

HEAVENS JEWEL JOSEPH

19/LAW01/108

LAW

COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH/ GST 122

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

The Coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19 which stands for Coronavirus disease 2019, is an infectious disease that started out as an epidemic in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and ended up as a pandemic which has thrown the whole world into a war-like situation. Thousands of deaths have been recorded for various countries around the world including USA, Italy, Spain, etc. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

The symptoms of this disease are different depending on the age of the person infected; majority of young people experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment while children and older people are likely to develop serious illness, especially those with underlying medical problems like diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory disease.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Washing of hands and avoiding touching the face is also a potent way of protecting oneself against the disease. There is currently no cure for corona virus.

COVID-19 has a high infectious rate. In a bid to reduce contact between people and consequently reduce the spread of COVID-19, several governments across the globe, Nigeria inclusive, have employed the "stay-at-home" order. The movement of people have been restricted and social distancing is to be applied. In most high-income countries, lockdown orders have been a cornerstone of the coronavirus response. But we're learning quickly that taking a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't necessarily fit very well with the needs of the developing world.

The coronavirus lockdown has led to the widespread of starvation in Nigeria. The lockdown as ordered by the government and implemented in various states has occasioned and enhanced hunger among Nigerians. The stay-at-home order has stopped Nigerians from going to work. Most Nigerians are daily income earners who can't sustain themselves daily with the little income from their meagre jobs. Clearly analysing it, most Nigerians may die as a result of hunger

and not the virus itself due to the lack of food. Recently in Lagos and other states, food items were distributed to poor citizens in the public in a bid to control the starvation rate. However, the palliatives provided by the government and all other agencies/individuals only make a mockery of poor Nigerians.

The lockdown has led to the increase in crime rate in the country. Nigerians, desperate for a new source of income to support themselves and their families, have resorted to illegal means of acquiring money and items. Fraudulent activities are on the rise as most resort to scamming others. There are more cases of theft in small communities in Akwa Ibom state. Cases of violence are on the rise as there have been several cases of the police or other law enforcement agents harassing citizens for violating the stay-at-home command. Human rights activists in Nigeria say that at least 18 people have been killed by security forces enforcing the lockdown. And those are only the reported cases.

The inflation of prices of commodities is another effect of the coronavirus lockdown in Nigeria. The restriction of movements makes it impossible to transport goods has led to a scarcity of essential food items in some communities. Hence, the little quantity that was available before the lockdown are sold at higher prices. Access to good medical facilities has been limited because of the lockdown.

However uncomfortable the coronavirus lockdown may be, there are some benefits that come along with it. Families have quite literally been forced to stay together, and with nowhere else to go to, they have no choice but to strengthen their bond. Countless lives have also been saved because the movement restriction has stopped travelling, thereby preventing road accidents from happening. Nigerians have also been encouraged by the lockdown to embrace the digital way of doing things.

The disadvantages of the lockdown are more profound by whatever advantages it may have. Which brings up the question, is this lockdown the best for a developing country like Nigeria? Hasn't this lockdown brought more harm than good to Nigeria and its people?