

Deep Pains and Deeper Inequality: Covid 19 Effects On Informal Sector Employees In Esikhaleni Settlement

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Abstract: Background: *The Covid-19 forced South African government to institute lockdown from stages 5 to 1, started on 26 March, 2020 until 28 December, 2020. Later, the country was returned to stage 3, on 29 December, 2020 as a result of second wave of coronavirus new variant detected and ended on 1 February, 2021.*

Aim: *The study analyses the impacts of lockdown on informal sector employees in Esikhaleni, Kwa Zulu Natal.*

Method: *The qualitative approach was employed. 30 participants were selected through random sampling and purposive method. Phone in based interview was conducted for data collection from the respondents between, the periods 1st January, 2020 to 1st February, 2021.*

Results: *The study reveals memories of pains inflicted by apartheid regime, wounds and scars opened, and government's service delivery procedures tested. Most informal sector employees, denied education during apartheid, now work in informal economy. Their wages are low, moreover, not regular. The lockdown also prevented them from working. Even, after easing the lockdown economic activities contracted, results in less income to informal sector employees. To some Covid 19 is apartheid in disguise, because, it exposes, how they were ignored during apartheid for infrastructural development. The pandemic further, deepen and widen the inequality gap. Whilst those in formal sector on stable income, the informal economy employees mostly (blacks) were living on charity of organisations and friends. The basic water to wash hands was unavailable. This questioned effectiveness of governments' service delivery processes. However, few participants realised the importance of savings to overcome obstacles of this nature in future.*

Conclusion: *Overall some participants realised, the need to develop their skills to be employable in the formal economy, where salaries and jobs are stable compares to informal sector.*

Recommendations: *It is therefore, recommended that skill training centres should be built in, Esikhaleni community, for those who might be interested to learn new skills.*

Key words: *Lockdown, Informal economy, Apartheid, Covid-19, Esikhaleni.*

I. Introduction

The Covid 19's wreaked havoc, ramifications, pandemonium and devastating conditions created in various countries, not only causing death and health problems, but rather forced millions to starve for hunger. The lives of the people had changed, revenues loss, and the global chain supply was shut down. The employment composition and nature had been in turn moiled or upsized down in the world, with tourism sector 'bleeding' profusely. Because, tourism sector is mainly labour intensive industry, which relies on the migration of people as well as the physical presence of the workers, before work can be done. The ripple effects of the lockdown cannot be underestimated, being it in transport sector, agricultural industry, hospitality, accommodation and what have you (Guan et al, 2020). The effect of the pandemic penetrates and cuts across all spheres of human life. Kock (2020) assertions on the deadly pandemic maintains that it is unique and defies the norms of other virus 'it is the combination of natural disaster, a socio-political crisis, and economic crisis and tourism demand crisis'. This implies no country is spared by the pandemic, being it poor or rich, whites or blacks in society, and more so, it affects all spheres of human endeavours.

As of April, 2020, barely three months into World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus as a global pandemic, on reaching infection rate of 80,000 worldwide (New York Times (2020) ; WHO (2020),

United States of America (USA) recorded 14.7% unemployment rate in their economic sector (Rosenberg and Ling, 2020). It is regarded as unprecedented in the history of USA, since the World War II (WWII) (Rosenberg and Ling, 2020). To Cheer (2020; 514) arguably the ramifications caused by the pandemic 'it is the most profound economic downturn since the great depression'. The United States of America statistics records indicate that, African-Americans and Hispanics, who double as low income earners as well as minority in the country, had been hit hard by the Covid 19 infection, death, and job losses (New York Times, 2020; Worldometers, 2020). As a result deepening, widening and aggravating existing economic and social inequality in the country based on the racial basis (Timiraos, 2020). Across the globe, India, China, Malaysia, Spain and Singapore, the informal sector employees largely low wage earners in the economy had been devastated by the deadly pandemic (Chatterjee, 2020 ; BBC 2020). In short, the pandemic had exposed already and pre-existing social, health, economic and income disparities hurting the minorities, vulnerable and destitute in societies the more.

The Republic of China, where the deadly pandemic originates was not spared. The pre-existing inequality between the rural and urban dwellers was well exposed and intensified to the core (Hernández, 2020). As in elsewhere like United States of America, where the economic and social inequality among citizens cut across racial lines, the scenario is not different from South Africa (Chan and Wei, 2020), the gap of inequality was deeply widen and exacerbated by Covid 19 pandemic. The inequality 'bridge' the South African government was 'constructing' by giving out transfer grants (child grant, disability grant, foster grant among others) to the economically disadvantage and marginalised in the country was forcefully 'pulled apart' by Covid 19. However, in case of China's economic inequality occurs as a result of geographical location that is rural-urban divide (Hernández, 2020). The South African economy which is dominated by the informal sector employees (Stats SA, 2019), and form the cog that propel and power the economy, was hard hit by the stringent lockdown of the economy. The great majority of them are found in the low income groups, factory workers, street vendors, delivery workers among others. Economically and socially they live at the lowest hierarchy (Wong et al, 2020). Most of them are found in the unskilled jobs. As the pandemic wreak havoc across the globe all countries closed their borders, in order to protect their citizens from the killer pandemic. The supply chain suffered and causing dominion effects, and economic activities grounded to stand still. The question is, what are the impacts on informal economic sector employees during the lockdown stages with shutting down, and easing of the economy as a measure to curb the spread of Covid 19?

The fate of the informal sector employees is crucial to the country's security, social stability, and for the future. Therefore, if necessary measures and good policies are implemented for them to up skill themselves, they could be the future drivers of the South African economy (Miller, 2012). If they are left unattended to, and the pandemic hit them hard, 'cripple' and 'paralyse' them in such a way that, they cannot recover from their level of poverty the country may be in disarrayed in future. The repercussions, consequences and knock on effects may be very unbearable for the society, and the country at large. The aim of this paper is not to trumpet the contributions of the informal economic sector employment to the gross domestic products (GDP). But rather, to assess the lockdown stages and measures such as self-quarantine, self-isolation, social distancing and physical distancing impacted and bestowed on the informal economy employees. Despite, the lockdown measure was taken to prevent the spread of the Covid 19, it had detrimental effects of the economy (Ren, 2020; Graham,-Harrison and Kuo, 2020). The lockdown measure disrupted lives and created 'new normal' in families, societies, communities, regions, countries as well as in the world. To compare other country's lockdown measures to that of South Africa, some scholars believe that South African lockdown was too stringent and harsh. Rogan and Skinner (2020) explain the harshness of South African lockdown that 'all citizens were instructed not to leave their homes other than to access food, medicine and social grant, only workers defined as 'essential services' providers could travel'.

As the lockdown was instituted and prevented the informal economy employees from operating their daily activities, their life styles as well as level of income were affected. More so, their activities need physical presence and cannot work from home, what are the impacts of the lockdown stages on them (informal economic sector workers)? Another concerned of this paper is the timing of the lockdown, may bestowed untold hardship on informal worker employees, because, South African economy was in recession, before the lockdown was implemented (South African Reserve Bank (SARB), 2020). Recession is the process where the economy of country decreases for two consecutive quarters (SARB, 2019). The murky, cloudiness and confusing surrounding the lockdown about how the informal sector employees were affected by the lockdown restriction and stages set the tone for this paper.

Esikhaleni community, whose majority of 85% are informal sector workers (Stats SA, 2010), therefore, adopted to find out the level of impacts the lockdown had on them. This presents a unique case since issues of psycho-

social cannot be left unattended, because, of the dominion effects it has on the society as a whole and a country at large.

II. Brief history of lockdown stages in South Africa

On the 26 March, 2020 restricted lockdown was instituted across the country (South Africa), as a measure to curb and ameliorate the infection rate of the pandemic. More so, it aims to help the government to prepare the health personnel psychologically as well as to secure the necessary equipment's for the patients who may be infected by the Covid 19 (The Presidency, 2020). Citizens were asked not to go out unless for food and medications. Only the essential services workers were allowed to travel. Borders were closed, aeroplanes grounded, regional travelling shut down, and all economic activities halted. As of 31 March, 2020 South Africa's infection rate was 1353 with 5 deaths recorded (Worldometer, 2020). The initial idea for the restricted lockdown was to last for 3 weeks, but it was later extended for another two weeks, and ended on 30 April, 2020.

The concept of lockdown stages and levels were introduced in South Africa. The stage or level 5 means the hardest, implies people were not allowed to leave their immediate environment, unless for food or medications, follows by 4, then 3 and in that order (The Presidency, 2020). The economy was being eased or unlocked as the levels were descending. The level 5, restricted, confined, and prevented movement of people. Jogging and brisk walking on the street were an offence under restricted lockdown rules and regulations. About 70,000 soldiers were deployed on the road together with South African Police Services (SAPS), to enforce the laws of the lockdown (The Presidency, 2020). There was travelling ban within the country, cities as well as townships. The whole country was deserted, and was as quiet as cemetery. A drop of a pin can even be heard of at loudest noise. To some extent some coined the term 'ghost periods' to describe the period of strict lockdown, because, of serenity which prevailed in the atmosphere. The hardest lockdown ends on the 30 April, 2020.

The level four witnessed the easing of the economy, which started from 1 May, 2020 to 30 May, 2020. Some services such as, transport and basic services were allowed to operate, but with strict Covid 19 protocols (The Presidency, 2020). In the taxi industry limited number of passengers were allowed to be carried. More so, the shops were allowed to admit about 5 clients at a time only (The Presidency, 2020). Furthermore, lockdown was eased to level three, which started, 1 June 2020 to 17 August, 2020. Under the level three, ban on restaurants, physical exercises like jogging on the road and brisk walking, travelling within the provinces among others were lifted, but with regulated operational periods. Demerit goods such as alcohols and cigarettes were completely banned (Booyens, 2020; The Presidency, 2020). The demerit goods are the goods considered by the society to be harmful. And they (demerit goods) are usually over supply by the market. Because, as the presidency put it they (demerit goods) are causing much trauma for the drunkards to be admitted, as a result stretching the overage health facilities to the limit (The Presidency, 2020).

Then again, stage 2 starts from 18 August, 2020 to 20 September, 2020. To some extent the economy was more opened than the previous levels. The night curfew was also eased and operates from 22 hours to 4 hours in the morning to allow movement of people. Social gatherings such as funerals and church services were instructed to be held with the maximum of 50 attendants and congregants respectively. Night vigils were not allowed, since funerals are considered to be super spreaders of the pandemic (The Presidency, 2020).

The alert level 1 begins from 21 September, 2020 to the 28 December, 2020. Most economic activities were allowed to operate with precautions and guidance. Various social gatherings were permitted. Beaches were opened, restaurants were operating with caution, as well as casinos and cinema centres were opened with maximum precautions. On the 29 December, 2020, during the eve of the New Year the country was returned to level three. As a result of the second wave of Covid 19 that engulfed the country with a new variant, which was also detected in United Kingdom (UK) (World Health Organisation, 2020). The economic activities were once again restricted. Alcohol was banned again. Ban extended to social gatherings such as churches, cinemas as well as cultural activities like, marriage ceremonies and initiation schools (Booyens, 2020; Ferreira, 2020). The initiation school is a cultural practices mostly among the Xhosa's in South Africa, where circumcisions are down for the teenager boys in ushering them into adulthoods (South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) news, 2020). Funerals were held with limited number of people. The economy was unlocked again on the 1 February, 2020, which coincides with the arrival of first batch of AstraZeneca's vaccine for Covid 19 from India (The Presidency, 2021).

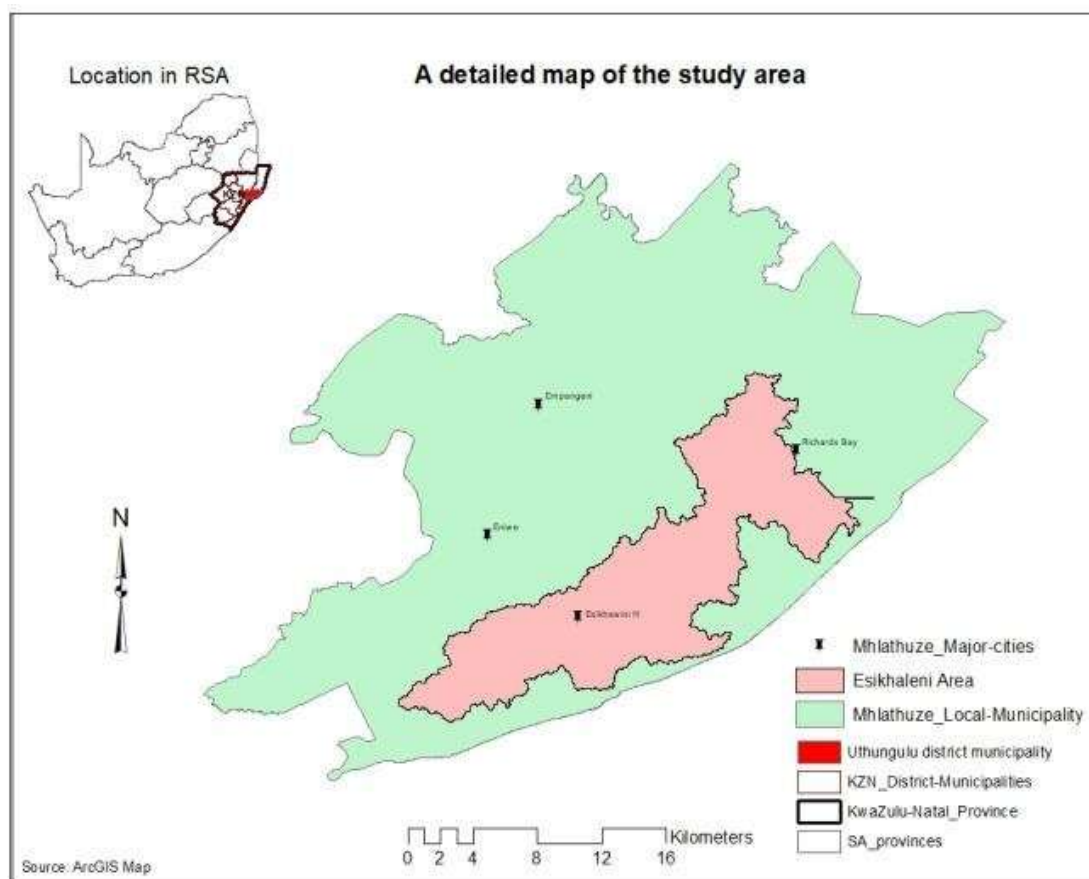
From the aforementioned level of lockdown stages, one can realised that, the sector which was hardest hit mostly is the informal sector economy and its employees. Because, they are low wage earners, their income depend on their daily activities as well as their physical presence to render services before wages. In other words, they (informal sector employees) cannot operate from home to earn income, neither nor their income is stable. Therefore, what impacts the deadly Covid 19 had on them during the lockdowns? The Esikhaleni Community is chosen for the study area, because about 85% of the residence are in the informal economic

sector (Stats SA, 2010). To be abreast with the population area under study, the description and the map of the study site is presented next.

III. The Study Area

The Esikhaleni as it is currently called was known as Esikhawini, which means in Zulu ‘the meeting point of the sea’. Esikhaleni was established in the year 1976 (Zulu Kingdom, 2008). Located in King Cetshwayo district of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. The people are mostly Zulus with 99.8 percent representation (Stats SA, 2010). The socio-economic status of the township (ekasie) dwellers is described to be low income. As at 2001 the population was 32,437 and in 2010 the township dwellers increased to 49,265 (Stats SA, 2010). The density of Esikhaleni is 5,500/km². The Esikhaleni is located 2km of the N2 route and the closest towns are Empangeni and Richards Bay with 15-20 km apart.

Esikhaleni double as the home of Ecubhu Lake and King Cetshwayo monument where it is on the record that, King Cetshwayo boarded a ship to be imprisoned in Cape Town after the defeat of Amazulu in the 1879 war in Ulundi (Impact, Economic Strategies of Zululand, 2007, 8: 8). Below is the map of South Africa showing details location of Esikhaleni as a study area in pink colour.



IV. Unemployment Conditions At The National Level During Lockdown

According to Statistics South Africa (Stats, SA), (2020) the working age population or economic active population (EAP) also known as labour force of quarter 2, increased by 147,000 or 0, 4% as compares to last year of 588,000 represents 1.5%. The number of employment decreased by 2.8 million to 4.3 million compares to quarter 1 of 2020, resulting to unemployment rate of 21.4% (Stats SA, 2020). The decrease in the level of unemployment was experienced across the globe. As a result of catastrophe caused by the deadly pandemic, reported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) monitor in 2020. Therefore, the statistics on the unemployment rate shows in South Africa, follows the global trends. The largest unemployment observed in the formal sector is 1.2 million, the informal sector recorded 640,000, with private households experienced 311,000, and Agricultural sector witnessed 66,000 decrease in employment (Stats SA, 2020). Guesses aside, it would be a bit cloudy and muddy on the informal sector economy to establish the accurate data of job losses during the lockdown periods.

In the view of Quarterly Employment Statistics (QES) Survey, 2020. The quarter 2, recorded 648,000 job losses in the formal non-agricultural industry. Reduced employment rate in the country to 9.5 million and the formal job decreased by 671,000 (QES Survey, 2020). All industries experienced the havoc of the pandemic by shedding of their labour force. The job losses occurred in quarter 2 compares to quarter 1 of 2020 took place in trade industry with, 192,000, business services industry, 147,000, and community services experienced 103,000 (QES Survey, 2020). Further, unemployment were witnessed in manufacturing, construction and transport industries with figures 85,000, 74,000 and 38,000 respectively. The moderate job losses occurred in mining and electricity industry with 6000 and 3000 respectively. The year on year job losses show a decrease of 671, 000 as of June, 2020 compares to June 2019 (QES survey, 2020).

The quarter 3 survey by QES in 2020 indicates that the jobs in the formal non-agriculture sector increase by 75,000. Therefore, increased the total number of formal non-agricultural employees closer to 9.6 million. However, formal sector decreased and shed jobs of 616,000 (QES Survey, 2020). It must be noted that, an increase experienced in employment data occurs as a result of the lockdown restriction was eased to level 1. Implies, the economy was opened to almost all industries. The breakdown of the gains recorded in the third quarter were recorded in 4 out of 8 industries. Trade industry, community services, construction industry and manufacturing industry with 31,000, 26,000, 21,000 and 8,000 respectively. On the contrarily note, business services recorded 7,000 job losses, follows by transport with 5,000, then again, mining industry with 2,000 and lastly, electricity industry jobs remains unchanged or stable (QES Survey, 2020). The full time job increased by 47,000 based on quarter on quarter and 28,000 par time jobs experienced the green light. (QES Survey, 2020).

Furthermore, the income level of the respondents were assessed, and the statistics shows that the level of no income increased from 5.2% to 15.4%, within the first 6 weeks of the lockdown. Then again, the gross domestic of product (GDP) decreased to the unprecedented record of 51% in the history of South Africa, only agricultural industry experienced a significant increase of 15% (Stats SA, 2020). The South African government having realised the impacts of the lockdown provided palliative, food parcels and food packages in some areas during the lockdown restriction (The Presidency, 2020). What really are impacts on the informal economic sector workers in the country in general and for that matter in Esikhaleni dwellers in particular? From the inferences one can realised that the level of poverty was on rise, and standard of living was decreasing under the lockdown. Therefore, the lockdown as a measure adopted to avoid the spread of the pandemic, presented unique phenomenon. Which shows a decreased in the level of employment in the country as a whole, give birth to this paper to find out the impacts that the lockdown had on Esikhaleni dwellers. The Esikhaleni residence are predominantly in the informal sector economy, and their incomes are not stable. In addition, their income earnings depend on their daily activities and physical presence, which was shut down and curtailed by the lockdown. Even, easing of the lockdown to level one, the economic activities experienced contraction or decline making it difficult for the informal economic operators to 'float'. From the aforementioned discussions, it can be summarized with an African proverb which maintains that, if green grasses are burning, what of the dry grasses? This implies, permanent jobs in the formal sector economy are being shed off during the lockdown as a result of contraction in the economy, how about those in the informal sector economy. The next section explores the method used to collect data for analysis.

V. Methodology

The underlying philosophy for the study is the phenomenon approach guided by the qualitative research which is used to collect the data. The qualitative approach is the best and most effective way to gather information and collect data when there is need to know much about an occurrences or events as it happens (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative approach is also significant and relevant, because the research topic deals with the psycho-social that is the impacts of lockdown on the people (informal sector employees) of Esikhaleni during lockdown, from 26 March, 2020 to 1 February, 2021. The qualitative research is explained by Corbin (2008) as a means of collecting data, interpreting, analysing and developing empirical ideas and understanding about the data collected. According to Creswell (2009) the qualitative approach is the process of identifying human problems and analyse them and assign meaning to them. The study area survey lasted for about five days. And permission is sought out from the participants to partake at their own will. It was explained to the participants that they were at liberty to withdrawal if they feel uncomfortable to answer any questions. And all information collected would be deleted without any penalty.

The purposive sample techniques was employed to gather the respondents up to the saturation of 30 participants. The services of the research assistance was employed since one of the researchers cannot competently speak isiZulu, the dialect of the township dwellers. The research assistance was briefed about the study aims, objectives and other expectations before the semi-structure interview was conducted through the telephone. The used of the telephone was necessary, because that was the period the country (South Africa) experienced the second wave of Covid 19 with new variant from the first wave. Then again, the field work coincide with the returning of the country to level three, as a result of high rate of infection rate in the country form 29 December,

2020 to 1 February, 2021. More so, the phone interview was adopted so that the field workers would not be exposed to the deadly pandemic infection. The data was collected, from 1 January, 2021 to 1 February, 2021. The data collected through the telephone interview was read over and over, proofread, coded and the emerging themes relevant to the study were identified. Thematic analysis was employed to evaluate the data and data was presented using narratives.

VI. Results / Findings

The finding reveals four aspect of impacts that were inflicted by the lockdown stages on the people of Esikhaleni. These were identified as economic, psychological, social and emotional impacts.

6.1 The economic effects on Esikhaleni residence during lockdown stages.

The participants felt that the pre-existing wounds, pains and agonies inflicted by the apartheid regime were once again opened and widely deepen. Some recalled how they were denied basic right to social amenities such as education, health, entertainment centres and recreational parks, which made them not to have education and qualification, in order to work in the formal sector economy. This is what one participant had to say.

‘In fact, the pandemic is more or less the same as the apartheid regime. The Covid 19 created a situation, where others have access to basic needs and wants, whilst some did not have. My brother, common basic water to even wash our hands is not flowing. The water which is used in the cities to flush toilets are cleaner than the water we drink here (Esikhaleni). Look at times, we share streams with animals’. Another participant added his voice by saying.

‘Frankly, the inequality created by infamous apartheid is more or less raising its ugly head in a disguised form. You can just imagine, those of us here (Esikhaleni) are almost Zulus and finding it difficult to meet three square meals during the stages of lockdown and even at level one stage. Because, after easing the lockdown there are no jobs. Whilst the other races are enjoying and able to provide for their families. The inequality among the race is being exacerbated, widen and deepen’

The statement indicates and exposes, how the national cake of the country was not shared equally in terms of infrastructure development in the country in the apartheid era as well as presently. It portrays how some parts of the country were well endowed with social amenities and others even suffer to get the basic services to be delivered. Furthermore, the statement raises an eyebrow on the processes and procedures the current government is using for delivery of services. Moreover, not acquiring critical skills by the Esikhaleni dwellers also come to play a role. Because, during the lockdown periods those who acquired high skills and employed permanently were on regular salary. They might not experience financial hardship though, as the participants expressing in their statements as a problem in lockdown stages. They might have their own problem about the lockdown though. Another participant also added her voice.

‘I normally go out to get my daily bread each day in the town. During restricted lockdown you cannot even get to the road, the law enforcement agencies will arrest you. No money at home and our food stock is running out. I don’t know when this lockdown will be lifted. We are hungry in the house, whilst we are able bodies that can go out to work and get food, but you cannot do that, because of lockdown. Even when the lockdown was eased and the economy opens businesses were down, people do not have money to buy, and the economy was very slow’.

The statement expresses how people do not have the basic needs and wants at home, yet, they cannot even go out to look for it to satisfy themselves. The participant maintains that their businesses were slow even when the economy is opened. Linking it to Moses story in the bible, who saw Canaan, but never reached there in the case of strict lockdown. The people know and, are aware about what to do to put food on their table for their family or to quench their hunger, but with lockdown rules and regulations it’s impossible. In the nut shell, it can be summarised that, the lockdown just brought memories of infamous apartheid and awaken the sleeping dogs that were lying in the post-apartheid.

6.2 The social effects of the lockdown on Esikhaleni dwellers.

The socialization aspect of life was shut down, restricted and curtailed through all stages of lockdown as a result of fear not to contract the pandemic. The concepts and terms introduced such as; social distances, physical distances, self-isolation, self-quarantine say it all. Brothers and sisters were afraid to share food as well as playing games together, because, of high rate of Covid 19 infections. The norms, values of caring and selflessness were thrown to the dogs. Individualism overrides ‘we feeling’, selfishness becomes language over selflessness and lastly, it seems darkness and night overtake, as well as overshadow light and day. In simple terms, the whole world was in turn moiled or upside down. This is what one of the participant had to say.

‘Frankly, this ‘thing’ called Covid 19 and its lockdown measure to avoid the spread of infection should not come again. How can you be afraid of your own brothers and sisters? He quizzed. It is unheard of. No place to go, moreover, your immediate family that you can get closer too, are afraid you. What a world? When the lockdown was eased and you sneeze in the taxi or in the town, you can just imagine the level of panic expressed by people running away from you. Normal coughing to clear lung is seen with scornful eyes, oh what a world. He remarks!!!’

The statement shows that the participant was just not happy about the so called ‘new normal’. It is just boring and makes an individual feels isolated like being on an island or in another planet (to borrow the term of geographers), despite being surrounded by people to play with. In a way, it relates to an African proverb which maintains that, one is surrounded by a pool of water, but very thirsty. Another participant also added her voice.

‘Chairman, beaches, cinemas, casinos and what have you are closed. More so, going to playing ground to paly is an offence. Is it only watching television, the order of the day or sleeping? Hmmmmmmmm, even when beaches opened everyone is afraid to go out for socialisation. At lockdown stage one, you do not see anyone outside, everyone is afraid to get closer to be infected by the pandemic’.

The statement shows that there is an element of frustration the lockdown bestowed on the participants during and after relaxation of the lockdown. Remaining in the house and immediate environment without going out all day could be a burden on its own. Even easing the lockdown does not improve the level of socialisation, because, everyone is afraid of each other not to be infected by the pandemic. The daily messages from the South African government explains it further. It reads ‘stay home and be safe’. Moreover, the emotional message from the tourism industry which states that, do not travel now, so that you travel later, could deter people from engaging on social activities.

6.3 The psychological effects of lockdown on the Esikhaleni dwellers.

The psychological impacts combine with other economic and social factors, because by nature if economic and social aspect of individuals not well balanced one is psychologically affected. The issue of self-esteem and self-respect play under psychological factor. Some households had to resort to begging of arms from the formal and informal organisations, before they can eat. Food parcels and food packages from churches and friends helped some families before, they did not go to bed with an empty stomach. One of the participant had this to say.

‘In fact, this is not life. I am an able body who can work, and feed my family, because of lockdown I have to resort to begging of food from friends. Just guess, how will they portray me in their mind? He quizzed soberly, I cannot go out to work and earn income even after the economy is unlocked work was not forthcoming’.

The statement expresses how self-reliant and hardworking individuals now become beggars, because of lockdown. Begging of arms does not even give you that self-confidence as well as self-respect among your friends and families. Another participant had added his voice.

‘How can you be respected when you have to rely on food parcels from the community? Am I a state or community property? He quizzed (angrily expressing negative emotions). I never think this predicament will happen to me, but here we are. I don’t want to talk about it, I am just praying this pandemic will be over’.

The finding reveals the level of frustration and an unexpected occurrences of the lockdown. People do not anticipate that events of this nature like, deadly pandemic and lockdown could happen in their lives. However, to some participants, it is an eye opener that they (participants) must learn from it.

6.4 The emotional effects during the lockdown among Esikhaleni township dwellers.

The practice of waking up, go to work and put food on the table of your family had been restricted. Even after the lockdown was eased, it was difficult to make the ends meet, because the economy did not pick up. The kids as little as they are might not know the new normal bestowed by the lockdown. Their demands and needs might not change. Food stocks, income, and savings may be running out, because the expenditure is on rise without any revenues. In other words, there are more household outflows of income than the inflows or expenditure is greater than income. Which results in swing in the moods running through the family during and after the lockdown. It is not surprise the South Africa Police Service (SAPS) data indicated that the domestic violence increased during the lockdown stages (SAPS, 2020). Words that could be said pre-lockdown for family members to laugh over, becomes an insult during the lockdown as a result of mood swing of the family bestowed by the financial pressure. In other words jokes become an insult in the name of lockdown pressures. This is what one participant had to say.

‘The lockdown is posing problem in the house. Once you ask for money from hubby, it’s like you touch matches with petrol, the flame just goes up. It is a problem. My hubby is lively person but now, he just sits quietly and be thinking, even aftermath of the lockdown the same behaviour pattern is displayed. You can realise, how this lockdown has affected lives?’ Another participant also maintains that.

‘The lockdown just brought sadness into this family even aftermath the same pattern of behaviour. We were leaving happily. Now the lockdown has made everyone’s facial expression in the family very bitter. It is very sad. I don’t want to live this kind of life with my family’.

The statement indicates how the family values and norms have been torn apart, because of the lockdown stresses. Even, after the lockdown things did not change as expected, which may be due as a result of financial challenges.

VII. Field work experiences

The field work experience was interesting as well as challenging. Since the country was returned to level three stage of lockdown on the eve of New Year, 29 December, 2020. The researchers visited the study site, demarcate the research site and give out the consent letters for the participants to sign. The demarcation and seeking concern of participants who were earmarked of, to take part in the research took barely five days. The research work which took the form of phone in based interview started on the 1 January, 2021 to 1 February, 2021.

On the field to survey the study area at Esikhaleni community and signing the letter of consent, we met the law enforcement agencies, who were the Police and the army in full force patrolling the areas for the lockdown rules and regulations not to be breached. They approached us and the permit as well as letter of consent for data collection was shown to them, but, they were not convinced and more so, could not understand why a research should be undertaken in the level three of lockdown where new variants of the Covid 19 infection is detected. However, with the soft voice and plea from the research assistance, we were allowed to do our work. To get the participants also was another hurdle, because nobody was expecting any visitor at a time as a result of fear of being infected with Covid 19 pandemic. Some participants expressed that knocking on the doors they could think that it was the law enforcement agencies.

Then later, the phone in process interview began from 1 January, 2020 to 1 February, 2020. The phone in based method was adopted in order to avoid contact with the people since the new variant of Covid 19 found in United Kingdom and South Africa was more deadly than the first wave of coronavirus. Hardly could phone calls go through. An instances, where the calls went through the phones were not picked up. This brought a bit of stress and anxiety to the researchers however, they were encouraged by the words resilience and dedication to duty in other to push the research to its final stage. It must be noted that, those participants who picked up the phones and interviewed indicate that they really enjoyed the interview section. Some of the participants could not believe how quickly, approximated two hours could go by without them noticing. Others express their desire to participate in future research work under the situation like the lockdown, because it helps them to do away with the boredom, stress and anxiety that was associated with the lockdown. The phone in based interview put financial stress on the researchers, since the participants had an ample time and were ready to give out all information under their armpit.

Overall, the field work during the lockdown provides both threats and in depth knowledge about the research. The threats in the sense of breaking the lockdown rules and regulations, because some of the law enforcement agencies did not understand why a permit was issued, whilst an opportunity in the a way that participants had much time, they were not rushing to any place, therefore much information was given out which actually enrich the writing of the research work.

VIII. Conclusion

The Covid 19 declared as global pandemic by World Health Organisation on infecting 80,000 people worldwide. Various countries adopted lockdown measure to curb and ameliorate the infection rate. This causes loss of jobs and revenues to the citizens and to the state. In South Africa various levels of the lockdown were instituted with the stage 5 being the hardest and level, 1 being the lowest where the economy was opened. Lives were affected and new normal become the order of the day. National unemployment rate figure increased and in the recorded of South African history the GDP fell to 51% (SARB, 2020). The informal sector economy was the hardest hit by the lockdown measure, because they (employees) do not have fixed or regular income. The impacts that the lockdown measure bestowed on the Esikhaleni dwellers who’s majority happened to be in the informal sector economy ranging from economic, social, physiological and emotional. Some participants described Covid 19 to be apartheid in disguised form. To them the lockdown really waters the seeds planted by the apartheid and they geminated. However, the finding reveals that most participants feel the lockdown

measure teaches them lesson and see it as an eye opener to add values to themselves, because the future occurrences cannot be predicted.

IX. Recommendations

- Despite, there is need for the informal sector in the economy, one can say that their income is very low and unstable. Any unforeseen circumstances like the Covid 19 will push people to the back foot financially. It is therefore, recommended that skills training centres must be built in and around the environs of the Esikhaleni Community so that residence who want to develop and up skill themselves can do so.
- More so, the Esikhaleni residence should be educated on savings, because there are raining days in life. Life cannot be from hands to the mouth always.
- Furthermore, the policy makers and planners should address the social and economic inequality among the citizen. Moreover, the government's policy of services delivery must be re-examined to ensure effective and efficient means to deliver services to the people at the grassroots' level.

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