Chapter One

Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic for the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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Introduction

First emerged in December 2019 from the Hunan seafood market in Wuhan City of China, Corona virus disease-2019 (COVID-19) has placed the world in a standstill, delaying the progress or implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the SDGs were gaining traction among policy makers as a framework to focus local policy on ambitious targets of sustainable development. Then came the Covid-19 crisis, a pandemic caused by the interaction between humans and wildlife through the harvest and sale of wild animals and spread by movement of people and goods across borders (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), 2020). Consequently, attention was then shifted to managing the attendant health crisis and the lock-down of the economy. This has triggered an onslaught of bad news for sustainable development and has disrupted the efforts geared towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and threatened to reverse years of progress on the SDGs. Ever since, the global community has been put in an unprecedented situation where parallel threats of health, economic and social crises have left countries struggling to contain the epidemic and provide immediate palliatives for the people affected by the associated macroeconomic downturns.

The measures taken to control the spread of the virus and the slowdown of economic activities have significant effects on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development. Indiscriminate use and dumping of disinfectants, gloves, and mask all endanger the environment. The short-term implications of this pandemic are evidently ubiquitous, but the long-term consequences of the pandemic especially how it will affect the achievement of the SDGs are not yet fully known. Environment wise, because of the rise in the use and dumping of gloves, masks, and other protective kits, the 2030 Agenda has been hit by the pandemic.

Against this backdrop, analysts have begun to wonder whether the SDGs remain relevant or not, because the priority of the decision makers have been shifted to recovery. It is, therefore, important to ascertain the implications of the pandemic for the attainment of the SDGs. Although it may be too early to ascertain whether the targets of the SDGs would be reset, their principles stand useful to planning a recovery that combines inclusion, growth and sustainability (Pipa & Bouchet, 2020). To gain a clearer understanding of the implications, this article therefore analyzes the implications of the pandemic for the attainment of the SDGs in Nigeria. This is necessary for understanding the economic, social and environmental sustainability challenges associated with the pandemic. The implications

identified in this paper would serve as focal points of future empirical studies in this area.

This paper is composed of five sections. Section 1 contains the Introduction while Section 2reviews the concept of sustainable development and the historical background of the SDGs. The method of data collection for the paper is contained in Section 3. While Section 4 provides a discussion of the implications of COVID-19 vis-à-vis each of the SDGs, Section 6 provides the conclusion of the paper and makes recommendations.

Literature Review

In order to evaluate the success recorded so far vis-à-vis the SDGs and to envisage how the outbreak of COVID-19 may affect or pose a challenge to the attainment of the SDGs, it is pertinent to review the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development

The term *sustainable development* was first used by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), an agency of the United Nations also called the Brundtland Commission (named after the Commission's Chairman, Gro Harlem Brundtland). Founded in 1983, the Commission presented its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*, in which they sought to address the problem of conflicts between environment and development goals by coining and defining the term *sustainable development*. Since then, the concept has shifted its focus more towards economic development, social development and environmental protection. Modern economies attempt to reconcile economic development and obligations of preserving the ecosystem, since the two are seen as conflicting. The Brundtland report advocated for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, which involves changing the content of growth progressively to make it less material- and energy-intensive and more equitable in its impact. The WCED report argued that the changes were required in all countries to maintain the stock of natural capital, to improve the distribution of income and to reduce the degree of vulnerability to economic crises (WCED, 1987). Also contained in the report was the call by the WCEDon the United Nations to establish the UN Programme of Action on Sustainable Development to implement the directives spelled out in the report. This call led to the 1992 Rio Summit, which culminated in the establishment of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 1992.

Ever since, sustainable development has moved to the centre of the development discourse as a priority in a world that is changing at a high speed. Advocates of sustainable development are calling for a rethinking of the growth model; they are looking for a model that balances inclusiveness, the need for economic growth and environmental sustainability as the basis for future prosperity. This reflects greater consensus that both the quality and quantity of growth are of equal importance as a basis for sustainable development (United Nations, 2017).

Yet the concept of sustainable development is novel and devoid of a uniform interpretation. Because the concept is still being developed, its definition is continually being revised, extended and refined. Sustainable development translated into inter-generational equity in economic growth theory involves concerns for economic development and environmental preservation and calls for an integrated approach of evaluating tradeoffs between conservation and change. According to (WCED, 1987, p. 54), sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This definition is the most widely quoted definition of sustainable development. By this definition, sustainable development is

seen as development that supports inter-generational equity an equitable distribution of resources between generations. In line with this, Soubbotina (2004) defines sustainable development as equitable and balanced development that balances the interests of different groups of people, within the same generation and among generations.

The term *sustainable development* has also been seen to be concerned with meeting development goals while concurrently sustaining the ability of the natural world to provide the ecosystem services and natural resources on which the economy depends. This would result in a society where resources and living conditions are advanced to satisfy human needs without compromising the stability and integrity of the natural world. Sustainable development is concerned with the resource use that aims to meet present human needs while preserving the environment for future generations in order to meet their own needs. It ties together concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the social, political, and economic challenges facing humanity.

Sustainable development is composed of three constituent pillars: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability. Since the 1987 report, there has generally been a recognition of these three aspects of sustainable development in the discussion and use of the concept. While many scholars concur that each of the three aspects contribute to the overall idea of sustainability, it is difficult to find evidence of equal levels of initiatives for the three pillars in countries' policies worldwide. With the large number of countries that put economic growth on the front burner of sustainable development, it is obvious that environmental sustainability and social sustainability have been suffering, given the overall wellbeing of the environment in an unhealthy state.

The three-pillar framework also described as *ecology*, *economy* and *equity,* or *environment, economy*, and *humanity* was initially put forth by the economist Rene Passet in 1979 and has been expanded by some authors to include a fourth pillar of culture, institutions or governance. These pillars are briefly reviewed below.

Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability whose objectives include growth, poverty reduction, efficiency and stability is the pillar that most countries focus on when attempting to attain more sustainable efforts and development. An *economically sustainable system* is one that produces goods and services persistently. In trying to build their economies, many countries focus their efforts on resource extraction, which leads to unsustainable efforts for environmental protection as well as economic growth sustainability. The Brundtland Commission has helped point out the connection between resource extraction and economic growth. The natural world has already been so much converted into human use that the focus cannot simply remain on economic growth and omit the ever-growing problem of environmental sustainability. Sustainable development reinforces the importance of finding ways to generate economic growth without hurting the environment.

Environmental Sustainability

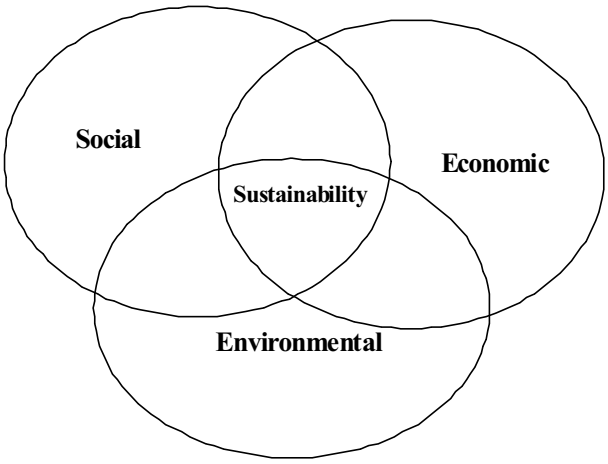
Environmental sustainability involves sustainable use of renewable raw materials, reduced generation of waste, emissions, effluent, elimination of toxic substances, and maintenance of biodiversity. An environmentally sustainable economy must maintain a steady or stable resource base by shunning over-exploitation of renewable resources and depletion nonrenewable resources as well as maintaining environmental sink services, which includes stability of the atmosphere, maintenance of biodiversity, and other ecosystem services not classed as economic resources (Harris, 2000). The Brundtland Commission played a vital role in linking development and environment and hence, moves away from the notion of environmental protection held by some scholars who saw environment as

Something of its sake. The objectives of environmental sustainability include healthy environment, rational and judicious use of renewable natural resources, and conservation of nonrenewable resources (Soubbotina, 2004).

Social Sustainability

The social sustainability pillar of sustainable development refers to social equality and equity. It focuses on the quality of life or social well-being of people. The objectives of social sustainability are full employment, equity, health, security, education, and cultural identity (Soubbotina, 2004). The gap between incomes of the poor and the rich is evident throughout the world with the incomes of the richer households increasing relative to the incomes of the middle- or lower-class households. Global inequality has been declining, but the world is still extremely unequal, with the richest 1% of the world's population owning 40% of the world's wealth and the poorest 50% owning around 1%. Thus, distributional equity, gender equity and equality, adequate provision of education and health services, political participation and accountability are the hallmarks of a socially sustainable system.

The relationships among these three pillars of sustainable development are depicted in Figure 1. As pointed out by Harris (2000), these three pillars introduce many possible complications to the initial simple definition, because goals implied by each element are multidimensional, and raise the issue of balancing objectives and judging success or failure. Provision of adequate water and food supplies, for example, requires changes in land use which will reduce biodiversity. Non-polluting energy sources are more expensive, thus increasing the burden on the poor. Which goal will take precedence? In the real world, we can rarely avoid trade-offs. Norgaard (1994) pointed out that we could achieve a single objective at a time and that it is impossible to operationally define sustainable development, because the normative nature of sustainable development makes it difficult to pin it down analytically. Of course, if we could move closer to attaining this tripartite goal, the world would be a better place.



Source. Adapted from Wanamaker (2018)
Figure 1. Relationships among social, environmental and economic sustainability

A pertinent question also arises here: What is to be *sustained* in sustainable development? It has been pointed out that such thing as a sustainable use of non-renewable resources is nonexistent, for any positive exploitation will eventually result in the exhaustion of the finite stock. This view renders the Industrial Revolution unsustainable. Consequently, some scholars view the phrase *sustainable development* as paradoxical, because *development* is seen as inherently unsustainable. Hence, the

meaning of sustainability has been a subject of debate among environmental and natural resource economists. The debate centres on the substitutability between the environment and the economy or between *natural capital* and *human-produced capital*. This debate is captured in terms of *weak* versus *strong sustainability*. These are the two different levels of sustainability.

Although sustainability is primarily associated with environmentalism, it is also used in relation to economic, social and political spheres as well as ethical discourse. It is, therefore, deemed necessary to explore the sustainability phenomenon for us to adequately understand and evaluate the implications of COVID-19 for the SDGs.

Weak Sustainability Rule versus Strong Sustainability Rule

In order to understand the concept of sustainability, it is necessary to explore the capital approach to sustainability, which is key to the concept of intergenerational equity. Decision makers require a concept that will enable assessment so as to decide if intergenerational equity is attained. The capital approach lends itself to this task. In this context, two different types of capital are distinguished: human-produced capital and natural capital. *Human-produced capital* refers to resources such as infrastructure, labour and knowledge, whereas *natural capital* refers to the stock of environmental assets such as fossil fuels, biodiversity and other ecosystem services.

Weak sustainability rule, or also known as *Hartwick-Solow rule*, is a paradigm within ecological economics which holds the position that *manufactured capital* is directly substitutable for natural capital, and hence natural capital can be used up as long as it is converted into manufactured capital of equal value. This implies that manufactured capital of equal value can replace natural capital. This is based on the work of Robert Solow (Solow, 1974, 1986, 1993) and John Hartwick (Hartwick, 1977, 1978a, 1978b). *Weak sustainability* refers to the requirement to keep the overall stock of natural and manufactured capital non-declining, or constant, over time. According to weak sustainability, a development is sustainable when it leaves the total capital stock at least unchanged.

The weak sustainability rule emphasizes the necessity of maintaining the stock of total capital or an economy's generalized productive capacity so that consumption per capita is constant through time. It presupposes that the decline of exhaustible resources can be compensated by the increase in the alternative, human-made capital. The rents from non-renewable resource depletion should be reinvested in produced capital. In other words, weak sustainability allows unconditional substitution among the two kinds of capital. This implies that natural capital may decline insofar as human capital is increased. With weak Sustainability, a development is called *sustainable* if it leaves the capital stock at least unchanged (Stern, 1997). For example, in mining coal for production of electricity, the natural resource (coal) is replaced by a manufactured good which is electricity. The electricity is then in turn used to improve the quality of domestic life via its benefits, which include lighting, heating, refrigeration, cooking and industrial use. Hence, if total capital stock is left constant over time, sustainable development is achieved.

Environmental policies governed by weak sustainability care for nature in the sense of balancing the benefits of economic growth against environmental protection. Weak notion of sustainable development suggests that it is feasible to pursue growth while averting environmental collapse (Campbell & Mollica, 2016).

One of the problems with weak sustainability is that, while we can attach a monetary value to manufactured capital, it is very difficult to attach a monetary value to natural capital. How much is a forest worth? What is the monetary value of the ozone layer, an ocean fishery or a wetland? Weak sustainability also fails to take into account the fact that some natural capital cannot be replaced by manufactured capital. Some human capital (e.g., forest) provides a place for hikers to enjoy the natural

environment and a home for wildlife that provides food for hunters.

Strong sustainability, on the other hand, refers to the requirement to keep present natural capital non-declining, or constant, over time. It stresses the necessity of maintaining the stock of natural capital rather than total capital as a prerequisite for sustainable development. It assumes that natural capital and human capital are complementary, rather than substitutable or interchangeable. It suggests that a sustainable development is one in which the stock of natural capital is constant. Strong sustainability posits that because there are certain functions that the environment performs that cannot be duplicated by humans or performed by capital, the existing stock of natural capital must be maintained and enhanced. For example, the ozone layer provides an ecosystem service that is difficult to duplicate.

The strong sustainability rule suggests that nature has a right to exist, which it has been borrowed and should be passed on from one generation to another, still intact in its original form. To pass on resources intact, polyethene bags could be manufactured from used sachets of water which would have been sent to a landfill.

In contrast, environmental policies governed by strong sustainability pose limits upon environmental degradation and consumption. Advocates of strong sustainability argue that natural capital is critical, irreversible once lost, and hence not substitutable. Some of these advocates add that the natural capital has a value of its own. However, skeptics suggest that the distinction between strong and weak sustainability might be illusory unless the natural world is ascribed a value of its own distinct from its value as capital.

The Sustainable Development Goals

At the Millennium Summit held in September 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York, the world leaders gathered to unanimously adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration and committed their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty. The Summit culminated in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set to reduce extreme poverty by 2015.

The MDGs are the world's quantified and time-bound targets for addressing poverty in its varying dimensions: hunger, income poverty, diseases, and inadequate housing (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2010). The blueprint, tagged the MDGs, contains eight developmental goals and a target. It committed about 189 countries and most the world's major multilateral organizations to a concerted effort to reduce poverty via global partnership.

The eight goals of MDG are as follows:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
Goal 5: Improve maternal health
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

These MDGs established measurable and universally-agreed objectives for tackling poverty, hunger, deadly diseases, low primary school enrollment as well as other development priorities (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2021). The eight goals galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

Although some shortfalls remain, the effort tailored towards achieving the MDGs was largely

successful across the globe. The MDGs achieved progress in many important areas such as poverty reduction, provision of access to water and sanitation, low child mortality, improved maternal health, free primary education, and HIV/AIDS infections as well as treatable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis (UNDP, 2017; UNDP, 2021). According to the UNDP (2021), the major MDG achievements are as follows:

- More than one billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty (since 1990)
- Child mortality dropped by more than half (since 1990)
- The number of out-of-school children has dropped by more than half (since 1990)
- HIV/AIDS infections fell by almost 40 percent (since 2000)

In spite of these lofty goals, progress in MDG achievement had been uneven, and the agenda remained unfinished. Thus, in order to finish the agenda, and tackle some of the more pressing challenges facing the world today, the UN General Assembly in January 2015 began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda, which culminated in the subsequent adoption of the 2030 Agenda. At the expiration of the deadline set for the attainment of the MDGs, nations of the world met in September 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), to replace the MDGs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a blueprint for prosperity and peace for people and the planet, now and in the future it envisions a present and a future that is economically sustainable, socially inclusive and environmentally resilient. The SDGs are a universal urgent call to action to shift the world onto a more sustainable path ending poverty and at the same time safeguarding the planet and ensuring that people enjoy prosperity and peace by the year 2030.

It is recognized that ending poverty must go together with strategies that improve education, health, inequality, and economic growth while confronting climate change and working to preserve the oceans and forests.

At the heart of the Agenda are the 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 230 key performance indicators. However, only the SDGs, also known as *global goals*, are summarized as follows:

Goal 1: No poverty
Goal 2: Zero hunger
Goal 3: Good health and well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4: Quality education for all
Goal 5: Gender equality
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation for all
Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy for all
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
Goal 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
Goal 10: Reduced inequality within and among countries
Goal 11:Sustainable cities and communities
Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
Goal 13: Climate action
Goal 14: Life below water
Goal 15: Life on land
Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions
Goal 17: Partnership for the goals

The 17 goals are integrated success in one goal affects success for others. For example, achieving SDG 8- decent work and sustainable economic growth - will impact on the SGDs 1 and 2.

Method

The method of data collection employed in this is a review of published sources. In the review, we juxtaposed a gamut of information sources, including policy and media reports in the search for patterns on emerging effects and implications of the pandemic. We also reviewed published research on the concept of sustainable development together with its three fundamental pillars and levels. Furthermore, online searches for "implications of COVID-19 for sustainable developments goals" and "impact or effect of COVID-19 on the sustainable developments goals" were conducted from January 2021 to April 2021. This was necessary in order to assess any pattern of implications the pandemic may have for the SDGs.

Discussion

This section discusses the potential implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

The 2030 Agenda has been hit by the pandemic. One of the implications is the strain on governments' fiscal situation, increased public debt, funding squeeze, increased spending, and the diversion of focus to immediate issues to address the pandemic and its consequences. Profiled below is how the pandemic has affected (or is likely to affect) each of the 17 goals of the 2030 agenda in Nigeria.

According to the United Nations, developing countries need an extra US$2.5 trillion in external finance to cope with the repercussions of the pandemic. The sum is needed for additional spending needs occasioned by the pandemic. Additional spending required on social protection and health services coincide with the collapse of all customary sources of development finance, which include migrant remittances, tax revenue, export earnings, and foreign direct investment (Sayeh & Chami, 2020). The collapse of these sources in Nigeria and other countries was due to the COVID-induced lockdown.

COVID-19 and SDGs 1, 2, and 8

As outlined in Section 3, SDGs 1, 2, and 8 aim at ending hunger and poverty via decent work and sustainable economic growth. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered the progress made so far on achieving these goals. The spread of COVID-19 has increased the sufferings of the poor and vulnerable segments of the country. It has put millions of people out of jobs owing to the virus-induced lockdowns, and as a result, world poverty level has risen. Most hit are the informal workers whose daily earnings provide only the basic needs. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria has increased since the outbreak. As youth unemployment in Nigeria is already at 55 percent, the impact of COVID-19 on SDGs 1, 2, and 8 is likely to be significant (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2020).

COVID-19 has led to the deepest global recession in history and the broadest one since the 1870s, for more than 90 percent of all countries were in recession (Kharas & MacArthur, 2020). Nigeria is not left out in taking its own share of the recession. Being a monocultural economy, the country

heavily depends on oil. Ipso facto, any decline in oil prices would significantly reduce growth, and possibly lead to another recession. The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in a dramatic drop in oil prices, because of a sustained decline in the demand for energy during the lockdown. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2020), the outbreak of COVID-19 and its dramatic impact on economic activity across the world have resulted in a decline in oil prices by 55 per cent between the last quarter of 2019 and first quarter 2020. In March 18, 2020, the price of crude oil was as low as US$29.6 per barrel. As the oil and gas sector contributes about 65 per cent and 90 per cent to government and total export revenues, respectively, the federal government has called for a drastic review and changes in the revenue expectations and fiscal projections. This liquidity squeeze occasioned by COVID-19 will undermine the capacity of state and federal governments to implement policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth and sustainable development.

With the lockdown of the economy, the country's services, trade and financial sectors have witnessed significant disruptions. These major service sectors contribute more than 30 per cent to GDP. Thus, any reduction in these critical sectors could lead to significant job losses both in the formal and informal job markets. About 400 million jobs are lost owing to the COVID-19 crisis. Workers in travel and tourism industries are most affected. About 65 percent decline in cross-border tourism during the first half of 2020, 15 percent drop in trade during the first half of 2020, 7 percent decline in remittances 2021, and roughly 45 percent drop foreign investment into developing countries.

COVID-19 and SDG 3

The SDG 3 aims to promote well-being for all at all ages and ensure healthy lives. There is an obvious negative progress on good health as people avoid hospitals unless it is absolutely necessary to visit there. The lockdown imposed in the country has disrupted the critical indicators of SDG-3 which includes maternal, child and reproductive health services, and nutrition. Owing to the redirection of focus towards curbing the spread of Covid-19 and the fear of contracting it in the health facilities, there is likely to be an upsurge of other communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and hepatitis, which may increase morbidity and mortality (Federal government of Nigeria, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis is placing enormous pressure on Nigeria's fragile healthcare system.

COVID-19 and SDGs 4 and 5

The SDG 4 aims at ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. As it happened in most countries across the globe, the decision to close all schools and tertiary institutions in Nigeria to contain the spread of COVID-19 left millions of children out of school and has created additional constraints to inclusivity by exposing the digital device in education, leaving billions of students out of school. This device is mirrored in some private schools in Nigeria, similar to most schools in advanced economies in the North, maintaining access to education through online classes. Consequently, the lockdown led to an increase in the number of children, youths and adult students not attending school. Remote or virtual learning remains out of reach for at least 500 million students. This hinders the attainment of the SDG 4.

Currently, the Covid-19 pandemic has, among other things, (a) widened the inequalities in the education sector between the urban and rural children, rich and poor; (b) reduced children access to quality education due to the shift from the usual physical teaching to virtual learning which is neither engaging nor participatory; and (c) inability of most children in the public schools to participate as their parents cannot afford the cost of data subscription and the ICT requirements such as phones, laptops, and so on.

As regards SDG 5, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, the

lockdown has increased the risk of violence against women and girls. The COVID-19-imposed lockdown has resulted in the rise in domestic violence and spousal abuse in many homes, especially the poor homes.

COVID-19 and SDG 6

The goal of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation is contained in SDG 6. As regards this, COVID-19 taught every Nigerian the requirement of the sanitization. No doubt, the mere presence of the virus in our dreams, make people compassionate to sanitization process. Thus, individuals and institutions work together to achieve the best results in the area of clean water and a clean environment.

COVID-19 and SDG 7

Direct effect of the pandemic cannot be linked to the achievement of the SDG 7 in Nigeria, though indirect effect can be established. The lockdown has reduced the demand for power because almost every activity is connected to the supply of power. The government revenues have taken a hit. Governments are resorting to offering stimulus to keep the economy afloat but fiscal parameters are under strain. This diverts financial resources away from achievement of the SDG 7ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.

COVID-19 and SDGs 9 and 10

Currently in Nigeria, industry, innovation and infrastructure are experiencing disruption due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Industry, innovation and infrastructure, with which the SDG 9 is concerned, relies on human capital which is undergoing massive disruption. Loss of jobs, income has increased poverty, inequalities, and hunger. Even the achievements of other SDGs have been hampered. Resulting deaths will have an impact on the availability of human capital required. The uncertainty will add to the ongoing stress and anxiety in industry, and innovation will suffer as a result.

Concerning SDG 10 reduced inequality within and among countries poorer or marginalized segments of society are more affected because of inadequate social safety nets. The pandemic may therefore increase socio-economic inequality.

COVID-19 and SDGs 12 and 13

Responsible and sustainable consumption and production patterns are aimed at via the SGD 12.The lockdown implemented by countries to curb the spread of COVID-19 have decreased economic activities and caused a drop in road transport. This temporarily “cleans” skies and decrease levels of certain air pollutants. The lockdown has led to a decline in fishing, tourism and maritime transport activities. However, there is no confirmed report that the emergence of COVID-19 virus is linked to climate change, the SDG 13.

COVID-19 and SDGs 14 and 15

SDGs 14 and 15 aim to sustainably manage and protect marine life, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems from pollution, combat desertification, cease and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. Life below water and on land due to the increasing level of water and land pollution. The lockdown has withdrawn finances away from environmental protection. Some animals are potentially vulnerable to COVID-19. The lockdown and the attendant loss of revenue from tourism also create challenges for protecting wildlife. The cost of COVID-19 to zoos could mean extinction for some species of plants and animals.

Furthermore, as a lot of waste often ends up in rivers and other sources of water in Nigeria, there will bean increase in toxic medical waste discharged into rivers and other water bodies. This could lead to death of both terrestrial and aquatic lives and loss of biodiversity.

COVID-19 and SDG 16

The SDG 16 is at the service of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Due to the lockdown induced by the outbreak of the pandemic, the issues of peace, justice, and strong institutions have been scaled down or completely halted. Many countries imposed some sort of martial law in their territories. The proceedings of cases were halted while those of cases of national importance and urgent matters have been carried out via video conferencing. Protests have been witnessed in various parts of the globe (Gulseven et al., 2020). There have been some jailbreaks in many countries. For example, Nigeria has recorded two cases of jailbreak during this pandemic: More than 1900 inmates escaped in Edo jailbreak in October19, 2020 while over 1,800prisoners escaped in Owerri jail break in April 5, 2021 (Vanguard, 2020; Kola, 2021).

COVID-19 and SDG 17

SDG 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. The pandemic has put the partnership to a stress test. It has shifted the attention of the countries to collectively mitigating the impact of the pandemic. The countries are hastening to share data and research on how to combat the scourge and cope with it. Partnerships are being forged actively to source protective equipment for medical personnel, those infected and those that are receiving medical attention.

Conclusion

This paper examines the potential implications of the pandemic for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. It analyses the economic, environmental and social implications of the pandemic by succinctly reviewing the existing studies, concepts, theories and models necessary to gain an insight into the problem. The possible implications identified by this paper would serve as focal points of future empirical studies in this area.

Nigeria has not been on track to deliver the SDGs by 2030, because COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on the SDGs and threatening the achievements already made in many areas in the country. While COVID-19 has impacted all and sundry, the most vulnerable and the poorest have been disproportionally affected. At this time, investment in data collection is urgently needed to respond to the crisis and support SDG acceleration. During a period of crisis, timely and disaggregated data are critical in understanding, managing and mitigating the human, social and economic impacts of the crisis. Therefore, financial and technical support for data systems and innovations are urgently needed and should be provided for designing the short-term responses and accelerated actions to put countries back on track to achieve the SDGs (Min & Perucci, 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic implies that pursuing the SDGs is more important now than they were before, since they represent the means through which the many problems associated with sustainable development may be addressed.

Based on the possible implications identified, the following policy recommendations are made. Given the foregoing, Nigerian governments should promote green recovery that integrates economic recovery from COVID-19, climate action and the SDGs (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, 2020). The recovery process should serve as a critical occasion to materialize much-needed transformative change towards a sustainable society. Economic stimulus or packages directed at

recovery from closure, loss of business or loss of employment engendered by COVID-19 should contribute to the transition towards resilient and decarbonized societies.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, medical waste generation has increased globally. National and local governments should consider medical waste management as an essential and urgent public service so as to minimize potential secondary impacts on health and the environment. There has been an explosion in the use of some medical supplies such as disposable masks and gloves. Effective management of this kind of waste is an urgent and pressing service required to avoid further contamination from the virus. In addition, the bring-your-own-cup scheme should be implemented in order to cut down the amount of plastics discarded every year. Sound urban environmental measures should be taken in the country.

Measures must be taken by the federal and state governments to address ways in which trade and the movement of people and goods contributed to the global outbreak of COVID-19. With an eye on the threats to global sustainability, current systems must be reevaluated to strengthen the resilience of countries, regions, and the entire globe. Governments should promote remote work also known as teleworking, telecommuting, or work from home as a means to reduce close social contact.

It is critical that the root causes of COVID-19 — the human-animal interaction and the uncontrolled movement of infected people are addressed. To address the underlying factors of the pandemic, this paper supports the position of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (2020) that "it is essential to significantly reduce uncontrolled land development and resulting ecosystem destruction, and rigorously implement climate change countermeasures to reduce the clear impacts of climate change on ecosystems".

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