

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Trade and Intercommunity Relations in the Hinterland and Borderland of Northwest Nigeria

*M.T. Usman*¹

Abstract

COVID-19 is a pandemic that has engaged the attention of humanity because it is a disaster that had produced unprecedented negative impact on human society all over the world. It has been declared a pandemic with a devastating effect on human lives and the economies of nations. The impact of COVID-19 on economies and societies of Africa has complicated the existing socioeconomic crisis on the continent which is difficult to predict the end of it. The imposition of prolong lockdowns by governments in Africa in order to curb the spread of COVID-19 only led to economic hardships, hunger, more diseases and deprivation in many communities. The ease of lockdowns led to the opening of national economies of African countries which had produced impact in different ways and dimensions. We should not forget the serious devastating impact of the pandemic on the means of livelihood among the poor in sub-Saharan Africa. African countries were expected to come up with inward looking strategies and collaborate with other countries of the world to find common solutions to the challenge of COVID-19, which would facilitate economic revival and sustained prosperity in Africa. This paper discusses some of the socioeconomic challenges of COVID-19 and their impact on some communities in northern Nigeria and the borderlands of Niger Republic.

1 Professor of History, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. Email: mt.usmanu@udusok.edu.ng

Introduction

The corona virus also known as COVID-19 is a disease that currently poses serious challenge to humanity. Experts are of the opinion that though, Africa is behind other parts of the world in terms of the figures coming out on daily basis of the people infected as well as the fatality. The continent is still considered the most vulnerable in terms of the devastating impact of the pandemic on the economy and society. Most of the reports from international organizations indicate a frightening picture of the devastation that the pandemic would cause on the continent because of so many problems connected with weak health infrastructures, declining economy and problematic governance. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one of the biggest challenges in Africa continues to be the nonavailability of essential medical supplies, particularly test kits. For instance, an OECD report (2020) highlights that 'Africa's relatively weak healthcare systems, limited medical supplies and shortfall in medical personnel put the continent at high risk'. Furthermore, the World Bank report on the pandemic situation in Africa indicates that healthcare facilities are inadequate and that accessibility to health services is very poor. The report of OECD (2020) indicates the number of hospital beds per 1 000 people is 1.2 in Africa and 3.8 in OECD countries.

Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the paper is to bring to the forefront the extent to which the COVID₁₉ has affected the social and economic lives of the ordinary people which is yet to receive the deserved attention from scholars and researchers. Specific objectives of the paper include:

- i. An examination of the historical process that had shaped social and economic lives of the communities in the study area.
- ii. An assessment of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on social and economic relations in the study area.
- iii. Recommend some measures and strategies that could

mitigate the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the study area.

Methodology

The paper adopts a qualitative approach and relies on the extant primary and secondary materials for data. Individual and focus group interviews were conducted in the field, in northern Nigeria and ten borderland communities between Nigeria and Niger. The field data have been extensively used in the discussion. Furthermore, radio and television programmes and news bulletins had been monitored regularly by the research to get additional information about economic and social activities in the study area especially during the lockdown. The media sources have yielded useful information about the socioeconomic realities during the peak period of the COVID-19. The sources of data both primary and secondary have been fully and duly documented in the paper.

Hinterland and crossborder trade in historical context

The history and development of trade relations between Nigeria and her neighbours had been well documented by economic historians. For several years, the ancient Trans-Saharan network of trade routes linked areas and kingdoms in the region for the movement of goods and services. (Meillasoux, 1971; Adamu, 1974; Hopkins, 1978; Lovejoy, 1980; Shea, 1993) Economic interdependency between the communities in the study area and others outside the region had contributed to manufacturing of local products; the growth of local trade and markets over the centuries. Scholars like Toyin Falola (1993) have demonstrated the extent of complementary socioeconomic relations among the different communities which was largely influenced by the material needs and entrepreneurial specialization particularly where communities were in close proximity to each other. The sociocultural and demographic influence on the area also gave rise to the development of market institutions, which stimulated commercial activities in wider areas across the West African sub-region. Cohen's analysis of the caravan trade in West Africa reveals some features of the

system dealing with credit, transport, insurance, information exchange and settlement of trade dispute mechanism which was relatively efficient and had facilitated the creation of a common economic zone, which some scholars argue qualified as an integrated economic region (Cohen, 1969). Understanding the processes of exchange among various pre-colonial communities in particular areas and the whole region of West Africa in general, has a lot to offer in understanding the forces that have transformed the internal structures of trade relations between different communities over time (Hopkins, 1978).

Commercial activities during the precolonial period especially aspects related to the development of trade and markets can best be understood if considered as part of the process of the general transformation of the economy of the West African region. Contemporary cross-border trade in West Africa had virtually developed over time along the old existing commercial relations involving diverse communities across cultural and geographical barriers.

Britain and France were the two European powers that established their presence by the 19th century. During the closing decades of the 19th century the two powers were deeply engaged in intense competition for the natural resources and other endowments in the territories under the control of the Hausa states, which were brought under the political control of a theocratic empire known as the Sokoto Caliphate that was founded as a result of the revivalist movement (*tajdid*) under Usman Dan Fodio early in the 19th century. The history of Hausaland for a very long period featured rivalry and battles for political supremacy among the powerful kingdoms until the 19th century when the Hausa states were ousted as a result of the political revolution under the banner of the *jihād* which ushered in a new Muslim empire. The political tussle among the Hausa states was significant in stabilizing territorial boundaries as observed by Miles (1994) who argues that the tussles and raids that had existed among the powerful kingdoms in Hausaland “is a typical example of how power influences the boundary of a kingdom. Powerful Hausa states such as Gobir, Katsina, Maradi, Daura, Zazzau, Damagaram (Zinder) etc., have at several times

engaged in battles of territorial expansion, protection or even recovery.”² Restriction of socioeconomic activities and social ties across territories was virtually none existing during the pre-colonial period. Miles (1994) reports that pre-colonial borders in Africa were not “a fixed political boundary” as one could understand from the history of the Hausa states.

Falola (1993) identifies three distinguishing features of the pre-colonial West African trade routes. First the routes connected the whole of West Africa together and those places which were not located on the major higher ways were linked by extensive feeder roads. Secondly, the routes were wide spread enough for people who travelled on foot or on animal. And finally, the routes were, by and large, safe and secured except in the periods of wars. It was also the primary responsibility of the rulers that the routes passed through their territories to provide security for the traders and their merchandize. The above characteristics contributed to promoting an exchange system that facilitated the distribution of goods in the region and beyond.

Intercommunity economic cooperation frameworks in the contemporary period

Trade relations between Nigeria and its north-west neighbours in the early period of independence, is one of interdependence and complementarity. However, given the size, population and vast natural resource endowment, Nigeria became an engine of the economy in the West African sub-region. For this reason, Nigeria’s neighbour in the north-west have become economically dependent on her. Niger republic is a land-locked country and therefore depends on the communication networks of its southern neighbours especially those of Nigeria for its international trade (Nwokedi, 1992). Furthermore, along the boundary of Nigeria, important market towns such as Jibia, Dankama and Bindawa rose to prominence by virtue of performing an essential market function within the borderland a hierarchy of market can be identified ranging from the large city markets, to the border and route markets, and the more numerous bush markets.

The border markets play an important role in the system of periodic markets. It is the effort to overcome this disability that the republic of Benin, with its transit position, adopted an economic infiltrationist policy towards Nigeria. Such were the major trends that informed the subsequent agreements on trade cooperation between the three countries.

Some of the economic cooperation arrangements include; the Lake Chad Basin Commission, which was set up in 1964, comprising Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger; the economic community of west African countries (ECOWAS) comprising sixteen countries of west Africa, including Nigeria-Niger and Benin republic; the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization scheme (ETLS); Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation (N-NJCC); within its umbrella, the trade agreement was established between the two countries with major aim of achieving a balance of trade between them; the establishment of Joint Trade Committee (JTC) between Nigeria and Niger republic; the Benin-Nigeria Joint committee on commerce (JCC). The major purpose for these commissions and committees is to encourage the trade relations and economic cooperation between the countries concerned. Important to mention here is the fact that, the formation of ECOWAS was a deliberate effort aimed at bringing Anglophone and Francophone West African countries together for the purpose of mutual cooperation and the acceleration of growth and development through mutual interdependency and increased integration. One of the protocols of ECOWAS for instance, is on the free movement of persons and goods across the national borders of member states. The 1979 protocol gives the citizens of member countries the right to travel within the sub-region without a visa for a period not exceeding 90 days. The fundamental principle underlying the provision of the protocol of ECOWAS on the free movement of persons, goods, and services across the national boundaries is to provide opportunity for increasing mutual interdependence and economic integration among member states (Asiwaju, 2002).

The COVID-19 challenge and other issues

Covid-19 according to many experts is a serious health crisis which has already been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. It is a catastrophe that has added to the existing social, economic and political problems in Africa. The pandemic has complicated the social and economic predicaments of many countries across the globe. South Africa which is a country with a relatively healthy economy and better infrastructure before the Covid-19 has been grappling with the challenges of the disease by virtue of the negative impact on the economy and society. As of 19th July 2020, South Africa has maintained the lead in the figures of Covid-19 infection on the continent. While the leadership in the country has taken the pandemic a serious national health crisis by imposing strict lockdown and providing regular updates to the citizens, many critics argue that there were a number of flaws in the response to the disease. (*Independent Online*, 2020;³ *New Frame*, 2020; *The Conversation*, 2020; *350africa.org*, 16 July 2020) The government of South Africa according to analysts while imposing the lockdown considered only a portion of the population who had easy access to medical care and in better economically to observe social distancing measures. The government of South Africa virtually ignored societal inequalities and other weaknesses. The vast majority of the population live in abject poverty without easy access to health services and facilities. (Editorial Note, *Africa Focus*, 2020) Using class analysis, some writers argue that there is a “lockdown class” who stay in large houses with assured supply of food and other necessities. This is in contrast to a one room apartment without running water for a family with a minimum of five persons.

Imposing of lockdown has featured in a number of discourses which have criticized the strategy but the scope of this paper cannot adequately analyze them. Chukwuma Soludo (2020) is one of the notable scholars who put up strong arguments against the imposition of lockdown in Africa because of the counterproductive effects on the economy and society in most of the African countries. Lockdown ‘template’ was adopted

from the West which consists of 'a coterie of defensive measures' some of them include border closure, opening of isolation centers, imposing 'stay at home' orders or lockdown, social distancing, introduction of welfare package in form of palliatives for the vulnerable people; and a stimulus package to cushion the effects of the pandemic on the economy. Western oriented measures for fighting Covid-19 as implemented in Africa were virtually based on a 'learning by doing' or 'trial and error' model which can hardly be effective in defeating the Covid-19. Soludo made reference to the slumps of Ajegunle and Maraba in Nigeria, Cairo, Nairobi, and Kinshasha among many others where observing social distancing is practically difficult if not impossible. The traditions and values in many local communities encourage "social clustering" and "communal living" which are critical factors for "economic survival" and social reproduction. No government is sincerely committed to paying for lockdown which leaves the citizens to bear the harsh consequences of unending restrictions of movement. For Africa it is impossible to determine the length of time require for lockdown to be effective checking the spread of Covid-19. Almost 80% of the population depend on income generated on daily toil for sustenance or what is called from 'hand to mouth'. One must but agree with Soludo when he avers that prolonged lockdown only created opportunities for extortion by security officials of the violators of lockdown orders. This has been the trend in both urban and rural areas during the peak of the lockdown as confirmed from the field research for this study. (Fieldnotes, 2020)

Government in Nigeria has erroneously attributed the massive deaths to the spread of Covid-19 that occurred during the lockdown in some cities of northern Nigeria. But it is equally debatable that the massive deaths were caused by some other prevailing ailments and diseases that require periodic follow-up, which unfortunately became impossible as a result of the restriction of movements. Evidence from the field reveal some of the dead have history of the most common diseases in the area that are related to heart, high blood pressure and kidney failure; while some died as a result of child-birth; some were killed by common malaria.

Hospitals were turning patients away. Shortage of protective kits and lack of testing centers for Covid-19 in many states in northern Nigeria has led to fears of being infected among health and medical personnel. (Fieldnotes, 2020). Some families resorted to joining long queues in local chemists and pharmacies for drugs; which soon ran out of the most basic drugs desperately needed in the communities. Most African countries import medicinal and pharmaceutical products especially from China and India which became difficult under lockdowns. (Soludo, 2020) It is reported by international organizations that the continent covers 94% of its pharmaceutical needs through imports when many of the countries providing these pharmaceuticals are heavily disrupted by COVID-19. This puts Africa in a precarious situation as essential pharmaceutical supplies could not be procured. Equally important is that Africa does very little in terms of investing resources in medical and pharmaceutical research. Lack of strong commitment to R&D has been responsible for Africa's marginal participation in global research consortia. Furthermore, tests and diagnoses are ineffective and not easily accessible to many citizens because majority cannot afford. (OECD & UNECA, 2020).

Most of the arguments put forward by Soludo have been practically validated from the field observations conducted in the cities of Kano and Kaduna, northern Nigeria as well as field reports from Lagos. A wholesale implementation of lockdowns in the case of Nigeria like in other cities of Niger Republic namely Niamey, Maradi, Zinder and Damagaram has not been the most effective strategy of fighting the Covid-19 spread. The impact of lockdowns had counterproductive effect on most communities because of some peculiarities of the socioeconomic across the two countries. (Fieldnotes 2020; NTA and AIT monitored programmes 2020). Petty traders, commercial drivers for urban and rural transport, artisans, the small-holder farmers were hard hit by the lockdowns. The lockdowns have badly affected the supply of manufactured products to the markets that were closed. Manufacturing companies under lockdown ran out of the essential inputs for production, spare parts which led to closures, retrenchment, rising unemployment and inflation. Markets and shops

exhausted their stocks that led to unhealthy commercial practices as observed at the famous Kantin Kwari textile market in Kano, northern Nigeria. (Fieldnotes 2020; BBC and RFI Hausa news)

Agricultural production which is mostly rain-fed has been under serious threat which made the Nigerian government to relax the lockdown and national inter-state travels from the beginning of July 2020. However, during the peak period of the lockdown, the rainy season farming on the lowland *fadama* (the vast flood plains) was used for cultivation of some cereals and vegetables in the northern part of Nigerian and the neighboring areas of Niger Republic. The old trading relations between northern and southern communities in Nigeria had served as important factor for the promotion of commodities exchange on the basis of a comparative advantage as well as cultural diffusion since the pre-colonial period. In the contemporary period, traders of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds have sustained the relationship across the geo-political zones of the country which presently guarantees food supplies in the country. While food supplies to the other parts of Nigeria was not disrupted but transportations of food items were not all that easy because of insecurity along the highways and the unpatriotic corrupt behavior of some security personnel as expressed by many drivers and farmers who were interviewed. Hausa Services of the BBC and RFI 2020).

Experts are of the view that banning of the importation of rice and other grains; frozen chickens and eggs have given a boost to agricultural activities despite the inadequate support for local farmers in Nigeria. The border closure which has been imposed by government before the Covid-19 has been officially justified on the basis of the ECOWAS protocol and sovereign national (economic) interest. Border closure according to some analysts violates the provision of ECOWAS protocol on free trade. The policy has virtually been economically harmful to Nigeria's neighbours especially Benin and Niger Republics. Nigerian government closed her borders on 18th August 2019. While there was increased production especially of rice in the country according to Government, the prices of the commodity has been high and people complained about the sharp

rise in the prices of food items in the country. (BBC Hausa Service news and reports on 18th August 2020 by 3 to 3:30 pm). The irony of the border closure and later the lockdown have together added to the food crisis in Nigeria because the agricultural sector has not been able to meet the food need of the country. Food items like rice, vegetable oil, fish, *garri* (mashed dry cassava), maize, millet and sorghum as well as, other popular food varieties are virtually out of reach of many families. People are frustrated by soaring inflation of food prices which keeps increasing by the day, and that forces many families to go hungry. It is reported that in July, inflation related to the prices of food stands at 15.48%. (MONEYLINE WITH NANCY aired AIT, 19th August 2020) Lack of cash or savings in banks is very common among the poor which makes it difficult to buy food under the harsh restriction of movement because of Covid-19. Between from 2007 to the present, deposits in Nigerian banks according Soludo (2020) have drastically reduced from an average of \$2500 to \$1,300 which because of the depreciation of the naira is equal to about N300, 000.00 to N500, 000.00 respectively. The few among the traders who operate savings account complain bitterly of poor services and corrupt practices before one gets the deserved attention from bank staff. During the period of the Covid-19 lockdown depositing or withdrawing cash is herculean task with much difficulty and frustration. Customers on long queues at the banks have to offer bribes to attendants at the gate before gaining access to bank premises. (AIT Programme *COVID Watch*, 2020)

Cross-border trade between Nigerian and her ECOWAS neighbours has not been a regulated trade, but has facilitated the movement of industrial goods to countries of the ECOWAS sub-region. Some of the borderland markets are periodic in their operations and attract many traders from the border and hinterland communities. Majority of the borderland communities have close cultural and historical links to each other. The markets provide the communities with vast opportunities for economic or commercial exchanges and a forum to discuss peculiar issues that are important to the development of cultural practices and traditions on both divides of the border. Some of the important and notable markets

are mainly located on the side of the Nigerian border and they include Maigatari, Zangon Daura, Jibia, Illela, Kamba and a host of others. Most of the essential manufactures originate from Nigeria being the most industrialized and economically strong member of ECOWAS. Nigerian products have ready markets whenever traders take them to the border markets and others in the interior of Niger Republic. Local products feature prominently in the border markets, hence supplies of livestock and legumes from Niger Republic are brought to the markets destined for the interior of Nigeria. The presence of traders of diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliation gives the border markets their international outlook.

Covid-19 is a phenomenon that is of primary concern to many experts and specialists in the health and medical sector. However, the social, economic and political implications of the disease have made it an issue of concern to intellectuals of diverse training. The dimension of the health crises have been clearly confirmed by the WHO from which one can understand the gloomy situation in some of the African countries. Health services and infrastructure are mostly in deplorable condition which results in adopting emergency and ad-hoc arrangements. WHO report shows that eventually, figures for Africa would be 3.6 million–5.5 million hospitalization because of Covid-19, of which 82,000–167,000 are severe cases requiring oxygen, and 52,000–107,000 critical cases requiring breathing support. The WHO also emphasizes that the predicted number of cases requiring hospitalization would overwhelm available medical capacity in most part of Africa (WHO, 2020).

Strategies for mitigating the COVID-19 challenges

The impact of Covid-19 or Corona virus on African countries individually and collectively has been disastrous, and it is predicted that sooner than later negative consequences of the pandemic are to manifest more on the social and economic structures which would require concerted efforts to address. It is anticipated that impact of Covid-19 would no doubt appear in real micro and macro spheres of the economy. Covid-19 would halt

the growth of the economies of African countries. (IMF 2020) Scholars, researchers, professionals in diverse fields who are concerned about issues related to Africa virtually agree that Africa cannot afford to do it alone. African countries do not have the financial capacity to sustain the economic consequences of corona virus. Interventions in the national budgets by foreign donors and financiers; bilateral and multilateral agencies have become a permanent feature in most Africa because of the crises of balance of payments. Unlike in Africa, most countries of the world – the US and South American countries; the European Union nations, the oil gulf countries and the rest have earmarked billions and trillions in the name of a ‘stimulus package’ to salvage their economies from the crisis of Covid-19. In Africa, the countries majorly requested for debt relief, special grants and more loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which financial experts believe would not do the magic. (Soludo 2020; Bello, “Re-COVID...”2020).

Africa’s strategy should be able to concretely mitigate the impact of Corona virus on micro and macro levels of the economy. It is suggested that as a matter of priority African countries should open-up their economies because lockdown is not sustainable. Africa should consider its peculiarities by looking inward and harnessing the opportunities in the global system in order to tackle the many challenges of corona virus as they affect the continent. For instance, collaboration by Africa with technologically advanced countries in scientific researches on Covid-19 is very important, unfortunately what African countries commit to scientific research is grossly inadequate which is why it is difficult to partner with the more advanced nations. Africa should do more in the research area related to investigating the efficacy of the many local herbs available in Africa. Our Universities and Medical Colleges have the experts to do the researches and bring out findings but African governments must be patriotic enough to support indigenous intellectual endeavours. Africa should not be oblivious of strong opposition to the initiative from big pharmaceutical companies of Europe, Asia and America. Certainly,

foreign pharmaceutical would vehemently discredit any African scientific breakthrough which could diminish their market potentials in Africa.

African should as well take advantage of scientific innovations outside the continent which will strengthen the fight against Covid-19. An OECD report considers a medical strategy as effective if it makes adequate provision for medical facilities personnel and drugs which should be accessible to all whenever needed, affordable, and safe. Health and medical strategies should make provision for testing to identify those infected by the virus; provide protective kits and devices (face masks, gloves, sanitizers, disinfectants, etc.) for the protection of patients, health personnel and others; they can provide - testing; it should be adequately protective; it should provide treatment needs of patients; such for drugs and vaccines for cure of Covid-19. (OECD & UNECA 2020)

It is suggested that a sustainable package to bring social and economic prosperity is necessary for Africa. The strategy for Africa's revival should be able to address the impending challenges of hunger, poverty, youth unemployment, and disease because of the impact of the pandemic. The major weakness in some submissions by the experts is lack of clear articulations of a people-oriented solution. Some of the solutions are targeted at the macro level of economy as opposed to those that could impact on the ordinary citizens that are largely making a living in the informal sector. (Soludo 2020; Bello, "Re-COVID..."2020). Possibly, the nature of the emergency in the economy and society of Africa caused by the Corona virus requires a strategy that would touch the lives of workers, petty traders, artisans, small-holder farmers and the unemployed. Suggestion for a "parallel of Marshall Plan" sounds attractive because of the success of the original plan after the World War II. The nitty-gritty of the African version of the plan being proposed, which must involve the intervention of rich nations, are not clearly articulated. (Bello, "We need an African MARSHALL PLAN", 2020). It is a proposal that nobody knows whether the provisions can take care of the social and economic needs of Africa. Any post-Covid-19 strategy for economic revival in Africa that is solely under government control is bound to partially succeed or even

fail because of corruption by government officials. Also, it is doubtful if the African Union could muster the courage to “instigate a pull-out of the United Nations” by African countries, should the world powers refuse to (financially) support any kind of intervention plan.

Agriculture is an important sector from which millions of ordinary Africans earn their living. It has the potential to provide employment to the teeming youth roaming the streets without jobs. What is needed are the right policies to render support to the farmers and openings for the unemployed to engage in various activities in the sector of cultivation, processing activities, marketing of products, poultry farming, fisheries, horticulture, agro-technical services and the rest. African governments must get committed to revolutionizing agriculture by extensive deployment technology to feed the population and income generating activities. The multiplier effect of agriculture had stimulated other economic sectors which include the industrial and manufacturing, trade and commerce in the history of the economies of other nations elsewhere. Technological revolution in Africa’s agriculture is very critical in improving techniques of processing and preservation of food and raw materials without which African farmers incur colossal losses. The absence of extension services for educating farmers about modern agriculture and investment has been a serious handicap that affects the development of many small-holder agriculturists in parts of Africa. Extension officers had played important role in the development of commodity agriculture during the colonial period and the early post-independent era in Africa. World Bank interventions through the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) in parts of northern Nigeria during the 1970s and 80s had made significant impact in the areas of mechanization, improved (seed) crop varieties, pest control, development of rural infrastructure, and availability of extension services.

The opportunities for value addition in agriculture which could enhance the income of local farmers in Nigeria is currently not fully harnessed. The government must do more to improve the fortunes of the farmer which the Covid-19 has to make agriculture more profitable which

could attract more people. Liberalizing avenues for support and assistance for farmers in Nigeria needs to be revisited because of the prevalence of fraudulent syndicates who cheat gullible farmers especially in the rural areas. Land and water management are essentials for the revitalization of agricultural activities. There may be the need for new legislations that could encourage utilization of more land and rivers for agriculture. Nigeria has been underutilizing the flood plains (*fadama*) and water from the rivers especially in the north for irrigation farming. The different river basins authorities control and regulate utilization of water in country for irrigation farming and fishing.

Recommendations

1. African countries should be considered for special intervention packages by the rich nations of the world and the bilateral and multilateral agencies to save the continent from imminent social and economic catastrophe as a result of Covid-19.
2. Debt cancellation for Africa should be vigorously pursued by the African Union on behalf of debtor countries which after negotiation such funds should be channel to development projects that impact directly on the lives of the common people.
3. The fight against Covid-19 in Africa should consider the social and economic realities of various communities so as minimize the harsh impact on the people.
4. National budgets in Africa should target areas of human capital development and the revitalization of micro economic activities especially the informal sector.
5. Campaigns, mass education and mobilization for awareness about personal hygiene, wearing of masks, and use of hand sanitizers should be community based in which faith-based organizations, youth groups and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) should partner with governments.

6. Government should devote more resources for the promotion of public health and general sanitation in urban and rural centers.

Conclusion

The paper has adopted historical approach in the discussion of the issues relating to the Covid19 pandemic and the extent to which it has impacted on the social and economic lives of the people and communities in the hinterland of northwestern Nigerian and the borderland close to the Republic of Niger. The role of history in the understanding of the nature of intercommunity relations over a long period in the study area has been discussed based on the extant relevant literature. Similarly, contemporary discourses by different scholars on Covid-19 both technical and others, have been of immense significance in providing invaluable information and additional insight relating to the social and economic effects of the pandemic elsewhere in Africa. Hence, the paper has contributed in identifying the most appropriate aspects of the framework of analyses of the Covid19 phenomenon, and also recommended the most relevant strategies for mitigating the devastating impact of coronavirus on the economy and society in the study area.

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