

Social Perspective of the Aftermath of Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Mankind is blessed to exercise his mental faculty to harness all available resources within reach and utilize them for sustenance and existence to a larger extent. As Covid 19 pandemic continues to ravage the world since the year 2020, it sparked the search for avenues not only to contain the scourge, but also to prepare and explore all means and opportunities to reclaim, and if possible, regain all what was forcibly lost during the pandemic, and to prepare against similar incidences which may occur in the future as well.

The Covid 19 scourge effects had spread shortages of consumer necessities including foods and medicaments due to lockdowns, which consequently led to health deterioration and deaths especially between those within the vulnerable age group. Not only that, the pandemic sparked worldwide panic buying of necessities which led to soaring of prices and put low and middle income earning families incapable of meeting their needs. More so, poverty sets in due to job losses as a result of regulations, which prohibited gatherings and direct human contacts, which are the basis for earning means of living.

This piece focuses on the social aftermath of Covid 19 pandemic; as the pandemic had awakened the mind of the general public and families as well, the need to concentrate on personal hygiene, and avoid exposure to situations and circumstances capable of causing illness and health complications. Again, it serves as an eye opener for states and families to make provisions for necessities; as the pandemic had sparked worldwide necessities shortages and panic buying. More so, due to lockdowns, family ties though increased, but at the same time, domestic violence index increased as well. These and many more would be discussed in this piece as part of the social aftermath of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Personal hygiene, Procreation, Domestic violence, Food security, Humanitarian Aid, Mass media

The Pandemic of Covid 19 which from the year 2020 continue to spelt disaster to the worlds' teeming population had not only been contained with the sudden and spontaneous rush in the field of medical health sciences and technology, but also the very existence of the world population socially. Indeed, in any circumstance throughout the world history, the social aspects perhaps continue to dominate the stage of discussions and intellectual debate in order to not only highlight the phenomenon, but also articulate it with all justification from different perspective, interpretation and school of thought.

One central lesson that remains as the theme about Covid 19 socially is that: people had learnt to live with it as it was added in the litany of world pandemics. So, since the pandemic has been accommodated and scientific evidence could be relied upon in this regard, various world pharmaceutical giants and health sciences researchers had developed vaccines. The vaccines include: Oxford AstraZaneca, Sinovac-Coronavac, Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson (Janssen), Valneva and Novavax vaccines (UN/WHO, 2022). This shows an unprecedented combination of political will, global collaboration and funding have enabled the rapid development and acceptance of Covid 19 vaccines. And the vaccines have reached billions of people, and have been proved worldwide as the vaccines offer life saving protection against a disease that has killed many (Gavi, 2022). Thanks to the efforts made to contend the scourge of Covid 19 as a result of combination of political will and commitment exhibited worldwide.

Perhaps, each region of the world had witnessed the impact of the Covid 19, and had developed measures to such cause based on its severity, to respond to the situation. Each measure adopted had its effects. The social aspect of it was that: although the pandemic had come, and has been put under effective control and monitoring to some extent, but, the existential situation of the effects socially had continued to bear on the world population generally up to date. These effects are studied and termed as the post Covid 19 pandemic social effects.

Hereunder, an attempt is made to analyze some of the common social effects of the aftermath of Covid 19 pandemic, as the effects became firmly adapted into our style and life as humans. These post Covid 19 social perspectives effects include:

Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene entails the way we take care of our body both externally through what we use to ensure our well being. Personal hygiene has come to reveal how and why standards of cleanliness have come to exist today. With regards to the Covid 19 as a pandemic, personal hygiene has been relied upon as the best and safest way to control the spread of the pandemic. The need to be clean has continue inducing us to do things like bathing, hand washing and general cleanliness of the body with the use of sanitizers and other antiseptics in order to wipe out germs and other harmful bacteria capable of causing or inducing illness.

During the Covid 19, aspects of personal hygiene practices were propagated widely in order to curtail the effects of the pandemic. At the centre of the practice was the hand washing with soap

base and sanitizers. This art was popularized as the safest method to curb the spread of the pandemic; as hands are prone to contacts with germs and bacteria. Again, hands are being used in person to person contacts - through shaking of hands, giving and receiving of items and other valuables as money, foods and others. Through these processes, the virus can be transmitted easily. Based on these concerns, the United Nations agency on health, the World Health Organization (UN-WHO), had continuously been supporting hand washing practices across the globe. To buttress the importance of hand washing, a special day (15th October of each year) has been marked by the UN-WHO as the International Hand Wash Day. To this end, accordingly, the health authorities have come to assert that about 90% and above of all viruses and other infectious diseases could be entirely wiped out by washing hands with antiseptics (PAHO/WHO, 2020). Therefore, it is the time to accelerate hand hygiene progress which requires a collective effort to enact real change in order to communicate effectively about the benefits of hand hygiene particularly to stop the spread of Covid 10 (Mc Custer, 2022).

More so, on health grounds, as the pandemic is virus type which means it is airborne and contagious too; etiquette in this regard was devised as when it is necessary to cough or sneeze, one is advised to use disposable tissues not handkerchief. When these are not available, one is advised to sneeze on clutched elbow, and move a little away from the crowd, so as not to sneeze or cough directly unto someone which may become infected of the virus later.

Although the Covid 19 pandemic has been contained, other health and hygienic practices are adapted worldwide. These practices include: keeping physical distance of at least one metre, wearing of properly fitted face mask, staying in a well ventilated place, avoid crowd and social gatherings, avoid contact with people who have been confirmed or suspected to have been infected by Covid 19 and consult health care personnel when one notices any signs and symptoms of the pandemic (CDC, 2022).

These safety health practices and standards that in the past were not at the centre of the general public, have now been revisited and reinforced in many societies, to the extent that practices as waving of hands instead of shaking as was the case before has been accepted; and wearing of masks in public places and gatherings, so also regular medical checkups and acceptance of vaccinations. These practices have been rolled over in the aftermath of the pandemic, and have been socially integrated globally to the extent that some privileges as visas, transit to or from other states, and other services are attached with prequalification of having been certified as Covid free with vaccination certificate as evidence.

Food security

As the Covid 19 pandemic sets in, the world was thrown into struggle in an attempt to stop the spread of, and to contain those already affected by the scourge. In the process, states imposed lockdowns and restrict interactions with other states; this was followed with wider prohibitions of interactions at continental level due to the devastations recorded in other continents, which

ultimately slowdown interactions. Consequent upon this, regional and intercontinental trade suffered; which spread worldwide shortages of consumer goods, foods and medicaments globally - coupled with low level purchasing power. Although there was no report of deaths due starvation, there was widespread food shortages especially in the non food producing states and those states that have not attained food security of which many of them are in Latin America, Asia, Caribbean and Africa.

Explaining the situation, United Nations agency, Food and Agricultural Organization (UN- FAO) contend that: nearly one in three people in the world (2.37 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020 under the shadow of Covid 19 pandemic (UN/FAO, 2021). Moreover, around 660 million people may still face hunger due to lasting effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on global food projections on food security by the year 2030 (UN/FAO, 2021). An estimated hunger index in 2030 was projected to triple the population of Brazil or double the current population of the United States (UN/FAO, 2021).

The above observations and projections had confirmed that: in the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic, there is going to be continual constrains to food access for poor households in many urban and rural areas across regions. This will be due to decline of households' purchasing power resulting from the loss of formal and informal employment, declining remittance and above average staple food prices (Bashir, 2021).

The points above could be judiciously relied upon to conclude that: the soaring of prices of foods and non food consumables and necessities after the Covid 19 pandemic, were as a result of the needs of the people that were disrupted due to measures put in place to control the pandemic; whereby factories and industrial production, transportation and marketing chain was halted for a while, and the chain was broken as a result. And for this reason, there was panic buying of foods and other necessity, as no one is sure when restrictions would be eased.

In this guise, the UN-FAO (UN/FAO, 2021) roll out efforts to ginger states and generate commitments towards transforming food systems to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms, and deliver affordable healthy diets for all, and to build forward better from the Covid 19 pandemic.

Procreation

Simply put, procreation is the act or process of begetting an offspring or the process by which an organism produces others of its biological kind. Technically, when I use the word here in this respect, it means the rate at which demographic data rose as a consequence of lockdowns and curfew imposed during the Covid 19 pandemic. Naturally, regular intimacy between couples/spouses could lead to conception, gestation and finally birth. When this happens, a new member is added to the family, community and the world at large.

During the Covid pandemic, many families are forced to remain at homes with members. When this becomes the case, regular cohabitation of opposite sex in the same place or area induces the desire to copulate (Paul, 2020). Though as it was a pandemic time, there were reports of massive deaths around the world. For instance: a study conducted in some 13 European countries, U.S and Canada shows that – Covid 19 rapidly emerged as the second leading cause of death in England, Wales and France after cancer (Viviana, 2021). Notwithstanding, the data collected as regards to demographic increases in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic had far outweigh the death ratio recorded. Though, some regions of the world had experienced more birth rate than death in the aftermath of the pandemic. For instance: in the cluster of states in central and southern Africa, there was a high birth rate which is sometimes over 50% (=50 births per 1000 inhabitants), with these, an unprecedented increase in population was recorded (WorldData.info, 2022). More so, it was envisaged that eight countries will make up over the half the projected total population increase by 2050. Such states as: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Philippines and Egypt (UNPF, 2022) recorded as the highest in the chart.

The use of birth pills and contraceptives, so also widespread migration due to conflicts and civil stripe continue to alter demographic data, but, all the way many families continue to ensure that they bear many children to rely upon as supporters in the long run (Population Matters, 2022); as government interventions and programs cannot be relied upon in similar cases as the Covid 19 pandemic case has exhibited.

Domestic violence

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class (UN/COVID 19 Response, 2021). Simply put, domestic violence or intimate abuse can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over partner. It includes any behaviours that frighten, manipulate, hurt, wound or injure someone (UN, 2021).

Although Covid 19 had come to be contained worldwide, the effect of the pandemic has thrown many women, girls and children to continue bearing the trauma physically and even psychologically. For instance: in Syria, the outreach workers of the United Nations are worried about the vulnerability of women and girls under curfew (UN-PFA Syria, 2021). This was affirmed to be so not only in Syria particularly, as scholarly records maintained that domestic violence has put nearly one in three women victimized by physical or sexual violence through their lifetimes (Devries et al., 2013).

During the Covid 19 pandemic lockdowns, many breadwinners were restricted from going outside for sustenance, as such they may likely transfer such disadvantaged feelings to their family members. Even in the most industrialized states as France, China and Italy (Taub, 2020) had recorded high level of reported cases of domestic violence during the pandemic which aspects of it are still in existence in the aftermath of the pandemic. Not only so, family bonds/ties were

weakened due to loss of jobs, thus, aggravating the situation – as family demands cannot be met by the householder, the more the breadwinner is likely to lose his/her self control and respond in an unhealthy and provocative manner capable of tearing family ties and weakening the bond of the institution.

In view of the acts relating to domestic violence, in the aftermath of the pandemic, medical health personnel services have recorded issues and came up with suggestions after the pandemic, and draw up proactive measures to contain the scourge in the case of any pandemic in the future as: each family holder should be examined both in behavioural and mental state where there is the need to engage him/her in any assignment by the state. Also of what factors could he/she be exposed and their extent in order to reduce the outbreak of domestic violence (Gautam and Kelly, 2020).

Globally, the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic had increased in calls to domestic violence helplines in many countries, it was in this spirit that the UN-Women of the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women – launched a public awareness campaign focusing on global increase in domestic violence during and after the pandemic; urging the general public to act and to support women and children if they suspect or know someone is experiencing violence (UN- Women, 2020), as there are available information and services to women in order to support and ameliorate the effect of the violence.

Children on the other hand, children had suffered from domestic violence incidences too during the Covid 19 pandemic. About 70-80% of children who witness violence against parents had caused them to develop psychological trauma and require special help for many and diverse behavioural and emotional disorders (Verena, K. et al, 2020). In the aftermath of the pandemic, observations and reports are common of such incidences, though were kept secretive and away from the public, and as such is accessible only through authorities approval.

Men were also victims of domestic as at the time of pandemic. As lockdown and restriction was enforced globally, as mitigating efforts against the pandemic of Covid 19; there were incidences of domestic violence against men also. For according to reports from Chinese province of Jingsu – there was the prevalence and victimization among men who have sex with men during the period (Shefung, 2022); and in the aftermath of the pandemic, it escalates into interpersonal violence associated with health issues such as psychosocial disillusion and exclusion among the victims (Paul and Gbeneol., 2009, 332-338). For instance: according to American Journal of Men's Health publication in 2009, Paul O. who conducted a tentative research on the issue of domestic violence against men during the pandemic, come up with reports as thus:

a. Mr A. (42 years old labourer), was severely beaten during the Covid 19 pandemic by his wife, who was aggressive and domineering while she demanded for money which he did not have as the lockdown has stopped his income.

b. Mr B. (51 years old trader), suffered scratches on face and bruises on hand from his wife due to his failure to meet her excessive financial demand during Covid 19 lockdown, which he could not satisfy, hence; the frequent disagreements culminated to fight.

So, in all these cases cited above, it shows that dwindling incomes, lack of freedom to participate socially and economic meltdown not only threaten families existence, but also set the pace for eventual chaos between spouses which had led to the risings of domestic and social cases index since the year 2020 which continue to linger till date.

Humanitarian aid

There are many definitions of the concept as Humanitarian Aid; an attempt is made hereunder to focus on one of them considering its significance of the keywords contained as regards to this work. Accordingly, Humanitarian Aid or Action as it is otherwise known entails active provision of aid designed to save lives, alleviate sufferings, and restore and promote human dignity in the wake of disasters and during large-scale emergencies (John et al, 2015, 1-10).

Covid 19 as a global pandemic rose the ire of the entire world as a result of its devastating effect which not only spread the contagious virus, but also socially continue to threaten the entire world populations' in all angles and perspective. In response to the situation, humanitarian agencies, philanthropists, religious bodies and organizations made bold attempts to secure the lives of the entire world population through efforts and responses materially and substantially. In the forefront of the crusade against the pandemic is the United Nations (UN) through its Office on Drugs and Crime and decided to take bold action as it was envisaged that global approach is the only way to fight covid-19 as it launches a program called Covid-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan – with an initial donation of US\$2 billion to fight the pandemic in 51 countries across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. This funding according to the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warns that: failing to help vulnerable countries fight the Corona Virus now could place millions at risk and leave the virus free to circle back around the globe; as the pandemic has killed more than 16000 people worldwide, and there are nearly 400 000 reported cases globally (UN, 2020).

This gesture by the United Nations continues to call for interventions from supporting partners to join hands to fight the pandemic. Accordingly, many regions of the world received one kind of humanitarian aid or another in form of vaccines, soap and base, medical equipments, water and sanitation essentials among other things.

From the surveys conducted so far, it was deduced that in the aftermath of the pandemic a high degree of relative peace was achieved in some trouble spots across the world due to the needs for intervention from the humanitarian agencies and donors. For instance in Juba, Colombia, Mali, Yemen and parts of the North-East of Nigeria – whom have been facing security challenges were called to order, in order to allow humanitarian supplies to reach target populations in need; and to

some extent, this was achieved. Also, joint collaboration between international humanitarian organizations and local humanitarian agencies was intensified, which proved that prioritizing activities is essential in efficiency of programs. This was so due to the innovative measures and improvisations made towards operations to attain specific and particular tasks. Again, tight measures were softened with the release of persons serving terms in incarceration and penitentiaries, simply based on humanitarian grounds, as an avenue to curtail the scourge of the pandemic. Moreover, in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Congo, Tanzania and Syria - more boreholes were sunk to ensure access to water; so as to facilitate personal hygiene practices like hand wash, which in effect reduces the risks of spreading the virus. Localization of technology through local content technology was developed in many third world states, as many ventilators were developed locally to serve immediate needs. Finally, through the office of the UN Offices for Development and Cooperation (DCO); health facilitators were trained to prepare and respond to health crisis in the future apart from sourcing funds for any humanitarian program (Brubaker et al., 2021, 3-31).

Mass media

Mass media of whatever type and form including the modern day social media continue to serve as indispensable source to share, receive and disseminate information which may be from person to person, from and within organization or to the world at large. In fact, information and mass media are seen as indispensable tools to mans' existence.

In the wake of Covid 19, many people turned to media for guidance and information. Information technology advancements and media continue to spread news about the Covid 19 pandemic which has both positive and negative impact on the mental and behavioural aspect of the general public. On these two sides of information (negative and positive), to begin with the negative side of it –as mis-information on the social and mass media, has been deemed to be as much of a threat to the people as the virus itself. As inaccurate information continue to serve and undermine the global responses to the devastating effect of the pandemic by eroding public confidence and trust, not only the prevalence of the pandemic; but also the acceptability of programs and measures to control its spread among people. For instance: in many third world states, communities continue to view the local and international authorities and organizations of trying to create avenue to control population increases by providing vaccines containing chemical compounds in retarding fertility of male and female towards having offspring. This unfounded fear is rooted into the hearts and minds of people as a result of mis-information from mischievous media interpretations (Peter, 2021, 34-86). Therefore, it was found out that (Abbas, et al. 2021) over reliance on the mass media especially social media can pose an increase risk to mental health, and may induce emotional trauma, insomnia, anxiety, depression and anger.

On the aspect mass media or the traditional journalism, due to lockdowns and isolations, many people within the age group of 30-49 have increased their use and patronage of the mass media- as the information is considered to be of journalistic standards and responsibility for accuracy of

news (Wada, 2018); whereas Tandoc (Tandoc, 2021) study reveals that: most people rated and believed that, news from the traditional media as newspapers and television shows are more relevant and credible than those shared by their friends on the social media platforms of any kind such as: Facebook, Whatsapp, Wechat, Instagram and others. Thus, mass media continue to curb unworthy assertions and information capable of creating chaos by quelling curiosity and maintaining balance reporting while abiding by the ethics of the profession. It was based on the information from the mass media generally that a term was coined to capture all incidences, practices and updates about the pandemic known as *Infodemic*.

With regard to children and young adolescents, mass media patronage and usages has contributed tremendously to improve their well being educationally. It was in the wave of the pandemic that various educational platforms became widely used and relied upon. Platforms on social media such as the Zoom, Webex, Skype, MS Teams and Loom or virtual learning were the commonest means by which conferences, seminars and symposiums were held via internet known as online e-learning or remote learning. For the pandemic has disrupted education in over 150 countries, and affected 1.6 billion students (World Bank/IBRD.IDA, 2021). Although difficulties were reported in the delivery of lesson and lectures, it had impacted the world schooling system during the pandemic. In the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic, such social platforms were adopted side by side with the traditional schooling system, operating altogether.

The consequences of these virtual platforms of working and learning is that; they had contributed to emotional distress which occupational health professionals need to be aware of and advise employers and employees that policies and guidance need to be put in place in order to ensure workers and students health in order to prevent emotional and psychological distress (Nerys, 2021).

Conclusion

The information discussed above has clearly show that for any crisis that set, in any aspect, be it pandemic, economic meltdown or otherwise could create a lasting effect which in turn alter the social balance existing in the world.

For the Covid-19 Pandemic which continues to adversely affect the worlds' population had created a new sense of magnitude and direction in addressing the challenges it has posed or continue to pose. In this respect, family ties were weaken due to travel restrictions, lockdowns ensures escalation of anti social behaviours towards closely relations within the same or proximal reach; as domestic violence and abuses became common, and was responsible for and created long lasting effect to the victims; and to those whose action could affect psychologically; such as the wards of the victim who may develop hatred and nurture malice towards the culprit whoever he or she may be - regardless of the circumstances as to the justification or otherwise of the act or omission.

Again, another social aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic was that: various states and organizations, so also donor agencies, have now come to realize the importance of collective actions in arresting and tackling any scourge capable of inflicting any bodily harm, or effect socially by pooling and widening the scope of programs and measures to halt the pandemic, and to continue to give support materially and substantially not only during the period to contain the incidence; but also to design and see to the implementation of resilient plans and programs as well.

Moreover, the social and mass media are seen as the most available potent tools in the fight against the stereotypes about the pandemic. In their role (mass media and social platforms), many unfounded fears were propagated, through these platforms, justified facts are presented to counter the threat posed by misinformation.

With the population of the world continue to surge, the Covid 19 pandemic had further accelerated the demographic data of the world generally; with the third world states leading the index chart. So, in the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic, more birth rates were recorded globally compared to the pre-and in the Covid 19 pandemic wake. This paved the way for many states and international bodies to make plans and provisions, to ensure sustainability of life and prepare in case of eventuality in the future of any outbreak or pandemic. In this realm, the United Nations Fund for Population (UNPF), World Health Organization (UN-WHO), and other agencies, continues to pool resources in an effort to ensure proper population planning around the world.

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