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CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECT OF THE LOCKDOWN AND THE RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIANS

Corona Virus Disease popularly called Covid-19 originated from Wuhan China December 2019. This disease which affects the respiratory systems was not given attention until it became a pandemic

The scourge began and spread all over the world including Africa. Scientifically it has not been proved if this pandemic is an act of God or a coincidence as most pandemics occurs every century. The Plague, Cholera, Spanish flu and the COVID – 19 occurs in 1720,1820,1920 and 2020 respectively.

As it stands, almost every countries of the world have been affected by Covid-19 and current statistics shows a global increase in the mortality rate. As at 12th April 2020, the World Health Organization recorded a total death of about 1,950,000 globally. This alarming increase in death rate calls for urgent attention. According to Rev. T. R. Malthus a reverend gentleman who stated in his book that food and population will be growing at arithmetic and geometric proportion, if not checked war, famine , pestilence, earthquake etc., will help to reshape population , hence the fight against this pandemic call for global attention

However, Nigeria is not an exception as the first case of COVID-19 was first reported on the 27th March, 2020 and this news of an Italian citizen testing positive to COVID-19 threw the whole nation into a mourning mood, subsequently this has gradually affected 20 other states of the federation.

Consequently, the pandemic continued to ravage Nigeria with its impeding effect on the Economy and Social Welfare of Nigerans. A stitch in time save nine, if measures to combat this pandemic has started early, this would have reduced the current trend. Currently Nigeria has recorded 19 deaths in the last couple of days and the need to curb this Pandemic from further spread become very paramount to the existence of Nigeria as a sovereign nation.

However, in attempt to fight this pandemic, the World Health Organization has introduced various measures like social distancing, avoid overcrowding, regular washing of hand with sanitizers and lockdown with has helped tremendously in the fight against COVID-19.

Lockdown is the process where all economic and social activities of a country are grounded to a halt primarily to avoid human-to- human interface in order to reduce or curtail the transmission. This measure was one of the measures adopted in Wuhan, China leading to a sharp decline in the number of deaths recorded in recent time.

This measure worked in China because of their cultural and economic affiliations, in pursuance of this measure, lockdown was introduced to curb transmission of COVID-19, hence, its impact on Nigerians cannot be overemphasized, its imminent effected and has brought untold hardship to the country in general.

Apart from the its positive impact, its effect on the economy, Individual and nation cannot be quantified at this moment as more and more cases are confirmed everyday

Lockdown as a result of COVID-19 has consequently led to the increase in the rate of crime. Instance of this could be found in Lagos where some group took to the streets dispossessing innocent people of their possession. In the same vein, other parts of the country have recorded various degree of insecurity, instance of this was the current rampage in Ogun sate and its environs.

Another effect of the lockdown is Stigmatization. This is the condition where victim fail to declare their status because of the social consequence on their relationship with their immediate relation or community

Lockdown has also known to be responsible for high cost commodity especially for the perishable items. Price of Garry which is a popular staple food has increased 300% (3 folds) of its original price. The urge to make quick profit and fear of unknown was said to be responsible for this hike in price of commodities

Death has also been reported in some areas as victims fail to attend the designated COVID-19 centers for treatment because of the fear of being stigmatized. However, death of some health professionals has been reported in some quarters resulting from contact with infected patient

Economically, the current scourge if not properly handled could lead to economic recession. A recession is negative drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) recorded in two successive quarters. This explains why Donald Trump initially ordered that the lockdown should be discontinued by second week in April to avoid USA from going into recession.

Furthermore, another economic effect of COVID-19 is the sharp drop in the price of crude Oil. The main stay of Nigeria economy is Petroleum, a drop in the price of petroleum will also have an effect on the proceeds from petroleum. This explains why the current budget forecast may not translate to a significant budget surplus in the coming year. Nigeria budget was predicated at about \$60 per barrel but has now dropped to \$30 per barrel translating to 50% reduction in Nigeria income.

Surprisingly, the strength of a nation is its human and capital resources, the current death recorded in Nigeria and the world at large will have a negative impact on the world population. Hence, the time to act is now

In the final analysis, however, if Nigeria is to be free from the dreaded COVID-19, the World Health Organization (WHO), has issues various guideline to fight this pandemic, some of which includes social distancing, avoid overcrowding, repeated washing of hand with soap or Alcohol base sanitizer, Lockdown and good personal hygiene

Social Distancing of about 2 meters have been prescribed by WHO to avoid direct contact with an infected person.

Another recommendation is to avoid overcrowding, this will go a long way at reducing human-to-human contact. Current reports have it that most of the cases recorded were as a result of overcrowding

The importance lockdown and good personal hygiene in the fight against COVID-19 cannot be over-emphasized in the fight this disease. These measures should target the aged ones, the poor and the vulnerable who stand the chances of easily been affected. Measures to stay at home should be enforced in order to defeat our common enemy.

Finally, if Nigeria is to be free from this common enemy, all hand must be on deck to observe the recommendation of WHO and with self-discipline as observed by Wuhan China, I am in no doubt that Nigeria will not come out of this quagmire in no time. Nigeria will prevail and overcome this pandemic if we properly harnessed our resources toward fighting this scourge.