

Economic Approaches to Deflate Economic Stresses upon Communities : A Brief Study of Kuala Lumpur

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Abstract

There are numerous economic stresses that are imparted upon the population. The rise of food prices, the inflation of rents, the stagnation of income, and others had taken a toll upon the population. There were several initiatives by the authorities to deflate these stresses, but the results were mixed. This paper parlays the attributes of the economic stresses, the approaches to mitigate the stresses, and the economic hardships and the mitigating solutions of designated populations of Kuala Lumpur.

Keywords : Economy, Financial Stress, Community, City

Introduction

There are always stresses upon the population of cities, towns, villages, and others. One primary stress is the economic stress that beckons upon the masses. There are individuals and families that lived within the poverty line at cities and rural areas. The negative repercussions are severe where individuals would be forced to actuate illegal activities such as theft, prostitution, gangsterism, and others in order to survive the economic hardship. According to Arafat and et. al., economic hardship had propelled individuals to be emotionally unstable, and there were cases where individuals had to reduce their daily food intake due to insufficient financial means [1].

Authorities are aware of these economic predicaments, and several solutions were developed but somehow portions of these solutions were unsuccessful in eradicating the economic stresses. It is vital for the authorities to ensure that the solutions are indeed

everlasting and able to reach the whole population at the designated areas. Lenhardt indicated that some populations in the urban setting are within the poverty line due to inequality and also due to ineffective wealth distribution [2]. Lenhardt also mentioned that those from the rural areas tend to migrate to the urban setting due to their skewed perception that the urban setting would absolutely offer them better conditions [2]. This is true in some cases, but there were cases where the urban setting offered more challenges.

Economic Stresses

Economic stresses are mentally challenging as they constraint the financial means of the individuals and there were various cases where individuals tend to harm themselves due to this predicament. There are extreme cases where workers at urban areas could not afford basic abodes and had to live under the bridges or on the streets. This is a global issue as developed countries also have prominent number of homeless folks and several of them were lured to gangs and illicit activities due to their improper status.

We had seen initiatives by authorities to lessen the number of homeless folks at the urban environment. Padgett stated that there are portions of homeless folks that have ongoing mental issues and this had prevented them from acquiring employments in a continuous fashion [3]. Subsequently, without employment, their economic status would remain degraded, and the predicament continues as a vicious cycle.

Harridon stipulated that in order to procreate a viable solution, it is imperative to gain a better understanding of the situation and subsequently represent the issue in a holistic and fair manner [4]. Mathematical models could be utilized to ascertain the degree of depravity of the economic stresses and from there onwards the most depraved issue would be tackled first.

Various Solutions

There were substantial solutions produced and implemented by the authorities. Cash aids such as Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (SARA) given by the government of Malaysia had helped and aided certain quarters of the community. However, there were postulations that this approach is appropriate for a short-term duration and a long-term solution needs to be developed. The coffers of the government would be depleted tremendously if the cash aids are given extensively without proper due diligence. Thus, any solution should take into account the intended targeted segment in order to avoid giving aids to those that are not eligible.

Elayah and et. al. mentioned that cash aid is more reliable than distributing food aid as food aid could be looted by irresponsible parties [5]. However, this distinction is perhaps suitable to war torn nations, and nations which are currently experiencing peace and harmony would be suited to have an alternative implementation such as soup kitchen and orderly package food distribution. Discounted fares and products were also introduced to several groups of the populations in order to alleviate their economic stresses. For example, senior citizens were given discounted fares to ride the subway, trains, busses, and other means of transportation. These senior citizens are normally retired workers that do not have the financial means to continuously pay for full fares and plausibly these senior citizens do not have a steady income.

Inherent Predicaments

There are ingrained challenges that posed as deterrents toward the efforts by the authorities. One of the challenges is the inappropriate distribution of wealth or aid to the intended group. There are instances where the economic aid had not reached the core groups which are at the baseline poverty level. Fenoll and et. al. mentioned that a structured mechanism is the best approach to deliver cash aid and they mentioned the system that was implemented in Italy where those that received the aid had to attend compulsory courses in order for them to have higher chances of employments [6]. This is a good approach as the individuals that had acquired the monetary assistance would be able to be on their own accord after the duration of the assistance had expired. This is an optimum long-term strategy to prevent frequent dependencies upon the government.

Another point of contention is the apparent lack of enthusiasm from certain population to accept the opening or establishment of new industry at their locations. Harridon stated that the establishment of industries at designated areas would procreate employments and if these industries are productive, these industries would alleviate the economic vibrancy of that particular areas and thus lessen the economic stresses of the designated communities [7]. Within this context, it is imperative for local and federal authorities to establish policies that are favourable towards economic development where several tax reductions could be given to corporations that expended their operations to regions that are currently underdeveloped.

Communities in Kuala Lumpur

We had actuated a brief survey of the population of Kuala Lumpur where 3 statements were posed to the respondents and their feedbacks were recorded. The feedbacks were in the form of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. We had managed to acquire 326 respondents and their feedbacks were tabulated as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Feedbacks from the Respondents

Statement	Number of Respondents (Percentage)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Economic Stresses that I had Encountered are Significant	295 (90.49%)	15 (4.6%)	16 (4.91%)	0	0
2. The Initiatives by the Government are Sufficient to Deflate the Economic Stresses	0	0	18 (5.52%)	32 (9.82%)	276 (84.66%)
3. The Government should Listen more to our Grouses	286 (87.73%)	39 (11.96%)	1 (0.31%)	0	0

We had also acquired quotations from the respondents, and we offered 5 selected quotations from the respondents as shown below.

“The government should do more to alleviate the economic stresses of the community” – Respondent A

“There is a lot of hardship in my life, and I hope there are more initiatives by the government” – Respondent B

“The approaches by the government are good as I had benefitted from the approaches” – Respondent C

“I had benefitted from the programs that were introduced by the government. However, the government should be more vigilant upon our hardships” – Respondent D

“Various groups should benefit from the initiatives and thus it is critical that the initiatives reach the core group” – Respondent E

As seen from Table 1, 90.49% of the respondents strongly agreed that the economic stresses encountered by them are significant and had affected their lives. None of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Hence, this parlays a notion that majority of city dwellers are facing economic and financial challenges that had deflated their spending power and this is plausibly due to inflation and the stagnation of their incomes.

Pursuant to Table 1, 84.66% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the initiatives by the government are sufficient to deflate the economic stresses. The respondents have the perception that the approaches by the government were not effective as evidences are still compounding and inexistence with regards to the economic hardships encountered by the urban population. 5.52% of the respondents had remained neutral with regards to this issue.

With regards to Statement 3 of Table 1, 87.73% of the respondents strongly agreed with the notion that the government should listen more to the grouses of the population. There were cases where issues that were parlayed by the people were not heeded and solved, and this had led to significant consternations from the masses. And there is the issue that minute predicaments were solved instantly but grave issue were not given intense attention. This is a misplaced priority, and the government should have a rigid structure to evaluate the gravity of the predicaments and rank them accordingly in order to solve the most critical issue first.

The selected five quotes from the respondents showed that in totality the government should put in extra efforts to alleviate the financial and economic stresses of the people. There are indeed rooms for improvement, and the local and federal authorities should be more observant of the plights of the population. We however acknowledged that the initiatives by the government had benefitted portions of the population, and it is best to continue the efforts and provide enhancements upon future economic programs.

According to Davidescu and et. al., there should be continuous economic programs so that nations could develop in a cohesive and longitudinal fashion [8]. The economic and financial programs introduced by the government of Malaysia should be consistent and be accorded to the population in a refined and prolonged manner so that the economic benefits could be reaped by the population in an almost perpetual time frame.

Conclusions

Numerous approaches were employed by governments throughout the world to deflate economic stresses of communities in urban and rural settings. Some of the approaches had mitigated the issue but within a period which is short. It is vital for the authorities to identify and develop viable solutions that are longitudinal in order to satiate the population continuously. The data that we had collected had shown that the initiatives by the Malaysian government had deflated the economic stresses of the population of Kuala Lumpur but there were grouses that these initiatives were inappropriate and had not met the designated objectives.

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