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**Corona virus pandemic and the effects of lockdown and restriction of movements on Nigerians.**

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) that started out as an epidemic in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and ended up as a pandemic (affecting the whole world) has thrown the whole world into a war-like situation. It rapidly spread, resulting in an epidemic throughout China and then moved to other parts of the world like wildfire, affecting every continent on earth, except Antarctica. The World Health Organization (WHO) later designated the disease COVID-19, which stands for Corona Virus Disease 2019, and declared it a pandemic on 11 March, 2020.

What has been reproducible about the Coronavirus pandemic in the world is the high rate at which it spreads among clusters of people and close contacts; and the fact that it does not kill evenly among all age groups. The fact that the virus spreads through close contacts led to lockdown and the restriction of movement in many countries in the world including Nigeria. Though, the reason for the lockdown and restriction of movement is for the citizen’s safety but the effect is more than the advantage in Nigeria.

The first casualty of COVID-19 is income loss. Even long before the announcement of lockdowns across the countries, immediate job and income loss was on the order of the day for Nigerian small business owners occasioned by the pandemic in the earliest days, showing the inter-dependence of the world economy at all levels even in backwater town and villages. A typical example is the effect of the pandemic on the sporting world and the spiraling effect on the owners of the ubiquitous soccer leagues viewing centres across Nigerian cities, towns and even villages where sport fans pay to watch these matches. With the suspension of the various leagues, it has been zero income for this sector.

In any crisis of capitalism, the ruling class always acts in a way as to shift the burden of the crisis onto the working class, and this case is not going to be different. They again want the masses to pay for the mess. The toiling workers, whose sweat and labour create the wealth of corporations, will not only be the first to be affected, but they will also be the ones that are hit hard while to management and parasitic board member’s profits and privileges remain intact. This is the fate of working people even in Nigeria. While the ruling class uses the left side of their mouth to tell people to stay at home, they are equally busy using the right side to tell the workers to keep going to work: production must not stop. These workers are given no compensation for risking their lives; they are neither provided with personal protective materials nor given easy access to COVID-19 test.

However, locking people down at home is like asking people to go hungry for the duration of the lockdown. More than sixty per cent of Nigerians survive on daily livelihood from menial jobs and petty trading. A lockdown means their means of livelihood have been locked down. The plight of private sector employees is no better. Many private employers have maintained a “no salary during lockdown” stance or at best a 50 per cent pay cut. Some have even completely laid the workers off. Labour must agitate for full pay for workers, whether private or government employed, for as long as the lockdown lasts. Government must also distribute foodstuff and domestic essentials to the poor masses to cushion the effect of the lockdown.

The truth is that if COVID-19 breaks out in Nigeria at even a quarter of the scale seen in Italy, the entire system would go under within days. The overall intervention on health in Nigeria has been recurrently unimpressive and in a constant free-fall.