against clustering in hundreds at social functions, advisory on the practice of handshakes, warm embrace and intimate association. It extended to neglect of regular hand washing, use of hand sanitizers, wearing of facemask and other personal hygiene cautions. Noncompliance motivated government to lockdown.

However, the lockdown translated to unprecedented hardship, hunger and anger. In some cases, the situation compelled ordinary people to defy the lockdown by going out in search of livelihood. Some states shared raw food and bread but on a limited scale. The inadequacy was to such extent that young people and women protested in their street in rejection of the ‘food rations’ (Becker, Aborisade, & Shivji 2020). The protest also engulfed police brutality on civilians in the course of enforcing government policies on COVID-19. Several cases of killings attributed to security forces during the lockdown made Nigerians to wonder how the police and the army could be killing people more than the coronavirus does.

Although government banned interstate movements, desperate travelers connived with some unscrupulous elements in the Nigeria Police force and the Nigerian Civil Defence Corp (NCDC) to commercialize the policy. Passenger movements continued to soar at border areas, which occasionally prompted Governors of Enugu, Ebonyi, and Rivers, etc, to enforce the order and impounded vehicles and passengers at the border posts. Security agencies and other local vigilante groups constituted by some state and local governments pretended to close any exit routes against travelers but surreptitiously converted the policy into serious economic opportunity by collecting toll fee to allow the commuters to pass at any checkpoint.

The defiant conduct among different tribes in Nigeria but the Hausa-Fulani in particular compelled political and religious leaders from the Southern Nigeria to raise alarm over the surge of Hausa-Fulanis from states in the north to the states in the south, claiming federal government’s complicity in the saga. It heightened mutual suspicion, war tensions and divisive verbal threats.

### **6.1. Leadership Questions in COVID-19 Management in Nigeria**

The COVID-19 crisis brought about serious emergency management challenges that many national political leaders and business organizations had least anticipated. It came at a time many governments in Nigeria (national, states and local) least expected exposure of leadership deficits in the country, including total collapse of health infrastructure, among others. It uncovered government’s cosmetic lies about its performance in the economy, health, education, agriculture for food sufficiency and security, in science and technology, public safety, poverty eradication and citizen’s welfare. The health emergency stripped Nigerian leadership, exposed the malfeasance that perpetuates deceits on “change mantra” even as the nation drifts. It aided frivolous financial allocation for programmes that threaten national treasury. While the ruling party at the center bemoans the depressing development, the opposition sees it as a welcome necessity for accountability by those in leadership positions.

Most leaders, when preparing for disasters, focus their efforts on creating systems to manage the fallout. They attack the symptoms rather than the problem itself (Walker, 2020). In Nigeria, the PTF created by President Buhari to manage the virus excluded key

stakeholders in the health sector. From every indication, party politics infiltrated the process and the complaints attracted no attention. Generally, the PTF, NCDC and NAFDAC focused on the handout guidelines from WHO and western countries. They ignored the Nigerian scientists, researchers and traditional medicine practitioners in the search for COVID-19 cure or vaccine. These bodies lacked government supports and encouragements.

This is in addition to the frequent altercation among the policymaking, policy implementation and respective government stakes in the process. The states appeared like an ancillary agency in the programme and it created much misunderstanding. While the states solely took charge of their coronavirus management and response to emergency issues related thereto, the NCDC supported and received daily infection information from the states. The NCDC published the summary of the data on its microsite. The general fact-sheet, published weekly, summarized the total figure of daily-confirmed COVID-19 cases, recoveries, deaths, the numbers of samples tested and the active cases recorded, from each state of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. Nonetheless, the reliability of these figures have raised concerns due to several loopholes and challenges including that state officials are not turning in enough test samples (Onyeji, 2020). In other words, the operational structure showed some degree of disconnect in the command system, which resulted in the initial refusal of some states (Kogi and Cross River) to cooperate with either the NCDC or the PTF, or to consent to laboratory test requirements for possible detection of COVID-19 cases. The lapse continued to create public distrust.

The daily press briefing organized by the PTF resembled a talk show management model, where leaders merely vacillated. The focus on the fallouts of COVID-19, and not how to cure the virus, betrayed the essence of leadership under such conditions. Unlike Nigeria, Madagascar provided a good example of proactive leadership in the fight against the pandemic in Africa. The leader deserves to take control of the entire situation and provide examples (Deloitte, 2020). Leadership is all about setting agenda, showing examples in prudence, honesty, selflessness, commitment, compliance to rules of engagement, compassion for the citizens and tolerance of peculiar socio-economic conditions prevalent in the country. In this sense, Walker (2020) argued that leadership is what prevents a pandemic.

The foregoing attributes inspire followership; hence, true leadership abhors atmosphere that fertilizes distrust and dishonesty, which metamorphose into civil disobedience by the followers. No doubt, the outbreak of COVID-19 made the demands for these leadership qualities to become more visible and compelling. In consonance, Deloitte (2020) suggested that a leader should possess some distinguishing attributes. In summary, a leader needed to grasp the complexity of the situation on ground; to view the situation from different perspectives; to show passion for experiment and change; to take quick decisions; and to have the relentless desire to excel, even in the most demanding situations. Furthermore, a leader should be mentally tough and persevere in difficult times and in rapidly changing situations; and show boldness in the face of ambiguity, as presented by COVID-19.

Again, there are both leadership problems and systemic flaws in Nigeria, which arose from lack of enabling environment needed for a successful management of COVID-19 when the country first registered her index case. Many evidences attest to the lapses. The first and major evidence came from the findings of a study conducted in 2017 by the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of International Health Regulations of the World Health Organization. It

unveiled key response elements in health emergencies after it examined a country's capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health risks, ([www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu); Dixit, et al, 2020). The analysis revealed that Nigeria performed poorly across the indicators. In both prevention and response actions, it scored 1.9 on the average across the 15 indicators in the prevention category. On overall, the country had limited capacity to prevent biological, chemical or radiation health risk, but it was better prepared, based on the analysis, to perform in the detection category, with an average score of 2.6 across the 13 indicators in the category.

The report exposed the imminent danger in Nigeria's health sector prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and graphically illustrated its fragility to respond effectively to emergency management requirements in the health sector. This was in addition to the insensitivity of the political leadership to develop sound health policy and thereby invest heavily in the sector to activate the system. It played key roles in the foregoing established deficits in the national COVID-19 leadership, which tended to highlight the invisibility of the Nigerian President in the fight against the pandemic. It also suggested that the role expectation and relapse in role performance by the national leadership during the peak of the COVID-19 was deep-rooted in infrastructural deficits and dearth of professional human capital.

The reported deficiencies were inexplicable and it came to the fore when public cynicism greeted the appointment of President Muhammadu Buhari as the ECOWAS COVID-19 response coordinator in April 23, 2020 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Organization (Olivier, 2020). Reacting to the development, many Nigerians reasoned that charity begins at home and President Buhari should or supposed to lead at home before leading the ECOWAS. The idea of his appointment to lead in what he loathe, symbolized the usual celebration of leadership failures in Africa. He was invisible on COVID-19 matters, addressed the nation almost under public duress, attracted public odium to his heavily criticized watery speeches on COVID-19 and inflames public patience.

## **7. Critique of the Role that Government Played in the Management of Covid-19 in Nigeria**

It is the role of government to provide leadership when under emergencies. Government relies on institutions for the performance of this role. Effective institutional arrangements ensure seamless implementation of policy in pursuit of shared goals (Boin, 2009). In crisis contexts, such as COVID-19 presented, institutional flexibility enables administrators to skip standard procedures to improvise what enables the system to adapt and respond to rapidly changing circumstances. Similar condition does not flourish in Nigeria. In fact, COVID-19 management exposed the fragility of national institutions and corporate culture in Nigeria, which manifests in fragmented authority. The opposition of Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State (Onyeji, 2020) and Governor Ben Ayade of Cross River State (Offiong, 2020) buttressed the cases. Apart from the fact that the duo among numerous other Nigerians questioned the existence of COVID-19 and especially in their states, there were doubts among different divides in Nigeria about the rate of COVID-19 infections, including the drugs used for the treatments. This perspective had frequently disagreed with the NCDC, PTF database and NMA supportive claims.

Ikegbu, et al (2020) harped on the poverty of leadership in the COVID-19 management in Nigeria. Few examples suffice. Governor Bello described the deadly disease as a hoax and subsequently raised inciting alarm, which claimed that, “Ninety percent of the noise about COVID-19 was for political, economic, financial (or) material gain. The other 10 percent (related to) ordinary flu, like the common colds Nigerians generally suffers” (Onyeji, 2020). The claims contradicted the PTF viewpoints on the reality of COVID-19. It did not only depict fragmented authority but also lack of inclusiveness and proper understanding among the political leaders, in the COVID-19 management.

Nevertheless, Kettle (2003) was of the opinion that owing to the disjointed experience in the COVID-19 management, situations arose whereby leaders who supposed to shield their differences and turn fragmented authority structures to their benefits, bowed to the dictates of either ego, ignorance or conflicts of interest among the key players. It breached institutional mechanisms, either formal or informal, that foster understanding and mitigate conflict across jurisdictional and organizational barriers. The jurisdictional conflict formed around COVID-19 management in Nigeria made government officials at different levels to flout many of the NCDC/PTF guidelines. They violated border closure, breached all the rules on lockdown, burial and other social functions, social/physical distancing, more than the masses did. An example was the burial of Abba Kyari, Chief of Staff to President Buhari, who died due to COVID-19 complications. It doubted the sincerity of government in containing the virus.

Government also flouted citizens’ rights as enshrined in the 1999 constitution. Some northern state governors spent millions evacuating the street children to their home states and some out-rightly banned the almajiri practice (Sahara Reporters, 2021). The public criticized the deportation of the almajiri that northern leaders encourage to thrive and wondered why government suddenly branded them COVID-19 transmission vessels. Further to the breach of their constitutional rights, as many other citizens suffered in a bid to prevent and as well contain COVID-19, they also faced recrimination as the most infected by the virus. Yet, government could not admit that it was responsible for the roaming culture among the almajiri in the north. Meanwhile, the visible indifference by government to show commitment towards the orders it made discouraged public support to fight and defeat the virus.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it becomes clear that the masses criticized leadership in Nigeria over the poor COVID-19 management for several reasons, among which include public exclusion in decision-making. In crisis, more so health related crisis, Van-Meter & Van-Horn (1975) argued that there is always the need for public support and collaboration with government and non-state actors. It helps to collectively pull-through the crisis. Such support is also important for both operational and political reasons. Kamradt-Scott & McInnes (2012) note that from the operational perspective, public support helps to marshal necessary resources and secures citizen cooperation. CACOVID groups and other private organization, including individuals who donate money, foodstuff and hospital equipments fall under the category. The political support reinforces the commitment of decision makers to promptly monitor the goals and measures that aim at sustaining government efforts. The role of opposition parties and constructive criticisms stimulate efforts to achieve the set objectives.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The COVID-19 management in Nigeria came with questions about the quality of the political leadership at all tiers of government. It also offered opportunity to learn many lessons from the pandemic. Walker (2020) contended that one lesson from the coronavirus is that the global response to the pandemic has offered itself as a case study in crisis management. In Nigeria, the case study has already failed the fundamental tests of leadership. The implication is that elected leaders in Nigeria lacked the capacity to prevent crises but had often appeared more disposed to scramble to handle them. It explained why leadership on COVID-19 management was in clear deficit once COVID-19 pandemic swept through the continents of the world.

Although the pandemic wreaked havoc in many countries, the low infections and fatality in Nigeria could not be associated with astute political leadership or managerial efficiency. Both conditions failed to achieve significant results but failed public expectations. Even when the effects appeared to be much more in countries with good leadership, the disparity is traceable to their unfavourable weather conditions. Unlike Nigeria, the U.S., Spain, Italy, Russia, UK, etc belonged to this category. Whereas no country prepared for the virus, the outbreak exposed the strengths and weaknesses of nations in difficulty situations that required proactive leaderships, which fit into peculiar circumstances and could mobilize the citizens easily to promptly respond to emergencies.

National and sub-national governments in Nigeria (exception of Lagos and few other states), failed in proactive leadership and thereby compromised the envisaged effective COVID-19 management in Nigeria. From this standpoint, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic reinvigorated the maxim by Martin Luther King Jr. that, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy” (Michalos, 1980). Most Nigerian leaders appeared to be pleasure driven and not risk-bearers. The evidence shows that the citizens should elect leaders who can willingly carry their cross and not visionless persons occupying positions of public trust and authority. There should be commitment towards providing basic infrastructure and building the necessary human capacity to prosecute and respond to national emergencies. Corruption is intending to kill Nigeria and only honest leadership will reverse the curse.

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## **THE POLITICS OF HATE SPEECH AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT IN NIGERIA, 2015-2020.**

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### **Abstract**

One of the cardinal pillars of democracy is the right to free speech. This right is universally recognizes and protected in several statutory instruments of states, albeit its limitations. In Nigeria, however, the protection and promotion of freedom of speech appears to be problematic due to governmental policies and actions targeted at curbing alleged incidences of hate speech. This paper interrogated the politics of hate speech and fundamental human rights with specific reference to efforts by the current administration in Nigeria to censor hate speech; an action that has brought about public outcry, mass criticism, protests and agitations that marred government proposal concerning hate speech law. The paper adopts the social Responsibilities Media Theory originated from Robert Hutchins Commission on the freedom of press of 1947 that explain the rights of the press to criticize any institutions and even government. The paper adopted a qualitative approach, addressed three objectives, which were tested by content analysis by relying on extant literature and other documented evidences. Findings of the study show that hate speech in Nigeria is largely promoted by the political class. Findings further show that hate speech law poses serious challenges to fundamental human rights of freedom of expression in Nigeria. It also found that existing laws that seek to address hate speech in Nigeria, such as the Electoral Act, have implementation gaps. Besides, it revealed that hate speeches are catalysts of disintegration among the different religious and tribal groups in Nigeria. The paper insists on a clear and objective understanding of what constitute hate speech and the parameters for delineating it as necessary pre-condition for mitigating its abuses and therefore guaranteeing the rights to freedom of expression by political opposition and ordinary citizens. The study recommends that the guarantee of freedom of expression requires that hate speech laws are carefully drafted, and that the implementation gaps associated with laws that address hate speech and rights violation should be strengthened.

**Keywords:** Politics, Hate Speech, Fundamental Human Right, Freedom of Expression.

### **Introduction**

Fundamental human right is a universal declaration which makes the right to freedom of expression explicit, inalienable, universally recognized and protected under statutory instruments of State. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, like those of other countries, have explicitly provided for the protection of this right because of its fundamental imperative and significance to the sustainability of personal liberty of the citizens and democratic practices. Section 39(1) of the constitution guarantees freedom of expression as a fundamental right. In addition, the right to freedom of expression is also protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the various Regional Instruments and Conventions on human and people's rights, including the African Charter on

Human and Peoples Rights (1986). In these statutory rights instruments, obligations and duties are imposed on the State or its agencies and on individuals to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The right to freedom of expression, like most other rights, is far from been sacrosanct or immutable as there are recognized restrictions and exceptions to this right. Thus, such restrictions or exceptions are to be found in the law of defamation; hence, the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression must as well take into cognizance the right of other citizens and groups to protect their reputation (Udofa, 2011). Evidently, a number of nations have introduced laws that seemingly impact negatively on human rights, following rising incidences of global terrorism and other forms of speech induced violence and warfare. For instance, the events of 11 September, 2001, and the subsequent so-called war on terror, triggered a number of human rights setbacks. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression noted that several states responded to the events of 11 September, 2001, by adopting laws which have negative implications for certain rights, including freedom of expression (Callamard, 2005). Consequently, a human rights organization named ARTICLE 19, in its global campaign for free expression, has monitored worldwide the growth in anti-terrorist legislation and state secrecy laws, increasing use of defamation laws, media censorship, self-censorship, and media biases.

In practice, freedom of expression can be limited in the name of prohibiting the incitement of hatred only if there is a close nexus between the expression in question and the risk of harm, and when the risk is imminent. Intent must be shown and the anticipated danger should not be remote or conjectural and the expression concerned should be intrinsically dangerous to the public interest. Furthermore, the state should ensure that the restriction imposed is the least restrictive means possible for protecting the interest threatened. In other words, international law calls for a careful balance to be struck between protecting the right to freedom of expression on the one hand, and prohibiting advocacy for hatred on grounds of nationality, race and religion on the other (Udofa, 2011).

Therefore the likelihood that hate speech will spark violence in any given situation can be estimated using just these five criteria: the speaker, the audience, the speech itself, the social and historical context, and the means of dissemination. In each case, one or more of these criteria may be especially important. A speaker can have great influence over a particular audience, and certain audiences may be especially vulnerable because of economic hardship, fear, or existing grievances. Certain language-related events, defined broadly to include such acts of expression as burning a holy book can be particularly powerful. In some cases, it is the last criterion, the mode of dissemination, which is of paramount importance, especially when it is a form of new media. Text messaging is used increasingly to organize riots and massacres in many countries. For youths in developing nations whose cell phones link them to the wider world and give them a sense of agency and power, a message may pop up on their screens like this one from the 2007, when ethnic violence broke out in Kenya, (Callamard, 2005).

In Nigeria, there are serious concerns over proposals for hate speech laws given the country's fragility in terms of democratic practices. This is particularly so given the high level of political intolerance and the rising incidences of executive impunity in the country; a situation that has put Nigeria on the spot on matters of human rights abuse. Also, there are equally growing concerns over abuse of freedom of speech among groups, particularly the political class in Nigeria. Therefore hate speech has transcended social-cultural and religious boundaries to politics in Nigeria. It is in this context that an interrogation of the politics of hate speech becomes imperative to the study. Doing this also entails establishing the link between politics of hate speech and fundamental human rights in Nigeria, identifying challenges and making concrete recommendations.

## **Conceptual and theoretical Issues**

### **Hate Speech**

There is no international legal definition of what constitutes hate speech, and the characterization of what is 'hateful' is controversial and disputed (Gutteres, 2019). In the Social sciences, the concept of hate speech is still evolving in literature. Notwithstanding, however, there are attempts by scholars and other relevant authorities at giving meaning to the concept. Neisser (1994), defines hate speech as all communications (whether verbal, written, symbolic) that insults a racial, ethnic and political group, whether by suggesting that they are inferior in some respect or by indicating that they are despised or not welcome for any other reasons. Gutteres (2019) notes that hate speech is any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, (2013), notes that hate speech includes: (a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the grounds in (b) above; (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination; and (e) participation in organizations and activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination.

The Encyclopedia Britannica (2015) describes hate speech as a statement intended to demean and brutalize another or the use of cruel and derogatory language on the basis of real or alleged membership in a social group. Hate speech is speech that attacks a person or a group on the basis of protected attributes such as race, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity (Nockleby, 2000). Vice President of the Federal Government of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbanjo refers to hate speech as specie of terrorism (Mamah, Akinferon, Agbakwuru, & Afer, 2017)). To him, hate speech is the unlawful use of violence or intimidation against individuals or groups especially for political aims. The law on hate speech terrorism 2011 in Nigeria defines hate speech as an act

deliberately done with malice and which may seriously harm or damage a country or a population (Ndah-Isaiah, 2017). Nockleby (2000) defines hate speech as that speech which attacks a person or group on the basis of attributes such as race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability or gender. Enahoro (2017) sees hate speech as polluted statements, especially by Nigerians, attacking each other on the basis of ethnicity or religion. Nadim and Fledmoe (2016) describe hate speech as any persecuting, degrading or discriminating speech on ground of the recipient's minority group identity; and that such speech that will be regarded as hate speech must be conveyed publicly or in the presence of others and be directed at a certain group or on individuals' assumed group identity.

According to Leets (2002), hate speech has serious consequences; it violates the individual's dignity, resulting in humiliation, distress and psychological or emotional pain. On the other hand, Nemes (2002), opines that hate speech can provoke pain, distress, fear, embarrassment and isolation to individuals. While hate speech towards groups of people can bring inequality problems and isolation, it creates the feeling of fear and discourages them from participating in the community and expressing their opinions. The Danish Penal Code, (266 B) prohibits hate speech, and legal regime in Denmark defines it as publicly making statements by which a group is threatened (trues), insulted (forhånes) or degraded (nedværdiges) due to race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, faith or sexual orientation. However, there has been considerable debate over the definition of hate speech (vihapuhe) in the Finnish language. According to Finnish Penal Code, (Chapter 11, Section 10), if "hate speech" is taken to mean ethnic agitation, it is prohibited in Finland and defined in the section 11 of the penal code, as war crimes and crimes against humanity, as published information or as an opinion or other statement that threatens or insults a group because of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or conviction, sexual orientation, disability, or a comparable basis. Ethnic agitation is punishable with a fine or up to 2 years in prison, or 4 months to 4 years if aggravated (such as incitement to genocide). Critics claim that, in political contexts, labeling certain opinions and statements hate speech can be used to silence unfavorable or critical opinions and suppress debate. Certain politicians, including Member of Parliament and the leader of the Finns Party Jussi Halla-aho, consider the term "hate speech" problematic because of the disagreement over its definition. Notwithstanding, hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace (Gutteres, 2019)

There has been much debate over freedom of expression or speech, hate speech and hate speech legislation (Herz & Molnar, 2012). The laws of some countries describe hate speech as speech, gestures, conduct, writing, or displays that incite violence or prejudicial actions against a group or individuals on the basis of their membership in the group, or which disparage or intimidate a group or individuals on the basis of their membership in the group. The law may identify a group based on certain characteristics (Criminal Justice Act, 2003; Terry, 2008). It is instructive to assert that in some countries, hate speech is not a legal term, while in some countries, including the United States, hate speech is constitutionally protected. In some countries, a victim of hate speech may seek redress under civil law, criminal law, or both (Stone, 1994; Volokh, 2015; Volokh, 2017). Nevertheless, the right to freedom of expression is well established in international law, which also requires that

states refrain from interfering with this right, unless the interference is necessary to protect a legitimate interest, and is provided by law. Notwithstanding, international law equally requires states to prohibit the advocacy of any national, racial or religious hatred. Article 20(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) stipulates that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Social Responsibility Media Theory. The theory originated from Robert Hutchins Commission on the freedom of press of 1947. It propagates the right of the press to criticize any institutions and even government, but it must be responsible enough to maintain the stability of the society. The Commission talks about a free and responsible press as being the cornerstone of any society. The guiding principle of the press at all times must and should be in Public Interest.

The theory came about as a result of the gross abuse observed in the libertarian era. It assumed rather erroneously that all human beings are necessarily responsible and could be trusted to use good judgment in carrying out their task and responsibility of keeping the public informed, but giving the press unbridled freedom is dangerous. According to Okunna (1994), no nation will indefinitely tolerate a freedom of the expression that serves to divide the country and to open up the floodgates of criticism against the freely chosen government that leads it. Ajibefun & Daramola (2003), noted that the Social Responsibility Theory advocates that:

- The media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society.
- The obligations are mainly to be met by setting high professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
- In accepting and applying these obligations, media should be self-regulating within the frame of laws of the land.
- The media must avoid whatever could lead to crime, violence, or civil disorder or give offence to minority groups.
- The media should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of the society, giving access to various points of view and to right of reply.
- Journalists and media professionals should be accountable to the society as a whole.

### **Empirical Review of Hate Speech Cases/Laws**

Hate speech laws have come to stay in several countries across different climes. However, there are a number of minimum standards and parameters that need to be adhered to in ensuring a balance between fundamental human rights of freedom of expression and effective hate speech mitigation. Udofa, (2011) argued that any restriction to fundamental human rights implies that:

- it should be clearly and narrowly defined;
- it should be applied by a body which is independent of political, commercial or other unwarranted influences, and in a manner which is neither arbitrary nor discriminatory, and which is subject to adequate safeguards against abuse, including the right of access to an independent court or tribunal;
- no one should be penalized for statements which are true;
- no one should be criminally penalized for the dissemination of hate speech unless it has been shown that they did so with the intention of inciting discrimination, hostility or violence;
- the right of journalists to decide how best to communicate information and ideas to the public should be respected, particularly when they are reporting on racism and intolerance;
- prior censorship should not be used as a tool against hate speech;
- care should be taken to apply the least intrusive and restrictive measures in recognition of the fact that there are various available measures, some of which exert less of a chilling effect on freedom of expression than others; and
- any imposition of sanctions should be in strict conformity with the principle of proportionality and criminal sanctions. In particular, imprisonment should be applied only as a last resort.

Bell (2009) opines that laws against hate speech can be divided into two types: those intended to preserve public order and those intended to protect human dignity. Furthermore, those designed to protect public order require a higher threshold to be violated, so they are not specifically enforced frequently, and those meant to protect human dignity have a much lower threshold for violation, so those in Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands tend to be more frequently enforced.

As a basis and justification for hate speech laws, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR, Article 20), states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law". Similarly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, (ICERD, article 4) prohibits all incitement of racism. Concerning the debate over how freedom of speech applies to the Internet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has sponsored conferences concerning such sites under the auspices of Preparatory Committee for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, (United Nations, 27 April 2001).

In the Canadian context, any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation and disability, is an indictable offence under the Criminal Code and it carries a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

There is no minimum sentence (Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985). Publicly inciting hatred against any identifiable group is also an offence. It can be prosecuted either as an indictable offence with a maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment, or as a summary conviction offence with a maximum sentence of six months' imprisonment. There are no minimum sentences in either case (RSC, *ibid.*). In Canada, the offence of publicly inciting hatred makes exceptions for cases of statements of truth, and subjects of public debate and religious doctrine. The landmark judicial decision on the constitutionality of this law was *R vs. Keegstra* (1990).

Furthermore, the Council of Europe in its sponsored No Hate Speech movement actively raised awareness about hate speech in order to help combat its associated problems. While Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights does not prohibit criminal laws against revisionism such as denial or minimization of genocides or crimes against humanity, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe went further and recommended in 1997 that member governments take appropriate steps to combat hate speech under its Recommendation R (97) 20 (Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, 1997). The ECHR does not offer an accepted definition for hate speech but instead offers only parameters by which prosecutors can decide if the hate speech is entitled to the protection of freedom of speech (Sharon, 2013).

In Germany, *Volksverhetzung* (incitement to hatred) is a punishable offense under Section 130 of the *Strafgesetzbuch* (Germany's criminal code) and can lead to five years' imprisonment. Section 130 of the German Criminal Code makes it a crime to publicly incite hatred against parts of the population or to call for violent or arbitrary measures against them or to insult, maliciously slur or defame them in a manner violating their (constitutionally protected) human dignity. For instance, it is illegal to publicly call certain ethnic groups maggots or freeloaders (St GB §130 (2) 1. c). Incitement to hatred therefore is punishable in Germany even if committed abroad and even if committed by non-German citizens, if only the incitement of hatred takes effect within German territory, e.g., the seditious sentiment was expressed in German writing or speech and made accessible in Germany, (German Criminal Code's Principle of Ubiquity, Section 9 §1 Alt. 3 and 4 of the *Strafgesetzbuch*). On June 30, 2017, Germany approved a bill criminalizing hate speech on social media sites. Aside criminalizing hate speech, the law states that social networking sites may be fined up to €50 million (US\$56 million) if they persistently fail to remove illegal content within a week, including defamatory fake news (Jordans, 2017).

In India, freedom of speech and expression is protected by article 19 (1) of the constitution of India, but under article 19(2) reasonable restrictions can be imposed on freedom of speech and expression in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence (The Constitution of India, 2014).

In Japan, the Japanese law covers threats and slander, but does not apply to hate speech against general groups of people. Japan became a member of the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1995. Article 4 of

the convention sets forth provisions calling for the criminalization of hate speech, but the Japanese government suspended the provisions, saying actions to spread or promote the idea of racial discrimination have not been taken in Japan to such an extent that legal action is necessary. The Foreign Ministry says that this assessment remains unchanged, (Wikipedia, 2019). However, in May 2013, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 2013) warned the Japanese government that it needs to take measures to curb hate speech against so-called comfort women. The committee's recommendation called for the Japanese government to better educate Japanese society on the plight of women who were forced into sexual slavery to prevent stigmatization and to take necessary measures to repair the lasting effects of exploitation, including addressing their right to compensation.

In 2013, following demonstrations, parades, and comments posted on the Internet threatening violence against foreign residents of Japan, especially Koreans, there were concerns that hate speech is a growing problem in Japan, (*Japan Times*, 5 June 2013). It further reported that Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and Justice Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki have expressed concerns about the increase in hate speech, saying that it "goes completely against the nation's dignity", but so far have stopped short of proposing any legal action against protesters.

On 22 September 2013, about 2,000 people participated in the "March on Tokyo for Freedom" campaigning against hate speech marches. Participants called on the Japanese government to sincerely adhere to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Sexual minorities and the disabled also participated in the march. Again on 25 September, 2013, a new organization, An international network overcoming hate speech and racism (Norikoenet) that is opposed to hate speech against ethnic Koreans and other minorities in Japan was launched (Wikipedia, 2019). Lending its voice, a United Nations panel urged Japan to ban hate speech. Thus, in May 2016, Japan passed a law dealing with hate speech. However, it does not ban hate speech and sets no penalty for committing it (Osaki, 2016).

In addition, the Dutch penal code prohibits both insulting a group (article 137c) and inciting hatred, discrimination or violence (Article 137d). The definition of the offences as outlined in the penal code is as follows: Article 137c: He who publicly, orally, in writing or graphically, intentionally expresses himself insultingly regarding a group of people because of their race, their religion or their life philosophy, their heterosexual or homosexual orientation or their physical, psychological or mental disability, shall be punished by imprisonment of no more than a year or a monetary penalty of the third category. Article 137d: He who publicly, orally, in writing or graphically, incites hatred against, discrimination of or violent action against person or belongings of people because of their race, their religion or their life philosophy, their gender, their heterosexual or homosexual orientation or their physical, psychological or mental disability, shall be punished by imprisonment of no more than a year or a monetary penalty of the third category (Wikipedia, 2021).

In January 2009, a court in Amsterdam ordered the prosecution of Geert Wilders, a Dutch Member of Parliament, for breaching articles 137c and 137d. On 23 June 2011, Wilders was

acquitted of all charges (BBC Report, 2009). In 2016, in a separate case, Wilders was found guilty of both insulting a group and inciting discrimination for promising an audience that he would deliver on their demand for fewer Moroccans (*Chicago Tribune*, 2016.)

With respect to Norway, hate speech is prohibited and it is defined as publicly making statements that threaten or ridicule someone or that incite hatred, persecution or contempt for someone due to their skin colour, ethnic origin, homosexual orientation, religion or philosophy of life, (The Norwegian Penal Code). At the same time, the Norwegian Constitution guarantees the right to free speech, and there has been an ongoing public and judicial debate over where the right balance between the ban against hate speech and the right to freedom of expression or speech lies. Norwegian courts have been restrictive in the use of the hate speech law and only a few persons have been sentenced for violating the law since its implementation in 1970. However, a public Free Speech Committee (1996–1999), recommended abolishing the hate speech law but the Norwegian Parliament instead voted to slightly strengthen it.

In the United Kingdom, several statutes criminalize hate speech against several categories of people. The statutes forbid communication that is hateful, threatening, or abusive, and targets a person on account, of disability, ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), race, religion, sexual orientation, or skin colour. The penalties for hate speech include fines, imprisonment, or both, (Public Order Act, 1986). The United States does not have hate speech laws, since American courts have repeatedly ruled that laws criminalizing hate speech violate the guarantee to freedom of speech contained in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.[10] There are several categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment, such as speech that calls for imminent violence upon a person or group. However, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that hate speech is not one of these categories, (Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969); *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377 (1992); *Snyder v. Phelps*, 562 U.S. 443 (2011); *Matal v. Tam*, 582 U.S., (2017)). Proponents of hate speech legislation in the United States have argued that freedom of speech undermines the 14th Amendment by bolstering an oppressive narrative which demeans equality and the Reconstructive Amendment's purpose of guaranteeing equal protection under the law, (Downs & Cowan, 2012).

In South Africa, hate speech (along with incitement to violence and propaganda for war) is specifically excluded from protection of freedom of expression or speech in the South African Constitution. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, (2000) contains the following clause:...No person may publish, propagate, advocate or communicate words based on one or more of the prohibited grounds, against any person, that could reasonably be construed to demonstrate a clear intention to be hurtful; be harmful or to incite harm; promote or propagate hatred. The prohibited grounds include race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. The crime of *crimen injuria* (unlawfully, intentionally and seriously impairing the dignity of another (Clark, 2003) may also be used to prosecute hate speech (Hanti, 2006).

It is reported that in 2011, a South African court banned Dubula iBhunu (Shoot the Boer), a derogatory song that degraded Afrikaners, on the basis that it violated a South African law prohibiting speech that demonstrates a clear intention to be hurtful, to incite harm, or to promote hatred (Benesch, 2012). Accordingly, in October 2016, the draft Hate Crimes Bill was introduced. It aims to address racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and discrimination based on gender, sex, sexual orientation and other issues, by providing an offence of hate crime. It includes controversial provisions that criminalize hate speech in ways that could be used to impermissibly restrict the right to freedom of expression (Amnesty International Report, 2017). The Foundation of Economic Education views this bill as a repetition of a mistake during the apartheid era, some maintaining that it constitutes the gravest threat to freedom of expression which South Africans have ever faced (Van Staden, 2017).

In the preceding section, we have explored country case studies with reference to hate speech legislations. In the overall context, it is worthy of note that countries abiding by international or regional standards (namely- Europe, Africa, and the Americas), may interpret them differently. Nowhere is it clearer than in the European Union, where countries have approached and dealt with hate groups and hate speech in very different ways. For instance, France and Germany have taken a much more prohibitive approach to hate speech (for instance with regard to Holocaust denial, or incitement to religious hatred) than the United Kingdom. The American approach, on the other hand, protects hate speech unless the speech actually incites to violence and the speech is likely to give rise to imminent violence. This is a very stringent standard; as a general matter at least, even the most virulent racist speech, even speech advocating violence and filled with racial insult and slurs, will be protected unless it can be shown that violence is likely to occur virtually immediately.

### **Hate Speech Politics and Fundamental Human Rights in Nigeria**

As contained in Chapter IV, Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed and protected. The provision of the law states that:

- a) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.
- b) Without prejudice to the generality of sub section (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions provided that no person, other than the government of the federation or a state, or any other person or body authorized by the president on fulfillment of a condition laid down by Act of National Assembly, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purpose whatsoever.

The right to freedom of expression is also guaranteed under the various international instruments on human rights and fundamental freedoms, to which Nigeria is signatory. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights provides as that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and that this right includes freedom to hold

opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information, and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Similarly, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights expressly provides for the right to freedom of expression. It states that:

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print in the form of art or through any other medium of his choice.

Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights also provides for the protection of the right to freedom of expression in the following terms:

1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information.
2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinion within the law.

But an appraisal of the provisions of the above laws would show a thin line between fundamental human rights of freedom of expression and hate speech law. Perhaps, this may have informed Callamard's (2005) submissions that the right to freedom of expression implies that it should be possible to scrutinize, openly debate and criticize, even harshly and unreasonably, belief systems, opinions, and institutions, as long as this does not amount to advocating hatred against an individual.

In Nigeria, policy matters relating to freedom of expression on one hand, and hate speech on the other, have become contentious to experts and delicate to governments owing to its socio-political implications on national security and stability. Attempt at establishing clear-cut boundaries between the two led to proposals for hate speech laws. The bill to this effect was first presented by Senator Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi in March 2018. The bill defines hate speech as when a person uses, publishes, presents, produces, plays, provides, distributes and/or directs the performance of any material, written and or visual which is threatening, abusive or insulting or involves the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior commits an offence if such person intends thereby to stir up ethnic hatred, or having regard to all the circumstances, ethnic hatred is likely to be stirred up against any person or person from such an ethnic group in Nigeria (Draft of Proposed Anti Hate Speech Bill, 2019). The bill proposed that any person found guilty of any form of hate speech offence shall be liable to life imprisonment, and where that results in the death of another person the penalty shall be death by hanging, upon conviction. It is instructive to note that the bill prescribed death penalty for hate speech only if such speech has deadly consequences. It is also instructive to note that capital punishment exists in Nigeria for offences like murder, armed robbery and treason. Offenders were killed by hanging until 2015, when lethal injection was also introduced in the Administration of Criminal Justice Act. According to Amnesty International, Benin Prison in Edo state carried out the last executions in Nigeria in 2016.

Notwithstanding, this bill faced heavy criticism and was abandoned in June 2019 after it failed to make it to the final reading. It was reintroduced in November 2019, as the National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate Speeches Bill, 2019 (SB. 154). Most Nigerians saw the bill as an attempt to gag the press and citizens. Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana even doubted that the national assembly had the power to pass such a bill into law. Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka also said the bill seeks to silence the voice of criticism.

However, Omirhobo in an interview with Onyekwere (*The Guardian Newspapers*, 2019) asserted that jurisprudentially, law is not static; it is dynamic and evolving with society to meet with social needs. He maintained that most laws in Nigeria are obsolete, more so that there are emerging social challenges that are new to the country that need to be regulated by laws, thus making it proper, lawful and constitutional for the National Assembly to make laws regulating social media, with respect to hate speech, provided it is in line with the demands of the constitution; the grand-norm and the supreme law of the land which binds all authorities, and persons throughout the Federation, and which gives validity to every other law in force in Nigeria. But the caveat to this is that any law passed by the National Assembly, which is inconsistent with the Nigerian constitution shall be to the extent of such inconsistency null and void.

Nevertheless, Nigerians are apprehensive that hate law in the country is intended to be used to gag free speech by a government that is perceived as being highly intolerant of the opposition and other dissenting views. These criticisms came amidst the insistence of the ruling All Progressive Congress Party that they would not go back on the bill, a stand which was later to be amplified by Nigeria's Minister of Information and culture, Lai Mohammed, who insisted that the bill's aim at regulating social media was to curb fake news and hate speech (*The Sun Newspapers*, 2019).

But Amnesty International (2019) observed that the proposed National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate Speech bill, and the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation and other Related Offences bill, give authorities arbitrary powers to shut down the internet and limit access to social media, and make criticizing the government punishable with penalties. Furthermore, most Nigerians are of the view that with incessant harassment of the press, politicization of the judiciary, internal use of the military for political objectives, public repression and suppression of political opponents as well as religious and ethnic persecution, any form of hate speech law would be suspect and amount to reign of terror in Nigeria.

Hate speech politics has adversely impacted on the fundamental human right of free speech, social stability and the democratization process in Nigeria. Findings of studies show a correlation between hate speeches, fundamental right to free speech and social stability in Nigeria. A study conducted by Adedokun, (2020) on the effect of hate speech on citizens in Ibadan metropolis show that hate speech permeates the Nigerian society and has the potential of disrupting the progress and development of the nation as its tenets are against tolerance and respect for human dignity. Abiodun, et-al. (2017) observed that during the 2015 general election in Nigeria, the political environment was intensified with the proliferation of adverts, political innuendos and propaganda messages. Media organizations in Nigeria, as always, became vehicles and channels of expressions and propaganda. A significant number of these

messages had elements of hate speeches which were targeted at ridiculing opponents and opposition parties.

Though there have been other instances of hate speech politics in Nigeria, it manifested more during the 2015 general elections. A few instances which were recorded during campaigns for the 2015 general elections, according to Mrabure (2016), were identified to include when:

“Katsina State Gov. Shema reportedly urged his supporters to attack opponents and referred to his political opponents as cockroaches urging his supporters to kill them as they kill cockroaches. The Ekiti State Governor, Peter Ayodele Fayose in January repeatedly took out front page newspaper advertorials warning voters not to vote for the APC presidential candidate Muhamadu Buhari. These adverts, now widely known as “death wish advertorials,” insinuated that the Presidential candidate was likely to die in office if elected, like the late President, Yar adua. Speaking during the PDP Women Presidential Campaign Rally in Kogi State, the then Nation’s First Lady, reportedly described Gen. Buhari unfit to be the country’s president, calling him old and brain dead. Patience Jonathan is also recorded as having urged the members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to stone anyone that promises them change. Change is the slogan of the All Progressives Congress (APC). In the same campaign speech given at a rally which held on Monday, March 2, in Calabar, Mrs. Jonathan is quoted as saying “Our people no dey born shildren wey dem no dey fit count. Our men no dey born shildren throwway for street. We no dey like the people for that side,” thus making derogatory statements obviously referring to the Northern parts of the country where the awful practice of child abandonment known as ‘Almajiri’ still occurs” (Mrabure, 2016, pp.162).

Ezeibe (2015) also observed that hate speech has been elevated to the status of political campaign strategy and it accounts for the escalation of pre, during and post election violence in Nigeria. An examination of these therefore shows how hate speech politics violates and equally undermines fundamental human right to freedom of expression. This agrees with the submissions of Mrabure (2016) that hate speech does exist and freedom of expression may sometimes be curtailed whenever there is an occurrence of the uttering of hate speech whether verbally or in print that might endanger public safety, unity and national security.

Although the Electoral Act contains detailed provisions specifically prohibiting politically motivated hateful speech, as contained in Section 95 and 102 of the Act (Mrabure, 2016), the 1999 Nigerian constitution does not expressly stipulates what constitutes hate speech, nor does it provide sanctions for offenders-apparently in protection of the freedom of speech. Adedokun (2019) had stated that there had been no legal laws on hate speech. This appears to be the gap that has paved way for the politicization of hate speech, abuse of freedom of speech, and the clamour for hate speech laws.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study examined the politics of hate speech and fundamental human rights in Nigeria, from 2015-2020. Findings of the study show that hate speech in Nigeria is largely promoted

by the political class. It also found that whereas hate speech laws in other claims have further strengthened and safeguarded the right of groups, in Nigeria the study found that existing laws that seek to address hate speech, such as the Electoral Act, have implementation gaps. Evidences of the study show that there is a significant relationship between hate speech and other fundamental human rights. This is particularly manifest in the abuse of the right to free speech through the use of hateful language against divergent groups and opinions, and suppression of political opposition by ruling governments. It has also manifested in violent destruction of lives and property.

Furthermore, the study found that hate speeches are catalysts of disintegration among the different religious and tribal groups in Nigeria. This further explains the lack of trust and confidence among the various groups and leadership in the country.

### **Recommendations**

As a corollary to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

1. The need to make legislation on hate speech should be anchored on honesty, transparency and trust, devoid of political considerations.
2. There is the need for government and the civil society to partner towards enlightening the citizens on their fundamental rights and their limits within the ambit of the law.
3. The law courts have a duty to ensure that the fundamental rights of all citizens are upheld and protected especially as it relates to hate speech conflicts.
4. The extant laws that appear to address hate speech in all its ramifications should be reviewed with the view to adequately capture changing realities in terms of evidence and sentence in Nigeria.
5. The implementation gaps associated with laws that address issues of hate speech and rights violation should be strengthened.

### **Conclusion**

The right to freedom of expression is a fundamental right which safeguards the exercise of all other rights as well as a catalyst for deepening democracy. However, safeguarding this all-important right has been problematic in Nigeria because of hate speech and Nigeria's other fault lines. The guarantee of this right therefore requires that hate speech laws be carefully drafted to protect vulnerable groups in society. This need is highlighted by the fact that the laws are sometimes used by the state against the very citizens it seeks to protect. This is premised on the grounds that hate speech laws can be used to restrict minorities from promoting their views, culture and identity. Hate speech legislation in such cases constitutes a blunt instrument, a double-edged sword that too often amounts to political expediency rather than well thought-through strategies to tackle discrimination, prevent violence and protect the right to life and to equality.

And bearing in mind that there is no denying that certain forms of hateful expression can threaten the dignity of targeted individuals and create an environment in which the enjoyment of equality is not possible, this study found that an effective response to vilifying expression

requires a sustained commitment on the part of governments to promote equality of opportunity, to protect and promote linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious rights, and to implement public education programmes about tolerance and pluralism. All these would go a long way in mitigating the challenges associated with the politics of hate speech and fundamental human rights in Nigeria.

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## **THE STATE AND POVERTY PROGRAMME FAILURES IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

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### **Abstract**

The relevance of history in appreciating the past, understanding the present and predicting the future cannot be ignored. This paper explores the history of poverty policy failures in Nigeria. In its attempt to unveil the underlining reason for the inability of past poverty policies to reduce poverty in Nigeria, the study adopts the theory of post-colonial state. Data was collected through the qualitative method with reliance on secondary data sources like books, journals and other documentary materials. The study adopts qualitative descriptive data analysis. The paper highlights various past and current poverty reduction programmes articulated and implemented by the Nigeria state. It discovers that the culture of corruption inherent in Nigerian political environment accounts for the failure of these poverty reduction programmes to achieve their desired objectives. The paper affirms that unless, selfless and responsible political leadership is entrenched in Nigeria, the issue of poverty reduction shall remain unresolved.

**Keywords:** Poverty Reduction, Policy Failures, Historical Narrative, Informal Sector, Self-employment, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

The post-colonial history of Nigeria is redolent with development strategies targeted at reducing the sufferings of the unemployed. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria had launched and implemented over 40 poverty reduction programmes to reduce poverty. Some of these past attempts include the establishment of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN), the Better Life Programme (BLP) for rural women; a gender specific programme designed to improve the life of rural women, the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the National Agricultural Land Development Authority

(NALDA), the Strategic Grains Reserve Authority (SGRA), the Accelerated Crop Production (ACP), the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Universal Basic Education (UBE), and the Vision 2020, the N-Power, among numerous others.

Similarly, the country had ceded to, and domesticated several global and continental development plans, targeted at mitigating the grave effect of poverty. Some of these continental plans include: the Lagos Plan of Action; the United Nation's New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; the Africa-Europe Summits' Cairo Plan of Action; the World Bank led Strategic Partnership with Africa; the International Monetary Fund-led Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Japan-led Tokyo Agenda for Action, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) among others.

Successive administrations in Nigeria (civilian and military) had ostensibly demonstrated its commitment to, and concern for the plights of the ordinary citizen in Nigeria. Nkom (1989:10), observes that:

motivated by the desire to advertise their “concern” for the sufferings of the ordinary citizen, successive governments in Nigeria have tried to outdo each other in the introduction of new strategies and programmes portrayed in sleek slogans and catchy/captivating acronyms.

In their desperate attempt to “buy” legitimacy and political support, successive governments had tried to whitewash their poverty reduction programmes in order to distinguish them from the ones of their predecessors (Nkom, 1989:10). In most cases, “achievements” claimed to have been recorded for such programmes in speeches, statements and media releases were often at variance with the reality on the ground. Poverty reduction measures and their objectives have tended to be designed by people who are far removed from the poor, rural environment and their knowledge of poverty is basically shaky and unreliable. This is particularly so because government officials do not deem it necessary to consult or involve the poor population in the design and implementation of some of the poverty reduction programmes. Nkom (1989) asserts that, the policy has been inspired largely by the ideology and interest of the World Bank and IMF and not the needs and objective realities of the people. Similarly, successive governments in Nigeria had initiated several programmes,

aimed at reducing poverty, but these programmes had not been successful (Iloabanafor, 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is predicated on the Marxist theory of post-colonial state of Africa. The Marxists see the state in its generic sense, as maintaining an order in which the interest of the ruling class is favoured in the long run. This is because it preserves the conditions under which the ruling class is dominant. Thus, Ake (1985:5) observes that:

the state is a specific modality of class domination, one in which domination is mediated by commodity exchange so that the system of institutional mechanisms of domination is differentiated and disassociated from the ruling class and even the society appears as an objective force standing alongside society.

The important point to note about the character of the state in advanced capitalist society is that it has been able to play the role of organizing the conditions under which the bourgeoisie maintain its dominance singly because it is not a direct instrument of this class. It appears relatively autonomous from the ruling class and from the dominated class (Draper, 1974:74-84). According to Ekekwe, (1980.iv) the state's relative autonomy allows it, ostensibly, to cater for the general interests of society, but it is also crucial for organizing the bourgeoisie hegemony. Thus, from the Marxist persuasion, the state in capitalist Western formations, though functions in the interest of the bourgeoisie, it hardly appears to be serving this purpose since it is ordinarily seen to be neutral, which is the same as saying that the state is class-neutral. As Ake (1985:3) argues, 'although the state is institutionally constituted so that it is independent of the social class, including the hegemonic class, it is by no means, independent of the mode of production. Thus, state domination remains class domination but the autonomy of the state tends to obscure this to the 'ordinary eye'.

Ekekwe (1985:12) notes that the distinction between state in advanced capitalist societies and those in post-colonial formations is that whereas the state in the former functions to maintain the economic and social relations under which the bourgeois accumulation takes place, in the later, factors which have to do with the level of development of productive forces make the state direct instrument of capital accumulation for the dominant class or its elements. Thus, as Ake (1985:10) argues, the state was crude tool of

colonial capital, used to coerce Africans into commodity relations, to change their pattern of production, to prevent the emergence of capitalist African bourgeoisie. The colonial state was instrumental in synchronizing the colonial state in the economy with that of the metropolitan state. The pervasive role of colonial state in the economy, which was primarily meant to serve metropolitan capitalism, foreclosed the development of orthodox capitalist culture in the colonies so that capitalist accumulation took the form of using the instrumentality of the apparatus of the state.

Using the Marxian theory of the post-colonial state of Africa to explain the study, the state in Nigeria is a direct instrument for primitive accumulation by public officials to the peril of development plans and collective interest of ordinary Nigerian citizens. Again, given the instrumentalist character of post-colonial state of Nigeria, relevant public officials see the control of poverty reduction programmes such as NAPEP, NDE, N-Power, YOU-WIN, as opportunity for self-enrichment of themselves materially. Against this background, it can be appreciated why Nigerian political class are reluctant to invest genuinely in training human capital which is the basis for tackling poverty, especially in the informal sector of the economy. This is because investing in human capital would deny state officials responsible for these poverty reduction policies opportunities to misappropriate the funds. It is within the context of this theory that the inability of Nigeria state to formulate and implement genuine and sustainable poverty reduction programmes can be explained and understood.

### **Specific Government Responses to Poverty concerns in Nigeria**

It is obvious that government has shown concerns on poverty issues in Nigeria. As a prelude to our discussion, it is important to note that poverty has been a perennial problem in Nigeria prior to the advent of European traders in West African sub-region. The primitive men in the communal setting had hunting as their major occupation. The pre-colonial agriculture framework of the geographical segments that eventually emerged as Nigeria was operating at a subsistent level until the colonization of the country by the British government. Therefore, what the natives produced through communal life was not enough to fight poverty (Okeke&Ijere, 1999).

### **The Colonial Era**

The British Colonial Masters, in their adventure to colonize and exploit the human and material resources and their quest to expand their empire, inherited poverty and backward

natives as liabilities. The ideology of the colonial agricultural policies, which derived from the alien development philosophy, was that development should follow a specific evolutionary dimension; in which the western capitalist societies were regarded as the model which the underdeveloped countries should adopt.

Njoku (2001) argues that the economic forces that motivated the British to colonize Nigeria were of two major purposes. As a colony, Nigeria was expected to serve as a source of cheap raw agricultural and mineral resources for British industries, and secondly as an assured and protected market for British manufacturers. Agricultural product such as palm oil and kernels, cocoa, groundnuts, forest products such as timber and minerals such as tin were direly needed by British industry. The colonial agriculture policy was therefore, centered squarely on production for export. Production was in the hands of small-scale peasant farmers who employed traditional techniques of the peasants and paid no attention at all to domestic food production. In spite of the importance of agriculture in the colonial economy, the government invested extremely little in the sector. The fact was that the expatriate firms were satisfied with their monopoly of the import-export trade mainly because of the proven capacity of the peasants to supply their export requirements. This implies that Nigeria was forced to follow the capitalist path of development. The colonial regime defined for the country the path of development they should follow and determined the goals and direction of changes; the rate of change; the source of change; how changes should occur, by whom and for whom changes were affected (Nzimiro, 1995).

The social system was actually incapable of developing the nation's agriculture. The introduction of capitalist form of agriculture created more hunger for the people and dislodged more inhabitants from the rural area into urban slums where they further deteriorated. The traditional crops, which had preserved the bodies of the under-privileged masses, were progressively neglected for the sake of foreign crops, quite unfamiliar with the peasants and crops strains which have been effectively controlled by the multi-national and which would remain out of the peasants reach.

### **Post-Colonial Era**

Nigeria's independence as a sovereign nation brought about great expectations of prosperity to all Nigerians. The politicians who took over the governance of the country, at the demise of colonial rule, promised bright future for all Nigerians. Colonial exploitation was to be replaced with meritocracy, where people would be rewarded for hard work. All the

colonial obstacles to economic and social empowerment and development were to be dismantled.

After independence, some of the colonial agricultural policies were continued and in some cases modified. For instance, the marketing boards were retained but it continued to exploit the peasant farmers until the reformation of the board in 1976. The agricultural research and demonstration institute were retained and new ones were also established in different parts of the country. The post-colonial government gave the agricultural sector the attention it deserved. The authorities matched their word with action to actualize their dreams. Of great significance was the role of regional governments in poverty reduction through agricultural development programmes.

### **South Eastern and Western Regional Governments' Programmes**

Prior to independence, small-scale peasant farmers had dominated the Nigerian agricultural sector. The policy of the regional governments in the South-East and South-West towards the modernization of agricultural system and increasing the volume and quality of produce centered on tree-crop planting. The plantation, the farm settlement and the small holders schemes were the three approaches adopted by the governments to achieve their goals (Njoku, 2001). Let us briefly discuss the three approaches below:

#### **a) Plantation Scheme**

The plantation approach involved expropriation of vast areas of land. Plantations were established in areas where there was abundant and population sparse. The respective Nigeria Development Corporations managed their plantation, namely – the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC) and the Western Nigeria Development Corporation (WNDC).

Investment in tree-crop planting during 1962-68 accounted for not less than 45% of planned capital allocations of the governments of the Eastern, Western and later Mid-Western Regions. This was a remarkable departure from the colonial practice, which relied on the initiative of small-scale farmers and received only facilitative aids from government. It was obvious that the schemes were not just aimed at improving the performance of the agricultural sector but also at raising the living standard of the rural dwellers, feeding a rapidly expanding urban population, providing raw materials to the industrial sector and generating revenue for government.

#### **b) Farm Settlement Scheme**

The regional government of East, West and Mid-West established a number of farm settlements during the 1962-68 plan periods. The settlement scheme involved relocation of farmers, and the main reason for the establishment of the farm settlements rested on the fact that peasant farmers were ill-equipped to serve as the pivot of the agricultural modernization, which was the primary aim. Agricultural transformation necessitated fundamental changes in the traditional unit and basis of production. The farm settlement scheme obviated the problem of land tenure, lack of access to capital and lack of familiarity with new technique and basis to replace the bush fallow system of traditional farming. The scheme was meant to attract the growing army of young school leavers to energize the sector and boost agricultural outputs to cater for the teeming population. The farm settlement programmes proved less successful than the dream, which conceived, bore and nurtured it. The entire scheme turned out to be too capital intensive to be sustained.

### **c) Smallholder Tree-Crops Scheme**

The poor performance of the plantation and the farm settlement necessitated the government to adopt an alternative approach in its desire to invigorate and modernize agricultural production in Southern Nigeria. The Ministry of Rural Development adopted this approach in the Eastern region. The Regional Government's Oil Rehabilitation scheme was tied up to the programme. Farmers and Farmers' Cooperatives who owned a minimum of five acres of a block of land were qualified to participate in the programme. Farmers and communities were encouraged by the ministry to pool their fragmented plots of land into compact blocks to meet the five-acre required as minimum standard, to enable them benefit, on application, from the ministry's planting and replanting service.

Farmers responded positively to the smallholder tree-crop scheme because it did not involve government or the participating farmers in undue financial strain. It was also not per capital intensive. Donor agencies such as the World Bank gave material and technical support to the programmes. The ministry provided a Rural Development Officer who served as an on-sites extension consultant. The programs recorded huge success. By the end of 1966, a total of 50,000 acres had been planted or replanted according to ministry's specifications and with high-yield seeds. Besides, over 4,000 farmers had participated in the programmes. A sticking success of the agriculture policies was that the leading institution in Africa for research in tropical agriculture today was the successful researchers, which have yielded high response, pest resistant seeds (Njoku, 2001).

### **Northern Government Programme**

The agricultural improvement of the Northern Regional government centered on a demonstration extension programme. The ministry of Agriculture, which was in charge of the project, conducted demonstrations on the farm plots of selected local farmers, applying a package of recommended techniques developed by the Ministry. Farmers from the vicinity were invited to observe each step of the planning and maintenance process, and yields obtained therefrom.

The aim of the programme was to provide incentives along with complementary input to private farmers in their traditional agricultural practice. It was a device to disseminate improved farming techniques to a large number of farmers through the demonstration effect, which improved crop yields was expected to achieve. Njoku (2001) documents that the programs were extended to all the Northern provinces and the project involved about 4,435 individual demonstrations. The scheme represented transferable means of introducing new farming techniques and new inputs because the techniques were easy for the local farmers to absorb. This was the state of the art before the sudden and unfortunate military coupe d'état which toppled the civilian government in 1966.

### **The Era of Oil Boom**

The military regime, on taking over political power did not rejuvenate the agricultural sector, instead the regime caved in to the emerging oil industry to the awful neglect of agriculture sector. The discovery of oil completely alienated able bodied men and women from agriculture because the youth migrated to the cities to take up white cola jobs. Consequently, only the elderly people were left in the village to produce food for the teeming population. Under the circumstance, there was scarcity of food and there was need for an agriculture programme to deal with the situation. This was prompted the then military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) to introduce Operation Feed the Nation in 1976.

### **Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)**

Following the outcry of the masses for hunger, the then Federal Government introduced poverty alleviation scheme to ameliorate the situation. The then Military Head of State, Lt. Col. Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme on 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1976. In his speech at the launch, the Head of State averred that in the last years, the country has witnessed an alarming decline in agricultural production.

Government has had to import increasing quantities of a variety of food items from abroad. Prices of foodstuff have galloped. To make matter worse, young people have been drifting from rural areas to cities in unprecedented number, leaving behind them old men and women who cannot be expected to meet the growing food needs of the country (Obasanjo, 1976)

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme was purposefully meant to stimulate the growth of food by individuals, especially the peasants, the schools, colleges, universities and diffused through media and education the idea that everyone must grow food for the nation. The publicity made the programme become widely accepted. To facilitate action in this direction, the government created the necessary incentives to make the laudable programme practically possible through package deals like agricultural inputs, such as improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides as well as proper marketing and storage arrangements. In addition to what the state governments had already ordered for the cropping season, the federal government made available to all the state governments fifty thousand (50,000) tons of fertilizers for distribution to subsistent farmers. Farmers were made to pay a uniform price for each type of fertilizer they bought irrespective of where they lived. The federal government subsidized the process of these fertilizers. Larger quantities of improved seeds were multiplied so that in future all farmers in Nigeria could plant the highest yielding seeds available from the research institutes. Fishing nets and simple farm implements such as hoes and cutlasses produced from local foundries were made available, while large quantities of pesticides were kept in readiness to prevent pests from frustrating the efforts of the government in this direction. To protect the farmer from seasonal fluctuations in the prices of farm produce and ensure that he derived a reasonable share of the nation's wealth, the Federal Military Government announced a guaranteed minimum price for maize, guinea-corn, beans, rice and yams (Obasanjo, 1976:11).

The Federal Military Government (FMG) expanded its agricultural policy in the Third National Development Plan and laid serious emphasis on food production. The overall aim of the plan was among others to:

- train intermediate and high level manpower for agriculture;
- conduct research and develop improved facilities of crops and live-stock
- increase disease and pest control activities for food stuffs and live-stock (FGN, 1978:6).

Lofty as the programme and its implementation sounded, it was evident that the operation feed the nation did not achieve its primary objectives of combating hunger and liberating the country from poverty and self-sufficiency in food production. The failure of the programme was its emphasis on importation and distribution of fertilizer, improved seedlings, pesticides etc. rather than encouragement in the development of human capital/indigenous science and technology to manufacture these products domestically. Many saw the programme as government effort to hoodwink Nigerians rather than to feed them because it never yielded the anticipated food security or encouraged agriculture. The programme merely created awareness about food insecurity in Nigeria and the need for both the government and individuals to tackle the problem, without providing tangible solution to the problems. Nzimiro (1985) observes that the programme was controlled and directed by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie for their own benefits. The end of Obasanjo military regime ended operation feed the nation scheme and gave rise to the emergence of Green Revolution Programme by the emergent civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari in 1979.

### **Green Revolution Programme (GRP)**

In its effort to tackle the problem of increasing poverty, hunger and starvation facing the country, the Second Republic Federal Government of Nigeria, inaugurated the Green Revolution Programme in April, 1980 to boost agricultural production and to ensure rural development through agro-industries, construction of feeder roads, provision of housing, education facilities, water and electricity in the rural areas. This was to increase food production and boost export of agricultural products. To realize this objective, on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1980 the Federal Government set up a National Council on Green Revolution. The Council was charged with the following specific functions:

1. To coordinate the activities of all ministries and organizations that has bearing on agricultural production, processing, marketing and research.
2. To give general directions to the ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources on issue relating to the development of agricultural sector.
3. Monitor the activities of the Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and assist these ministries in every way in their pursuit of the goal of self-sufficiency in agricultural production.

The Green Revolution programme was conceived not only to boost agricultural production, but also to ensure rural development of agro-based industries, the

construction of feeder roads, the provision of water, housing, education, health facilities and electricity in the rural areas to improve the quality of rural life. (Shagari, 1980).

On June 3, 1980 the Federal Government set up National Council on Green Revolution. The terms of reference were, among others to:

- ❖ review the policies and programmes of various ministries concerned with the Green Revolution and advise the Council on the adequacy or otherwise of such policies and programmes for the achievement of the objectives of the Green Revolution.
- ❖ review the activities of existing institutions under the various ministries and advise the council on the strengthening of such institutions or the creation of new ones, where necessary, for the implementation of the administrative policies and programmes of the Green Revolution.
- ❖ set up sub-committees and expert working groups to study in detail all aspects of the policies and programmes for the Green Revolution to form the basis of the advice by the committee to the national council.

The committee was also charged not to overlook the tremendous contributions, which the professional and the intellectual communities could make to the success of the Green Revolution so that in the end Nigerian will be able to feed her population and have excess for export.

The problem with the green revolution was that it was executed through councils and committees whose membership was political party loyalists who saw the objects as a political patronage. Thus the rural farmers were left out in the scheme. The green revolution programme produced over-night elitist “farmers” who had no business with farming and in fact, knew nothing about farm work. As the local farmers became disenchanted and frustrated about the implementation of the programme, food importation became more pronounced and the consequence was intensified food insecurity. Achebe (2003) sums up the green revolution programme thus: “it gave Nigerians more food for thought than food for the stomach” The programme came to abrupt end in 1983 when the Buhari-led coup d’etat toppled the civilian government after it had gulped N3.8 billion tax payers’ money. Indeed, the Green Revolution Programme induced poverty and economic inequality among Nigerians.

### **Better Life Programme (BLP)**

As a hangover, Nigeria, a nation under the affliction of uncertainty, poverty and inflation, cried out for panacea of this perennial monster-hunger. A four-day national workshop on women in development was held from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 1987 at the International Conference Centre, Abuja. The workshop was organized with human and material resources contributed mainly by the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the Federal Ministries of Education, Health, Works, Housing and Information, Directorate of Social Mobilization (MAMSER) and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). The workshop culminated in the Better Life for Rural women programme (Ijere, 1991).

The Better Life for Rural Women Programme was launched by late Mrs. Maryam Babangida, wife of the then military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd) on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1987. The programme was aimed at promoting rural development through the mobilization of women at the grassroots. The project was designed to address numerous social, cultural, political and economic problems facing the people. The broader objectives of the better life programme among others include encouraging and stimulating the rural populace in general toward improving their standard of living, their families and environments.

The state governors and the local government council chairmen followed suit to launch the programme in their respective states and council areas. The wife of the head of state was the chairperson at the National level, while wives of state governors and wives of the local council chairmen were the chairpersons at their respective government domains. Thus, a programme designed to improve the life of rural women increased rural misery because real rural women were alienated completely from the programme. Indeed, the better life programme became bitter life for rural women in Nigeria. The net effect was that escalation of poverty and hunger among rural dwellers especially the women.

### **The Family Support Programme (FSP)**

The Family Support Programme was another gender specific poverty reduction programme which was inaugurated in 1994 by the wife of the then Head of State of Nigeria, Mrs. Maryam Sani Abacha. It was a child of necessity borne out of the need to improve the life and lots of Nigerian masses, especially women in the rural areas. It was to improve the

previous experiences of women in Development Programme by broadening its coverage and sharpening its focus. This programme was a shift of policy thrust on the role of family in national development, particularly as it affects major social sectors such as health, education and economic empowerment among others. The policy objectives of the Family Support Programme inter alia include:

- (a) To improve and sustain family cohesion through the promotion of social and economic well-being of the Nigerian family for its maximum contribution to national development.
- (b) To promote policies and programmes which strengthen the observance and protection of human rights and the advancement of social justice and human dignity.
- (c) To promote decent health care delivery in reducing material and child mortality and morbidity through improved health care system.

The strategies for implementation of Family Support Programme include:

- (a) Sponsoring media captions, news talk, television and radio discussions.
- (b) Establishment of relevant clubs and societies so that the rural family life shall be touched through the assistance given to women by loan.
- (c) Mounting workshops, seminars, symposia and public lectures to mobilize the people through competitions and quizzes, publications and training schemes.

The programme was implemented through media propaganda which did not have any meaningful impact on the target group. This led to its eventual collapse..

### **Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)**

Not to be beaten by his predecessors and to demonstrate that he too had a way out of the nation's poverty, the late Gen. SaniAbacha introduced the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). The Family Economic Advancement Programme was established by Decree No. 11 1997 and amended by Decree No. 4 of 1999. The programme was entrusted with the tasks of providing credit for agricultural production and processing, cottage and small-scale industries through co-operative societies to encourage the design and manufacture of plant, machinery and equipment and to establish pilot project at village levels as a means of providing employment. Before the project wound up in 2000, it had financed

20,382 projects with a total credit of N3.33 billion; trained about 2000 loan beneficiaries in cooperative laws, principles and practice and financial management and basic marketing skills (FGN, 2000). The major problem of the programme which led to its eventual demise, was the top-bottom stance of FEAP. The makers and managers of the programme were drawn from the superstructure of the society. No rural or indigent family was known to have benefited meaningfully from the programme. At the end of the programme, it gulped N10 billion tax payers' money (*Tell Magazine*, 1998:11).

### **Agricultural Development Project (ADP)**

Nigeria as a neo-colonial state, depended so much on the importation of food to feed its people, yet we could not afford to continue to import enough food to feed our teeming population due to competing demand on our meager foreign exchange earnings. There was the need to stop the food dependency syndrome with its related dangers that have characterized the economy. The increased food crisis encouraged the government to embark on the agricultural development projects as a production strategy so as to realize an efficient and effective national food policy.

The Agricultural Development Project (ADP) was established in 1974 with initial three experimental project centers at Fantua in Kaduna State, Gombe in Bauchi State and Gusau in Sokoto State. After ten years the project was introduced, the scheme was expanded to cover the whole of the country, the World Bank, the Federal and the State Governments financed the project jointly.

The Agricultural Development Project (ADP) was established on a simple philosophy of “gaffing on to the existing rural socio-economic system those vital inputs and basic infrastructures which it lacks to raise agricultural productivity and the quality of rural life (Gana, 1983:96). In fact, instead of embarking upon a radical transformation of the existing modes of production, the projects were simply planned to provide essential services and inputs to the existing system of production. The operational strategy include among others, establishment of a network of Farm Service Centers for an efficient input supply system; construction of spatial network of rural feeder roads to facilitate accessibility to farm service centre and markets.

### **River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAS)**

The River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAS) scheme was first launched in 1976 with a view to developing Nigeria's water resources to facilitate agricultural and rural development. The objective of the establishment of the organization was to tackle the perennial problems of draught and unemployment caused to many farmers during the dry season. The River Basin Development Project Authorities was basically created to undertake a comprehensive development of both underground and surface water resources for multi-purpose use; assist in the development of fisheries and improved navigation on rivers, lakes, reservoirs, lagoons and creeks in the country, among others (Gana, nd:16).

### **National Directorate of Employment (NDE)**

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established through decree No. 24 of 1986. The Federal Government of Nigeria established this Directorate with clear mandate to provide 70% of job opportunities available in the informal sector and micro-businesses. The programme implementation strategy includes training Nigerians on how to take advantage of the opportunity, including Youth Corpers to achieve the following: (a) make unemployed youths to have marketable skills through the entrepreneurship development programme; and (b) Start-Your-Own-Business programme for other employable, but unemployed Nigerians.

The NDE was basically established to create jobs for Nigerians as a means of reducing poverty. The programme had several schemes to achieve its objectives, including: youth employment and vocational skill development scheme; small scale industries and graduates employment scheme; agricultural sector employment scheme; school leavers apprentice scheme; entrepreneurs training programmes for graduates scheme; and resettlements of trained beneficiaries scheme.

The NDE trained more than 2 million unemployed Nigerians, provided business training for not less than 400,000 people, vocational training in up to 90 different trades and assistance to more than 40,000 unemployed to set up their own businesses. The directorate organized labour-based groups through which 160,000 people benefited (FGN, 2001) According to Ogwumike (2007), Oyemomi (2006), NDE is one of the institutions that survived the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era, and has continued to articulate development policies and programmes with labour intensive aimed at solving the

unemployment problems in the country. However, the Directorate has been fraught with problems, including: inadequate funding from the federal government; duplication of efforts with the statutory roles of the federal ministry of labour and productivity in the area of compilation of statistics on the unemployed in the country and claims to maintain a data bank on these, as well as matching applicants with vacancies, among others.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the National Directorate of Employment has not succeeded in its objective to stem the increasing incidence of unemployment in Nigeria.

### **Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI)**

In the face of alarming decline in agriculture production, increasing poverty and massive food shortages, the Federal Military Government under General Ibrahim Babangida established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1986. This was decisive initiative and concrete step taken to tackle the problem of rural poverty and under-development through a comprehensive and sustained programme of rural development. The decision to set up the DFRRI was derived from the premise that since human, natural and mineral resources, which constituted the primary ingredient for national growth and development, are located massively in the rural areas, genuine rural development can only be achieved when the rural people are motivated to effectively use their immediate environment to start off a sustained development process.

The Directorate's role was guided by four fundamental objectives namely to:

- Contribute to efforts aimed at laying a solid foundation for the rapid growth and development of the country's food and agriculture.
- Contribute to the country's search to attain food self-sufficiency in five years beginning from 1998.
- Contribute to efforts to make food and the agricultural sector the true mainstay of the Nigerian economy.
- Make food and agriculture one of the directorate's major thrusts for rural development (Gana, n.d).

To achieve these objectives, the directorate designed an intervention programme package for food production to revolve around four major strategies, these include among others to:ensure strong, effective and efficient grassroots participation through the community based implementation strategy; ensure an efficient contribution in support of food

and agricultural production services and activities in selected areas of arable crops, oil seeds, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, agro-based raw material production; ensure the creation of vulgarization support activities and services required in all its selected areas of intervention; proper harvesting-handling techniques, storage and preservation, processing and transformation, marketing and distribution, etc. (DFRRI, 1998).

Considering the infrastructural development as part of the effort to make rural areas conducive for living and to facilitate increased food and agricultural production, the directorate was actively involved in the provision of the following basic infrastructure:

**A. Rural Feeder Roads:**

The Directorate's rural feeder roads construction programme between 1986 and 1990 was designed to be constructed in each phase. The target was to construct 90,000 kilometers throughout the country with each local government areas benefiting.

**B. Rural Electrification Scheme:**

DFRRI made effort in collaboration with the States Rural Electrification Boards, the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power and various communities to electrify the rural communities. The strategy was to create step down stations from the 33KV National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) station to enable various communities to buy transformation and distribution cables only and hook up with NEPA.

**C. Rural Housing Scheme:**

In collaboration with the Nigeria Building and Root Research Institute of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, DFRRI embarked on a rural housing programme to ensure the large scale manufacture of the clay and bricks which were used by rural communities, as well as the use of sand, cement and coconut or oil palm fiber to manufacture roofing sheets for rural housing construction. The Directorate concentrated heavily on the technical extension workers for each state of the federation as phase one of the programme. In phase two of the project, the state technical extension workers were equipped to train government extension workers who would in the final phase go to their respective local communities to teach the people the techniques of house construction using local resources.

#### **D. Rural Health:**

Emphasis and contribution were in the provision of portable water through a nation-wide rural water and sanitation programme. The programme was designed to provide water to 250 rural communities that were penciled to benefit in phase two of the scheme (Gana, undated:11)

#### **Directorate of Social Mobilization (MAMSER)**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1987, the Federal Military Government, through Decree No. 31, established a body known as the Directorate of Social Mobilization (Decree 31 1987). The Directorate had a governing body at the Federal, State and Local Government levels.

#### **Objectives of the Directorate**

- A.** Create a new cultural and productive environment, which will promote pride in productive work, self-reliance and self-discipline
- B.** Generally awaken the rights and obligations of a citizens to the nations;
- C.** Encourage the people to actively and freely participate in discussions and decisions affecting their general welfare; and
- D.** Promote new sets of attitude and culture for the attainment of the goals and objectives of the Nigerian state.

The functions of the Directorate *inter alia* include to:

- sensitize, induct and equip all Nigerians to fight against internal and external domination of resources by a few individuals or groups.
- promote self-reliance and pride in the consumption of home produced commodities.
- propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry.
- inculcate in all Nigerian the virtues of patriotism and positive participation in national affairs, (MAMSER, 1987).

The decree stipulated that the Directorate shall liaise with and work in close cooperation with relevant Government ministries, agencies at the federal, state and local levels; and cooperate with all the other private and public organizations, institutions, and individuals concerned with the realization of the objectives of the Directorate.

The government of a state and each Local Government Council in every state shall participate in the functions of the Directorate in such manner as the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces may, from time to time, determine. Accordingly, and without prejudice to the establishment of state equivalent of the Directorate under section 6 of the Decree, all Local Government Councils shall be constituted into committees for the implementation of the social mobilization programmes as envisaged in the decree (Decree No. 31, 1987).

As part of its special functions, the Directorate shall gear all its efforts towards the implementations of social mobilization in the nation in order to awaken the consciousness of all categories of Nigerians to their rights and obligations as citizens of Nigeria. It shall also encourage and organize an appropriate federal and state government bodies or agencies and local government councils for the successful attainment of the objectives of the Directorate.

On Saturday, 25 July 1987, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida launched the mass mobilization campaign. In his address, the President stated, among other things that:

if we were to contemplate the 27 years of our country since independence; examine the dire circumstances of our society today, in all providence of life; reflect on the profligacy with which we squandered undreamt of vast oil wealth, concede that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is the much needed antidote against past economic misdeeds and an elixir for future economic health, if, moreover, it is clear that too many unquiet and disquiet forces seem determined to torment and destroy our social peace and harmony, we would surely appreciate the anguished cry of the right-thinking patriotic Nigerians. (Decree No. 31, 1987:2).

The Head of State stated that one of the cardinal principles on which MAMSER philosophy was built was to raise our individual and collective national consciousness and enable us dream great dreams and attain lofty goals; to seek and to attain what is noblest in human nature; to place the highest value and respect the dignity of human life, to rediscover the meaning of human life, to accept responsibility, to pursue honest endeavors and to take pride in personal advancement through dedication and hard work; to respect one another and to guard the rights to others as jealously as we guard our own; to believe in rules and to respect and play by the rules and above all to return to those ties not so many years ago when everyone accepted that the community and the nation's interest came first and personal interest last.

The failure of MAMSER arose from the fact that rural Nigerians it intended to mobilize were hungry people whose confidence in nation building had been destroyed by the firm grip of poverty. Before MAMSER transmuted to National Orientation Agency (NOA) it was evident that the programme was sheer white elephant project.

### **National Accelerated Food Production Programme**

The National Accelerated Food Production Programme was conceived under the Third National Development Plan against the background of increasing food shortages. Some farmers were selected as a vehicle for producing and multiplying improved seeds for wider distribution to other farmers in rural areas to boost food production for the teeming population in the rural and urban areas. Its main thrust was on imparting to farmers improved practices and management through a coordinated package approach, (Njoku, 2001:2).

It is obviously certain that national acceleration food production programme failed to result in amelioration of Nigeria's food problem. This was self-evident as the living standard of the poor got worse.

### **Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)**

On assumption of office in May 1999, the Obasanjo administration was primarily concerned with how to revamp the nation's economy and save the people from further economic decay. It took decisive steps to put in place an enabling environment first for thriving of the nascent democracy and putting the economy on the part of sustainable growth and development, and secondly regaining international respectability and credibility. Specific measures taken included:

1. Establishment of Anti-Corruption Bill to fight the ills of the society.
2. Curtailing excessive and extra-budgetary spending by government.
3. Adoption of measures to achieve fiscal prudence, transparency, minimal deficits and efficient resources use.
4. Introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme to wipe out illiteracy and ignorance.
5. Review of developments in the various critical sectors of the economy and outlining measures to move the nation forward to the right direction.
6. Introduction of improved minimum living wage
7. Establishment of poverty alleviation programmes (PAP Document, 2001).

The poverty alleviation programmes were the first priority of Obasanjo's administration. It was a major step to accelerate economic growth and eventually eliminate the monster (poverty) generally, the measure adopted was to empower Nigerians to be more economically productive, with a view to improving their quality of life. The measures were designed to be people-oriented. The government provided a poverty reduction fund for the creation of two hundred thousand jobs in the 2000 fiscal year (PAP Document, 2000). The programme was to engage unemployed in direct productive activities as a means of reflecting the economy and providing them with direct jobs. Specifically, the measures tended to address the problems of low economic growth and high youth unemployment included the provision of five million jobs which involved the training and settlement of at least 50% of unemployed graduates estimated at about one hundred and thirty thousand per annum (PAP Document, 2000). The government sponsored a turn to agriculture programme to boost agricultural output by various measures, which included enhanced provision of various inputs such as fertilizers, credit facilities and modernization of farming practices, which was also part of the youth unemployment reduction programme.

### **Conclusion**

The study established that poverty reduction strategies adopted by successive governments to stem the tide of poverty have not been successful. This was due to the programmes' top-down stance in formulation and implementation. The study concludes that as long as government remains dishonest, insincere in formulation and implementation of poverty reduction policies, the issue of poverty shall remain a fundamental threat to the people. It recommended that for poverty reduction policies to be result oriented, government must be sincere, honest and pragmatic in its implementation. Also, the people whom the programme is meant to benefit must be allowed to drive such programmes. In other words, bottom-top approach is highly recommended.

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## **ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA AND THE WAY FORWARD: 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN PERSPECTIVE.**

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### **Abstract**

*Election violence can be defined as those illegitimate, obscured means and instrumentality employed by the major actors in electoral process in order to achieve victory at the expense of others. The resultant effect of election violence is illegitimacy of government and loss of confidence in the electoral process from the comity of nations. Overtime elections in Nigeria have metamorphosed to an alarming violent situation. This assertion came to its climax during 2019 General election, which played out between February and March 2019. The study undertakes a critical review of 2019 elections in Nigeria from Presidential to Governorship Elections. Empirical evidences from the field, comprising the licensed election observers, those who played direct or indirect roles during the 2019 elections, such as electoral workers, government agencies or representatives of the political parties, the media, and the security agencies were also examined. Data gathered from the field during the elections as well as other secondary sources were critically examined using the exploratory and descriptive analytical method. The thrust of this analysis is enshrined in the various themes and sub themes selected. In analyzing the data all the factors responsible for various forms of malpractices observed during the elections were unmasked. The game theory is deployed in this analysis for a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. Conclusively, from the observations made, solutions were proffered to drastically reduce or completely eliminate election violence in Nigeria and make the process truly free, fair and credible. This will enhance its acceptability at the global stage.*

**Keywords:** *Election, Violence, Rigging, Money Politics, Political parties, Way Forward.*

### **Introduction**

Election originated with Greek civilization in 508BC, hence election franchise were domiciled to male property owners (land lords) invariably it was not meant for the proletarians, as only the male bourgeois were appropriated with election right (Plano & Riggs, 1973). During the period, elections were conducted every ten years and were conducted with ‘broken pieces of pots’. The person that garnered the highest number of votes casted would win. The significance of conducting elections with minimal national endowment cannot be overemphasized, thereby saving significant portion of the national

treasury for developmental agenda for the elected officials, rather than national profligacy on elections. Furthermore, the elongation of the election timetable strengthened the assertion that national wealth should not be sacrificed at the altar of frequent periodic elections.

From Greeks, other parts of the world followed suit, hence the regular modification of electoral patterns, practice and procedure to suit the global developmental challenge. Interestingly, every developed world takes a critical review of the challenges of the past elections to ensure its reformation to eliminate a repeat of such unwanted trend. At this juncture, it is very pertinent to note that many developed world have transformed their electoral system to ensure that none of its citizens is denied electoral franchise irrespective of their country of abode. Hence the emergence of ‘E’ voting, which enable nationals of a country to vote from their country of residence.

A free, fair and credible election is synonymous to good governance when every negativity that surrounds it is eliminated. This enables every candidate to do a critical self-appraisal devoid of any sentiment before signifying interest to contest any national elective position. When election is devoid of being free and fair as well as being credible it is regarded as a manipulated election and this could give credence to many negative variables during the period of governance. Elections could be manipulated through rigging, systemic manipulations as well as several other forms of electoral violence. The consequence of these is post electoral violence.

There is a similitude of history between election and election violence in Nigeria, as both moved in ‘paripasu’ (Osaghae 2011). The nexus between both is traced to the colonial era, noted from the flaws in Clifford’s constitution of 1922 which provided an ‘in way’ to electoral violence in Nigeria (Egobueze & Ojirika, 2017). However, both manifested in the first republic and Odusote (2014) notes that since independence, Nigeria has not experienced a good governance because its elected leaders emerged through a flawed electoral system devoid of any form of credibility which reflects in their style of undemocratic governance. The poor system of governance styled from these leaders elected from questionable electoral processes has led to series of military intervention in Nigerian politics, hence leaving the polity more ‘injured’ compared to the existing status quo they met. According to Egobueze and Ojirika (2017), the first recorded electoral violence in Nigeria, was in 1964 which was tagged the ‘western region violent political conflict’ popularly referred to as ‘operation wet e’. This took place between 1964 – 1965 during both federal and regional elections, majorly caused by the rift between Awolowo and Akintola (Egobueze & Ojirika, 2017).

From first the republic to date, Nigeria has witnessed series of electoral violence which worsens by each passing election year instead of getting abated. This ugly trend has seen the assassination of the perceived fine products during varying electoral year, such as Bola Ige, Harry Marshall, Alfred Dikibo, Andrew Agom, Funsho Williams among others (Durutoye, 2014). We shall discuss this in details as we progress. During the period under review, every political leader fight with every weapon within his reach to ensure the retention of state power for himself or successors alike. This is otherwise referred as the power of incumbency.

For instance, the former president Olusegun Obasanjo in order to ensure his successor is in the same political lining with him, affirmed that “it is a do or die affair” (Obasanjo, 2007).

Political violence has marred the credibility of our elections from inception to the current democratic dispensation. Unarguably Nigeria made some significance progress in the conduct of the general elections during the period of 2011 – 2015 when former President Goodluck Jonathan held sway. This is boosted in Jonathan’s popular assertion that ‘nobody’s political ambition worth the blood of any Nigerian’ (Vanguard, 2014). Jonathan made this statement as a self-exoneration from election violence, as well as to encourage his teaming supporters to avoid politics of bitterness devoid of rancor and series of political violence during elections. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note the downward trajectory of election violence in Nigeria since 2015 till 2019 general election. Moreover, the electoral flaws of 2019 cut across all the elective positions; from presidency to national assembly, from gubernatorial to state houses of assembly.

### **Methodology**

Several sources were employed to obtain information on election violence in Nigeria. Firstly, we gathered information from on the spot independent election observers. Secondly, relevant literatures which included books, journals, articles, newspapers and other online and electronics publications that dealt with the subject matter were reviewed. Oyewole and Omotola (2021) noted that in as much as media contents are common source for literature in election violence in Nigeria and that “self-compiled data from media reports can be verified, they are often less exhaustive or comprehensive and can be influenced by researcher’s bias and error, with negative implications for the final analysis”. Nevertheless, many data bases ensure they provide a considerably verified data on the subject matter (Oyewole & Omotola, 2021).

### **Theoretical Framework**

For a better analysis of this subject matter, Game Theory is best suited as a handy tool to do justice to the election violence in Nigeria. Games theory was a product of mathematical research of relationship among independent and self-interested agents. The complexity of game theory has extended to other fields of human endeavor, such as Biology, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Linguistics and Computer Science (Brachman & Dietterich, 2007).

Game theory is a rational way of studying co-operations as well as conflicts. The interdependence of various apostles led to the application of game theory. These apostles can be in form of individuals, group, firms or even their combinations (Turocy & Stengel, 2001). It is also an approach for the study of decision making in politics. This is because in Politics we have the option of conflict or cooperation. Hence, game theory is a veritable tool. Game theory is a quantitative theory used nationally and in international relations, where the common assumption is who gains or who wins (Onah, 2010). The major assumption of this

theory is that players and actors would optimize their maximum gains and benefits and minimize their losses (Plano & Riggs, 1973). The juxtaposition of the two strategies deployed by the two opposing parties always proves one as a better strategist and that ultimately determines the resultant effect of the game and it is accompanied by variety of pay-offs. There are three types of games: namely; two-person zero sum game, two-person non – constant sum game and n-person non-constant sum game (where n is greater than 2). In most cases, the activities of political parties in power to retain power at all cost further add to this menace.

In politics, especially in pre-election year and during elections various actors both protagonists and antagonists alike strategize to ensure that they or their parties come out victorious during the elections. To actualize this, they adopt various strategies and plans, both legitimate and illegitimate, to maneuver their opponents. Hence, the desire to win at all cost gives way to election violence. On the other hand, the opposition adopts various campaigns of calumny, blackmail and propaganda to get the sentiments of the populace to their side. These are various strategies of games adopted to ensure a positive outcome and eliminate a negative result. Even after the elections results must have been released by the electoral umpire (INEC), games theory is heavily deployed in the process of election petition tribunals. From the tribunal, the dissatisfied party goes to the appellate court and the gerrymandering continues to the Supreme Court.

### **Literature Review**

Contrary to perceived common notion that political violence, specifically election violence, is a creation of underdeveloped world, the history of election violence is elusive without the mention of violence and insecurity in the Central American region in the medieval period which is ascribed as the originating destination (Huhn & Warnecke-Berger, 2016). Nevertheless, to proactively and effectively nip it at the bud, the United States of America (USA) established the US Institute of Peace (USIP) Academy where research is conducted on how to eliminate both election violence and post-election violence. Their task involves research, training and field work to improve knowledge and develop code of conduct for participants in election, both direct participants (contestants) and indirect participants (electoral workers). This is aimed at averting any form of violence (Worden & Cookman, 2017). They later extended this to Africa as a way of reforming electoral practice in Africa.

In other parts of the world, there were instances of election and post-election violence such as in Afghanistan in 2001, Nepal 2008, Pakistan 2018 and Colombia 2019. Politics itself is said to have inherent mechanism of brewing, nurturing, escalating, taming and resolving conflict, (Abdul-Wasi, 2010). Furthermore, Abdul-Wasi (2010) asserts that ironically, politics in most parts of the developing world tends towards conflict escalation than resolution, to the extent that one can conveniently say that politics in the developing world is inseparable from violence because the latter has often been employed as a viable and valuable tool to attaining political power. Hence, Abdul-Wasi (2010), viewed politics as ‘polling tricks’ where violence is part of the tricks employed. Therefore, political violence which is part and parcel

of election violence is seen as encompassing all acts of violence, that is, politically motivated or with political undertones (Abdul-Wasi, 2010).

Furthermore, Election violence in Africa has been the bane of underdevelopment that has marred the continent's quest in its ascendancy to the developed world status. The colossal consequences include but not limited to undermining the legitimacy of the democratic process, plunging the country into civil war as the case may be, as well as giving birth to dictatorship. Examples include but not limited to Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda (Kovacs & Bjarnesen, 2018).

Umana (2018), described election violence as election motivated crisis, employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behavior of voters, or voting patterns, or possibly reverse electoral decision to favour a particular individual, groups or political party. He further asserts that election violence can be pre-election action, thus involving all such activities that inflict any form of injury to the democratic system and its constituent, and it could be during voters' registrations, campaigns and actual voting (Umana, 2018). Such violence according to him could also be a post-election phenomenon, which comes with consequent of the manipulation of election results, rejection of results among others (Umana, 2018). He further listed the following as causes of election violence in Nigeria; hate campaign, rigging of election, thuggery, abuse of power, electoral corruption and fraud.

Lack of internal democracy within political parties, inefficiency of electoral commissions, inadequate security personnel, inadequate voter education, voters' bribery, rumours of rigging among others were some of the identified causes of election violence in 2011 and 2015 in Lagos, Nigeria (Kalu & Gberevbie, 2015). They argued that Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should institutionalize a strong electoral mechanism embedded with quality to conduct a free, fair and credible election, based on one man, one vote.

According to International Crisis Group (ICG, 2018), recent Nigerian elections have all been violent, especially the 2011 polls. More than 800 people were killed as post-election protest climaxed to mob attacks on minorities in twelve northern states. In the same vein, as peaceful as 2015 general election may be seen, yet there was couple of violence which metamorphosed to killings during campaigns and after voting (ICG, 2018). ICG further asserts that risk of election violence appears to be at its highest clime in six states of Rivers, AkwaIbom, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Adamawa. However, there are differentials between the dynamics in each of the states mentioned. Nevertheless, all the six states feature two or four major triggers; which are intense struggles between APC and PDP for control over states with large voting populace, huge public revenues or symbolic electoral value, as well as local rivalry between the former and incumbent governors. Also, tension resulting from ethno-religious or herder-farmer conflict and the presence of criminal groups or thugs handy for politicians to recruit and arm to attack rivals and their constituents (ICG,2018).

Obakhedo (2011), opine that election violence is the greatest obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Thus, this is as a result of the rascal politics that the political elites engage. According to him, often times it is intra party or in most occasions inter party

characterized. Apart from the resultant effect of lack of credibility for electoral system, the democratic system and the rule of law, the nature, extent and magnitude of violence and rigging associated with elections in Nigeria had assumed alarming proportion that necessitates intellectual excursion to the realm of possible solution (Obakhedo, 2011).

### **Factors that Fueled violence in 2019 general election**

When we talk of factors that fueled violence in 2019 general election, we refer to both immediate and remote causes of the violence. Some were pre-election determined, while others were post-election determined, as well as those recoded during the election days. These factors include but not limited to political parties, money politics, religious politics, thuggery and Social miscreants, incumbency factor, desperation, electoral umpire factor, law enforcement agents, media coverage and social media, murder/assassination, card reader challenge, ethnic/regional factor/sentiments. We will discuss some of these factors to see how they contribute to election violence in Nigeria.

#### **1. Political parties**

It is no longer news that most political cum election violence are hinged on the activities of Political parties, such as blackmailing rival or opposition parties and candidates. The so called mega rallies that political parties organize so as to intimidate the opponents and falsely make them believe they have majority of masses to their side is just mere part of the election trick, whereas these crowds were rented to attend such mega rallies, and use them as means of violent intimidation to opposition. Ahere (2018), posits that as political parties are important part of political processes, and has roles they play in escalating or de-escalating political violence. Going further, prominent anarchist theorist like George Woodcock would question the efficacy of political parties, given that political parties themselves imbued with the aim to seize the state machine that seek to concentrate power, monopolize violence and perpetuate hierarchy (Woodcock 1962, cited in Ahere, 2018).

During the 2019 general election in Nigeria, the independent observers noted that in Rivers, Oyo, Ebonyi, Lagos, Imo and AkwaIbom in particular, Political parties armed their thugs with various types of ammunitions to attack their opponents, to snatch ballot boxes and intimidate voters. Hence, there were violence clashes in places like Etche, Ahoada and Obiakpo in Rivers state. In AkwaIbom, pockets of violence were noted in places like Ikot-Ekpene and Ikot-Abasi. These violent clashes left many people dead and others injured including electoral workers themselves. For instance, a sitting member of House of Assembly was murdered in AkwaIbom. In Oyo, a sitting member House of Representatives member also lost his life. In Ebonyi, a party chairman was killed, while two lives were lost on the presidential Election Day at Ikwo local government (CNBC Africa, 2019).

In Ago-Palace Way, Okota, Lagos state, agents of All Progressive Congress (APC) were seen burning people's vote in an Igbo dominated environment, with premonition that the Igbos will swing their votes to the People Democratic Party (PDP) because of the contesting Vice Presidential candidate Mr. Peter Obi who is of the Igbo extraction (This

Day Newspaper, 2019). These and many more were some of the activities of the political parties that led to violence during the 2019 general election in Nigeria.

## **2. Money Politics**

There were instances of vote buying in almost all the states of federation where elections were conducted. These were premeditated before, during and even in some case after the conduct of elections. Hence, party agents were paying eligible electorates to submit their voters' cards for monetary inducements, which were majorly seen in places like Lagos and Kano among others. Voters cards were swapped with monetary inducements and the cards were surrendered to the political parties' agents. These led to protests from rival political parties, which often times cause some violence in a bid that the more cards you acquire the money vote you swing to your side. Voters collected N5,000, N3,000 and even N7,000 as the case may be to surrender their voters cards to various political parties(The Guardian Newspaper, 2019). These money politics often times cause frictions between rival political parties culminating to political/election violence.

## **3. Religious Politics**

The relationship between politics and religion is intimate because there is always a point of convergence. More so, the relationship is complex because of the intricacies inherent in the politicization of religion (Oshewolo & Maren, 2015). In Anambra, Lagos and Kaduna, some religious leaders' support some particular political parties out of bias, probably the contestant(s) are their members, hence in their homilies they preach to worshippers of the need to vote a particular political party and demonized the rival.

In some instances, they were also monetarily induced to do so. Hence the religion with more populace ensures their members win election in most cases, except otherwise determined by state 'god fathers'. At this juncture, Afolabi (2015), opines that religion has taken a position of importance in Nigerian politics, going by its populous nature in West Africa and vested with religious diversity, these religions are intertwined with political activities in the country. He further asserts that political office holders are misusing religion as a tool to get to power while religious leaders are mishandling it to get personal gain from those who hold public office (Afolabi, 2015).

## **4. 'Thuggery' and Miscreants**

Thugs of Political parties are major cause of election violence in Nigeria. Hence, Umar (2018), asserts that political thuggery is an aspect of social violence, which is devastating in Nigerian democracy. He further posits that the menace has become detrimental to democratic sustainability in Nigerian politics in which thugs move mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating and injuring innocent individuals and politicians (Umar, 2018).

Greater percentage of these thugs is drawn from social miscreants popularly known as 'touts'. Every ill, negativity, or social vices associated with election are mainly carried out by this category of people. It starts from ballot box snatching, stuffing of ballot papers

into ballot boxes, coercing and intimidating electorates to vote particular candidates rather than their preferred candidates, murder and assassination, as well as violent fights during election. They are simply known as chief violent causers in every election, which 2019 is one of them. Thus, Samuel (2017), posits that among other things that democracy is still battling with political violence, which derives its energy and dominance force from the army of young men and women of the African population.

Other menace of political thugs are intimidating electoral workers with dangerous weapons, as well as forcing them to change election results where it did not favour their candidates or even outright destruction of same and replacing them with their own manipulated results. They are active participants and major actors in post-election violence, engaging in wanton destruction of public and private properties in the event their party or candidate loses election.

## **5. Incumbency Factor**

Incumbency factor or otherwise referred as ‘power of incumbency’ means the ability of the government in power to use its power as an advantage to ensure their party or that particular candidate retains power at all cost. This power cannot be overemphasized, as it played a great deal during 2019 general election.

In governorship election, the election in states like Kano, Sokoto, Plateau, Akwa-Ibom and Rivers were inconclusive according to the electoral umpire. However, incumbency factor necessitated that the sitting governors in the above mentioned states emerged victorious to retain power in their various States irrespective of high voracious opposition capacity, which is capable of swinging the results and eventually victory the other way round.

Most times the party in power has funds available to spend more than the opposition, as they turned government revenues and spending towards funding election. Thus, the synonym of the ‘highest bidder’ takes it all. Therefore, they have more funds to compromise other stakeholders, such as electoral staff, security agencies, the media, even in some cases the observers, during the election, which the opposition cannot match. In some of the states, while the opposition was sharing N3,000 per electorate, the government in power was sharing N7,000 per electorate, hence the confirmation that the ‘highest bidder’ takes it all.

In the presidential election, all the security agencies who are beneficiaries of federal governments as well as federal government owned media companies worked for their benefactor, thereby undermining the chances of the opposition. Some of the security agents were agents of rigging and manipulation of results. A major testament was the shooting of an opposition agent in Rivers state by the police (Human Rights Watch, 2019). It was also noted that some government owned media agencies such Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Voice of Nigeria (VON) and Radio Nigeria (RN) were highly biased in their reportage, as they tend to cover the areas where government agents

were involved in the manipulation of elections and the result and focused their attention where opposition agents were caught in illegalities (HRW, 2019).

Many examples which are not exhaustive abound to the suspicious actions taken in pre-election period, during the election and in post-election days by both the government and opposition alike were viewed as acts of desperation by the populace.

## **6. Murder/Assassination**

Individuals' have lost their lives to murder and assassination as a result of election violence. For instance, a candidate of House of the Representatives was murdered in Oyo State (Channels TV, 2020). Prior to the general election, some party chairmen in some local government in Imo State, including the Ideator North local government APC chairman was murdered (The Cable, 2018). On the Election Day, many lives were lost. For instance in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State two lives were lost on the presidential Election Day. Many people were also killed in Rivers and Akwa-Ibom states, as well as other states of the federation (HRW, 2019).

## **7. Card Reader Issue**

The failure of card reader in many polling units resulted to the use of temporary voter's cards by the electorates to vote in some areas, which led to invalid votes and when the INEC Adhoc staff posted in those areas cancelled the affected results, it erupted to violence and attack of the INEC Adhoc staff in those areas. The glasses of vehicles conveying the Adhoc staff to those locations in Ikwo local government of Ebonyi State were smashed by the infuriated mobs (HRW, 2019).

Consequently, all these activities has left electoral process unfree, unfair and incredible, failing to meet international standard and expectation, hence making the outcome of the election not to be acceptable and finally making the government an illegitimate government. In addition, these activities which breed violence during elections have sent many good Nigerians to great beyond, while other are maimed for life.

## **Conclusion**

Election violence in any society does more harm than good. This is a sensitive factor that contributes to underdevelopment and tension within a society. According to Aloysius and Nkwede (2015), they note that “any polity, society, environment or economy threatened with crime, insecurity, insurgency, kidnapping and violence is usually accompanied with tensions and anxiety”. Therefore, it is imperative for the government to place priority in building and maintaining a better electoral process devoid of violence. This will contribute positively to the growth of the country especially in areas of human and infrastructural development, international recognition and commendation, security and peace. Moreover, the citizens in all cadre should be committed to play their role for a better society free from violence and crime. To drive home these points, we will give some recommendations as a way forward.

## Way Forward

The government through a legislative backing to ensure they control the excesses of the politicians and the political parties must strengthen the various institutions from anti-corruption, to law enforcement agencies and the electoral body. This will ensure that future elections credible, free and fair.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should be made to be truly independent. Hence, the electoral body's chairman both national and at the states should be made to have their separate budgets, not manipulated by the presidency or the states governors. Secondly, their appointments should be subjected to applications by eminently qualified Nigerians and be subjected to voting by the media; both foreign and local, the observers; both foreign and local, as well as the national assembly. While the states chairmen should be voted by the local media, as well as the state assemblies.

The anti-corruption agencies should investigate sources of campaign funds both from those in governments and from the opposition.

Also, the law enforcement agencies should ensure that political parties and politicians sign code of conduct against violence, murder/assassination, rigging, vote buying among others. These are solutions that will make election credible, free and fair.

Furthermore, the electoral body should modify the 'option A4' system to ensure people are physically counted to reduce incidence of ballot snatching, stuffing and wastages of the national treasury on elections.

After every election, the reports of the independent observers should be taken seriously. If the electoral body's chairman or their staff is found culpable, they should be prosecuted and imprisoned for not less than 10 years. Furthermore, they should forfeit every corrupt enrichment to the government.

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