



RESPONSE TO THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS BY KATSINA STATE GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The continent of Asia has in the last two decades became the origin of disease outbreaks that affected the continent and areas beyond. These disease outbreaks include SARS-CoV-1 that broke out in the year 2003 and MERS that broke out in the year 2012. The most recent is SARS-CoV-2 otherwise referred to as Coronavirus or COVID-19 that broke out in 2019 at Hubei Province of China and then spread rapidly to other parts of the world emerging as a significant public health threat. The disease has since spread to Africa with Nigeria presently ranked the third most infected country after South Africa and Egypt. Federal and State Governments in Nigeria have adopted a number of measures to respond to the spread of disease. This article examines the response to the spread of coronavirus by Katsina State Government. Data for the study were generated mainly from secondary sources and informal discussions with some of the people of the State. The results have shown that the State Government has responded adequately by adopting a number of measures to contain the spread of the disease. These responses closure of schools and inter-state borders, imposition of lockdowns on affected Local Government Areas, creation of working committees and mobile courts, and a number of directives to business owners and transporters among others. These responses however have certain limitations and have generated many complains from the people of the State. It is therefore recommended that the State Government should tackle the limitations and address complains for more effective responses to the spread of diseases.*

KEY WORDS: Response, Spread, Coronavirus, Limitations, Complains, Covid-19, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The continent of Asia has in the last two decades became the origin of disease outbreaks that affected the continent and other continents of the world. One of these disease outbreaks was the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or SARS-CoV-1 that was detected on 16th April 2003 in Taiwan that then spreads to other parts of Asia (WHO,2003). The geographical spread of this outbreak remains within Asia. In the year 2012, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) broke out in Saudi Arabia then spreads to South Korea and United States of America (CDC,2012). The spread of MERS does not cover the large parts of the world and therefore its impacts are limited.

In the year 2019, SARS-CoV-2 broke out again in Asia in the Hubei Province of China. SARS-CoV-2 is a new virus that is responsible for the outbreak of respiratory illness known as COVID-19. Coronavirus belong to a group of viruses that may cause symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, difficulty in breathing, lung infection, sneezing and coughing (Awaji,2020).



The virus is mainly spread through close contact between persons and by small droplets produced during coughing, sneezing and talking (ECDP, 2020). The people that are more likely or susceptible to acute coronavirus infections are the aged or elderly people and people with underlying medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, HIV Aids and others (WHO, 2020a).

Since the report of the first case of the disease in December 2019, cases of the disease have spread rapidly around the globe emerging as a significant public health threat worldwide (Kowalik et al,2020). By 16th March,2020 the number of infections outside China increased drastically and the number of affected countries. States or territories reporting infections to the World Health Organization (WHO) was 143 (Bradford, 2020). On the basis of alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction, the Director General of WHO described the situation as a pandemic (Bradford et al, 2020). By 19th June 2020 6.33 PDT coronavirus has spread around the globe infecting more than 8.5 million people and killed more than 450,000 worldwide since January when it was first reported.

In the continent of Africa, WHO has observed that the number of coronavirus cases has been steadily increasing rising to more than 75,000 as at 7th June 2020 (WHO, 2020b). South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria records the highest number of infections. South Africa has recorded 118,375 cases with Egypt recording 61,130 cases and Nigeria recording 22,614 cases as at 25th June 2020 (ECDC, 2020 and NCDC, 2020). The spread of the disease to the continent raised special concern from the international community and WHO in view of poorly developed healthcare systems, inadequate budgetary allocation to healthcare and inadequate emergency preparedness for disease outbreaks of global proportion.

Nigeria has in the past two decades witnessed and experiences a number of disease outbreaks of different severity and geographical spread. These include HIV aids (2005-2012), Lead poisoning (2011), Ebola virus (2014-2015), Acute hepatitis E (2017), Cholera (2017), Monkey pox (2017-2018), Yellow fever (2019) and Lassa fever (2018-2020). The Coronavirus that broke out in 2019 is unique as it started as an epidemic to reach a pandemic proportion with simultaneous infections across the world within 1-3 months, its global coverage and rapid spread of the virus (Bradford,2020). Also, there is no known cure or anti-viral treatment leading to high mortality rates among infected persons even in the most advanced nations of the world such as USA, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Spain.

The first case in Nigeria was an Italian migrant worker who landed at Lagos on 24th February 2020. The disease infection then spreads to Ogun State that shares boundary with Lagos and later to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (Adamu, 2020). The arrival of the disease to Abuja and then Bauchi State lead to the spread of the disease to the northern parts of Nigeria including Katsina State. Since the outbreak of the disease in China, the Governments of many countries have adopted a number of measures to respond to the disease which include entire nations enforcing lockdowns, widespread halt to international travels, mass layoffs of workers, halt to national and international sporting events, closure of international borders, battered financial markets (Bloomberg,2020).

In Nigeria the Federal Government has responded to the disease outbreak by outlining a number of measures that were announced through presidential addresses to the nation and other measures conveyed through the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on Coronavirus that gives daily briefings to update the people on the situation at Abuja. At the level of the State Governments,



many States in the federation have adopted different measures to respond to the disease even at a time when the outbreak has not been reported in their States. It is based on this background that this article is set to achieve the following objectives.

- (i) Explain the response to the spread of coronavirus by Katsina State Government.
- (ii) Highlight the limitations of the responses by the State Government.
- (iii) Outline complains of the people on the response measures adopted by the State Government.
- (iv) Recommend appropriate measures to make the responses more effective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses mainly secondary sources to generate data for the study in order to achieve the set objectives. These sources include articles published in peer reviewed journals, development reports, Government news bulletins, press releases from government house, daily newspapers, radio and television programs on coronavirus and internet sourced materials published on the coronavirus pandemic that were retrieved through desk research. Informal discussions on the coronavirus pandemic and the measures adopted by the State Government were held with some residents of Katsina, the State capital and other Local Government Areas of the State where cases of the disease infections were detected and lockdowns were imposed on them. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data particularly use of tabulation in arranging the responses according to their effective dates. The data collected from these sources highlighted above sources were edited to suit the writing of the paper.

Response to the Spread of Coronavirus in Katsina State

The State Government has adopted a number of measures in response to the outbreak of coronavirus even before the first case of the disease was found in the State. These measures can be seen on the table below:

Table 1: Measures Adopted by Katsina State Government to Respond to the Spread of Coronavirus

S/No	Effective date	Response of the State Government
1	23 rd March 2020	Closure of public and private nursery, primary and secondary schools including tertiary institutions
2	25 th March 2020	Closure of inter-State borders with Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Zamfara States
3.	27 th March 2020	Suspension of large gatherings for weekly Friday prayers and Sunday church service
4	27 th March 2020	Directing civil servants to stay at home and not to report to work
5	30 th March 2020	Setting of Emergency and rapid response committee to assist Ministry of Health
6	31 st March 2020	Rehabilitation of a ward to serve as Isolation and Treatment Center at Federal Medical Center Katsina



7	1 st April 2020	Setting of Taskforce on public enlightenment and sensitization
8	7 th April,2020	Lifting ban on large gatherings in Friday prayers and Sunday church service and provision of prevention materials to the mosques and churches
9	11 th April,2020	Imposition of lockdown order on Daura LGA following detection of three cases of the disease.
10	17 th April,2020	Reinstating ban on large gatherings in Friday prayers and Sunday church service
11	17 th April,2020	Fifteen weekly markets in towns and villages across the State to close down
12	17 th April,2020	Imposition of lockdown order on Dutsinma LGA following detection of one case of the disease.
13	20 th April,2020	Presentation of breakdown of expenditure concerning donations received by the State Government
14	21 st April,2020	Imposition of lockdown orders on Katsina and Batagarawa LGAs following detection of two cases
15	21 st April,2020	Creation of two mobile courts to try violators of lockdown order in the affected LGA.
16	23 rd April,2020	Imposition of lockdown order on Jibia and Mani LGAs following the detection of one case each
17	25 th April,2020	Imposition of lockdown order on Safana LGA following detection of three cases of the disease.
18	1 st May 2020	Imposition of lockdown orders on Kankia, Musawa and Matazu LGAs following detection of two cases of the disease.
19	6 th May 2020	Directives to Tricyclists and commercial motorcycles to adopt preventive measures against the disease.
20	7 th May 2020	Imposition of lockdown orders on Malumfashi and Rimi LGAs following detection of one case each
21	10 th May 2020	Imposition of lockdown order on Ingawa LGA following detection of one case
22	14 th May 2020	Lifting of lockdown orders on Jibia and Mani LGAs following positive reports on the cases.
23	18 th May 2020	Lifting of lockdown orders on Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura LGAs for <i>eid</i> celebrations and re-stocking of food items and other provisions.
25	27 th May,2020	Re-imposition of lockdown order on Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura LGAs following increase cases of infections in the State.
26	3 rd June 2020	Lifting of lockdown order on Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura LGAs
27	14 th June 2020	Directives to Quranic and Islamiyya schools to remain closed till further notice from the State Government.
28	21 st June 2020	Announcement that playing football games remains suspended while football viewing centers should remain close till further directives from the State Government.



After holding a meeting at Kaduna other members of the North West Governors forum on 17th March 2020, the State Government issued a directive that all public, private nursery, primary and secondary schools including tertiary institutions should be closed for a period of 30 days with effect from 23rd March 2020. This directive was aimed at preventing the spread of coronavirus disease across the north west zone (Alabi, 2020).

The State Government issued a restriction order NOs/SEC.2/T/13 directing the total closure of the State borders and that with Niger republic with effect from 25th March 2020. This order is a precaution against the spread of coronavirus into the State. Residents of the State can move within the State's geographical boundary but not outside the area (The Cable, 2020). The closure of the borders are important as they prevent infected persons from other States and the Abuja that have already recorded cases, from coming into the State to spread the virus. Consequently, health and security officials were deployed to the border entry points to restrict movement and ensure those that are coming in with genuine reasons are medically examined before they are allowed entry into the State.

The State Government issued a restriction order NOs/SEC.2/T/14 dated 27th March 2020 suspending large public gatherings for the weekly Friday prayers and Sunday church service while marriage ceremonies are to be conducted in low key manner across the State. As part of the measures taken to curtail the spread of coronavirus (Oyelude, 2020).

With effect from 27th March, 2020 civil servants serving in the State civil service were directed not to come to work and therefore stay at home as a preventive measure against the spread of the disease. And in compliance with the directive they stayed at home until they were directed to resume work to provide skeletal services with effect from 6th April, 2020 to work from 10.00am to 2.00pm which continued up till the time lockdown order was imposed on the State capital on 21st April, 2020 and the civil servants also had to stay at home.

On the 30th March 2020, the State Government inaugurated the Emergency and rapid Response Committee chaired by the Deputy Governor of the State. Other members include Commissioners of Finance, Health and Justice, the Speaker State House of Assembly, Chief of Staff Government House and Chairman Afdin Constructions Limited Katsina. The committee is mandated to assist the State Ministry of Health to combat spread of the virus in the State. In line with this mandate the committee has received donations from private individuals and corporate organizations totaling nearly 300 million Nigerian Naira. The amount was expended in training of medical personnel and disease surveillance nursing officers, procurement of medical equipment for the isolation centers, payment of allowances to medical personnel, fumigation of worship centers, procurement of hygienic materials and funding the activities of taskforce on public enlightenment (Aminu, 2020).

On the 31st March 2020, the State Government started the rehabilitation of a ward that served as isolation and treatment center at Federal Medical Center Katsina. A new well-equipped isolation and treatment center was constructed at Internally Displaced Persons camp along Jibia road, Katsina which is a 160-bed capacity center to accommodate large number of patients. Another isolation center is presently under construction on a land area Between General Amadi Rimi Specialist Hospital and Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina to accommodate more patients when the need arises. The Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) Training School served as a quarantine center for child beggars (*Almajirai*) who were



repatriated from other northern States. This was after some of the beggars returned to Kaduna State from Kano State tested positive of the virus.

On 1st April 2020, the State Government inaugurated Taskforce on public enlightenment and sensitization committee. The committee is chaired by Commissioner of Information, Culture and Home Affairs. Other members of the committee include Commissioner of Women Affairs, Special Advisers of Higher Education and Girl child Education and Child Development, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Health and Chief Imam Banu Coomassie Friday mosque Katsina. The committee has carried out public enlightenment campaigns through radio and television programs and jingles, pasting of print materials on billboards, posters and flyers. The committee also visit markets and motor parks for their enlightenment campaigns and supervise movement of people at local government and inter-State borders. They also supervise activities in LGAs that are under lockdown to monitor level of compliance to the lockdown order and supervise shops and shopping malls that were allowed to sale essential commodities to the public during lockdowns (Sardauna,2020).

The State Government lifted the ban on large gatherings for the weekly Friday prayers and Sunday church service on 7th April 2020. The are however instructions that are expected to be followed for these gatherings to take place. For the Friday prayers Imams should focus on sermons that highlight what Muslims are expected to do during disease outbreaks. Also, the sermons should be short and during the prayers, short verses of the holy Quran should be recited so that the prayers can be concluded within a short time. The State Government provided the preventive materials that people are expected to use before entering the Friday mosques such as buckets of water and soap for hand washing and hand sanitizers. A visit to two of the Friday mosques at Katsina city on 14th April, 2020 showed some level of adherence to the instructions. This ban on large gatherings was re-instated by the State Government on 17th April 2020 following increase cases of infections.

On 11th April,2020 the State Government imposed locked down Daura LGA as a means of containing the spread of the virus This was following the first case of coronavirus infection in Katsina State who was a medical doctor who travelled to Lagos for some days and upon return, felt sick and went to the Nigerian Airforce Reference Hospital at Daura, Daura LGA. The doctor died on 6th April 2020 and the samples of 23 people he came in contact with were taken to NCDC and three were declared positive and admitted at FMC isolation ward. The State Government and some politicians provided palliative support to enable the people stay at home some days after the lockdown (PM News, 2020). SEPA officials later went to the residence and clinic owned by the doctor to spray chemicals in order to disinfect them to prevent spread of the disease.

The State government issued a press release on 17th April directing that fifteen major weekly markets in the State should close down to prevent gathering of large number of people that can potentially be a source of infection and spread of the disease. The press release further stated that efforts will be made by law enforcement agents to block other entry routes used by the people to enter the markets in order to ensure total compliance to the directive. Another press release dated 3rd May,2020 directed the shutdown of three more major weekly markets following growing concern by the Government and major stakeholders over increase of confirmed cases in the State (KTSG,2020). One other major weekly market was directed to close by the State government on 7th May,2020.



The State government-imposed lockdown order on Dutsinma LGA with effect from 17th April 2020 to prevent the spread of the disease to other parts of the State This is the second LGA to record infection of coronavirus where one resident who recently returned from Lagos tested positive based on a report from the NCDC (Pulse.ng, 2020).

On the 20th April, 2020, the Chairman of the Emergency and Rapid Response Committee convened a press conference and gave a breakdown of the expenses concerning the over 207 million Nigerian Naira that was then donated to the State Government. The breakdown of the expenditure came after criticism from stakeholders on the amount so far collected and what it is being used for in the fight against spread of the coronavirus (Aminu,2020).

On the 21st April 2020, the State Government locked down Katsina LGA due to two confirmed cases that tested positive based on test carried out by NCDC. Batagarawa LGA was also locked down due to its proximity with Katsina LGA on the same date. These two cases are persons who are businessmen who have travelled and returned to Katsina from other States of the federation. The two are residing at Kofar Kaura Layout and Sabon Titin Kwado in Katsina metropolis.

Also, on 21st April, 2020 the State Government inaugurated two mobile courts to try persons who violates the lockdown order. The two courts have operated on daily basis during the period of the lockdown and they are located outside Kofar Kaura and Kofar Guga in Katsina, the State capital (Sardauna, 2020). The number of the mobile courts were increased from two to five as more LGAs were locked down in the State. As at 17th May, 2020 when the mobile courts suspended operation, the courts have trailed a total of 1,223 persons in accordance with the law for disobeying the lockdown order.

On 23rd April 2020 both Jibia and Mani LGA were locked down by the State government.

These are the fourth and fifth LGAs to record infections of coronavirus where one person each tested positive according to reports by the NCDC. The people of Jibia LGA have argued that the person that tested positive is only an indigene of the LG but he resides in Katsina metropolis and therefore there was no need to impose lockdown order on the LGA.

On 25th April 2020, the State Government imposed locked down order on Safana LGA which became the sixth LGA to record infections of coronavirus is where three persons tested positive based on reports by the NCDC. According to report these three persons are primary contacts of the index case established in Dutsinma LGA (Pulse.ng, 2020b). These three persons are residents of Tsaskiya village located in the north eastern part of the LGA.

The State Government imposed lockdown order on three LGAs are Kankia, Musawa and Matazu on 1st May 2020 in line with the decision taken by the Government and other stakeholders to shut down any LGA where coronavirus case has been detected (Misau, 2020).One person tested positive based on reports by NCDC in Kankia and another person also tested positive but the health officials could not identify whether the village he lives is in Musawa or Matazu LGA. Matazu LGA was unlocked a week later because it was identified that the village where the infected person lives is located at Musawa LGA.

From the above highlights, it can be observed that the number of infections keep increasing so also are the number of LGAs that are locked down to contain the spread of the disease. On 4th May 2020, the State Government announced that it recorded thirty-seven (37) new cases of



coronavirus which then increased the total number of the infections to seventy-five (75) cases (Nseyen, 2020). The number increases as medical officials continue contact identification and tracking with samples taken to verify the status at the NCDC whose daily reports mostly included Katsina State among the States with number of positive cases. Also, out of the 37 cases recorded above, fourteen (14) of them are medical personnel that are working at FMC Katsina and other private clinics (Nseyen, 2020). So, while attending to and treating coronavirus patients, medical personnel are also infected which increases the number of infections in the State.

On the 6th of May, 2020 the Chairman of the Taskforce on public enlightenment and sensitization issued a directive to operators of commercial motorcycles and tricyclist. The directive requested the operators to wear facemasks, use hand sanitizers and observe physical distancing while carrying passengers. This directive is for the twenty-two LGAs that are not under lockdown while the twelve LGAs under lockdown are to continue to comply with the lockdown order.

On 7th May 2020, the State government impose lockdown order on two LGAs which are Malumfashi and Rimi to stop the further spread of coronavirus pandemic in the State (Madugba, 2020). This development then brought the number of LGAs under lockdown to 12 out of the 34 LGAs in the State. These two LGAs to recorded infections of coronavirus where one person each has tested positive based on reports by NCDC. On 10th May 2020, the State government-imposed lockdown order on Ingawa LGA to stop the further spread of the disease This is the 13th LGA to record infection of coronavirus where one case has tested positive based on reports by NCDC.

On the 17th May, 2020, the State Government relaxes the lockdown order for the LGAs that are still under lockdown from 18th to 26th May 2020. The relaxation is to enable conduct of prayers for the end of Ramadan month, *eid-el-fitr* celebrations and re-stocking of food and provisions. However, on 27th May, 2020 the lockdown order was re-imposed on three LGAs namely Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura. According to the State Government the re-imposition was due to the addition of 12 confirmed cases in the State as announced by the NCDC on the 16th May, 2020.

The lockdown orders are lifted in the affected LGAs once there are reports that the cases have been treated and show no traces of the disease as was the case for Mani, Jibia and others LGAs. By 31st May 2020, only three LGAs are under lockdown which are Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura LGAs. These LGAs account for 80% of the cases recorded in the State, as out of the 337 cases in the State 294 are recorded in these LGAs with 43 cases from other LGAs as at 26th May 2020 (Vanguard, 2020).

On the 3rd of June 2020, the lockdown order on the three remaining LGAs was lifted with the lockdown period to be observed from 10.00am to 4.00am daily. The lifting of the lockdown order has come as a welcome relief to the people especially daily income earners whose level of income has been seriously affected and are finding life difficult. Following the lifting of the lockdown, the State civil servants were directed to resume work on the 8th June 2020 but they must observe the preventive measures against the spread of the disease.

On 14th June 2020, the State Government issued a directive to Islamiyya and Quranic schools that have resumed studies on their own to be closed as the dangers of the virus is still around.



Again, an announcement by the Commissioner of Youths, Sports and Social Development directed that football matches should be stopped and football viewing centers should also close as the ban has not been lifted by the State Government.

From the above it can be observed that the positive cases keep increasing from zero case in early April to over 300 cases at the end of May 2020. The cases increase despite the several preventive measures adopted against the spread of the disease. This clearly means that there are some limitations of the preventive measures adopted by the State Government which are highlighted below.

Limitations of the response by the state government

There are many limitations of the measures adopted by the State Government which explains why the infection cases continue to rise in the State. The limitations also explain the challenges encountered while the government attempted to impose some of the preventive measures on the people of the State. These limitations are outlined below:

- (i) The Taskforce on public enlightenment does not include some important personnel that should have boosted their activities and make the taskforce effective in the discharge of its mandate. These include special adviser on social media to the Governor, representative of National Orientation Agency (NOA), youth groups and non-governmental organizations.
- (ii) The Taskforce on enlightenment and sensitization concentrated most of its activities in the State capital and LGAs in the northern part of the State. Some people in other LGAs were not enlightened on the preventive measures adopted by the State government such as directives to people not to gather in large numbers for the weekly Friday prayers. This led to violent protests by followers of a religious group leaders on 28th March 2020. The followers attacked policemen on duty at Kusada Police Division, burn the police station, the DPO's quarters, seven vehicles and ten motorcycles parked at the premises of the police station (Oyelude, 2020).
- (iii) The representative of Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) Katsina State Chapter has observed the need for the weekly markets to be closed also in view of the first reported case of the disease in the State that was reported on 7th April 2020. Some of these markets were large number of people gather were directed to close by the State government only on the 17th April 2020, ten days after the first reported case. Other weekly markets were directed to close on 3rd and 7th May 2020. This delay in closure of the markets have contributed to the rise in infections in the State.
- (ii) There is no effective monitoring and control of the State borders with other States and neighboring Niger Republic. The result was that many people entered the State through the unofficial routes such as bush paths, foot paths and cattle routes thereby raising the rate of infections. Even the index case of the State based at Daura returned from Lagos State and entered into the State on 4th April 2020, when the borders have been closed since 25th March 2020.
- (iv) The closure of inter-state borders are very important in the control of the spread of infection of coronavirus in Nigeria as a whole. That is why there was a presidential directive banning inter-state travel. In some neighboring states such as Kano and Kaduna



the State Governors and their Deputies personally went to their borders with other states to monitor, control movement into their state and even event to the extent of directing the arrest and prosecution of violators. This extent of monitoring and control of entry into States was not witnessed along the Katsina state borders.

- (v) In many states of Nigeria including Katsina State, politicians and government house officials are in the forefront in the fight against coronavirus rather than medical and health professionals. The politicians in most cases tend to politicize the activities of the committees they are appointed to serve at the detriment of the fight against the disease. About eighty per cent (80%) of the members of the taskforce on enlightenment and sensitization and the rapid response committee are not medical and health professionals.
- (vi) The State Government did not take effective measures to monitor the activities of the index cases at Daura and Dutsinma LGAs. This resulted in release of a video and audio clips by two of the index cases denying that they are not coronavirus positive. This has created doubt and suspicion in the minds of the people on the genuineness of the index cases and the presence of the disease in general.
- (vii) There was no coordination and adoption of common preventive measures adopted by Katsina State Government and the Governments of neighbouring States such as Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna concerning attendance to weekly markets, gathering for Friday prayers and eid prayers. This has encouraged the movement of people through the unofficial routes to other States to attend weekly markets and gather for Friday prayers.
- (viii) The State Government did not make any provision to provide food and some basic necessities to cater for those who work daily to earn a living. This lack of palliative care has not only led to protests but people disobeying the lockdown order. The lockdowns have not been effective as some people have zero savings to survive on them and as such had to go out to engage in some jobs such as operating commercial motorcyclists, tricyclists and petty trading (Mafaa and Ahmad, 2020).
- (ix) Before the completion of the 160-bed isolation centre at IDP camp, Jibia road Katsina, there are persons who received text messages that their tests for coronavirus are positive and therefore should isolate themselves at home. These patients that are not on admission in isolation centres are possibly coming in contact with other people and therefore transmitting the disease to other people. This may be one of the reasons for the rising number of positive cases in Katsina State as reported by NCDC daily updates during the months of April and May 2020.

Complaints on the response by Katsina State Government

There are many complains by the people of the state concerning the measures adopted by the state government to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease. These complaints are highlighted below:

- (i) Some medical health practitioners have complained to the State Government that they not included in the Rapid Response Committee chaired by the Deputy Governor of Katsina State. This Committee is the most powerful among the committees that were set up by the State Government and yet no medical health practitioner is included as a member.



- (ii) The people of Katsina LGA have complained about the erratic supply of electricity that residential quarters are experiencing during the lockdown which is not encouraging the residents to stay at home. This complain was also put forward by the people of Jibia and Mani LGAs on the first day of the lockdown of their LGAs.
- (iii) The people of Katsina LGA have complained that the time grace given to them before the lockdown to purchase foodstuffs and other provisions was inadequate as only a day and a half was given which was quite inadequate. This has resulted to traffic congestion, overcrowding in markets, and supermarkets and shopping malls, long queue in gas stations, difficulties in accessing public transportation etc. A minimum of three days are required by the people in an LGA of the size and population of Katsina LGA.
- (iv) Some people of the locked down LGAs have complained to the State Government that they have no food in stock to eat during the two weeks of the lockdown. Then how can they be expected to comply strictly with the lockdown order, as they are daily income earners who have to go out to earn an income to buy foodstuff, provisions and other necessities of life.
- (v) The people of Mani town have complained of lack of portable water supply as they use to travel 5kms to a village along Mashi road to fetch water. During this travel, that is mostly by trekking and the fetching of the water, social distancing cannot be maintained. Therefore, adequate water has to be supplied if social distancing is to be practiced.
- (vi) The people of Jibia LGA have complained that the index case of the LGA is only an indigene whose native village is Bugaje, a village closer to Katsina city than Jibia town. Also, the index case resides at Shaiskawa quarters in Katsina city and therefore there was no need to impose lockdown order on Jibia LGA.
- (vii) People have complained about the increase in the price of goods that are sold at the authorized business operators such as pharmaceuticals, grain stores and shops selling essential commodities. This tend to reduce the purchasing power of the people and increasing the economic difficulties the people are facing due to the lockdowns.
- (viii) The people of Batsari, Batagarawa, Faskari, Kankara and Sabua LGAs have complained that the State government has devoted much attention and resources to the fight against coronavirus while neglecting the fight against banditry which has intensified within the end of April to middle of May 2020 claiming more lives than the coronavirus pandemic.
- (ix) There are farmers who are living in Katsina, Batagarawa and Daura LGAs but they were locked at home. This does not give them the chance to go to their farmlands located outside the towns in preparation for the 2020 farming season. This is in view of the fact that the rains have started falling and farmers in neighbouring LGAs have started planting crops.
- (x) Some security agents deployed at road junctions, roundabouts, checkpoints and entry points into the State in order to ensure compliance to the lockdown order were accused by members of the public of collecting money to allow violators to go free. In some instances, they even beat up people as was reported at a Friday mosque in Katsina metropolis, Dankama and Kaita weekly markets and central market, Katsina.



- (xi) The imposition of lockdown in some LGAs does not give chance for the people in some LGAs to go and sell their cattle so as to escape cattle rustling by the bandits terrorizing parts of the State. A member of the State house of Assembly representing Safana LGA even called on the State Government to lift the lockdown in his constituency so as to avail his people the chance to sell the remnants of the domestic animals before cattle rustlers and bandits forcefully take them away (Kuraye, 2020).
- (xii) The imposition of lockdown has put a lot of people under pressure as it restricts movement from one place to another which the bandits took advantage to launch attacks on some villages of the LGAs such as Dutsinma, Musawa and Kankara (Aminu, 2020b). These attacks during the period of the lockdown were even acknowledged by the President Buhari in his June 12th Democracy day address to the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in order to ensure that effective preventive measures are adopted against the spread of coronavirus and any other disease in future.

- (i) The taskforce on public enlightenment and sensitization should expand its activities to the southern parts of the state. This will enable the people of that part of the State to be fully enlightened and sensitized so that they will not resort to any act of violence that is against the law.
- (ii) The State Government should continue to enlighten the public as there are some people who doubt the existence of the virus. If no action is taken such people will continue to jeopardize the health and wellbeing of the other people of the State.
- (iii) The State government should ensure that relevant professionals constitute the various committees in charge of fighting disease outbreaks. This is one sure way to improving the performance of these committees towards achieving the desired goals.
- (iv) The lockdown should be implemented and caution in view of the fact that majority of the people in the State are living by their daily earnings through petty trading, artisanship, handicrafts, riding commercial motorcycles and tricycles among others. So lockdown leads to total loss of income by the majority of the people in the affected LGAs.
- (v) The Federal and State Governments should make and implement a program to support the owners of small businesses in order to fully recover from the impacts of lockdowns in the affected LGAs. People who lost their jobs as a result of the impacts of the coronavirus and the associated lockdowns should also be assisted to regain their jobs as a result of the pandemic.
- (vi) The State Government and the Government of neighboring States should meet before taking measures against any disease outbreak in order to adopt common measures that will discourage movement of people across the boundaries.



CONCLUSION

The coronavirus pandemic has led Governments across the globe to respond by adopting unprecedented measures with the objectives of curbing the spread of the virus particularly in view of the fact that the virus does not spread itself but rather it is the people that spreads it. Some of these response measures include closure of schools, tertiary institutions, markets, industries and the imposition of lockdown order which has succeeded in containing the spread of the virus with minimal social and economic difficulties in the developed countries. The adoption of similar response measures in the developing countries such as Nigeria has brought maximum social and economic difficulties which has given rise to large number of complaints by the people as highlighted in this article using Katsina State as a case study.

Katsina State Government like other States in Nigeria has adopted many measures as a response to the spread of coronavirus even before the first index case of the disease. Therefore, it can be argued that the measures adopted to respond to the spread of coronavirus have assisted to reduce the number of infections. By 25th May 2020, Katsina State ranked fourth in the number of confirmed cases with 337 cases among the States of the federation but the State has considerably moved down to rank thirteenth with 434 cases as at 25th June 2020. This movement down the ranks is commendable as the State is no longer among the five most infected States with the coronavirus. This development notwithstanding the State Government should continue to adopt appropriate measures to respond to the threats posed by the coronavirus to the people of the State.

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