



## GOVERNANCE DEFICIT AND THE MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study provided an in-depth appraisal of the scope and effect of governance deficit on the management of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. This assessment was prompted by the fact that lives of people are shaped and influenced by governance which entails the management of the political, administrative and socio-economic systems of a nation, wherein it is expected that the protection of lives of the people, provision of social services and infrastructures, protection of the rights of the people etcetera are of utmost importance hence accorded priority attention. Unfortunately, the contemporary socio-economic developmental realities in Nigeria portray and orbit around governance shortfalls which manifest in paucity of social infrastructures, abuse of human right and lack of transparency and accountability in the distribution and management of national resources. Premised on qualitative descriptive design and anchored on good governance theory, the study found that infrastructural deficits as observed in the Nigerian health, water and education sectors, weak transparency/accountability and abuse of rule of law impeded the effective management of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Consequently, the study recommended social infrastructure revamp, proper safeguard of human rights and re-orientation of security agencies for that purpose, proper demographic documentation and inbuilt monitoring mechanism as strategic measures to alleviate these hurdles and enhance pandemic management in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Governance deficit, human rights abuse, COVID-19*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As every human society evolves, they aspires towards expansion, advancement and growth in terms of resources allocation and management, provision of basic infrastructure, upholding constitutional provisions on human rights and social justice, political maturity and stability through adherence to democratic tenets..The realization of these development variables situates on a concerted effort towards actualization of social needs through the institutions and deployment of the nation's resources. This is the reality of the act of governance which is targeted at ensuring transparency in all transactions and activities of government agencies towards achieving the desired wellbeing of citizenry. This expectation is not a recent phenomenon

as the idea and ideals of governance has been in existence since human beings started living orderly in a community through conscious and defined decision making and implementation (Muhammad, 2015).

This aspiration is celebrated and termed "good governance" when there are manifestations and presence of rule of law, human rights protection, and transparent and accountable government, (Etoung in Muhammad, 2015). Thus, while good governance heralds prudence in harnessing and distribution of national resources to meet the needs of common man, decentralization of means of production and exchange, suitable basic needs, etc. (Essien, 2012), "bad governance" presupposes the deviation or non-existence of the core elements of good governance as



listed above. For emphasis sake, the United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) cited in Coker & George-Genyi (2014) explained that bad governance entails an ineffective and inefficient government that lacks transparency and is not responsive to the public, but is favorable to a selected class of elite, abuses the rule of law and is devoid of policies that are collectively and representatively driven.

Many scholars and authors believe that governance in Nigeria has tilted towards ineffective and inefficient government that lacks transparency and is not responsive to the public, but favorable to a selected class of elite, abuses the rule of law and is devoid of policies that are collectively and representatively driven (Essien, 2012; Ajimotokan and Orizu, 2020). Thus, governance in Nigeria is said to have been marred by political and bureaucratic corruption with attendant consequences of inefficient and ineffective service delivery, insecurity, disorderliness and chaos in the society as well as dearth of needed social basic infrastructures (Essien, 2012). Hence, Diamond & Morlino (2004) linked good governance to the necessity to capacitate public administration to implement public policies effectively.

In Nigeria, central to governance discourse is social infrastructure perhaps because of the vital role it plays in improving competitiveness, facilitating domestic and international trade as well as ensuring the satisfaction of basic human needs. Unfortunately, the reality is that weak social infrastructure has hindered the delivery of social and economic benefits to Nigerians, and this is a simple symptom of defective governance. While literature on the wretched level of infrastructure in Nigeria is eloquent but as at 2020, a study by Ajimotokan and Orizu, (2020) put the estimated funds required to close Nigeria's social infrastructure deficit gap at \$3 trillion (Ajimotokan and Orizu, 2020). They expressively asserted that the deterioration of the Nigerian social infrastructures has

overtime negatively impacted Nigeria's competitiveness globally, making economic growth and diversification difficult, with non-availability of good road network, inadequate health system, poor education infrastructure, etcetera. Thus, governance deficit has manifested adversely on the human wellbeing through the paucity of social infrastructures such as health, education, transportation, electricity etcetera for the citizenry.

The extent of infrastructure decay, the areas of such decays and the consequences of such decays were manifested during the outbreak of Coronavirus. While this observation is not peculiar and particular to Nigeria, it is worthy of note because of the failures observed in the management of the pandemic, which is why this study takes the period of coronavirus outbreak as a litmus test to the level of governance deficit in Nigeria.

It can be recalled that during the outbreak of the Coronavirus, different countries with Nigeria inclusive deployed several management strategies to contain the spread of the virus. Such measures include stay-at-home directive, quarantine and isolation (Leighton 2020), enforcing compliance to directives by penalizing defaulters (Webber, 2020), building new hospitals or upgrading the existing ones and use of stadia for makeshift hospitals (Anirban 2020; Gregory 2020), mobilizing volunteers for the anti-COVID-19 epidemic agenda (Ridgwell, 2020; Broom 2020), suspension of all domestic and international sporting events or having them played indoors without spectators (Wamsley, 2020; Feuer & Young, 2020), restriction of citizens' visits to older people (Ridgwell, 2020), border closure to all forms of movements (Leigh 2020; Griffin, 2020), daily reporting of COVID-19 updates (WHO, 2020) and the WHO's hand washing with soap and running water.

As expected by every discernable mind, the success and failure of measures adopted by any country is hinged on the level of availability of the components of good governance such as infrastructural, human



rights and social justice. When extrapolated in the context of Nigeria as regard the COVID-19 spread and containment campaign, basic social infrastructure covers hospital and medical facilities, water and running water alongside soap and hand sanitizers. Indeed, the success and failure of the measures marshaled against the corona virus at inception depended on the kind of health facilities, including personnel we have as well as the availability and quality of water we have in many parts of Nigeria.

For this purpose, this study focused on governance deficit in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Thus, the study seeks to:

1. x-ray areas of governance deficit in the managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria,
2. assess the implications of governance deficit in the managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria
3. identify viable policy options for make ups.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT AND

### RELATED LITERATURE

Relevant literatures for this study were thematically reviewed under the following sub-headings:

- ✓ Overview of the concept of governance
- ✓ COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria: Cases, Death and Management
- ✓ Social Infrastructural and Infrastructural Deficit

#### 2.1 An Overview of the concept of Governance

Governance is complex and multi-faceted concept with no single generally accepted definition. The concepts of Governance and Government are used interchangeably in some literatures but governance is beyond mere government activities. Governance heralds a reformed face of social contract theory that emphasizes on cordial partnership between the government and citizens in the areas of effective representation and public affairs. Obadan in Coker & George-Genyi (2014) opined that governance encompasses the state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes, and policy

formation and implementation capacity". In other words, it is capability of the government to ensure overall wellbeing of citizenry with the instrumentality of its various agencies.

The above views on the concept of governance addressed the subject matter in bits; however, the definition propounded by the Commission on Global Governance is more detailed and exhaustive. In research report titled Our Global Neighborhood issued in 1995, the commission defined governance as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest." It has four features: governance is not a set of rules or an activity, but a process; the process of governance is not based on control, but on coordination; it involves both public and private sectors; it is not a formal institution, but continuing interaction (Keping, 2018).

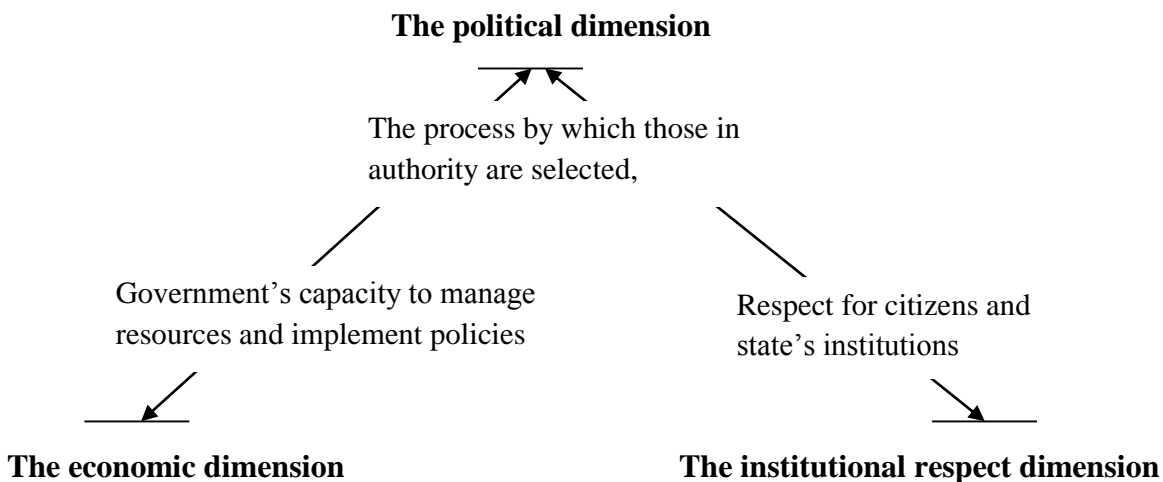
In spite of the divergent views on the concept of governance by different authors, it can be deduced that governance entails process and activities of the state geared towards effective utilization of political, economic and administrative authorities and national resources in effective and efficient initiation and implementation of polices for the betterment of the citizenry. These activities are meant be carried out within the purview of law.

Kaufmann (2000) simplified the concept of Governance when he asserted that governance is the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. As traditions and institutions, he identified three (3) dimensions of governance. These are the tripod upon



which governance of any nation seats. They are diagrammatically presented thus

Fig.i: Good Governance Triangle.



Source: Authors

This good governance triangle is culled from the definition of governance by Worldwide Governance Indicators: “which says that governance is the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (Umar, 2016). This definition of governance is in sync with World Bank’s definition of governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development (Umar, 2016). The UNDP’s definition of governance as: “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels, comprising mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences, situates the position of the Mo Ibrahim

Foundation define governance as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that every citizen has the right to expect from his or her state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens.

Little wonder Essien (2012) asserted that the idea of governance is said to be “good” when it allocates and manages resources to respond to collective problems, in other words, when a State efficiently provides public goods of necessary quality to its citizens. However, Rotberg’s (2004) assertion that states should be assessed on both the quality and the quantity of public goods provided to citizens call to mind the measurement indices of governance. The reason is the ubiquity of the governance phenomenon in contemporary times that has made most African countries and indeed, global multilateral organizations like the world Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to become “governance infatuated “such that they prescribe and insist that governance reform is the key



to economic growth and development in Africa which calls for show of concern and invoking of ethics, values and norms of good governance which would enable us to raise evaluative questions about proper procedures, transparency, the quality and process of decision making, selection of officials and other such matters (Doornbos, 2001).

These measurement indices were developed by the World Bank. According to the World Bank in order to more closely define and measure governance, some aggregate Governance Indicators have been constructed, which now cover more than 200 countries, based on more than 350 variables, obtained from dozens of institutions worldwide, including the Survey. The Governance Indicators capture six key dimensions of institutional quality or governance viz:

- (i) **Voice and Accountability** measured by the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, association, and the press
- (ii) **Political Stability and Absence of Violence** measured by the likelihood that the government will be destabilized by unconstitutional or violent means, including terrorism
- (iii) **Government Effectiveness**, measured by the quality of public services, the capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures, and the quality of policy formulation
- (iv) **Regulatory Quality** measured by the ability of the government to provide sound policies and regulations that enable and promote private sector development
- (v) **Rule of Law**, measured by the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, including the quality of property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the risk of crime
- (vi) **Control of Corruption** measured by the extent to which public power is exercised for private

gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as elite "capture" of the state (Zhuang, de Dios,; & Lagman-Martin, 2010 Bishara, 2011)

## 2.2 COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria: Cases, Death and Management

Nigeria is one of the countries in Africa that has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic through an index case of a 44-year old Italian citizen, who was diagnosed of COVID-19 in Lagos State on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Since then, Nigeria has recorded 33,153 cases, 13,671 recovered/discharged and 744 deaths as at 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (NCDC, 2020). The number of deaths may seem relatively low considering the population which is projected to be over 200 million, there is need to put into consideration that older population which are described as highest risk target of the virus stands at about 6.4 million people which is 3.1% of the population (Ohiaa, Adeleye, Bakarey & Tauseef, 2020).

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the country, the government of Nigeria through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has initiated various preventive measures and coping strategies for the COVID-19. These measures which took pharmaceutical and non- pharmaceutical forms include: testing, isolation, contact tracing, public enlightenment, Lockdown, physical/social distancing, palliatives, etc. (NCDC, 2020). Most of these measures are in conformity with the guidelines initiated by global and continental organizations such as World Health Organization in a bid to combat the spread of the virus.

However, there have been divergent views on the assessment of these measures and their level of performance in the management of the coronavirus pandemic. Various social factors such as hunger, population congestion, lack of confidence in the government, influence of religion organizations, illiteracy, etcetera had adverse effects on the behaviour of Nigerians towards compliance with Covid-19



guidelines. Chukwuorji & Iorfa (2020) reported that nearly 80% of Nigeria's population lives on daily income without any savings to cope with the lockdown directive; consequently, there were experiences of difficulties and hunger with varying degrees among the citizens. Furthermore, the inability of the government at all levels to provide needed palliatives at the time of the directive to cushion the effects of the lockdown resulted to most incidences of non-compliance to the lockdown directive.

The physical/social distancing order was relatively attainable at the early stage due the federal and state government's directive for school closure, ban of social activities like marriages, religious gathering, inter-state movements, aviation movement, markets closure and border closure, which lasted for couple of months before the eventual gradual lifting of the ban.

### **2.3 Social Infrastructural and Infrastructural Deficit**

The term infrastructure generally entails basic structures, systems and facilities that enable accomplishment of socio-economic goals. Social Infrastructure is a subsection of the whole infrastructural sector with specific assets that includes services such as housing, health and education facilities (Hardwicke, 2008).Argy et al. in Han, Yusof, Hai & Ismail (2012) further classified social infrastructures into hard social infrastructure (e.g. hospitals) and soft infrastructure (e.g. social security).This indicates that social infrastructure could take physical and non-physical formats.

On the relevance of social infrastructure towards the general wellbeing of the people, Teriman, Yigitcanlar & Mayere (2010) opined that it provides response to the fundamental social needs of communities and enhances human and social capital. Latham & Jack (2019) have elevated the place of social infrastructure to another level by asserting that Social infrastructure facilitates the identification of various dimensions of the society that are neglected. This implies that

different parts of public and social enclaves that are not properly integrated into the full polity of a nation are captured and recognized through social infrastructure. From above views on the social infrastructure, a working definition of social infrastructure deficit can be deduced as the inadequacy of social infrastructure required to meet the social needs of citizenry. It is a gap between the demand of social infrastructure by the citizens and its supply by the government. In summation, social infrastructure deficit simply indicates continuous drop in government infrastructure expenditure.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The study used qualitative descriptive approach. Keeping in view the nature of research and its objectives, researchers utilized robust data from official documents and evidence from relevant agencies which include: Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC), amongst others. Other relevant information from scholarly works and articles in journals and newspapers were utilized to carry out this study.

### **4. THEORY-BASED ANALYSIS**

The impact of governance deficit on the management of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria can hardly pass a coherent assessment without a theory-based analogy. Authors like Ekundayo (2017) have used the good governance theory to analyze issues of good governance and guest for development in Nigeria. Taking a clue from these great scholars, we adopted the good governance theory for the theory-based analysis of the effect of governance deficit on the management of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

The good governance theory is a governance theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government, irrespective of forms, must be run. Such principles include accountability, control, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, economy, efficiency etcetera. Generally, the theory of good governance is created to reflect all the principles enunciated above and many more (Minogue, Polidano



& Hulme, 1998). In view of the foregoing and in line with the World Bank principles and policy interventions in third world countries, good governance involves an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts and responsible administration of public funds.

The theory of good governance originated from the various principles, ideas and conditions enunciated by WorldBank, (1992) UNDP (2007) and IMF (2012). According to The World Bank (1992), good governance is epitomized by predictable; open, and enlightened policymaking (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law. The Bank's call for good governance and its concern with accountability, transparency, and the rule of law have to do exclusively with the contribution they make to social and economic development and to the Bank's fundamental objective of sustainable poverty reduction in the developing world. Thus, the World Bank's interest in governance derives from its concern for the sustainability of the programs and projects it helps finance. According to UNDP (2007), the main governance principles are participation/inclusion, non-discrimination/equality and rule of law/accountability. However, the UNDP also espoused eight attributes of good governance: political participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus, equity and inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and accountability.

The IMF's contribution to good governance are through its policy advice and, where relevant, technical assistance, which arises principally in: improving the management of public resources through reforms covering public sector institutions (e.g., the treasury, central bank, public enterprises, civil service, and the official statistics function), including administrative procedures (e.g., expenditure control, budget

management, and revenue collection); and supporting the development and maintenance of a transparent and stable economic and regulatory environment conducive to efficient private sector activities (e.g., price systems, exchange and trade regimes, and banking systems and their related regulations). In addition, IMF (2012) declares that good governance, in all its aspects, is by ensuring the rule of law, improving efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption as essential elements of a framework within which economies can prosper.

The various principles, ideas and conditions enunciated by the World Bank; UNDP and IMF form the tenets of the good governance theory. But for precision sake, the following are the tents of good governance theory:

- (i) **Voice and Accountability** measured by the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, association, and the press
- (ii) **Political Stability and Absence of Violence** measured by the likelihood that the government will be destabilized by unconstitutional or violent means, including terrorism
- (iii) **Government Effectiveness**, measured by the quality of public services, the capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures, and the quality of policy formulation
- (iv) **Regulatory Quality** measured by the ability of the government to provide sound policies and regulations that enable and promote private sector development
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- (vi) **Control of Corruption** measured by the extent to which public power is exercised for private



gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as elite “capture” of the state.

With the tenets in mind, good governance theory aims at achieving efficiency in public service delivery, encouraging competition, privatization, civil service reforms, decentralization, out-sourcing of services to key private suppliers among others (Williams and Young, 1994). (Sheng, 2008) emphasized that good governance theory is geared towards enhancing ways and means by which state bureaucracies carry-out state activities and utilise state resources so as to protect individual and personal liberties.

By application, the good governance theory is very relevant in the understanding of the role of governance deficit in the gaps experienced in the management of the covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria as its principles aid the understanding of infrastructural decay, human right abuses and lack of transparency and accountability in the distribution and management of national resources in Nigeria that impacted negatively on the management of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In line with the objectives of the study, the following findings were made:

- ❖ Weak transparency/accountability and abuse of rule of law are key elements of bad governance that impedes the effective management of COVID-19 in Nigeria.
- ❖ Infrastructural deficits in the Nigerian health, water and education sectors hamper the effective management of COVID-19 in Nigeria.
- ❖ Social infrastructural revamp, proper safeguard of human rights and re-orientation of security agencies, appropriate demographic documentation, proper auditing of the administration of COVID-19 funds and prosecution of culprits and inbuilt monitoring mechanism are strategic measures to alleviate

the hurdles and enhance COVID-19 management in Nigeria.

- ❖ Access to clean water deficit and the COVID-19 management in Nigeria
- ❖ Educational infrastructural deficit and the management of COVID-19 in Nigeria

These findings are elaborately analyzed and discussed below in distinct sub-headings

### 5.1 Weak transparency/accountability and COVID-19 Management in Nigeria

Transparency and accountability are core elements of good governance. It entails the process of making information available to the public. In any given society especially within the democratic dispensation, it is the right of the citizens to access information on nation’s polity in the areas of public process. The level of transparency begets the degree of good governance in any society. The transparency and accountability questions that emerged in the COVID-19 management in Nigeria revolves around the utilization of donated funds, distribution of palliative and implementation of social investment programmes (cash transfer and National Home Grown school feeding).

In realization of the level of financial challenges facing the country in responding appropriately to the pandemic both at the federal and state level, there was instant formation of Coalition Against COVID (CACOVID) to mobilize private sector resources towards supporting the government’s response to the crisis (Eribo, 2020). The coalition interventions were in the form of cash, medical equipment, palliatives, construction and equipping of isolation centers, etc. with notable amongst them are CBN and Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu, Mike Adenuga, etc. (Benson, 2020). However, the bone of contention and worries of Nigerians was on the judicious spending of the fund and answerability of it. Intriguing questions were raised on why all the donations are routed to the government and the assurance that the target





population of such donations will access them. The implication of questioning the government's credibility and prudence in utilizing the fund has devastating effects on the trust of citizenry towards the number of cases reported and level of compliance to the COVID-19 guidelines stipulated by the government. In emphasizing the necessity for transparency in deployment of COVID-19 funds, Oxfam led coalition of NGO's demanded for transparency on the federal government's part in the utilization of \$3.4 billion emergency support loan from the IMF that was granted in response to the pandemic (Oxfam, 2020).

On the issue of palliative distribution by the federal government, the local newspapers have been flooded with reports of lopsided distribution of palliatives based on political and sectional prejudices following the government's announcement when the lockdown was instituted that it would leverage the distribution mechanism of the Conditional Cash Transfer program it created in 2015 to distribute the palliative (Eribo, 2020). The fright of transparency and accountability did not go unnoticed in the eyes of Non-Governmental Organizations and international agencies. Eribo (2020) reported that Coalitions of NGO's and other CSO's including Upright4Nigeria led by ActionAid in Nigeria, whilst implementing their own palliative schemes in effort to make up for the lopsidedness of the federal government scheme on 22 April, demanded that all governments must disclose to citizens the value of all donations received and publish the list of beneficiaries of the palliatives. There has been also fear of palliative distribution along political and ethnic enclaves. Most of the complaints about unfair distribution of relief materials emerged from southeastern states of the country which are predominantly controlled by non-ruling party (Azu, 2020). It is quite disturbing that government is being associated with deployment of palliative as an instrument of marginalization in a nation with already tensed ethnic divide. The Nigerian Governors forum

admonished the presidency to modify distribution of palliatives to prevent crisis.

National Social Investment Programmes which is the hallmark of president Buhari's administration which geared towards lifting millions of Nigerians out of poverty has been ongoing before the COVID-19 eruption. With the directive to shut the school down nationwide, the president's order through the ministry of Humanitarian to continue implementation of National Home Grown School feeding which is categorically meant for school children raised serious outcry from all parts of the country owing to the fact that the target groups are at home. Another programme that raised serious question of transparency is cash transfer which the minister of humanitarian via the ministry pronounced the sharing of the first batch of 5billion naira. This was criticized by leadership of National Assembly considering the approach of distribution making the vulnerable citizens who are affected by the COVID-19 not to fully benefit (Sanni, 2020).

Another aspect of controversy is the disbursing of twenty thousand naira conditional cash transfer to the vulnerable in which over 2.6 million households have benefited from the palliative according to the minister of Humanitarian. However, this triggered the curiosity on how did the ministry identified the poorest of the poor within short period of time. The issue was compounded as the minister could not vividly explain how they are dispatched to targeted groups. The directive from President Buhari that the number of households in the national social register be increased from 2.6 million to 3.6 million raised another intriguing question because it contradicted the special adviser to the president on SIP (Maryam Uwais) last update on the number of people in the register which was 700,000 (David, 2020).

## **5.2. The Abuse of Rule of law and Covid-19 Management in Nigeria**

Essentially, rule of law entails that law is supreme above every citizen and equality before the law. It



enhances social order, equality and regulates the behaviour of citizens. Obedience to the COVID-19 rules and regulations in Nigeria seem to be selective for ruling against the ruled. Nigerian scenario showed cases where governmental officials who are expected to be the harbinger of law compliance are found to be the aberrant of law. One of the major guidelines in combating the spread of coronavirus as stipulated by World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted by federal of government of Nigeria is social distancing. Regrettably, this was severely violated during the burial of Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff who was confirmed being positive and died out of the Coronavirus infection. The secretary to the government of the federation, Boss Mustapha who is also the chairman of the COVID-19 task force was one of the dignitaries among other government officials present at the burial scene which culminated to SGF being sued to court by a lawyer (Oladimeji, 2020). The implication of this deviance is the legal and moral justification in arresting and prosecuting of ordinary citizens found on the street in search of their means of livelihood.

Another area of bad governance in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is the abuse of rule of law which manifested in the form of violation of fundamental human rights via the brutality of security agencies. At the declaration of lockdown at different times in various states in Nigeria, there were multiple reports of maltreatments and loss of lives to the brutality of security forces in different parts of the country. There have been pockets of reported cases of brutality and loss of lives due to the highhandedness of the security operatives on Nigerians notably in Warri, Anambra, Rivers and Lagos state. After the first three weeks of lockdown, it was reported by National Human Rights Commission that eighteen Nigerians have lost their lives due to security agencies efforts to implement the lockdown order (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020).

### **5.3. Health Sector Infrastructural Deficit and COVID-19 Management in Nigeria**

Development experts opined that development of nation's economic and human resources are premised on her primacy to health and education (Ifijeh, 2019). Generally, Health sector is usually in the forefront to manage any form of health issue. Countries of the world heavily rely on their health sector to combat any epidemic or pandemic at any given time. The implication is that the success or failure of health sector of any nation in combating any disease outbreak depends on their health infrastructural facilities and human resources potency. Nigerian health sector has been described as weak which is proven by issues revolving around infrastructural inadequacy, poor workers welfare and medical logistics, and an unreliable health information system (Adeloye et al., 2017; Nnadozie, Iorfa, & Agonsi, 2015).

To emphasize the deplorable state of health sector in Nigeria, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates in 2018, in expressing the manifestations of government's failure to prioritize health, told the now-defunct National Economic Council that Nigeria was "one of the most dangerous countries in the world to give birth" and had the "fourth worst maternal mortality rate in the world, only ahead of Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and Chad" (Olawunmi, 2020).

The Coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria was a high mountain to climb for her health sector considering the infrastructural facilities such as ventilators, test kits, etc. needed to contain and treat the Covid-19. This occurred as consequences of low allocation to the health sector in the annual national budget which over the years, has never exceeded six percent as against the 15% benchmark of the annual budget agreed upon by African Union in the Abuja Declaration of 2001 which Nigeria was part of (Ifijeh, 2019). The allocation to health sector in Nigerian annual budget in the past ten consecutive years is presented in the table i below.



**Table. 1. Nigerian Health Sector Allocation from 2010 To 2020**

Year	Amount	Percentage %
2010	N164.9bn	3.7%
2011	N266.7bn	5.4%
2012	N282.8bn	5.8%
2013	N279.2bn	5.7%
2014	N262.7bn	5.63%
2015	N237.6bn	5.78%
2016	N257.5bn	4.14%
2017	N377.4bn	5.17%
2018	N340.46bn	3.95%
2019	N365.77bn	4.1%
2020	N427.3bn	4.15%

Source: Uzochukwu et al. (2015), Ifijeh (2019), National budget (2020)

The administration of health service delivery which include health care financing, knowledge and information, human resources, commodities and equipment are largely determined by the availability of quality infrastructures. The 2020 national budget in which lowest appropriation was accorded to health sector among the three key development sectors (Security, Education 653.94bn with 6.32 and Health N427.30bn with 4.14%) is a glaring indication of where federal government places health sector. The breakdown of the proposed 2020 allocation for health sector which stood at N427.3 billion for estimated 200 million Nigerians, allotted #2000 to each Nigerian for health care services for the entire year (Olufemi 201). The implication is that this covers all the logistics and human capital development cost in the Ministry of Health.

The assessment of readiness to combat the Coronavirus in Nigeria showed an awful result with statistics of 71 hospitals with 350 intensive care units with each having between one to 20 beds for over 200 million estimated people (Ogundipe, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak equally brought to fore the age-

long debate as the elite who are in the habit of jetting out in search of better healthcare overseas are all now holed up in the country with whatever the ‘forsaken’ health sector has to offer (Olawunmi, 2020). The regrettable scenario of infrastructural deficit in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is manifested in the persistent complains and threats of strike by the health workers as result of lack of primary protective equipment (PPE) which unfortunately had claimed lives of some of their members. The issue of non-payment of salaries and allowances especially hazard allowance which was pegged at five thousand naira is clear indication of misplaced priority of health sector in Nigeria.

**5.4. Education Sector Infrastructural Deficit and COVID-19 Management in Nigeria**

Globally, education sector has proven to be a catalyst for all round development through its enormous contribution in the human resources development, research outputs, etc. These vital roles have attracted significant attention and priority to the sector in most countries of the world. The mandate to contribute to national development by education sector especially technical colleges and tertiary institutions is anchored largely on the availability and utilization of needed infrastructural facilities. Nigerian Education sector at all strata has experienced reoccurring crisis which centered on poor funding and infrastructural deficit. This is evidently shown in the allocation to education sector in her annual budget which has persistent fall far below the 26% benchmark specified by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for developing countries. The allocation to Nigerian education sector within the last ten years is shown below.

**Table 2. Nigerian Education Sector Allocation from 2010- 2020**

Years	Amount	Percentage%
2010	N339.6bn	9.32%



2011	N393.8bn	7.37%
2012	N468.3bn	9.86%
2013	N426.5bn	10.21%
2014	N493bn	10.63%
2015	N492bn	10.75%
2016	N483bn	7.92%
2017	N455bn	7.41%
2018	N496bn	7.04%
2019	N512bn	7.1%
2020	N541bn	6.9%

**Source:** *eduplana (2020)*

The above table indicates the amount allocated to the education sector and it's attending percentage of the entire budget. The implication is that Nigerian education sector has not been allotted ample financial resources required for effective achievement of desired targets.

The outbreak of the Coronavirus in Nigeria has adversely affected the school system at all levels which led to its closure on 19 March, 2020 as a response to the pandemic (Amorighoye, 2020). Series of efforts to reopen schools in the context of the Covid-19 in Nigeria has been hampered by the paucity of infrastructural facilities that enhance distant learning. Although some state government like Anambra and Lagos state swiftly initiated "Anambra Teaching on Air" and "Radio and TV lessons for students in public schools" respectively. Nevertheless, many families that earn below \$1 per day and coupled with harsh economic realities faced due to lockdown, the purchase of radios or TV might be a trade-off that they cannot afford.

The radio and television imitative could not meet the demands of tertiary institutions where some courses are practical designed. This buttresses the long unabated saga between the federal government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which centered on revitalization of Nigerian University system and amongst others. The major implication of

this infrastructure decay and inadequacy in Nigerian education sector is the inability of Nigerian universities to join the efforts of their counterparts in searching for vaccines and drugs for the COVID-19. The E-learning platform facilities that could have ensured continuity of academic activities for the students are not in existence in these universities. By implication, the idleness of the youths enhances the increase of social vices especially in the nation's metropolises.

The guidelines that were issued by the federal government through the Covid-19 taskforce team for reopening of schools and the mandate to meet up with the guidelines before 29<sup>th</sup> of July practically seem not to be obtainable by government owned schools not to talk of private schools which has drained financial base due to the closure of school and consequently have not been able to pay their workers. Some of the items in the guidelines which include provision of learning facilities, TLCs-use solar power and boreholes for water amongst others (Adedigba, 2020) are not feasible considering the time frame and enormous resources required to set up these.

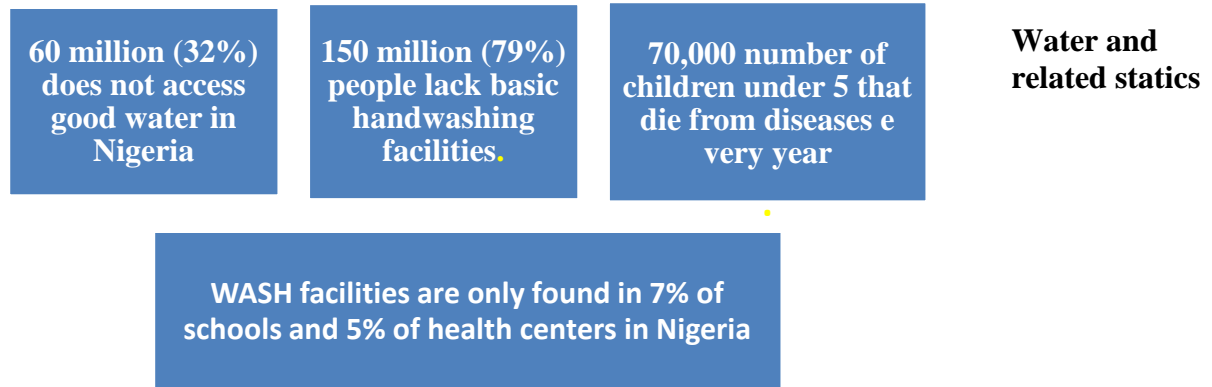
### 5.5. Lack of Access to Clean Water and COVID-19 Management in Nigeria

The outbreak of the Coronavirus that has frequent hand-washing with soap and water as one of its simplest preventive measures has placed a serious reality check on the availability and access to clean water all over the world. The issue of access to clean water is a global challenge.

In Nigeria, the ordeal of having access to clean water has been a recurrent issue in spite the fact that Nigeria is signatory to the United Nations Declaration of the Right to Water, which avails every citizen right to access to good water. Some striking data that explains the extent of lack of access to good water and its attending implications to human health in Nigeria are presented below.



**Fig. ii:  
Hygiene  
in Nigeria**



**Source:**Banwo&Abdulmalik (2020).

[https://www.wateraid.org/ng/sites/g/files/jkxooof381/files/wateraid-nigeria-covid-19-situational-map\\_-updated-june-11-2020\\_0](https://www.wateraid.org/ng/sites/g/files/jkxooof381/files/wateraid-nigeria-covid-19-situational-map_-updated-june-11-2020_0)

The information in the fig. 2 above on the hygiene and sanitation reports in Nigeria prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 mostly centered on lack of access to clean water. Consequent upon the non-availability of treatment or vaccine for coronavirus and rate of community transmission in Nigeria, access to clean water ought to be what people should rely on to maintain personal hygiene. This is because coronavirus are contracted through droplets and infected surfaces. Good hygiene is crucial to avoid contact and spread of the virus.

The rural dwellers in Nigeria are more vulnerable to the contacting and transmitting the virus considering the level of access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in rural communities. More so, the problem of water resources as result of infrastructural deficit and inadequate funding are compounded by the global menace of climate change. Notwithstanding that government launched an emergency action plan in November to address water problems, the plan has not made desired in impact.

## 6. RECOMMENDED POLICY OPTIONS

Consequent upon the observed trend of bad governance with its concomitant infrastructural deficit which hampered the management of the Coronavirus

in Nigeria, the following recommendations are offered in order to alleviate the challenges:

### i. Social Infrastructure Revamp

Social Infrastructures are key drivers to socio-economic advancement of any nation. Growth and development of most countries of the world are juxtaposed to their level of social Infrastructural advancement. Inadequate investment in social Infrastructures in Nigeria has positioned it in a deplorable state. This calls for an urgent intervention towards social Infrastructural overhauling through annual budget and synergy with other partners (international, NGOs and Individuals). This is not merely for the COVID-19 combat but current and future wellbeing of Nigerians.

### ii. Proper Safeguard of Human Rights and Re-orientation of Security Agencies

The essence of law is to regulate social interactions and behaviours. Every citizen is expected to be controlled by rules and regulations irrespective of the status, race, tribe etc. Law should not bend for any individual or class. More so, violator of the law ought to face the same sanction as stipulated in the constitution. On the other hand, the fundamental duty of government is to protect lives and properties of the citizens through security agencies. There is need to tailor Nigerian



security operatives towards this prime mandate of government and draw a distinct line between civil and criminal matters and lawful ways of handling each matter. In a case of recklessness or unlawful action of security personnel, justice should be done.

### **iii. Appropriate Demographic Documentation**

One veritable tool for effective and efficient policy/programme initiation and implementation is availability and accessibility of correct and current data. Data management in Nigeria has been of the one major menace to policy makers taken into consideration that Nigeria carried out her census in 2006, every other available population data are premised on projections. This constitutes one of the major hurdles to palliative distribution in Nigeria since the outbreak of the COVID-19. There is an utmost need for a holistic social register compilation that will capture the demographic realities of Nigerians such as unemployed, aged, disabled, etc. This enhances easy identification and access of a particular target group for a distinct programme or policy.

### **iv. Proper Auditing of the administration of COVID-19 Funds and Prosecution of Culprits**

Auditing is veritable instrument to achieve transparency and accountability in both private and public spending. The fear and questions raised by many Nigerians as regards to the effective and efficient utilization of all the funds raised for the COVID-19 management will be allayed through an independent and corrupt free audit. However, any traces of foul play, should be severely and legally sanctioned in order to serve as deterrence to other public office holders who manage public resources. The gap between a proposed programme or project and its outcome is bridged by effective monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. Allocation and releasing of funds by the government for particular programme(s) just like the case of the COVID-19 are not an assurance for realization of stipulated goals. There should be integral mechanism right from the planning stage on

how to monitor the progress of the programme. The inbuilt monitoring team should inculcate not just government agencies but Non-government organizations as well in order to ensure prudence and transparency of the allocated resources.

### **7. CONCLUSION**

Good governance in the past few decades has occupied significant discourse in the development of many nations. Deviation from good governance impacts negatively in every aspect of human endeavour more importantly, on infrastructural development. Because governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action, while good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources, the COVID-19 pandemic experience exposed the lots of governance deficit in our system responding to the outbreak and the effect on human wellbeing in general has been tied to poor management of public expenditure. This is why we assert through the lances of the good governance triangle that governance deficit birthed the infrastructural deficit, suppression of the right of the people alongside disregard for the rule of law and the lack of transparency and accountability that was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic era in Nigeria. It is crystal clear, both the social, political and economic aspects of our lives were seen to be poorly and incompetently managed amidst huge resources leading to unnecessary borrowing that the every discernable mind in the country rejected, yet the leadership of the country still find their way to borrow against citizens' wish and at the detriment of citizens' wellbeing.

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