

# COVID-19 Palliative Fund Donations: Altruism or Egoism. The Nigerian Experience

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## Abstract

The world experienced a global health crisis of corona virus (COVID-19) which originated in 2019 from Wuhan in China. Covid-19 or Corona Virus has greatly challenged the world in all ramifications. Beyond being a global health crisis, it greatly shook the economic foundation of the world and Nigeria was not an exception to this colossal damage. This global economic crisis has caused unimaginable hardship on the citizenry. The states were locked down, interstate movement restricted, businesses closed, people deserted the cities to stay indoors as a precautionary measure. Its ravaging effect has increased the level of hardship and poverty in Nigeria hence the urgent need for palliative measures to cushion the harsh effect of this pandemic on the citizenry. Many Nigerian philanthropists, billionaires and corporate bodies have generously donated funds to this effect to the Nigerian government which is propitious and patriotic. However, this paper argues that channeling all the donated funds to the Nigerian government is a misdirected one due to its antecedence of unaccountability, lack of transparency and corruption. In this connection, this paper examines to what extent can this good act be termed egoistic or altruistic? The paper adopts the method of critical textual analysis and it is purely argumentative.

**Keywords:** Altruism; Egoism; Covid-19; Palliatives Donations; Accountability.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since after February 27, 2020 when the index case was recorded in Nigeria, there have been donations from corporate bodies, Banks, International bodies, Nigerian billionaires and philanthropists to aid in combating the pandemic and alleviating the suffering and hardship occasioned by the lock down. This is a show of patriotism, magnanimity and good will which must be commended in all ramifications. Among the big donors were Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu, Modupe and Folorunsho, Alakija, Abdulsamad Rabi, Segun Agbaije, Herbert Wigwe, Oba Otedeko, Femi Otedola, Mike Adenuga, Jim Ovia, Ray Gupta, MTN Nigeria and other telecommunications, Commercial Banks (UBA, GTBank., etc) amongst others (Abara 2020). These billionaires, philanthropists and corporate

bodies donated in billions to assist the government and Nigerians to manage the challenging health crisis and salvage the hardship caused by the virus and consequent lock down. Such pecuniary move and commitment is laudable, impressive, show of kindness and benevolence to the country and its citizens. One can say, they have in no small measure given back to the society that contributed in what they are today. These monies donated by Nigerian billionaires, philanthropists and corporate bodies were channeled through the Federal government to assist in the fight against covid-19 in Nigeria (Umukoro et al., 2020).

While we commend this philanthropic gesture, it is high time we realized that our government and her leaders have failed its citizens in several ways. The people we elected to represent us have not truly

represented us rather it seems to be a game of egoism. It is in this direction that this work argues that channeling the full sum of these palliative monies to the government is a misdirected act taking cognizance of its antecedents. Our governments have a history of unaccountability and lacks transparency especially in terms of fund management. This is a truism that is glaring and evident in several sectors in Nigeria. Is it in management of funds meant for capital projects, in education, health, security mention it and you will discover the height of unaccountability of funds channeled in these sectors and the worst of it all is that sometimes there is nothing to show that money has been budgeted and spent on those areas. Being aware of this ugly trend and canker worm that is troubling our leaders and the government one begins to question the motive behind fully channeling these huge funds to the government- is it motivated by egoism or altruism? Nigerians are very intelligent and smart beings and when they act it is pertinent sometimes to consider and investigate the motive behind their acts which could be hidden from the uncritical mind. It is arguable that some of the donations are done just to get the government recognition, some in anticipation of long awaited bogus project and contracts, others in anticipation of government appointments and others want to show that they are still relevant in the Nigerian political circle. All these motivations are not bad in themselves but are not motivated by altruism and as such not morally commendable. Further it is arguable that these motivation can be termed egoism. Although this does not negate the laudable act of the donors nor the fact that some still donated selflessly and just for the common good but it becomes worrisome that knowing the kind of government and leaders we have experienced in Nigeria these palliatives donations may not be judiciously used or get to the most vulnerable targeted people in the society. This is the reason this paper argues that it is a misdirected act to channel the full sum of the fund totally to the Nigerian government. The view of this paper is that part of the money could be given to the government to assist in combating the spread of the virus (purchasing or production of test kits, medical equipment and personnel and other logistics) while the chunk sum directly spent on the targeted projects and vulnerable populace. This can be used to purchase face masks, food stuffs, provide portable water, hand sanitizers, and equip the health care centers in the rural and urban areas by the donors themselves, their delegates or through Charity and faith based organizations. If the

donors were altruistically motivated, they would not launch the full donations to the government but consider spending part of these monies on palliatives that will directly get to the targeted projects and population. In fact they should have followed their monies and ensure that the people gets what they have donated. There are reports from some corners that the palliatives were not felt by many vulnerable citizens of Nigeria and this is worrisome considering the amount of money donated and the extent of hardship Nigerians are passing through occasioned by the novel corona virus and its attendant lock down.

The problem of this paper is the perceived weak accountability and transparency of Nigerian government and her leaders especially in managing public funds which covid-19 palliative funds may not be an exception. This has resulted in increased level of corruption, huge waste of national fund and decay of economic infrastructure in the economy. The paper will strengthen its argument and stance of not supporting complete donation to the Nigerian government by reason of its history of corruption and conversion of public funds to private estate as seen in the case of alleged relooting of recovered funds by the suspended EFCC acting chairman, Ibrahim Magu.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### 2.1 Covid-19 Palliative Donations

A palliative is something done to reduce the effect of a particular undesirable condition without solving the root cause of the problem. It aims at reducing the harsh effect of a bad condition but does not bring a permanent solution to the problem. In medical field, palliative care is described as a treatment that relieves suffering without curing the actual illness. Its aim is to improve the quality of both the life of the patient and the family. Palliative care is concerned with the needs of the patient rather than the patient's prognosis. Palliatives has become a household name since the outbreak of the novel covid-19 virus especially the terms "palliative donations" and "palliative measures". They have become household terms in recent times. Covid-19 Palliative donations are cash or funds, relief materials donated by corporate bodies, international bodies, billionaires and philanthropists to aid contain covid-19 virus and cushion the ravaging effect of the pandemic on the poor and vulnerable persons in the society. The palliative donations could be in form of money, relief materials like food stuffs, medical equipment and personnel but the focus of this

paper is on the covid-19 cash donations to the government. These palliative donations (cash) are meant to support the government and the general populace in the fight against covid-19 pandemic.

## 2.2 Altruism and Egoism

Defining Altruism and egoism is a herculean task because these terms have been understood in radically different ways in philosophy, biological and social sciences. The focus of this paper is the philosophical standard conception of altruism and egoism. The proponents of these views agree that humans help others in various ways but their point of disagreement is on the reason d'être. The term altruism is derived from the Latin word "alter" meaning "other". August Comte the French Positivists coined the term to describe his ethical doctrine which he summarized thus "live for others". Altruism is a selfless concern for the good of others. It is the ethical theory that holds that people have the moral obligation to assist or work for the common good but devoid of self-interest (Ikegbu & Enyimba 2010; Ikegbu & Diana-Abasi 2017; Ikegbu & Bassey 2019). In this sense the action favours the other and the moral agent does it selflessly without an intention for personal gain but just for the intention to do well. In altruistic act the agent does not necessarily benefit from the act. In the context of this paper, altruism is seeking the good of the other, the common good selflessly without indirectly pursuing personal motives, needs or interests. Altruism is the bedrock of moral action and is in opposition to egoism.

Egoism is derived from the Latin word "ego" meaning "I" or "self". It is the ethical theory that all human actions both good and bad are self-oriented. It recognizes that man is selfish and self-seeking by nature in all his doings. It states that people carry out actions with the intention to gain, either directly or indirectly, immediately or in the future. Egoism holds that there is always a selfish intention/motive in human actions. Such motives could be the desire to be famous, wealthy, powerful, and other indirect hidden desires. It has been observed that certain actions conceived as altruistic are in reality a type of "enlightened self-interest". Ethical egoism encourages one to pursue or do certain good actions in as much as they advance ones self-interest.

## 2.3 Covid-19 Palliative Fund Donations in Nigeria

President Muhammed Buhari announced on April 13, 2020 the lockdown of Lagos, Ogun and FCT Abuja

which were the first hit of the virus. Taking a clue from the presidential lock down announcement other states initiated either partial or total lock down. With this lockdown, interstate movement automatically became restricted, workers were asked to down tools and stay at home, businesses shut down and people were advised to take safety measure to curb the spread of the virus. Those who earn their living on daily income were the worst hit because they need to go out to earn a living. People were directed to shut down all manners of businesses and stay indoors. This generated a lot of fears and panic among Nigerians as economic hardship began to set in. People could no longer provide their basic daily needs and many families now find it difficult to feed. This is felt more among the informal sector which comprises of about 80% of Nigerian workers which covers several workers like street traders, taxi and bus drivers, tradesmen, food vendors, hairdressers, hawkers and other artisans. Many of the people in this category depend on daily income. They do not have savings, pensions or insurance which give them basic social coverage. In fact we can describe them as people whose means of livelihood depends on their going out and coming in each day because if they do not go out they will definitely starve. This harsh condition occasioned by covid-19 and its economic hardship triggered many palliative aids called covid-19 palliative fund donations.

The private sector, Nigerian billionaires, philanthropists and corporate bodies have really shown impressive kindness in assisting the federal and state government in contributing to this palliative clarion call. They have shown benevolence and patriotism to the Nigerian government. According to Benson 2020 the top donors include Alhaji Aliko Dangote (N2billion), Tony Elumelu (N1billion), Modupe and Folorunsho (N1billion), Alakija (N1billion), Abdulsamad Rabiou (N1billion), Segun Agbaje (N1billion), Herbert Wigwe (N1billion), Oba Otedeko (N1billion), Femi Otedola (N1billion), Mike Adenuga (N1billion), Jim Ovia (N1billion), Raj Gupta (N1billion), MTN Nigeria (N1billion) amongst others. THIS DAY newspaper reported that United Bank for Africa (UBA) donated N2.5billion which is to be shared across the 36 states with Lagos getting more. Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank) in the same spirit donated N1 billion and built an isolation center. Multichioce donated 1.2 billion. Two chambers of the national Assembly showed patriotism by resolving to donate half of their March and April salary to the federal

government to support the fight against this global virus. All the telecommunications and commercial banks in Nigeria donated generously to fight the contagious disease and pandemic. It was reported that that the private sector in Nigeria has raised an estimated N27 billion as of June as palliative donation (Ishiekwene 2020).

### 3. THE PROBLEM WITH THE COVID-19 PALLIATIVE DONATION/FUND IN NIGERIA

Chinua Achebe 1984 in his work "The Problem with Nigeria" enumerated about eight problems with Nigeria and amongst them are the problem of leadership and corruption. He categorically stated that "there is nothing wrong with Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the willingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership" (p.1). Furthermore he laments that his "frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook, or else does not live in this country" (p.37). These two views amongst others raised by Chinua Achebe are the major problems mitigating the growth and development of Nigeria. The Nigerian leaders and their corrupt practices is the reason this paper argued that donating the full fund to the government is a misdirected one and like we said earlier this is due to its antecedence of bad leadership characterized by unaccountability and lack of transparency with public funds. To buttress the above position, Ikegbu contends that: "The ruler-ruled contract has evidently collapsed consequent upon the inability of the ruler to see his leadership position as that of a trust...the bond enshrined in the country's national pledge particularly the expressed wordings, to be faithful, loyal and honest...to defend her unity and uphold her honour and glory...were mere fury and of no evidential pragmatic consequence going by the leadership policies and attitudes of the leaders" (2015, p. 243). Corruption has eaten deep into Nigerian leaders and when it comes to issues of accountability our leaders seem to be very far from the ideal. According to Ariche (2018) "the culture of giving fit back, report and account has been eroded by corruption" (p.35). It cannot be overemphasized that Nigerian government lacks the culture of accountability and transparency in managing public funds and this Covid-19 palliative donation and fund would not be an exception if

appropriate checks are not put in place. Giving accurate and honest accountability has become a nightmare for our leaders. Many of them shy away from it and can do anything within their power to eliminate anyone who tries to inquire or investigate on how the funds entrusted to them were managed and spent. Accountability and transparency are the hallmark and corner stone of good governance and it strengthens trust between the leaders and the led.

The merits and integrity that goes with accountability and transparency can never be overemphasized for a cordial and peaceful relationship between the government and the citizens. Where they are lacking the sincerity of the government towards the governed is taken with a pinch of salt. Adejuwon (2012) corroborating this view remarked that "accountability foster good governance, ethical governance and are fundamentally needful for building public trust in leadership. Abused and neglected over time, the Nigerian public has gradually grown accustomed to not trusting its leadership any longer" (p.34). Writing on the dangers of lack of accountability and transparency Okpala (2012) reported that the diagnostic survey conducted in Nigeria in 2001 into federal government public procurement showed that "Nigeria lost several Hundred Billions of Naira over the last few decades due to flagrant abuse of procedure, lack of transparency and merit in the award of contracts in the public sector and accountability quandary" (p.16). Instances of unaccountability and lack of transparency in managing public funds among Nigerian leaders abound both at the federal and state levels.

There are plethora of cases of mismanagement, unaccountability and intransparency by Nigerian leaders' overtime that will be mentioned at this point to justify the claim of this paper. It is to be recalled that Babangida regime of 1985-1993 was full of corrupt and financial recklessness as contained in the Okigbo Panel Report of 1994. According to Ogbeidi (2012) "the 1994 Okigbo Panel Report on the Reorganization and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria indicted former military president, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, former Head of State General Sani Abacha and former Governor of central bank of Nigeria, the late Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed, for mismanaging about \$12.4 billion oil windfall between 1988 and 1994. A summary of the panel's report submitted to the federal government revealed that General Ibrahim Babangida's regime conspired with top officials of the central bank of Nigeria to squander the entire fortune

on unproductive or dubious projects" (p.13). However it is unfortunate that this document was hidden and never released by the federal government. It was kept secret because top government officials were involved. In 1979 "N2billion tax payers' money was mismanaged and unaccounted for through Green Revolution Programme" (Nna et al 2010, p.141). In 1979 also NNPC was alleged to have mismanaged N2.8billion meant for public services (Tijani and Williams 1981). Allegations of N400billion looted money was found in 19 UK banks in 2001 (Ayim and Akanwa 2002). In 2001 there was serious allegation that \$200 billion meter oil money was bluntly mismanaged between 1970 -1980 (Ayim and Akanwa 2002). Nna et al also reported that "over N 80billion pumped into DPRI was mismanaged and funds for MAMSER, PBN, CBP, BLP, FSP, and FEAP over N10b were totally mismanaged. Further PTF wasted over N135 billion through over invoicing, corruption and mismanagement". In 2015 "armsgate scandal involving the National Security Adviser (NSA) of about \$2.2billion was mismanaged" (Dasuki 2015). Ogunidipe 2016 reported that national security adviser to former President Goodluck Jonathan had "misappropriated funds of about \$2.1billion meant for the purchase of arms and equipment's in the country's fight against Boko Haram". Laccino 2015 estimated that "about \$150billion have either been stolen or mismanaged by previous administration as at 2016."

In the 1990s, a culture of impunity was not farfetched. Corruption and unaccountability was also endemic. It was reported that "throughout the eight years of President Olusegun Obasanjo he was fully in charge of the petroleum ministry where high level corrupt practices took place with impunity. The over \$400 million invested on the Turn-Around Maintenance (TAM) and repairs of the refineries failed to yield any positive result and the contractors awarded the contracts were never brought to book" (Adekeye et al 2003, p.30). Further, Adekeye et al reported that "...during the first four years of the Obasanjo administration, federal ministers allegedly stole more than N23billion from the public coffers. An audit report released by Vincent Azie acting Auditor General of the federation showed that the amount represented financial frauds ranging from embezzlement, payment for jobs not done, over invoicing, double-debiting, inflation of contracts figures to release money without the consent of the approving authority in ten major ministries (2003, p.31). It was also on record that instead of calling the ministers to order or handing over the matter to ICPC

Vincent Azie was hurriedly retired by presidency for procedural offences. What a country!. Further Muhammed (2013, p.127) narrated the case of former president's daughter, Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello, a senator of the federal Republic involved in unaccountability and intransparency. According to him "in December 2007, Iyabo Obasanjo Bello was involved in a contract scandal amounting to N3.5billion involving her and an Australian firm. She was again involved in financial scandal of mismanagement of funds in the ministry of health. It was this scandal that led to the resignation of Mrs. Adenike Grainage and her Deputy Architect Gabriel Aduku. Iyabo was later arraigned in court for over N300million unspent budget scam. According to Ademola (2011, p.312) "Mallam Nuhu Ribadu the former EFCC chairman lamented that over \$400billion that had been looted from the common wealth by the leaders is six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding western Europe after the second world war."

Nigeria has suffered economically through the loss of hundreds of billions as a result of unaccountability and lack of transparency with public funds. There are cases of unaccounted Petroleum Trust Fund of N25billion case in 2011, Police Pension fraud case of N17billion in 2017, and \$6.8 billion dollars fuel subsidy case of 2012. The missing \$20billion from sale of Nigerian crude oil between 2011 and 2012 and the \$2.8 billion dollar missing oil money in 1977 (Edom 2018). The humanitarian sector is also not free from this nefarious activities. Page exposed the ugly happenings in the humanitarian sector. According to his experience "Graft, fraud and extortion within the humanitarian sector continue to exacerbate one of the world's largest humanitarian crisis: the displacement of over 2million people by the Boko haram conflict. Assuming the role of middlemen in the relief effort, officials from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and its state counterpart agencies (SEMAs) frequently obstruct international aid efforts, embezzle relief funds and waylay supplies meant for internally displaced persons. Led by political cronies these agencies have become conduits for diverting millions of dollars in emergency humanitarian spending into private hands (p.10). Ibekwe (2017) narrated how "several billions of dollars have been stolen from Nigeria by corrupt politicians and other officials since the country's independence in 1960. Switzerland alone has returned over \$723million to the country in 10 years."

Reports has it that "former Governor of Taraba state, Jolly Nyame (1999-2007) was charged for illegal

withdrawal of N285 million public fund by Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) between march 2003 and 2007" (Musari and Agbana 2012,p.4). Former Governor of Delta James Ibori (1999-2007) embezzled public funds belonging to Delta state of about 250 million pounds. The London court in 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012 arraigned and convicted him for money laundering and embezzlement of public funds and was sentenced to 13 years jail term. Ero (2012, p.24) reported of another former governor of Bayelsa State Timipre Sylva (2017-2012) who was also arraigned for embezzlement of public funds to the tune of N6.5billion. The chairman of Economic and Financial Crime Commission reported that "over \$3.6billion (1.3 trillion naira) was stolen from public coffers between 2011 and 2015, a sum that could have secured the future of the next generation (cited in Papchristou 2019, p.1). Ibrahim Magu commenting on this ugly trend lamented that "just one third of the stolen funds could have been used to construct over 500 kilometers of roads, build some 200 schools, educate about 4000 children, build 20000 units of two bedroom houses across Nigeria and even more". Furthermore decrying this overwhelming economic loss he stated that "the cost of this grand theft, therefore is that these roads, schools and houses will never be built and these children will never have access to quality education because a few rapacious individuals had cornered for themselves what would have helped secure the lives of the future generation."

Former military ruler General Sani Abacha did not blink an eye in looting and embezzling Nigeria's resources. Chike (2020) has it that till date Nigeria has recovered over \$311 million of the alleged stolen funds by the country's former military ruler, General Sani Abacha from the United States and Jersey." Furthermore Okwumbu (2020) reports that "the United States embassy has announced the discovery of another \$319 million looted by former military Head of State, Sani Abacha, which is being held in the United Kingdom am France." This is a clear evidence of unaccountability and lack of transparency among Nigeria leaders and an indication that Nigerians can no longer have full trust and confidence in them whenever public fund is concerned. He was the former head of State from 1993-1998. Though he is no more the amount of money he stole is unimaginable and has never been seen in the history of governance. Still over 22years after his death successive government have been talking about his loot. In fact he looted Nigerian fund with reckless abandon. During President

Goodluck administration the minister of petroleum Diezani Alison Madueke looted over \$20bn which was generated through Nigeria's crude oil. Kolade (2015) decried that "not only did this jezebel massacred our oil industry, she child-raped and lied to Nigerians that their sufferings will end by 2014 during the manipulated oil subsidy removal." According to Afolabi (2016) "fifty five people who were government ministers, state governors, public officials, bankers and business men stole 1.34 trillion naira (\$6.8billion) from Nigeria's public purse over a seven year period, the information minister said on Monday." Recently the Acting Chairman of EFCC Magu has been dragged before the presidential panel for diversion of public funds. According to PUNCH Newspaper, 24 allegations were levelled against Magu who has been the acting chairman EFCC for almost five years. Most of the allegations, it was learnt, emanated from a report by the Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malalmi(SAN),and a DSS report which was submitted to the senate in 2016 and 2017.The EFCC boss was accused of living above his means, fraternizing with corrupt persons, diversion of recovered funds and many others. He was accused of insubordination, discrepancies in the figures of funds recovered by the EFCC, disposing of assets especially building seized from corrupt politicians and others, without approval or knowledge of the AGF's office, which is the supervisory ministry of the EFCC"(Jide Ojo 2020).Recently NDDC commission was unable to account for about N40 billion in 2019 budget. Monies meant for the development of Niger Delta States and for payment of scholarship were found in an individual account.

Accountability and transparency are very essential factors for the development of any country and vital for ideal governance. Ninalowo (2003) has it that accountability implies that "government functionaries should be prepared to be answerable for their action at all times to members of the public and be able to justify their actions at the level of moral and ethical standard."(p.5) For Agba et al "accountability demands that the public should know when money came into government treasury and how the money was used" (2008, p.187). Accountability and transparency in managing public funds are indispensable and fundamental to gain and maintain people's trust. Nigeria has been bedeviled with poor leadership in terms of accountability and transparency and this is the major obstacle to its development. Our leaders need to rise up to a new way of life and

embrace this virtue if the people must trust them once again. Babawale (2007) holds that “one of the challenges of development in Nigeria is that of bad leadership and politics of belly that abound at all levels of governance in the country. Nigerian leaders lack good quality leadership. To move forward as a nation we need a new breed of leaders that are sensitive, patriotic and accountable and have demonstrable vision” (p.16). There is no doubt that lack of accountability and transparency in government has contributed increasing wide discrepancies in income distribution in the society which has resulted in underdevelopment and high rate of poverty in the country. In a country where accountability and transparency is dreaded and treated with levity unethical practices will surely abound in such a country and the implication is that funds will be poorly managed and embezzled by public officers and political leaders. Ukaogo (2015) therefore opines that “the betrayal manifesting in lack of openness and accountability remain a frightening legacy of the Nigerian leadership since 1960 to date (p.8). The level of unaccountability and lack of transparency seems to be increasing from one administration to another. These cases question the sincerity and transparency of Nigerian leaders in the management and proper use of the Covid-19 palliative donations. What makes us think that it will not be business as usual? Ishiekwe (2020) further asked that “in Nigeria for example, what is to stop crooks who diverted 200 tons of dates worth N20 million donated to Nigeria by Saudi Arabia for internally displaced persons from swindling billions of coronavirus palliatives?” All these facts about unaccountability and lack of transparency in managing public funds is what has kept Nigeria the way it is today and has remained in economic and infrastructural underdevelopment. It has made Nigeria to remain underdeveloped.

It is heartbreaking that after many years of independence Nigeria is still struggling with problems of poverty at all levels-bad and dilapidated roads, inadequate and poor infrastructures, lack of quality education and health care system, problem of accountability, transparency to mention but a few. Even after years of military intervention and advent of democracy, the case has never been different. There are reports from Transparency International that Nigeria top high in corrupt practices. Ogudiya (2010) succinctly put it that “Nigeria has consistently ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world” (p.207). So many policies and good plans in Nigeria

have failed due to lack of accountability and transparency. Amalu et al (2018) corroborating this view opine that “corruption and the absence of good governance have led to unfavorable policies and poor policy implementation” (p.75). For Ariche (2018) “Transparency is a factor some Nigerians dread, often a transparent man is seen as a man who does not know what is in vogue, he is often described as a foolish man. Transparency and accountability are seen as old fashioned” (p.39).

Majority of the Nigerian populace have lost confidence in Nigerian government. This is because for Adejuwan “Nigeria is showing elements of weak governments, institutional and high profile unethical feature as well as increasing inability of government to deliver on key deliverables such as poverty eradication, employment generation, economic development, security and general improvement in the lives of the people” (p.41). Therefore managing Covid-19 palliative donation fund will not be any different if adequate precautions and measure are not put in place to checkmate mismanagement and lack of transparency. It is in this connection that “A consortium of anti-corruption organizations under the Upright for Nigeria, Stand Against Corruption campaign has called on the federal and state governments to immediately publish the names of all beneficiaries of government palliatives to ensure transparency in the distribution of the corona virus(COVID-19) palliatives” Nigerians have lost trust and confidence on the government and this to a great extent explains why some Nigerians still see Covid-19 in Nigeria as a scam. This is a big problem because we can no longer go to bed and close our eyes when public funds are concerned. Lack of accountability, transparency and problem of corruption in Nigeria threaten the proper and sincere expenditure of the Covid-19 palliative fund in Nigeria. However, the Consortium warned that “the information imbalance between governments and citizens on the CCT started in 2018 and other palliatives specifically donated for COVID-19 may lead to corruption.” It is this reason that this paper is worried with donating the full money to the Nigerian government. Nigerian governments need help in this trying period of the novel Corona virus and that explains why the palliative donations from billionaires and philanthropists in Nigerian is a laudable one. The worry is not that it is wrong to donate to our country in times like this but the puzzle is that the government at all levels have shown lack of accountability and transparency with previous funds

therefore can no longer be trusted and that is why the paper conceives channeling the full sum to the government as a misdirected one.

The view of this paper is that while we commend Nigerian billionaires, philanthropists, top business individuals and corporate bodies that donated generously to Nigeria in the fight against covid-19 we are compelled to question whether this rescue assistance is purely altruistic or egoistic. And in this connection this paper argues that with these cases and figures of previous lack of accountability and transparency exhibited by the government it becomes worrisome why these group of Nigerians will donate the full palliative monies to the government. This is the reason this paper argued that with the knowledge of all these antecedence of unaccountability and lack of transparency one can no longer say that the donors were purely altruistically motivated. If they were purely altruistically motivated they will not just donate but must work out ways of making sure that the donations reach the targeted vulnerable Nigerians. This paper in its recommendations maintains that it will be more altruistic than egoistic if the donors have donated half of the money to the government to take care of issues like providing testing kits, awareness campaign, research for covid-19 vaccines and drugs, fund NCDC, Improve health care and other logistics and then the other half will be used in providing palliative measures directly to the targeted poor and vulnerable Nigerians who may never get this if left entirely in the hands of the Nigerian government. That is why the paper earlier recommended that donors should follow their money. Already reports are coming from many Nigerians lamenting that the so called palliative measures were either too poor or did not get to them at all. Imagine a family of three getting one tin of tomatoe, few cups of rice and beans and a pack of indomie. This will definitely not feed them for even a meal. According to Okon (2020) "It is lamentation and bitter wailing in Lagos and parts of the country as Nigerians complain that the stimulus packages announced by the federal and Lagos state governments to cushion the effects of the lockdown imposed on some states and the federal capital Territory (FCT) to contain the further spread of the corona virus pandemic have not been sincerely deployed." It is also disheartening that these covid-19 palliatives measures are being politicised. Okon corroborating this view said that "the citizens also alleged that the process of distribution of whatever that may have been made available for that purpose has been politicized."

Furthermore he reported that "those that have sighted a semblance of the palliative packages in the area, decried the distribution process, they complained that a greater portion of the relief materials was reserved for party members when the goods arrived the local government." These complaints are some of the challenges the people face in the hand of the government and its leaders. These challenges can be minimized or totally avoided when these palliative materials are sent directly by the donors to the targeted Nigerian vulnerable citizens or handed over to charity and faith based organizations whose sole objective is to ensure that the poor are not neglected. The donors can, if they find it difficult to get to the target vulnerable population collaborate with charity organizations whose sole and primary objective is to work and support the poor and vulnerable in the society. Such charity organizations like "Caritas" of the Catholic Church will ensure that people benefit from the palliative donations to avoid bringing politics into it. Therefore, Nigerian political leaders should learn to demonstrate high ethical standard through accountability, transparency, trustworthiness, consistent in character and commitment to duty. Reawakening the culture of accountability and transparency lost for years becomes imperative if the trusting relationship needed between the government and the Nigerian populace must be actualized. Accountability and transparency are important corner stone in good governance

It is this issue of systemic corruption, unaccountability and lack of transparency in managing public funds by political leaders in Nigeria and the devastating effects it had on the country in general that Obasanjo led administration established the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to handle headlong the cases of embezzlement and mismanagement of public funds. However this institutions have been making significant efforts but they need to step up their game because the level of unaccountability and looting of public funds by Nigeria leaders at all levels is quite alarming. However ICPC and EFCC have been accused of being government's tools for fighting political oppositions. Corroborating this Nmah, (2017, p.121) maintains that "...with the turnout of events, some Nigerians alleged that ICPC and EFCC suddenly had become government's tools for vendetta to political oppositions, non-loyalists and perceived enemies. This development derailed the hitherto merits credited to



the anti-corruption bodies..." In this direction Ugoani (2017) clearly states that "Mr. Corruption seems to have the upper hand from the presidential villa, through the 36 state houses, FCT headquarters and the 774 local government headquarters throughout Nigeria" (p.512). Further he argued that "issues of corruption and mismanagement needs reporting than ever before because of the damage it has done to Nigeria" (p.505). There is urgent and imminent need for the government to keep accurate account of the Covid-19 palliative donation fund to ensure transparency. Corroborating this view, the Consortium further demands that "all government must disclose to the citizens the value of money received for the Covid-19 donations and publish the list of beneficiaries of the palliative measures, establish a toll-free line for citizens to call and report any act of corruption regarding the palliative distribution. Government should ensure the law is applied where any official is found to be corrupt on the management of the Covid-19 palliative funds." This is because public fund and resources are mismanaged by Nigerian leaders with blatant impunity and this has caused us untold hardship and makes us worried on the sincerity of managing the covid-19 cash palliative donations.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Our leaders have lost their conscience, no shame or compassion for the citizens. They do not consider leading by good example something worthwhile. The conversion of the public common wealth into private estate has further increased the level of poverty in the land. From the government leadership class down to agencies of government, the appetite for corrupt practices germinates and grows with speed. Lack of accountability and transparency, embezzlement of public funds and all sorts of corruption have become pervasive in Nigeria that it has turned public offices and political leaders into sudden billionaires. This prevalence of lack of accountability and transparency undermines economic development in Nigeria. Like Ariche clearly puts it "the development of any country rests on transparency and accountability" (p.35). Nigerian government can no longer be trusted and it is on this basis that this paper emphasized for a change of mindset by the government and her leaders. Cases of unaccountability and lack of transparency are reported almost on daily basis against our political leaders and those heading public offices who were entrusted with public funds. Indeed going by the plethora of cases of official corruption in the country,

entrusting the full palliative funds in the hands of the government and its agencies is like pouring water into a leaking bucket or water in a basket. Public funds are mismanaged, embezzled and put to private use while Nigerians are allowed to their fate. The Covid-19 palliative donation fund will not be an exception considering the antecedence of our governments. It is therefore not out of place to say that channeling the full Covid-19 palliative donation fund to the Nigerian government is a misdirected one because of its antecedence of lack of accountability and transparency. To mitigate this it is recommended that appropriate checks and measures should be put in place to monitor how the covid-19 donation fund were spent. The appropriate bodies must ensure that anyone no matter how highly placed involved in mismanagement of this fund should be made to face the full weight of the rule.

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