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THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: An analytical view of gains and challenges.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID19 is a viral diseases found among various strains of corona virus. It derived its name “COVID-19” from to its occurrence in the year 2019. Also referred to as Corona Virus, the disease is a global invisible enemy that has no respect to human status, race, boundaries or age. The disease has dealt a devastating blow to Global health and socio-economic fabrics, both at macro and micro-level. Most countries have been affected by the pandemic. Arising from the aforementioned the study aimed at examining whether the pandemic had any socio-Economic gains and challenges. The study found that, the pandemic resulted to certain gains such as, mass production of medical equipment and services, enhanced training and recruitment of medical personnel, research and innovation, cost-saving in hospitals, family cohesiveness, urban-rural migration, increased saving by state, international co-operation and understanding, awakening to National security, political machination among others. However, the corona-virus had also resulted to untold miseries both at National and house-hold level. Huge losses have been experienced, these include liquidations of businesses, shutdown of factories and manufacturing units, man-power attrition, congestion of health facilities, loss of life, global instability, possibility of Corona-Virus usage as biological weapon, psychological trauma, heavy spending by government, broken families among others. The study recommended that the Governments and house-holds put in place measures to contain and prevent the spread of the virus. That, each individual has personal responsibility to contain and prevent the spread. The state should come up with policies to cushion itself and the households from the negative effects of Covid-19. At Global level, the international bodies should do all it can, see to it that the virus is not weaponised, since its use can deal a devastating blow to the mankind.

KEY WORDS

Covid-19: Refers to a disease by the name corona virus, which emerged in 2019. The disease causes severe respiratory syndrome.

Virus: Refers to a sub-microscopic infection agent that replicate only inside the living cell of an organism.

Enemy: Refers to a thing that harms or weakens something else.

Socio-Economic: Refers to a factor or factors relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic aspects

Fabrics: Refers to the relationship or connection we make with one another making us all part of the common thread of a society as a whole.

Urban-Rural Migration: Refers to the movement of people from urban areas to rural areas.

Liquidation: Refers to an economic process where business is brought to an end and assets are distributed to the claimants. It occurs when a company is insolvent meaning it cannot pay its obligations.

Household: Refers to a unit of dwelling consisting of one or a group of people who live in the same shelter and share meals.

Pandemic: Refers to epidemic that occurs worldwide or over a very wide area crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people.

Introduction

The Covid-19 is viral diseases, found among various traits of Corona Virus. Also referred to as Corona, the disease is not an air-borne, but can spread through coughing, sneezing, or contact with body fluids. Experts suggest that the disease is not found among humans but vectored from wild animals to humans, through contact with game meat. The disease is thought to have originated from china Wuhan market either through game meat, though more information is needed to confirm its actual origin. The disease is lethal and affects the respiratory systems where it manifest itself like pneumonia, which interferes with air circulation within the lungs leading to death. The various containment measures adapted by the world governments have affected the socio-economic set-up of the world populace. The day to day operations have been affected either positively or negatively. Arising from the aforementioned article examines the direct and indirect socio-economic gains and challenges derived from corona-virus pandemic.

Methodology and Theory.

The researcher used the descriptive research method and based the study on socio-economic theory. According to this theory, economic activities are affected and shaped by social processes or external factors such as health, Geo-politics among others, leading to stagnation or regress because of their local, regional and global economy.

The Covid-19 as a health factor has affected the regional and global economy resulting to direct and indirect social challenges and gains.

Gains derived from Corona Virus Pandemic

Mass production of goods and services

The pandemic have necessitated for various measures to be put in place in order to combat the disease. The measures are both preventive and curative in nature. The virus has resulted to multi-billion industries which manufactures and distribute vaccines needed to curb the infection and spread of the virus. Such industries are found in USA, India, Britain, Russia, South Africa, and China among others. These are industries with large capital outlay and which will realise huge returns on capital invested in the sales and distribution of vacancies. Corona Virus has activated factories manufacturing personal protective years (PPPS), which has become a norm for medical personnel working in hospitals and medical research centres. The demand for medical Equipment is very high, which means large profit for the factories. Thus, most of the previous underperforming factories have been given a lease of life due to the demand for medical Equipment as a result of rapid spread of the Virus.

The emergence of mask wearing as a preventive measure adopted by most governments has increased production in most textile industries. Most of those industries were under-performing while others were facing natural attrition. The emergence have rejuvenated the industries both small and large scale producers. This means increased income to the proprietors and the workers engaged in those industries.

The demand for raw materials used for the manufacturer of personal protective gears. Mask, hand glove, and sanitizers have increasing at increased rate. Cotton farmers and ginnery industries are actually reaping a lot from this pandemic. Material meant for sanitizers, like alcohol or ethanol as well as chemical industries are facing abnormal demand, meaning demand increasing at increasing prices, quite against the law of demand, where high prices corresponds proportionately to low quantity demanded. Other business that have gained from corona virus, include manufacture of ventilators, Oxygen surgical gloves, industries, manufacturers of vitamin C, among others.

Employment of medical personnel.

Containment and treatment of Corona Virus has demanded an increased recruitment of medical man-power in the health sector. This demand-driven, aspect has lead to employment of medical doctors, nurses, clinical officers and health care workers. These personnel care involved in the day to day caring of the Covid-19 Victims as well putting both preventive and curative measures to curb the pandemic. The Employment happens to be a relief among the unemployed cohort who have been jobless for a period of time. The engagement provide a Golden Opportunity for one to enhance his/her potential as well as the chance to earn and increase his income, hence realising returns on capital invested in his long term education race-course.

Training of medical personnel

Due to increased demand for medical personnel, the Government and private sector have increased the intake for medical training. The coming of Covid-19 saw an upsurge increase of enrolment rate in medical schools and health sciences colleges. These will enhance man-power accumulation in the sector, meaning that most countries will not run short of medical personnel during and after the pandemic. The training of personnel has double benefits in that the involved person will have an opportunity to gain skills and knowledge as well “as the certainty” to be employed at future date and subsequently leading to earning saving, investment.

Subsidiary Industries

Any economic activity stimulates the occurrence of other activities related to the event. Covid-19 has led to multi-billion industries dealing with the manufacturing of medical Equipment, drugs and sanitation elements. These industries have created other small and medium enterprises essential in the completion of the chain of distribution. A product is said to be a final product when it reaches the final consumer. Thus, the distribution processes have attracted the wholesalers, the retailers both small and large. In addition it has attracted other related players like air transport, land transport, insurance companies, research firms, financial institution and security firms among others. Their engagement implies more returns in their enterprises as a result of covid-19.

Research and Innovation

Various countries have engaged their researchers and research firmS to find a possible cure of Covid-19. Countries like China, USA, Britain, India, South Africa, and Russia among others have invested huge sum of money on research. Though, the research is primary meant for covid-19 pandemic, there is high possibility that, the researchers may discover other variables that may be essential in treating and curing of offer strains within the covid-19 variants. It’s also possible that the research may develop others medication to treat other diseases. The pandemic has brought forth creativity and innovativeness in combating the menace. This creativity and innovation is critical in economic development.

Cost –saving in Hospitals

Covid-19 has brought about new measures on sanitization. As preventive measure, one is required to wash his hands regularly, use alcohol based sanitizers or soap, avoid touching of nose, ears or eyes. In addition wearing of surgical mask is crucial; as well as social distancing and quarantining oneself in case of coming into contact with infected person or in the eve one becomes suspicious. The aforementioned measures have greatly prevented infection of other diseases. Hospitals all-over the world has few cases of other diseases. This means that the issue of covid-19, has “re-discovered” others ways of preventing other diseases and reducing congestion in health facilities. Lack of other infection, implies that both the governments and households will save a substantial amount of money that would have been used in treating and curing other diseases. Besides, being strong and health means the person is mentally and physically productive which leads to increased GNP and production at household level. This results to enhanced state revenues collection and household income which is beneficial to the countries and household cotters.

Cohesiveness of the family unit

Measures put in place to combat the virus include social distancing, curfew and lockdown, in addition to closing down of institutions of learning. This means, the family members will be forced to converge at their family home. These circumstances have forced the family to come back and stay together. This leads to family cohesiveness which is important for normal human growth. Also, by re-uniting, important family matters are discussed and dispensed, which have socio-economic bearing at future date. It is also during this time that socio-economic and socio-cultural connections are made which are beneficial to relatives on their day to day operation. The cohesiveness also calms various sensitive family demands which are discussed and sorted out. Thus, the measures give the family members an opportunity to sort- out and settle various disputes within the family units.

Urban-rural Migration

In most parts of the world, many Governments are faced with the problem of rural-urban migration with its subsequent consequences. The pandemic has consequently over turned the direction of migration, from rural urban to urban-rural migration. The emergence of the virus most affected the urban areas. Urban areas are faced

with railroad of problems; namely congestion of health facilities, congestion of space, daily travel from place of residence to work in congested means of travel, poor sanitation and congestion on social amenities, among others. The curfew and lock down in towns added more problems on the existing challenges. Many urban duellers find it beneficial to migrate from towns to rural areas where the aforesaid problems are absent or less experienced. The migration to rural areas has it profound benefits. It provide the much needed cheap labour in Agricultural sector leading to increased agricultural production at lower rate, with the consequences of providing food and nutrition at lower price, which goes a long way in cushioning the citizens of the adverse effects of corona virus. Migrating to rural areas also provide the rural areas with other skills and knowledge previously lacking in those areas, thus increasing the production in the said areas, leading to development of rural economy. Enhancement of rural economy has the spiral effects on households, income and state revenue collection which is crucial at such a period of time.

Fiscal Policies

Most Governments have formulated and implemented policies to cushion its citizens against the Economic crises brought about by corona virus. These measures include Tax reduction, Tax relief, special economic stimulus packages, and change of policy on labour i.e. from capital intensive to labour intensive technique of production. The aforesaid policies in away, have increased individuals and households income. Increased income, holding others factors constant implies an increase on marginal propensity to save which leads to increased investment with its profound benefits both at national and individual level.

Increased saving

The endeavours to close down institutions of learning and the policy directive to work from home have actually increased savings. Organisations spend a lot of money on Sundry expenditure on its workers, and visitors, for example on beverage, snacks, lunch, travel and subsistence. Working from home means such expenditures are reduced to a minimum level and the money is saved. Individuals working from home, also spend less on transport, food items, and entertainment. This leads to saving and investment.

In addition closing down of institutions of learning has double benefits both to the government and the household. It is evident that the government and the household spends colossal amount of money on school in the form of school fees or levies and up keep money. This amount of money is not spent during closing period. The assumption is the money is saved directly or indirectly by either the government or the household. Thus, the government and households are able to clear budget deficit or create surplus income. The balanced budget will enable both households and Governments to provided Utilities without stress. The surplus budget will be invested in other sectors of economy which will bring forth other benefits.

International co-operation and Understanding

The corona-virus, is an international enemy, it is not a respecter of personage, boundaries, race, continents, Nations both developed and undeveloped. It has attacked all the countries in the world without mercy or sympathy and has rendered the global operations to halt, and every Government is on it toes combating the menace.

The world has been reduced to a sick-village. Through world health organisation (WHO) the Nations has brought their heads together to discuss and deliberate on how to combat the Global Enemy. This co-operation of Nations that hither to could not co-operate is an important milestone to the world socio-Economic co-existence and development, which has resulted to Collaboration on research to contain, and manage the emerging Global enemy. This collaboration in research provide knowledge and skills previously lacking in the said countries. It also bring about Global awareness, Enlightened people are able to learn more about other countries. Countries have been able to understand who are their friends or enemies at international arena. This aspect is important particularly on matters international trade.

Awakening call to National Security

The covid-19, have a wakened the Governments on matters security. The virus is not just a disease, it is a serious threat. It is an invisible Enemy and weapon, which any country can access with ease and use it to its advantage. Its use can bring about enormous damage to man-kind. Thus most governments have been awakened to the

realities of time, to change and adjust their security policies to the new emerging threat, which can devastate and damage socio-Economic fabric of the Global Economy.

Political Machination

The covid-19 has provided a fertile ground for political manipulation by the ruling political administration. Policies that hither-to, would not be formulated and implemented, have been put in place courtesy of covid-19 containment measures. The lockdown and curfew has slowed the heightened political activities within most countries. This has enabled political administration to silently impose and administer what they deem fit in their political machination. The ruling hierarchy has been able to silence their political rivals, without any backlash from their support base. The political administration has been enabled to implement some policies to the General public which previously would have been difficult to bestow either due to ignorance or lack of good will. For instance personal and public sanitation measures, vaccination, and other measures previously ignored by members of the public. This is a plus to both the government and the General public.

Crime reduction

The containment measures brought about by covid-19 have reduced crime to a large extent. The curfew and lockdown contained people in their respective places of residence. The measures have also reduced movement at certain time of nights and in certain areas. This has curtailed movement of criminals, thus reducing the rate of crime. This reduction has benefits to both Governments and households. The household is saved from the menace and consequences that come with crime at household level. The Government is saved, the many court cases as result of crime. In addition the Government will save a lot of money that is used to combat crime, through policing, intelligence gathering and other measures used to fight and prevent crime. The reduction of crime also implies a stable economy, since the day to day economic activities will place without disturbance. This enhances socio-Economic development which is essential to both households and the Government.

Losses

Liquidation of Businesses

The emergence of Covid-19, witnessed the death of enterprises, some enterprises “went under” while others liquidated completely. This occurred as a result of low demand and sometimes lack of demands of goods and services rendered by the said businesses. Others were occasioned by lockdown, loss of personnel and lack of suppliers. Hospitality Business, tourism, transport, among other were are affected and some of them have stagnated or face natural attrition. This is a big loss to the governments, households and other subsidiary industries. The state has lost colossal amount of revenue collected as taxes or levies while household lost the much need jobs and income.

Shutdown of factories and manufacturing industries

Covid-19 has dealt a devastating blow to some industries and factories. Due to lock down, certain industries could not access supply of raw materials required for manufacturing of their products. This implied that the manufacturer entity could not continue with operation since a raw material to add value. This has contributed either the industries haling its operation for a given period of time or total death of the industries. In the hospitality industry like hotels most of them were shut down due to lockdown which resulted to lack of clients, other have seen shut down due to infection of their workers.

Transport industry has been adversely affected by the lock down and curfew. The covid-19 measures also saw the industry minimize the frequency of operation, and carriage capacity. Air transport was temporary shut; both at domestic level and international level, other business affected include certain service industries like insurance, the banking industries, and others involved in the supply chain of goods and services produced by aforesaid manufacturing industries. This shutdown reduced the gross domestic product (GNP) affected chain of distribution, caused strains on consumption of goods and services, reduced Government Revenue and households income and consequently affected overall economic activities.

Man Power Losses

Labour as a factor of production has been is affected greatly by the corona virus. The Covid-19 has caused the loss of skilled and semi killed man-power. Loss of skilled labour force actually affects the operation of any industry or enterprises. Most production process especially in developing countries do depend on human efforts both physical and mental, others are wholly labour intensive. Thus, loss of man-power have halted the operation of the said production unit, since recruiting and inducting such killed employees take time and involve a lot of resources, both finances and time. This affects the production of good and services. The end effect is that few goods and services will be produced, leading to less turnover. Less turnovers implies less returns leading to less profit or even losses at the end of trading period. This therefore means less corporate tax and loss of income to individual employees and the resultant effect at household level and other business that depend on the said employee.

Congestion on Healthy Facilities

The upsurge of Covid-19 evidenced the increased demand of health facilities, against limited supply of the said facilities. Many health are still congested courtesy of corona virus. Up to date, most of ICU and HDU units in Hospitals are still congested. In some countries, the Government had to construct makeshift hospitals to cater for the rising number of corona virus patients since the existing hospital are filled.

Medical facilities like Oxygen cylinders, Ventilator, personal protective gear medicine and other medical Equipment are in high demand, beside other crucial operation. The increased demand calls for individual and Government heavy spending on the same. Some Governments had to borrow loans to cushion themselves from the menace while households had to fundraise, or empty their coffers to meet medical bills for their family member who are either decimated by corona or infected by the disease, hence to heavy losses.

Loss of life

The pandemic not only led to loss of lively hoods but loss human life. The society has lost their loved ones and in some cases bread winner .This loss is twofold. By losing the loved one, the family is affected socially and psychologically and in some case resulted to trauma. Loss of a bread winner mean loss of income and subsequent economic gap, which is actually an uphill task to fill at household level .Some household coffers have also been affected in the process of meeting hospital bills and containment measures

The virus, have affected the very personnel (medical personnel) that were to contain it .Loss of Doctors and nurses adversely affected the corona virus victims, since it instilled fear to the said personnel and in some cases officers have resulted to industrial action, agitating for increased allowances .This issue has forced the governments or employers to use more on the said personnel since they hold the key to containing and eliminating the virus. In addition loss of such personnel meant reduced services at hospitals turning to increased loss of life, and labour.

Global instability

The origin of Covid-19 is purported to have taken place in wahun market in China. At the time of emerging, the U.S.A was at longer head–with China occasioned to by their economic-interests. The U.S.A and her allies (European Union) have traded war of words with China. That China knew the emergency of the disease, and kept quiet for a long time without informing the other world and finally talked about it when it was spreading like bush fire .The blame was heaped on China. While it denied all what has been her heaped. This blame game by the two Global economic giants can lead to Global instability, since other nations will align themselves to either sides, thus affecting the habitual day to day Global operations on matters economy, security, peace, co-operation end co-existence.

In some cases, some countries may be affected economically especially those countries that rely on China on matters trade. In addition individuals phobia on products from that country, which they suspect to be infected, leads to low demand. This impacts negatively to the supply chain and can result to adverse Geo-economic and political instability at Global level.

Biological weapon

The corona virus is Global enemy, an enemy so vicious. It is not a respect of personage, territory, or nations or individuals, economic, social and academic status .It is so penetrative and intrusive, silent and invisible, the Virus

can be easily cultured in any medical or biological laboratory .The aforesaid properties of the virus leads to the eminent danger of the covid-19

The virus can be used as a biological weapon with easy, less cost, at any time and place ,Its impact is so devastating since it is invisible and not instant .Up to date ,no individual or country can confirm whether its emergency was planned or not or whether the motivation behind it was economic or political warfare .However ,whether its occurrence was planned or not ,the fact remain it can be weaponised , which will can deal a devastating impact to the man –kind. Thus, great care must be taken at Global level to save man –kind from such a weapon.

Psychological trauma

Measures instilled to contain Covid-19, in a way have affected individuals socially and psychologically .Human beings are habitual in nature. Any alteration of the said pattern of life will affect them adversely .As social –Animal, certain human habits are crucial to the social well-being. Social distancing ,Lack of “hand –shake” among humans can really affect their day to day social operations .Beside the pronouncement by Government ,social media ,print media, and electronic media, also instilled phobia among individuals. This is due to the existing and the anticipated danger especially the loss of life of the loved one .In addition, due to the curfew and lock down in some institutions, most people stayed idle .A previous active person, then converted idle can lead to stress and depression . It has been reported that some teachers developed depression since they were idle against what they used to be previously .Other individuals have suffered because they lost hope .A stressed-or-depressed person is a sick person who requires medication or psychriatic services. Such an individual is not health and thus not productive hence a big loss to the economy and the society.

Broken family fabrics and institution of marriages.

The emergency of Covid 19 have occasioned breakdown of family units. Many marriages have been affected mainly due to lack of resources, (basic needs) forcing the parents to go separate. In some cases, a COVID containment measure has led to death and painful separation. Lock down measures has more often led to communication (physical) breakdown leading to infidelity which has affected institution of marriage adversely. The containment measures have who forced the family to be together after being separate for long time while in pursuit of economic gains. The two parents have never stayed together for a long time, meaning they hardly understand or know each other. This kind of experience has lead to antagonism while trying to know and understand each other, leading to conflicts and broken marriages as the end product. In other scenarios, the death of partner has dealt a devastating blow to the whole family members since a biological father or mother cannot be replaced. The aforesaid, have in one way or another affected the social-fabric of institution of marriage.

Heavy spending by the government

The pandemic has necessitated the Government to do heavy spending in order to contain and find a cure for the disease. Government have spent colossal amount of money to purchase the necessary medical equipment, such as ventilators, oxygen cylinders, protective gears, construction of hospitals, hospital beds and other medical assortments. Large sum of money have been used in procurement of medicines and antigen to diagnose and treat the diseases. In developed countries, the Governments have used a lot of finances on research of possible cure and vaccines. All over the world Government have recruited medical personnel, such doctors, clinical officers, nurses and others “health care-givers” in order to contain and prevent the spread of virus. Besides, other key sectors have been involved in maintaining containment measures as stipulated by health authorities. Such sectors include security and intelligence entries, which the Government has spent colossal amount of money funds in recruiting, and correct inducting and paying of allowances to maintain law and order gather information during curfew and lock down. These emerging expenditures have drained government coffers.

International trade

Modern technology has reduced the world to a global village. The economies of nations are inter-wined and connected, No country can do without the other. The Global market is interdependence and inter-related.

The COVID 19 and it subsequent measures have altered the operation of the Global market. Cessation measures, that halting air travel have adversely affected the movement of goods and services in big way. Countries that rely on others, through imports and exports have been affected either by loss of business, income or tariffs. This means, loss of income from a broad leading to unbalanced balance of trade. Thus, many Governments have lost the much need revenue leading to unbalanced national budget. At individual level most household have lacked some basic items simply because they are not in the commodity market or are in short supply. In addition, the incomplete chain of distribution due to cessation of air travel has led to near collapse of some of factories and manufacturing units, leading to loss of revenues, jobs and household income.

Stigmatization

The issue of COVID 19 have stigmatise many people. Human beings relate and associate certain phenomena's with superstitions. In most cases victims of corona-virus are not fully accepted by the society. In some cases, the family members separate them from others, since associate the infection with punishment from the power of providence. That the victims have offended our creator, and because of that, the victim should be segregated from the rest. This stigimization have actually affected the victims, leading to the loss of self-esteem and sometimes affecting their mental health. The stigimized person cannot live a normal life and sometimes becomes a mental ease, worth medical care. Such people are not productive and have changed from corona victim to psychiatric victims, who cannot depend on themselves, therefore adding to the statistics of dependence ratio and unproductive army of people. This is a huge loss to state and thee family unit.

Conclusion

The corona-virus, through an emerging global menace, has had it gains and losses. The virus has withered some benefits and demerits. However it's not worthy to find comfort on the gains, since the gains have been experienced at the cost of life. Life of human being is not replaceable but wealth is replaceable. Arising from the aforementioned, it advisable for the Governments, individuals and households to put in place concrete measures to contain, and prevent the spread of the lethal virus. Everyone should be his/her brother, sister, neighbour keeper, for if you are not infected you are affected. The global leaders should guarantee us that the virus will never be used as biological weapon, since it can deal a devastating blow to man-kind. This therefore calls for concerted effort and action toward the prevention, containment and treatment of this global biological invisible enemy.

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