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# Revitalizing the Nigerian Textile Industries for Mitigating the Effect of COVID-19 and Achieving Sustainable Economic Development

WOLE LATEEF AKINTAYO
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

**Abstract.** The paper examines the role the textile industry can play in achieving the diversification of the Nigerian economy as a way of reducing the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on the economy. The economy had been largely dependent on revenue from crude oil to the neglect of agriculture, manufacturing, services/trade and other emerging sectors. COVID 19 pandemic has made the Nigerian economy vulnerable to vagaries of price crash in the world oil market and this vulnerability has given rise to many challenges such as massive job loss, the inability of many states and the federal government paying workers salary, inability to embark on capital expenditure and putting everything on hold in many states, with basic infrastructure decaying. The paper examines the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on Nigeria as well as the importance of textiles to human sustenance, and the socio-economic development of Nigeria; the effect of government long years of negligence and adverse policies on the textile industry. The paper concludes that the revitalization of the textile industry would be a way to diversify the economy for mitigating the effect of COVID-19 in the post-pandemic era and achieving sustainable development. The paper recommends that government should provide new intervention fund to the textile industry; government should improve the obsolete technology in the textile industry and provide necessary infrastructural facilities especially power supply to local textile manufacturing companies.

**Keywords:** COVID 19 pandemic, mitigating, Nigeria, Textile Industry, Revitalizing

## 1. Introduction

Pandemics are for the most part, disease outbreaks that become widespread as a result of the spread of human to-human infection. The word "pandemic" according to Navarro, Kohl, Cetron and Markel, (2016) refers to a widespread epidemic of contagious disease throughout the whole of a country or one or more continents at the same time. Harris (2009) defines a pandemic as an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. Also WHO, (2011a) describes a pandemic as an epidemic that occur over a very wide area and usually affecting a large proportion of the population and distributed or occurring widely throughout a region, country, continent or globally among others. For WHO to pronounce a level six pandemic alert, there has to be sustained transmission in at least two regions at the same time.

There are some key basic characteristics of a pandemic, including wide geographic extension, disease movement, novelty, severity, high attack rates and explosiveness, minimal population immunity, infectiousness and contagiousness, which help us to understand the concept better, if we examine similarities and differences among them. The pandemic related crises have been associated with enormous negative impacts on health, economy, political, social disruption and security of national and global communities. According to WHO (2011b); Rewar, Mirdha, & Rewar (2015); and Gesinde, (2020), there have been a number of significant pandemics recorded in human history, including smallpox, cholera, plague, dengue, AIDS, influenza, Hong Kong Flu, H7N9, Ebola, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

In December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases from an unknown virus surfaced in Wuhan, China. Based on initial laboratory findings, the disease named Coronavirus disease 2019 (abbreviated as

COVID-19), was described as a highly infectious disease that is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. The COVID-19 outbreak has since spread to about 209 countries and territories in every continent and as of 10th April 2020, it has accounted for *over* 400,000 confirmed cases with over 18,000 deaths *(*Sheikh, 2020). The first death of the pandemic was recorded in China on 9 January, 2020 while the first death outside China was confirmed on 13 January in Thailand and Nigeria confirm its first case of COVID-19 pandemic on 27 February 2020 (NCDC, 2020; & Ifijeh, 2020).

**1.1 COVID-19 Pandemic and its Effects on Business and Economy in Nigeria**

A pandemic impacts both supply and demand and its effect threatens all aspects of economic, political, and social fabric of mankind (Drake, Chalabi & Coker, 2012). Specifically, COVID-19 pandemic, as it is presently, has created all manner of economic shocks which can be organized and be put into three bins. According to Garrett (2008) and Odunsi (2020) the first shock is the purely medical shock which the COVID-19 pandemic met the Nigeria Government with. Our health sector condition was exposed and found not to develop enough to be able to handle the pandemic. Nigeria's health system before the pandemic was nearly collapsed. In most of the cities, health systems are completely dilapidated as they have not received adequate attention, and some government officials have contributed to health system collapse by encouraging medical tourism.

The second shock is the economic impacts of containment measures of the pandemic. Efforts to flatten the epi curve reduce economic activity. Government initially downplayed the disease until sustained community transmission takes hold and then they imposed severe social distancing policies to contain the pandemic. The containment policies flatten the medical curve of the pandemic, but steepen the recession curve. Containment measures started with a lockdown of the country. The lockdown involves closing down of schools, churches, mosques, theatres, markets, stores, airports just to mention but a few but this sprang up uproar among the citizens as a result of hunger, armed robbery as well as other negative outcomes attributed to the lockdown. The concern is that a large proportion of the population, especially in the commercial hub of the country, lives on daily income with no savings to act as a financial buffer during the lockdown. The palliative measures promised by the government does not have any positive effect because only a small proportion of the population attested to receiving any support.

The third shock is the expectation which made the COVID-19 crisis to have consumers and firms all around the world and Nigeria, in particular, putting off spending; thereby making them to be in a wait-and-see mode has there is limitations in spending and declining consumptions. The Effects are felt disproportionately across the economy amidst sectors specifically with government, hospitality and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) most adversely affected by suffering huge losses. According to Bouey (2020), everyone is someone else’s employee, customer, lender, and others. If one of these buyer-seller links is ruptured by the disease or containment policies, the outcome will be a cascading chain of disruptions.

A typical example here is the adverse effect of the pandemic on the sporting world and the spiraling effect on the owners of the ubiquitous soccer leagues viewing centres across Nigerian cities, towns and even villages where sport fans pay to watch these matches. With the suspension of the various leagues, it has been zero financial income for this sector. Another example is the aviation industry which witnessed an unprecedented suspension of its activities and led to loss of millions of jobs around the world. The private sector have their own share of the effect of the pandemic in that many of them have started laying off their staff because they could not meet up with payment of salaries since they were not in operation. The Nigeria government, undoubtedly had its fair share because the pandemic has worsened an already precarious situation of the economy in that, there was crash in crude oil prices in the world oil market which had negatively affect the country’s revenue and foreign exchange earnings resulting in debt challenges, massive job loss, inability of many states and Federal Government to pay workers salary. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning expressed the effect of the pandemic on Nigeria economy when she admitted that the COVID-19 pandemic, is driving Nigerian economy to experience recession if not into recession already, as it might contract the economy by -8.9% (Royal, 2020, Ugbodaga, 2020).

It is already apparent from the emergence of the pandemic that there are implications on the economy, factories are shutting down or cutting down production and output, while staff work from home to limit physical contact. Unfortunately, the nation has grossly underachieved in setting aside sufficient buffers for rainy days. Government now needs to focus on mitigating the consequences of this pandemic. In addressing these daunting economic challenges, government should deploy policies that will prevent this pandemic era to lead into “recession” by avoiding long-lasting damage to our economy and adopt diversification priorities to alternative sectors such as agriculture, textiles, solid minerals, manufacturing and services sectors. Thus, there is the need for government to revitalize the textile industry as an alternative to the oil revenue component.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

#### 2.1.1 The Concept of Economic Diversification

The main conceptual issue in this work is economic diversification. By economic diversification, we mean the strategy of making the economy dependent on a wide range of products and sectors instead of relying on just one product. It also means integrating the economy into different regions of the global economy so that a robust economic growth and sustainable development can be generated (Organization for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD), 2011; Uzonwanne, 2015).

With regard to Nigeria, economic diversification is the process of avoiding over dependence on crude oil to the neglect of agriculture, manufacturing, textile industry, services/trade and the other emerging sectors and revenue earners. Available statistics indicate that since the 1970s when the civil war ended and Nigeria experienced oil boom, there has been over-reliance on crude oil as the main revenue earner up to the tone of close to 100% (Osaghae, 2012). Before the dominance of oil, Nigeria used to export agricultural products namely: oil palm produce, cocoa, groundnut, cotton and a host of others. The solid minerals exported included tin ore, iron, cobalt, coal, columbite etc. With reliance on oil, all these non-oil exports were neglected and Nigeria became a mono-cultural economy depending solely on oil prices in the world market for her revenue and economic progress. The essence of diversification is to make Nigeria go back to a non-oil economy based on the quadruple of agriculture, manufacturing, trade/services, textile, and other emerging sectors like entertainment and telecommunication.

#### 2.1.2 The Concept of Sustainable Development

Development is sustainable when a country is committed to a national policy on environment that ensures proper management of natural resources in a manner which meets the needs of the present and future generations (Emaviwe, 2016). Development, per-se, is the process of enhancing the economic, socio-cultural, political, legal and technological living standards of a people through the exploitation of natural resources (Meier, 2018). It becomes sustainable when it meets the needs of the people not only now but also for the future generations. Cavagnaro, and Curiel (2012) define sustainable development as the development model that allows us to meet present needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The essential objective of this development model is to raise the quality of life by long-term maximisation of the productive potential of ecosystems, through the appropriate technologies for this purpose (Gwilt, and Rissanen, 2011). Sustainable development is not only a new concept, but also a new paradigm, and this requires us to look at things differently. It is a notion of the world deeply different from the one that dominates our current thinking and includes satisfying basic human needs such as justice, freedom and dignity (Ehrenfeld, 2019). It is the vision through which we can build a way of being (European Commission Enterprise and Industry (2012). Moreover, Suzuki and Dressel (2012) define sustainability, at the individual level, as the assessment of all human behaviour with the vision of reformulating those that contradict the development of a sustainable future.

#### 2.2.3 Empirical Studies

Many studies have found that there are many channels through which an infectious disease outbreak influences the economy. The experience from the previous disease outbreaks provides valuable information on how to think about the implications of COVID-19. Previous pandemics such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and the 1918 ‘Spanish Flu’ may provide some indication to the economic effects of COVID-19, however, the evidence suggests that the current pandemic is very different from those previously experienced. The spread of COVID-19 has seen economies struck by a simultaneous demand and supply shock, with there being no correlation between economic impact and mortality rates (Fernandes, 2020).

Rassy and Smith (2013) examine the effect of the H1N1 influenza pandemic (‘Swine Flu’) on the Mexican tourist and pork industries during spring 2009. Several nations imposed travel restrictions to Mexico, which led to reduced demand and cancellations. Many airlines cut their flight frequencies to Mexico City or suspended flights for at least a month. At the time, tourism, Mexico's largest service sector, was recovering from the global financial crisis of 2008, but the H1N1 pandemic brought the industry to a standstill. Reports that the H1N1 virus originated from swine led consumers to cut down on pork consumption. Domestic demand plummeted, and countries around the world banned imports of Mexican pork.

Brahmbhatt (2005) examines the social and economic impact of the Avian flu in East Asia – a human pandemic similar to the 1918 influenza pandemic. Findings indicate direct economic costs on the poultry sector due to losses from the disease and control measures put in place. Poultry recorded mean financial losses to farmers and impacted the poultry supply chain and the sector as a whole with a 15 per cent economic loss in poultry output in Vietnam amounting to approximately 0.1 per cent of GDP. Findings by Lin, McCloud, Bigman and Viswanath (2016) on the potential impact of an influenza pandemic suggest a concurrent decline in global aggregate demand and international trade leading. The magnitude of this loss is estimated at $1.5 to $2 trillion (2005 dollar value), representing some 5 per cent fall in global GDP over one year.

McKibbin and Sidorenko (2006) model a range of scenarios (mild, moderate, severe and ultra) using the USA to explore the implications of a pandemic influenza outbreak on the global economy. The four scenarios mimicked are: the 1968-69 influenza 'Hong Kong flu' (mild), the 1957 influenza 'Asian flu' (moderate), and the 1918-19 influenza 'Spanish flu' (severe) which was without the anomalously high elderly survival rates (ultra). Findings from the study indicate different degrees of impact on the global economy with a mild scenario estimated to lead to 1.4 million mortality and a global loss of approximately $U330 billion (2006-dollar value) in economic output. This amounts to a loss of 0.8 per cent of GDP. Keogh-Brown and Smith (2008) analyse the macro-economic impact of the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak. Of the approximately 10,000 infected population, a mortality of 10 per cent is reported. Findings from the study indicate that the largest economic impact of SARS is related to overall GDP and investment with the most affected sectors being hotels, restaurants and tourism.

Smith, Keogh-Brown and Barnett (2011) also estimate the economic impact of pandemic influenza in the UK using scenario modeling. A single country Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) open-economy model is developed to estimate fatality rates for three influenza scenarios (mild, moderate and severe) alongside the cost estimates of the impact and associated policies. The model consists of twelve industry sectors (agriculture, food, materials manufacturing, wood and paper manufacturing, chemicals manufacturing, utilities and construction, retail hotels and restaurants, transport and telecommunications, banking and investment, other business services and other services) ) with the finance sector aggregated together with the other sectors and industries. Findings indicate that at a macro-level, the impact of the influenza pandemic itself is lower than the effect of the mitigation policies put in place to combat the disease. The combined effect of school closure and preventive absenteeism led to a cost impact of 1.1 per cent (£14.7 billion), 1.3 per cent (£16.3 billion) and 1.4 per cent (£18.5 billion) respectively for the three modeled scenarios. Cost estimates indicate GDP reduction of 0.3 per cent (£3.5 billion), 0.4 per cent (£5 billion) and 0.6 per cent (£7.4 billion) for the mild, moderate and severe scenarios respectively (Obansa, Okoroafor, Aluko and Millicent, 2013).

## 3. The Nigeria Textile Industry

Textile is a general term which refers to any material made of interlacing of fibers such as fabric, cloth, carpet, and belt among others. Generally, it is a flexible woven material consisting of a network of natural or artificial fibers which are often referred to as thread or yarn. The importance of textiles to human sustenance, and the socio-cultural and economic development of a nation cannot be over emphasized. Apart from food and shelter, textile (clothing) has been identified as the most important in the hierarchy of man's need.

In Nigeria, the production of textiles had flourished at both cottage and industrial levels. Studies by Asaju (2004), Oloyede (2014) and Makinde (2015) show that the industry had been a major employer of labour (about 60% of the labour force) in the manufacturing sector and contributed immensely to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country, it is unfortunate, however, that the current economic downturn in Nigeria has developed adversarial forces clamping the proper functioning of the textile industry as a resourceful economic contributor. It becomes germane at this point to briefly trace the history of the development of both the traditional cottage textiles and industrial textiles overtime.

### 3.1 Traditional Cottage Textiles

Cottage textile production in Nigerian refers to the traditional artisanship of the rural and urban people who produce various textile related items with locally available raw materials and skills inherited from past generations. Most of the textile products produced in the cottage textile industry is handcrafted and the raw materials locally sourced. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2007) describes handcrafting as a part of economic activity characterized by certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and in a competitive market.

Nigerian traditional textiles can be classified as woven, non-woven, dyed or patterned which are decorated and designed structurally at the surface. These include; “Aso Oke” (Yoruba), “Akwete” (Igbo), “Okene” (Ebira), “Ashiasha” (Tiv), and “Adire” (Yoruba) among others. Basically, these textiles are structurally decorated and produced on both vertical and horizontal looms that are exclusively handled by women and men weavers in the society. These fabrics have age long qualities such as high durability, unique textures and traditional designs. They are traditionally used on special occasions such as burial, wedding, naming, house warming and chieftaincy installation ceremonies among others. The surface decorated ones like “Adire” are produced by the process of dyeing, printing and direct application of other elements of finishing unto the surface of the locally woven fabric. These surface decorated fabrics appear in a variety of complimentary, cool, warm, harmonious and contrasting colours with designs that are mainly from traditional sources (Aguiyi, Ukaoha, Onyegbulam, and Nwankwo, 2011).

**3.2 Industrial Textiles**

Industrial textiles refer to textiles produced through the use of automated electronic machines which usually come in a variety of colours, designs, and quality. This became possible due to a number of factors. Traditionally, Nigeria is noted for the production of cotton, silk and other fibers, which are primary materials for the textile industries. However, the situation has changed today; Nigeria now relies on imported raw materials and foreign technology to make the industry function. According to Aremu, (2015) the first textile mill in Nigeria was established in 1956 and between 1960 and 1988; the country has witnessed a rapid growth of the industry as a result of her rich stable economy arising from her oil-wealth (petroleum/oil boom).

Andrae, and Björn (2009) state that, the oil boom era stalemated the steady growth and promising future of Nigeria political economy as it resulted in the neglect of other aspects of the economy such as agriculture (cocoa, groundnut, palm); textiles, art and crafts among others in pre and post independent Nigeria. These other sectors of the economy were gradually undermined through inadequate funding. The unpleasant scenario, over the decades, has resulted in an economy that is oil-based, thereby making other sectors of Nigeria’s economy largely unsustainable; hence, the country remains a developing economy. The current state of Nigerian textile industries is worrisome because; most textile industries in the country today had already folded up or dying by the day.

**3.3 The State of Nigerian Textile Industry Today**

A survey of technological gaps in the textile industries in Nigeria revealed that less than 12 mills (industry), representing 61% of the total capacity spin only cotton while 25% of the existing mills are integrated mills (supply reference). It has also been observed by Muhammad, Mukhtar and Lola (2017) that most of the industries operate on low spinning capacity and they are generally lagging technologically without any hope for improvements in the weaving mills. Also, labour productivity in spinning operations is not high because of low capacity utilization and inadequate provision for on-the-job training. Low productivity level also limits export capacities. Notably, with substantially liberated economic policies that Nigeria offers to avoid quota restrictions under the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA), foreign entrepreneurs are induced, mostly from Asian countries, to establish export-oriented plants in the country.

The long years of negligence and adverse policies have led to the under-utilization of these resources, despite abundant human and material resources in the country. These resources according to Aremu (2015) have not been effectively utilized in order to yield maximum economic benefits to aid national development. This has been confirmed to be one of the primary causes of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria and a clear index of underdevelopment. In essence, the Textile Industry has been confirmed to be the most affected in Nigeria today. The money made from oil boom provided a lot of money into the economy which increased the purchasing power of the government and made them to develop a cultic taste and hedonistic tendency for comfort as an expression of wealth and class. It suddenly became a burden for the government to plan and work towards the development of other sectors of Nigeria’s economy such as agriculture and the textile industry; while it became easy to promote an oil-based economy which later jeopardized the economic viability of the country by neglecting and eventually crippling other sectors of the economy (Oloyede, 2014). Consequently, a country that cannot provide gainful and sustainable employment for her teeming population like Nigeria stands the risk of perpetual economic instability and dependency on established economies of the world.

## 4. Contributions of Textile Industry to Economic Development in Nigeria

In-spite of the daunting challenges pose by the emergence of COVID-19, Nigeria can still take off and diversify the economy once there is a will and transparent leadership. Revitalizing the traditional textile cottage industry can take the shine away from oil. Textile industry has the potential to make very glaring impact on the economy of Nigeria at these trying times of COVID 9 pandemic to bring back the economy to normal. The following are some of the possible contributions of the textile industry to Nigeria:

### 4.1 The Textile Industry Improves Means of Generating Funds to the Economy

The textile and clothing industry would contribute to the Nigerian economy in a distinctive manner. If strategically revamped and re-positioned, Nigeria will witnessed unparalleled growth in this sector, as it would be a source for the largest exporting industry in Nigeria. The problem of textile industry in Nigeria is not the market; the market is huge. Once the problem of power is largely solved, the textile industry would attain a high profile in terms of foreign exchange earnings, exports, industrialization and contribution to GDP within a short span of time. The textile industry, with its woven, knitted, tie-dye and batik fabric sub-components, would be a pre-dominantly export oriented sector, with 95 per cent of the woven and 90 per cent of the knitted fabrics being exported to foreign markets.

### 4.2 Employment Generation

The textile industry would not only play a major role in the manufacturing sector, but also in Nigeria's economy as a whole. This industry has remained a major generator of employment because of its labour intensive nature. In April 2008, the textile and clothing industry accounted for 14,373 jobs compared to 30,000 in 2004. This means that since August 2004, the industry has seen a loss of more than 15,000 jobs, due to factory shutdown. This trend continued as the total number of jobs dropped further to 11,493 in December 2010. Revitalization of the textile industry will, however transform the industry and bring it back to its glorious days of yielding employment as well as economic fortune to Nigeria.

### 4.3 Textile Industry Spill-over Effects on other Sectors of the Economy

Reviving of textile industry would spawn a whole new set of linkage industries and facilitate expansion of many service sector activities. The textile industry has had some spill-over effects, which benefited other sectors and rendered large externalities by contributing to other economic activities in such areas as banking, insurance, real estate, packaging, hotels and tourism, recycling, consumer goods, utility services and transportation.

### 4.4 Textile industry effect on Banking and Insurance

The growth of the textile industry and the related activities would contribute a lot to the robust growth of the financial sector in Nigeria. A World Bank survey revealed that almost all firms (98%) are the clients of the commercial banks for working capital and procurement of machines and equipment (57%). All firms in the textile industry have their machines and plants insured and, additionally, 87% of importers of textile input and 15% of the textile industry exporters get their imports/exports insured and all of these firms would contribute to the economic development of Nigeria.

### 4.5 Textile industry effect on Shipping and Logistics

The textile sector would contribute to the shipping business in Nigeria and stimulated setting up of several container yards, expansion of port facilities to handle large container carrying trains, increase of cargo handling and storage facilities. For instance, the textile manufacturers would extensively use services of Clearing & Forwarding Agents for the purpose of customs clearance of their inputs and finished goods. It is estimated that port usage fees earned from the textile sector may account for more than 40% of the income of the port authority.

### 4.6 Textile industry effect on Information and Communication Technology

The textile industry sector of the economy would also play a catalytic role in the growth of the country's ICT sector. The services consumed by the textile industry generated revenue for the ICT sector. Payments for ICT services which include communication, hardware and software services are estimated at 19.34 million dollars in the 2014 fiscal year when the sector was still operating at low ebb. If the textile industry is revitalized now, it is expected that more revenue would be generated to the government.

## 5. Policy Options towards Nigeria Textile Industries to Stimulate the Economy for Mitigating the Effect of the COVID 19 Pandemic

For Nigeria to make a quick recovery from the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, the Nigerian government must essentially lead economic diversification drive towards the Nigeria textile industries. This would require the government to ramp up resilience planning and deploy policy options discussed below to proactively revive the Nigeria textile industries towards achieving sustainable development.

### 5.1 Provision of Intervention Fund to the Textile Industry

Government should channel more funds to the textile industry to enable it lead the diversification process. Government should provide new intervention fund to the textile industry by directing the central bank to come to the aid of the textile industry as part of strategy to diversify the economy and achieve inclusive growth through job creation. This should be backed with a ban on the importation of foreign textile and second hand clothing to rejuvenate production of local textile materials. Government should encourage local textile manufacturing companies by providing them with soft loans and easy access to credit facilities through the Bank of Industry.

### 5.2 Improvement of the Obsolete Technology in the Textile Industry

There is no doubt that textile industry globally is largely labour-intensive (Anderson, 2012; Traub-Merz, 2006 and Xiaoyang, 2014), and the Nigeria textile industry requires new and advanced technology to achieve a higher level of productivity and competitiveness (Anyanwu, 2000). For example, due to modern technology, the Chinese spindle produces twice as much as African spindle (Bedi, 2014, cited in Becker, 2014). However, most textile mills in Nigeria are still using old and obsolete technology (COMESA, 2011). This has an adverse effect on mills' productivity and product quality.

Nigerian textile mills depend heavily on foreign technology (machines) and accessories. This practice becomes problematic and costly to the nation's economy due to high cost of importation of materials and tools, non-availability of spare parts for the replacement of worn-out or damaged tools, coupled with poor maintenance culture arising from inadequate knowledge of its components. Often, these machines wear out with use and age while the unserviceable ones are often vandalized in an attempt to put the working machines in good shape. This invariably affects production and quality of products and this often leads to abandonment of local textiles for the imported ones as better substitutes. The federal government should establish the Nigeria machines tools industry to boost the fabrication of spare parts and the modification of the existing machines

### 5.3 Development of Basic Infrastructure

Government should provide necessary infrastructural facilities especially power supply to local textile manufacturing companies. The socio-cultural challenges are daunting in that there is a dearth of basic infrastructure to support industrialization. According to Global Competitiveness Index (2016 - 2017) Nigeria ranked 130 out of 180 countries in overall infrastructure development (Hassan, 2018). This includes energy crises, poor transport facilities, poor communication network and bad roads etc. The problem of power supply has worsened, in spite of privatization of the power sector, and this has forced many textile companies to relocate to other countries like Ghana, Benin Republic, Cameroon etc. For instance, there have been days during the year, when electricity generation from the Generating Companies (Gencos) was zero megawatts due to grid collapse occasioned by vandalization of pipelines that supply gas to the Gencos (Yusuf, 2018).

The local refineries cannot meet local demand and the importers cannot sell at control prices without subsidy which had been tinted with corruption have been used to reap the country off over the years. Even fuel pipelines are not spared of vandalization by the enemies of the government in the Niger Delta. When we come to road network, we see that Nigerian roads are not industry friendly. They are riddled with potholes that regularly make trailers carrying industrials raw materials and merchandize to fall over and destroy their wares. Again, railway lines that provide cheap means of transport in the industrialized countries of the world are not readily available any more in Nigeria in spite of the billions of naira regularly sunk to rehabilitate what the colonialist left for the country. Government should promote and protect the Nigeria textiles industries to ensure that basic infrastructure such as power supply, poor communication network, poor transport facilities and bad roads etc. are made to be industry friendly, by putting them in order.

**5.4 Adequate and Regular interaction between Industry and the Academia**

One of the major problems faced by the textile industry in Nigeria is the lack of interaction between industry and the academia. Universities are places where researches are conducted on regular basis on current issues which are very much helpful in solving problems and providing innovative policies that will bring drastic changes to be used in addressing current situations. But unfortunately, there is no linkage between the textile industry and Academia. Government should ensure that there is regular linkage between the textile industry and the academia (University, Polytechnic and Research institute) in the area of research and training in order to come out with new designs and modern marketing strategies that will ensure better ways of improving sales of textile products.

**5.5 Creation of Stakeholder's Support Policies**

Government should spearheaded the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Nigeria Police, Paramilitary Institutions and National Youth Service Corp on one side and the Nigerian Textile Manufacturers Association (NTMA), Ginning Companies and National Cotton Association of Nigeria (NACOTAN) on the other side to supply textile fabrics to these government agencies. This policy directive to these agencies to source their uniforms locally would have positive impact on the industry if it would be well implemented. The utilization of local fabrics by government agencies would be favourable to the textile industry in that it will help to mop up stocks because companies are producing and have mass stock in line with the Executive Order 003 of 2017, and will also create a market and provide an outlet to sell part of the products produced by the textile industries.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Global security is threatened by pandemics, in terms of lives and economic stability. An effective and efficient emergency response can reduce the avoidable consequences of this COVID 19 pandemic and reduce the types of economic and social impacts. How to have an effective and efficient emergency management will be a critical task of governments to deal effectively with COVID-19 pandemic outbreak now and in the future. Despite many difficulties faced by the textile industry over the past years, it continued to show its robust performance and competitive strength. The Nigerian textile mills have the capability of making the Nigeria economy improve again to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic if given proper handling and attention. Both traditional and contemporary textiles are essential to national growth. The financing of the industry would clearly have to be taken seriously.

The Nigerian government's determination and political will to be active players in the industry will help to fully realize its potentials. It is opined that if there is the potential to grow the textile industry, with government determination to introduce policy options and programmes designed to proactively revitalize the textile industry, the industry can stimulate the Nigerian economy, retain and create jobs, thereby turning COVID-19 to opportunity.

Based on the conclusions, the following policy recommendations are proffered:

- More funding should be channeled to the manufacturing industry to enable it lead diversification. This should be backed up with a ban on the importation of foreign textiles and also blocking of smuggling of textile materials into the country to encourage local production.
- Government should assist the practitioners in the textile industry to adopt innovative strategies by investing in human resource development. In the face of economic downturn, they should redeploy staff to other areas instead of retrenching them.
- Textile companies should replace outdated machines with newer ones which also make use of modern technology. Almost all the textile companies were found to be using overage machines with outdated technologies.
- Government at federal, state, and local levels should return to agriculture and concentrate on cotton cultivation to provide needed raw materials for the textile industry.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should increase investment in electricity infrastructure so as to increase the amount of electricity to the textile industry. Less than 5,000 Kilowatts of electricity is presently generated for a population of over 197 million people.
- Governments at all levels should implement developmental policies especially as it

relates to the productive sectors of the economy as economic growth has been shown to be a determinant of foreign direct investment.

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