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FLOODING DISASTER IN NIGERIA, BARRIER TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN FLOODED COMMUNITIES: INTERVENTION FOR REMEDY

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Abstract

School Children in over ten important States in Nigeria are continuously plagued with chronic flooding disasters year in year out. This has posed a serious barrier in the Educational Attainment of children in these states. In many cases, the school children struggle to attend classes with their instructors in Flooded classrooms, conduct morning assemblies in Flooded school compounds, with no access to extra curricular activities. This barrier in learning is far from the cry of formal education as the only means to self actualization, growth and development of the nation. It has also made the indigenes of these communities to be backward in social amenities, social integration and psycho-social behavior. This paper therefore examined the academic achievement of the children in the flooded states compared with school children in other states without flood, in other to proffer solutions. Population of the study comprised ten thousand pupils, with a sample of one thousand pupils. An instrument for data collection was based on their core subjects: Mathematics Achievement Test (MAT), English language Achievement Test (ELAT) and Basics Science Achievement Test (BSAT). Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The findings after analysis indicated that pupils in flood devastated communities in these states, with continuous obstructions of academic calendar had serious academic achievement effects, when compared to pupils in the states without flood. Recommendations based on the findings were made such as: creating awareness to the Federal Government of Nigeria, international Bodies such as UNESCO, of these communities in these states. In other to come for the rescue of school children in these states.

Keywords: School Children, flooded states, academic achievement.

1 INTRODUCTION

Flooding disaster is one of the major natural catastrophe of the second millennium. Over 20 countries of the world, including Nigeria have been greatly affected by flood. Since 1950, Nigeria has been suffering from it, according to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA, 2018). And since then, not many improvements have been made in the area of controlling and preventing it. From 1988 through 2021, several communities in more than ten states of the country keep experiencing flooding disasters in an unprecedented way. Famous (2018) reported the devastating level of flood across 12 states in the country, where he estimated over 8 million people that were greatly affected by the flood. In some of the communities in these states, the flood water will take up the whole areas, to the extent that their houses are swallowed up by the flood water. The movement of water can be so disastrous that in a twinkle of an eye, buildings are covered up with water, rushing out household properties. (Obebi 2013, Unachukwu & Israel 2013). Improvisation for survival by the indigenes at this critical moment is locally made boats covered with tarpaulin.

The most serious threat to Nigeria flooding disaster, as far as this study is concerned is the barrier posed to the educational attainment of school children in the various communities affected by flood. It is serious because, education is the major means by which the child is prepared with a skill to survive in his environment and to contribute to national growth. According to Asiwu (2018), citing Aggarwal, underscores the education of the child as a process that draws out the best in the child with the aim of producing well balanced personalities, culturally refined, emotionally stable, ethically sound, mentally alert, morally upright, physically strong, socially efficient, vocationally self sufficient and internationally liberal. In the face of this barrier, school aged children are greatly handicapped to receive the good features education offers,

Following the flooding disasters in Nigeria, school children have always been incapacitated of learning. Their school compounds are covered up with flood water. Their "morning Assembly" are conducted in floods of water (see illustration in fig 1). When flooding occurs, schools continue to be used as evacuated centres for all affected states, and considering the on-going flood, many schools and educational properties are always damaged. All schools in the affected areas have to be closed down and put on hold for safety measure until the flood ebbs, (Abubakar2020).



Fig 1. School Children in flooded school compound during Morning Assembly

Several studies have been carried out on this flooding disasters and the children educational attainment. For example, Unachukwu and Ugoma (2012) investigated the academic achievement of primary school pupils in flood affected communities of Oko, Delta State, who were kept in refugee camps in the state headquarters. In their findings, pupils in the flooded communities had a standard deviation (SD) of 5.5 in mathematics and (SD) of 6.32 in English language, when this is compared with pupils in an area not affected by flood, there is a standard deviation (SD) of 8.98 in mathematics and (SD) of 9.21 in English language. This is far below standard for educational attainment of school children. Again, Amadi (2013) in other flooded communities in the country investigated academic achievement of students and also found out that 93.33% of the students had their performance affected. While 90% of school enrolment number reduced drastically because of dropout of school children in flood affected areas.

These studies have been carried out in almost 9 years ago; yet, the flooding disasters have been consistence. What is still the educational attainment of school children in these flooded communities over the years since 2012-2021? What method of preparedness against future occurrence of flood that has been put in place in these states? Is there any significant difference in academic achievement of pupils in mathematics, English language and Basic science in the flooded states and of pupils that are not affected by flood since 2012 – 2021? It is based on this, that the researchers have decided to conduct a study to verify the academic achievement of the school children in over 12 states in Nigeria affected by floods, in order to proffer remedies to the flooding problems.

2 METHOD

The study made use of descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate for the study because it investigated the effects of flood devastated communities and academic achievement of

pupils in the primary school. It also investigated the method of preparedness of the indigenes of these states against future occurrence. Population of the study was ten thousand pupils, with a sample of one thousand pupils selected through random sampling in their various refugee camps. Instruments for data collection were the mathematics achievement test (MAT), English language achievement test (ELAT) and Basic Science achievement test (BSAT). These instruments were validated by the various subject teachers and each has psychometric characteristics of 0.68, 0.70 and 0.64 respectively, after test-retest reliabilities was established. Again, each instrument contained 20 items of both objectives and sub-objective questions. The mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) were used to analyse the research questions. On the other hand, Likert scale of measurement was used to quantify the attitude and interest of preparedness of the people in these communities against future occurrence of flood.

Table 1: means (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) of the effect of academic achievement of pupils in flooded and non-flooded communities.

Academic Achievement				
Subject	Pupils in flooded communities		Pupils in non-flooded communities	
	No of pupils participant (500)		No of pupils participant (500)	
	(\bar{x})	(SD)	\bar{X}	(SD)
Maths	25.2	5.01	85.2	9.23
English	38.7	6.22	90.1	9.49
Basic Science	45.4	6.73	91.5	9.56

Table 1 above indicated that primary school pupils in flooded communities obtained a mean (\bar{x}) of 25.1 and standard deviation (SD) of 5.1 in mathematics, mean (\bar{x}) of 38.7 and standard deviation (SD) of 6.22 in English language and mean (\bar{x}) of 45.4 and standard deviation (SD) of 6.73 in Basic science. Pupils in non-flooded communities on the other hand, obtained a mean (\bar{x}) of 85.2 and standard deviation (SD) of 9.23 in mathematics, a mean (\bar{x}) of 90.1 and standard deviation (SD) of 9.49 in English language and a mean (\bar{x}) of 91.5 and standard deviation (SD) of 9.56 in Basic Science.

Table 2: Method of Preparedness Against future Occurrence of Flood in the Flooded Communities

S/N	Questionnaire Statements	Responses by the flooded states					\bar{X}	Decision
		5 SA	4 A	3 D	2 SD	1 N		
1	there has always been flood in my community/state	6	5	-	-	-	$\frac{50}{15}$	3.33 Accepted
2	The flood in 2012 was not the worst flood we have ever experienced in our areas	4	7	2	1	1	$\frac{57}{15}$	3.8 Accepted
3	Usually, during flooding, government still makes provision for school to go on	1	1	1	6	5	$\frac{29}{15}$	1.9 Rejected
4	Non - governmental organizations always make provision to avert flood disaster	1	1	1	6	2	$\frac{26}{15}$	1.7 Rejected
5	Major causes of most flood in our communities are not known to us	2	1	2	2	1	$\frac{25}{15}$	1.6 Rejected
6	We as indigene always make provision for our children's schooling during flooding	2	1	1	3	1	$\frac{24}{14}$	1.6 Rejected
7	We as indigenes have also made provision to control and prevent future flood occurrence	2	1	4	2	2	$\frac{32}{15}$	2.13 Rejected
8	Help from NGO and International organizations have also made provisions to prevent and control the flood for us	2	2	3	2	3	$\frac{34}{15}$	2.26 Rejected

Benchmark: Below 3.0 is rejected, while 3.0 and above is accepted

Table 2 responses to the questionnaire items on method of preparedness to future occurrence of flood indicated that there is no adequate preparation from both the indigenes of the affected communities and governmental authorities to the control and prevention of flood in these areas (as indicated in questions 6 & 8). There is also no adequate preparation for school children to attend classes, either from the indigenes, governmental authorities or non- government authorities (NGO), (as also indicated in question 3 & 4)

However, the indigenes are aware of some of the major causes of their worst flooding disasters (question 5)

3 RESULT

Findings from the study indicated low academic achievement of school children in flood devastated communities/states in Nigeria. The (\bar{x}) of 25.1 and (SD) of 5.19, (\bar{x}) of 38.7 and (SD) of 6.22 and (\bar{x}) of 45.4 and (SD) of 6.73 in mathematics, English language and Basic Science are not encouraging academically. This present findings agreed with the findings of Unachukwu and Ugoma (2013), Amadi (2013) and Abubakar 2020). The low achievement of primary school pupils academically as a result of flooding disaster is a barrier to educational attainment of both pupils and students in these states. This is not healthy for a growing country like Nigeria that needs science and technology to develop.

Again, findings from the study showed that there is no tangible provision from the indigenes, governmental agencies, non- government organizations and even international body to make quality efforts to give permanent solution to the flooding problems or make provision for quality education to the children in these communities, during flooding.

Intervention for Remedy: The people living in the coastal areas where the flood water ravages their lives have always complained about dams' water released from neighbouring countries like Cameroon and Chad republic. The government of these countries (Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad) are aware of these catastrophes. Muhammed (2015) on Blue print report said that Nigeria and Cameroon have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on River Benue Basin management. The signing of MoU is a way forward to controlling the flooding disaster that keeps on affecting the indigenes and school children. This was since 2013, nothing tangible was done. Akani (2012) on the study of the effect of globalization on Nigeria education concluded that Nigeria could not appropriate the benefits of globalization. Because, its educational system is not constituted to surmount the challenges of flood in many areas of the country, he needs help globally to address the issue. The way forward as a remedy to the educational barriers of school children in these state is to renew and act promptly on the MoU between these countries. The world is a global village, and Nigeria is part of the global village, it needed recognition by international body, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and NGO to step into this perpetual problem of flooding disaster posing a barrier to educational attainment of our school children.

4 CONCLUSION

It is imperative to recognize the role of education in any developing nation like Nigeria and be given priorities. Nigeria flooding disaster is a chronic catastrophe dwarfing lives, darkening school children bright future and drowning the nation's economy. For the sake of the children who are precious resources of the human race, now growing into waywardness, touts, ritualists, kidnappers, armed robbers, as a result of half education or no education at all, there is urgent need to:

- Make proactive measure to relocate school children to safer ground to continue their learning until the water ebbs, instead of putting on hold their learning.
- Construct embankment high up on river banks such as river Niger and river Benue to keep off flood water.
- Renew the MoU between Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad to control the release of dam water unnecessarily to cause flood.
- Have intervention from international bodies such as unicef, unesco and ngo to step into Nigeria flooding disasters, as it were in the globalized world's respond to tsunami in 2004.

In this way, there will be balance in education, socio-cultural integration, growth and development of children in flooded communities and non-flooded communities in Nigeria.

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