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ASSIGNMENT

Write a report on the coronavirus and the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigerians.

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA**

The virus 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. Scores of thousands of deaths have been recorded cumulatively for all countries across the world. Health systems in most countries are overwhelmed by the serious sick patients in the hospitals, many of whom are on ventilators and nursed in intensive care units (ICU). Global and local economies stand at their worst in decades; the world economy is now declared to be in recession by world Bank/IMF, and could eventually lead to the deepest depression since 1929.

When the Federal government of Nigeria found out about the virus, on 28th January 2020, they assured citizens of the country of its readiness to strengthen surveillance at five international airports as Enugu, Lagos, Rivers, Kano and the FCT. The Nigeria Centre for disease control also announced same day that they had already set up coronavirus group and was ready to activate its incident system if any case emerged in Nigeria.

On 31st January 2020, following the developments of the pandemic in mainland China and other countries worldwide, the federal government of Nigeria set up a Coronavirus Preparedness Group to mitigate the impact of the virus if it eventually spreads to the country. On the same day, the World Health Organization listed Nigeria among other 13 African countries identified as high-risk for the spread of the virus.

On 26th February 2020, a Chinese citizen presented himself to the Lagos state government on suspicion of being infected with coronavirus. He was admitted at Reddington Hospital and was released the following day after testing negative.

The first confirmed case of the pandemic COVID-19 in Nigeria was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus, caused by SARS-COV-2. On 9th March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen.

**THE EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN**

With so many cases still arising and high rate of death in Nigeria, although not as much as other countries. It would be hell if the COVID-19 breaks out in Nigeria on the scale presently being witnessed in Europe and the US. Apart from the dire state of the healthcare system, 69 million Nigerians have no access to clean water. This invariably leads to water-borne disease like cholera, which continue to break as regular epidemics. Social distancing and self-isolation presuppose that people have enough space. In Lagos where we have over 100 slum areas, about 80 people can be found sharing a 10 room building with only two toilets and a bathroom being shared by all with no pipe-borne or treated water readily available.

As parts of the efforts to curtail COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government ordered a lockdown. Locking people down at home in the Nigerian context is like asking people to go hungry for the duration of the lockdown. More than 60 percent of Nigerians survive on daily pay from menial jobs and petty trading. A lockdown means their means of daily livelihood have been locked down. Pangs of hunger will lead to widespread anger. Protest in different forms are already being seen within the communities.

**THE HYPOCRISY OF LOCKDOWN**

While the poor masses, a majority of whom are informal workers, are asked to stay of their businesses and sit at home, exceptions are proudly being granted to members of the ruling class and the billionaire class. In Ogun state, for example, Dangote trucks have been exempted from the lockdown order by the state government. Dangote is one of the richest man in Africa and thus the message is clear; one law for the rich and another for the poor.

A number of workers are compelled to go to work at the moment in spite of the lockdown; some, like the health workers on the front line and rearguards at the hospitals, through a sense of duty and the imperativeness of their job. Also, there are some whose work cannot be allowed to stop because it would the profit base of the bosses and the economic preserve of the ruling class.

In conclusion, the global outbreak COVID-19 emanating from China has sent the world in a state of panic and alarm. Our world is battling a pandemic, one that is disrupting world markets, stalling global trade, challenging emergency healthcare preparedness of states, disrupting normal lives, and testing the resolve of leadership in times of crisis.