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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

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### Rethinking Social Order: Racism within and After Covid-19 Pandemic

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### **Abstract**

The year 2020 was welcomed by the novel Corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic that has ravaged countries with high cases of fatalities, locked down economies and social activities as well as concomitant racist actions resurge within the peak of the pandemic. Racism has been a misdemeanour that social activists have confronted over time. What remains unclear is the effect(s) that will come about due to the resurgence of racism amidst Covid-19 with regard to human coexistence. Adopting a survey approach, this study purposively explored social media platforms: facebook, instagram, twitter, and whatsapp charts, to follow and download news posts and reaction on covid-19 and racism acts between March and May 2020. Applying the critical theory of racism, the study identified cultural/racial, institutional and individual forms of racism as thriving luxuriantly amidst the covid-19 pandemic. Both occurrences are found to be divisive, cause separation, and seclusion, which in turn breed nepotism, intolerance and segregation. The implication of racism and covid-19 with their attendant consequence is that human life and coexistence is under threat as all attendant effects are antithetical to human coexistence. The call is not just for a cure to quickly be found to stem the tide of covid-19 but more so that deliberate measures to put forth to stem all forms of racism as a panacea for human coexistence to be maintained and sustained.

**Keywords:** Corona virus, human coexistence, racial discourse, pandemic.

#### Introduction

**Racism** is the belief held by some people that other groups of humans possess different behavioural traits that corresponds to their physical appearance and can be divided based on the superiority of one race over another. It is also referred to as prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity. Other forms of racism are based on social perceptions of biological differences between

peoples such as male, female and or bisexual identities. These views take the form of social actions, practices or beliefs, or political systems in which different races are ranked inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits. abilities. or qualities. Political system is supported by apartheid expresses prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices or laws; racist ideology may include associated social aspects such as nativism, xenophobia, otherness,



segregation, hierarchical ranking and supremacism.

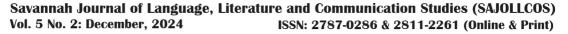
While the concepts of race and ethnicity are considered to be separate in contemporary social science, the two concepts have a long history of equivalence in popular usage and older social science literature. "Ethnicity" is often used in a sense close to one traditionally attributed to "race": the division of human groups based on qualities assumed to be essential or innate to the group (e.g. shared ancestry or shared behaviour). and Therefore. racial racism discrimination are often used to describe discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, independent of whether these differences are described as racial.

Racism is a relatively modern concept that came about in the European age of imperialism and the subsequent growth of capitalism, especially during the Atlantic slave trade of which it was a major driving force. It was also a major force behind racial segregation especially in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries and in South Africa under apartheid; these acts of racism are well documented and constitutes a reference point in studies and discourses about racism. Racism has also played a role in genocides such as the Holocaust and the Hutu / Tutsi genocide; it Rwanda also was responsible for the colonial projects that led to the European colonization of the Americas. Africa and Asia.

Racism is thus a global hierarchy of superiority and

inferiority among humans that has politically. culturally and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by "capitalist/patriarchal westerncentric/Christian-centric and modern/colonial world-system" (Grosfoguel, 2011). This conception of racism places some people to be above the line of humans and such a group is recognized socially as more human and thus, enjoy access to rights: (human rights, civil rights, women rights and/or labour rights), resources. and material recognition to their subjectivities, epistemologies identities, spiritualities. The people below the line of the human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated (Fanon 1967). In the latter case, the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities epistemology are denied.

This notion of racism allows for the conception of diverse forms of racism that evade the reductionism of many existing definitions that focus especially to colour based racism as the only form of racism. This is because depending on the different colonial histories in diverse regions of the world. hierarchy the of superiority/inferiority can be constructed through diverse racial markers of ethnicity. language. culture colour. and/or religion. Although since colonial times colour racism has been the dominant marker of racism in most parts of the world, it is thus not the only or exclusive form of racist marker (Grosfoguel, 2016).





Often. confuse the we particular/concrete social marker of racism in one region of the world with what is taken to be as the exclusive form or universal definition of racism. This has created an enormous amount of conceptual and theoretical problems. If we collapse the particular social form/marker that racism adopts in particular regions or countries of the world, (for example, colour racism) to make it equivalent to the universal definition of racism, then we lose sight of the diverse racist markers that are not necessarily the same in other regions of the world. The problem with taking a particular racist marker as the definition of racism, leads us to adopt the false conclusion that racism does not exist in other parts of the world, that is, if the form of marking racism in one particular region or country does not coincide with the "common sense" form of marking it in one's own country.

### Corona virus (Covid-19)

novel corona designated as Covid-2019, emerged in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019, Corona viruses are from a large family of viruses that infect birds and mammals. including humans, according to world health organisation (WHO). These viruses have been responsible for several outbreaks around the including the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) pandemic of 2002-2003 and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) outbreak in South Korea in 2015. Most recently, a novel virus (SARS-CoV-2, known as COVID-19) triggered an

outbreak sparking in China. international concern. While some corona viruses have caused devastating epidemics, others cause mild to moderate respiratory infections, like the common cold; but the current strand – Covid-19 appears deadlier and its spread very rapid.

By the end of January 2020, 1000 cases had been diagnosed in nine countries: China, Thailand, Japan, South Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Nepal, and the United States with fatalities occurring, mainly in patients with serious underlying illness. In Nigeria, the first index case was recorded in February and by April fatalities were also recorded. Although many details of the emergence of this virus — such as its origin and its ability to spread among humans — remain sketchy, an increasing number of cases appear to have resulted from human-to-human transmission. Common symptoms of the disease include: 1. Fever, 2. Breathlessness, 3. Cough, and 4. it may take 2-14 days for a person to notice symptoms after infection.

Following its emergence. China responded quickly bv World informing the Health Organization (WHO) of the outbreak and sharing sequence information with the international community after discovery of the causative agent. The WHO responded rapidly by coordinating diagnostics development; issuing guidance on patient monitoring, specimen collection, and treatment; providing up-to-date information on the outbreak. Its spread is through and sneezing covering the mouth which disperse



droplets into the air. Touching or shaking hands with a person who has the virus can pass the virus between individuals. Making contact with a surface or object that has the virus and then touching the nose, eyes, or mouth. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) suggest that several groups of people have the highest risk of developing complications due to COVID-19. These groups include: young children, people aged 65 years or older, and women who are pregnant.

To prevent transmission. people are advised to stay at home and rest while symptoms are active. They should also avoid close contact with other people. Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or coughing handkerchief while sneezing can also help prevent transmission. It is important to dispose of any tissues after use and maintain hygiene around the home. recommendations prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with showing symptoms respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing. Thus, advocating for social/physical distancing people amongst other.

#### Motivation for the study

The need for this study is premised on the fact that, racism as an age-long phenomenon is yet trending amidst the present Corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic with its attendant effects. Both racism and covid-19 do not promote communal

but living amongst humans separation. isolation and social/physical distancing. There is thus the need to determine the correlation. effect(s) and consequences of both racism and Covid-19. during and after the pandemic due to their divisive, segregationist separatist, individualistic tendencies on people order coexistence. in determine the place of social relations and communal living amongst people within the and post covid-19 era.

### Study aim and objectives

This study aims to investigate the ravaging nature of the corona virus pandemic alongside the rampaging nature of racism, which humanity is concurrently besieged with. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify different strands of racism and manifestation
- ii. establish the consciousness and awakening of people to the ills of racism in the information age. determine the nature of racial discourses in the age of the Covid-19 pandemic
- iii. ascertain the trends and effects that covid-19 and racism have on human life and coexistence

### Overview of related literature Historical overview

The notion of racism came about sometime in the 1902 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a description of U.S. policy toward Native Americans (Howard, 2016). For the first half of the 20th century, the term was used interchangeably



with "racialism." Within the social sciences the use of the term is relatively new (Barot & Bird, 2001) as it began with Ruth Benedict's *Race and Racism* (Benedict, 1945) and in Edmund Soper's *Racism: A World Issue* (Hankins, 1947). In both books, "racism" describes incidences in the world that are characterized by feelings of ill will that arouse active hostility between groups based on visible physical differences.

**Apart** from the term "prejudice," there is no other word that has gained such popular usage to describe social conflict as the word racism since the second half of the 20th century. Two developments popularized the term. First, it was its use for propaganda against anti-Semitism and the racial eugenics that targeted Jews in Germany in the 1930s and during the Second World (Blaut, 1992). The second popularization came from the U.S. civil rights activists in the 1960s. **Activists** the political saw independence of former colonies in Africa and Asia as empty prizes that did not change the economic dependence of newly independent states on their former colonial masters (Nkrumah, 1965). Domestic U.S. civil rights victories did not lessen economic inequality between Black and White Americans. Equally, civil rights movement had the shortcoming of having no specific strategy to effectively combat the covert and indirect ways that racial hierarchy was maintained in the North and Midwest of the US. This shortcoming was the basis of the "black power" critique of the civil rights movement (Levy, 1998).

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference highlighted this shortcoming in their unsuccessful attempt to address racial economic inequality in 1966 (Ralph, 1993). A better understanding was needed of what they were up against and how to change it.

### **Racism: Emerging Concept**

Members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) needed to make sense of what they were struggling against and how best to attack it (Forman, 1972). They needed a conceptual model. First, it was clear to them that the racial hierarchy they were up against dated back to slavery, was intergenerational, and become part of the culture. Second, racial discrimination was institutionalized in different ways in the South and in the North. There was the overt and highly elaborate Jim Crow system in the South; then there was a covert and indirect system in the North. Third, they realized that individual acts of racial feeling of ill will arousing active hostility against African Americans were social in origin and did not originate solely from individuals actors. Obviously. individual Whites learnt their hostility to the blacks as part of their socialization. What had to be worked out was how these three key realities were connected and operated and could be changed (Carmichael & Thelwell, 2003).

The first attempt at connecting two of the three realities of institutional racism and personal racial feeling of ill will that arouses active hostility to others was Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and



Charles Hamilton's Black Power (1967). The U.S Iim Crow order of Southern small-town communities and expected social relations between races created a near perfect model of racial oppression. Carmichael and Hamilton first referred to oppressive alignment as "personally institutionally racist." missing piece of history and culture was viewed as part of the institutional barrier. The person to first describe all three pieces of the puzzle as distinct levels (cultural-historic, institutional, and individual) as one concept of racism was James Jones' (1972) Prejudice and Racism; which was further elaborated on in his essay. "The Concept of Racism and Its Changing Reality" (Jones, 1981).

Overtime, studies on racism and have interrogated abound various aspects relating to the various dimensions of racism, identification of sites where racism manifests such media. education, as: health. employment, and gender among various other aspects. Amongst these studies are: UNESCO 2003, Araújo Rodríguez and Maeso 2012. Kulaszewicz 2015, Grosfoguel 2016, Salter et.al 2018, and Stanley et.al. 2019. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized a workshop in Paris in 2003 that focused on **Dimensions** of Racism to commemorate the end of the United Nations Third Decade in Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in nations. It brought together education training experts, academics, United Nations human rights experts individuals from governmental organizations (NGOs)

working on racism and related issues to develop educational materials for eliminating racial prejudice and fostering tolerance. The papers presented analysed racism and racial discrimination in specific contexts, including in education, the workplace, health, migration, contemporary forms of slavery, the media, the criminal justice system, and the experience of double discrimination based on gender and race.

Araújo and Maeso (2012) examine Portuguese history textbooks and submit that textbooks' narratives constitute a power-evasive discourse on history, which naturalises core processes such as colonialism, slavery and racism. Showing the limits of an approach that merely proposes the compensation (mis)representations, they argue for the need to unbind the debate on Eurocentrism, from a perspective that fails to problematize the 'very idea of Europe'. Their analysis of Portuguese history textbooks focuses on three core narrative devices: a) chronopolitics of representation; b) the paradigm of the (democratic) national State; c) the definitive bond between concepts and historical processes. Kulaszewicz (2015) looks at racism in the context of the media. The study focused on how media bias contributes to racism in explicit ways. It sums that in the beginning stages of film and media, African Americans have struggled to represent their own beliefs. stories. opinions people identities because White controlled the entertainment industry and chose what images of Black people to portray. The word "black"



becomes a racial microaggression because it is excessively used to condition the mind of people to associate the word with negative connotation. Black men are often criminalized and represented as violent is the media. As contrast, in the event of a White officer as the shooter of a Black man, the officer's actions are justified or supported regardless of the criminality of the officers own actions.

Grosfoguel (2016) discusses racism in relation to state of being and non-being. Racism is discussed as dehumanization related materiality of domination used by the world-system in the area of nonbeing (violence and dispossession); as opposed to the materiality of domination in the zone of being (regulation and emancipation). The approach shows how the intersection of oppressions work differently for oppressed people in the zone of being as opposed to oppressed people in the zone of non-being. While in the zone of being oppressions mitigated by racial privilege, in the zone of non-being oppressions are aggravated by racial oppression. Salter et.al (2018), look at racism in the structure of everyday worlds cultural-psychological from a perspective. They view racism not only "in the head" but also "in the world." They sum that racism is defined as individual prejudice, but apart from that racism is also systemic, existing in the advantages disadvantages imprinted cultural artifacts. ideological discourse, and institutional realities that work together with individual biases. They highlight examples of historically derived ideas and cultural patterns that maintain present-day racial inequalities and identified three key insights on the psychology of racism derived from utilizing a cultural-psychology framework. First, that racism is embedded in our worlds. evervdav Second. that through preferences and our selections. we maintain racial contexts in everyday action. Third, we inhabit cultural worlds that, in turn, promote racial ways of seeing, being in, and acting in the world.

Stanley et.al (2019) examined the impact of racism on the future health of adults. The study found that racial discrimination is a key social determinant of health and driver of racial/ethnic health inequities. That people exposed to racism have poorer health outcomes (particularly for mental health), alongside reduced access to health care and poorer patient experiences. These and all other studies have revealed so much on the nature and operation of racism. We have seen the definitions and platforms as well as platforms that racism operates. What is however unclear is the correlation between racism and corona virus and the effect(s) that emanate as a result of such coexistence; hence, the reason for this study to examine such coexistence and its aftermath.

### Methods and theoretical approaches

Data for this study are purposively sourced from social media platforms: 'Whatsapp,' 'Facebook,' 'Instagram,' and 'Twit' posts and chats that address issues of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as



racism between the months of March and June 2020. The discourses on these issues were purposively chosen, screenshot and subjected to a critical discourse analysis to determine their correlation and effect(s) on human coexistence.

### Theory of Racism

In the 1960s social activists' notion of racism was interaction between cultural, institutional, and individual levels. Racism was seen as a stool which stays upright and serves its purpose because it has three legs. Each leg is necessary and works in conjunction with the others. All three legs together are necessary and sufficient for the stool to stay upright; no one or two of the three legs can hold the stool up by themselves. The premises of this theory of racism follow:

- 1. Cultural racism (the presumption of White supremacy and Black inferiority) precedes and preconditions institutional expressions of racism. Without racist cultural scripts. institutional expressions of racism would not occur.
- 2. Cultural racism provides the blueprint and architecture for the organization of institutional racism, its objectives (White dominance), and criteria for success (White privilege). Cultural

- racism is passed on intergenerationally and is part of the content of White racial identity.
- 3. Institutional racism is both essential for the of White perpetuation of White privilege and dominance. Institutional racism keeps racism going within and across generations. It in turn reinforces cultural racism.
- 4. Institutional racism precedes and preconditions individual expressions of racism. Cultural racism is also a necessary precondition to individual racism, but its influence is mediated through institutional racism.
- 5. Cultural racism regulates the intensity and frequency of individual acts of racism by the extent to which institutional racism has been deployed.

Hypothetically, if institutional racism is increasingly deployed, acts of individual racism will increase. If institutional racism is poorly deployed, individual acts will have little reinforcement. The following illustration (Figure 1) shows the links and interdependencies between the levels of racism.



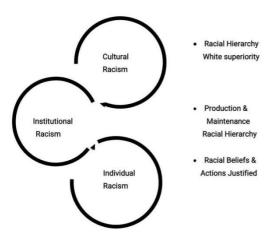


Fig. 1: The activist theory of racism

### Data presentation and analysis

Here, the study examines aspects of racism and its manifestations within the corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic and the implications of such co-occurrence to human coexistence, within and after the pandemic.

### Strands of racism and manifestation amidst Covid-19

A survey carried out on social media platforms: facebook, whatsapp – group charts, instagram and twitter handles, establish the existence of different strands of racism within this period of the Covid-19 pandemic, which are marked by lots of outcry by

people. The acts of racism identified include:



Fig. 1



Fig. 1

Cultural / Racial racism

This type of racism involves the cultivation and display of negative attitudes and beliefs that lead to the use of social power that puts at a disadvantage one race and offer unique advantage to another race. Cultural racism is clearly typified in the 'White supremacy and Black inferiority' mentality; this form of racism precedes and preconditions all other forms/expressions of racism. This aspect of racism manifestly



features amongst societies and was recently witnessed in the US with the killing of George Floyd, a black

American by a White police officer, an act that drew wide condemnation and reactions around the world.





Fig. 3

The figures above are clear depictions of the manifestations of cultural/racial racism. where inequalities based on race are displayed. Fig. 1 shows the disparity between the washbasins for white and coloured folks in both size and quality to indicate their inequality. Fig. 2 is a demonstration by a coloured race against discrimination towards them by reason of their race; while fig., 3 is the inhuman treatment inflicted on George Floyd, a black American by a White police officer that led to his death.

Cultural Racism occurs when one group exerts the power to define cultural values for the society. Such racism involves not only a preference for the culture, heritage, and values of one's own group (ethnocentrism), but also the imposition of this culture on other groups. This term cultural racism has been used historically, and to date with increasing frequency to

draw attention to racism from physical characteristics such as social customs. manners and behavior, religious, and moral beliefs and practices, language, aesthetic values, and leisure activities. For this reason, cultural racism involves being prejudice against individuals because race/culture. of their The consequences of cultural racism are that minorities are encouraged to turn their back on their own culture and to become absorbed by the majority culture (Halstead, 1988).

### Institutional racism

This involves the differences that come about as effects of policies. practices, and laws on members of certain racial groups and on the rest group members. Institutional racism develops from intentional racism, motivations to provide resources to one's own group and attempts to limit other group's rights and privileges; these are barked with systematic race-based policies, which typically are associated with ideologies



developed to justify them. These institutional racist acts are manifested within this covid-19 period through lop-sided the appointments into positions 14 Sill off CH Politics

Buhari: Fresh concerns on national unity over alleged lopsided appointments



Fig. 4 Fig. 5

The figures above are evidence of people crying foul against the dispropotional manner in which appointments into key positions in govenrment are made in the Mohammadu Buhari led administration in Nigeria. The government has been accussed of favouring only a section of the country in its appointment. This lends credence to the notion that some sects in the country have rulership as their birthright and have rights and priviledges accruing to them outside the scope of merit as against what obtains in other parts of the country. This descrimation on the basis of race Medical racism

Here, we consider the apparent discrimination to health information and services for individuals, communities and peoples

government in the Nigerian context as decried by others as shown in the following:



that is found in institutional settings like the government manifested and is fully in manifestation within the covid-19 pandemic as shown in the figures above. It also affirms the position made earliar that cultural racism provides the blueprint and architecture for the organization of institutional racism, its objectives being to establish the superiority / dominance of one race over another or others. Cultural racism is thus seen to be passed on inter-generationally. It is found in other institutional establishments like medical and economic sectors.

of different social strata, ethnic origins and barriers towards accessing health care, health promotion and disease prevention services. Some of the identified areas



found in the survey amidst the corona virus pandemic include the following:





Fig. 6 Fig.7

Differences in health conditions and access to health facilities across social strata groups, in terms of both morbidity and mortality, have been repeatedly documented in favour of the rich over the poor. In this light, figures 6 and 7 above, indicate that, the corona virus pandemic came with its attendant effect of total lockdown for months, with businesses and work places generally, closed down. Lots of people depend on their daily labour to survive as such the lockdown spelt doom. Poverty became the bane that ravaging the people; desperately needed food, not to talk of having access to internet services for the social media, or electricity to power their gadgets to access information about their health: let incur the bills test themselves for their corona virus status as posited in figure 6. This leaves the people at the mercies of being killed by the virus or by poverty/hunger, while the rich are getting access to testing treatment service for the covid-19 and also the wherewithal to access private medical service when in need. constitutes medical racism between the rich and the poor and affirms the position in figure 7 that indeed, corona virus has further made it clear that inequality is a public health issue, as the rich always have access to health care services to the neglect of the poor. Before the pandemic the rich could fly their sick to other countries for Medicare and left medical services in their countries unattended to: an now that the virus has prevented travels the ill-equipped hospitals are now the exclusive preserves of the rich for their Medicare, with the poor having no access at-all. How can someone struggling to feed afford nothing less

than fifty thousand naira just for a test even if the kits are available?

Consequently, it is not right to speak of racism and races on grounds of ancestry or genetics alone. The differences between individuals and people are rooted also in culture. Race is thus a social, political and cultural concept. Ethnicity as concept refers to the shared myths, ancestors, religion, territory, clothing, language and memories of a collective past that regulate a human community's relations. Hence. discriminations in institutions: government, health care and economy here are seen as constituting acts of racism.

#### **Economic racism**

Racial discrimination pervades every aspect of a society in which it is found. It is also found in levels of economic accomplishment: that is, income, wages, prices paid, and credit extended amongst other areas. Economic or social disparity is form racism of discrimination caused by reasons that affects people in this period of covid-19 through attitudes and actions on members of the general population's wellbeing with regards to access to resources. Some aspects identified in our survey include:

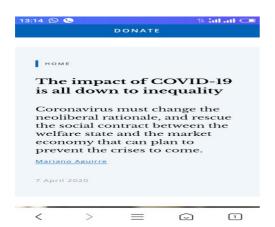




Fig. 8 Fig. 9

Majority of person, who are the lower rank of societal stratification, lack access to Medicare in this time of Covid-19; whereas nations in most developed climes have provided massive testing and treatment schemes to care for their citizens as well as other palliative measures, other countries lack the wherewithal to cater for the Medicare of their citizens in this period of pandemic. The little resources available are thus used to service the bourgeois to an almost total exclusion of the low-class.

This attitude thus constitutes



Fig. 6



Fig. 8

economic racism as national resources are used to service a handful instead of the majority.

### Individual/Gender racism

Institutional racism precedes and preconditions individual expressions of racism. Cultural racism is also a necessary precondition to individual racism, as its influence is mediated through institutional and cultural racisms. Individual racism is characterised by individual acts of domination and discrimination over other individuals. It is a subset of institutional and cultural racism on the basis that the institutional and cultural aspects lay the template that validate the manifestation individual racist acts through norms and value placements as found below:



Fig. 9



Individual racism is closely related to racial prejudices, where one or certain individual(s) are unduly given preference over others. For instance, the preference of male children over the girl child is an undue preference that can be categorized as racist. This has given warrant to the indecent ways to which women are treated especially in most African cultures. The incidences of increased domestic violence and rape have been reported to be heightened within the lockdown occasioned by the covid-19 pandemic with women and children mostly on the receiving end. Figures 6 – 9 reflect some reactions as to how the spike of domestic violence erupted and how the society conditions the womenfolk to take such an anomaly as a norm (– fig 9) even in the spate of covid-19. Such prejudice is conceptualized as an attitude of individual racism and it is expressed both overtly and covertly.

### Religious bigotry/intolerance and communal crisis as racism

These refer to discriminations and prejudices among people/groups that are based on religious and communal grounds. Our survey identified that these were also in occurrence alongside the covid-19 pandemic as exemplified in the following examples:



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

Apart from diversity in tribes and cultures, Nigeria like many other nations is made up of adherents of Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion amongst other sects. The various tribes and adherents of especially Muslim and Christian religions are often engaged





in conflicts, leading to lose of lives and property. The religious scenario in Nigeria has assumed a violent dimension, especially in the Northern part of the nation and the area around the 'Middle-Belt' of Nigeria. These religious crises are more frequent in the North and they sometimes lead to reprisal attacks in Eastern part of Nigeria.

Racism it is established is the belief by a group of people that they possess different behavioral traits that correspond to physical appearance that are based on the superiority of one race over another; it also means prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race, ethnicity or religion. Variants of racism are thus based in social perceptions of differences biological between peoples that take the form of social

action, practices or beliefs, or political systems and allegiance in which different groups/races are ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. This thus qualifies religious bigotry and communal crisis as aspects of racism.

## Establishing the consciousness and awakening of people to the ills of racism

This section ascertains the level of awareness and reactions to acts of racism. The study establishes that in this information age, news does travel fast as well as its disseminations. With the spate of racist acts that have been identified in the forgoing, our survey equally identified that various display and reactions as captured demonstrate levels of awareness and responses to racism.



Fig. 13



Fig. 15

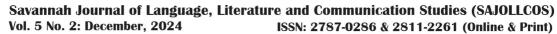


Fig, 14



Fig. 16







Following the death of George Floyd in the U.S as he gasped for breath under the knee of a white police officer as seen in Fig, 13, a picture that went viral, across the globe with the help of the new media: tweets, facebook, instagram and whatsapp chats amongst other means, public reactions and responds came across the world condemning the act and racism in all its forms and ramifications. The final words of George Floyd - "Please, I can't breathe" - have become a narrative construct with which the global black community has revalidated their continued struggle against systemic racism. The chant for no racism, Black Lives Matter (BLM) has transverse the global community with agitation for the elimination of racism. This suggests that inadvertently there is a global awakening that is calling for the world to get ready for change against all forms of racism. The media is awash with news of previous and current acts of racism. and demonstrations against the acts as captured in the figures above.

The fight against racism must however be fought with a deliberate and conscious effort for success to be guaranteed. This is because the notion of "I Can't Breathe" must be perceived first as 'The Enemies Are Within' and not just without. The untimely death of George Floyd in the custody of white police officers in the United States of America and the accompanying global protests by the BLM need to be further re-evaluated. Just as the struggle for freedom from the continuing strangulation of black people by white supremacists traits and other forms of racism is still far

from being over as long as black people have underlying disdain for intellectual properties, inventions, institutions. theories. artefacts. ideologies, philosophies by black people. Black politicians who embark medical tourism. on rejecting hospitals manned by black people are kneeling on the necks of black people. Black politicians who underfund education and health in the nation's budget are kneeling on the necks of black people. Black children who cannot speak their native languages are kneeling on the necks of black people's indigenous languages. Black academics that out-rightly reject theories and concepts propounded by black academics are kneeling on the necks of black people. Black football administrators who reject black coaches for their national teams, giving preference to white coaches are kneeling on the necks of black people. As long as we fail to realise that charity begins at home, black people will continue to scream: "Please, we can't breathe". Thus, the reawakening and consciousness that is been created must first be viewed from within and not solely as a force without that has to be pinned down.

## Trends and effects of covid-19 and racism on human life and coexistence

This section looks at racial acts and covid-19 as parallel global occurrences, and determines how these concurrently impact on human life and coexistence. The Philosophy of coexistence is all about humans knowing the humane way of living. Once human beings understand





natural order of things and existential reality, they automatically understand humane conduct. As an outcome, people have fulfilling and happy interactions with each other as they share knowledge and experience blissful lives in a harmonious society. A harmonious societal order is established at the social level and individual participation is self

inspired to work for the collective good of all. Coexistence is the underlying law of nature; it is the basis of existential reality that assumes that "We live so we can learn to coexist", and "we coexist so we can learn to live". It is the highest principle that encompasses every other element of humanity.



Fig. 17 – the philosophy of coexistence

Existence is thus the state and expression of harmonious coexistence, while coexistence means nothing exists in isolation and all the elements support each other's existence. All and elements components of existence are part of the greater system and harmoniously enrich one another. Once the Philosophy of Coexistence is embraced and understood, people start sharing instead of hoarding and the state of Utopia is said to exist everywhere, (Anand, 2019). The philosophy of coexistence has been the craze of mankind, who have been pushing to harmonize and unify the world into one global village.

However, with the advent of the novel corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic and its rapid infectious mode and the lack of a definite cure, there have been increased calls for physical and or social distancing with calls for isolation, separation, and quarantine as measure to avoid spreading the virus. These acts in themselves are inimical to human coexistence. Hence, this study finds that, what obtained as the gains of the philosophy of coexistence have been dramatically eroded. This is because covid-19 has brought about confusion and disheartening situations that are marked by division, pain and loss; characteristics that are equally brought about by racism in all its ramifications.

The implication of the effects of covid-19 and racism co-occurring together is that human beings are increasingly pushed to lives of isolation, individualism, and separation. For covid-19, it is to safeguard people from contracting or spreading the virus, while for racism it is to promote nepotism, bigotry and group-affinity. In both instances, the



philosophy of coexistence is completely violated. The result of this inadvertently is that human need and desire to cohere is gradually being done away with; and the consequence of such a situation is that human beings are being put on the path of divisiveness, which in turn breeds acrimony, pain and losses. With this scenario playing itself, the hope for human coexistence is at stake and deliberate measures need to be adopted to salvage the already dicey situation that is threatening the soul of humanity.

### Conclusion

Overall, this study identifies there are many negative stereotypes associated with various demographic categories which have become dominant and enduring and have shaped racist attitudes and dispositions in people across cultures and nationalities. This has resulted in agitations and a reawakening in issues concerning combating intolerance negative stereotyping, stigmatization. discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion and beliefs. These racist acts are found to be concomitant with the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are strongly conditioned by inequality between social stratifications in societies. countries and COVID-19 is observed to be worsening these inequalities.

The implication of racism and Covid-19 is increased inequality will have long-term consequences that reduces the impact of economic growth on poverty reduction, meaning that eventual economic

recovery may have less impact on the poor and other marginalized groups, potentially leaving them worse off and facing greater inequality than before. If inequalities are addressed. eventual economic recovery will have less impact. The study sums that deliberate measures should not end at just finding a remedy/cure to the Corona virus alone but equally measures to stem racism in all its ramifications should be intensified in order to bring about equitable and egalitarian societies where human coexistence thrives.

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