

Covid 19: Challenges and Opportunities for Human and National Development
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COVID 19: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUMAN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT¹

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the analysis of the challenges posed by the covid-19 pandemic as well as an exploration of the opportunities brought about by the ravaging pandemic on the national and human development of the nation. The challenge which ranges from a huge decline in Foreign earnings, high rate of unemployment, food insecurity, and depression brought about by covid-19 has exposed fundamental weaknesses in the healthcare systems and capabilities in several countries. However, Safety-Driven Entrepreneurial Opportunities, Innovation and Import Substitution opportunities that emerged and explored during the ravaging pandemic have invariably enhanced human and national development. To this end, the aim of this paper is not to be definitive about the challenges posed by the virus outbreak, but rather to provide information about a range of possible economic opportunities of the disease and how to make judicious and effective use of opportunities that abounds. It is therefore recommended that individuals should utilize various opportunities such as innovation, Import substitution and skills acquisition opportunities brought about by the pandemic to develop themselves and the nation at large.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health organisation, the Covid-19 disease was first reported in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Adhikari et al., 2020; Adnan, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, & Siddique, 2020; Unhale, Ansar, Sanap, Thakhre, & Wadatkar, 2020) and has since then spread like a wildfire to more than 190 countries (Congressional Research Service., 2020; Harapan, Itoh, Yufika, Winardi, Keam, Te, et al., 2020). In other words, the disease has become a global pandemic which has caused massive economic disruptions across the globe. To this end, Economic experts have predicted that the pandemic could plunge the world into a global recession.

It has however exposed fundamental weaknesses in the healthcare systems and capabilities in several countries, both rich and poor. Against this backdrop and addressing the systemic nature of the pandemic and related effects, there is a need to identify and analyze the challenges and opportunities posed by COVID-19 by linking the immediate need to curb the spread of the disease to the SDGs. Considering broad social, political, and economic impacts, we focus on health disparities and the severe effects of the crisis on some populations particularly disadvantaged and underserved ones and countries relative to others. While the fallout from the crisis is both amplifying familiar risks and creating new ones, change at this scale also creates new openings for managing systemic challenges, and ways to build back better in a means to enhance national development.

Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus disease 2019 is an infectious disease that is popularly known as Covid-19 (Moore, 2020; Ohia et al., 2020). The disease is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2; otherwise known as SARS-CoV-2 (Adnan et al., 2020; Harapan, Itoh, Yufika, Winardi, Keam, & Mudatsir, 2020; Ohia et al., 2020; Poudel, Poudel, Gautam, Phuyal, & Tiwari, 2020). Its symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, among others. It is a highly communicable disease (Adnan et al., 2020) and its mode of transmission is from person-to-person (Unhale et al., 2020).

Transmission occurs among close contacts mostly through respiratory droplets released when the infected person sneezes or coughs (Harapan, Itoh, Yufika, Winardi, Keam, Te, et al., 2020). While

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measures such as lockdown, social distancing, self-isolation or self-quarantine, and observation of simple hygiene habits such as regular washing of hands, wearing of facemasks, and covering the mouth with a handkerchief when coughing or sneezing have been recommended to contain the spread of the disease among people (Ohia, 2020).

Though vaccines to curb the widespread disease is currently being distributed worldwide, the world health organization, then recommended measures to prevent infection include frequent hand washing, social distancing (maintaining physical distance from others, especially from those with symptoms), covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or inner elbow, and keeping unwashed hands away from the face. The use of masks is recommended for those who suspect they have the virus and their caregivers. Recommendations for mask use by the general public vary, with some authorities recommending against their use, some recommending their use, and others requiring their use.

Some Identified Immediate Measures Put in Place by Government on COVID-19 Pandemic

The government, cooperative bodies, philanthropists have been supportive in the fight against Covid-19 transmission via telecast, jingles, adverts, billboards, fliers, posters across Nigeria. The Federal Ministry of Health and the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control worked assiduously to put in place certain control measures and rules (guidelines) for the prevention of COVID-19. These measures include:

- i. Washing of hands with soap and running tap water for at least 20 seconds after being in a public place or frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub;
- ii. If soap and water are not immediately available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% - 70% alcohol;
- iii. Use 10 ml of Dettol plus 1 ml of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) in 100 ml of clean water to decontaminate surfaces;
- iv. Avoid touching, nose, eyes, and mouth with unwashed hands;
- v. Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough or who is sick;
- vi. Put distance (2-meter gap) between oneself and others as community transmission is fast.
- vii. Mandatory use of non-medical face mask/covering for all persons.
- viii. Mandatory provision of handwashing facilities/sanitizers.

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- ix. Single-use latex gloves are discouraged, except in clinical settings, or if used, they should be disposed of safely after every single use.
- x. Extensive temperature checks on entry into the business premises and other public places.
- xi. The physical distancing of 2 Meters between people in workplaces and other public places.
- xii. No large gatherings of more than 20 people outside the workplace.

HUMAN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Human Development

Human development is defined as the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being. Human development is about the real freedom ordinary people have to decide who to be, what to do, and how to live. Central to the human development approach is the concept of capabilities. Capabilities generally refer to what people can do and what they can become-are the equipment one has to pursue a life of value. Basic capabilities valued by virtually everyone include good health, access to knowledge, and a decent material standard of living. Other capabilities central to a fulfilling life could include the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one's life, to have control over one's living environment, to enjoy freedom from violence, to have societal respect, and to relax and have fun.

Our capabilities are expanded (or constrained) by our efforts and by the institutions and conditions of our society. People with extensive, well-developed capabilities have the tools they need to make their vision of "a good life" a reality. Those poor in capabilities are less able to chart their course and to seize opportunities. Without basic capabilities, the human potential remains unfulfilled.

National Development

The term national development is very comprehensive. It includes all aspects of the life of an individual and the nation. It is holistic in approach. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and the development of individuals. It includes full-growth and expansion of our industries, agriculture, education, social, religious, and cultural institutions. Moreover, national development implies the development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation viz. political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and material.

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According to United Nations, “National development is growth plus change. Change in turn is social and cultural as well as economic and qualitative as well as quantitative”. Broadly, the development of the nation encapsulates such parameters as:

- (i) Development through a planned national economy,
- (ii) Increase in agricultural production through application of modern technical know-how,
- (iii) harnessing industrial production,
- (iv) Development of human resource,
- (v) Application of science and technology in the production sector

Challenges Posed by Covid-19 on Human and National Development

The coronavirus pandemic has a lot of dark sides. Around the world, people get ill and die, schools close, the healthcare system is overloaded, employees lose their jobs, companies face bankruptcy, stock markets collapse and countries have to spend billions on bailouts and medical aid. And for everyone, whether directly hurt or not, Covid-19 is a huge stressor shaking up our psyche, triggering our fears and uncertainties.

Challenges to Human Development

Depression

With the gravity and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, it is natural for a range of intense negative emotions to exacerbate, such as fear and anxiety, stress and distress, anger and confusion. These emotions are driven by myriad stressors (e.g., physical safety concerns, financial uncertainty, negative and/or conflicting news) and can lead to depression and other mental health issues as observed in previous outbreaks including SARS, MERS, and H1N1. Further magnified by a host of factors such as social isolation and perceived helplessness, mental health challenges may especially affect vulnerable segments of the population (e.g., the elderly and people with special needs).

Cases of depression and mental health challenges may be amplified the longer the pandemic continues, with the likelihood of persisting well after. The unemployed and financially distressed may be hit hardest as jobs will be scarce while economies worldwide struggle to recover from the predicted financial recession.

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Mental Health Issues

The persistence and intensification of these mental health issues may result in far graver consequences. As people seek to regulate their negative feelings, they may employ a gamut of coping strategies, often with dire outcomes for both their mental and physical health.

At one end of the spectrum is compulsive consumption, such as overspending and alcohol use. Taken to the extreme, these emotional-repair strategies may result in increased materialism and substance abuse that carries potentially enormous costs for the self and society. Given that there are often bidirectional relationships between negative emotions and compulsive behaviors, victims may find themselves trapped in an unfortunate vicious cycle.

At the other end of the spectrum is suicide. Already, there have been increasing reports of suicide cases arising from the pandemic. Evidence suggests that suicides are especially prevalent following financial hardship, with suicide rates in Europe and the US rising about 1% for every 1% point increase in unemployment.

Challenges to National Development Due To COVID- 19

Aggravation of Food Insecurity: Most of the individuals in the country rely on working to feed a family on a daily or weekly basis. This indicates that the base of the economy is very fragile like glass. Covid-19 came with a dangerous impact on agriculture as there was low production with a great effect on the purchasing power of citizens

The High-Risk Scenario

Politics could turn toxic as governments fail or struggle to speedily control the pandemic, to ease lockdowns safely, or to communicate clearly about what they are doing and why.

Some politicians will resort to a discourse combining fear and tribalism. This will exacerbate discrimination at home – as seen in some parts of the United States, China, and India – and jingoistic nationalism will also make international cooperation more difficult.

Failure to cooperate internationally will hinder the fight against the virus. Closing down trade, requisitioning materials, or preventing supply to other nations will hobble everyone's capacity to

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source adequate testing and treatment materials. The closing of borders and ripping up of international rules will make it even more difficult to restart trade and travel, and extend the lockdown, heightening anger and anxiety.

The crisis has exposed how many people, even in some of the world's richest countries, live in inadequate housing, without reserves of cash or food, and face difficulties in accessing government assistance. The global lockdown is exacting an enormous price from them. They will demand better, having seen the enormous sums governments have mobilized to deal with the crisis.

Over-Correction/Under-Correction of Globalization

The biggest risks that lie ahead are the risks of over-correction or under-correction in response to COVID-19. The risk of over-correction would involve a full swing back from the hyper-globalization of the 1990s and early 2000s to a highly nationalist and protectionist order in the 2020s. Pro-globalization supporters from the 1990s could be critiqued for presenting an excessively rosy picture of globalization. They focused on globalization's many and varied benefits, presenting increased connectivity as both inevitable and positive. Although shocks like the global financial crisis and COVID-19 show some of the systemic risks that attend globalization, the solution is not to swing to the opposite extreme of assuming that everything national is good and everything global is bad.

There is a need for a more measured, calibrated approach. Take the supply of medical items as an example. COVID-19 has shown that many states depend on international supply chains that can leave them dangerously exposed in the event of a pandemic. But there are risks associated with reshoring production. If a country were self-reliant when it came to making medical supplies, that capacity could be wiped out by a natural disaster and imports might not be available rapidly enough to substitute for local production. Moreover, manufacturing pharmaceuticals would be more expensive, which might cost lives at other times.

The answer is to manage interdependence by carefully diversifying exposure, combining both domestic and international suppliers.

The slowdown of Service Sectors such as hotels, restaurants, resorts, and lodges facing bankruptcy by customer loss that aroused from the state of emergency which given the command

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for society to stay at home. This lowers the demands of industrial manufactured and agricultural products produced by enterprises. Majorly, this affected perishable products such as fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and fisheries than staple crops such as teff, maize, and wheat which are less perishable and their demand is relatively inelastic.

The decline in Foreign Earning: The current virus slowed global trade by reducing international travels and disrupting global value chains (WBG, 2020). The decrement in the value of currency leads to lower purchasing power parity of the country. It is simple fact that the Naira is devaluating relative to the United States dollar due to the problem of export of goods to other countries are less to goods that are entered into the country from abroad measured in currency.

Unemployment: Covid-19 pandemic is discouraging foreign direct or domestic investment in the area of significant sectors of the economy. This difficult condition imposes a negative impact on the people who are engaged in various enterprises of the sector like agriculture to sustain their life from day today. In addition to the tensions of the pandemic, employers forcing them to exit from the jobs that make the life of employees under questions.

Opportunities in Coronavirus Breakout

The coronavirus crisis showed that the world is so fragile and non-resilient, but also the world is full of hidden potentials and undiscovered opportunities. Since there are new challenges that come with the complications of this deadly virus for sure, we need to look for the hidden opportunities that could boost our competitiveness in the current and the future foresighted environment Buheji (2020a).

Hidden opportunities usually depend on the conditions of competitiveness when a crisis erupts. For example, how we could deal with the coming recession as a result of such a crisis, including managing the socio-economic complications as a result of such a crisis.

Hidden opportunities, once discovered, can help close the ‘competitiveness gap’ and ensure better international and regional sustainable growth. This means the opportunities would come from the global ‘diverging socio-economic development’ and the ‘unbalanced growth models’.

Thus, the hidden opportunities might come from the collection of approaches that brings in chronic human issues like migration, rising non-resilience racial tensions, loss of acceptance of others,

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future foresight spillovers affect, fragile businesses with preventive measures, e-solutions, speed of innovation along with international communication possibilities.

In the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak, Korea was facing a huge crisis. At one point, it was the second-largest country in terms of numbers of confirmed cases. This was partly due to its geographic proximity to China and partly to a large-scale community infection. However, Korea managed to slow down the spread and is making its best efforts to prevent a second wave of infections. While doing so, Korea is also proactively driving initiatives aimed at turning this crisis into an opportunity. In the course of their fight with the virus, the Korean government and businesses developed a variety of innovative prevention measures (e.g., drive-through testing) and products (e.g., testing kits) that can be utilized all over the world. Many Korean manufacturers also took the chance to reconsider and restructure their global supply chains to make them more sustainable. Both the governmental and business sectors see clear growth opportunities in non-contact industries, including telecommunication, online education, and remote support solutions. Companies can enhance their reputation and contribute to alleviating the negative impacts of the global health crisis by implementing corporate social responsibility initiatives. Many Korean multinationals, for example, have embarked on providing support to secure the supply of medical devices and protecting employees in developing countries with weak medical infrastructure. In short, resilience, strategic agility, and entrepreneurship will continue to play a key role in capturing value from these opportunities while overcoming the crisis.

Opportunities to Human Development Due To COVID-19

New Perspective for Changing the Way We See Life Today

With the crisis of coronavirus breakout, we could discover many visible opportunities. One of the first opportunities is to think again about the concepts that are dominating our life today, such as the capitalist economy and its resources and how fragile they are. The largest global economies such as China and Italy are seen collapsing in front of coronavirus (Kim & Liu, 2012).

Therefore, coronavirus can represent an opportunity to review how we should live in harmony in this world and keep the communication model between us without extra unnecessary boundaries.

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The (COVID-19) crisis is a wake-up call for those who value the quality of life and those who value financial interests regardless of the consequences to global health or human beings.

These levels of values were seen clearly in some of the airlines' industry, which increased the humans' cross-infection risks, after knowing the dangers of such disease (The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine, 2016a).

Implementation of Public Health Education Programmes

It is imperative to implement public-health education programs and campaigns to increase awareness of mental health issues, and for self-regulatory mechanisms and professional treatments to be made more widely and readily accessible. Instead of laying off employees, companies could redeploy underutilized manpower and resources to better support frontline organizations engaged in mental and public health services. Such strategies allow companies to stay relevant and resilient while addressing important societal needs emerging from the crisis. Likewise, individuals and support groups can play a more proactive role in assisting those struggling with emotional and mental

Self Sufficient Synergetic Human Communities

The other visible opportunity (COVID-19) challenge brings is that it made us pay more attention to the importance of self-sufficiency and readiness or increased preparedness. This triggers more change in the work mechanisms and to find sustainable mechanisms that help to rearrange our internal life and the way it is constructed.

The synergy of humans was also clearer in this (COVID-19), which relief the tensions of many polarized areas despite the ongoing wars in many countries. Community solidarity that such deep, complex crisis would bring to the mind of the many the essence of being and living together in this world (Green, 2011).

Re-Alignment for Understanding of Our Livelihood

The Corona Virus has shifted our attention and focus from being a wealth-seeking creature to more of a creature that value the meaning and the value of the quality of life.

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While we were becoming isolated by choice and focused on the 'profit and loss' formula, we lost touch with the division of labor and its philosophy of innovation and wealth creation. This leads the curve of capitalism to sharply drop-down (World Bank (2014)).

The way we are dealing with a livelihood in a capital-based economy today is leading us to dump our liabilities on the youth and the future generation. 'Free-Market Economy' destroying the economic fabric of society.

As capitalism is based on the assumptions that a great share of the world's resources could be bought, i.e. lands and natural resources could be brought regardless of who might be deprived. Finally, in a capitalist economy, we have all the opportunity to make something of ourselves.

Opportunities to National Development Due To COVID-19

More Credibility and Transparency in Relevance to Common Global Issue

One of the benefits of the shocks of this crisis is that it pushed the bar further up for the demand for better credibility and transparency in issues relevant to the common globe. The reporting and declaration of (COVID-19) disease became not only a community right but gone further to be a human right.

The crisis would bring in more innovative developments in relevance to medical and healthcare requirements and services. But more important the world would also be more aware of the hidden enemy that we all need to fight together regardless of our differences and level of diversities.

Re-thinking the Business Models

The incidence of coronavirus gives us time to rethink the business models adopted in life. The importance of the goodwill value in the business model should be one of the lessons learned. Government, organizations, and communities could re-evaluate the ethical and transparency issues of different industries, i.e. doing and creating businesses from things that you don't own.

It is a great opportunity for people, organizations and communities, or countries to come out of the comfort zone.

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Here we can build new relations as we see the world after the corona challenge from a different perspective, due to the attitudes and behavioral changes that are caused by our previous assumption shock. The new changes in the ways we handle many routines in life give us opportunities to bring in new insights to life.

More attention to economic tools that lead to a better market should be mixed with better welfare and should guarantee the equilibrium balance with profits and costs Candeias and Morhard (2018).

The sharing economy helps to emphasize how the cooperative practices as an 'entrepreneurial opportunity' and helps in better "welfare promotion". The Corona Economy brings in Case Studies and references for both the undergraduate and the postgraduate schools of Business, Sociology, and Law Students for discussion on how Business Models are built based on Cooperation and even Collaboration (Green, 2011).

Realizing Requirements of a Healthy and a Profitable Community

The (COVID-19) crisis in Wuhan province in China in 2020 emphasized that we need to create more resilient communities. The difference between growth and development can be seen clearly in such communities. This is exactly also what differentiates the concepts of capitalist economy and resilience economy Buheji (2020a).

The Wuhan growth has shown that despite the accumulation of materialistic wealth, of high-rise buildings and global city services, it missed the practices of being healthy and appreciating the intrinsic power wealth. (COVID-19) the crisis showed how capitalism approaches adopted even by countries like China are causing self-destruction and created a form of individualism that uses domination techniques, like property rights, to address self-interest, with some public benefit. World Bank (2020).

The (COVID-19) crisis showed the following unbalanced and unhealthy relations between the individual vs public rights, the company rights vs public rights, and the country rights vs public rights. On the other hand, China has shown very healthy professional approaches at least in dealing with the crisis as it escalates. Without persistence and perseverance, China would not have the

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chance to survive without huge casualties and hence the rest of the world. (COVID-19) the crisis has shaken the greedy capital economy (i.e. doing and creating businesses from things that you don't own). Such sudden breakout tested the fragility of the attention economy we live in where a better market, better welfare could create equilibrium between profit and cost.

Import Substitution: Most of the consumable goods in the country are been imported from other countries including agriculture goods such as Wheat, Beer Barley, Dairy products, and others. As it stands most goods were banned from importation paving way for a local manufacturer to get more produce for local consumption.

Innovation

The pandemic is an opportunity to hit the reset button, with scientists and social scientists plays an important part role. In-country like China, they invest in drones, unpiloted vehicles, and other technologies to reduce human contact. In Africa, mobile phones are improving access to markets, prices, and weather data, as well as facilitating money transfers (Torero, 2020).

Building Resilient Communities

The breakout of the (COVID-19) crisis showed that we need to build resilient communities more than anything if we are going to survive the more sophisticated challenges. The business continuity of both the communities and its business needs to be tested again from different angles, including the interruption of the supply chain Buheji (2020a).

Selfishness vs Unity is a debate that is going to more debate in the post-coronavirus. i.e. Pushing coronavirus cases outside the country, or closing the borders against an alliance country are new practices that are going to affect future socio-political relations too.

No country can claim or think that it can have its 'inclusive border' anymore as the world is truly becoming one village. We need to keep building resilient communities that are holistic and interdisciplinary connected Buheji (2018).

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Non-resilient communities where wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few and where natural resources are exploited for short-term profits would have to change the way it deals with the under-privileges otherwise it would face riots.

Safety-Driven Entrepreneurial Opportunities after Coronavirus

Coronavirus disruption has proven that we are in a phase with new entrepreneurial projects. These entrepreneurial projects focus on unlocking the capacity to reach people electronically and provide for them value-added services that reduce their fear and enhance their probability of facing hazards safely Buheji (2019b).

Studies show that, in total, there would be more than 97 million Chinese travelings abroad by 2023, with a forecasted annual growth rate of more than 5.0% over the next ten-year, Oxford Economics (2015). Therefore, utilization of safety-driven value-added services could provide unique values to the consumers that mitigate the risks of sudden life threats.

Being More Alert for Food-Borne Diseases

The other livelihood side that this crisis brings is being more precise and careful about food-borne diseases. i.e. even being more particular about what to eat and how to eat any type of living creatures. The uncontrolled human appetite needs to be controlled if it creates a danger to himself and his/her fellow humans (Todd and Grieg (2015).

Studies confirmed that enteric viruses are major contributors to foodborne disease, and include adenovirus, astrovirus, rotavirus, sapovirus, hepatitis A and E viruses, and norovirus. Foodborne viruses are transmitted through contaminated food, but also in combination with person-to-person contact or through environmental contamination. This is exactly what is of high probability the main cause for the outbreak of the coronavirus in the Wuhan lives central animal market in China. This place became the hub of the epicenter for this virus that is now threatening the whole world.

Todd and Grieg (2015) mentioned that such viruses coming from food could survive well in the environment, are excreted in abundance in feces, and have a low infectious dose, all of which

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facilitate spread within a community. This again exactly what is now approximately confirmed about the relation of the bat's feces to this deadly disease.

Hence, there are more research opportunities in relevance to stopping the widespread of foodborne transmissions that come from cross-species infections that create more adaptation of viruses to humans. Even more precise research would be needed to see how to safely reduce the infections that would be coming from contacts between humans and animals (The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine, 2016b).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Coronavirus pandemic is a horrific war. It is challenging science and technology, governance, public administration of human beings and the world. It has posed restrictions on human mobility thereby exposing many people on the move to significant risks, impacting their human rights and well-being, impeding our collective response to the pandemic, and threatening the ability to ensure a recovery in which no-one is left behind. However, the current environment is also an opportunity for us to reimagine how migration can be governed more humanely and effectively, during and after this crisis.

This paper has presented some of the opportunities and challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak and how the disease might evolve. The goal is not to be definitive about the virus outbreak, but rather to provide information about a range of possible economic opportunities of the disease. Working remotely at home advises us that working in an office is not always as necessary as we have thought and practice. Therefore, the coronavirus pandemic provides us new opportunities to reshape our working style, lifestyle, and social networking style.

It is, therefore, recommended that individuals should utilize various opportunities such as innovation, Import substitution and skills acquisition opportunity brought about by the pandemic to develop themselves and the nation at large. Individuals are also enjoined to engage and invest more in research work that will enhance the growth and development of the global community.

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