**WAS LOCKDOWN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC A VITAL MEASURE DESPITE THE ACCOMPANYING HARDSHIP?**

**BY:**

**ANIAGO, DAVID CHIGOZIEM**

**WISDOM GATE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, EAST/WEST ROAD, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE**

**BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE UBA ESSAY COMPETITION 2020**

**October, 2020**

INTRODUCTION

The first coronavirus to humans was in Wuhan, China on the 17th November 2019 from where it spread to other parts of the world. The virus spreads through human contact so the safest way to curtail it was to reduce human contact. The virus was brought into my country, Nigeria through a visiting Italian, who, upon arrival, was found to carry the virus while undergoing routine medical checks at the airport. He was subsequently isolated and taken to a treatment center where he recovered after full treatment. The Word Health Organization (WHO) was later to declare the spreading virus a pandemic as it became life threatening globally and because there was yet no known treatment or vaccine available to contain it. Their action was equally justified by the newness of the virus.

Several Countries of the world, followed by closing their land, air and sea borders to limit the entrance of the virus in their own space. Since the medical world is studying the behavior of the virus to gain adequate knowledge towards its management, dealing with it involved a two-pronged approach of preventive and curative measures. Unfortunately, WHO and the entire medical world, faced with this tragedy, has no option than to advice countries to adopt partial and total lockdown.

Infection rate rose rapidly with many fatalities recorded while in some cases, there were no available bed spaces and infrastructures in the treatment centers and other hospitals. Governments moved to shut down activities to minimize human contact. Organizations in all sectors of the economy kept most employees at home. Banks, aviation industry, oil companies, communication companies and all other bodies followed by providing skeletal services. Religious houses were shutdown as people were asked to adopt a virtual approach to worship. Physical meetings were stopped as a way of limiting human contacts. Schools were hurriedly closed and all students sent home, all in effort to manage the epidemic.

THE NEW NORMAL

Only in very important situation could physical contact occur, and in such cases, those involved must adopt the officially approved measures to protect themselves against infection. The now popular COVID-19 protocols was drawn up by the Nigeria center for disease control (NCDC) as the officially adopted measures to manage the crisis. It encapsulates all the safe measures which everyone must adopt to stay safe. It became the normal to wear face-masks and to distance oneself from others. Meetings are now virtual, while students take lectures online.

As fatalities increased, governments saw the need to move from partial to total lockdown involving a total closure of offices and borders, canceling events, flights and virtually everything that requires physical closeness, except medical and other essential services. Curfew was imposed to further curtail human movement. Suffering increased as people were forced indoors. The food and other home needs earlier stocked-up were exhausted and hunger became a new problem. People started agitating for easing of the lockdown to enable them come out in search of food. There were feelings that hunger was likely to kill faster than the virus if people were kept in lockdown for too long.

The lockdown reduced macro and micro economies and the activities of mankind that facilitate economic growth were brought to their knees, while Nigeria’s economy faced a near collapse as it largely depends on oil exports. The crude oil markets have been on a downward trend as COVID-19 crippled the demands. Fuel prices fell and recorded 18 year low trading at less than 22 dollars per barrel and expected to go lower. Oil production dropped drastically , while Stock markets are falling daily as the global economy came crashing down. Most economies, are already in recession, which automatically have ripple effects globally.

However, the lockdown gave us a new unique culture as meetings are now successfully held virtually. The President of my country, His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari and other leaders held virtual meetings with a huge success. The lockdown humbled mankind to accept adoption of alternatives in the way of doing things.

CONCLUSION

What I would have done differently if I had the opportunity lies in the area of border closure. I would have shut our air, land and sea borders earlier before the visit of the Italian who brought it into my country