

## REMAKING AFRICAN MUSICOLOGISTS FOR THE NEW NORMAL

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### Abstract

The effects of the pandemic on global economic growth cannot be overemphasized. As a result of covid 19, most people, organization, religious group, educational sectors, etc could not continue their normal activities to avoid the spread of the pandemic. Nigeria, like every other developed and developing countries, announced the closure of borders (land, air, etc), still to avoid the spread of the deadly outbreak of the pandemic. However, with all the efforts to curtail the spread of covid 19 all over the world, yet, almost every country recorded a notable number of Covid-19 crises, where some lead to death and some could recover after a while at the isolation centre where adequate care was given. As a result of this outbreak since 2019, almost everything seems to have taken a different approach in dealings. African musicology like every other course all over the world now exploring a new approach toward research and learning in the pandemic era - A new normal. Therefore, this paper highlights the State of Covid 19 in Nigeria, challenges of African musicologist in the world of new normal, and suggest effective/scientific solutions to the challenges.

**Keywords:** Covid19, Pandemic researcher and African Musicologist

## **Introduction**

The covid 19 pandemics has changed life as we know it. No sector seems to be left behind as everyone begins to get adjusted to the new normal; that is a new way of life. There has been an outburst of virus in the year past, which Nigeria is not an exception but non seems to have grounded or affected the global community as Covid-19. According to Sohrabi, C. (2020), the first known occurrence of the virus was at Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province of China, by December 2019. However, it began as a form of pneumonia cases in the province. The cases were also reported to the (WHO) country office and it was discovered to be a new train of SARS-CoV virus of 2002. The name Covid was however given by the WHO on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020. This is an acronym purposely for Corona Virus Disease of 2019. The lab scientist made it known that the symptoms of Covid-19 are associated with the disease were common to that of the common cold in Nigeria and all over the world. Among these are; cold, fever, poor sense of smell and breath shortness. Oyeranti, O & Sokeye, B. (2020), says that "the complications are of a greater degree than the symptoms as it could lead to pneumonia, viral sepsis, acute respiratory distress syndrome, kidney failure, etc. also, Sohrabi, (2020), also note that the overtime have been said to worsen based on the health status of the individual. The Covid 19 is not an airborne disease but can be spread in various ways though. Avoidance of crowded places is a necessity because it could spread faster in a crowded environment. The most valuable approach to curtail the spread is to keep a safe distance from an infected person, constant washing of hands and cleaning of the possible contaminated surface. The symptoms are quite irregular, so it is difficult to identify an infected person without testing. The presence of these silent carrier has increased the spread. These are three categories of silent carriers according to (Lauer, 2020).

They are;

- i. Asymptomatic: people who carry the active virus in their body but never develop any symptoms.
- ii. Presymptomatic: people who have been feeling a little unwell from a Covid 19 infection but continue to come in close contact with others.
- iii. Very mildly symptomatic: people who feel a little unwell from a Covid19 infection but continue to come in close contact with others.

So, it is very necessary that all the careers of covid 19 should strongly adhere to the warning of social distancing at all time. So, by taking to all these protocols/preventions, a new normal is launched. African musicologist like other specialists would have to be proactive in a time like this in other to keep their relevancies in the society and global village. This would practically be implemented through the various approaches to learning.

### **African Musicology**

Africa is a land of black, hence African constitute over 90% of black people of the world. They have so many traditions which are still prevalent and common among them till the present day. Despite the missionary incursion and introductions of European civilization through formal education, these traditions which in another word refer to culture, are all dependent on African music. Many scholars/musicologists in Africa and Europe have discussed African musicology from a different perspective and making the purpose of the study known to the global village. No doubt, African musicology gives better knowledge of traditional African music study. Efurhievwe, M. A. (2020), made it known that African musicology study could be enhanced through knowledge reconstruction of indigenous music. So, a good knowledge of African musicology helps both African and non-African scholars to have a better understanding of African music studies in general. The study of African musicology has exposed scholars all over

the world to the richness of African cultural heritage and the necessity of making it a course of study at global institutions. Bringing it down to the present day where the pandemic has truncate normalcy of every sphere of life including education, therefore, making African musicology up their relevancy in time like this.

### **Remaking Nature of African Music Research**

Today, African and the entire globe have striven hard to survive in the face of 21<sup>st</sup>-century existence. Like a child breaking into a run, to catch up with his older parents or relations, the African is attempting to take gigantic leaps to catch up with the technology development that has taken over the entire American and European countries for centuries, and the current pandemic that has taken the entire globe on ransom. This is naturally a big task. As an Igbo proverb says, it is futile trying to catch up on a journey (on foot) with a man who left a day before. Thus, the hopelessness of the attempt at the so-called transfer of technology and other methods of scientific "advance" is manifested by the widening gaps between Africa and the Western world. Scientists of the latter land men on the being able to monitor movements into the remotest parts of the earth. On the other hand, Africans cannot even communicate with their neighbouring countries in finding a common solution to the Covid-19 pandemic that has killed over thousands and still killing, yet a final solution hasn't been found. It seems scholars, researchers and even the government in the various countries in African are waiting seriously for w white man found a solution.

But works of Arts in Africa have been hailed in all parts of the world. Our antiquities are considered second-to-none. Our music and dance are reckoned to be the highest cultural standards throughout the world. If one is to make an impact in a society in which one lives, one must put one's best foot forward. So, it is important therefore that we should develop our arts alongside other spheres of growth to establish a balanced society that would enhance musicologist to get

along in a time like this. This would lead to how best to continue in research, learning at various levels of education, even in the pandemic. This would encourage more input in all field or specialization areas in music

It therefore necessary that in the spirit of a reawakening of the potentials in African heritage, and cultural abilities, researchers, in various field including African musicologist should resolve on collaborative research in finding a groundbreaking solution to the current pandemic facing the whole world, using the African method and technics.

### **The Pandemic Outbreaks**

The entire world is currently battling with the "Covid -19" pandemic, in another way, known as CORONA-VIRUS. This particular virus caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This particular virus was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The world health emergency of international concern regarding covid19 on 30 January 2020 and later declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Research has it that around 15bApril, 2021, over 138 million cases have been confirmed with more than 2,97 million deaths attributed to covid19, therefore, this pandemic was regarded to be one of the deadliest pandemics thus far in history.

There are no specific symptoms of covid 19 as the symptoms are variable, from none to life-threatening illness. It has been noted that the virus could spread through the air when people move or stay close to each other. Any infected persons could be transmitting the virus as they breathe, cough, sneeze or spit entering another person through their mouth, nose or eyes. Its spread could also be through contaminated surfaces. WHO (2020), the state is that "people remain contagious for up to two weeks and can spread the virus even if they are asymptomatic".

### **Recommended Preventive Method;**

1. Social Distancing
2. Wearing Face Mask (in the public)
3. Ventilation and air filtering
4. Hand Washing
5. Covering one's Mouth when Sneezing and Coughing
6. Disinfection Surface
7. Self-Isolation for people exposes or symptomatic

Since the inception of the pandemic in December 2019, several vaccines have been made. Here has been a lot of treatment addressing the symptoms and also, some therapeutic drugs that inhibit the drug has been developed as well. Global authorities have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdown/ quarantines, workplace hazard controls and business closures. Many organizations are also working on an increase in testing capacity and trace contacts of the infected.

The pandemic has affected every sector globally and everyone is adjusting to the new normal. One of the most affected sectors is the educational sector where many educational institutions have been partially or fully closed and also, many events have been called or postponed. However, in a situation where some events are allowed, the participant numbers are reduced to very few.

### **State of Covid 19 in Nigeria**

The record has proved that the last pandemic that has the type level of impact so far, was the 'Spanish flu' and it recorded a higher death rate in the second wave than in the first. The death rate was attributed to a mutated form of the virus which is possible with Covid 19 situation on if an inappropriate vaccine produced (Phillips, 2014). Due to the pressure of a vaccine, the testing phase for the treatment

is expected to be shortened. Hence, plans should be made to avoid second waves or contain them if is inevitable. (Radusin, 2012).

Thevajan et al, 2020, also say that the nature of the virus shows no potential for mutation, however, the treatment could create complications. The complication could be avoided if the intended vaccines are given more time to be tested. The haste is understandable but the consequences of the haste should be considered in like manner. In Nigeria and as well as any part of the world, the vaccine has been distributed and the first round of two has been admitted on some individual and particularly the front-liners who are the health workers. However, in Nigeria, not every individual has shown interest in the vaccine as many have no trust in it yet. Most Nigerians believe that the vaccine that would not give a total resistance of the covid worth not taking at all. Yet, WHO warned that one will still have to adhere to covid19 rules even If he or she has been administered the vaccine. How the is the necessity of the vaccine if one would still have to observe all the safety rules even when the vaccine has been administered, this and more are the questions from most citizens of Nigeria.

Without the strong participation of the Nigerian populace, there is an expected geometric increase in the rate of contamination. The rate of contamination in rural areas is expected to be lighter than that of the urban, hence, a spike of covid19 cases is expected if the spread increase across the rural areas.

### **Challenges of African Musicologists/Researchers**

Researchers all over the world are facing set back in their various activities. In Nigeria, most schools are shut down and student and lecturers were advised to work from home, making use of the various possible online platform. The researchers on the other hand would have been involved in fieldwork to authenticate their findings and carry out various research, but the danger of covid19 may some difficulties/challenges are noted;

1. Access denial to other states/countries to carry out field research work:
2. Group Research Discouragement
3. Unavailability of Sponsors (individual / private and government)
4. Poor internet access due to the location of some researchers
5. Slow working phase due to individualistic nature

## **Solutions**

Solutions to the above-mentioned challenges and many more are not far-fetched. The idea is prompt swift to enable Nigeria researcher to fit into global standard, rather than grounding researches due to the pandemic that the exact season or period to eliminate it has not been known.

1. An online workshop for all Nigeria researchers on the proper use of the online platform for research and learning: It would be necessary if the federal government can make available all the necessary facilities available and also engaged ICT professional to train people on the effective ways to carry out research using the various online platform such as; doodles, Zoom, WhatsApp, Google classroom, Microsoft teams, etc. this will not only help many researchers but also serve as a job opportunity for many people
2. Possible research during the period of a pandemic: Most people will continue to work from home. However, researchers are encouraged to engage in research that could be done via an online platform instead of staying idle at home in the name of lockdown or no movement. There are researches that consultation of e-library, private library, journals, books, etc. would help engaged.
3. Constant internet access: One of the problems of Nigerian researchers in a time like this is access to the internet. In most



organizations in Nigeria, there no, or rather a weak internet access available. This will in no doubt downgrade the effectiveness of any scholars who cannot provide for themselves and assess to the internet. It is as bad as locking oneself out of the world if a researcher could not communicate globally due to a lack of internet access.

4. Attending various workshop/seminars online regularly: Due to the pandemic, almost all academic activities have been moved online, especially in the developed countries and some African countries. Most institutions in these developed countries do not miss a session to the pandemic, unlike most countries in Africa, where a whole session was lost to pandemic due to the inability to put effectively move all the learning online for both the teacher and students. Researchers are encouraged to use this period to attend international conferences and seminars abroad (online) because it would not be a necessity to be physically present in an international conference and seminars/workshop during the pandemic. Only to access the provided link and everyone is connected virtually. This will also help save the transportation expenses one could have incurred in the process of physical presence in an international conference.
5. Various gadget for self-protection at any point when going out / moving around is inevitable: WHO and every other country's health organization has warned everyone exposing himself to the pandemic. Therefore, every organization should endeavour to provide safety-protection of their worker or members as the case may be. This would be in support of the provisions made by the federal government. Safety-protections such as; face shield or mask, hand sanitizer, gloves, and observing social distancing.

## **Conclusion**

Based on this study, the Nigerian musicologist like every other musicologist all over the world should have a rethink on the way forward in a time like this. It is no doubt a period of 'New Norma' in which no one knows the possibilities of returning to the usual way of life. At the moment, no date, or sign of the pandemic been crushed in totality, so, it is expected that it comes to stay for a moment no one would be able to imagine. Some developed countries like France, UK and the US have gone through series of lockdown from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> and presently doing everything possible to make sure that everyone adheres to the safety rules to curtail the spread.

Nigeria on the other hand has not gone on second lockdown likewise some other African Countries. So, precautions must be taken to avoid further calamities that the spread could cause. It is possible that the genes of most Africans and sunlight that is available in Nigeria are helping to slow down the effect of the virus when contacted, but we should be careful as there are other seasons where rain and cold dominate which then could cause second wave of the lockdown in Nigeria. However, the suggestions listed above would help Musicologist in the area of Musicology and other areas of specialization to rethink in other to get along in the season of 'New Normal'.

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