

EVACUATION OF NATIONALS OF WEST AFRICA ORIGIN IN DIASPORA IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN EUROPE: INSIGHTS FROM SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Socio-economic activities of people of West Africa State. One research question guided the study. The research design was the exploratory. The Instrument used in data collection was Qualitative. Funnel Shape procedures used in reviewing Literature. Convince sampling technique was used in data collection, data have been collected based on exhaustive consultation of many journals and online records. The published data from ACAPS (2020) was analysed to determine the Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on Socio-Economic Activities of the People of West Africans' States. The study indicated that over 21 million people were socially and economically implicated as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic in West African. The finding reveals that 68.8 million people were socio-economically affected. The findings of the study concluded that, the COVID-19 Pandemic has affected almost all areas of human life both socially, economically and politically in West African States at large. The vulnerable people become desperate and destitute in the society. The Pandemic affected both household and children education in the states. Since this Pandemic was spreads all over the world, the situation and normal activities of the people were yet to be normal. The finding of the study has recommended that, West African States governments should initiate useful programme that will help the business owners and needy people by given them loan and grant to revive their business activities. School academic calendar need to be adjusted so as to bridge the gap of education in the African states.

Keywords: *COVID-19 Pandemic, West Africa, Social Studies Education, Socio-economic Implications*

Introduction

COVID-19 Pandemic has dramatically changed the global migration and mobility landscape, and added a layer of complexity of migration in Africa from Europe. This

rapidly spreading health crisis has led to the implementation of mobility restrictions and border closures, as well as to the suspension of social and economic activities in most countries around the world, including Africa and Europe.

Some governments were beginning to gradually lift these measures, public, research and policy attention was increasingly turning to the socioeconomic and political effects that these may have in the medium and longer term. As the crisis is still unfolding, these effects remain difficult to predict. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) foresees that the pandemic will lead to the worst global recession of the past century, and that the gross domestic product of sub-Saharan Africa will fall by 3.2 per cent in 2020 (IMF, 2020). Others have pointed to the longer-term consequences that the pandemic may have for domestic politics, international relations and trust in governments (Perth, 2020), including in Africa (DE Vermont, 2020). COVID-19 and migration trends. "Africa must prepare for the worst", the World Health Organization warned from the outset (WHO, 2020). Governments reacted quickly, announcing a series of measures to contain the virus, yet these measures have trade-offs, particularly for vulnerable populations. Regional organizations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), are mobilizing efforts and have nominated the

West African Health Organization (WAHO) to lead the region's response to the pandemic (ECOWAS, 2020).

Conceptual Clarifications:

Coronavirus (COVID-19 Pandemic)

COVID-19 Stand for 'CO' Stands for Corona, 'VI' for Virus, and 'D' for Disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel Corona Virus' or '2019-nCov.' The COVID-19 Virus is a new Virus linked to the same family of Viruses as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the same types of common cold. It is a communicable disease. The symptoms of the disease are; fever, dry cough, tiredness, aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, difficult in breath, loss of speech, chest pain or pressure (WHO, 2021).

Concept of Social Studies Education

Idu (2011) defined Social Studies as an integrated study that centers on the study of environmental, economic, political and cultural facet of society which relates to the historical, contemporary and future events. Social Studies is the study of man in his totality and how his problems are solved. Social Studies is an integrated discipline of Social Science subjects that addressing the solutions of man's problems in the society. Oyibe (2019) views Social

Studies as that subject that focuses on “Learning about people, how and where they live, how they form and structure societies, how they govern themselves and provide for their material and psychological needs, how and why they love and hate each other, how they use and misuse the resources of the planet that is their home”. Dania & Eboh (2013) has also submitted that the subject is about molding character and values. In addition, Atubi (2019) made it clear that, Social Studies major objective is to direct young Nigerians towards possessing the right behavior, knowledge, values and skills to fight ethnicity, crime and insecurity. It inculcates positive attitudes and values in the society.

Osakwe (2009) also opined that citizens should be taught to be committed to the dignifying values, behaviors and rules that are enshrined in the Nigerian constitution, which are taught in Social Studies. Social Studies education thus seeks to imbibe in learners the knowledge of how to become useful to themselves, their societies and the country at large, this will make the entire nation to be devoid of COVID-19 Pandemic case by observing all the protocol given by the health authority. Atubi & Dania (2020)

opines that Social Studies is exceedingly good in helping children with diverse learning abilities in becoming efficient learners and can do more than that for value education.

Evacuations of West Africans Origin from Europe in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic:

United States has so far evacuated 38,296 citizens from Nigeria, Ghana, Benin Republic, and 75 other countries on account of the coronavirus pandemic. The citizens were airlifted in 330 flights coordinated by the US Department of State. West Africans nationals living in the United Kingdom, United States, China and other African countries have been registering for their evacuation back home due to the Coronavirus pandemic ravaging the world, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) has said. Nigerians living in the United Kingdom, United States, China and other West African countries have been registering for their evacuation back home due to the Coronavirus pandemic ravaging the world, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) has said (Daily Trust, 2020). The Commission added that those registering for evacuation are ready to foot their flight expenses. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, chairperson, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), urged Nigerians residing abroad

who are willing to return back to Nigeria to notify the Nigerian missions in their respective countries. She noted that the financial implications of such evacuation will be borne by the respective individuals "who will be compulsorily quarantined when they return to Nigeria." (Punch Newspaper, 2020).

On the registration of Nigerians overseas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, has briefed by the Presidential Task force for the Control of COVID-19, said the government would work out the evacuation logistics after the exercise (Premium Time Newspaper, 2020). He advised Nigerians abroad to stay where they were to avoid the risk of contracting the virus. Mr. Onyeama stated, "We have written letters to our embassies to give us an indication of the number in their countries and once we have that, we would be able to look at the issue of logistics and how to bring them back. "We should also bear in mind that the medical people have said that it's better to stay where you are if you can but you stand a much better chance of catching the virus if you are travelling up and down" (Punch Newspaper, 2021). Nigeria has evacuated no fewer than 648 nationals stranded in Europe, as a result of the coronavirus

pandemic, a government agency has said. The evacuees arrived at Nnamdi Azikiwe Int'l Airport, Abuja on Sunday via different airlines, namely: Emirate, Azman air, Euro air and Air Sudan (Punch Newspaper, 2020). In a Twitter post Monday, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission said 117 evacuees from Saudi Arabia arrived at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja at about 11:30 p.m. local time on Sunday via Azman air while Emirate airlifted 324 stranded nationals in the United Arab Emirate (UAE) and arrived at about 3 p.m. Also, Euro Air moved 51 evacuees from Canada who arrived at about 6.45 p.m. on the same day. Meanwhile, another 22 nationals were said to have arrived from some parts of Europe namely, France, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Norway, Germany, Holland, the United Kingdom. "Earlier we reported that air France flight AF936 with 22 Nigerians from (France, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Norway, Germany, Holland, the United Kingdom and Canada) with other Nationals arrived Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja at about 2:44 p.m. local time from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris," (Premium Time, 2020). It said 134 Nigerians who were evacuated from Sudan, also arrived at the

Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja via Air Sudan, on Sunday morning. At the time of drafting, more than 18 000 cases and 400 deaths have been recorded in West Africa according to Johns Hopkins University & Medicine.

In late February, 2020, the first case was recorded in Nigeria. Within one month, Covid-19 had spread to all 17 countries. The exact number of cases, however, is very uncertain, particularly given the low levels of testing. Death tolls are also unreliable as they may exclude people who did not die in a hospital, or who died before they could be tested.

All the returnees reportedly tested negative to COVID-19 and would proceed on a 14-day self-isolation as mandated by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (Federal Ministry of Health, 2020). The Federal Ministry of Health, and the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, the agency said. In the meantime, Nigeria has airlifted hundreds of its citizens across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused over 550,000 deaths globally. The exercise is part of government efforts to clear the backlog of stranded nationals around the world during the public health emergency. According to the Presidential Task Force on

COVID-19, the evacuation is targeted at least 500 Nigerians on a weekly basis.

Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on West African States Insight from Social Studies Education:

Travel and social restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic have had multiple impacts on the lives and journeys of migrants. Impacts may vary widely, depending on migrants' legal status and socio-economic characteristics. The migrants with regular status, better employment and housing conditions, skills recognized in countries of destination, better language skills, better access to information and supporting social networks are likely to be less exposed to the short- and long-term negative effects of the pandemic (IOM, 2020). Such as health risks, livelihood crises, unemployment, worsening labor conditions and stigmatization. At the same time, transportation services have been disrupted. This has had a significant impact on migration trends and patterns (IOM, & Milan, 2020).

In 95 per cent of assessed locations, migrants who rely on daily labor opportunities were reported to have been negatively affected due to COVID-19- Pandemic, induced slowdown in

economic activities, while rising levels of food insecurity among migrants were also observed as a result. Apart from the economic slowdown in West Africa and Europe, mobility restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic further contributed to decreasing migrants' access to livelihood opportunities by limiting their mobility, such losses of income, together with school closures, may worsen migrants' general living conditions and increase the exposure of vulnerable migrants and their families to age- and gender-specific risks, such as child labor and child marriages. Stigmatization and discrimination from national institutions and local communities also appear to have increased, worldwide and in these regions (MMC, 2020). Lack of money and information, discrimination against foreigners and fear of being reported in case of irregular status are the main barriers to accessing health services, migrants were living in poor housing conditions (IOM, 2020). Such health services were included; overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, poor nutrition and limited access to health-care facilities. Travel restrictions, lockdowns and quarantine measures have had a significant impact on economic activities in

all countries. They have also led to a global recession, which is likely to generate higher unemployment and exacerbate poverty globally (World Bank, 2020).

School closures bring additional challenges. Millions of school children will no longer avail of the programme. Over 20 million school children in West Africa are missing out on school meals due to Covid-19 related closures. These closures not only exacerbate food insecurity, they also interrupt learning and cause gaps in childcare, putting additional pressure on parents, especially women (WFP, 2020). The long-term impacts of disrupted schooling and access to nutrition at school for young children will be significant for poor families, limiting their human capital development and future earning potential.

Objective of the Study

To determine the Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on Socio-economic activities of people of West Africans' States.

Research Question

To what Extent does COVID-19 Pandemic affect Socio-economic activities of people of West Africans' States?

Methodology

This study is adopted exploratory research design. The Instrument used in data collection was Qualitative. Funnel Shape procedures used in reviewing Literature. Convince sampling technique was used in data collection, data have been collected based on exhaustive consultation of many journals and online records. The published data from ACAPS (2020) was analyzed to determine the Implications of COVID-19

Pandemic on Socio-Economic Activities of the People of West Africans’ States.

Results

Research Questions

To what Extent does COVID-19 Pandemic affect Socio-Economic Activities of People of West Africans’ States?

A Selection of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Measures in West African States

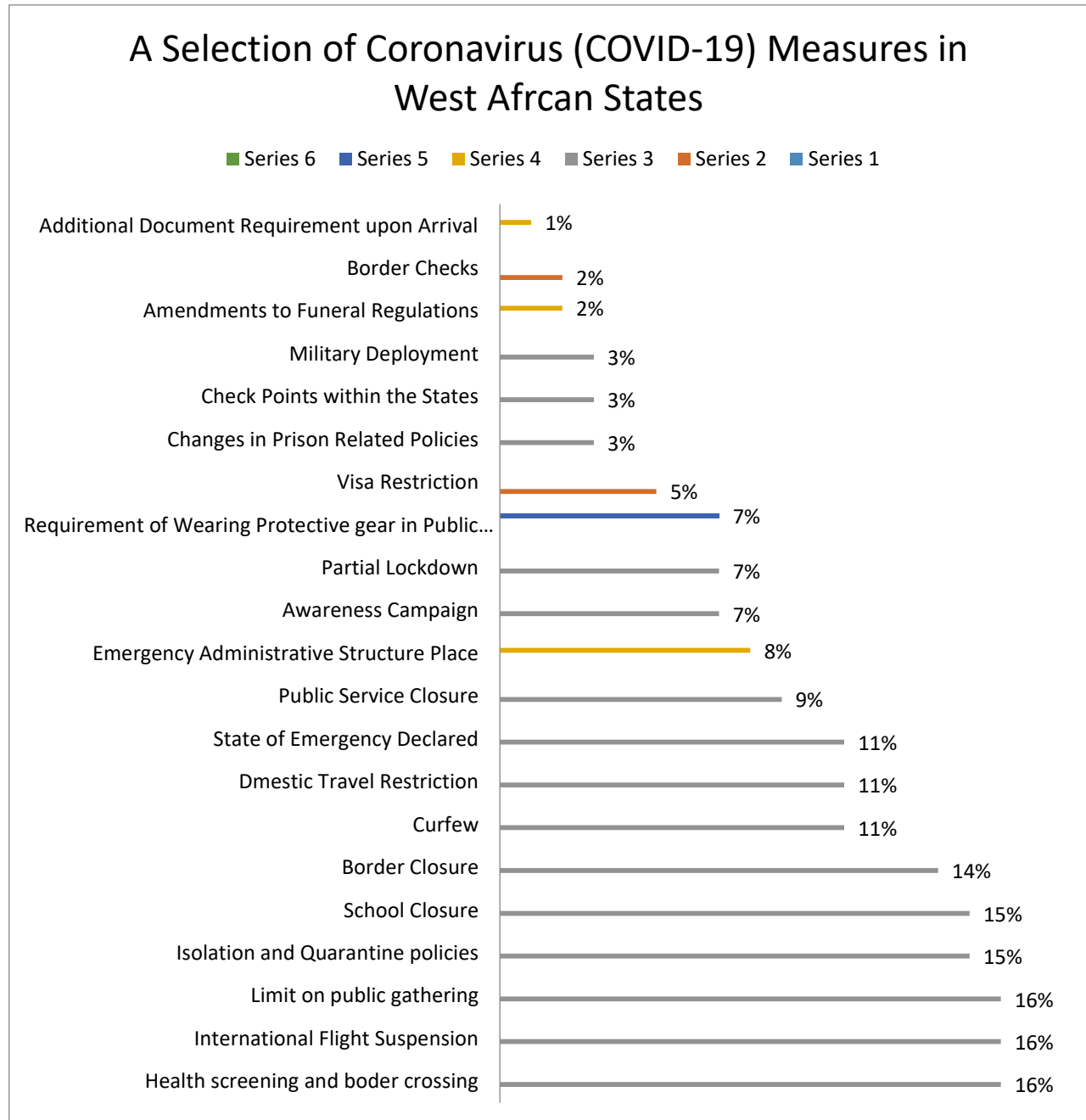
S/N	Measures	Per-cent
1	Health Screening at Airport and Border Crossing	16 %
2	International Flight Suspension	16 %
3	Limit on Public Gathering	16 %
4	Isolation and Quarantine Policies	15 %
5	School Closure	15 %
6	Border Closure	14 %
7	Curfew	11%
8	Domestic Travel Restrictions	11 %
9	State of Emergency Declared	11 %
10	Public Service Closure	9 %
11	Emergency Administrative Structure Places	8 %
12	Awareness Campaign	7 %
13	Partial Lockdown	7 %
14	Requirement of Wearing Protective gear in Public	7 %
15	Visa Restriction	5 %
16	Changes in Prison Related Policies	3%
17	Check Points Within the States	3 %
18	Military Deployment	3 %
19	Amendments to Funeral or Burial Regulation	2 %
20	Border Check	2 %
21	Additional Documents Upon Arrival	1 %

Note: ACAPS, (2020).

Table shows 21 measures taken by West African State in order to curb COVID-19

Pandemic from spreading among West African states. The proportionate per-cent of

21 items or measures will be presented in the graph.



Note: Field Work, 2022.

From the insights of Social Studies Education, the chart has 21 measures taken by the

governments of west African states have actually affected both social and economic activities of the people of west African States in such a way like; curfew, isolation and quarantine, school closure, shutting down of public places, border closure, restrictions of visa, limit public gathering among others. Therefore, COVID-19 Pandemic had really affected West African State.

Discussion

The result of the study on the research question reveals that COVID-19 Pandemic has affected the socio-economic activities of the people of West African states through the use of proper study and analyses of related journals and available records of the cases of the Pandemic. Being as a subject that study man in his totality in his social and economic activities, Social Studies Education insights some Socio-economic implications of COVID-19 Pandemic on the lives of people of West African states. This finding is in line with World Bank, (2020), IOM, (2020), MMC, (2020), & WFP et al (2020) whose studies opines and maintained that Covid-19 Pandemic has disrupted livelihood, health crisis, unemployment, working labor conditions, stigmatization, mobility

restrictions, imposed of curfew and disrupts of learning in west African states. All these problems were bringing gaps in socio-economic activities of the people of West African states including Nigeria.

Results of the study indicated that over 21 million people were socially and economically implicated as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic in West African states. Health screening, international flight suspension and limit of public gathering carried 16% each, which have the highest percentage of the result, it represented 8 million of people estimate disturbed. Isolation and quarantine. School closure have 15% each represents 3.7 million. Border closure carried 14% represents 3 million. Curfew, domestic travel and declaration of state of emergency each carried 11% which represents 7.3 million. Public service closure 9% represents 2.7 million. Emergency admin structure places 8% represents 2.6 million. Awareness campaign, Partial lockdown and requirement of wearing gear protective carried 7% each which represents 11.5 million. Visa restrictions 5% represents 1.4 million. Changes in prison-related policies, check points within the country and military deployment carried 3% each which represents 2.7 million. Amendment of funeral

regulations, and border check carried 2% each, which represents 1.3 million. While Additional document requirements upon arrival has only 1% represent only 276,000 thousand only, it has the less population. Total of 68.8 million people estimated socially and economically affected as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic in West African State.

Conclusion

The findings of the study concluded that the COVID-19 Pandemic has affected almost all areas of human life both socially, economically and politically in West African States at large. The vulnerable people become desperate and destitute in the society. Likewise, the Pandemic affected both household and children education in the states. Since this Pandemic was spreads all over the world, the situation and normal activities of the people were yet to be normal. The study therefore concluded that COVID-19 Pandemic has negatively affected the socio-economic activities of the people of West African State.

Recommendation

Upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. West African States governments should initiate useful programme that will help the business owners and needy people by given them loan and grant to revive their business and normal life activities in the states.
2. And also school academic calendar of the learners needs to be adjusted so as to bridge the gap of education in the state.

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