

IFEANYI-OBI ADAEZE CLARE

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MBBS

GST-112

A REPORT ON THE CORONAVIRUS AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIANS.

INTRODUCTION

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on the 27 February 2020 in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital with a population of 21 million. The index case arrived from Milan, Italy, then the fourth country with high incidence (371 cases), and came into the country via Lagos Airport on 25 February 2020 where nothing serious was on ground to check or track new entrants into the country from suspected places with acute infections. The Italian man, who works with the multibillion dollars' multinational, Lafarge Cement Company, went for a meeting at the company's factory at Ewekoro, Ogun state, an adjoining state to Lagos. It was at the Lafarge's medical centre in Ewekoro that the case was flagged when he presented sick, and was sent for testing and confirmed COVID-19. This man was on the move for two full days before he was finally isolated.

Since then in Nigeria, as of 18th April, there have been 493 cases, with 17 deaths and 159 people recovering from the virus. In order to curb the spread of the virus, on the 30th of March, 2020, the announcement for the country's lockdown was declared. The lockdown brought with it many bad effects, the only advantage to slow down the effects of the virus. Some of the effects include;

❖ THE DEPRECIATION OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMIC SECTOR

Nigeria is already feeling the pinch with oil prices plunging. The country is the world's eighth-largest oil exporter, and almost 90 percent of its export earnings are tied to oil. Shutting down the country's financial capital, Lagos, is expected to further add to an impending economic crisis. 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.

❖ THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE NIGERIAN CITIZENS AND INCREASE IN CRIME RATE

There will be an uptick in crimes in Nigeria and particularly the spaces that are under any forms of lockdown because the Nigerian economy isn't made for things like remote work. An increase in domestic violence will be expected with people that will find themselves locked in with their

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abusers when they would normally be away from home. The lockdown will only widen the income inequality gap and make less privileged people move into crime because they need to eat. The lockdown means additional financial pain for millions of informal labourers who rely heavily on their daily earnings to survive.

There were long queues at supermarkets after President Buhari announced the lockdown, with people rushing to stock up on essentials. But many Nigerians live hand-to-mouth, often on less than \$1 (£0.80) and they cannot stock up on food or other essentials. Many workers are also yet to be paid their wages for March so there are deep concerns about the financial implications of a lockdown. The extension of the lockdown is expected to add to the hardship of millions of Nigerians living hand-to-mouth, often on less than one dollar a day. The government has pledged a series of support measures to ease the financial pain for the most vulnerable, but there have been widespread complaints that not enough is being done for those facing hunger.

The vast majority of Nigerians depend on daily wages, they have to go out to get money and buy food to put it on the table for their families. All non-essential travel has been banned in most states and many workers, including civil servants, have been told to work from home. But with a lack of reliable electricity supplies and poor internet connections, it is hard to see how most people will get any work done. Meanwhile, electricity remains a major challenge in the country. Most people rely on costly diesel-powered generators to power their homes and keep businesses afloat.

CONCLUSION

There are many other effects, but these generate the most concern. The Federal Government of Nigeria have put in effort to reduce some of these effects but due to the population, total control has not yet been achieved.