

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S SURVIVAL IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

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ABSTRACT

The recent global economic meltdown has my doubt brought untold hardship on the generality of Nigerians Experts believe that the financial unbalance has created increasing dangers which can be summed up as increase in unemployment poverty violence against women increase in crime rate, which poses enormous challenges to the survival of families in Nigeria. The paper examined the causes of economic meltdown and effects in Nigeria. Effects of the meltdown on women were highlighted. These among users include poverty inability for families to provide the basic necessities of life, increased violence in the home and maternal and infant mortality. It was recommended that women should form cooperative societies to enable them get credit facilities to set up their businesses and vocational training centers set up in towns and villages for skill acquisitions.

INTRODUCTION

The world today is experiencing a global phenomenon that is simultaneously peculiar and disturbing The phenomenon is affecting nations, societies, religion and people and as its scope is universal, no one is left out As Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) came ravaging the globe until it became a deadly reality, so was the signal of the global warming and now the economic meltdown. The meltdown crisis is sending the whole world into a grip of fear. The hydra-headed monster has taken a serious toll on all the sectors of the nations of the world

The term economic meltdown could be called economic "go slow". Just like the traffic jam which grinds vehicular movements to a halt with attendant man-hour losses and physical and mental stress. Economic meltdown brings an economy to a halt or standstill Economic meltdown according to Isang (2009) is a down tum in a nation's economic activities. Eruka and Tyoga (2009) viewel economic meltdown as economic "go-slow" Economists have coined several phrases to express this reality to include global crunch, global economic crisis. financial breakdown,

financial crisis economic downturn, global recession and so on Economic meltdown phrase is not only on the lips of Economists but also on bankers, teachers, lawyers, the enlightened and illiterates in Nigeria Suleman and Shinco (2010) stated that the global economic meltdown has emerged not only as one of the most universally discussed economic crises that the century has experienced, but it is also one of the crises that have shaken the whole world to its root and that have affected every facet of human life. Although the present economic meltdown in the world today is not a new phenomenon it has been seen in the practice of capitalist economy since the era of Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 20 century The future of the economy of the nation Nigeria which was once regarded as the most viable in Africa looks precarious Nigeria's economy is threatened as prices of crude oil, the mainstay of the economy since the early 1970s has consistently fallen In Nigeria the global economic crisis has affected all the sectors from the banking manufacturing, oil and gas and the informal sector Ogbonna, Adigun. Sanyaolu and Udunze (2015) maintained that the Nigerian economy rated a Africa's largest with \$510 billion annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) appears to be heading for the precipice even though the federal government said there was no cause for alarm. A pointer to this claim is the mounting arrears of public employees salaries particularly among the 36 states of the federation arising from sharp drop in statutory allocation to federating unit

Economic meltdown has created intense human suffering, economic turmoil and deep misery which are manifesting by loss of jobs, hunger, poverty, crime, prostitution, depression frustration, anger, lethargy, aggression among others Global economic meltdown is a serious socio economic problem Its seriousness in Nigeria could be seen in the recent hike in the price of Premium Mo Spirit (PMS) at pump stations few days before the handover of Officer in Nigeria on 29th of May 2015 from President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to President Muhamadu Buhari The PMS which supposed to be sold at 87 per liter in Nigeria rose as high as 120-N500 and above per litre in different states with long queues at the oil stations created tension and hardship for citizens. It is a pity that after the handover, the commodity is still not affordable which has affected the prices of commodities in the market

The economic meltdown in Nigeria has not left women untouched as they have experienced all forms of hardship in taking care of their households Women in

Nigeria constitute more than half of the population of the country's citizens Fajonyemi (2004) stated that majority of women in Nigeria are poor The United Nations Population Fund (2009) opined that women are said to be mostly affected by global economic crunch both in developed and developing countries for some obvious reasons

CAUSES OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

One of the major causes of economic meltdown in Nigeria is poor leadership Olojidi (2009) stated that Nigeria as a nation might have been blessed with abundant natural resources but however cursed by poor leadership It was further stated that each government comes and goes, sell out oil, pockets the money with his sycophants, leaves for other sets of looters to take over Eberconwu (2009) opined that greed, dishonesty and poor regulation are the major causes of economic meltdown in Nigeria. He added that much money finds its way into the hands of those who have control over them but they do not use them for the wellbeing of the nation Political leaders in Nigeria and their greed for money and power have wreaked havoc on the nation

Corruption is another cause of global economic crisis Okobia, Okafor and Osajie (2013) defined corruption as a social phenomenon which manifests itself in various human actions such as dishonesty, selfishness, embezzlement, moral degeneration, bribery, insatiability, covetousness among others Corruption has thrived persistently in Nigeria as a result of excessive materialism, bottleneck and poor leadership too.

Over dependence and mismanagement of oil as a source of revenue is a very big factor that has affected the Nigerian economy Countries such as Malaysia and Singapore in the 1970s had the same source of revenue with Nigeria but today they make more than II times the revenue on oil With the kidnapping of oil workers and vandalization of oil wells in the Niger Delta, the barrels of crude oil produced per day have dropped Urbanization is another factor responsible for economic crisis in Nigeria Rural-Urban-migration of people to the cities especially youths for greener pastures and "white collar" jobs, has led to high prices of food stuffs, accommodation, transportation and health problems. Apart from these causes of

economic meltdown in Nigeria. Eraka and Tyoga (2009) however, observed the followings as causes of economic meltdown in Nigeria.

- Over dependence on petroleum as a source of income
- International debts
- High rate of importation
- Resources mismanagement
- Niger Delta militants' activities
- Growing gap between elites and the impoverished.
- Dynamic state of the nation's population
- A wide gap between the rich and the poor where the rich exploit the poor instead of empowering them

THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC MELTDOWN IN NIGERIA

The effect of global economic crisis in Nigeria is enormous and has affected every facet of the nation's economy. Nigeria began to take its share of the crisis when the Nigerian Stock Exchange started to record unprecedented losses in the value of the shares of companies listed on the stock market.

The economic meltdown as observed by Amumudu (2010), has slowed down economic activities around the world affecting productivity, business operations and international demands on goods and services. The global crisis on the part of governments, Islang (2009) stated that there has been a reduction in the generation of revenue thereby constraining government's promises on the provision of basic social amenities and services. On the part of the private sector, the meltdown has massively reduced the purchasing power of the people. Using the instrument of inflation, economic meltdown affects people's consumption patterns. It affects it because there is a direct connection between reduction in wealth, consumption and business investments. The crisis is still noticeable in the energy sector. The inadequate power supply has forced many industries to fold up especially in

Nigeria The energy problem has created mass retrenchment of workers in industries, increase in crime rate and poverty

Tracy (2005) enumerated the followings as the effects of economic meltdown.

- Reduction in revenue flow to the coffers of governments around the world
- Massive reduction in consumer purchasing power due to inflation
- Drastic fall in public spending
- Decrease in demand for companies manufactured goods and services.
- Reduced turnover and profitability of business
- Job shrinking that is downsizing particularly in the private sector where thousands are laid off and companies folded up
- Reduction in wages and salaries of workers, delay and non payment of salaries
- Early retirement of workers with new policies formulated to reduce workforce.
- Poverty on the increase as there is a heavy toll on the family's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and education

THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC MELTDOWN ON WOMEN

Women are the most vulnerable group within the economy especially during shock periods Research has revealed that crisis affect women and men differently and the current global meltdown is no exception Dejardin (2009) opined that economic crisis has a "Woman's face" The United Nations Population Fund (2009) pointed out that the different impact of economic meltdown will vary across countries but that it is expected to hit women harder in developed as well as developing countries as u result of combination of factors For women who are in most cases heading families as bread winners, this is a bad news. The stress of economic meltdown is lawful and has led to an increase in personal unrest, family crisis, as well as social conflicts which concerns every individual (Hienstra, 2008). The consequences of the crisis on women are as follows

- **Increased Violence against Women**

The women's complementary role of helping their husbands often times, turn out to be their sole role in the upkeep of the family Women and girls are often exposed to greater risk of violence in times of hardship and then economic and social right may be jeopardized The United Nations High Commissioner as quoted by Deen (2009) said "we have seen media reports of increased numbers of women in the sex trade industry and the increasing number of domestic violence incidents against women linked to the financial crisis" This report shows that women suffer much from crisis situations all over the world

- **Prostitution and HIV/AIDS Victimization**

The growing economic malaises make some women to resort to prostitution as a result of unemployment and hardship. Most of these women end up being victims of the dreaded HIV/AIDS Adaniu and Madaki (2010) stated that economic crisis put pressure on women to remain in abusive relationship, migrate for work or enter into the sex trade and other risky professions.

- **Maternal and infant mortality**

When there is economic and financial crisis, women and children are usually at greater risk Women are prone to increased risks of pregnancy due to low spending on public health information and services. A fall in household income could increase maternal and infant deaths. Having more children is seen as a strategy to cope with lower survival rates, however this multiplies the mothers risk of pregnancy related death and disability (Ehrenpreis and Viveros, 2009).

- **Poverty**

One major effect of economic meltdown on women is increased poverty. In a family or economy where poverty is severe, it is mostly felt or experienced by women whether married or single because major interactions in the family centres on the female. Okatabi (2010) opined that the effect of regression on women can take on immeasurable proportions as women have long standing discrimination and economic disadvantages It was also stated that they have fewer personal assets to rely on during economic crisis.

- **Unemployment/Decreased Employment and Under-employment**

Women are more likely to be unemployed than men in the formal sector According to Anumudu (2010) The World Bank identified 33 developing countries where women and girls in poor households are particularly vulnerable to the effects of global economic and food crisis and Nigeria being one of them In developing countries especially Nigeria, most sectors decrease their wages to the employees when there is financial crisis in their organizations As the crisis tightens, women are among those who may be laid off. Nwokonkwo (2010) stated that in economic crisis many are unemployed and women in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of such unemployment than men.

- **Crime Rate**

In the past one can hardly see women being involved in global crime, but these days, women is now taking part in crimes ranging from drug and human trafficking, alcoholism as a result of poverty and economic crisis even when they are aware of the penalties attached to such crimes Jibril (2010) stated that before the millennium or globalization women were rarely involved in theft, drug trafficking and alcoholism but today women have become more alluring in these acts.

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES In

curbing the global economic meltdown, Women Education should not be overlooked The crisis calls for personal development, skill acquisition, creativity, poverty eradication and self-reliance Home Economics Education is a field of knowledge with numerous marketable skills that make for self-reliance and self-employments Olaitan and Agusiobo (1990) defined Home Economics education as a field of study that provides the necessary knowledge for guiding and assisting human beings towards a more self-rewarding and fulfilled life compatible with their society As a skill-oriented- subject, Home Economics Education is capable of equipping women and individuals with saleable skills that could make for employment The basic requirement of life sustenance revolves around the knowledge acquired in the following major areas of Home Economics such as Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Clothing and Textile.

Women need to be empowered with knowledge of Home Economics either in the formal classrooms or the vocational centres no matter their age the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education emphasized education for adults Skills in Home Economics and related areas should be taught to make women effective resources managers, income generators, poverty alleviators, family health and nutrition consultants Ogbene (2006) observed that economic and social life of people in Nigeria has been dwindling as a result of economic recession Subsequent upon that, it was noted that there have been cases of premature retirements of workers, retrenchments of workers, high prices of consumable and non-consumable goods, unemployment of able bodied men and women and irregular payments of salaries of employees On this backdrop, Ogbene enumerated the following areas of Home Economics and career options which can help to create employment in the absence of government paid employment especially in this era of economic meltdown as survival strategies for women. The following items and services will help to empower women in

- **Food and Nutrition**

- Catering services, Restaurant management
- Bakery-Bread making, snacks, cake and decoration
- Fast food business sale/provision of rice of all kinds, pounded yam and soup etc
- Akara, moi-moi
- Soya milk, yogurt etc

- **Clothing and Textiles**

- Fashion designing Tailoring
- Weaving and embroidery
- Crafts-bead making Knitting and crocheting

- **Home Management**

- Soap and cream production
- Fabric retail store (Selling of buttons, Zippers and other clothing accessories)
- Laundry services/dry cleaning
- House keeping
- Growing of vegetables eg Okro, spinach and tomatoes
- Growing of potted plants and flowers
- Rearing of buds

CONCLUSION

There is no gainsaying that the economy of Nigeria is ailing. Women are greatly affected as a result of the increasing challenges posed on the families. The importance of Home Economics Education cannot be over emphasized. This is because it is a discipline that improves the standard of living of individuals and families where women hold vital positions in the upkeep of their homes. In the era of economic meltdown, the study of Home Economics Education must be encouraged among women to help solve the problems of unemployment and poverty and cushion the effects of financial crisis in the home and the nation in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Since greed and dishonesty have been implicated in the economic meltdown, our leader should be disciplined and do away with corrupt practices.
- Government should look out for other ways of getting revenue instead of depending solely on oil. Agriculture and other minerals such as coal, iron ore, should be considered for economic sustainability and growth.
- Home Economics should be taught at all levels of education with particular emphasis on skills that will provide employment after graduation.
- Vocational training centres should be set up in towns and villages to enable women acquire skills that will provide them with self-employment.
- Women should form cooperative societies to enable them get credit facilities to set up their businesses with ease.

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