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**A REPORT OF THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTIONS OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIA.**

Corona Virus is a family of respiratory viruses. The proper name of the virus causing this outbreak is ‘Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2’. The disease that this virus was formerly referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or 2019-nCoV’ but on February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced an official name of the disease called ‘Corona Virus Disease 2019’ shortened to ‘COVID-19’.

The first case of the virus was discovered in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Many health experts believe that this new strain of viruses likely originated from bats. And the first transmission to humans was in Wuhan. Recent statistics show that there are over two million cases of the virus and about a hundred and fifty related deaths. Therefore the virus has a mortality rate of approximately 4%. Compared with similar outbreaks like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in the past, the percentage of mortality is relatively low. However the virus spread exponentially, and quite a number of people are dying on a daily basis. The World Health Organization thereby declared Corona Virus a pandemic due to the fact that the Corona Virus spread across to people in large regions who are not immune to the virus.

The corona virus travels in heavy droplets of air. It is transmitted when a carrier of the virus expels tiny droplets that contain the virus. When infected surfaces are touched, the virus is transferred to other individuals. However, it has been confirmed that coronavirus can be asymptomatic for a period of 14 days. So it is very possible for someone without symptoms to spread the virus. The symptoms of Corona Virus are very similar to that of the common cold and flu. These include fever, cough, shortness of breath etc. The virus can lead to difficulty in breathing and death in more severe cases. The chances of surviving the virus depends on age, medical problems and how it affects the lungs and immune system.

The first confirmed case of Corona Virus in Nigeria as announced on 27February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus. On March 9 2020, a second case was reported in Ogun State; a Nigerian who had come in contact with the Italian citizen. There are currently more than four hundred confirmed cases of the virus in Nigeria and over 13 related deaths. Nigerians are currently experiencing hell due to the outbreak of the pandemic. This can be accounted to the dire state of the Nigerian healthcare system and the fact that a lot of people have no access to clean water. Research has shown that about 69 million Nigerians have no access to clean water which can aid to the spread of a number of diseases. Social distancing and self-isolation proves difficult as there is no space. In Lagos where there are about 100 slum areas and a large number of people are seen to be sharing a single public toilet with no pipe borne water available, the chances of spread the pandemic and a host of other diseases is quite large. It is evident that it will be difficult for Nigeria to fully eradicate the pandemic.

THE LOCKDOWN

As part of the efforts to curtail the Corona Virus pandemic, the federal government ordered a lockdown on Lagos, Ogun and the FCT Abuja, for an initial period of two weeks starting from 11:59 pm on the 30th of March, 2020. Many other states are currently applying the stay-at-home order and even closing the states boundaries. But the lockdown to some individuals is more like sentencing them to hunger as many of them gain their livelihood from money gotten daily from menial jobs and petty trading. Research has shown that over 60% of Nigerians are currently living hand-to-mouth. The case of social workers on the other hand is not very pleasant as well. As they have to go into lockdown without their salaries. Although the government has pledged a series of support measures to ease the pain of the most vulnerable, there are complaints that not enough is being done for those facing hunger.

Another problem faced by Nigerians during the increase in crime rate. The saying, “A hungry man is an angry man” is true. Pangs of hunger will lead to widespread anger. Protests in different forms are already being seen within communities. This protest mood that is brewing has the potential to transform into a movement that will pose a serious challenge to the lockdown if the issue of hunger is not resolved. In places like Lagos and Ogun, a handful of individuals driven by extreme hunger, are said to have gone on mass looting of shops and homes, carting away with people’s food and belongings.

There is also the issue of electricity and pollution. Here’s a short scenario. Three days before the lockdown came into effect in the nation’s capital, Abuja; Joseph Joe, a 27 year old accountant purchased 150litres of petrol in anticipation of having to use his generator more in home. Given unreliable electricity supply, having citizens like Joseph staying at home amid a lockdown to curb the spread of the corona virus likely means that Joseph’s and millions of other’s electricity generators will be working overtime to power homes, worsening the pollution of residential areas. While deserted highways and erstwhile bustling business districts means lower vehicular and industrial emissions, research shows us that the increased usage of generators likely means an uptick in air and noise pollution.

So far, about 18 people have been killed by the Nigerian security forces during the lockdown. This is a higher figure than the deaths caused by the pandemic in the country. The law enforcement agents extra judicially executed those people in the cause of the law enforcement regulations. The security forces have been accused severally by individuals of harassment during the lockdown in several states. Some are even demanding bribes from road users. There are still growing fears of a rise in crime and unrest due to the virus restrictions.

The government should work on provision of food and essential household requirements for all who are in need of them. They should also guarantee all social workers of their jobs and salaries during the lockdown. The government should also ensure to punish any law enforcement agent who violates the rights of any civilian during the period of lockdown and restriction of movement. Corona virus is not a death sentence to us. We can fully eradicate the pandemic from our dear country if we fully adhere to the stay-at-home order from the federal government.