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**ASSESSMENT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL
SECURITY IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL FCT, ABUJA, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The security architecture of many countries including Nigeria was badly challenged by the Corona virus pandemic in the greater part of 2020. Nigeria's weak security situation provided a safe haven for criminally minded persons to carry out their nefarious activities. Though crimes such as kidnapping, rape, armed robbery, internet fraud and Ponzi schemes, food insecurity and inadequate health facilities have bedeviled the Nigerian state for sometimes now, their occurrences were in the increase following a lockdown orders imposed by government to flatten the curve of COVID-19. The abuse of human rights and killings of innocent citizens are other security concerns that Nigerians had to contend with. To this end, this study examines the security threats arising from the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic on the residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council of the FCT. The study adopts structural functionalism as its framework of analysis. Sources were drawn from primary and secondary data. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between COVID-19 pandemic and security threats on the residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council of the FCT. Poverty, unemployment, weak and poorly funded military establishments as the causes of the unabating security concerns. The Paper therefore recommends among others that strong and good governance is needed if Nigeria and AMAC authority must provide passable security for her citizens. Creation of employment opportunities and the adequate training and funding of law enforcements agencies is most urgently needed than ever.

Keywords

Covid-19, pandemic and national security.

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic is indisputably the biggest health crisis the world has ever faced in a century. It was previously known as the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The name was chosen to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origins in terms of populations, geography, or animal associations. Towards the end of the year 2019, China Center for Disease Control and Chinese Health Authority traced and reported Novel Corona virus (COVID-19) to the Hunan Seafood Market in Hubai province of Wuhan, a capital and major business city of China (Gralinski & Menachery, 2020). The virus spread speedily to have public health significance and consequently declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020 by the World Health Organization

(WHO). The disease spread across China, and beyond by travelers who went to spend the Chinese New Year. Many not aware or being asymptomatic carriers returned to their respective countries infecting many hundreds to thousands by contact unawares. On February 11, 2020, the Coronavirus Study Group of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses in a statement announced the official designation for the novel virus as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2). Thus within a short time there was an exponential increase in the number of infected case and mortality rate. The WHO on March 11, 2020, declared COVID-19 (as a pandemic having met the epidemiological criteria of having infected over 100, 000 people in at least 100 countries (WHO, 2020).

While COVID-19 originated in the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province of China, it has spread rapidly across the world, resulting in a human tragedy and tremendous economic damage. The outbreak of Corona Virus Disease has posed serious existential threat to the economy, human lives and security in different parts of the world. As at globally, as 25 May 2021, there have been 167,252,150 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 3,467,663 deaths. One factor responsible for the rapid spreading of the pandemic is globalization that has enhanced means of transportation in today's world. The consequences of the pandemic have been felt across economic, social, political, environmental, and indeed all facets of lives have been impacted like never before in recent decades (Bhattoa, 2020).

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH, 2020) reported the first index case of Coronavirus on 28 February 2020 by an Italian citizen, who works in Nigeria and who was diagnosed upon returning to Nigeria from a trip to Milan, Italy. This incidentally is the very first reported case in Sub-Saharan African, ever since then there has been a daily rise in the number of cases. As at September 4, 2020 of the 413, 265 samples tested, 54, 588 cases have been confirmed, 42,627 cases have been discharged and 1,048 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in the third quarter of 2020 alone (NCDC, 2020). These figures are comparatively low when compared to data from United States of American, Italy, Brazil or India.

Nigeria has recorded about 166,019 confirmed cases with 2,067 deaths as at May 23, 2021 (Worldometer: 2021). In response to the pandemic, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) emplaced measures such as the constitution of a Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID 19, total lockdown of the country including closing airports, schools and commercial centres as well as land borders, institution of protocols and guidelines among others. The efforts of the FGN have to some extent contained the spread of the virus to a manageable proportion with improved recovery rates and fewer deaths recorded. Despite the measures, Nigeria continues to witness the spread of the pandemic especially community transmissions which is adversely affecting the lives and livelihood of the people and not allowed for flattening the curve. The impact of COVID 19 on the people in Nigeria cut across social, economic, political and erosion of livelihoods as well as the curtailment of human rights (Boyle, 2016).

As opined by Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim (2015) that security in Nigeria is being socio-political in nature, as without security there would be political instability and chaos and social vices. Thus, there is a connection between the security of Nigerians and their survival of the adverse effects of COVID 19 pandemic. Furthermore, the security of Nigerians

during the COVID 19 pandemic is the freedom from present and future danger, harm, fear, doubt, panic, anxiety or consequences of the pandemic. Security has been a long part of human existence and sustenance and can be viewed as freedom and absence of threat or violence, which could lead to loss of lives and property. Thus, security in Nigeria is a situation in which residents are free from any form of external threats to their life and means of livelihood, they are safe from bodily harm and disease and from any form of human rights violation, wherever they may be found within Nigerian states (Ojata & Udoh, 2012; Anifowose, 2011).

However, the trust of this work is to interrogate the threats of COVID-19 pandemic on Abuja Municipal Area Council of the FCT.

Objective

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which the COVID-19 affected security architecture of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) of the FCT and the challenges in the management of such. The specific objective of this study is to:

- i. Identify the causes of insecurity arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19)

According to Medscape (2019) is an illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2(SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The symptoms of COVID 19 disease range from fever, cough, difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath and other respiratory flu like symptoms (CDC 2020). Severe manifestations include lower tract infections such as pneumonia, bronchitis, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and sever acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and death. These complications are prominently seen in individuals with underlying health conditions such as diabetes mellitus, cardio-pulmonary disease, immune-compromised individuals, extremes of age (children and the elderly), cancer patients and patients undergoing chemotherapy (NCDC, 2020).

There has been no successful cure for COVID-19 several months after. However there have been many vaccines undergoing clinical trials. In the absence of a safe and effective vaccine or antiviral for use in humans, control and mitigation efforts against COVID-19 are focused on the safety precautions which include social distancing, community lockdown, the use of face masks, isolation and contact tracing of confirmed cases and quarantine of people suspected of being exposed to the disease (WHO, 2020).

Coronavirus is an epidemic that has virtually desterilize politically, socially, economically as well as culturally. Every individual are potential risk of this virus irrespective of status in the society. It is a disease that has virtually strike almost all over the world which eventually succeeded in destabilized economic activities in the name of general lockdown so as to reduce or minimized incidence of been infected. The covid19 belongs to a family of viruses that may cause various symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty, and lung infection (Grant, 2001). Every individual have the highest risk of been infected due to numerous activities we all engage. These viruses are common in animals worldwide, but very few cases have been known to affect humans. The World Health Organization (WHO 2020) used the term 2019 novel coronavirus to refer to a coronavirus

that affected the lower respiratory tract of patients with pneumonia, breathing and among other.

Concept of Security

Security is the degree of resistance to, or protection from, harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, nation, or organization. As noted by the Institute for Security and Open Methodologies (ISECOM) security provides "a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat." These separations are generically called "controls," and sometimes include changes to the asset or the threat.

Abraham Maslow describes an insecure person as a person who "perceives the world as a threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish; feels rejected and isolated person, anxious and hostile; is generally pessimistic and unhappy; shows signs of tension and conflict, tends to turn inward; is troubled by guilt-feelings, has one or another disturbance of self-esteem; tends to be neurotic; and is generally selfish and egocentric.

National Security

National Security is best described as a capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and well-being (Brown, 1994). It is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms.

Although there is often a legitimate military dimension to national security, further studies have proven that national security cannot be measured by military parameters alone. It is also a function of economic strength, political cohesiveness, social equity, cultural outreach, and environment soundness. The security dilemma is not peculiar or unique to Third World countries and Nigeria inclusive, but a universal concern particularly in these contemporary times of growing interdependence, globalization and shared danger, posed by weapons of mass destruction and varying nature of terrorist acts. The debate on the redefinition of national security responds to new global challenges.

Abubakar, (2004), was of the opinion that the debate is essentially premised on the need to focus more on political threats posed by regional, ethnic and religious conflicts is a result of the explosion in global interdependence, communication and information technology and crisis in public World Order. Apart from the issue of the menace of the Boko Haram sect, other security problems currently confronting the nation have been identified to include: political and electioneering conflicts, socio-economic agitations, ethno-religious crises, ethnic militias, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality and organized crimes. These problems constitute threat to the peace, security and development of the country. These have implications for the survival of the nation's nascent democracy.

National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy power projection and political power. The concept was developed in the USA after World War II. Initially focusing on military might, it now encompasses a broad range of facets, all of which impinge on the non-military or economic security of the nation and the values espoused by the national society. Accordingly, in order

to possess national security, a nation needs to possess economic security, energy security, environmental security, etc. Security threats involve not only conventional foes such as other nation state but also non-state actors such as violent non-state actors, narcotic cartels, Multinational Corporation and nongovernmental organization; some authorities include natural disaster and events causing severe environmental damage in this category (Ogu & Osah, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the structural-functional analysis which is a derivation of the General System theory of political analysis and as propounded by Almond and Coleman (1960) and Almond and Powell, (1966). The structural functional analysis is another derivative of the systems approach. Coming in through sociology and originating mainly in the writings of anthropologists like Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, and adopted in political science, especially in comparative politics by Gabriel Almond, structural functional analysis is basically concerned with the phenomenon of system maintenance and regulation. The basic theoretical proposition of this approach is that all systems exist to perform functions through their structures. The central question of this approach, as Young (1966) says, is: 'What structures fulfill what basic functions and under what conditions in any given society'?

Basic Assumptions of the theory

The basic assumptions of the structural-functional derivative of the systems approach are:

- 1) Society is a single inter-connected system in which each of its elements performs a specific function and whose basic goal is the maintenance of the systemic equilibrium;
- 2) Society, being a system as a whole, consists of its numerous parts which are inter-related;
- 3) The dominant tendency of the social system is towards stability which is maintained by its own in-built mechanism;
- 4) System's ability to resolve internal conflicts is usually an admitted fact;
- 5) Changes in the system are natural, but they are neither sudden nor revolutionary, but are always gradual and adaptive as well as adjustive.
- 6) System has its own structure, with its own aims, principles and functions.

The structural-functional derivative speaks of the political system as composed of several structures as patterns of action and resultant institutions with their assigned functions. A function, in this context, means, as Plato (Dictionary of Political Analysis) says, 'some purpose served with respect to the maintenance or perpetuation of the system', and a structure could be related to "any set of related roles, including such concrete organizational structures as political parties and legislatures." So the structural-functional analysis, Piano continues, "involves the identification of a set of requisite or at least recurring functions in the kind of system under investigation. This is coupled with an attempt to determine the kinds of structures and their interrelations through which those functions are performed."

Structural-Functionalism as a theoretical framework is intended to explain the basis for the maintenance of order and stability in society and the relevant arrangement within the society, which maintain the social order and stability. In our formation of a structural functional framework, social processes and social mechanisms are the intervening variables. A complete description of a social system would include therefore, a treatment of the social structures, and various functions of these structures; and of the social processes and mechanisms that must be in operation if the structures are to satisfy certain functions (Holt, 1967). It is Holt's view that structural functional analysis is a distinguishable approach primarily because of the selective aspects of social reality that it seeks to describe largely in terms of structures, processes, mechanisms and functions. These four concepts are of particular importance in the laws and theories that are developed.

Taking Easton's system analysis as a starting point, Almond identified the input and output function of all political systems as follows:

1. Interest articulation, this means expressing and making demands upon the political system which is usually done by parties and pressure groups
2. Interest aggregations; this focuses on selecting demands and combining them into a manageable number of alternatives. While on the output side are the following functions.
3. Rulemaking: This means taking demands and converting them into the authoritative decisions of the political system e.g. the legislative
4. Rule application; this is the administering or putting the decisions into effect i.e. policy implementation carried out by the executive.
5. Rule adjudication, this involves making authoritative decisions about whether or not a rule has been transgressed in given cases e.g. the judiciary.
6. Political communication; transmitting politically – relevant information to the citizens within the political system and outside of these diverse activities.
7. Political recruitment and socialization; this means getting people to fill all the political system from voters to leaders; forming positive attitudes, values, beliefs and opinions which maintains or sustains the political systems (Almond, 1969:15).

Almond and Powell (1966) have also classified functions into three types: Capability functions, conversion functions and communication functions. The capability function include those with extractive capability (to extract taxes and obedience from people), regulative capability (how far the system is allowed to go to enforce law and order), distributive capability (how goods and services are distributed), symbolic capability (whether the political system is in a position to get love for its symbols such as national flag, or the national anthem, etc.), and responsive capability (how responsive the system is as perceived by citizens. The capability functions play a role in how a political system conducts transactions between its domestic and foreign environment. The conversion functions are the same as interest articulation and interest aggregation, and are simply called conversion functions because they convert inputs from the environments to outputs in the environments. The communication functions are also the same as socialization and recruitment and communication, but they are also sometimes referred to as developmental

processes. Therefore, it is the comprehensive workability of these capabilities that makes up a political system.

Historical Background of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC)

The Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) was created on 1st October 1984 along with Gwagwalada local government, following the controversies surrounding the status of Abuja at the debate of 1989 Constitution; the local governments in Abuja were redesigned into Area Councils. The objective was to maintain neutral status of Abuja as an entity different from other states of the federation. Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) is located on the eastern wing of the Federal Capital Territory, bulk of Federal Institutions, Ministries and Embassies are located within the confines of the council. The area council is accessible from other parts of the country by road through the Abuja-Suleja road on the north, on the east through the eastern arterial Keffi-Nyanya road and through the Lokoja-Gwagwalada road on the West (AMAC Information Manual, 2013).

Residents of AMAC comprise the following ethnic groups: Gbagyi, Gwandara, Koro, Gade, and other Nigerians spread across the ethnic groups. The main Gbagyi settlement is AMAC includes; Karu, Nyanya, Durumi, Garki, Ketti, Kabusa, Mabushi, Jabi, Lugbe, Ido, Toge, Hulumi, Pyakasa, Jikwoyi, Kurudu, Orozo, Maitama and Asokoro areas. The Gwagwalada are commonly found in Karshi, Nyanya, Sheretti, Gwagwa and Karimo areas (AMAC Information Manual, 2013).

Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) has the following departments; Audit, Education and Social Department, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Finance, Health, Environment/Sanitation, Administration and works department. However, AMAC are indeed empowered by law to impose and collect list of taxes, levies, rates and permits internally in addition with the statutory allocation. To this effect, Federal Capital Territory Administration, enabling the area councils to enhance its revenue base for quality service delivery.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

The spate of insecurity in the country is at a worrisome situation particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic requires an understanding of the root causes. In this discourse, some of the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria include unemployment, poverty, corruption and leadership failure, weak and poorly funded military establishments.

a) Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the monsters confronting the Nigeria (Atere, Osah, Ayim and Chioma (2013). Nigeria, like other countries in Africa faces the challenge of unemployment. This has become a big threat to the survival of the political space of the country (Dike, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemics worsened the situation of unemployment in Nigeria, as many from the onset of the pandemic had either lost their jobs either or shut down of certain business enterprise. This may be due to compliance to government regulations on staff capacity or the state of the Nigerian economy. Unemployment breeds poverty and hunger. One age long reality is that 'a hungry man is an angry man'. This explains the increasing occurrence of all forms of security breach and other criminalities, including kidnapping, armed robbery and advanced fee fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic.

b) Poverty

Poverty is a form of economic deprivation averred that both economic deprivation and disease which result from poverty bring physical discomfort and prevents children from reaching their physical and mental potential. Ironically, Nigeria is one of the most resource-endowed nations in the world, but its citizens are among the poorest in the world. There is a persisting paradox of a rich country inhabited by poor people. Unfortunately, as poverty deepens as a result of the pandemic it gears towards a large poverty stricken youth populations without any sustainable source of living have continued to dabble into organized kidnapping, armed robbery. Thus, as unemployment rises the level of poverty rises as well (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

c) Leadership Failure

Nigeria for sometimes has not had the benefit of being administered by good and quality leaders as most of the political leaders are in office for their pecuniary gains (Campbell, 2010; Olukoshi, Agbaje, Abdullah and Obi, 2005; Maier, 2000). So sadly at the course of the pandemic palliatives were distributed by the government from the COVID-19 palliative fund. For instance, while the citizens were languishing in hunger, there are claims and counterclaims about members of the National Assembly getting up to N20 million each as palliatives from the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Even when funds and palliatives were to ebe given, they were not made available to the masses. If at all anything was given, they were so ridiculous. For example in certain areas of Lagos State and Ogun State a household comprising of over 15 individuals were given a 'Kongo' of garri, five sachet of Indomie noodles, a pack of salt and a loaf of bread. It is worthy of note that Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people but the culture of corruption in public service has resulted in the death of basic necessities.

COVID-19 Pandemic and the Security Implications in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC)

Nigeria braces itself to be part of what is most likely a third wave of the outbreak – along with many of the world's developing countries where the virus interact with significantly lowered healthcare capacities and multiple pre-existing fragilities. Implications of an outbreak in the country's protracted conflict and security zones could be particularly catastrophic – significantly altering the country and its psyche.

Security experts have predicted that following the crippling of businesses by the lockdown over the coronavirus outbreak, the crime rate may soar across the country after the pandemic. A former Department of State Services (DSS) boss, Dennis Amachree, said that the fallouts of the lockdown in its first two weeks, especially in Lagos, were indications that there would be a spike in criminal activities during and immediately after the COVID-19 in general.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, many have lost their jobs; many of our citizens have lost their means of livelihood. Many businesses have also shut down, which makes more difficult to feed, shelter, and other basic necessities during the pandemic. The economic assistance that the government has announced in response to the virus has exposed inadequacies in Nigeria's social protection systems and risks excluding the country's poorest and most vulnerable people.

With the level of criminal activities experienced so far especially in the commercial cities such as Lagos, many have predicted that “more criminals will take advantage of the inadequate number of law enforcement resources to perpetrate property and violent crimes in the commercial corridors. The criminals will stay away from housing and residential areas because everyone is at home”.

Similarly, there is a high probability that those released from jail by the federal and state governments to check the spread of coronavirus may regroup to form gangs. Inmates released may contribute to an increase in crime because of the same issue of unemployment raised earlier. When it is difficult for educated graduates with clean records to find jobs, it will be 10 times more difficult for persons with criminal records. Again, some of them may resort to crime as a means of survival. Remember that the prisons in Nigeria are not correctional, although the name was recently changed. These inmates tend to acquire more dangerous habits before they finish serving their terms. There is also no means to electronically monitor them, but records will show that some of these released prisoners will soon find their way back into prison in the near future.

There are speculations about the increase in the crime rate after the lockdown, to stem from the economic impact of the lockdown caused by COVID-19. Of most importance will be the likely increase in unemployment, which will see more people become desperate to feed themselves and their families. This desperation for survival often leads to increased crime; the crime rate would increase after Covid-19 because many companies and businesses are not likely to come back fully on stream after the pandemic.

Measures by the Federal government and Law enforcement Agencies to curb Security Challenges arising from COVID-19

The FGN remains committed to working with states and other stakeholders to provide optimal care for all COVID-19 confirmed cases in the country. The method of contact tracing is ongoing to identify all persons who have been in contact with the new confirmed cases. Nigerians and others coming in from other countries are made to isolate. The strategy adopted by the Presidential Task Force chaired by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr Boss Mustapha working in conjunction with the states includes testing, detecting, isolation, contact tracing and management of the pandemic. The Port Health Services of the Federal Ministry of Health has heightened screening at all air, land and sea points of entry into Nigeria and adapted the protocols to reflect the travel guidance issued by the Presidential Task Force on Coronavirus. The National Emergency Operations Centre led by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) supported by partners continues to coordinate response activities and strengthen the preparation capacity across states nationwide. An intensive national risk communications campaign is ongoing to inform Nigerians about COVID-19. It is observed that pandemic communication is not really cascading down to the grassroots as many Nigerians still doubt the authenticity of government information on COVID 19. Some even argue that there is no COVID 19 in Nigeria. It is therefore important to rejig crisis communication strategy of both the private and public communication agencies.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic took the world by surprise, thereby dislocating communities, disrupting social cohesion among peoples and tasking governments at all levels to innovate various measures aimed at curtailing the spread.

Nigeria's federal capital Abuja was also not spared from the ravaging effects of the pandemic.

In the midst of fear, tension and anxiety among residents about the negative effects of the novel coronavirus, the Federal Capital Territory administration under the minister, Mallam Muhammad Musa Bello, took up the gauntlet and was able to manage the spread of the virus in the territory. The administration immediately put proactive measures in place such as closure of mass-gathering places like cinemas, churches, mosques, hotels, events centres, night clubs, conference centres and strict regulation of markets in the territory. The strategy of staggering the markets days also helped in reducing unnecessary cluster of people in the markets and with these containment measures, the minister also found it necessary to constitute a task force which was mandated with the enforcement of the protective measures.

In addition to this, the minister embarked on a weekly appraisal of the workability of existing measures and protocols as rolled out by the World Health Organisation and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). Where any gaps existed the minister ensured that they were closed and rendered needed support to all the institutions involved in reducing the spread of the coronavirus, including frontline health workers and security personnel, all in a bid to keep the FCT residents safe.

As the nation's capital and with the presence of numerous international organisations, federal ministries, departments and agencies, containing the spread of the deadly virus was particularly challenging, but the managerial acumen of the FCT minister played a prominent role as he rose to the occasion, rallied all stakeholders to brace the challenge and provided the needed logistics support towards the realisation of President Muhammadu Buhari's vision of seeing Nigeria flatten the curve in the spread of the deadly pandemic.

As the pandemic continued to increase across the globe, the leadership of the federal capital exhibited an unmatched willingness and desire to tackle the challenge frontally. The results are visible and this has imbued the FCT residents with confidence that they are in safe hands and that the leadership of the territory cared for their wellbeing and welfare. Today the citizens are full of encomiums for the minister and his team having been working behind the scenes to secure their lives. Definitely such altruistic leadership as exemplified by the minister has not only set him apart from others but should be emulated by contemporary and future leaders in the country.

Going forward and with the benefit of hindsight and experience, governments at all levels must endeavour to budget more funds for the health sector and knowing that it is cheaper to maintain a functional health system than running helter-skelter to contain an unforeseen and unpredictable enemy. Even on this score kudos must be given to the minister for ensuring that since his assumption of office the health sector always received adequate attention, hence they were able to reduce the spread of the coronavirus to a manageable level.

Worthy of mention also is the symbiotic relationship between the FCT administration, NCDC and the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 led by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustafa. Throughout the period of the

lockdown, the proactive efforts of the FCT administration to lend a helping hand wherever and whenever it is needed was manifest and unsurpassed. Similarly the FCT administration had a hectic time controlling the interstate movement of people yet the minister's avowed commitment to save the lives of residents remained the driving force for the task force to endure sleepless nights on the FCT major highways to check the influx of people into the territory during the lockdown.

The cooperation of religious bodies in the FCT with the administration can also be attributed to the leadership style of the minister as he applies consultation, dialogue and persuasion in dealing with such sensitive issues, hence their total compliance with the periodic protocols being rolled out by the FCT administration.

Though Nigeria and the entire world have not left the danger zone of the pandemic completely, yet it is consoling that other states can benefit from the exemplary leadership of Mallam Bello, who with a single-minded determination continues to provide a selfless leadership to the residents of the federal capital Abuja.

Beyond visible achievements of the minister in the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is room for improvement in the health sector, especially in the area of data collection, management and storage. This will help patients immensely to access the needed health personnel, drugs and attention in times of emergency.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher adopts survey design in carrying out this study. This approach was chosen to enable the researcher reach out to a reasonable number of the population within the available resources. The choice of this design was also due to the fact that it enriches the data collection. The research design adopted on this study was carefully planned, so as to be able to obtain accurate and complete information about the research project being used. Therefore, research design refers to a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation. It also serves as a plan and a strategy designed for systematically solving research problems of interest to the researcher within his relevant circumstance (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The Target Population for this research is defined to include members of the general public which comprises the market women, ordinary citizen, and government officials residing within Gwarinpa Federal Housing, Gwagwa; Tunga Kwaso; Lugbe-Airport Road in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) of the Federal Capital Territory. However, the above population stood at one hundred and six thousand, seven hundred and sixty three (106,763) as shown in the table below.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This section deals with presentation, interpretation and analysis of data generated from the field through questionnaire where data obtained from field survey are presented with the use of the simple percentage statistical method. The total sample size for this study was 400 questionnaires administered to the respondents and 378 were completed and returned by respondents. However, the chapter focused on the rate of return response of questionnaires analysis and interpretation of respondent's profile and data presentation

Table 1.1: Rate of Returns of Responses of Questionnaire

Target respondents	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of return question	Percentage
Residents of Gwarimpa Federal Housing	157	146	39
Gwagwa	42	40	11
Tunga Kwaso	19	15	4
Lugbe-Airport Road	182	177	46
Total	400	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021

Table 1.1 shows the statistics of questionnaire distributed to the respondents in the study areas. Out of 157 copies of questionnaire distributed to residents of Gwarimpa Federal Housing 146 were returned, 40 out of 42 were retrieved from Gwagwa, while 15 out of 19 and 177 out of 182 were also retrieved from Tunga Kwaso and Lugbe-Airport Road respectively.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1.2: Sex of Respondents

Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage
Male	199	52.65
Female	179	47.35
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From table 1.2, it is clearly seen that majority of the respondents were male representing 199 (52.65%) while the remaining 179 (47.35%) were female. This shows that more male respondents were available and ready to respond to our request.

Table 1.3: Age distribution of the respondents

Age of Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage
18-25	60	15.87
26-35	93	24.60
36-45	167	44.18
46-55	38	10.05
55 and above	20	5.29
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From table 1.3, it is revealed that 60 (15.87%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 18-25 years, 93 (24.60%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 26-35 years, 167 (44.18%) of the respondents were within the age of 36-45 years, 38 respondents (10.05%) were in the age bracket of 46-55 years, and the remaining 20 (5.29%) were in the age of 56 years and above.

Table 1.4: Marital Status

Variables	No. of Responses	Percentage
Single	123	32.54
Married	156	41.27
Divorced	56	14.82
Widowed/Widower	43	11.38
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

Table 1.4 clearly shown that 123(32.54%) of the respondents were single, 156 (41.27%) were married, 56 (14.82%) were divorced, 43 (11.38%) of the respondents were widowed.

Table 1.5: Educational Qualification of respondents

Educational Qualification	No. of Responses	Percentage
SSCE	72	19.05
NCE/ND	102	26.98
HND/B.Sc	194	51.3
M.Sc/others	10	2.63
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From table 1.5, it is shown that 72 (19.05%) have SSCE certificate, 102 (26.98%) of the respondents have NCE/ND qualification, 194 (51.3%) of the respondents have HND/B.Sc degree while the remaining 10 (2.63%) of the respondents have M.Sc and others. From these statistics, it can be observed that the respondents were educated enough to understand and comprehend the research focus.

Table 1.6: Occupation of the respondents

Occupation of Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage
Public service	76	20.1
Private sector	141	37.3
Professional service	58	15.3
Informal sector	103	27.2
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From the analysis, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents were public servant (which is proven by 76 (20.1%) of the total population, 141 (37.3%) of the respondents were private sector staff, 58 (15.3%) were professional service, while the remaining 103 (27.2%) worked at informal sector.

Table 1.7: COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a threat to human security.

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	101	26.72
Agreed	69	18.25
Strongly Disagree	56	14.81
Disagree	67	17.73
Indifferent	85	22.49
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

Table 1.7 revealed that 101 (26.72%) of the respondents strongly agree that the outbreak of COVID-19 constitute threat to human security, 69 (18.25%) agree with the assertion, 56 (14.81%) respondents strongly disagree, 67 (17.73%) disagree, while the remaining 85 (22.49%) respondents are indifferent. The implication of the above findings is that, the virus constitute security challenges to human security which Nigeria is note an exception.

Table 1.8: Difficulties arising the from COVID-19 pandemic has led many into social vices in Nigeria

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	101	26.72
Agreed	85	22.49
Strongly Disagree	65	17.19
Disagree	60	15.88
Indifferent	67	17.72
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

Table 1.8 revealed that, 101 (26.72%) strongly agree that difficulties arising the from COVID-19 pandemic has led many into social vices in Nigeria, 85 (22.49%) agree with it, 65 (17.19%) strongly disagree with it, while 67 (17.72%) were indifferent. The implications of this analysis is that COVID-19 has caused so many poverty and insecurity situations in Nigeria which Abuja Municipal Area Council is not an exception.

Table 1.9: Nature of security threats arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Armed Robbery	92	24.34
Kidnapping	67	12.73
Rape	81	21.43
Killing of innocent persons	67	17.73
Abuse of human rights	71	18.78
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From the table 4.9, 92 (24.34%) of the respondents stressed that armed robbery is one of the major security threats facing the residents of AMAC following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, 67 (12.73%) mentioned kidnapping, 81 (21.43%) says raping, 67 (17.73%) said killing of innocent persons, while abuse of human rights in the area council constitutes 71 (18.78%).

Table 1.10: Inadequate distribution of palliative, corruption and overlapping functions/ insufficient policies are the principal structural challenges constitute security threat arising from COVID-19 in the AMAC

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	152	40.21
Agreed	73	19.31
Strongly Disagree	54	14.29
Disagree	51	13.49
Indifferent	48	12.70

Total	378	100
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Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

From table 1.10, 152 (40.21%), 73 (19.31%), strongly agree, agree respectively that the federal government attitude towards the distribution of palliative were marred by corruption and overlapping functions/ insufficient policies which invariably constitute the principal structural challenges arising from COVID-19 security threat in the AMAC, 54 (14.29%), 51 (13.49%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively. While remaining 48 respondents (12.70%) are indifferent.

Table 1.11: Provision of foods and protection of the residents of AMAC during the pick of COVID-19 was not sufficient

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	187	49.42
Agreed	68	18.01
Strongly Disagree	52	13.75
Disagree	36	9.52
Indifferent	35	9.26
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

The findings in the on table 1.11 showed that 187 respondents representing (49.42%) and 68 (18.01%) strongly agree and agreed respectively that provision of foods and protection of the residents of AMAC during the pick of COVID-19 was not sufficient, a total of 52 representing 13.75% and 36 (9.52%) of the respondents held a contrary view. However, 36 respondents representing 9.26% were indifferent.

Table 1.12: Adequate provision of palliative and creation of jobs for restive youths are necessary in order to improve on their wellbeing will thereby enhance the security challenge of AMAC.

Opinion	No. of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Agreed	98	25.93
Agreed	103	27.25
Strongly Disagree	87	23.02
Disagree	82	21.69
Indifferent	8	2.12
Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2021.

The responses in the table 1.12 also revealed that 98 respondents representing 25.93% admitted that adequate provision of palliative and creation of jobs for restive youths is necessary in order to improve on their wellbeing will thereby enhance the security challenge of AMAC, 103 respondents representing 27.25% accepted that it is to a large extent. 87 respondents representing 23.02% and 82 (21.69%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively, while 8 respondents representing 2.12% were indifferent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the foregoing findings, it was revealed that;

- The study however shows that the outbreak of COVID-19 has caused so many poverty and insecurity situations in Nigeria which Abuja Municipal Area Council is not an exception.

- ii. That, there are no adequate measures put in place to curtail the agitations for the vulnerable, youths and others who lost their jobs in Abuja Municipal Area Council of the FCT. Like we are told, a hungry man is an angry man and he that is down needed fear no fall. The government is still compounding the issue by the order for correctional centres across the country to release inmates who have minor offences hanging on their necks; those on awaiting trials for a certain period of time and those with health challenges. This situation culminated to social vices in AMAC.
- iii. The study also found that there is problem of inadequate provision of palliative for the residents of the area council, corruption and overlapping functions/ insufficient policies are the principal challenges in proper management of COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv. As the nation's capital and with the presence of numerous international organisations, federal ministries, departments and agencies, containing the spread of the deadly virus was particularly challenging, but the managerial acumen of the FCT played a prominent role relative measures were taken to this effect.

CONCLUSION

Insecurity has posed a challenge for the Nigerian government and appears intractable. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nigerian government has wobbled in its security responsibility of lives and properties. The study is a policy response approach which has investigated sufficiently the alarming security issue under the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic outbreak in relation to Nigerian national security particularly in the Abuja Municipal Area Council of the FCT. This is necessary because the challenges of national security in Nigeria is an extension of national security threats to West African region and Africa at large as discovered by this study. It was identified from the study that the COVID 19 outbreak and its security implications on the Peace and Security conditions in AMAC could be catastrophic as it risks further eroding an already fragile social fabric and in turn undo the gains made in deepening foundations for peace and stability in the area council.

While measures were taken to mitigate the effects of the virus and at the same time to counter the armed bandits' and other security attacks in AMAC, the bandits utilised the opportunity provided by lock down to wreck more havoc. The responses were found to have been inadequate according to this study owing to corruption, lukewarm approach, deplorable condition of the security services and equipment of operation, terrain of the crisis and the socioeconomic and political contexts of the affected communities in AMAC. The study further concludes that the bandits' attacks and COVID 19 pandemic further worsened humanitarian situation in the area council leading to increase in death toll, depletion of farming land dominated by activities of banditry which will be the repercussion of food insecurity and other crises. Thus, the study suggested that this mishap should not continue. It must be arrested immediately. Therefore, some measures were presented based on the findings of the study as presented below.

Recommendations

To assist the government in ensuring security in Nigeria and particularly in Abuja Municipal Area Council, this study has engaged itself in identifying the security challenges and the way out.

- i. It is suggested as a long-term panacea that the policymakers should designed policies and programmes that will ensure equality and equity in resources allocation and distribution to extricate millions of the inhabitants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic particularly in AMAC from abject penury and deprivation which is identified as a major cause.
- ii. The security agencies should employ more use of surveillance and intelligence gathering than other strategies adopted so far. The government must be sincere in providing the needed equipment and compensation that will motivate the security operatives. All the sources of funds, weapons, logistics and movements of the bandit groups should be identified and blocked accordingly to weaken them and force them into submission.
- iii. Entrepreneurship education should be incorporated into the curricular of secondary school and tertiary institutions. This will help shift the youth from being job seekers to job creator and from social dependence to self-sufficient people.
- iv. Government at all levels should put in place and sustain programmes and policies geared towards reduction of poverty and unemployment levels.
- v. Facilities such as the Central Bank of Nigeria COVID-19 fund which aimed at giving loans to small and medium enterprise should be made to get to those it is meant for.

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