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**CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND IT’S EFFECT OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENTS ON NIGERIANS**

It will be hell if COVID-19 should break out in Nigeria – this was quoted in an article from the Marxist University. Apart from the dire state of the healthcare system, 69 million Nigerians have no access to clean water. This invariably leads to water-borne diseases like cholera, which continue to break out as regular epidemics. Social distancing and self-isolation presuppose that people have enough space. In Lagos where we have over 100 slum areas, about 80 people can be found sharing a 10-room building with only two toilets and a bathroom being shared by all with no pipe-borne or treated water readily available.

Clearly the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) that started out as an epidemic in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and ended up as a pandemic (affecting the whole world) has thrown the whole world into a war-like situation. The price of crude oil (the mainstay of the Nigerian economy) tumbled like never before in the last 20 years. It went to as low as below $20 per barrel from above $60 just before the pandemic. It has never been this bad in the last two decades and this has made a mess of the Nigerian federal government’s budget estimates for 2020; making salaries payment, debt obligations and other projections uncertain. This is clearly so because the price of crude oil, which contributes over 90% of Nigeria’s externally-generated revenue, now hovers around $30 per barrel, which is far less than the budget’s benchmark of $57 per barrel, and this signifies tough times ahead.

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. The economy was in a dire state even before 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 the lockdown. A very typical example is those viewing centers for sports e.g. Football, wrestling etc due to the breakdown there has been no sports therefore causing zero income to those who use it as a source of employment

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 the poor masses to cushion the effect of the lockdown. 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.

If this were to be the case today, the course of this pandemic would have been limited to a mere epidemic in one country in the first instance. Instead of this, all nations of the world saw the outbreak as China’s problem; President Donald Trump of USA even publicly referred to it as the ‘Chinese virus’. Well on the news it was said USA had given Nigeria 21billion for the poor well since it is during the lockdown we want to believe it is because of the lockdown, but specifically the money was for the poor. We might think this is simple but then I heard on radio people asking who the poor is, is it who does not have a bank account? Or who has a bank account but cannot afford a square meal? But then Nigeria those not have an accurate list of its citizens.

The epidemic outbreak of COVID-19 has indeed brought a negative output on the citizens of Nigeria.