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CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIAN CITIZENS

The deadly disease known as COVID-19 which stands for Coronavirus disease 2019, a name designated by the W.H.O, started out as an epidemic in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and unfortunately ended up as a pandemic which has frightened the whole world into a war-like situation. Thousands to millions of deaths have been verified for various countries around the globe including USA, Italy, Spain, The UK, etc.

It is very obvious that there was really no preparation to capture the earliest cases of introduction of the disease into the country which would have been done at the points of entry into the country, especially at the international airports. Rather, it was not until much later by 18th March 2020, that Nigeria eventually placed a travel ban on 13 countries with high incidence of the disease and resulting an implementation of sweeping quarantine and lockdown in a bid to slow the spread of the new virus .In most developed countries, the stay-at-home order has been a keystone of the disease response and has largely worked though at a terrible price. But the results have not been the same in developing countries like Nigeria as its unintentional effects have been a big hit on their citizens. This has led to the extension of starvation in Nigeria. The lockdown as ordered by the government and executed in various states has effected and enhanced hunger among Nigerians. Most of her citizens live from “hand-to-mouth”, majority being daily income earners who can’t sustain themselves daily with the little income from their meager jobs. Clearly analyzing 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. It sounds and looks good from a view but the palliatives provided by the government and all other agencies/individuals only make a mockery of poor Nigerians. A bus driver I had a discussion with said “*Hunger virus worse pass Coronavirus o”.* And I am pretty sure this stay-at-home rule wouldn’t last a month.

This has also brought about boredom and idleness. The upsetting level of boredom during this period has been the greatest effect of the lockdown on Nigerians. During this enforced stay-at-home period, Nigerians are confined and have no access to the various social activities they engage in to stay happy and occupied as they no longer go to school, work, parties, work-outs, gyming, blocking, among other possible social activities that bring us joy. They are only allowed to stay at home all day bored and idle having nothing to do to keep them company but hope of a day they get to resume their normal lives.

The lockdown has led to the increase in fraudulent and yahoo activities. In order to survive during this lockdown, most Nigerians have resorted to scamming and extorting other Nigerians for various gains. An example is the famous “Loom Investment” which assurances to double one’s payment but is a fake means of receiving more money from individuals. Also, other internet fraudsters have strategized various other dubious means of getting money from innocent people including the adoption of the “give-away method” which they famously use to get easy preys. There remain many other scopes adopted in carrying out various fraudulent acts during this period by swindlers who are abusing on this favorable chance.

Around are more to the effects of the lockdown and association restriction on the citizens clearly showing that it isn’t favouring Nigerians as it has caused a lot of havoc though it is the price Nigeria has to pay to combat the deadly coronavirus in the country aside the treatment of the infected. Nevertheless, the government should see that lockdown must come with adequate provision of food and essential domestic requirements for all if the lockdown policy must be successfully implemented. Likewise, all possible effects on its citizens should as well be considered and adequate provisions made to combat them by the administration.