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

Coronavirus disease also known as COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019), is a name designated by the W.H.O, and it 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 in various countries around the world including the USA, Italy, and Spain, and the case count unfortunately continues to rise.

It is very evident that there was really no prior preparation or planning to arrest the earliest cases of the disease. If there was, the Federal Government of Nigeria would have placed a travel ban on countries within Nigeria, as well as a total border shutdown to prevent infected patients from being able to enter or exit the country, thus reducing greatly the chances of the deadly virus spreading more than it already had. Rather, it was not until much later by 18th March 2020, that Nigeria eventually placed a travel ban on the 13 countries with the highest cases of the disease and a following implementation of a 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 cornerstone of the disease response and has largely worked due to the countries' advanced technology and developed environment. But the results have not been the same in developing countries like Nigeria as its unintended effects have affected Nigerians in quite a number of ways, which are as follows..

Firstly, it has led to a widespread case of starvation in Nigeria. The lockdown as ordered by the government and implemented in various states has occasioned and enhanced hunger among Nigerians. Most Nigerians 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 may appear hopeful from a certain perspective, but the palliatives provided by the government and all other agencies/individuals only make a mockery of poor Nigerians. What does a cup of rice or beans shared do to an individual talk less of a family within the lockdown period?

It has brought about boredom and idleness. The alarming rate of the increment of indolence and slackness during this period has been the greatest effect of the lockdown on Nigerians. During this stay-at-home period, Nigerians are confined and have no access to the various activities they engage in to stay happy and occupied as they no longer go to work, school, parties, jog-outs, cycling, gyming, sit-outs, among other possible social activities that bring them joy. They are only allowed to stay at home all day lethargic and idle having nothing to do to keep them company but hope that one day they get to resume their normal life, which is quite a dreary, unenthusiastic, sad, and depressing way of living.

The lockdown has led to an increase in fraudulent activities. In order to survive during this lockdown, most Nigerians have resorted to scamming other Nigerians for various gains. An example is the famous “Binomo Trade Investment” which promises to double one’s deposit but is a fake means of getting money from people. Also, other scammers and internet thieves 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 are many other dimensions adopted in carrying out various fraudulent acts during this period by fraudsters who are capitalizing on this favorable opportunity.

There are more to the effects of the lockdown and movement restriction on Nigerians 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. However, the government should see that lockdown must come with adequate provision of food and essential household requirements for all if the lockdown policy must be effectively and successfully implemented. Also, all possible effects on its citizens should as well be considered and adequate provisions made to combat them by the government.