

GST 122 ASSIGNMENT

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MEDICINE AND SURGERY

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

The novel corona virus officially known as SARS-COV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome related Corona Viruses 2) which causes the disease COVID-19(Corona Virus Disease 2019) is from a family of viruses some of which are the MERS, SARS and even the common cold. It was first identified in China in the Wuhan province in late 2019 but was declared a pandemic by the WHO in March 2020 when it had hit almost every country on our planet making it a major cause for concern. The virus is spread by respiratory droplets of which coughing, sneezing and even talking can transmit it and it can travel up to 2 metres in the air making it very highly contagious. The virus affects the lungs of a person which supplies oxygen to the body and without oxygen other organs are prone to severe damage which could lead to death of an individual. The virus may not manifest symptoms in an infected person from two days to up to fourteen days but such a person can still transmit the disease hence the international cry by health professionals and national governments to 'stay at home' which in itself is a partial solution to the spread of the virus but the parent of a host of many consequences especially to underdeveloped countries, my country Nigeria as one.

The virus was first confirmed in Nigeria on the 27th February 2020 in an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria in Lagos state this was a cause for concern but the travel bans and lockdown order was not effected till late March spreading the virus even further. The government says stay home, close down unnecessary points of gatherings like churches, shops selling nonessentials, clubs, restaurants and the likes, don't go out, buy food a lot at home, lots of orders but we forget that people do not have homes, people cannot panic buy because a lot of citizens cannot afford three square meals per day talk less of buying food in the house for a month. For those that can afford to buy the food and can buy refrigerators to store them there is no power supply, the food will go bad wasting very hard earned money. Lots of people hustling and running their small scale business that sell nonessentials can no longer sell making them lack source of income for a family that will be at home for an indefinitely long time. The Corona virus has caused grief to many poor and homeless Nigerians who simply cannot afford the lockdown order.

The situation also seems to be particularly bad for the illiterate and ignorant in society. Many Nigerians cannot fully read or understand English language and can only make decisions based on second-hand information from others. It had been seen that many do not even know how to pronounce the name of the virus, although this is not too surprising as even the president in his very mechanical speech to the citizens could not get the name right. In a situation where so many cannot fully grasp the name of the virus talk less of grasping the causes, effects and prevention of

the disease. It is particularly alarming as more research is being done daily on the new virus and more facts discovered, the question of how will one pass effective information on how to protect oneself to these people when as everyday for every fact discovered about ten lies and conspiracy theories and sensational stories are told. The government has resorted to use of force but this has been the cause of more harm than good as many are harassed, beaten and even killed for simply not understanding why they have to stay indoors when they have to live and feed a family.

The economy of many big countries have almost been crippled by the virus and Nigeria is not an exception. With an economy that depends almost solely on crude oil with very little farming activities and the fast drop of the cost of oil, the economy of our country is badly affected. Because of the halt of cash flow in the economy many have resorted to armed robbery raising security concerns in our economy. Despite all of this there is a small glimmer of hope in this aspect as it is seen that many have started cultivating crops of some sort as they cannot buy so much anymore and this if it increases could be a restarting point for the farming economy of the nation.

One cannot fail to state the effects on the health sector. The Corona virus is proven to spread more in hospitals and health centres as the early symptoms of the virus are like common cold and when those infected go to the hospital it makes the hospital waiting rooms and wards very good breeding and spreading grounds for the virus. It is advised that people should avoid hospitals and this makes many individuals with serious medical conditions at risk of not getting adequate health care from their homes. Also there is limited testing of the virus in people as the test kits for Corona virus are expensive and not readily available making many hospital workers at high risk of infection. There is also a bit of hope in this situation as the virus has caused many highly placed individuals in society to experience treatment in highly underfunded and underequipped public hospital. This situation has caused the health sector to receive funding and equipment that would prove very useful once the pandemic is over.

In conclusion, although the lockdown order may have drastic effects on almost every aspect of living of Nigerians it is seemingly the best solution we have to fight the virus till at least it is contained or a cure is found. We should all stay safe too while in our homes, wash our hands, eat healthy and avoid public gatherings as much as possible to prevent the virus from claiming more lives than necessary.