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Covid-19 Pandemic as Alibi for Less Vigorous Pursuit of Government Developmental Programmes in Nigeria: A Case Study of Cross River State

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Abstract: Government have in the past embarked on many infrastructural programmes such as building of roads, hospitals, health centers in the rural areas, schools, etc for its citizens. A lot of projects have been carried out in the past years, there are institutions formed to carter for the implementation of such programmes, institutions like NEMA to check disasters, repair of roads, collapse buildings etc. NDDC was formed to take care of roads in the South East but many of these programmes and institutions have not fared well in recent years because of corruption. Take for instance in the channels news of Tuesdays 16/6/2020 the new NDDC Director revealed how projects awarded to contractors in the past were all not carried out, funds meant for those purposes were all embezzled into private pockets. With the coming of Covid 19, governments have now found cover to say Covid 19 has attacked all revenue sources and so cannot carry out projects in the country. This is the burden of this work. Is it true that it is Covid 19 that halted the success of programme implementation in Nigeria? This is what this paper is out to ascertain.

Keywords: *Covid 19, Pandemic, Government Programmes, Development.*

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Introduction

One of the reasons for the existence of government is to fashion out projects which has to be pursued during its period of administration of the nation. Some of these projects include housing, roads, health, education, etc. This is why we have different institutions at the federal and state ministries which should formulate policies that will enable government to pursue or realize the project they have set for themselves. In the case of Nigeria, this has been a very troubling state of affairs because our experiences have been that many projects are earmarked at the beginning of budget year only to discover that the projects are not achieved or are haphazardly done. Most of the governors have tried to execute certain projects to improve on the standard of living of their people while others are not doing anything. The focus of this paper is to look at the efforts of government on road construction in the nation and in Cross River in particular, to see how they have fared throughout the length and breadth of the state during this pandemic.

The projects of government were already earmarked in 2019 before the advent of Covid 19; at this time the government is struggling to execute the projects it has set for itself vis –a- vis combating the pandemic that has taken the center stage in the affairs of governance. The dilemma of government at this time is to see how to balance their budget so as to still carry out their projects while fighting the pandemic which is affecting all the facet of our national life. It is a case of ensuring that people's life are secured while not losing sight of the importance of other aspects of government projects. The question now is how is government able to balance up its developmental projects with its fight against the pandemic?

Interestingly in Cross River State, the governor is making spirited effort to still ensure that roads project in parts of the state are still going on, however, it is evident that the pace of work has slowed down because of the paucity of funds, since most of the funds which were supposed to be made available for road projects are now been diverted to fight the pandemic. With the government setting up over 50 enforcement employees it means paying all the 50 enforcement employees. This pandemic was never envisaged, so there has to be some budgetary adjustments to accommodate the new pandemic. Before the pandemic, there were signs that some roads in the state were to be worked on but now, it has slowed down this is because of the pandemic. Though generally, many states are now building health facilities, building rehabilitation centers, buying health equipment, providing testing equipments which are imported and are expensive, updating medical

facilities, providing ad-hoc staff which have all added to bring stress on the available funds. The pandemic has created avenue for diversion of funds for personal use by some government agents, while some state government are committed and seriously minded in fighting the pandemic in their state, others are seeing it as an opportunity to swindle their government. It is so bad that some people cannot pay salaries in the name of fighting the virus which is an extreme negative position. In spite of the very dangerous dimension the virus is assuming in Nigeria, government is not supposed to lose sight, they are still supposed to pursue their developmental projects side by side the pandemic, they can still fight the virus and maintain some balance

Objective of the study

The focus of this paper is to look at the effect of Covid- 19 on government programmes specially road construction in the nation and in Cross River state in particular, to see how they have fared before and during this pandemic**.**

Theoretical framework

Social Cognitive theory by Albert Bandura emphasizes the need to take care of the multidimensional causative factors in human activities. He refers to it as triadic reciprocal determinism. To assess any social situation you have to consider the fact of human behavior, environmental influences and level of knowledge. Applying this theory to our subject matter we explicate that human behavioral trait, the environment where they find themselves, attendant influences, the general level of knowledge, exposure and understanding will determine the measure to adopt and how to apply them to each unique situation (Bandura, 1986).

Application of the theory

Social cognitive theory applied in administrative processes will require that we examine the peculiarity and uniqueness of the

1. **Environment:** Administration is to be used for the wellbeing of the people's continuation of the provision of infrastructure, amenities that engender corporate wellbeing. In this case, road construction is part of it but government is abandoning it in the name of Covid-19. The level of how informed the people are, how critical the people are, the nature of environment is important and they have to be aggregated to determine how the Administrator will respond to the situation. However, where people in

the environment are concerned and ask questions, then, the administrator will be forced to perform but where the people are insensitive, it will impact on what goes on.

2. **Human behavior and traits:** Human beings are ambivalent; they are capable of changing their positions. When the going is good they move along but when it is bad they drop. A person can give an impression of being good whereas he is bad. People tend to follow the part of least resistance. Any opportunity that makes them remain in their comfort zone will remain there than stepping into an unknown terrain. This time they are using the prevalence of the virus to abdicate their social administrative responsibilities. Some have responded negatively, others are responding positively. They may not do it to the extent they would have done, but their sincerity will be seen from the sincere efforts they are making. The attendant influences do not apply equally to all situations, because there are states that are working, those who know that leadership is a divine duty to serve their people do what is right irrespective of the situation they find themselves. But those who are not morally sound are diverting the money into their private pockets or to service themselves instead of servicing the state.

3. **Extent of Knowledge and Exposure:** The level of knowledge of administrators will determine how they respond to emergency situations. A person who is knowledgeable will continue to pursue what he knows is good in spite of militating situations. He is supposed to continue to discharge his responsibilities irrespective of obstacles, hindrances and oppositions.

Conceptual issues

Corona-virus

Corona viruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or human.

Covid-19

According to Talor and Francis (2020) CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus and 'D'for disease. Before now, the disease was mentioned as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-CoV'. The COVID-19 virus is a new virus related to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some type of common cold. Covid-19 was seen on the planet on 31st December, 2019 in Wuhan City, China in persons with pneumonia.

It is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus with symptoms of fever, tiredness, dry cough, difficulty in breathing (WHO, 2020).

Statistics of Covid 19 virus in Nigeria is over 29,286 confirmed cases, 654 death, 11,828 discharged cases as of the time of writing this research 8/7/20.

Pandemic

This is a problem that spreads so fast as to cover all over a country, continent or world. The Corona virus is an example of such a disease.

Government programmes

Government programmes are outcome of specific policies of action selected by the government to help the government achieve its objectives in various sectors of the economy. These programmes are setup to benefit its citizens. Government programmes refer to projects that are financed by a government and are typically owned by the government, these include major infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dams, railways, tunnels, or facilities such as hospitals, schools, prisons, etc.

These sectors include the education, health, agriculture, public utilities, finance. Okelegbe (1994) said they are planned programmes of action to be achieved or carried out. A plan of action according to him is a policy on a plan of action that government has set out to implement. He says it covers economy, education, health, defence, social welfare, foreign affairs, housing etc. these are projects to solve societal problems. Government programmes are activities sponsored by local, state or federal government. Some have argued that governments neither are not wholly capitalist corporations nor are they all socialist activities that dole out welfare programmes with expecting something from her citizens. Some say that most government programmes are making some people to be dependent on government to provide basic needs for them and as such have become lazy.

Some have argued that crony capitalism is more alive and well in most government circles and have made government programmes big, powerful, costly and complex so that only the big and powerful can prosper and keep getting bigger while the poor and powerless become poorer. Andy Beshear explained that in the United States, PBM was originally established to help companies and government programmes manage pharmacy cost, but it has grown into powerful industry with middle men that have taken over to hide and complicate drug pricing issues. Today, same scenario is seen in Nigeria in this Covid-19 era, where the effort of the government is being thwarted by some government officials. For example, the palliatives provided by the government is not getting to the poor, the middle men most at times hijack these palliatives and resale them still to the poor thereby

making the poor poorer. In Nigeria, even till date most privatized companies are all taken over by the capitalist so that the potentials in ensuring citizens participation is not achieved. There is need to end Fukuyama's history of superiority of the rich over the vulnerable (Nwanegbo, 2005).

Impact of Covid – 19 on Construction Projects

The impact of Covid-19 varies from state to state. In Nigeria, some states have abandoned everything about governance and are concerned about tackling the menace of Covid-19. States like Cross River state and Kogi state are playing down on the impact of Covid-19. The position in these two states oscillates between outright denials of its existence, to halfhearted or lukewarm acceptance of its existence. However, surprisingly, from observation not much appears to be going on in these states in terms of construction projects. It is therefore not obvious why we are experiencing a lack luster performance in the area of construction. Other states are hinging their non- performance or in some cases marginal performance on the fight against Covid-19.

In the United States of America, most of the states like New York, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Boston, Massachusetts have designated construction projects as either "essential" or non "essential". While some states are carrying on with both the essential or the non-essential projects at varying degrees. Others are concentrating only on essential projects otherwise called "Life sustaining businesses or constructions. A few others like in Boston, Cambridge and Massachusetts have labeled all projects as essential and have permitted that they go on provided the persons involved in the constructions observe the corona-protocols like social distancing, face masking, hand washing and so on ((Epstein, R. C., Knaub, Z. D., 2020)).

The truth is that many of the construction firms have been impacted upon negatively by the corona-virus pandemic. This has led to a lot of legal issues. Many companies and governments are locked in the battle of taking a "second look" at the job agreements signed before the onset of Covid-19 to seek for ways of mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on the sustainability of the contracts. Companies are claiming damages, compensable costs, risks allocation, cost differentials, need for time extension and variation in cost and time of delivery of contracts. What is being done is that government and companies are assessing the actual and potential impacts of the Covid-19 on the original cost of contract. The law says that delay or cost differential claims must be ascertained within 21 days of the intrusion of "force

majeure" which negatively affects a contract. It is important in the eyes of the law that delay notices or damage claims be made within stipulated time frames. It is not clear whether all these legal precautions are being judiciously observed in Nigeria.

It is noted that during pandemic it is the contractor that takes responsibility of pandemic safety protocols at the work site. So, government can hold companies responsible for any breach in observing the safety protocols. However, where the government on its own terminates the contract abruptly, according to laws of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the contractor is obligated in such circumstances to recover from government payment for work so far executed as well as reasonable overhead and project on work not executed and other costs incurred by reason of such termination (Epstein, & Knaub, 2020)

Since the delay occasioned by the advent of Covid-19 pandemic is not the fault of contractors, they are entitled to have the provision of "No damages for delay" (NDFD) clause waved for contractors since they did not occasion the delay in this instance.

The question is that every company's case must be treated on its own merit. The question will have to be asked whether the delay was self-inflicted or as a result of the intrusion of the Corona-virus Pandemic. Some delays therefore may be excusable but non-compensable.

The Nigerian experience

Even before the outbreak**,** the outlook for the Nigeria government economy- has been fragile because Nigeria has been grappling with weak oil price with GDP growth around 2.3% in 2019 and with the IMF revising of the 2020 GDP growth rate from 2.5% to 2% because of low oil prices and limited fiscal space this has made the countries debt profile a source of concern for policy makers and development planners as the debt profile is likely to worsen amid the steep decline linked with falling oil prices. These factors will increase the economic impact of Covid 19 and make it more difficult for the government to handle the crises. Also the weak capacity of health care system in these developing countries is likely to worsen the pandemic and its impact on Nigeria's economy (Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020).

The United Nation system in Nigeria in collaboration with the government of Nigeria, has launched the Covid 19 "Basket Fund" to complement ongoing efforts to mobilize resources in support of the National Covid -19 multi sectorial pandemic Response Plan, developed by

the presidential task force on Covid -19. The Basket fund will also fund socio-economic measures.

As seen in other countries, Covid 19 is not stopping projects completely but is slowing them down. There are disruptions and delays here and there. But leaders who are focused and determined still manage to carry on with their projects. However, many governors who are looking for excuse have stopped most of their projects hoping to resume work at different project sites at a later date.

Some of the excuses given is that the money for projects have been transferred to the Health sector since the business of securing life is more urgent. There is the reason that since the virus is now at the stage of community spread, it is not safe for workers at site to continue to work to avoid the inter-personal transfer of the virus at the project sites. Other reasons are that the virus may assume a new peak or spike if some measure of lockdown is not put in place. Again, there is the fear that most people are not complying with the safety protocols put in place by the National center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the state government. The overriding reason, therefore, is that it is the government's responsibility to provide a safe working environment before workers are deployed to the site. This most governments are finding difficult to do.

Some governments have classified certain projects as non-essential or non-critical businesses and as such should be stopped. These moves have great implications, one, how will construction companies and contractors continue to pay their workers who are presently not working? How will the company remain afloat if the necessary funds are not flowing in? Who knows how long the pandemic will stay with us? Will government be ready to pay to the constructed firms the incidental differentials that will be necessitated by the time lag? This means that there will be extension of time for contractors, there is need for some funds to pay workers wages in order to retain them. There are also likely damages that may be incurred because of lapses in time. There is need for compensation to the contractors and firms handling government projects. Contractors may seek relief on the basis of an exceptional and unpredictable occurrence like the Covid 19 pandemic. This is what is called in law of contract the intrusion of a force majeure event, which is an unforeseen event which is so powerful as to interfere with the continuation of a contract or project.

The event of Covid 19 pandemic is going to condition how government and firms enter into contractual agreement in post pandemic period. In the face of the existing crisis, the current Covid-19 is helping in intensifying the crisis of education to an unprecedented level in the face of

economic downtown. Schools have been shutdown since March 2020, students are exposed to disjointed learning, sexual immorality, early pregnancies and all sort of social vices coupled with, massive retrenchment of labour force.

Government of contemporary society is beset by many problems ranging from politics, economic and social issues. Other issues are terrorism, communal clash, kidnapping among others. Since the role of government revolves around protection of lives and property and, provision of essential services in compliance to human right laws, government formulate policies to address these problems. In C.R.S, the challenge imposed by internally displaced persons at Bakassi, Odukpani, Ikom, and Ogoja call for a visionary leadership with a political will to implement social policies that will improve the quality of life of the citizens

On Tuesday, October 8, 2019, His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, President, Federal Republic of Nigeria at the Joint Session of the National Assembly, Abuja, Delivered the Buhari's 2020 Budget Speech as N10.33trn for the nation. Below is the breakdown

2.46 trillion for capital expenditure
318 billion for capital projects for statutory transfer
721.33billion (23%) Total capital budget
262 billion Works and housing
127billion Power
123billion Transport
112billion Universal basic education
100billion Defence
100 billion Zonal intervention projects
83billoin Agriculture and Rural Development
82billion Water Resources
81billion Niger Delta
48billion Education
46 billion Health
40 billion Industry trade and investment
35 billion Interior
30 billion Social investment programme
28 billion Federal capital territory
24 billion Niger Delta Affairs

Government has released 58 million US dollars to fight corona-virus. This means that this is either extra budgetary provision or extra borrowing or money extracted from budgetary allocation to other sections. Somehow, this may affect 721 billion budgeted for capital projects, we have 262 billion

for works and Housing. There is no doubt that budgetary allocations to other sectors must have been affected because the money budgeted for Corona virus was not captured in the 2020 budget. It comes under emergency budgetary need that needs urgent provision. The socio-Economic rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has sent an urgent appeal to the United Nations Special rapporteurs over the Federal Government's adjustments in health and Education (UBE). They accused the Federal Government of cutting the allocations to Health and Education. Health budget was reduced from ₦444 billion to ₦23.3 billion and Universal Basic Education was reduced from 111.7 billion to 57.1 billion.

Whereas a whooping sum of 37 billion was approved for the renovation of National Assembly complex (which is not a priority project) that of health and Education were drastically slashed. SERAP sees the discriminatory budget cuts in Education and health as unjustified and disproportionate reduction of allocations. It is the view of SERAP that the Federal Government is wittingly encouraging members of the national Assembly to corner the wealth of the nation to continue to sustain their opulent life style at the expense of the rest of the citizens. By so doing, the federal government has failed in addressing the growing economic and social inequality in the country and the consequent case of vulnerabilities as a result of the corona virus pandemic. It is callous for the federal government to be talking of renovation at the tune of 37billion naira when Nigerians are dying of hunger resulting from the collapse of businesses, job losses, unemployment and nonpayment of salaries in some quarters (Nweje, 2020).

The revised 2020 budget forwarded by the President to the National Assembly was rejected because the executive omitted 186 billion meant for Covid-19 emergency response. This amount was captured in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The 500 billion earmarked for Covid-19 emergency was captured in the MTEF but the 186 billion omitted caused the National Assembly to return the budget to the Presidency.

What we have gathered from the old and the revised budget is that some ministries notably health, Education, Judiciary and others were affected to accommodate the emergency of Covid-19 pandemic. In spite of the supplementary budget of ₦500 billion for Covid-19, budgetary allocations to all the sectors were tampered with. For example the judiciary was scaled down to 110 billion (Fred, 2020).

National Assembly budget was cut down from 37billion to 27billion. The point is that infrastructure. Health and Education are much more important than renovation which can be handled when things get better. It is the syndrome of "I rob your back, you rob my back". For the presidency to

get away with its profligate budget, it has to support the National Assembly. This shows that Nigerians are at the mercy of potentate politicians who are sharing our common wealth among themselves.

The Federal Government has been permitted to borrow 5.5 billion US dollar and 22.7 billion US dollars from multilateral leaders and external sources in order to still pursue its critical and priority infrastructure development.

Methodology

Area of Study: The study was conducted in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Cross River State is located in the South-South part of Nigeria. It has a surface are of latitude 4º15 and 4º05 North of the Equator and on a longitude of 7º05 and 8º25 East of the Meridian. The main occupation is Agriculture (farming and fishing) while most women engage in marketing activities. (Media Nigeria, 2018).The work employed survey research design technique. Stratified random sampling was used to select thirty (7) respondents from each ward of 10 wards. (Media Nigeria, 2018). The main aim was to ensure adequate representation. Thus making a sample of (210) respondents. The samples size consisted of seventy (70) seven from each ward. Respondents where purposively selected from each ward to elicit correct information such as professors, doctors, public and private services. Data was collected with the act of structure questionnaire prepared by the research to reflect the objective of the study with a 4 point scale as strongly agreed (SA) Agreed (A) Strongly Disagreed (SD-), Disagreed (D). Section A is on bio-data profile of respondents and section B was on the effect of Covid -19 on government programmer especially on construction of roads to see how they have fared before and during the pandemic.

Respondents Bio-Date Profile

Characteristics	frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	35	50%
Female	35	50%
TOTAL	**70**	**100%**
AGE:		
20-30	15	22%
31-40	15	22%
41-50	20	28%
51-60	20	28%
TOTAL	**70**	**200%**

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND		
Primary school	10	15%
Secondary school	10	15%
OND/NCE	10	15%
HND/B.Sc/MA	20	28%
Ph.D	20	28%
TOTAL	**70**	**100%**
OCCUPATION		
Business men and women	20	28%
Students	10	14%
Civil/Public servant	40	58%
TOTAL	**70**	**100%**

Source: Field 2020

Table 1: Effect Of Covid 19 On Government Programmes – On Road Construction

S/NO	ITEMS	A	SA	D	SD	TOTAL
TABLE 1	Covid 19 has affected government Porgrammes in Cross River State especially road construction	**25 35%**	**20 28%**	**15 22%**	**10 15%**	**70 100%**
TABLE 2	Many contract were terminated during the pandemic in Cross River State	**30 42%**	**20 28%**	**10 15%**	**10 15%**	**70 100%**
TABLE 3	Covid 19 stopped project completely, but determined and focused leaders can still carry out projects	**10 12%**	**10 15%**	**20 28%**	**30 42%**	**70 100%**

Source: field work. (2020)

Table 1 above show that respondents strongly agreed that Covid 19 affected government programmes in Cross River state because movement were restricted, cash flow was not available as many banks did not operate.

Table 2 indicates that many contract were terminated because the sit at home order was observed and so no work was carried out.

Table 3 above also revealed that responses under strongly disagreed were 30(42%) indicating that respondents disagreed to the fact that Covid 19 stopped project completely. After the sit at home order was lifted, some committed, determined and focused leaders were working to ameliorate the

sufferings of their people. But the government of Cross River State was apathetic to the needs of their people. They did little or nothing to ameliorate the suffering of their people. For example they were reluctant to distribute the palliatives given to them by the Federal government for their people. Talk less of going into infrastructural programmes that are capital intensive and the many challenges facing the state ranging from collapse buildings as a result of erosion; bad roads and resettling internally displaced persons in Bakassi and Odukpani local government area.

Table 3 Chi-Square(X^2) Computation for Observed Frequency

RESPONSES	A	D	TOTAL
Effect of Covid 19 on government Programmes(Table 1)	45	25	70
Termination of contract (Table 2)	50	20	70
Covid 19 stopped project completely (Table 3)	20	50	70
TOTAL	**115**	**95**	**210**

Source: Field work 2020.

Table 4 Chi-Square(X^2) Analysis of Expected Frequency

NO	OF	EF	OF-EF	$(OF-EF)^2$	$\frac{(OF-EF)^2}{EF}$
1	**45**	**38.3**	**-6.7**	**44.89**	**1.17**
2	**50**	**38.3**	**-11.7**	**136.89**	**3.57**
3	**20**	**38.3**	**18.3**	**334.89**	**8.72**
4	**25**	**31.6**	**6.0**	**36.00**	**1.13**
5	**20**	**31.6**	**11.6**	**134.56**	**4.25**
6	**50**	**31.6**	**-18.4**	**338.56**	**10.71**
TOTAL	**210**				**28.55**

Source: field work 2020.

The degree of freedom (df) =(c- 1(r- 1)

df= (2-1) (5-1) = 4

Calculated(x^2) value = 28.55 at dr = 4

Critical value at 0.05

Decision rule

Accept the null hypothesis if the calculated value is less than the critical value.

Since calculated (x^2) value of 28.55 is greater than 7.815 at critical value of 0.05 degree of freedom. We therefore agree that Covid 19 cannot stop infrastructural programmes.

Discussion

From the findings, the pandemic was not as destructive and wide spread as people had thought in Nigeria. People devised their local drugs which brought the pandemic under control before the WHO brought in the difference vaccines that were used as curative and preventive therapists. Is it a pandemic that affected the whole world which instigated global quest for solution while that was being done Nigerians were quick to devised their own local solutions.

Gainers and losers of Covid 19

Most businesses have suffered negatively, hospitality firms have recorded low transaction rates, banks are all affected, some lost their jobs and others were paid half salaries while some ventures saw what was coming and made a switch on time for example, some textile factories changed from making dresses as there was no money to buy dress to making of face mask which is in high demand at this time. Health care owners like chemist shops, pharmacy shop, ICT, food and beverages are the winners in this Covid – 19 eras because people must eat, make calls, go to health centers, chemist, and pharmacy to get drugs. Transporters made money as they doubled fares, police, armies, the taskforce for Covid-19 etc who were on the roads made money as they collected from any transport plying the road (CTV 21/6/20). Some government officials, health officials are all gainers in this pandemic because the United Nations as 20/6/20 NTA news of 10pm, said they have assisted Nigeria with 613 US dollars to fight the pandemic. The worrying point is that a huge chunk of the fund will go into private pockets. Today, exposures are being made of rot in EFCC and NDDC. We have also seen how Mr. Magu the EFCC leader who was to fight corrupt people could not account for 550billion of the loot recovered from corrupt politicians.

It is discovered that Nigerian leaders are in the National Assemble for themselves and not for the masses. The NDDC minister, Godswill Akpabio, and the national assembly who are there to represent the suffering masses also pocketed funds meant for road construction (Onyeato, 2020). It is now the Machiavellian style, the strong get it all. Nigerian leaders are selfish, wicked and corrupt. Many have enriched themselves during this pandemic, diverting the palliatives meant for the vulnerable for themselves (Adeyi, 2020). These shows bad leadership, a good leader is ready to do the right thing and find ways of ameliorating the pains of his people, this is not so in Nigeria.

Federal government even came in to arraign two supermarkets and two pharmacies owners who hike the prices of hand sanitizers and face masks. (Tsa, 2020) It is incredible that people use this period of national suffering to hike prices to enrich themselves while the poor suffers. Many states have refused to carry out major projects giving excuse of lack of fund because of the effect of Covid-19.

While other countries are helping their business firms to get to their feet again. Nigerian leaders only help their family members. Grants, jobs meant for the masses are diverted by the national assembly. The 774,000 jobs given by President Buhari was contended over because the National Assembly wanted to hijack the jobs for their family members or perhaps give it out to the public at exorbitant price, if not for the firms stand of the minister handling the project. The National Assembly rejected our local cars assembled by Innoson motors in Nigeria and went abroad to buy cars at the tune of five billion at the rate of fourteen million per car at a period when people cannot travel on Nigerian roads, in this pandemic era when people cannot eat three square meals a day (Oshoma, 2020).

> " we can say that 98% of the people are not feeling the impact of government, it is only 2% of those in government that are comfortable where they are. We all do not feel the same thing the same way.
> The leaders do not travel by road so they do not see and feel what the people
> are suffering (Marricke, 2020).

He went further to say that there are people who put in nothing but when they get in there, they get everything. For example, the ordinary man works from 8am to 5pm and yet get very little but one politician who wins election gets in there and gets all the money.

Ogun state governor has started working on abandoned projects especially on roads (Onyeato, 2020). Ten communities in Anambra state lament dilapidated roads, hospitals and other projects (Odogwu,2020).

For Wike the governor of Rivers State, Covid -19 won't stop ongoing projects. The governor reassured residents that Covid-19 pandemic will not stop the completion of all ongoing projects, they are building Mother and Child Hospital that has reached the state of installation of medical equipment, but the furnishing and installation has delayed because of the ban on international flights that would have brought in the equipment and the personnel to install them. There are three flyovers going on that will

be completed within the stipulated time which is early 2021. He said while the country is fighting

Covid -19, Rivers State must try to provide basic infrastructure for the people, that the pandemic will one day stop but the people of the state will be there to have a good infrastructure to improve their economic life (Tony, 2020).

Response from the public on Covid has shown that most people do not believe there is anything like Covid-19. This is seen in their behavior as some do not wear facemasks, no social distancing in most places, people shake hands, many do not use hand sanitizers nor practice the universal precaution. For the public Covid -19 is not African sickness, it is for the whites, some says it is just malaria which they Africans are used to so it can not kill them. They say there is no Covid-19, that the figures given by Nigerian Government are political figure to get money from outside world. They went on to say that is why the Covid-19 pandemic will not end so easily because the leaders are making money out of it and would not want it to end early.

What an observation by Okonette (2020).

DEADLY PANDEMIC

"If there really was a deadly pandemic we wouldn't need to be rushing to test everybody to prove it exists. People would actually be sick. Hospitals would all be full. People you actually know would be dead. None of that exists in reality, but instead only on the television".

With this most Nigerians do not believe corona-virus exist in Nigeria

Conclusion

The question of infrastructure and health issues are very crucial issues that impinge on human existence. It is important to build roads, bridges, dams, rail lines as it is important to fight the deadly pandemic that has already taken a toll on human life and the economy. The old adage says that "good health is more precious than gold" One must be alive before you can use infrastructure. We can say that it is proper to give priority attention to the fight against the pandemic. And in this wise the Nigerian Government and the State Governments have done well.

This paper is addressing the issue of hypocritical attitude in leadership. A leader is a person who knows how to balance out all his many activities so that none will suffer. A leader should know how to utilize and

allocate resources available to him to the many sectors that need attention. Governance has to do with the concurrent workings of all the facets of the state life health, power, water, roads, housing, etc. he has to prioritize them but make sure that all sectors are working at certain acceptable minimal levels.

Our research has revealed that while some governors are actually shouldering their responsibilities in a balanced way. Others are hiding under the excuse (alibi) of covid19 to ravage in their responsibilities. This paper is a clarion call on all to rise up to the challenge and put in their best to ensure, that the provision of critical infrastructure is carried along with the fight against covid19. Already we have a lot of deficit in the area of critical infrastructure like roads, bridges, food production, housing, power, etc. all these critical needs should not be sacrificed on the altar of covid19.

Recommendations

The fallout from our research shows that a frugal management of resources available to the states and Local Government can suffice for the fight against covid19 with substantial amount left for the execution of other projects.

- The state and local government will have to pull their resources together in a contributory manner to fight covid19 in the state.
- State government should make good use of the fund provided by the federal government for the purpose of fighting the pandemic.
- Appeal should be made to public spirited individuals who are wealthy and cooperation like Banks, Lafarge, Dangote, etc. operating in their state to assist in donating money for the fight against covid19.
- It is also advisable and rational that government functionaries, reduce the wastage in government through a coated government expenditure on white elephant project, unnecessary jamborees and proper, and balanced budgeting which ensures that all sectors are carried along in the best governmental practice
- A bold step anchored on propriety in terms of doing all that should be done at the right time, build roads, during the dry season to avoid water that will be incurred if done in the rainy season.
- Government should have a team of experts to advice on, how to carry on with the business of government in hard times such as this.
- There is need for communication so as to carry the citizen along with the activities of

Government.

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