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**ASSIGNMENT**

Write a report of not more than two pages on the coronavirus pandemic and the effects of the lockdown and restrictions of movement on Nigerians.

**REPORT:**

**THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECT OF LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION IN NIGERIA**

As Africa’s most populous nation with an estimated population of 200 million people, Nigeria became a centre for concern as the novel coronavirus, also referred to as Covid-19 made its way to the African continent.

Given the nature by which the virus spreads among humans and the ravaging effect recorded in other nations of the world such as China where it originated, USA, Spain, UK, Italy and South Korea to mention a few. Medical experts raised concerns on the need to put in place precautionary measures at reducing the risk of having an epidemic in the country given the poor state of the Nigerian health sector. More importantly, there were calls from all quarters on the need to equip major healthcare facilities across the country in preparedness for an outbreak of the virus.

Officially, the first case of the virus was recorded on February 27, 2020 in Lagos State. In the following days, there were pointers to a potential lockdown of the country as more cases were recorded in other parts of the country. Though not desirable, a lockdown on movement across borders, as well as a restriction on movement within cities with the exception of essential service providers, is no doubt an effective way of reducing the spread of the virus as seen in other climes where the virus has claimed thousands of lives.

In a live broadcast on March 29, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari in an address to the nation announced a closure of entry points to the country as well as a lockdown of Lagos, the epicentre of the virus in Nigeria, Ogun State and the FCT, Abuja. As a matter of urgency, other states also introduced certain restrictions to curtail the spread of the virus.

As expected, the lockdown brought about an abrupt stop in the source of livelihood for a number of Nigerians, especially artisans and daily income earners, most of whom live below a dollar per day. As the lockdown became effective, both federal and state governments began to set in motion various palliatives measures in form of food items and cash targeted at these vulnerable Nigerians to help cushion the effective of the lockdown. However, this has not been effective as evident in more communities calling on their respective governments to come to their aid with relief items, a situation which has generated questions on how the vulnerable citizens are identified and the modalities for sharing the relief items.

Of a truth, the lockdown which has seen educational institutions shut down across the country have its advantage and disadvantage on the citizenry, but given the poverty index of the country, the disadvantage has become profound.

In terms of its advantage, it is obvious that if not for the lockdown, more deaths would have probably been recorded in Nigeria than the USA which currently holds the record for most deaths from Covid-19, given the poor state of our health sector and the poor hygiene cum environmental conditions in most parts of the country.

On the negative side, criminal activities has become a major concern in states like Lagos and Ogun where hoodlums attack innocent citizens both day and night. This has left citizens in these states to live in constant fear both day and night as most communities have had to form vigilante groups who keep vigil.

Not just that, some families are now living in serious hardship given the fact that they cannot go about their businesses and they have already run out of savings. A further extension of the restriction for another two weeks in Lagos and Ogun States as well as the FCT which was announced by President Buhari on April 12, 2020 has left quite a number of people in limbo on the way forward with regards to survival.

It is also important to note that the impact of this lockdown is also being felt by the corporate sector as most organizations are presently operating below their optimal levels. Some have asked employees to work from home, while it has become impossible for others given the nature of their businesses. Some have had to lay-off employees and inevitably, more jobs will be lost in coming weeks as employers are looking for ways to cut cost. For instance, a recent report revealed that over 91,000 jobs are at stake as travel agencies have been instructed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to refund travellers who couldn’t embark on their various trips as a result of flight restrictions across countries.

The recent drop in the cost of crude oil across the globe which has seen the Bonny Light Crude produced by Nigeria drop to $12 per barrel is also a major concern at this point in time for a developing nation like Nigeria.

No doubt, this is a trying time for all and sundry as the impact of Covid-19 will last for a while, even after it has been defeated.