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**THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC : THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN FROM A NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE.**

**WHAT ARE CORONAVIRUSES**

Coronaviruses are a large family of Zoonotic viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to severe respiratory diseases. Zoonotic means these viruses are able to be transmitted from animals to humans. Corona represents crown-like spikes on the outer surface of the virus; thus, it was named as a coronavirus.

Coronaviruses are actually a family of hundreds of viruses. Most of these infected animals such as bats, chickens, camels, and cats. Occasionally, viruses that infect one species can mutate in such a way that allows them to start infecting another species. This is called “cross-species transmission” or “spillover.”

COVID-19 is the most recent to make the jump to human infection. Common signs of COVID-19 infection are similar to the common cold and include respiratory symptoms such as dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and death.

The COVID-19 infection is spread from one person to others via droplets produced from the respiratory system of infected people, often during coughing or sneezing. According to current data, time from exposure to onset of symptoms is usually between two and 14 days, with an average of five days.

The COVID-19 first emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. Wuhan which was now emerging as a business hub for China experienced an outbreak of a novel coronavirus that killed more than eighteen hundred and infected over seventy thousand individuals within the first fifty days of the epidemic. This virus was reported to be a member of the group of coronaviruses. The novel virus was named as Wuhan coronavirus or 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) by the Chinese researchers.

**THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) IN NIGERIA**

In Nigeria, the cases of those infected with the virus have spiraled over the last two months. The rampant spread of the virus over the last month prompted a swift response from the Nigerian government in order to break the chain of spread.

The Nigerian government imposed a mandatory total lock down on all the 36 states with major concentration of the lock down to Lagos State and Abuja; The Federal Capital Territory as these states have a relatively high number of returnees from Europe and America who might have contracted the virus abroad in comparison to other states in the country.

The Nigerian government has also made efforts through the Nigerian Center For Disease Control (NCDC) to stop the chain of spread and to create awareness on the threat of the virus as well as the nature of the virus and the preventive measures that must be taken in order to prevent the spread of the virus as there is no cure or vaccine which can be administered at this point in time that can cure the virus.

The NCDC is the Nigerian government agency which was established with the main responsibilities which include monitoring, detecting and responding to infectious disease control outbreak. Over the last three years the NCDC has deployed a new System for Disease Surveillance.

The Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis system (SORMAS) is a system jointly developed by the NCDC and Helmholtz center for infections (HZI). The system has gone a long way in facilitating quick detection of the virus as well as monitoring the chain of spread of the COVID-19 in all states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The NCDC has been of immense support to all states with cases of the virus. They have been able to provide heavily affected states with medical personnel who are well trained in the field of disease control. The NCDC have also provided medical equipment which is being used in quickly discovering the presence of the virus in the respiratory tract of individuals who have showed symptoms of the disease.

Despite all this, the government body for disease control otherwise known as the NCDC could do a lot more to provide assistance to heavily affected states like Lagos, Abuja and now Kano so as to break the chain of spread of the disease throughout the country.

Scientist and Researchers all over the world are trying their hardest to come up with a permanent cure or vaccine for this deadly virus, they have also come to find out that the disease is not as deadly as it seems and most people who contact the virus are likely to self resolve depending on the strength of the persons immune system.

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE LOCKDOWN RESULTING FROM THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC ON NIGERIA AND HER ECONOMY.**

A Lock down is an emergency protocol that usually restricts people or information from leaving an area or country. The lock down protocol which was mandated by the Nigerian government through the president; Muhammadu Buhari has brought about both positive and negative implications some of which are highlighted below;

**NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

* The lock down protocol has restricted businesses from rendering their services thereby causing them to loose potential revenue that could have been gained.
* Since businesses are no longer generating revenue, smaller businesses may be in a very weak financial position and they maybe forced to furlough staff therefore leaving workers uncertain about the safety of their jobs after the pandemic and also leaving those particular furloughed staff in a position where they do not have the resources to cater for their essential needs during the duration of the lock down order.
* Individuals who live from hand to mouth like hawkers, mechanics and other daily earners will be unable to provide the essential needs for their families and may find it very hard to survive as a result of the lock down protocol.
* The lock down as a preventive measure to break the chain of spread of the COVID-19 will also result in the shutting down of schools which will disrupt the academic calender of the year and years to come. Students in their final year in the secondary or tertiary institutions maybe forced to do an extra year to conclude the syllabus.
* As a result of the lock down, the various sectors of the Nigerian economy will be incredibly dilapidated, therefore leaving the already suffering Nigerian economy in a situation of recession or gross debt.
* The lock down protocol has also restricted movement on interstate travel therefore hindering agricultural companies and food distributors from being able to distribute their produce or products to the various states in the country. The ripple effect of this could be enormous in the sense that food in some if not all states will be scarce and when food products become scarce the prices of food products in the market will become unbearably high owing to the market forces of demand and supply.
* Since all economic activities are no longer in session, when the lock down is eventually eased and the restriction of movement is lifted, the already suffering Nigerian economy will take a while to recover hence leaving the economy to crash into a great depression for a prolonged period of time which would be longer than the time it would take the developed economies of the world to recover from.
* The poor economic situation after the lock down is eased will lead to an increased crime rate all over the country.

**POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS**

* The lock down will enable the health care professionals in dealing with those already infected with the virus.
* The restriction is also very useful in trying to break the chain of spread as people will no longer be in large gatherings where it will be a lot easier for the virus to spread.
* The restriction on movement allows for ample family bonding time
* The restriction on movement will enable both public and private sector workers to rest and recoup energy for when the lock down is eased.
* It enables entrepreneurs and other individuals to think on other ways of making revenue and generating wealth.
* The lock down protocol will give people an opportunity to get closer to their God and work more on their spiritual life.
* The mentality of people will change as regards to how plans could change quickly so they will try as much as possible to make their plans more flexible leaving them in a better position in future events.

CONCLUSION

The lock down protocol put in place by the government was done so in order to enable the medical personnel and health care workers stay ahead of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It cannot be mistaken for a permanent solution to the COVID-19 virus which infects people through their respiratory tracts.

The severity of this virus can never be emphasized even when a cure or vaccine has been developed. It will forever be in the memory of those who survived the disease as well as those who did not as the spread of the disease must have affected everyone in one way or the other.

The NCDC still have a lot to do as regards curtailing or controlling the spread of the virus until a cure has been developed. The best way we as individuals could assist those at the forefront of the battle of humanity and the Coronaviruses that is those health care professionals or doctors who are treating and caring for those infected is by adhering to the governments directives by staying at home, we can also be of help to the medical professionals and to ourselves in our immediate environment by washing our hands frequently, by making use of an alcohol based hand santizers and by keeping your hands away from your face as the various openings on our faces are the only paths through which the virus can enter into our systems.

Let us be of help to the government and ourselves so that we may get back to our normal lives.