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Editorial and Introduction:

ISSUES ON THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC, FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Globally, many observers have described 2020 as *annus horribilis*, a year of horror for all. No one could envisage the outbreak of a deadly viral disease to the effect of a worldwide lockdown. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in Wuhan China in December 2019 engendered a spiral effect that affected every country in various degrees. Nigeria was not left out, and COVID-19 is not yet over. Truly, the world is currently in the middle of new strains of the virus. However, our journal the *Socialscientia*, an interdisciplinary social science medium for scholars decided to engage with the COVID-19 and its ramifying effect on Nigeria within the global context of the pandemic. The result is this special edition that harnesses papers on quasi theory, livelihood, economy, and research in ways that offer a universal view of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

Onuagha Amaka Veronica who leads the array of contributors to this special edition acknowledges the ramifying impact of COVID-19 on culture, the totality of our existence, traversing marriage institution, family life, education, religion, and so on. Also, the author notes the troubling denial of the reality of COVID-19 by the people in the selected communities in Anambra State, Nigeria. While taking cognizance of COVID-19, she recommends education of the people to abide by the prescribed measures for mitigating the spread of the virus. On his part, Chibuikwe E. Madubuegwu focuses on the political economy of COVID-19, especially its debilitating effect on economic fundamentals evinced in the about 13.2 percent inflation rate, the revised budget of N10.81 trillion, and projected unemployment rise to 33.6 percent before the end of the year 2020. In this regard, the author prioritises for government deference to the predicament of the public, fiscal and monetary prudence, targeted policies, and soft-approach to austerity measures to mitigate the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

Samson Oyefolu leads the group of essays on livelihood with his study of the COVID-19 pandemic and the realities of poverty in Nigeria. He argues that the pandemic affects the poverty level in Nigeria with a decline in the standard of living of the people, and an increase in the rate of unemployment among others. This is dire given the fact that Nigeria remains the capital of global poverty since 2018. Equally disturbing for the wellbeing of the people are the plummeting oil price, oil being the country's economic mainstay, weak and underdeveloped digital economy, the poor state of infrastructure in the public health sector, and lack of effective national welfare programmes. The author then recommends a competitive and diversified economy, the revamping of infrastructure in the public health sector, the digital economy, and planned national welfare programmes. Also, he recommends the transformation of the ideological character of the state. Bonaventure Chigozie Uzoh follows with his examination of the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Nigerian working class against the backdrop of social dislocation and normalization

process theories. He contends that the post-pandemic future looks very bleak and uncertain for the working class, and in indeed all Nigerians, due to the foreseeable durability of the pandemic. He, therefore, recommends effective governmental leadership to implement policies, such as the strengthening of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with credit facilities to alleviate the sufferings of the Nigerian working people. Both Blessing Nonye Onyima and Promise Chukwuedozie Udeh explore the negative aspect of COVID-19 and extant inequality, and related survival strategies employed by the informal workers during the COVID-19 lockdowns in the Southeast region of Nigeria. The authors employ the social inclusion theory within a qualitative matrix to look at the negative aspect of COVID-19 on informal workers. The latter with no steady flow of income and poor savings had to resort to charity outlets and abstemious practices such as skipping afternoon meals, sourcing palliatives from churches and wealthy relatives, and compulsory fasts among others for survival. This reality nudges the authors to conclude that inequality is a strong expression of marginalization, and deprivation among informal workers deepened by the prevailing pandemic. Oluwatosin Abigail Dawodu, Sabastine Sunday Ezeh and Ann Nnenna Ezeh analyse the effect of covid-19 on the youth, especially the unemployed and physically challenged. The authors argue in the main that the constraint of lockdown occasioned by the pandemic led to increased unemployment and a consequent crime rate. They then suggest that the government should cushion the socio-economic burden to youth.

The economy gains the attention of Chinedu A. Nwosu *et al*; J. O. Saka; Benedict I. Uzoechina *et al*; and Ugochukwu Mmaduabuchi Onwunyi and Christopher Oster. Nwosu *et al* look at the impact of COVID-19 lockdown strategy on supply and inflation rate in Nigeria. They employ the Monthly Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) in manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities. The PMI showed a general contraction that affected the supply of manufactured commodities. While new orders and production levels dwindled, supply shortages ensued with resultant unemployment and inflation bubbles under COVID-19 lockdown. The authors then recommend selective lockdown without slowing down economic productivity. Saka evaluates the interaction among exchange rate, stock market performance, and the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, February-September 2020 using money transactional indices. The findings were a decline in the stock index and corresponding exchange rate depreciation. The author recommends a more open economy complemented by adequate investment financing, low utility, and improved welfare conditions. Uzoechina *et al* examine the impact of inter-state border closure on the economic efficiency of micro and small-scale businesses in the Anambra State of Nigeria during COVID-19 lockdown. Given the factors that impacted efficiency, the authors recommend government empowerment programmes through soft loans and review of the border closure to allow for movement of goods and services to save business outfits. Onwunyi and Oster examine the impact of COVID-19 on global oil prices and its corresponding effect on Nigeria's economy. They show that COVID-19 impacted negatively on global oil prices. Indeed, Nigeria's earnings from oil and the value of the country's national currency slumped engendering a resort to external borrowing. The authors recommend the provision of infrastructures to enhance diversification of the economy from its oil-dependence and also to moderate variability in the GDP component.

The effects of COVID-19 on the conduct of ethnographic research are the focus of Lydia Ngozi Nwabueze and Blessing Nonye. They examine how the outbreak of the

Coronavirus pandemic has transformed ethnographic research. They draw on their ongoing research in selected communities around the Wupa River in the FCT, Abuja Nigeria. Due to the COVID-19, the protocols of ethnographic research, such as living with the people, were altered. Other drawbacks include the elongation and limited access to the study population. The authors then call for flexibility in research design to accommodate a force majeure.

The contribution of Sam Ugwuozor and Chibuike E. Madubuegwu conclude this special edition. Theirs is a report on Enugu State Government Response to COVID-19. They highlight the measures taken to address the pandemic in the state, the constraints, and success. They both suggest a multi-sectoral approach to improve the well-being of the people and the health of the economy.

**Professor Sylvester Odion Akhaine,
Chair, Guest Editors.**