

## **Managing the COVID 19 Crisis**

With the onset of globalization, the implementation of the restructuring process in many workplaces, followed by the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, are factors which have combined to bring about the closures of many businesses. Micro, small and medium size businesses have been dealt a severe blow. The laying off, retrenchment of workers and the altering of working arrangements, have contributed to a reduction in the sustained levels of employment. Those who once occupied jobs which were seen as status jobs are now finding themselves on the breadline and fighting like crabs in a barrel for the few high-status job in the labour market.

At the start of the 1990's and moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, few would have even envisaged this onslaught upon the workforce. Governments have continued to promote jobs as a number one priority. While the consequence of new technologies has been the scaling down of available jobs in some sectors, it is understandable why governments have tended to support the introduction of new technologies. The case has been repeatedly advanced that this development gives life to the promotion of efficiencies and higher level of productivity. While they consider this as appropriate for the times, it raises the question of their awareness of the potential this has on aiding the reduction on the demand for manual labour. With the looming threats to job retention, job security and job sustainability, governments' thinking seems to be run contrary their voicing of jobs being a number one priority.

Across the world, unemployment has been on the increase. With the apparent lowering of the threat of the corona virus as vaccines come on stream, the decision by governments to reopening countries to business, is the signal for the restoration of a state of normalcy. Given the fear factor of new strains of the virus which are impacting on societies and the vaccine hesitancy which continues to occupy the minds of many, it would appear that there is no quick solution to the return to business as usual. Workers are pushing back against the idea of mandatory vaccination, as is being promoted by some employers. The slow pace of work to find a solution to this problem, might be deeply emersed in the fallout which governments stand to face from any political decision taken to make immunization

for the corona virus mandatory. The possibility is that there resides a latent fear of becoming unpopular with the electorate, and hence the resort to moral suasion is being used as the preferred option to encourage and entice persons to become immunize.

With the slow pace of immunization being recorded worldwide, the problem of reaching herd immunity is a slow process. It seems rather unfortunate that it requires the resort to offering a million-dollar lottery draw to entice persons to be immunized. Countries like the United States of America that have infinite resources, are better placed to undertake such an initiative. Whether the offering of a monetary incentive will work is now left to be seen. Small developing countries around the world which have limited financial resources available to them are highly unlikely to contemplate offering such a lucrative incentive to drive the immunization programme.

The attention of those poor countries is likely to be more occupied with the sourcing of donations of vaccines from the rich nations of the world or engaging in the negotiation process in an effort to acquire vaccines at a reduced purchase cost. While the acquisition of the vaccines remains a pressing problem, governments remain constrained in instituting the force of law, in taking the decision to make immunization mandatory. Without access to the vaccine to the full population, Governments find themselves between a rock and a hard place in attempting to consider making immunization against the corona virus mandatory.

Those who preach the doctrine of extensive lockdowns answer to rid the world of the corona virus, are apparently losing sight of the main objective of getting the global population immunize. When ever a period of lockdown ends and life temporary resumes to some state of normalcy, each impacted country understands that it is not business as usual. It is hardly likely that there will be a change to the existing situation until there is herd immunity.

Medical practitioners and public health officials ought to turn their attention from the diagnosis of the problem and move to focus on the treatment. Lockdowns are unsustainable. A viral infection as COVID 19 is said to be, does not go to sleep during the course of a lockdown. In fact, with a lockdown, it may appear that the virus has gone into a state of dormancy, but commonsense would suggest that when it ever

a country reopens to business, the sleeping giant will awake from its slumber and become active again.

Inasmuch that the science does not suggest that the viral infection will go away as a result of engaging in lockdown, it can only be that this is a containment measure until countries have full access to the vaccines, so as to allow for herd immunity to take place.