NAME: USMAN MAIMUNAT MARYAM

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**CORONA VIRUS AND THE EFFECT OF THE LOCKDOWN ON NIGERIANS**

This report aims to enlighten the reader on the nature of the coronavirus and its effect on the economy and daily lives of individuals living in the country. It explains in detail the situation on ground in Nigeria and offers an indepth analysis of the situation.

**What is the coronavirus?**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to people. SARS, for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans while MERS moved to humans from a type of camel.Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.The name coronavirus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, the virus looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona.The best way to curb the spread of this virus is to restrict movement so as to reduce contact between humans.

**What is being done to stop it from spreading?**

Scientists around the globe are racing to develop a vaccine but have warned it is not likely one will be available for mass distribution before 2021.Meanwhile, Nigeria has introduced a series of sweeping measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including nationwide lockdowns, bans on gatherings, closure of schools, restaurants, bars and sports clubs, as well as issuing mandatory work-from-home decrees.  International airline have cancelled flights the world over. Some countries have banned non-citizens from entering their territories, and several more have evacuated their citizens from abroad.

The 2019-2020 corona virus pandemic has had far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease and efforts to quarantine it. As the pandemic has spread around the globe, concerns have shifted from supply-side manufacturing issues to decreased business in the services sector. The pandemic caused the [largest global recession in history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_recession), with more than a third of the global population at the time being placed on [lockdown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockdown).

Shortage supply have affected a lot of sectors due to [panic buying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panic_buying), increased usage of goods to fight the pandemic, and disruption to factories and logistics in Nigeria, in addition, it also led to [price gouging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_gouging). There have been widespread reports of supply shortages of pharmaceuticals, with many areas seeing panic buying and consequent shortages of food and other essential grocery items. The technology industry, in particular, has been warning about delays to shipments of electronic goods.

The decision to close educational institutions and schools around the globe in an attempt to contain the pandemic has also led to a soaring number of children, youth and adults not attending schools. According to UNESCO Monitoring report on [COVID-19 educational disruption and response](https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures), the impact of school closures in the over 100 countries that have implemented the decisions around the world has impacted over half of the global students’ population. These educational disruptions are being escalated particularly for the most vulnerable members of society.

Even long before the announcement of lockdowns across countries, immediate job and income loss was on the order of the day for Nigerian small business owners occasioned by the pandemic in the earliest days, showing the inter-dependence of the world economy at all levels even in backwater town and villages. A typical example here is the 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 income for this sector

In any crisis of capitalism, the ruling class always acts in a way as to shift the burden of the crisis onto the working class, and this case is not going to be different. They again want the masses to pay for the mess. The toiling workers, whose sweat and labour create the wealth of the corporations, will not only be the first to be affected, but they will also be the ones that are hit hard, while top management and parasitic board members’ profits and privileges remain intact. This is the fate of working people even in Nigeria. While the ruling class uses the left side of their mouth to tell people to stay at home, they are equally busy using the right side to tell the workers to keep going to work: production must not stop. These workers are given no compensation for risking their lives; they are neither provided with personal protective materials, nor given easy access to COVID-19 tests.

It is in this vein that the leadership of labour must come out in defence of the workers on the issue of lockdown. As parts of the efforts to curtail the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government ordered a lockdown on Lagos, Ogun and the FCT Abuja, for an initial period of two weeks starting 11:59pm, 30 March 2020, now extended by another 2 weeks from 13 April 2020. Many other states are already applying one stay-at-home rule or the other up to state boundaries closure. However, locking people down at home in the Nigerian context is like asking people to go hungry for the duration of the lockdown. More than 60 per cent of Nigerians survive on daily pay from menial jobs and petty trading. A lockdown means their means of daily livelihood have been locked down. The plight of private sector employees is no better. Many private employers have maintained a ‘no salary during lockdown’ stance, or at best a 50 per cent pay cut. Some have even completely laid the workers off. Labour must agitate for full pay for workers, whether private or government employed, for as long as the lockdown lasts. Government must also distribute foodstuff and domestic essentials to and domestic essentials to the poor masses to cushion the effect of the lockdown.

Pangs of hunger will lead to widespread anger. Protests in different forms are already being seen within the communities. People are protesting against a lockdown without palliatives, against the high-handedness of law enforcement agents, and even rejecting all manner of palliatives that smack of insult to their intelligence, such as packs of food that are not enough to feed a family of six in 2 weeks being distributed to be shared among 60-80 families in a cluster. This protest mood that is brewing has the potential to transform into a movement that would pose a serious challenge to the lockdown if the hunger question is not resolved. It could also get a lot worse, as we are beginning to see in some places in Lagos and Ogun States where a layer of lumpen youth, pushed to extreme hunger by the lockdown, go on mass looting of shops and houses, carting away ordinary people’s food and belongings.

The lockdown is also believed to have profound and potentially long-term mental effects on Nigerians

Finally, it may be concluded that the coronavirus is a deadly virus but enforcing a total lockdown will be a mammoth challenge and almost impossible for the authorities in a country where millions of people rely on their daily earnings to survive.