

Economic Recession and Almajiri Education Goal Attainment in North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of economic recession on the achievement of Almajiri education goals in Nigeria. The study focused on the extent to which economic recession has affected the funding, maintenance and provision of basic infrastructural facilities in Almajiri integrated schools. A total of 80 respondents were sampled for the study through the simple random sampling technique. The survey research design was adopted for the study and questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data collected in the study was analysed using simple percentages. From the findings of the study, it was discovered that economic recession has stagnated the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria by diverting government's attention from Almajiri education and parents' inability to provide the educational needs of their children. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that economic recession has led to inadequate allocation of funds to Almajiri education goal attainment, it has led to irregular payment of teachers' salaries in Almajiri schools and inadequate maintenance of Almajiri schools. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the Nigerian government, despite the effects of economic recession should allocate adequate funds for the running, maintenance and development of Almajiri model schools in Nigeria and non-governmental organizations such as UNDP and UNICEF should partner with the Nigerian government in the funding and development of Almajiri education.

Keyword: Economic recession, Almajiri education, Goals attainment.

Introduction

Economic recession is a crisis which has ravaged many economies around the world has caused noticeable imbalance in Nigeria. Besides depleting the country's external reserves, it has led substantially to the crash of the stock market, the erosion of the country's revenue by over 60 percent and the depreciation of the national currency, (James, 2015). However, Oyesola (2016) reported that, "Nigeria has been hit by the economic recession with inception of the regime of President Muhammadu Buhari led government. The term economic recession can be defined as a situation where there is a crisis or a down-turn in a nation's economic activities, thus affecting the standard of living and elements of the economy. In Nigeria, the educational system is almost completely dependent on government budgetary allocation and with the economic crisis; the sector will no doubt witness its fair share of budget cuts which will affect not only the teachers but also students and families.

The major goal of government intervention in Almajiri education in Nigeria is to ensure that the Almajiri children acquire functional and qualitative education that will enable them impact greatly on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. In the recent time federal Government of Nigeria made attempts to integrate western education with Islamic education so as to transcend the Almajiri to functional member of noble society. Merging the two system of education together to curtail the plight of street begging by children and youth pursuing Almajiri education is a welcome development. The system is to accommodate the Almajiri who are coming to the city from far and near village for Almajiri knowledge. The purpose of integrating the two system of education is to provide education opportunities for this category of children to acquire Qur'an education as well as basic western education so as to improve their living condition. By doing these, it will enable each state of the federation to achieve Educational for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2020. (Education for All – EFA – Global Monitoring Report, 2015)

Nigeria is a nation that value and has embraced education for a very long time. She has committed a large chunk of her earnings to the pursuance of education at all levels and has adopted education as an instrument per excellence. The government is of the hope that for the benefit of all citizens, the country's education goals shall be clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the realities of our environment and the modern world. FGN (2004) 'every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability'. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2004) in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria has always meant well for the development of both the individual and the nation at large; different regimes (uniformed and civilian) have pursued educational programmes with vigour. It is on record that Northerners have ruled this country longer period than the rest part of the country. Why have they delayed in incorporating Almajiri education into the formal education system? Even the UBE scheme which focused on the education of the various segments of the less privileged Nigerians did not quite address the integration of the Almajiri system into the Western education. Successful northern rulers did not envisage that the neglect of this teaming Almajiri population could and would become a menace and a thing of national disgrace in the future.

According to James (2015), there is a sudden renewed interest in the Almajiri syndrome and the need to integrate them into the formal school system. The Nigerian government formally signed into law Almajiri education on the 10th April 2012. In his presentation to the National Economic Council in July 2013, the then minister of state for Education, Ezenwo N. Wike, noted that to ensure that Almajiris are provided with opportunities for access to Basic Education Federal Government set up the National Committee on Implementation of Almajiri Education Programme. The Committee was charged with integrating the Almajiris into the UBE

Programme without prejudice to acquiring a sound mastery of Qur'anic knowledge. The programme was to help in the acquisition of skills to enable them participate more actively in society.

However, presently, in Nigeria, there seem to be little or no discourse on the state Almajiri education in Nigeria. This paper is therefore prompted to assess the influence of economic recession on Almajiri education in Nigeria. In a related development, Abdulmalik (2016) lamented on the issue of funding and maintenance of the Almajiri schools. The author observed that the Nigerian government is and consistent in its commitment to the development of Almajiri schools. The schools are not properly funded and maintained. Most of the structures and facilities in the schools have deteriorated with no effort from the government to renovate them. (Oyesola, 2016).

Statement of the problem

Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 has been battling with series of violent, crisis and agitations from various geo-political zones in the country (Ahmadu, 2015). These agitations pose serious threat to its economic growth. Nigeria is a rich nation but Nigerians are poor, many extremely so. Nigeria has suffered growing security, capacity and legitimacy gaps, demonstrated in the declining capacity of its institutions to deliver public goods, including security, transportation, water, medical care, power and education. However, Abdulmalik (2016), particularly noted at the last quarter of 2016, Nigeria went into an economic recession that crippled economic activities and extended its effects to other sectors of the economy particularly the education sector, household income and high inflation. Due to the present economic hardship, very little attention is being given to Almajiri education. The Nigerian governments have in the past made effort

establish Almajiri model schools to provide western style of education to Almajiri children however, in recent times, very little is being said or done to improve the goal attainment of Almajiri children in Nigeria. It is due to the above observed problem that this study was prompted to assess the influence of economic recession on Almajiri goal achievement in Nigeria.

purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of economic recession on Almajiri goal achievement in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include:

Determine the extent to which economic recession militates against the goal achievement of Almajiri education.

Determine the extent to which economic recession has affected the funding of Almajiri education in Nigeria

Determine the extent to which economic recession has affected the quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri schools.

research questions

The following research questions are formulated to facilitate the findings of this paper:

To what extent has economic recession affected the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria?

To what extent has economic recession affected the funding of Almajiri education in Nigeria?

To what extent has economic recession affected the quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was employed in carrying out this study. The descriptive survey assesses the challenges of integrating the Almajiri children into the universal basic educational programme were surveyed and data collected were subjected to statistical analysis. The target population for this study was defined as all teachers in the Almajiri schools in Plateau State of Nigeria. The sample consisted of 80 (eighty) teachers that were randomly selected across Plateau State. The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by three experts in the area of measurement and evaluation for face and content validation. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part one consisted of personal data of the respondent. Part two sought information on the impact of economic recession on funding, infrastructural facilities, quality of instruction and goal attainment of Almajiri education in Nigeria. The researcher personally administered 80 (eighty) questionnaire to the respondents who formed the sample used for the study. The data collection exercise took three weeks to complete. The data obtained from this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent has economic recession affected the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria?

Table 1: Extent to which economic recession affected the goal attainment of Almajiri education in Nigeria

| s/n | Item | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|-----|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1 | Economic recession has stagnated the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria | 80 | 100% | - | - |
| 2 | Economic recession has diverted government's attention from Almajiri educational goal attainment | 62 | 77.5% | 18 | 22.5% |
| 3 | Economic recession has resulted in parents' inability to provide the educational needs of their children | 54 | 67.5% | 26 | 32.5% |

Table 1 shows that 80 respondents representing 100% agreed that economic recession has stagnated the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria. 62 respondents representing 77.5% agreed that economic recession has diverted government's attention from Almajiri educational goal attainment while 18 respondents representing 22.5% disagreed. 54 respondents representing 67.5% agreed that economic recession has resulted in parent's inability to provide the educational needs of their children while 26 respondents representing 32.5% disagreed.

Research Question Two: To what extent has economic recession affected the funding of Almajiri education in Nigeria?

Table 2: Influence of economic recession on funding of Almajiri schools

| s/n | Item | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|-----|--|-------|--------|----------|--------|
| 4 | Economic recession has led to inadequate allocation of funds to Almajiri education goal attainment | 69 | 86.25% | 11 | 13.75% |
| 5 | Economic recession has led to irregular payment of teachers' salaries in Almajiri schools | 54 | 67.5% | 26 | 32.5% |
| 6 | Economic recession has resulted in poor maintenance of Almajiri schools | 52 | 65% | 28 | 35% |

Table 2 shows that in respect to item 4, 69 (86.25%) respondents agreed that economic recession has led to poor allocation of funds for Almajiri education goal attainment while 11 respondents representing 13.75% disagreed. 54 respondents representing 67.5% agreed that economic recession has led to irregular payment of teachers' salaries in Almajiri schools while 32.5% of the respondents disagreed. 52 respondents representing 65% agreed that economic recession has resulted in poor maintenance of Almajiri schools while 28 respondents representing 35% disagreed.

Research Question Three: To what extent has economic recession affected the quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools?

Table 3: Extent to which economic recession has affected the quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools

| s/n | Item | Agree | % | Disagree | % |
|-----|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| 9 | Economic recession has led to low quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools | 75 | 93.7% | 5 | 6.3% |
| 10 | Economic recession has led to lack of adequate teaching and learning infrastructures in schools | 56 | 70% | 24 | 30% |
| 11 | Economic recession has de-motivated teachers in Almajiri schools from teaching effectively due to poor remuneration and infrequent payment of salaries | 51 | 63.7% | 29 | 36.3% |

From item 9, the data show that 75 respondents representing 93.7% agreed that economic recession has led to poor quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools while 5 respondents representing 6.3% disagreed. 56 respondents representing 70% agreed that economic recession has led to lack of adequate teaching and learning infrastructures in schools while 24 respondents representing 30% disagreed. 51 respondents representing 63.7% agreed that economic recession has de-motivated teachers in Almajiri schools from teaching effectively due to poor remuneration and infrequent payment of salaries while 36.3% disagreed.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that economic recession has stagnated the goal achievement of Almajiri education in Nigeria by diverting government's attention from Almajiri education and parents' inability to provide the educational needs of their children. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that economic recession has led to poor allocation of funds to Almajiri education goal attainment, it has led to irregular payment of teachers' salaries in Almajiri schools and poor maintenance of Almajiri schools.

The result of the study also showed that economic recession has led to poor quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri model schools. It has led to lack of adequate teaching and learning infrastructures in schools and demotivated teachers in Almajiri schools from teaching effectively due to poor remuneration and infrequent payment of salaries.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned findings, it is obvious that economic recession has negative impact on Almajiri education goal attainment in Nigeria. It has limited the funding and quality of teaching and learning in Almajiri schools thus limiting the achievement of Almajiri education goals such as 100% enrollment of Almajiri children in Almajiri schools and providing qualitative education to all Almajiri children in Nigeria. The implication of these findings is that the implementation of the integrated Almajiri educational programme is adversely affected by economic recession and thus resulting in poor achievement of the goals and objective for which the scheme was set for.

Recommendations

Based on the assessment in this paper, the following findings were proffered:

1. The Nigerian government, despite the effects of economic recession should allocate adequate funds for the running, maintenance and development of Almajiri model schools in Nigeria
2. Parents of the Almajiri children should try as much as possible to see that the educational needs of their children are provided so as to enable them acquire qualitative education.
3. Non-governmental organizations such as UNDP and UNICEF should partner with the Nigerian government in the funding and development of Almajiri education
4. The State, Federal government and non- governmental organizations should provide adequate instructional facilities .in the integrated Almajiri schools for teaching and learning to be effective in such schools.

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